

20 March 2024

Hon Tony Burke MP  
Minister for Employment and  
Workplace Relations and Minister for the Arts  
House of Representatives, Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
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Dear Minister,

**Re: The Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) – Statement of Intent for 2024**

Thank you for your letter of 18 January 2024 setting out your expectations of the Australian National Maritime Museum. On behalf of the Museum's Council, I am pleased to respond with this Statement of Intent. This Statement of Intent should be read in conjunction with the Museum's Strategic Framework and current Corporate Plan.

The Australian National Maritime Museum is one of the world's leading maritime museums, with a mission to connect Australians with our maritime stories, past, present and future. The Museum is uniquely placed to capture and communicate the spirit of our island nation. Our exhibitions, programs and educational activities are dedicated to telling the stories that explore who we are as a nation and as a culture, as shaped by the seas.

Our Strategic Framework 2023 to 2027 actively engages all five pillars shaping the National Cultural Policy, and we support the vision and objectives of the National Cultural Policy, recognising its important social, cultural and economic impact.

**Funding Commitment**

The Museum's Council greatly appreciates your support and the funding commitment to the Museum in the 2023-24 budget. This funding has allowed us to do urgent and critical works on our ageing infrastructure, including repairs to our buildings, pontoons, wharves and boardwalk, as well essential improvements in safety and compliance. The ongoing uplift, particularly the additional indexed \$5.1m from 2027 will go some way to alleviating the pressures that the Maritime Museum faces.

Despite the Government's sustainability funding, the Museum faces significant challenges in the forward years, with an ageing fleet and building, within a precinct of increasingly contemporary developments such as the new Harbourside and Fish Market providing modern facilities around us. The challenges of maintaining our fleet, collection and ageing building mean we will struggle to deliver to the full potential of the site and collection, and this will be further compounded by the impact of pay fragmentation and APS wide salary increases.

Own source revenue has always been a strength for the ANMM and we are focusing on growing this further. In the 2022/23 FY the Museum's own-source revenue was \$16M and is forecast to be \$15.1M for 2023/24. We will maximise our opportunities for philanthropy by focusing on high impact capital projects, including the updating of elements of our 30-year-old galleries that are most likely to draw support from third parties. The targeted galleries include Migration, Navy and Australia's oldest surviving ship – early 1800's *Barangaroo Boat*. We continue to be heavily reliant on self-generated revenue to meet some of your expectations.

### **Leadership and collaboration**

We will maintain our leadership role within our sector, supporting and promoting the pillars of *Revive* through a range of experiences. Examples include hosting the International Congress of Maritime Museums in Australia in 2026, sharing our First Nations experience locally and internationally through exhibitions and international representations and further developing our national and international touring exhibition programs. We will continue to provide leadership and support to our regional colleagues through the Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme (MMAPSS).

### **Information management**

The Museum is committed to establishing and maintaining information management practices that meet its business needs and accountability requirements. The last year has been one of foundational rebuild for ANMM, with a focus on core systems and processes. We are investing substantially in our ICT infrastructure and systems, ensuring that we have the building blocks in place for the Museum to respond to our current and evolving business needs. New front of house, volunteer management and customer relationship management systems will be refined following implementation in 2024, our new finance system will be operational in the second half of 2024. TMS, our core collection management program has recently been upgraded, enhancing online public access to our collection. We have made substantial progress in addressing the issues raised in the ANAO report, and we are transferring archival records to the National Archives of Australia and upgrading our corporate document management system, ensuring compliance with the *Archives Act 1983*.

### **First Nations first**

First Nations narratives and perspective are integrated into everything we do. We have made a significant investment, building our team of three curators who provide input to the whole museum. We will continue to collaborate with and commission First Nations artists for our exhibitions, programs and digital content. A key priority is collecting important sea stories as key elders age, ensuring they are recorded for future generations.

### **Disability access**

The Museum is committed to being an inclusive museum that is accessible to all, within the physical constraints of the building. The outcomes of an accessibility review are being incorporated into our new Disability Inclusion Action Plan which will be active from 1 July 2024. Achieving a fully inclusive and accessible experience is limited by the age and design of our building, which has uneven flooring, few disabled toilets, and limited access to fleet and some exhibitions. We are exploring projects that allow us to

resolve these challenges and improve accessibility, which we will bring to government in the coming years. In the interim, we will create 360° digital capture immersive experiences of our vessels, providing some online self-guided tours, to ensure vessels are accessible to all, including audio experiences for the visually impaired.

