

a year **OF GIVING**

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM FOUNDATION
ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2012



Welcome to the first edition of the Australian Museum Foundation's annual newsletter.

Since 2005, the Australian Museum Foundation has dispersed more than one million dollars in grants to support the work of our scientists, educators, collectors and historians.

The Australian Museum Foundation Trustees assess each grant application from Museum staff to ensure that funds are used for special projects, acquisitions for the collections and research.

This newsletter showcases the projects that have been supported in 2012, and were made possible thanks to you, our generous donors.

Diccon Loxton
Chairman

PACIFIC YOUTH CULTURAL RECONNECTION PROGRAM

The Museum's Dion Peita has developed a program to build cultural awareness among 'at risk' youth from Pacific communities to challenge their perceptions that being a 'warrior' is synonymous with being violent.

Dion and his colleagues use the Museum's extensive Pacific collections to work with groups from the community and present the complex history and proud tradition associated with each object.

The Pacific Youth Cultural Reconnection program was piloted in 2009 in collaboration with the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and has since been boosted by a grant from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and \$91,500 from the Australian Museum Foundation.



Above: Photo © Australian Museum

RESTORING THE LORD HOWE ISLAND DIORAMA

Hidden away in the Skeletons gallery is one of the Museum's greatest treasures – the last historic museum diorama in New South Wales. With the Foundation's help, the Lord Howe Island diorama has been fully restored to its former glory.

Conservator Heather McKay and staff carefully restored specimens originally installed in 1923. Gallery visitors were able to view conservation staff at work and see the transformation of this precious heritage display.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$34,500 towards the restoration project.

Right: Photo by Megan Dean-Jones © Australian Museum

INDIGENOUS LEARNING HUB

A new Indigenous learning hub featuring two interactive touch tables will complement artefacts, artworks and other Indigenous objects in the revamped Indigenous Australians gallery. This facility will bring the next evolution of in-gallery learning and connecting ideas with current events. It will allow the gallery to become a living and energised space that is constantly changing and, most importantly, relevant to school curricula.

The digital learning environment is increasingly familiar to students, who will be able to upload content from the hub and create a scrapbook for home and classroom use.

The Australian Museum Foundation has provided more than \$70,000 for the Indigenous learning hub, and it will be operational in early 2013, ready for first semester.

Cover: Photo by Carl Bento © Australian Museum

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SEQUENCING OF THE KOALA GENOME

One of Australia's most iconic native species, the Koala, is under threat from diseases, habitat dislocation and population isolation. The genome sequencing project uses the Museum's expertise in applied DNA to identify and compare the gene pools of Koalas throughout the country.

This important research will help Dr Rebecca Johnson, Head of the Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics, and her team to document how the species is responding to the impact of disease, the pressures of urban development and, potentially, conservation methods.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$50,000 towards the genome sequencing project.

Above: Photo by Greta Frankham © Australian Museum

This important research will help document how the koala species is responding to various environmental impacts.

INVASIVE SEAWORM IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

For invasive seaworms the most effective way to infiltrate new territory is to hitch a ride on a ship's hull. Stopping these pests before they can damage our marine environments requires early detection.

Dr Pat Hutchings, Senior Principal Research Scientist, and her colleagues are developing an illustrated identification guide to invasive seaworms for use by quarantine officers and port authorities.

The guide will assist authorities to identify harmful marine pest species and prevent them from entering Australia's harbours and waterways.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$70,000 to produce the guide.

Right: Image © Eunice Wong and Kevin Hendrawan



DIGIVOL: VOLUNTEERS DIGITISING THE COLLECTIONS

The Australian Museum holds millions of objects in its Entomology and Malacology collections and archives. Since 2011, a team of 70 dedicated volunteers has created more than 43,000 digitised records from labels and specimens.

Digitised records make collection data readily available to researchers and other users of the collections. The Museum database has become a vital reference for the international science community, enabling broader access to collection information.

The DigiVol project was piloted in 2011 by the Atlas of Living Australia program, and an Australian Museum Foundation grant of \$50,000 has extended it by 12 months.

Right: Photo by Julie Reese © Australian Museum



TIMOR-LESTE EXPEDITION OF BIODISCOVERY

In September 2012, Australian Museum scientists took part in the latest in a series of major expeditions to Timor-Leste to collect both terrestrial and marine specimens.

Scientists on the Timor-Leste expeditions surveyed the country's rarely documented biodiversity, and worked closely with local authorities to assess the efficacy of the nation's network of protected areas.

The expeditions were funded by a significant donation to the Australian Museum Foundation from a private donor.

Below: Photo by Dr Dave Britton © Australian Museum

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collection data readily
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the PATRICIA PORRITT COLLECTION ACQUISITION FUND

This fund was made possible thanks to a bequest from the late Mrs Patricia Porritt for the specific purpose of acquiring items for the Museum's collections.

COMMUNITY TIME CAPSULE

In the era of contemporary acquisitions, the Community Time Capsule takes an ethical and comprehensive approach. The capsule comprises 30–50 ethnographic objects from the Longgu speakers in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands with each object selected by community members.

The Community Time Capsule collection represents the identity of the Longgu as they would like to be seen in a modern, globalised world. The project is an important step in establishing an ongoing relationship with the Longgu community.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$28,700 for this project.

Below: Photo © Deborah Hill, University of Canberra



TAXIDERMY MOUNTS FOR WILD AUSTRALIA

Australian wildlife has always fascinated overseas visitors. The acquisition of 52 fully mounted specimens for the Bird and Mammal collections will no doubt be the highlight of a new touring exhibition from the Australian Museum – *Wild Australia*.

The mounts will tour internationally to China and other parts of Asia as part of this exhibition, before returning to the Museum for display in the Surviving Australia and Birds galleries, the Atrium and in Search and Discover.

The *Wild Australia* exhibition will highlight issues such as biodiversity and conservation of Australia's unique fauna.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$80,000 towards the acquisition of the mounts to add to the Museum's permanent collections.

Below: Photo © Australian Museum



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the **PATRICIA PORRITT COLLECTION ACQUISITION FUND**

KEN THAIDAY MASK

Respected Torres Strait Islander artist Ken Thaiday Snr creates sculptures that reflect contemporary and traditional Torres Strait Islander culture as it adapts to cultural and historical shifts. The shark headdress that Ken Thaiday is creating for the Museum is a manifestation of ancient supernatural forces, and is his most important figure.

Ken Thaiday is from Erub (Darnley Island), where he lived a traditional life, fishing, gardening and participating in ceremonial life. He moved to Cairns as a teenager and eventually became a founding member of the Darnley Island Dance Troupe.

The commission and purchase of one of his sculptures, which will be on permanent display in the newly refurbished Indigenous Australians gallery, will enhance the Museum's collection of Torres Strait Islander material, and provide a powerful contemporary balance to the collection on display.

The Australian Museum Foundation granted \$30,300 for the commission and purchase of the Ken Thaiday artwork.

Below: Photo © Sheryl Connors-Young



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will enhance
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THANK YOU

Thank you for making these important and innovative projects a reality.

To see the full list of our generous donors, please visit www.australianmuseum.net.au/Our-Donors

If you would like to discuss making a donation to the Australian Museum Foundation please contact Anna Gauchat, Development Officer on 02 9320 6216 or Development@austmus.gov.au

All donations of \$2 or more to the Australian Museum Foundation (ABN 64 497 967 210) are tax deductible.

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