

PUBLICATION DETAILS: Council of Australasian Museum Directors

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TOPIC 3: Population, sustainability, climate change and water

Australia's major social and natural history museums and science centres are knowledge powerhouses providing the essential research data and community nexus to address Australia's most pressing social and scientific issues. By 2020, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) believes museums will be the most trusted forum within which Australia's search for solutions to the challenge of environmental sustainability will be informed, explored, understood and shared. They will be universally valued for their ability to bridge the gaps between:

- research disciplines and knowledge strands;
- new discoveries and traditional knowledge;
- science and the lay community;
- society's different generations; and between
- Australia, the Pacific region and the world.

The major museums encompass collections that provide the most basic and valuable research infrastructure for Australia and the region. Natural history museum collections are records through time and space of the past and important predictive tools for the future. They are essential research tools in identifying solutions to the world's global problems.

Social history collections build community understanding of past exploitation of the environment and identify critical social mechanisms for change. As multi-disciplinary institutions, museums are unique sites engaging communities in solutions. Museum-supported 'citizen scientists' work alongside museum scientists to map biodiversity and climate change.

Through collections, research data, exhibitions, education programs and community collaborations museums provide access to trusted information and empower users to think critically, to canvass the 'big' issues facing society, and to collaborate in innovative solutions.

To fulfil the 2020 vision museums need:

- inclusion in Government's education and research frameworks for the future;
- access to an effective research and innovation infrastructure system;
- resources to unlock collection data for research; and
- support to create relevant and trusted Australian digital content to inform community debate online and project Australia to the world.

TOPIC 6: Strengthening communities and supporting working families

Museums Building Social Capital

Australia's major history and science museums are custodians of the nation's memory and active sites for the construction of national identity. They are significant community-owned resources operating for the public good. By 2020, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) sees museums universally valued for their ability to build links between:

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- new understandings and traditional knowledge;
- Australia's diverse communities;
- the different generations;
- research disciplines and knowledge strands; and between
- Australia, the Pacific region and the world.

Museums will be a significant trusted forum within which Australians forge social cohesion and national identity.

Museums are already nodes of citizen and community interchange providing safe forums for discussion of significant cultural and political issues. They are places where communities explore the past, understand the present and seek a collaborative future. By 2020 uptake of the new social media will further empower individuals and communities to exchange understandings and explore identity.

To fulfil its 2020 vision museums need:

- inclusion in Government's community, education and research frameworks for the future;
- access to an effective research and innovation infrastructure system;
- resources to unlock collections for research and community access;
- support to create relevant Australian digital content to inform community debate online and project Australia to the world; and
- resources to exploit the potential of Web 2 and the new social media.

TOPIC 7: Options for the future of Indigenous Australia

Australia's major museums are custodians of unique cultural collections and associated knowledge. In partnership with Indigenous communities, they preserve traditional knowledge, record living cultures and affirm the contribution of indigenous communities to Australian society. Museums have been at the forefront of the drive to Reconciliation.

By 2020, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) sees museums promoting reconciliation by working more effectively with Indigenous people to:

- promote diverse Indigenous cultures within Australia and the world ;

- facilitate access to collection material and information particularly for remote and regional communities; and
- empower Indigenous communities to tell their own stories in their own ways.

To fulfil its 2020 vision museums seek:

- inclusion in Government frameworks for Indigenous Australia;
- resources to unlock collections for community access;
- support to create collaborative digital content to inform the wider community and project Australia to the world;
- resources to exploit the potential of Web 2 and the new social media particularly for remote and regional communities; and
- access to an effective research and innovation infrastructure system which values traditional knowledge and facilitates multi-disciplinary responses to major research questions.

TOPIC 8: Towards a creative Australia: the future of the arts, film and design

Australia's museums embody our national identity, projecting the unique character of Australian environment and culture to the world. They are storehouses of cultural memory and powerhouses of research, design and innovation.

Through collections, exhibitions, research and community partnerships, museums encourage users to think creatively, to explore ideas and search for innovative solutions, to canvass the 'big' issues facing society and to create new objects, designs, knowledge and processes.

Museum programs extend beyond the 'arts' into the environment, heritage and science. Their creative output is multi-disciplinary and crosses traditional portfolios. This provides unique advantages in generating creative solutions to contemporary global issues but can lead to marginalisation in current Government policy frameworks.

By 2020, the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) believes that museums will:

- be essential partners in Government's creative and innovation agenda;
- provide comprehensive on-line access to collections and research;
- produce trusted Australian on-line content; and
- facilitate user generated knowledge through innovative digital tools.

To fulfil its 2020 vision museums seek:

- access to an effective research and innovation infrastructure system;
- resources to unlock collection data for research;
- support to create relevant Australian digital content to inform community debate online and project Australia to the world; and
- the creation of a Federal funding body to support museums at all levels across Australia or expansion of the brief of an existing Federal arts body to include museums of science and history.