### **Renewal of permanent galleries**

We are intending to embark on an ambitious project to re-imagine our aged and outdated permanent galleries around the theme of the *journeys that shaped the nation* – from deep time and geomorphic movements to the interaction of First Nation communities with the littoral environment, colonial society, the role of navy and merchant trade, post-war immigration and contemporary beach culture. The Journeys project will be adaptable, taking in several important projects, starting with our First Nation's gallery, *Deep Time*, the story of our multicultural roots and the Vietnamese migrant boat, *Tu Do*: Navy and our place in the Asia Pacific; and the diverse narratives and stories of our island nation.

### **Putting the visitor at the heart of the experience**

The Australian National Maritime Museum is the keeper of our stories as an island nation. We add knowledge, build cohesion and advance sustainability by connecting all our visitors, wherever they are on their journey, with the unique role our waterways and oceans play in our identity. We are a trusted centre of expertise, and this trusted position underpins our approach to access and engagement.

The key planned activities, as they relate to the Statement of Expectations are attached and will be incorporated within our Corporate Plan 2024-2027. Our capacity to deliver on all areas outlined in your Statement of Expectation is restrained by our current resource level. We will continue to be guided by the pillars and principles of *Revive* in all our activities. We will work cooperatively with the Department, other National Cultural Institutions and across the sector to deliver the actions outlined in *Revive* and to achieve the expectations you have set out.

Yours sincerely,



**John Mullen**

Chair, on behalf of the ANMM Council

## **ANMM activities in support of the Minister's Statement of Expectations 2024**

Our planned activities supporting the strategic priorities outlined in the Statement of Expectations include:

### **Provide strong leadership and foster collaboration within national and international arts and cultural sectors to promote the five pillars of *Revive*.**

Strong cooperative relationships and collaborations underpin the work of ANMM. We continue to provide leadership and foster collaboration within the museum sector to promote the five pillars of *Revive* by:

- Consolidating our position as a world leading Maritime Museum by hosting the 2026 International Congress of Maritime Museums.
- Continuing our dynamic exhibition touring program to museums and galleries around Australia e.g. *Mariw Minaral (Spiritual Patterns)*, *Sea Monsters*, *Bidhonja: restoring our oyster reefs*.
- Touring our exhibitions internationally, showcasing the Museum globally:
  - *Brickwrecks: Sunken ships in Lego bricks* – developed in collaboration with the Western Australian Museum is now traveling internationally including the Vasa Museum in Sweden, Maritime Museum of Denmark and potentially USA venues.
  - The *Ocean Photographer of the Year* exhibition was a success onsite over the summer and is being developed to travel in collaboration with Oceanographic Magazine.
- Continue leading work on Australia's maritime heritage through our ongoing support for regional and community museums and maritime heritage with our Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme (MMA PSS), leadership of the Australian Maritime Museums Council and of the Australian Register of Historic Vessels.
- Continue to collaborate through national and international conferences and research partnerships.

### **Ensure policies and procedures are in place to promote diversity, sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion.**

- We are committed to ensuring all policies and plans are up to date and relevant, including diversity and inclusion policies and plans.
- Our Sustainability Plan is identified in the Museum's Corporate Plan 2023-2026 to be finalised within the 2024-25 financial year.
- Our Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2027 will be launched in the second half of 2024, ideally at the Stretch stage.
- Our Boardwalk improvement project ensures safety and compliance requirements are met and will provide a safe, complaint harbourside space with improved amenities and access for emergency vehicles.

### **Ensure a current Disability Action Plan is in place to support people with disability to participate fully in Australia's cultural and creative life.**

Following a full audit of access by Accessible Arts NSW, a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2024/27) is in final stages of development, and will be launched early in the new financial year.

**Continue to foster appreciation and understanding of First Nations art, culture and knowledge systems, and contribute to a professional, viable and ethical First Nations arts sector in line with the principle that First Nations arts and culture are First Nations led.**

First Nations narratives underpin our work, and we ensure First Nations perspectives are integrated into everything we do.

