

**Meeting with the Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP,
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts**

Time: 3.00 pm, Tuesday 11 April 2006

Venue: Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices
Level 8/70 Philip Street Sydney

CAMD attendees: Dr Kevin Fewster, Chair, CAMD and Director, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
Dr Meredith Foley, Executive Officer, CAMD
The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PROPOSED AGENDA

- 1. Overview of the Role and Activities of the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD)**
- 2. Visions of Australia Program**
- 3. Collections Council of Australia and Collections Australia Network**
- 4. Tax deductibility of museum membership**
- 5. Invitation to Minister to meet with CAMD members during their Annual General Meeting 2006**

Brief papers on each item are attached.

For further information please contact Dr Meredith Foley on (02) 9967-3237 or by email on mfolwil@bigpond.net.au.

1. Overview of the Role and Activities of the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD)

CAMD has been active since the late 1940s and was formally constituted by 1967. Its members are the directors of 17 major national, state and regional museums in Australia and have included, since 2005, the directors of the 4 major museums in New Zealand.

Dr Fewster will provide an overview for the Minister of the current role, coverage and activities of CAMD. CAMD recently appointed a part-time Executive Officer to assist it, in particular, to support the work of the Collections Council of Australia (CCA).

A list of members of CAMD is attached for the Minister's information.

2. Visions of Australia Funding

CAMD congratulates the Minister and the Visions Board for the opportunity provided at the recent Visions of Australia Forum for review and reflection on the Visions touring exhibition program.

The Forum was highly productive in that it generated an exchange of practical information between the Board, DCITA staff and prospective applicants about developing successful applications with good outcomes for a range of institutions. CAMD is fortunate that its members Mr Bill Bleathman and Ms Mary-Louise Williams are the Chair and Deputy Chair respectively of the Visions Board. They will be sharing much of the information acquired at the Forum with CAMD members at an upcoming meeting.

At the Forum, Dr Fewster made a presentation based on feedback received from CAMD members (a copy of Dr Fewster's paper is attached for your information). CAMD's membership encompasses heads of institutions that receive federal, state and local government as well as private funding. The members provided a range of responses when asked about their level of involvement in, and perceived ability to utilise, the Visions program.

It would appear that applications from some CAMD members have fallen away over the last few years. The major reasons identified by members included the:

- level of resources required to develop museum exhibitions capable of being toured to remote and regional areas;
- the high costs and difficult logistics associated with touring three dimensional objects as opposed to two dimensional art works;
- the lack of capacity in regional and remote museums to accommodate, support or generate touring museum exhibitions;
- the timing of funding announcements; and
- the disjuncture between State museum mandates and the Vision requirement for interstate touring.

In light of the points made by members, Dr Fewster would like the opportunity to discuss a proposal to further enhance the effectiveness of the Visions Program.

The mandate for State institutions is, of course, focussed within the boundaries of each State. The national institutions, on the other hand, have a clear mandate to tour their collections around Australia. In times of financial stringency there is an increasing pressure on State institutions to focus attention on intrastate touring. As Visions can only cover part of the costs of an exhibition tour, State museums can be left to incur significant costs to develop or adapt an exhibition for interstate touring purposes.

Dr Fewster would like to raise the possibility of addressing this difficulty by extending the Visions program to create a separate funding pool for federal institutions while preserving the current pool for state and regional institutions alone.

This approach would facilitate further the national touring programs of the national institutions, few of which have dedicated national touring budgets, and, at same time, would allow other institutions to apply for larger grants which could be utilised to purpose-build interstate touring exhibitions and provide much-needed support to extend regional capacity to participate in these tours.

The views of the Minister on this proposal for the expansion of the Visions Program would be appreciated.

3. Collections Council of Australia and Collections Australia Network (CAN)

Dr Fewster would welcome the opportunity to discuss the future of the Collections Australia Network (CAN) with the Minister. The CAN website provides an important public gateway to and between collecting institutions in Australia. In particular, it provides much needed support to small to medium and regional collecting institutions in Australia.

