

National Museum of Australia 10–11 Annual Report



National Museum of Australia

10–11 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements



Australian Government

Department of the Prime
Minister and Cabinet
Office for the Arts



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The Hon Simon Crean MP

Chair's letter of transmittal

The Hon Simon Crean MP
Minister for the Arts
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

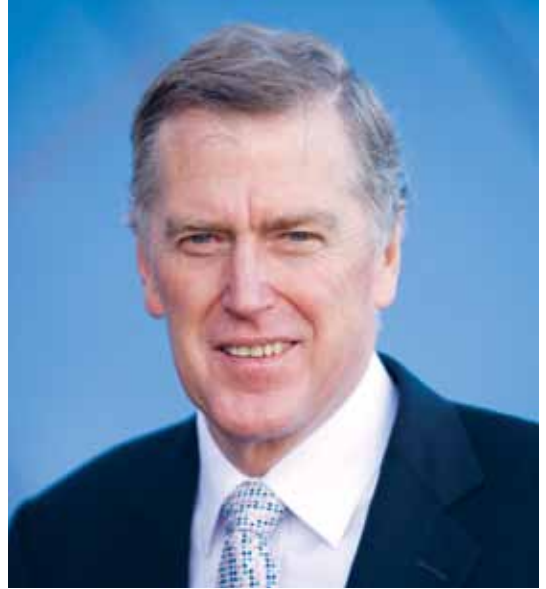
Dear Minister

On behalf of the Council of the National Museum of Australia, I am pleased to submit our annual report for the financial year ended 30 June 2011. The report is presented in accordance with Section 9 and Schedule 1 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, and it has been prepared in conformity with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies (Report of Operations) Orders 2008*.

In March 2011 the Museum celebrated the tenth anniversary of its opening on Acton Peninsula, a significant milestone in the history of the Museum. We took this opportunity to outline a forward plan for the Museum, built on its present and past successes.

This year was marked by many achievements. These included record visitation figures of nearly five million, the opening of a major permanent gallery and the creation of a new brand for the Museum.

Highlights of the Museum's temporary exhibition program included an exhibition that for the very first time told the story of the Canning Stock Route's



Daniel Gilbert AM

impact, and the importance of the country around it, in Aboriginal voices and interpreted through Aboriginal eyes. *Not Just Ned: A True History of the Irish in Australia* told the epic story of the impact of the Irish in the history of Australia. Both of these exhibitions resulted in record-breaking visitation.

The Museum has achieved or surpassed the outcomes set for it by government for 2010–11, and there have been no significant developments since the end of the financial year. I would like to acknowledge the support of all Council members in ensuring the highest levels of governance for the Museum. The term of longstanding Council member Marian Gibney ended during the year and I take this opportunity to thank her for her work in the governance of the National Museum.

I would also like to express the Council's appreciation of your support for the Museum throughout 2010–11, and acknowledge the support of the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts, Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, from 1 July to 13 September 2010.

Finally, all members of the Council join me in congratulating the Director and staff on the Museum's continuing success.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Gilbert AM

Chair of Council
National Museum of Australia
September 2011

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Part one:
Executive
summary





Vision

A recognised world-class museum exploring Australia's past, illuminating the present, imagining the future.

Mission

To promote an understanding of Australia's history and an awareness of future possibilities by:

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

Values

The National Museum of Australia operates with the highest ethical standards. It embraces truth and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and recognises the importance of aesthetic considerations. The Museum acknowledges the contributions of all Australians to the country's historical development and accepts a fundamental requirement for fairness and equity in its activities. In operating within the framework established by such values, the National Museum of Australia:

- develops and preserves the National Historical Collection
- upholds scholarly and professional integrity
- makes best use of its resources
- values and is open-minded to new ideas
- promotes continuous learning
- strives to be innovative and creative
- anticipates and responds to its diverse audience's needs.

Richard Painter has his photograph taken for the Landmarks gallery as he visits the Sydney Opera House.

Director's review of operations

This was a significant year in the life of the National Museum of Australia. It was a year in which a new set of strategic priorities was formulated and endorsed — priorities that will shape the direction of the Museum into the future. These strategic priorities are aimed at transforming the Museum and positioning it for the challenges of the next decade. They seek to bring the Museum to the forefront of the cultural life of this country and to a position of leadership in which contemporary Australia is understood in relationship to its past and its future promise.

