

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET  
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION  
APPLICATION UNDER SECTION 29(1)(b) OF THE  
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE ACT 1988 (SA)**

**Consultation Information Package**

<b>Applicant:</b>	The South Australian Museum
<b>Authorisation Request:</b>	To remove Aboriginal objects from South Australia
<b>Purpose/Activity:</b>	Exhibitions in Darwin, Brisbane and Canberra
<b>Aboriginal Objects:</b>	Twenty-One (21) Yidaki

**Overview**

As the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, the Premier of South Australia has received an application from the South Australian Museum (SAM) under section 29(1)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (the Act). The application seeks authority to temporarily remove Aboriginal objects from South Australia, for the purposes of exhibiting them in Darwin, Brisbane and Canberra.

The application relates to 21 yidaki (didgeridoos) that are intended to be exhibited on the *Yidaki: Didjeridu and the Sound of Australia* tour (Tour). The yidaki are both historic and more recently crafted yidaki from the Northern Territory, particularly north-east Arnhem Land.

The Tour is planned as follows:

- Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, April-July 2019
- Queensland Museum, Brisbane, November 2019 – March 2020
- National Museum of Australia, Canberra, April 2020 – January 2021.

The Tour requires the temporary removal of the 21 yidaki from South Australia between March of 2019 and February 2021. The applicant has developed a Care Plan for transport and handling of the 21 yidaki. The applicant has provided pictures and details of each yidaki, to the extent that details are known. Please refer to attached object listing for a listing of all objects.

The Premier's functions under the Act include the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage in South Australia. Heritage is defined to include Aboriginal sites, objects and ancestral remains. The Act specifically prohibits the removal of Aboriginal objects from South Australia without prior authorisation from the Premier. Before granting such an authorisation, consultation is required with interested Aboriginal parties.

**The Yidaki**

The yidaki were collected or acquired by SAM between 1892 to 2017. Of the 21 yidaki, 11 are from Yirrkala, which appear to be recently crafted and which were directly obtained by SAM from Yirrkala community members involved in the curation of the Tour.

Less is known about the other, somewhat older yidaki, which came into SAM's possession either donation, collection or purchase. SAM has recorded all yidaki as being NT sourced.

### **The Applicant**

SAM is established under the *South Australian Museum Act 1976*. SAM is a natural history museum and research institution founded in 1856. SAM advises that it holds the world's most important public collection of historic didgeridoos (yidaki).

The Tour is supported and endorsed by SAM's Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

### **Yolngu Participation**

SAM advises that extensive consultation has been undertaken to date with Djalul Gurruwiwi and his family, and that these Aboriginal people have been involved in the curation and implementation of the exhibition. SAM advises Djalul Gurruwiwi and his family are strong supporters of taking the yidaki to Darwin, Brisbane and Canberra for the exhibitions.

Djalul Gurruwiwi is described by SAM as the world's foremost authority on yidaki. SAM has a long association with the Gurruwiwi family, collaborating with the family throughout 2016 to present the SAM exhibition, *Yidaki: Didjeridu and the Sound of Australia* (March to July 2017) in Adelaide; and an international exhibition for the same yidaki, in Japan in 2018.

The Tour is not a traditional museum exhibition. The story is not told through labels written by museum curators, but is instead told by Djalul, his family and members of the wider Yolngu community. Throughout the development of the exhibition in 2016, Djalul guided SAM staff in how he wanted the story to be told. Then using video and the sound of Yidaki, Djalul imparts the story of Yidaki directly to the visitors. The Tour would not be possible without Djalul's full support and commitment to this story.

Djalul Gurruwiwi of Yirrkala has a long-term association with the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala. Mr Joseph Brady, the Program Director of the Mulka Project at Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre, has provided written support for the Tour.

Yolngu involvement in the public programming at each venue is the responsibility of each of the participating venues. SAM strongly encouraged the participating venues to consult with the community and undertake such programming, but ultimately it is up to the venues to make the arrangements. To SAM's knowledge, the venues have yet to finalise their plans regarding these matters.

### **The Exhibitions**

SAM advises that it intends to hold the Tour to bring yidaki to life through a creative collaboration with Djalul Gurruwiwi. The Tour will form an important cultural event stimulating conversations emerging from connections between the stories of Yolngu and the rest of Australia.

SAM advises that the Tour may benefit a wide section of the community, as it is intended to broaden the public's understanding of, and provide exposure to, Australian Indigenous art and culture. The Tour is designed to engage visitors with little knowledge of Aboriginal

culture, honouring the immense cultural significance of the yidaki – adopted worldwide as an Australian icon.

