

## Ellen Mannix

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**From:** Merino <merino@netspace.net.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 4 February 2019 3:13 PM  
**To:** Ellen Mannix  
**Subject:** HPE CM: Supplementary submission by Marina Garlick in reply to the Australian Museum response to submissions to the EIS on the removal of Pacific collections

While the EIS deals mainly with technical matters relating to alterations to the building, the fate of the world renowned Pacific collections cannot be ignored in this context. These collections are of national and international significance and contribute to the NSW AAA rating. The Museum gives lip service to the importance of the Pacific collections but does not provide any practical evidence of this, rather the reverse.

The Museum has "handled the truth carelessly" in its response to the submissions relating to the off site storage of these priceless collections.

1. The Museum claims that all of the collection is being transferred to a warehouse in Rydalmere. In fact, a substantial part of the collection has already been transferred to storage at the Discovery Centre in Castle Hill, never to be seen again.
2. The Museum claims that the rented Rydalmere premises will be far superior to those currently housing the Pacific collections in College St, even though these were purpose built. The Rydalmere premises are not ready for occupation and in the interim the Pacific collections will be in storage provided by the removalist for an unspecified period of time. It is not known what climate control or security provisions are provided in this storage. This is downright irresponsible.
3. The Museum currently has a freeze on capital expenditure. If the alterations at Rydalmere are subject to this, the Pacific collections may be languishing in removalists storage for quite some time. If and when the necessary Rydalmere alterations are carried out, one must question the expenditure of public funds on a private rental building.
4. The Rydalmere premises are to be rented for 5+ 5 years. The rent must come out of recurrent expenditure and so is dependent on the Museum receiving appropriate funding, not at all guaranteed in the present and likely future climate of constraints on public funding.
5. The Museum promises improved access for Pacific communities and claims that the Rydalmere location is closer to them. In fact, most Pacific communities are located in south west Sydney and College St is easier for them to access. Nor is the Museum likely to be able to provide specialist staff to be available at Rydalmere to assist in accessing the material. It must also be noted that the collection has been packed in boxes without full conservation. Staff will be needed to unpack the boxes and the lack of conservation puts the collection in danger of deteriorating. This makes the claimed improved access highly unlikely.
6. It is apparently proposed to leave a small number of items at College St to show to "VIPs". This is tokenism of the worst order.

The primary reason for the off site transfer of the Pacific collections is to make way for an exhibition of material on Tutankhamun in 2021 and the state government has provided \$57.5 million for this which is unlikely to be recouped. While the Museum ( and the Minister) promise a larger Pacific Spirit Gallery in the College St premises there is no date for this, nor is there funding. Such promises also do alter the fact that the vast bulk of the Pacific collections is being consigned to an uncertain and unsafe future in rental premises. The Museum has not demonstrated that it is a suitable custodian of these collections.

If the EIS is to be approved, stringent conditions relating to the preservation, conservation and access for the Pacific collections must be included. These must be met before further changes to the College St building. In view of the

importance of the Pacific to Australia, material relating to the diverse cultures of the region should have priority over an exhibition of Egyptian artefacts.

Marina Garlick  
Balmain  
4February, 2019

Sent from my iPad