Principal among the new strategic priorities is the aspiration to 'create a place that people love, renowned for its excellence'. To this end we will deploy all of the internal resources available to the Museum responsibly and efficiently. The priorities also seek to establish fruitful partnerships to help the Museum increase its resources and reach wider audiences in Australia and globally. They also embrace the notion of providing lifelong learning opportunities for visitors to the Museum and using the national collection to greatest effect.

This year the Museum celebrated record visitation of nearly five million, which included visitors to the Museum and its travelling exhibitions and online visitors. Over one and a half million people visited our temporary exhibitions and enjoyed our public programs and events, demonstrating strong audience interest in the



Director Andrew Sayers AM

Museum. In July, we opened *Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route*, an exhibition developed in partnership with FORM, an independent arts organisation based in Perth, Western Australia. The exhibition proved to be a huge success. It attracted over 120,000 visitors during its showing in Canberra, the highest attendance at any Museum exhibition since the Museum building opened in 2001. We plan to tour the exhibition nationally in Australia during 2011–12. One feature of this exhibition that attracted a great deal of attention was the extensive and innovative use of interactive multimedia.

In March 2011, we opened *Not Just Ned: A True History of the Irish in Australia*. Again, this exhibition proved to be extremely popular and was enjoyed by more than 70,000 visitors. The exhibition was in many ways a model exhibition for the National Museum of Australia. It explored a subject of particular importance in our national story, it was generated from within the Museum, and it allowed us to highlight and give context to some significant objects in the Museum's collection.

In June 2011, we opened the permanent gallery *Landmarks: People and Places across Australia*, the last in a series of enhancements to the Museum's displays that came out of the Carroll Review of the Museum in 2003. Museum staff worked on this exhibition for several years and the result of their efforts is a display, organised on both chronological and geographical

“These are challenging times for museums but we will be led into the future by single-minded attention to bringing the Australian story to life for as many people as we can possibly reach.”

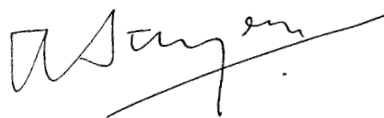
principles, that tells a number of important Australian stories in great depth and detail. More than any other part of the Museum, Landmarks is a reminder of the importance of regional Australia. Its breadth is deliberately and truly national.

The Museum continued to play a significant educational role in the Australian community. In the formal education sector we continued to work towards one of our stated goals: to ensure that the Museum’s programs are developed in step with the emerging national curriculum. But our commitment is also to a wider educational constituency, encompassed in the phrase ‘lifelong learning’. Public programs, publications and our online presence are three powerful ways that we reach out to Australians — whoever they are and wherever they are.

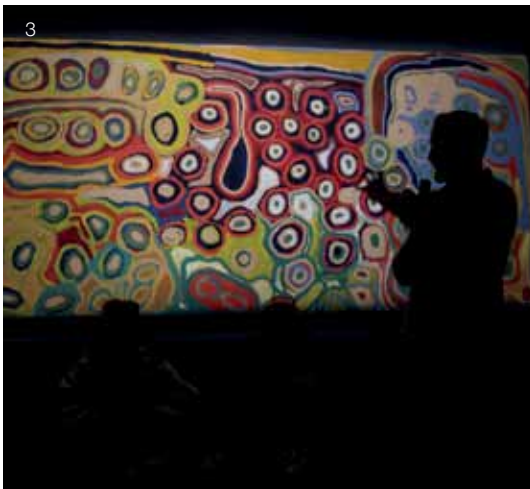
In November 2010, we opened one of our collection treatment and storage facilities to the public in our ‘Come into our shed’ open day. It was a great opportunity for people with many and diverse interests to experience the collection close-up. A particularly gratifying feature of the day was the opportunity for visitors to look ‘behind the scenes’ and to meet the staff who carry out the important collection management work in the Museum’s conservation and registration teams. Again, this open day pointed to an area we want to develop in the future — revealing the whole work of the Museum to our visitors.

In March 2011, the National Museum of Australia marked the tenth anniversary of the opening of the building on Acton Peninsula. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of the staff of the Museum over that decade (and, indeed, in the years before) and their hard work in bringing the Australian story to the nation. I would also like to acknowledge the continuing support shown by the Friends of the National Museum of Australia and the many volunteers who bring skills and enthusiasm to the work of the Museum.

