

### **Statement from the Director, Marcus Schutenko**

MAGNT works hard to connect Territorians to Aboriginal culture, natural science, history and art. Our staff and the collections they support are valued highly by MAGNT and our wonderful visitors. Over the past few weeks there has been commentary in print media and radio with inaccurate information relating to MAGNT. It is important that we provide Territorians with the facts to assist reports and inform our committed supporters.

In April 2018 the Northern Territory Government announced that MAGNT would remain at Bullocky Point. An art gallery for State Square had already been announced. MAGNT has plans to increase the Aboriginal culture, natural science and history exhibitions at Bullocky Point to coincide with art exhibitions moving to the new State Square museum. With a new venue in State Square becoming MAGNT's eighth site, MAGNT looks forward to being able to tell more unique stories about the Northern Territory and its near neighbours across Aboriginal culture, natural science, history and art.

In May 2019, the Northern Territory Government advised the Board of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) that as part of the Government's Budget Repair measures MAGNT's core funding would be reduced by 11% over two years (\$848,000) with an annual 1% reduction thereafter.

Since then MAGNT have implemented a number of measures in response to reduced funding. MAGNT reduced the hours of operation across three of our venues and significantly cut our forward exhibitions program. These measures only address some of the funding cuts.

In order to set MAGNT up to be financially sustainable into the future MAGNT is proposing a new organisational structure. The proposed structure is designed to best meet the museum's Goals, as outlined in our Strategic Vision. This proposed structure includes six less positions than the current structure.

Staff are being consulted on the proposal. Feedback has been received and is now in active consideration. We are doing all that we can to support MAGNT's staff in navigating this proposed change including offering access to employee assistance services.

This is a difficult path that we are proposing to take for the future sustainability of MAGNT for Territorians.

We are doing all that we can to support our staff and collections for the future during this challenging time and ask Territorians for their continued support.

## Background

Key facts about MAGNT's history:

- MAGNT was established in 1965 as a statutory authority.
- The first staff member was appointed in 1970.
- In 1981, when MAGNT opened its principal facility in Darwin, it had 58 staff.
- By 1997 MAGNT had over 140 staff (including the Strehlow Research Centre, which was soon to be absorbed into MAGNT).
- In 1997 MAGNT's statutory authority status was revoked. MAGNT was rolled into Government at this time and over the next 17 years was a branch of various Government departments experiencing numerous funding cuts.
- MAGNT's statutory authority status was restored in 2014, at which time it had 38 staff.
- Upon returning to be a statutory authority in 2014 it took ten months for MAGNT to return to growth.
- At MAGNT's lowest ebb, May 2015, it had 36 staff (34FTE).
- MAGNT currently has 67 staff (54FTE).
- Since 2015, the 20FTE new staffing positions created at MAGNT were the result of MAGNT's success in securing new revenue from various streams, and operational improvements.
- When MAGNT was restored to its statutory status in 2014 it had seven curators. Across MAGNT's four areas of focus there was one curator for Aboriginal culture, four curators for natural science, two curators for history and no curators for art. As a museum and art gallery MAGNT had seven museum curators and no art curators.
- Since 2014 MAGNT has been successful in growing its revenues and realising efficiencies that have allowed it to increase its curatorial team from seven to twelve. MAGNT now has a Head of Curatorial, three curators for Aboriginal culture, four for natural science, two for history and two for art.
- The proposal that MAGNT is consulting staff on would reduce MAGNT's curatorial positions by one in each of Aboriginal culture, natural science and history. MAGNT would then have nine curators, six museum curators and two art curators, as well as the Head of Curatorial.
- Natural science is, and will continue to be, the curatorial field with the most staff.