

File No: 17/33

20 October 2017

Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Communications  
Parliament House  
Canberra 2600

### **National Museum of Australia – Statement of Intent**

Dear Minister

Thank you for meeting with Dr Mathew Trinca and myself on 31 August 2017 to discuss the intentions of the National Museum of Australia (NMA) in meeting your expectations of the institution over the course of the 2017 – 18 financial year.

I would like to reiterate our appreciation of your ongoing and continued support of NMA. The Museum's Council and Staff are very grateful for your assistance and advocacy on their behalf and for the Government's funding commitment to the organisation to enable it to fulfil its mission.

The NMA's functions are set out in its enabling legislation, the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980*. Our purpose is to bring to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia, by:

- developing, preserving, digitising and exhibiting a significant national collection;
- taking a leadership role in research and scholarship;
- engaging and providing access for audiences nationally and internationally; and
- delivering innovative programs.

The NMA endeavours to make the most advantageous use of the national collection in the national interest. The Museum brings to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia through strong engagement with the nation's varied communities and traditions.

### **Relationship with the Minister and the Department**

The NMA will keep the Minister informed with accurate and timely advice on significant issues in its core area of business. The NMA will continue to engage closely with the Minister and the Department of Communications and the Arts: to deliver on the Government's Modernisation and Innovation

agenda; to provide qualitative and quantitative data for the development and reporting of key performance information for the NMA and the broader sector; and to maximise opportunities to contribute to other Government policy settings.

### **Delivering on the Government's Modernisation and Innovation Agenda**

The NMA is grateful for the additional Government funding of \$2.29 million over the current and next two financial years that will enable the NMA to transform elements of its business to keep pace with technological developments and reach more Australians across the country. In particular, we believe this additional expenditure will help the NMA reach new audiences in regional and remote areas through our online services and travelling and touring programs.

Moreover, the injection of \$8.9 million over three years to establish a Cultural and Corporate Shared Services Centre will allow the NMA to provide shared corporate and business services functions to other collecting institutions. In particular, it will ensure that we collectively can consolidate our information technology support services, and ensure our operations are efficient and cost-effective. We are committed to delivering the first stage of this program in 2017/18.

### **Delivery of core functions and strategic objectives for the year ahead**

In response to your statement of expectations, I can assure you that the NMA will pursue the following strategies and activities in FY 2017–18, to drive visitation and audience engagement:

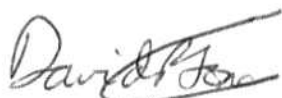
- Delivering two major capital projects over the course of the financial year (redevelopment of the Main Hall and Forecourt renewal) that will transform the visitor experience of the NMA;
- Bringing the stories of Australia to life through innovative exhibitions and programs, including the opening of the major exhibition *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*; and creation of digital education resources and experiences, and participatory programs;
- Expanding digital access to the National Historical Collection to enable access through online engagement, and upgrading wireless infrastructure to provide improved performance, analytics and location services within the Museum to support digital and social media technologies for enhanced visitor experience;
- Pursuing innovative and creative opportunities for visitor engagement and growth, building own-source revenue and fostering sustainable partnerships within the philanthropic, business and cultural sectors for shared benefit;
- Contributing to the Government's cultural diplomacy outcomes through our international exhibition touring program and support of key international partnerships, such as the tour of the Indigenous exhibition *Old Masters: Australia's Great Bark Artists* to China, partnering with the South Australian Museum to tour *Yidaki: Didjeridu and the Sound of Australia* to Japan, and supporting a range of arts and cultural activities recommended by the Australia-Singapore Arts Group;

- Developing a Master Plan to guide the NMA's future to 2030. The draft Master Plan dovetails into the Acton Peninsula Precinct Draft Structure Plan to outline possible futures for the Peninsula.
- Contributing to the Government's diversity and inclusion objectives through ongoing consultation and implementation of the NMA's Diversity Action Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan; and
- Managing an active research and scholarship program that underpins the Museum's programs through public debate and engagement, including the *Defining Moments in Australian History* project, the *Encounters* Indigenous Cultural Workers Scholarship program, and active participation in key conferences and symposia.

In each of these pursuits, the NMA recognises the need to manage its human and financial resources effectively through coordinated planning, benchmarking and performance measurement. In 2017–18 the NMA will continue to build corporate, commercial and evaluation skills across the organisation, to contribute to audience and revenue growth.

I look forward to the opportunity of discussing these activities and plans with you when we next meet, and feel confident that the NMA has an outstanding year of achievement ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mr David Jones  
Chair of Council