At the very end of the 2010–11 financial year we commenced the rolling out of a new brand identity, which describes the Museum as a place ‘where our stories live’. These are challenging times for museums but we will be led into the future by single-minded attention to bringing the Australian story to life for as many people as we can possibly reach.



Andrew Sayers AM
August 2011



The year at a glance

August 2010: Museum repatriates. The Museum returns the remains of two Native Americans to Jemez Pueblo in New Mexico. The remains were first excavated between 1914 and 1929 by Alfred V Kidder, a prominent American archaeologist, and were unaccounted for until the Museum contacted the Jemez community.

October 2010: Aboriginal treasures at the Vatican. *Rituals of Life*, an exhibition curated by the Museum, is opened by the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Hon Julie Bishop MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, at the Vatican's Ethnological Museum. On display are 300 Aboriginal artworks sent from Catholic missions to the Vatican in the 1920s.

November 2010: 'Come into our shed'. The Museum opens its storage and conservation areas to the public, providing a rare opportunity for people to see objects that are not currently on display. Visitors observe how the Museum conserves the National Historical Collection and have the opportunity to talk to expert staff **(1)**.

December 2010: Indigenous cadet awarded Rhodes Scholarship. Rebecca Richards becomes Australia's first Indigenous Rhodes Scholar **(2)**.

Yiwarra Kuju's record-breaking visitation. The Museum's exhibition of paintings and stories that reclaim the Aboriginal history of the Canning Stock Route sets a new record. More than 120,000 people



visit the exhibition, exceeding the number of visitors to any previous temporary exhibition (3).

The Museum acquires racing treasure. The Junius Cup, one of Australia's earliest sporting trophies, is purchased by the Museum at auction (4).

The Museum launches braille map. A large print and tactile map of the building and exhibits and a brochure interpreting the Garden of Australian Dreams are launched to coincide with the International Day of People with Disability (5).

March 2011: Happy birthday. The Museum marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of the building on Acton Peninsula.

A tribute to Bob Edwards. The Museum holds a day of talks to honour Dr Bob Edwards AO, who played a crucial role in museums, Aboriginal art and culture, and the visual arts in Australia over seven decades of public life (6).

Not Just Ned opens on St Patrick's Day, 17 March.

This major exhibition, officially launched by the Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for the Arts, and the Ambassador of Ireland, Máirtín Ó Fainín, tells the epic history of the Irish in Australia. On display were objects sourced from around the world (7).

May 2011: Gold award. For the third consecutive year the Museum's annual report wins a gold award in the Australasian Reporting Awards.

June 2011: Landmarks: People and Places across Australia. The Museum opens a major new permanent gallery that displays more than 1500 objects and explores Australian history since European settlement (8).

The Museum celebrates record visitation. In the 12 months until the end of June, more than one and a half million people have visited the Museum and its travelling exhibitions, and attended its programs and events.

Performance summary

The National Museum of Australia is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Australian Government funds the Museum to achieve an agreed outcome through a series of performance indicators, as specified in the annual Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS). The Museum's outcome is to ensure:

Increased awareness and understanding of Australia's history and culture by managing the National Museum's collections and providing access through public programs and exhibitions.

(National Museum of Australia, Portfolio Budget Statements, 2010–11)

Financial summary

Total revenue for 2010–11 was \$48.317 million (anticipated \$47.144 million). Revenue from government was \$40.144 million and revenue from other sources was \$8.173 million (anticipated \$7.000 million).

The Museum's financial statements disclose an operating deficit of \$0.104 million compared with the 2009–10 operating deficit of \$2.246 million. The Museum also received an equity injection of \$1.887 million in 2010–11 to fund National Historical Collection acquisitions.

Revenue from non-government sources increased by \$0.676 million this year. This increase was the result of improved retail sales and interest earnings. Donated assets for 2010–11 were valued at \$0.872 million.

Total expenses decreased by \$1.168 million. The balance sheet discloses an increase in the Museum's net assets to \$19.657 million. In 2010–11 there was an increase in the asset revaluation reserve following an independent valuation of land and buildings (\$8.137 million) and heritage and cultural assets (\$9.737 million).

Cash as at 30 June 2011 totalled \$2.177 million (30 June 2010: \$2.246 million) and investments totalled \$40.927 million (30 June 2010: \$45.777 million).

