

200 TREASURES OF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM EXHIBITION TO INCLUDE 100 OBJECTS AND 100 AUSTRALIANS WHO'VE SHAPED THE NATION

Restoration of the AM's Historic Long Gallery a 'gift to the nation' for Westpac's 200th and Australian Museum's 190th Anniversaries in 2017

Sydney, Wednesday 12 October 2016: 100 people who have helped shape Australia along with 100 significant objects from the Australian Museum's (AM) extraordinary collection, form the core of a new permanent AM exhibition planned to open in 2017.

200 Treasures of the Australian Museum will be housed in the restored Westpac Long Gallery which will reopen in October 2017 as part of the AM's 190th and Westpac's 200th anniversaries providing a 'gift to the nation' celebrating Australia's culture and people.

The exhibition and gallery restoration – jointly funded by Westpac, the NSW Government and the AM's own philanthropic efforts – was first announced in December 2015 as featuring the most valuable specimens and artefacts from the AM's collection.

Today, the AM has added to these details, announcing that 100 of the 'treasures' will be people – legendary Australians, whose unique achievements will be highlighted throughout the multi-level exhibition.

"The captivating stories of the most significant treasures from the AM's collection of over 18 million objects will be showcased, alongside the stories of the people who have helped shape the nation," **Kim McKay AO**, Director and CEO of the Australian Museum said.

"The 100 Australian legends are currently being selected by a committee with wide ranging experience and interests, and there will also be the opportunity for the public to nominate an outstanding Australian for inclusion in the list during 2017," she said.

Although the inventory of legends is still to be finalised, some of the outstanding Australians will include the likes of internationally celebrated Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba, the greatest cricketer of all time Sir Donald Bradman, indigenous sportswoman and Olympic champion Cathy Freeman and Australia's first truly international film star, Errol Flynn.

Among the 100 treasured objects on display will be a rare and beautiful Kalani'opu'u cape collected by Captain Cook on his third and final voyage and an opalised pilosaur specimen from the Early Cretaceous period, fondly known as 'Eric'.

The final list of treasures – both people and objects – will be revealed when the exhibition opens in October 2017.

"The historic Long Gallery in its current form will close on 10 October for 12 months of heritage restoration and exhibition installation, reopening as the Westpac Long Gallery," McKay said.

Originally built between 1845-1850, with a third level added in 1890, the Long Gallery will experience an 'extreme makeover' showcasing its classical architecture while incorporating the latest interactive technologies in the new exhibition.

The skeletons which have been displayed on the ground floor of the Long Gallery will be rehomed throughout the AM, including in the popular Search & Discover interactive learning space and in the *Wild Planet* gallery.

The Westpac Long Gallery featuring *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum* will open in mid-October 2017 as a highlight of the AM's 190th anniversary celebrations.

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About the Australian Museum (AM)

The AM, founded in 1827 is the nation's first museum, and is an internationally recognised natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. As custodian of more than 18 million objects, the AM is uniquely positioned to provide a greater understanding of the region through its scientific research, exhibitions and public and education programs. Through the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM also has a leading role in conserving Australia's biodiversity through understanding the environmental impacts of climate change, potential biosecurity threats and invasive species.

About Westpac

Westpac has a long and proud history of supporting Australians. As the nation's first and oldest bank, the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) was founded in 1817 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie to provide a stable and reliable economic system in response to the growth and development of the colony. Renamed Westpac Banking Corporation in 1982, the Bank expanded. As of June 2015 Westpac has five key customer facing divisions serving around 13 million customers. The five key divisions include: Consumer Bank, Commercial and Business Bank, BT Financial Group, Westpac Institutional Bank and Westpac New Zealand.

About the Westpac Long Gallery

The Westpac Long Gallery will be the treasure trove of Australia. It will celebrate the nation's culture and people through the new exhibition *200 Treasures of the Australian Museum*. The first treasure will be the Westpac Long Gallery itself: an amazing 19th Century theatre of display, revitalised as a 21st Century showcase of the AM's collections today. The heritage conservation project will make the Gallery new again; not a literal reconstruction of the original gallery, but layers of preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation to respect the evocative qualities of the past while embracing the spirit of the present.

The significance of the Westpac Long Gallery is not as an architectural shell frozen in the past, but its continuous use and evolution as a museum gallery for over 150 years.

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