

Australian Museum to Undergo \$50m Refurbishment to Host International Blockbuster Exhibitions Sydney Secures *Tutankhamun* Exhibition

June 11, 2018, Sydney, Australia: NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin and Treasurer Dominic Perrottet today announced the Australian Museum will receive \$50 million to expand its touring exhibition halls, opening with the exclusive blockbuster exhibition, ***Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh*** – the largest and most impressive Tutankhamun exhibition to ever leave Egypt.

NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin revealed Sydney will host ***Tutankhamun*** in early 2021 for a six-month run at the Australian Museum – the fifth city as part of a 10-city world tour to mark the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922 by British archaeologist Howard Carter.

“The Tutankhamun exhibition is a game-changer for Sydney and Australia. Sydney is the major cultural city in the Pacific/South East Asian region, and the significant upgrades to the Australian Museum will ensure we have world-class museum exhibition spaces for visitors to our State as well as residents to enjoy,” Mr Harwin said.

The funding enables the Australian Museum to repurpose existing storage space to significantly expand the touring exhibition halls to 1500 square metres across two levels – allowing the AM to host either one big blockbuster or two exhibitions simultaneously.

“As well as the transformed exhibition spaces, the refurbishment will also create new education facilities, enabling school student visitors to double to 100,000 a year, and space for a new museum shop and café and other amenities – all completed in time to host the ***Tutankhamun*** exhibition,” Mr Harwin added.

To cater for the increased number of visitors, the Australian Museum’s award-winning Crystal Hall entrance will be further extended along the William Street façade.

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the museum upgrade will deliver a boost to the culture economy.

“The Australian Museum is a national treasure and this expansion will not only bring the world’s biggest blockbuster exhibitions like Tutankhamun, it will also bring flow on benefits for local businesses,” the Treasurer said.

The expanded touring exhibition halls will be able to accommodate up to 800,000 visitors during a blockbuster the size and scale of Tutankhamun.

Director and CEO of the Australian Museum, Ms Kim McKay AO said that the refurbishment is a critical step in the future development of the Australian Museum.

“By expanding our exhibition space to secure international blockbusters, we’re creating new facilities and visitor amenities, allowing us to remain competitive and relevant for generations of Australians and international visitors,” Ms McKay said.

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“The project has a BCR of 1.55 and it will provide great flexibility to the AM to ensure the very best exhibitions and experiences are presented at the AM in the future. We have a world-class collection and now we’ll have world-class spaces to exhibit them.

“*Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh* is the ultimate museum exhibition for Sydney and I’m very proud that the Australian Museum will be able to host this international blockbuster,” Ms McKay added.

The Tutankhamun exhibition is being presented by the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and global events leader IMG. The Australian Museum is the exclusive host of the exhibition in South East Asia with the support of Destination NSW.

Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh features more than 150 objects from King Tut’s tomb, including 60 treasures never previously displayed outside Egypt. Produced by IMG, it is the last time these objects will travel outside Egypt now that the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza is nearing completion.

Currently on exhibit to sold-out crowds at the California Science Center in Los Angeles – the first stop on the 10-city world tour – the exhibition also features advanced display technology and the latest science about King Tut’s life, health, death and lineage.

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About Australian Museum: 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 19 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.

For hi-res images, video and VNR, please contact:

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