

C A M D

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIAN
MUSEUM DIRECTORS

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15 November 2007

MEDIA RELEASE

Museums Overlooked in Election Policies

Everyone agrees that museums are important. But they have been neglected in the election policies of the major parties in the lead up to this election.

The Council of Australasian Museum Directors today released the results of their annual survey of major museums.

Museums remain amongst the most popular of all cultural and tourism sites, with close to 12.5 million visits in this year alone to museums in Australia and New Zealand.

The number of virtual visitors has risen even more spectacularly. A staggering 51 million virtual visitors logged on to museum websites during the year - an increase of 34 per cent in just 12 months.

The pressure is really on museums to meet this expanding demand for information, both from visitors and increasingly sophisticated on-line consumers but, said CAMD Chair Margaret Anderson, 'many museums are struggling to find the resources to digitize their collections. Museum budgets have not kept pace with greater public use, particularly in areas like the new technologies.'

As Australians search for answers to the urgent national and global questions of the day – reconciliation, national identity, biodiversity, climate change, water – they turn increasingly to these collections to benchmark the present and suggest directions for the future.

AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
MARITIME MUSEUM

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
CANTERBURY MUSEUM

HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST OF NSW

HISTORY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS
AND SCIENCES (POWERHOUSE)

MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND
TE PAPA TONGAREWA

MUSEUM VICTORIA

MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

OTAGO MUSEUM AND
DISCOVERY WORLD

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM
AND ART GALLERY

QUEENSLAND MUSEUM

SCITECH DISCOVERY CENTRE, PERTH

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

TASMANIAN MUSEUM
AND ART GALLERY

THE SOVEREIGN HILL
MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

In 2006-07, these and many other issues were explored through 200 new exhibitions, education programs for over 1.45 million students, close to 480 scholarly publications and over 180 programs and exhibitions highlighting issues of cultural diversity.

Margaret Anderson said 'Museums enjoy great public trust. As we move to come to terms with the great social and scientific issues of our time museums will be increasingly crucial to research programs and to public education and debate.'

Does public policy reflect the pivotal role museums can play? Margaret Anderson believes there is room for improvement. 'Museums have fallen behind the arts in national cultural policy in the past decade. There is a need for new national policy directions to support museums and enable them to meet the demands of the future.'

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Attachment:

'CAMD Annual Survey 2006-07 Highlights' (2pp)