Currently, the Cultural Minister's Council is responsible for the overall vision and aims of the CAN website and services and for the provision of policy direction while the Department of Communications, Information and Technology (DCITA) is responsible for funding administration. DCITA oversees funds provided to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney that has been contracted as the hosting agency for the project.

Over the past 12 months, discussions promoted by CAMD have been underway between CAN, the Collections Council of Australia (CCA) and DCITA about the possible transfer of responsibility and funding for the CAN website project to CCA.

CAMD believes that this transfer would contribute to CCA's ability to:

- build a profile with a broad cross-section of the collecting sector;
- communicate with the Australian collections sector and maximise sector engagement;
- access a repository of expert advice in relation to web-based delivery services;

- provide valuable services, particularly to small to medium and regional collecting institutions across the sector;
- contribute to the enhancement of access to collections and standards in collection management;
- promote collaboration between libraries, archives, museums and galleries; and
- explore alternative funding for support of CCA activities.

It should be noted that new interest is being shown in CAN by the libraries and archives domain and that New Zealand has also indicated its interest in being involved. Dr Fewster would like to discuss the potential for the transfer to go forward but is concerned that there be sufficient, ongoing funding to allow CAN to maximise fully its potential across the collection sector. While the Powerhouse is willing to continue to host the website, without appropriate funding there may be a need to reduce some outreach programs.

4. Tax Deductibility of Museum Membership

CAMD members regularly discuss the potential for museums in Australia to attain a higher level of self-sufficiency in relation to funding.

It has been noted that, in the USA, the basis for funding contributions to museums or other cultural organisation is mass membership. This support conduit has gained in popularity because membership of museums in the USA is wholly or partially tax deductible.

The system works according to a formula that subtracts some of the value to members of particular services that are supplied directly to members (eg magazines or free entrance). Museum members are able to declare the amount remaining after the application of the formula as a tax deduction.

For example, the Children's Museum of Atlanta offers tax deductions at its higher levels of membership: a US\$250 membership provides a wide range of services plus a US\$100 tax deduction. Its US\$500 membership allows for a tax deduction of US\$200. At Mystic Seaport in New England individual and family memberships, which provide free access and a host of other services, and which range from US\$35 to US\$75 are fully tax deductible while partial deductions are allowed for higher level memberships.

Dr Fewster would like to explore the potential for this approach to museum fundraising with the Minister.

5. Invitation to Minister to meet with CAMD members during its Annual General Meeting in 2006

CAMD members will hold their Annual General Meeting this year at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra from September 7 –8. CAMD members would be honoured if the Minister could join them for either lunch, dinner or drinks during this time. Alternatively, the Minister may wish to host a reception at Parliament House. The Minister's availability and preferences can be discussed at the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Ms Margaret Anderson
Director
HISTORY TRUST OF SA

Dr Seddon Bennington
Director,
MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA
TONGAREWA

Mr Bill Bleathman
Director
TASMANIAN MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Mr Alan Brien
Chief Executive Officer
SCITECH DISCOVERY CENTRE

Dr Dawn Casey
Executive Director
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Professor Graham Durant
Director
NATIONAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
CENTRE

Dr Kevin Fewster AM
Chairperson, CAMD
Director, Powerhouse Museum

Dr Tim Flannery
Director
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Dr Ian Galloway
Director
QUEENSLAND MUSEUM

Major General Steve Gower AO
Director
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Dr J Patrick Greene OBE
CEO
MUSEUM VICTORIA

Mr Frank Howarth
Director
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Mr Jeremy Johnson
Hon Treasurer, CAMD
Chief Executive Officer,
SOVEREIGN HILL

Ms Anna Malgorzewicz
Director,
MUSEUM & ART GALLERY OF THE
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr Craddock Morton
Director
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Mr Shimrath Paul
Director
OTAGO MUSEUM AND DISCOVERY
WORLD

Mr Chris Tassell AM
Director
QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM & ART
GALLERY

Mr Peter Watts
Director
HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST OF NSW

Ms Mary-Louise Williams
Director
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME
MUSEUM

Dr Rodney Wilson
Director
AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Mr Anthony Wright
Director
CANTERBURY MUSEUM