

MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 2 November 2016

Technology, stories and objects bring new museum to life

Untold stories and rarely-seen artefacts take centre stage in the new Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre, which was officially opened today by Minister for Culture and the Arts John Day.

The opening is the culmination of many years' hard work by volunteers, generous donors and the City of Bunbury, which has created a unique experience by intertwining new technology and significant objects.

Among the many highlights is a suspended sculpture of a ship, which represents the city's maritime history, including its many shipwrecks.

Museum Curator Laretta Davies said the museum, which is located in the 130-year-old Paisley Centre on Arthur Street, tells unique stories and is engaging for locals and visitors.

"The museum focuses strongly on Bunbury's rich history and includes the latest technology to tell stories, including those of pre-European Noongar culture, visiting whalers, explorers and early settlers," Ms Davies said.

"It is very exciting because many of these stories have never been publicly revealed before."

The highlight is the unique ship sculpture, custom-designed for the new museum and suspended from the ceiling. Other innovations include interactive screens and custom-made exhibition materials.

"While the new museum has a growing collection of artefacts relating to Bunbury history, the displays don't rely on objects alone," Ms Davies said.

"The stories are focused on key people and events with the use of video and imagery bringing bygone days back to life.

"It will be the innovative and interactive aspects of the museum that will most engage visitors, and we are expecting a lot of interest as this is the first regional museum to be opened in some time."

The museum also includes a classroom funded by the Chefs Long Table Lunch, which reflects both 100-year-old school life as well as contemporary educational facilities.

The museum design also allows for travelling exhibitions and boasts climate-controlled facilities for the preservation and storage of artefacts.

Other contributors and cultural partners include the Kerry Stokes Collection; Andrew and Nicola Forrest; Western Australian Museum – Shipwreck Galleries; Fremantle Prison; Bunbury Historical Society; National Gallery of Australia; State Library of New South Wales.

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Acting Mayor Brendan Kelly said the museum opening was a significant milestone in Bunbury's own history.

"It is very pleasing to see this museum being opened to the public as it is important that our City's rich history is on show for locals and visitors to appreciate," Cr Kelly said.

"I encourage everyone to spend some time exploring the museum as its design, interactive technology, objects and stories makes it significant addition to our City."

The Museum, which is owned and operated by the City of Bunbury, will be open to the public from 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Saturday. Entry is free.

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