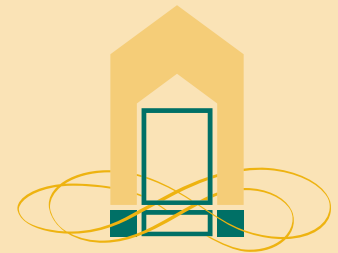


# Friends

A PUBLICATION BY THE FRIENDS OF THE TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY INC.

SPRING 2012



The FRIENDS of the  
TASMANIAN MUSEUM  
& ART GALLERY  
*incorporated*

## What's happening behind the closed doors?

AN INTERVIEW WITH TMAG DEPUTY DIRECTOR PETER WEST

Deputy Director Peter West sounds a bit like Kevin McCloud of *Grand Design* when he says: “When you build a house you can’t use it until you fit it out — and that’s what’s happening right now as we apply the finishing touches to prepare for the grand opening in early 2013”.

When you look at the numbers, it’s no small job to get the Museum ready for the public after all the reconstruction work is finished. “Think of the brilliant *Theatre of the World* exhibition currently on display at MONA, with 300 TMAG exhibits and 160 from MONA’s collection”, says Peter.

“Spread across 1200 square metres or so, this took about two months to prepare for the public opening. TMAG has around 2000 items to put on display over about 3500 square metres, and there is a lot more to do than simply take them out of storage and put them in a gallery”.

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**Above: Peter West takes Premier Lara Giddings on a tour of the redevelopment.**

**Below: TMAG skyline with crane.** Photo: Peter West

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## What's happening behind the closed doors?

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Peter adds that some of the fiddly behind the scenes stuff that we don't see include ensuring the objects are ready for showing after transferring them from storage, registering them on the computer, and making sure they are safely and well installed to best advantage.

On top of that, there is the small matter of about 50 individual fit out projects to be finished — including the cafe, the signage around the museum and in each gallery, the Members' Lounge, the old foyer and the new entrance — just to name a few!

"It's all hands on deck from now on," Peter adds. "Everyone here is doing their best to get the Museum and Art Gallery ready for the grand opening. This is the first time in living memory that we have been closed for an extended period of time, but we have to take the time to do it properly. As we don't want locals and visitors to miss out on our great stories, we are working as hard as we can to make the new Museum one that all Tasmanians can be proud of".

### REDEVELOPMENT TOUR

New committee member **Alison Alexander** comments on our committee's recent visit to the building site...

*Recently, Bill Bleathman our Director took Friends committee members on a tour of the redevelopment. Frankly, I'm always a bit sceptical about redevelopments — are they going to throw the baby out with the bathwater? I'm happy to report that this one isn't!*

*We were thrilled to see the Henry Hunter building emerge with its wonderful architecture, freed from the frightful false walls and ceilings inflicted on it by earlier philistines in their redevelopments. It now looks marvellous, even before the work is finished. Everything seems to have been done with sensitivity to the past, yet also feeling for the future.*

### Help us find new members

There has never been a better time to join the Friends — when the doors open on our rejuvenated museum and art gallery next year, there will be a wonderful program of events and celebrations to enjoy.

If you have friends who are interested in becoming Friends, please pass on the enclosed membership brochure.

Thank you to all who returned our survey in September. We received a total of 212 responses, an excellent result from a mailing of 380.

Analysing those responses, we found:

- Two-thirds of respondents were aged between 60 and 79, with a further 20% aged 80–99. While there were only two responses from members aged under 40, we can celebrate having one member aged over 100.
- Eighty per cent of respondents have access to email, and most of these would be open to receiving invitations to events via email. While 69% would like to learn about Friends activities via a website, only 17% are on Facebook — so we won't be exploring that avenue of communication just yet.
- Many respondents (40%) wish to continue making payments for membership and functions by cheque, with the most popular alternative being payment by credit card (36%). Cash is on the way out, with only 5% preferring this option.

- Respondents' assessment of our events were very positive. Assessed on four categories — quality, diversity, food and beverages — around 45% rated these as good, with a further 25% rating the quality and diversity as excellent. None of the categories attracted more than one or two ratings of 'Poor'.

One surprising result was that around 25% of respondents answered 'Don't know' to these questions: they do not attend events. While we are very grateful for the continuing support of these people, who renew their membership each year even though they are unable or unavailable to attend events, we hope that you will be able to come along to some of the exciting events we have planned for 2013.

- The Members' Room is much anticipated: 80% of respondents plan to make use of it.

