

MEDIA RELEASE**Tuesday, 25 October 2011**

The National Gallery of Australia's Annual Report for 2010/11 has been tabled in Parliament and is now available on the Gallery's website www.nga.gov.au

National Gallery of Australia ends historic year with strong momentum

During the 2010–11 Financial Year, a total of 5,318,690 people visited the National Gallery of Australia's collection, temporary and travelling exhibitions and saw works of art from the national art collection, an increase of 16.5% on the previous year.

An additional 1,700,000 people accessed information on the national art collection, Gallery programs and exhibitions through the National Gallery of Australia website.

A primary attraction for driving visitation to the Gallery in 2010-11 was the opening of Stage One and the 11 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art galleries representing the most significant development of the National Gallery of Australia since it opened in 1982.

'The last Financial Year was certainly an exciting one for the National Gallery of Australia. The most significant achievement was the opening of Stage 1 including our 11 new Indigenous art galleries, James Turrell *Skyspace* and new front entrance which has greatly enhanced the visitor experience,' said Ron Radford AM, Director of the National Gallery of Australia.'

'We are very proud that the Gallery did not close down even for one day during the complex construction of Stage One, or during the renovations to the original building, ensuring that all visitors during the period of construction could enjoy the national art collection.'

'Visitor satisfaction with the Gallery experience has reached new heights since the opening of Stage One, with 96% of visitors rating their visit as good or excellent, largely due to the improved facilities and access provided by the new Stage One redevelopment and the associated Stage One opening season of events and exhibitions.'

The Stage One development has already received a number of industry accolades including:

- ACT Master Builders Association Award for Project of the Year and the Commercial Building Award
- Property Council of Australia ACT Property Development of the Year
- ACT Australian Hotels Association 2011 Award for Best Tourist Attraction

During 2010-2011 the Gallery presented the trail-blazing exhibition *Life, Death and Magic: 2000 years of Southeast Asian* ancestral art – the first major exhibition to examine animist art in Southeast Asia. Another pioneering exhibition was *Varilaku: Pacific Arts from the Solomon Islands*, the first exhibition in Australia on the art of our

near neighbours. The 2010/11 summer exhibition, *Ballets Russes: the art of costume* was a dramatic display of 150 of the Gallery's Ballets Russes costumes designed by artists such as Matisse, Picasso and de Chirico.

Amongst other highlights detailed in the Annual Report are:

- It was a record year for National Gallery of Australia publishing with 15 new and significant publications produced including the Indigenous Art Collection Highlights handbook to accompany the opening of the new Indigenous art galleries.
- The National Gallery of Australia also achieved record fundraising success in 2010-11 securing in excess of \$16 million in cash donations, gifts of works of art and corporate sponsorship with the support of the National Gallery of Australia Foundation. This private support helped the Gallery to acquire 1600 new works, almost two-thirds of which were gifts, to continue to strengthen and strategically develop the national art collection.
- In addition to fundraising success, the National Gallery of Australia generated \$11.4 million revenue through sales of exhibition tickets, National Gallery of Australia catalogues and product, venue hire, sales of goods and services and commercial operations.
- Self-generated revenue therefore contributed a total of \$27.5 million to the Gallery's operating budget accounting for 46% of the Gallery's total revenue. The Gallery ended the year with a modest operating surplus.
- The value of the national art collection now stands at \$3.9 billion – the most valuable art collection in Australia.

Ron Radford notes in his Director's Report, 'Despite a great year in the Gallery's history and the growth and success that has been achieved, the economic environment has presented significant challenges. The Gallery found it difficult to achieve its operating revenue targets even though fundraising for acquisitions and sponsorship was at an all time high. Following the completion of the Stage One building expansion, staff, utility and other charges added cost pressures to our operations. These were offset in part through substantial cost cuts by management in the second half of the year'.

The strategic postponement of the National Indigenous Art Triennial to 2012 also allowed the Gallery to secure a new corporate partner for the exhibition which will be officially announced in the near future.

Further information:

David Edghill
Head of Marketing and Communications
T: (02) 6240 6643 M: 0403 123 084 E: david.edghill@nga.gov.au

Siobhan Ion
Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator
T: (02) 6240 6431 E: siobhan.ion@nga.gov.au