Financial summary 2010–11, measured against PBS

Budgeted outcome: \$48.094m	Actual outcome 2010–11: \$48.421m
Departmental appropriations: \$40.144m	Actual appropriations: \$40.144m
Revenue from other sources: \$7.000m	Actual revenue from other sources: \$8.173m

Financial summary 2009–10, measured against PBS

Budgeted outcome: \$46.998m	Actual outcome 2009–10: \$49.590m
Departmental appropriations: \$40.182m	Actual appropriations: \$40.182m
Revenue from other sources: \$4.366m	Actual revenue from other sources: \$7.162m

Program summary

Quantitative and qualitative performance indicators were met or exceeded across the program that supports the Museum's PBS outcome:

Program 1.1 Collection management, research, exhibitions and programs

- **Collection management.** The target of 100 per cent for the proportion of acquisitions acquired in accordance with the Collection Development Framework was achieved. The estimate for the percentage (75 per cent) of the National Historical Collection being packed or stored at, or above, appropriate museum standards was achieved (75 per cent).
- **Research.** The National Museum of Australia's programs are informed by theory and practice across all of the professions, trades and disciplines relevant to the Museum's themes. Research predicated on the highest standards of scholarship characterises all of the Museum's outputs, ranging from advancing historical knowledge for external audiences through to development of internal governance systems. As a result, the Museum has developed a national and international reputation in museological practice.
- **Exhibitions and programs.** The target of 4,478,000 for the number of visitors to the Museum's collections, exhibitions and programs (including web) was exceeded with a total of 4,960,348 (1,580,574 visitors and 3,379,774 web visitors). Visitor satisfaction with the Museum (96 per cent) exceeded the target (85 per cent).

Achievement of strategic and business priorities

Strategic priority 1: Enhance exhibitions, programs and services

BUSINESS PRIORITIES	REPORT
1.1 Develop a new galleries and exhibitions plan, inclusive of the Hall, South Back of House and Kspace	Achieved: A 10-year Display Redevelopment Plan was submitted to Executive, setting out proposals for managing the redevelopment of permanent galleries and related public spaces. The five-stage plan encompasses: developing the Hall as a large object display zone; redevelopment of the Gallery of First Australians gallery entrance; redevelopment of Kspace; conversion of South Back of House to a Discovery Centre; and consolidation of Circa, Old New Land, Eternity and the Gallery of First Australians into one large exhibition space.
1.2 Finalise and install the Landmarks gallery and deliver the major exhibitions <i>Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route</i> and <i>Not Just Ned: A True History of the Irish in Australia</i>	Achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Landmarks gallery opened on 11 June 2011 and features more than 1500 objects. See p. 24 <i>Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route</i> opened on 30 July 2010 and attracted 122,334 visitors. It is the most popular exhibition ever presented by the Museum. See p. 26 <i>Not Just Ned: A True History of the Irish in Australia</i> opened on St Patrick's Day, 17 March 2011, and attracted 72,736 visitors. See p. 26
1.3 Deliver programs and educational services to support an engaging visitor experience	Achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36,653 people attended the Museum's broad range of public programs. See p. 29 83,293 school students from all over Australia visited the Museum this year. Program evaluation indicated that 99% of schools were satisfied with the programs, finding them 'engaging, child-centred and positive'. See pp. 36–39

Strategic priority 2: Develop the National Historical Collection, enhance collections management and improve collections storage

BUSINESS PRIORITIES	REPORT
2.1 Develop the collection through key acquisitions and targeted collecting projects	Achieved: A total of \$2.115 million was added in acquisitions to the National Historical Collection, and 119 significant collections were approved for accession by Council. Targeted collecting projects included objects from the Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi — a collaboration with the Queensland Museum. See pp. 19–20
2.2 Ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of Museum collections	Achieved: Museum staff processed 8359 objects this year (including 534 treatments). This included condition checks, pest management treatments, install and deinstall of exhibition objects and stabilisation of objects for storage. See p. 21–22
2.3 Implement a digital asset management solution and increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of collection information	Achieved: An automated digital asset management system (DAMS) was implemented, with completion expected in early 2011–12. See p. 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online access to the Museum's collection database is provided by the Museum's online public access catalogue, 'Search our collections'. This year 11,392 records were made available online, increasing the total number available to the public to 56,955 records. See pp. 22–23