- Continuing our active and ongoing program supporting the work of First Nations artists connected with the sea. We showcase works through multiple platforms, programs and activities including Nawi building workshops, travelling exhibitions (*Mariw Minaral* showcasing the work of Alick Tipoti), onsite exhibitions (our Badu gallery featuring the work of Yolŋju sculptor Guykuda Munungurr) and immersive digital experiences (the *Shaped by Sea* video installation Dhanjaṅ Dhukarr commissioned from the Mulka Project).
- Continue working with First Nations artists, such as our consultation and video documentation with Djambawa Marrawilli.
- Continue building on our online 'pillar' *Garrigarrang Garaguru – Saltwater Cloud* to showcase First Nations storytelling. The digital experience showcases engagement projects with more than 20 language regions that are represented across the Museum's exhibition spaces and places artists and creators at the centre of the experience.
- Continue our popular *Saltwater Stories* Kids Deck holiday program including programs highlighting First Nations voices and includes weaving, storytelling and our Sea Country activity trail.

**Support and promote artists and ensure they are remunerated appropriately.**

- Our site activation strategy includes performances and events in collaboration with partners such as Sydney Festival e.g. New Beginnings Festival and the *Il Tabarro* opera, providing opportunities to a broad range of artists and performers.
- The Museum will commission artistic works that help us to shape conversations about Australia and stimulate our visitors wherever they are, such as *Octopus Garden*, an immersive space, developed with Junior Major and featuring artwork by InkHunter, it gives visitors of all ages and abilities the chance to experience the extraordinary behaviours of one of the ocean's most enigmatic and intelligent creatures.
- We will ensure artists are remunerated appropriately.

**Provide greater opportunities for all Australians to access arts and culture, including through a diverse range of exhibitions, programs, events, and digital offerings.**

We will continue to engage all our visitors in a dialogue about our relationship with oceans and waterways wherever they visit us – at the museum, online or at one of our travelling exhibitions.

- We are planning a refresh of our gallery spaces and hope to introduce exciting opportunities that will allow us to tell the rich and diverse stories of our nation shaped by sea. These include:
  - Introducing the Vietnamese refugee boat *Tu Do* as the centre piece to tell the stories of migration. The *Tu Do* arrived in Darwin on 21 November 1977 with 31 Vietnamese refugees crowded on board. It became part of the National Maritime Collection in 1990 and has recently undergone extensive conservation treatment to ensure its preservation.

- Display the *Barangaroo Boat*. Discovered during Sydney Metro's excavation of Barangaroo Station, it reveals rare information regarding shipbuilding and presents a unique and compelling opportunity for telling the story of Sydney Harbour's First Nations, colonial and future contexts.
- Continue to host our National Monument to Migration unveiling ceremonies. Our National Monument to Migration celebrates diversity and inclusion and now has close to 34,000 names honouring those who migrated to Australia.
- Continue creating 360° digital capture immersive experiences of our vessels and exhibitions, providing digital self-guided tours, to ensure vessels are accessible to all Australians, wherever they are located.
- Increase access to our storytelling and subject matter expertise through the implementation of our newly designed website.

### **Engage in activities to enrich arts and cultural education at all levels.**

We are nationally recognised for our original and unique learning programs and we will continue to grow our reach and impact in education. We deliver online and onsite curriculum aligned schools programs, to educate and inspire the next generation, and a variety of educational experiences for life-long learners and all ages, including:

- Continuing to develop our online learning initiatives, ensuring our schools program connects with students across all Australia, such as our online resource for year 4 history students on the 1606 arrival of the *Duyfken* from First Nations and Dutch perspectives developed in partnership with Deadly Ed.
- Harnessing the potential of digital storytelling and education, ensuring accessible and rich experiences for our audience wherever they are located. This includes our online educational games and our website pillars that provide an in-depth immersion on focused themes, such as *Deep Dive* for maritime archaeology research.
- We will continue our onsite learning activations such as tours of the Seabin's Ocean Health Lab, underwater drone sessions and the Cabinet of Curiosities – a hands-on experience using maritime artefacts. Our ocean science and sustainability education programs include *Underwater Microbeasts* and *Solutions to Ocean Pollution* for primary school students to explore ocean ecosystems and pollution.