

## ***Agenda item 16 Attachment TMAG***

### **CAMD MEMBER'S REPORT to ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**PERIOD:** 2014/15

**NAME OF INSTITUTION:** **Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery**

**NAME OF DIRECTOR:** Janet Carding

#### **1. ACCESS & VISITATION**

In the 2014-15 financial year TMAG sites attracted 368 782 visitors, or 1097 per day with 328 days open. As expected there was a decrease compared to the previous year, but the numbers were still well ahead of those prior to the redevelopment. TMAG's city site received 359 825 visitors, this included 151 127 interstate visitors and 53 974 overseas visitors. Family Days and Programs received 45 582 visitors.

Major exhibitions included: The suspense is Awful: Tasmania and the Great War, Ashes to Ashes and Bush Blitz in Focus: Discovering New Species in Tasmania. Ashes to Ashes was an exhibition about death held as a Dark MOFO public program and Bush Blitz in Focus was a photographic exhibition following on from TMAG's participation in the Bush Blitz program.

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#### **2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

TMAG continues to work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community with the help and support of TMAG's Tasmanian Aboriginal Advisory Council. Major progress has been made toward a significant show to appear in the future titled kanalaritja: An Unbroken String. This exhibition will display a variety of beautiful, delicate and rare strings of shells evidencing the stringing skills of Tasmanian Aboriginal Ancestor in the 1800's. kanalaritja will tour nationally through a Visions grant.

Volunteers continued to make an enormous contribution across TMAG during 2014-15, donating nearly 11 000 hours across the museum with collections and research activities as well as public programs. This was the equivalent of 5.68 staff and a shadow wage of \$513 394. Throughout the year volunteers provided assistance toward a number of exhibitions and projects including research for The Suspense is Awful: Tasmania and the Great War exhibition.

TMAG expanded its education programming to participate in NAIDOC Week in July 2014. Throughout the week 14 school holiday program were hold including kelp

creations, pulawini (ochre), working with fibre and identifying the protecting Aboriginal heritage.

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### **3. MANAGEMENT & FUNDING**

Savings have been made through a reduction in opening hours from 7 days per week to six days per week and closing an hour earlier each day (effective from 3 November 2014). TMAG is already working with austerity measures, within a broader State Government vacancy control process and has been undertaking a series of audits.

Sponsorship has been received for the upcoming exhibition, Pattern Bandits consisting of \$50 000 from TasNetworks and \$25 000 from Nystar.

Significant acquisitions included 12 medals of Sir John Gellibrand, the founder of Legacy, presented by Hobart Legacy, 3 783 vertebrate and invertebrate specimens presented by staff and 4520 specimens presented by external collectors. Individuals and institutions donated a total of 1 405 specimens to the Herbarium and a further 1 755 specimens were collected and lodged by staff.

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### **4. EDUCATION & RESEARCH**

TMAG's Tasmanian Herbarium continued to build on its role as the fundamental source of information on Tasmania's native and introduced flora. Development of the collection, now numbering in excess of 260 000 specimens, progressed steadily, with further enhancements to the quality and accuracy of specimen data and improved electronic access.

Six hundred and seventy five high resolution images of the Tasmanian Herbarium's vascular plant type specimens are now available on the internet on the Global Plants database. The database, hosted by JSTOR (a digital archive), contains more than 2.2 million images and can be accessed by researchers world-wide. The potential to view the images in detailed close-up will greatly facilitate research on the Australian flora, and will enable rapid access to valuable specimens that would otherwise require either a loan or travel by the researcher

Herbarium and Zoology scientists participated in the 2015 Tasmanian Bush Blitz field study undertaken in the Tarkine area as part of the national Bush Blitz program. As a direct result of this and other important collections based research, early 15 million Zoology and Herbarium records were downloaded from 66 631 visits to the online Atlas of Living Australia.

Total onsite student visits during the 2014-15 financial year were 16 878 and total onsite educational visits, inclusive of teachers was 21 097.

The TMAG has secured three year funding to employ a Tasmanian Aboriginal Learning Facilitator. This unique position has come about due to TMAG's standing as one of the leading learning institutions for Aboriginal culture in the state, particularly in the school sector. This year has also seen the launch of the Black Box: Tasmanian Aboriginal Cultural Loan resource. This loan box, with content selected by a Tasmanian Aboriginal community member, is linked with live virtual tours of the gallery and ensures the whole state has access to important cultural material and stories.

TMAG staff produced 21 research publication and articles, including TMAG journal Kanunnah.

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## 5. MAJOR CHALLENGES AHEAD

I arrived at TMAG in early April seven months ago. Since then I have been working with the trustees and leading the staff through an inclusive strategic planning process, and we are scheduled to deliver the new Plan to the Trustees and Arts Minister by the end of the year. Key areas are the digital transformation of collection use, the contribution by TMAG to the burgeoning Tasmanian tourist economy, and the role TMAG can play in initiatives to increase literacy, high school graduation rates, and community connections.

At the same time a review of the governance for TMAG and several other parts of the cultural portfolio are underway, following a challenging report from the Tasmanian Audit Office in March, which flagged that the roles and responsibilities between the Trustees and the Department of State Growth (DSG) were unclear. The Arts Minister responded by announcing the review, and I have worked with the Trustees to put together a comprehensive submission. At this point there is no firm news but we understand the Minister is considering changes to the legislation, which is old (1950), and silent on many key issues.

In the short-term I have been working with colleagues at the DSG to stabilise and make effective a relationship that I think has sometimes been difficult, in the changed climate after the election of a new Liberal Government in 2014 and the subsequent merger between the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, and the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources to form DSG.

To give one example, financial reporting for TMAG is drawn from DSG, but as two systems were merged, no budget figures could be loaded into the system last year, and the trustees and team could only review reports of actuals when I arrived. This

year the aim is to finalise an appropriate reporting system, and go on to deliver a balanced budget, which will be very challenging. To hold expenditure down the museum and gallery will run with several vacancies, but this will reduce capacity in key areas such as Art, and Indigenous Cultures.

I am in active discussion with the DSG, Minister and Treasury about long-term financial sustainability and funding the initiatives and operational support that will underpin the strategic plan. A key plank will be capital investment in collections management and access systems. The key cultural organisations across the State are all looking to upgrade, and so there is a great opportunity to strategically align the procurement and migration, so that we can together achieve a complete transformation in collections and cultural heritage for Tasmania.

A strategic asset management plan is also in preparation, to understand the capital repairs and maintenance requirements of the whole estate, ranging from the Commissariat, the oldest heritage building in continuous use in Australia, to the State Herbarium. Once this is complete we will review the place of the further stages of the TMAG masterplan in the context of the new Strategic Plan.

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