SAM proposes to have the yidaki on public display throughout the course of the Tour. The Tour will include audio-visual displays and printed materials informing visitors to the exhibitions about yidaki, and the cultural and ceremonial context of their use.

### **Care Plan for the Yidaki**

The yidaki will be on loan to the respective galleries for the duration of the Tour. The formal loan agreement between SAM and the display venues includes conditions that they must adhere to for the wellbeing of the yidaki whilst they are under their care and control. This includes security, excluding UV light and keeping light levels to no higher than recommended maximums for the exhibition materials.

All Tour objects will receive expert care from SAM collection staff, Artlab Australia conservators while in South Australia, and from International Art Services while travelling.

Culturally, the travel will be overseen by members of the Yolngu community. The details below cover Yolngu community oversight, condition reporting, packing, travel arrangements and details about install and de-install.

### **Condition Reporting**

A condition report for each yidaki travelling for the Tour will be completed. The condition report will be an accurate and informative account of the yidaki state of preservation. It will provide a description of the nature, location and extent of any existing damage on the visible surfaces of each instrument. The condition reports will be completed by object conservators at Artlab Australia, and are the standard method of identifying change in object condition used throughout the industry.

Each yidaki will be compared against its condition report when it arrives at its destination before installation, and again after each segment of the Tour has finished during de-installation. Any damage or change in condition will be noted. Some wear and tear is expected; however, safe handling techniques and expert packing will ensure this is kept to a minimum. If invasive conservation work is required, it will be completed by a trained conservator, with permission of the Senior Collection Manager – Humanities, SAM and with advice from Artlab Australia.

### **Packing**

All yidaki will be packed in bespoke or custom-made crates using archival materials. Packing will be completed by object conservators at Artlab Australia taking care to avoid areas of fragility on individual instruments. The bespoke crates are built by POD Services – Museum and Fine Art. Crates will be POD's 'Museum Standard Crates' which are purpose-built to provide the highest level of climate control and protection.

### **Travel**

Travel interstate will be handled by International Art Services in liaison with SAM staff. This will involve:

### Depart Adelaide to Darwin

Collection from SAM and delivery to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory - dedicated air ride tailgate vehicle. Stored, secure climate-controlled facility, until required for installation.

### Depart Darwin for Brisbane

Collection from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Darwin, NT and delivery to the Queensland Museum - dedicated air ride tailgate vehicle. Stored, secure climate-controlled facility, until required for installation.

### Depart Brisbane for Canberra

Collection from the Queensland Museum, and delivery to the National Museum of Australia, Canberra - dedicated air ride tailgate vehicle. Stored, secure climate-controlled facility, until required for installation.

Unloading and loading of all crates at each museum will be carried out by professional museum staff at each location. Crates can only be opened in the presence of the Senior Collection Manager – Humanities (SAM). A 24-hour acclimatisation period is required at each stop where crates are to be opened. This is to prevent objects from being exposed to rapid changes in temperature and humidity. The return journey will replicate the above procedures.

### **Install and De-install**

Install and de-install will be completed by three SAM staff, including Humanities Collection Managers, who are ultimately responsible for the objects. Installation will involve bespoke cases (open display and props) specifically designed for each object. As noted, condition checking will be completed by the Humanities Collection Managers prior to installation and after de-installation prior to objects being returned to packing crates. A final condition check will be completed by Artlab Australia conservators when the objects return to South Australia, prior to being returned to secure storage.

### **Consultation and Submissions**

Verbal and written submissions about the proposed Tour from individuals and groups that satisfy the requirements of section 13 of the Act are now invited. You can make a submission by letter, email or by telephoning Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR) at the addresses or telephone number given below.

The views of the South Australian State Aboriginal Heritage Committee established under the Act will be sought, and any advice or submissions from relevant Aboriginal parties received by the due date, will be forwarded to the Premier. Submissions may also be forwarded to SAM for comment before being forwarded to the Premier.

Staff from AAR can assist you with information about this application any time prior to the closing date for submissions.

To make a submission, please contact:

**Mr Alex van Wessem**

Principal Project Officer (Heritage)  
Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation  
GPO Box 320  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tel: 8226 8900

Email: [DPC-AAR.CIR@sa.gov.au](mailto:DPC-AAR.CIR@sa.gov.au)

**DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 12 NOON (CDT) WEDNESDAY 27  
FEBRUARY 2019**