Strategic priority 3: Strengthen research and scholarship capability

BUSINESS PRIORITIES	REPORT
3.1 Develop integrated research programs and activities connecting exhibitions, collections, audiences, history, museum studies and material culture	Achieved: The staff of Curatorial, Registration, Conservation and the Centre for Historical Research (CHR) undertook research broadly in accord with the Museum's objectives and programs, including the Material Histories program (in which researchers published articles and other work relating to the Museum's and other collections) and centre members' contributions to future exhibition projects. See pp. 41–42
3.2 Develop collaborations between the Centre for Historical Research and institutions in Australia and internationally	Achieved: CHR maintained links with international research centres, including the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in London and Curtin University's Australia, Asia and the Pacific Institute. Researchers also collaborated with the Australian National University. Centre staff embarked upon two new Australian Research Council partnerships, investigating songlines of the Western Desert and the history of Anzac Day. See p. 42

Strategic priority 4: Enhance national and international profile

BUSINESS PRIORITIES	REPORT
4.1 Deliver travelling exhibitions and associated outreach programs, in Australia and internationally	Achieved: In 2010–11, eight exhibitions travelled to a total of 25 different venues (with two venues hosting more than one of these exhibitions) across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. Of these, 13 were metropolitan venues and 12 were regional. International exhibitions were <i>Papunya Painting: Out of the Australian Desert</i> , which was held at Beijing's National Art Museum of China and attracted 120,000 visitors (10 June – 26 August 2010) and <i>League of Legends: 100 Years of Rugby League in Australia</i> , which travelled to Samoa (14 June – 30 July 2010). Travelling exhibitions attracted a record 736,811 visitors. See pp. 27–29
4.2 Redesign web delivery to promote content contribution and social media engagement with collections and the Museum's programs	Achieved: The website has been redesigned to be contemporary and engaging. Development of a new content management system was also completed in preparation for the release of a new website with enhanced functionality in late 2011. The Museum engaged with audiences via a range of social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and a consultative blog with the Forgotten Australians community. Online engagement through social media accounted for approximately 160,000 visits in 2010–11 compared with about 60,000 in 2009–10. See p. 41
4.3 Develop an Acton Peninsula Plan, inclusive of a Centre for National Museum of Australia Collections	Achieved: A team of consultants assisted with the development of the Acton Peninsula Plan. The preferred proposal allows for a greater proportion of the Museum's collections to be accessible to the public. Presentations outlining the Museum's vision for the site were made to the Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for the Arts; the National Capital Authority; and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. See p. 25
4.4 Create sponsorship and marketing vehicles for corporate and private interests	Achieved: <i>Not Just Ned: A True History of the Irish in Australia</i> attracted strong private sector sponsorship. The support for this exhibition increased the number of private sector sponsors in 2010–11 by 40% over the previous year. The Museum successfully applied for and received two international government grants to support <i>Not Just Ned</i> , in addition to receiving Visions of Australia and NCITO (National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program) funding for its 2010–11 touring program. See pp. 61, 116

Strategic priority 5: Develop staff, business practices and infrastructure

BUSINESS PRIORITIES	REPORT
5.1 Develop a Capital Plan for the Museum's asset replacement and planned gallery redevelopments	<p>Achieved: A summary of major building activity was completed and presented to the Museum's Council and Executive. The summary addressed and approved proposed and pending projects, providing estimated resource requirements.</p>
5.2 Commence the Administration Extension Project	<p>Achieved: The Administration Extension Project is well underway and will make available 650 square metres of space for collection display.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Museum's proposed 920-square-metre extension to the existing administration wing of its main building on Acton Peninsula was approved in the 2010–11 Federal Budget. • The National Capital Authority, which controls the land where the extension is to be constructed, provided works approval for the project. • A team of consultants were engaged, including Ashton Raggatt McDougall, the original architects of the main Museum building. • 50% of design and documentation has been completed. • The Public Works Committee has approved the project. • Public notification has been managed through letters to community groups and newspaper advertisements. See p. 25
5.3 Revise, update and implement the Museum's risk management framework	<p>Achieved: The Museum's risk management framework was reviewed this year, in conjunction with an external consultant, to ensure that it met the requirements of the International Standard on Risk Management, ISO31000:2009. See pp. 52–53</p>
5.4 Commence 2011–14 Enterprise Agreement negotiations	<p>Achieved: The National Museum of Australia Workplace Agreement 2008–11 has a nominal expiry date of 30 October 2011. The Museum has commenced preparations to negotiate a new workplace agreement for 2011–14 in the second half of 2011. See pp. 53–54</p>