

[Museums Australia]

Western Australia
Advancing museums, galleries and cultural centres

Attention editor/chief of staff

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Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA ALARMED AT THREATS OF FURTHER CUTS TO STATE INSTITUTIONS

Museums Australia WA is alarmed at the recent talk of a further 5% efficiency dividend to be cut from the already parlous Cultural Institutions operating budgets.

Jane King, Executive Officer of Museums Australia, said “The State Government’s application of this efficiency dividend uniformly across all departments and agencies has a disproportionate impact on those small agencies who don’t have the economies of scale.”

Last year the 3% cut was achieved by closing the Art Gallery and all Museum sites one day a week, and the permanent closure of the Fremantle History Museum. Will they now have to close another day each week? Or perhaps close another site will it be Albany or Geraldton this time?

Perth is now in the unenviable position of being the only city in Australasia where the major state and national collections are not accessible seven days a week.¹

In tough economic times Museums and Galleries are seen as good value for money. They are the major draw-card for cultural tourists, who stay longer and spend more money per head than any other tourist.² Additionally, our state institutions play an important educative role, with school groups visiting daily, many visiting multiple sites.

There also continues to be no further announcement or funding forthcoming for the State Museum redevelopment. This penny pinching approach from Treasury does not sit well with the strong push to upgrade and revitalise the Perth Cultural Centre and talk of a new Aboriginal Cultural Centre/Museum. It seems we may end up with all cake-tin and no cake!

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Background

Museums Australia WA is the peak body for the museum, gallery and collecting institutions sector, and provides services for the advancement of the sector and the professional development of those who work in it. We are recognized as the peak body by the sector and the wider cultural and arts sector.

Website: <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au>

¹ Our research has found the only other state museum or gallery in Australasia not open seven days a week is the National Gallery of Victoria's two sites, with the Australian collection closing Monday's and the International collection closed on Tuesday's.

² Tourism Research Australia – Culture and Heritage Tourism Australia 2008
<http://www.tra.australia.com/niche.asp?lang=EN&sub=0079>