



PAUL FLETCHER MP

Federal Member for Bradfield

Minister for Communications,
Cyber Safety and the Arts

MS19-000734

Mr David Jones
Chair
Council of the National Museum of Australia
Lawson Crescent
Acton ACT 2601

Dear Mr Jones

I am writing to outline my expectations for the National Museum of Australia (the Museum) for 2019-20. The portfolio allocation for the Museum in 2019-20 is \$48.489 million. This allocation includes \$3.2 million from the Public Service Modernisation Fund to support the Cultural Shared Services Centre, and \$1 million for works to upgrade disability access points, safety equipment and fire services, and to remove public safety hazards and ensure accessibility to the main Museum building, identified by the recent National Collecting Institutions Review.

Let me first acknowledge the achievements of the Museum in 2018-19, in particular the Museum's contribution to implementing activities to mark 250 years since Captain James Cook's first voyage to Australia and the Pacific in 1770. This includes the *Cultural Connections Initiative* (comprising the *Encounters Fellowships* program and the *Cultural Connections* program), and collaboration with the National Library of Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum to develop a shared digital platform.

More broadly, I acknowledge the Museum's success in continuing to develop a series of high-quality exhibitions, programs and experiences that showcase the National Historical Collection, appeal to the Australian public and attract significant audiences. This includes *Rome: City and Empire* exhibition from the British Museum. Internationally, the Museum's *Old Masters: Australia's Great Bark Artists* toured to four venues across China, which is an important aspect of Australia's cultural diplomacy.

The Morrison Government's key policy priorities are to grow the economy and employment, to keep Australians safe and to keep Australians together.

The Government recognises the significant value that cultural activity delivers for the enrichment of our society and the role it plays in shaping our collective values. The arts also make a direct and important contribution to these broader priority areas of Government.

During my first few months as portfolio Minister, I have developed a number of priorities across all my areas of responsibility. For the arts, my goal is to foster an authentic and vital Australian arts sector. The actions I intend to progress are to:

- Grow the Indigenous art market.
- Promote Australian stories and identity.
- Deliver arts funding that is sustainable and contestable.

The arts are a key part of Australian identity, contributing to how we are perceived internationally in both trade and diplomacy, as well as our potential to attract international visitation. The important economic contribution of the arts is also widely acknowledged.

I encourage the Museum to consider opportunities where it can support these broader strategic priorities and I take this opportunity to outline some strategic priorities which I ask the Museum to focus on in 2019-20. These are:

- Ensuring the Museum contributes to economic activity, particularly in regional centres, through touring and other outreach activities.
- Providing leadership to the collections sector as an employer of choice.
- Accepting opportunities to shape and promote Australian identity through the Museum's public-facing activities both national and internationally.
- Considering opportunities to create and meet demand for inbound tourism.
- Providing leadership in the delivery of collection management, arts education and public programs.
- Continuing to explore opportunities to grow private sector support and increase own-source revenue.

I note that many of these areas are already being actively progressed by the Museum. I encourage the Museum to continue to work cooperatively with my Department and other portfolio agencies in contributing to the Government's policy priorities. I also appreciate you alerting me to any plans about significant events related to the Museum's activities or functions.

I thank the Museum Director, Dr Mat Trinca, for making time recently to meet with me to discuss the Museum's future priorities.

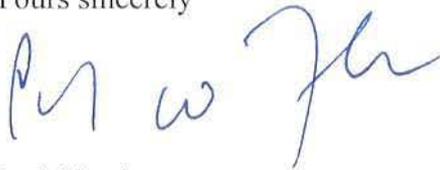
The fiscal climate, including the Government's expectation in meeting the announced 2019-20 budget surplus and maintaining budget surpluses over the forward estimates, means the Government is unlikely to be able to respond to requests for additional financial support in the short term. This includes proposals for any major expansion plans or capital works that do not address critical health and safety or compliance issues.

Given this situation, I am suggesting to all National Collecting Institutions that they focus their resources on the operations and maintenance needs of their existing facilities and consider whether some of their reserves could be used to address outstanding works.

This Statement of Expectations and your corresponding Statement of Intent form an important component of the Museum's governance framework. As such, I would anticipate both being public documents and I ask that you write to me with the Museum's Statement of Intent before the end of 2019. I have written in similar terms to all arts portfolio agencies, and have copied this letter to the Museum Director, Dr Trinca.

I wish you and the Museum Council and executive team success in meeting outcomes and objectives for 2019-20.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Fletcher', written in a cursive style.

Paul Fletcher

2/10/2019