In addition to the statistical information, we also received many positive comments in the section 'What would

make the Friends of TMAG better for you?' Many people asked for events to spread over different times and days of the week, so we have incorporated this into our future planning. Behind-the-scenes events, and talks and tours by TMAG specialists were also requested.

We will look forward to several of these when TMAG opens up again.

### COMING UP IN 2013

Your hard-working committee got together at David Coleman's house one Sunday afternoon recently to crystal ball what Friends events might be interesting and possible in 2013. We were very conscious of the reality that last year's projections did not all work out as planned — not surprising in retrospect!

But this year we expect that there will be a return to a full program of events from the time the museum opens again in the new year. As well as an introduction to the new splendours of the changed environment in TMAG (maybe before the opening...), we are hoping to have a coach trip to another museum, a visit to MONA for a special look at Theatre of the World, and previews of some great art exhibitions planned for the year. More as plans firm up in the new year...

## Friends fund museum carts



The new Museum cart, or 'Hollow Vessel' as maker Patrick Hall has titled it, is pictured ready to have its interactive elements and objects installed in time for the opening of the new museum, where it will be on view in the Centre for Learning and Discovery.

This is one of two special carts designed and built by Patrick Hall — the Friends are sponsoring this Museum cart and Detached is funding the Art cart.

## The iRemember Dementia Community Project

Dr Carolyn King, Chief Investigator,  
UTAS Wicking Centre

In April this year, TMAG embarked upon a unique collaboration with the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre (WDREC) to develop a set of iRemember cases filled with a rich collection of familiar objects from the 1930s–1970s. The cases were developed as a free loan resource for use in Reminiscence Therapy with people with dementia. Reminiscence therapy involves the systematic discussion of memories associated with objects, a positive experience designed to facilitate communication, sharing, and the strengthening of feelings of self-identity and self-worth associated with re-experiencing the past.

TMAG and WDREC recognised a unique opportunity for a collaborative, person-centred approach whereby the artefacts and information provided in these cases would be informed via direct feedback from the people for whom the cases were intended — people with dementia and their therapists and carers, and nursing staff.

The results of the study have been surprising and inspiring, not least the discovery that we were able to negate many commonly held assumptions about dementia. Thirty wonderful participants



with dementia gave us up to two hours of their time to relate the memories that were triggered by items from 'in the kitchen'. Their recollections were fascinating and often extremely detailed, but we were equally humbled by the eagerness of participants in the later stages of dementia to communicate their thoughts in any way possible.

The favoured items will form the basis of the final collection, while the themes and objects suggested by the participants will be used for the development of future cases. This tailored reminiscence resource made with the help of people with dementia for people with dementia will be available for loan state-wide from TMAG from 2013.

The Friends had a very successful visit to the Wicking Centre in the Medical Science Building in July to learn about this fascinating collaboration between TMAG and the Wicking Centre.

If you would like to make a donation to assist the iRemember project, call 03 6226 4881 or visit the website: [www.utas.edu.au/wicking/](http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/)

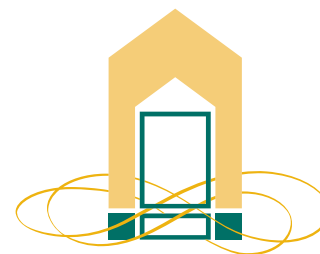
## Meet our new committee members

**Alison Alexander** has been a historian working in Hobart for the last thirty years. She has written 23 commissioned histories of Tasmanian institutions ranging from the Southern Midlands area to the Clarence District Football Club. Her 2010 book *Tasmania's Convicts*, which describes the result of Tasmania being a convict colony, was well received by critics and the reading public. Her next book, a biography entitled *The ambitions of Jane Franklin*, will be published next year.

Alison has been involved with TMAG for many years. She served two terms as a TMAG Trustee, and until 2011 she was the Trustees representative on the Friends Committee.

**Andrew Ross** is a graduate of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, and has worked for some of Tasmania's foremost cultural organisations over the years: for the ABC, Screen Tasmania, Theatre Royal, and as Marketing and Development Manager for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra during its historic move to the Federation Concert Hall.

He worked on marketing and communications with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens before joining the Port Arthur Historic Sites as its first Marketing Manager in 2007.



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### OFFICE HOURS

We almost always answer the phone at TMAG on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10 and 12, so that's the best time to phone. An email will get our attention at other times. And comments and suggestions are always welcome!

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