

I am a foundation friend of the National Museum of Australia and have, indeed, followed its progress for even longer.

It has been a great pleasure to watch the development of the museum and to see it develop as an unique institution on the Australian cultural scene.

It would have been very easy for the Museum to have become "just another collection of rocks and stuffed animals". Instead it has chosen to take the more exciting path of including programmes documenting and displaying the socio-economic history of this country. Its emphasis on the role played by the great diversity of peoples who go to make up this nation, the inclusion of displays to which everyone can relate [rather than just the rich and/or famous] makes it a museum which appeals to all people and which is, as a result, a museum which everyone can regard as "their museum"

No museum can develop without making the odd mistake but the NMA has grown in strength and stature, has incorporated into its displays the traditional and the technological and has, as a result, developed an appeal for the old and the young, the specialist and the man or woman on the street.

I hope the staff will be given the freedom and resources to continue the process of learning to create displays which add significantly to the education and enjoyment of its visitors. It is inevitable that not all displays will appeal to all people but this should not limit the imagination and vision which can be applied to the Museum's ability to tell the story of all aspects of Australia and Australians.

My only real complaint is the appallingly uncomfortable seating in the Friends' lounge. For those less than 6 feet tall, the arm chairs do not provide a place to relax.

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