



## **THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Norfolk Island Museum wins community heritage grant**

The Australian Government has awarded the Norfolk Island Museum a grant of \$7150 to pay for a Preservation Needs Assessment of the Museum's Norfolk Island collections.

The grant was awarded under the Australian Government's Community Heritage Grants Programme and was announced at an award ceremony at the National Library of Australia on Tuesday 13 November. Grants totalling \$428,300 were awarded to 85 Australian community groups and organisations to assist in the identification and preservation of community-owned, nationally significant heritage collections.

The Community Heritage Grant recognises the local and national significance of the Museum's Norfolk Island collections. The Museum is responsible for three major collections – the HMS *Sirius* shipwreck collection, the KAVHA archaeological collection and the Norfolk Island Collection.

The Norfolk Island Collection consists of a wide variety of material relating to the history of the island since the Pitcairner settlement in 1856. It includes extremely significant objects such as the cannon and kettle off the HMS *Bounty* and the Fremantle letter as well numerous industrial and domestic artefacts, manuscripts, documents, diaries, photographs and books.

The grant will give the Museum the opportunity to fund a trained conservator to come to the Museum and assess the collection and make recommendations on its storage, handling and use. The long-term aim is to extend the life of the collection so that it can be enjoyed and experienced by both present and future generations.

These sentiments were expressed most clearly by the National Library's Director-General Jan Fullerton when she described the success of the Community Heritage Grant Program. "It has been taken up by groups throughout Australia, ensuring the longevity of nationally significant collections and that the collections stay in the community where they belong."

The Hon. Vicky Jack, the Minister responsible for the Norfolk Island Museum, was especially pleased that the significance of Norfolk Island's heritage was recognised. "Norfolk Islanders are very proud of their heritage and this Community Heritage Grant will assist the Norfolk Island Government and the Norfolk Island Museum in their work to preserve and present that heritage to its fullest extent", Mrs Jack said.

His Honour the Acting Administrator and the Chair of the Norfolk Island Museum Trust, Mr Owen Walsh, agreed wholeheartedly. “This grant is an important recognition of our Museums on Norfolk and the crucial role that they have in conserving and presenting Norfolk Island’s rich and unique heritage”, Mr Walsh said. “In assisting to preserve the Norfolk Island Collection, the grant will ensure that future residents and visitors alike can learn about and appreciate the Island’s history and heritage. It is important that, as we change and grow as a community, that we preserve and learn from our past.”

The Norfolk Island Museum’s curator, Mr Brian Hubber, was invited to Canberra to attend the announcement ceremony and to participate in a three-day intensive preservation and collection management workshop held at the National Library, the National Archives of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, and the National Museum. Brian advised that:

“Most of the workshop sessions related to preservation of different types of heritage objects – paper-based material such as photographs, books, letters and the like, audiovisual material including a bewildering and often overlapping array of sound, film and digital technologies, and finally the “hard” materials such as stone, metal, timber and glass”.

“During the course of these very practical workshops, I had the unique opportunity of networking with more than sixty other professionals working in the museum sector, many of whom are dealing with similar issues relating to the collection and preservation of heritage collections in remote places. This professional network will be an invaluable resource as we undertake the funded preservation assessment”.

“Because I had to wait until last Saturday to return to Norfolk Island, the National Library very generously funded my extended stay in Canberra which also allowed me to do some research in its own collections. During that time I had the opportunity to identify and to study some unique historical materials that will be of interest to Norfolk Islanders. I hope to share some of these stories in the next few months.”

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007