

THE PROJECT

First Nations Community Consultation Report 2019

By Laura McBride
First Nations Curator
Mariko Smith
First Nations Assistant Curator

The Australian Museum respects and acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which the Museum stands.

We acknowledge Elders past and present.

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Overview

The 2020 Project is a First Nations-led response to the upcoming 250th anniversary in 2020 of James Cook's voyage on the HMB Endeavour along Australia's eastern coastline during 1770. The project will result in an exhibition and associated programming that will take place at the Australian Museum (AM and the Museum) in the second half of 2020.

This report provides an overview of *The 2020 Project* and the First Nations community consultation undertaken to determine the objectives and themes of the project.

Curatorial Team



Laura McBride

Laura is a Wailwan woman and First Nations Curator in the Exhibitions, Engagement and Cultural Connection (EECC) branch of the AM.

Laura's curatorial approach centers First Nations voices and interpretation of objects and histories so that communities represent themselves and their cultures within the Museum.

Laura's academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts (University of Sydney) conferred in 2008 (double Major in Psychology and Australian Indigenous Studies), and Master of Aboriginal Education (University of Technology Sydney) conferred in 2012.



Mariko Smith

Mariko Smith is a Yuin woman and First Nations Assistant Curator in the EECC branch of the AM.

Mariko focuses on Indigenous community-based cultural resurgence initiatives and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into curatorial and artistic practices.

Mariko's academic and professional qualifications include a combined Bachelor degree in Arts and Laws (University of Sydney) conferred in 2005 and 2007 respectively, Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (College of Law) conferred in 2008, Master of Museum Studies (awarded with Merit: University of Sydney) conferred in 2012, and Doctor of Philosophy from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney (completed in December 2018 and degree to be conferred in June 2019). Her PhD thesis focused on the cultural resurgence of Aboriginal tied-bark canoe making in south-eastern Aboriginal communities, with the topic inspired by a museum's conference event. She is also a Wingara Mura Fellow and Associate Lecturer at Sydney College of the Arts, the University of Sydney.

Background

In May 2018, the AM appointed Laura McBride in the role of First Nations Curator (as part of the Museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collection team). The First Nations Curator is to deliver a special exhibition addressing the impact of Cook's arrival on the eastern coast in 1770, and his ongoing colonial legacy on First Nations peoples and their communities (current working title is *The 2020 Project*).

From June to November 2018, the First Nations Curator planned and conducted community consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, initially in New South Wales (NSW) communities. In September 2018, the AM appointed Mariko Smith in the part-time role of First Nations Assistant Curator. Together, Laura and Mariko make up *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team.

The exhibition is the centrepiece of *The 2020 Project*, and is due to show in the second half of 2020 at the Australian Museum.

Acknowledgments

The 2020 Project Curatorial Team would like to thank:

- All of the First Nations peoples and communities who contributed their knowledge and feedback to The 2020 Project;
- The AM's First Nations staff for their support, assistance in consultation, and preparing material to present on The 2020 Project: Sharni Jones, Nathan Sentance, Courtney Marsh, and Sara Khan; and
- Anna Forster, Katelyn Matthews, and Tony Power for assisting The 2020 Project Curatorial Team in the review of the raw survey data for their analysis.

We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Old People – the Ancestors and Elders, past and present – who guide us in their wisdom through Country, culture, and community.



Director's Statement

In 2020, Australia will mark the 250th anniversary of first contact with the British on the east coast of Australia by James Cook. Historically, Aboriginal voices and perspectives on these events and their consequences have been largely ignored.

Given this skewed view of history, the AM is providing a platform for First Nations communities to respond to the events of 1770 and ongoing consequences through *The 2020 Project*.

To understand what topics and stories Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities would like to have told through *The 2020 Project*, community consultation was undertaken in 2018.

I welcome the results of the First Nations community consultation, and sincerely thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents for giving the Museum their feedback and insight.

Kim McKay AO, Director & CEO

¹ Australian Museum (2018). *Annual Report 2017-18* (Sydney: Australian Museum Trust), p. 43: https://australianmuseum.net.au/uploads/documents/39225/australian-museum-annual-report_2017-18.pdf (accessed 03/12/2018).

First Nations Community Consultation

Methodology

The 2020 Project's exhibition has the capacity for profound change in how museum audiences learn about First Nations lived experiences.

The Curatorial Team's overarching community consultation strategy was to prioritise First Nations peoples' involvement in the exhibition development.

The primary aims of this strategy were to:

- inform First Nations communities across Australia about The 2020 Project at the AM;
- understand their views on the 1770 events and their subsequent consequences; and
- ask them directly what they want (and do not want) to see in an exhibition responding to the 1770 events.

'Have your say!' Campaign

The 2020 Project's community-centred 'Have your say!' campaign involved a voluntary, short, seven-question survey to gather the feedback and opinions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to help further develop *The 2020 Project* brief and provide direction for exhibition content.

The survey responses will especially assist *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team in deciding the exhibition themes, messages, interpretive strategies, ideas for object selection or commissioned works, facilitating evaluation and feedback to communities.

The survey also collected relevant information and feedback on the AM. This will inform the AM's First Nations-related strategies for improving practices regarding First Nations cultural collections and interpretation within the Museum.

The 'Have your say!' survey consisted of the following questions which had been designed to be answered anonymously.

Question 1

Respondents were asked to identify whether they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or neither.

Question 2

Respondents were asked to identify their Nation, language or cultural group or community (singular or plural, as relevant).

Question 3

Respondents were asked to specify their residential postcode so the Curatorial Team can ascertain the geographical reach of the survey.

Question 4

Respondents were asked what words and thoughts come to mind when they think about the Australian Museum.

Question 5

Respondents were asked what words and thoughts come to mind when they hear or see the name Captain James Cook.

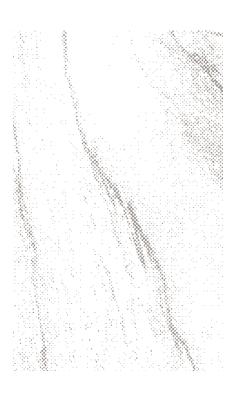
Question 6

Respondents were asked what topics or issues they would like the AM to address in this exhibition that responds to the anniversary of 1770.

Question 7

Respondents were asked what is something that they would not want to see in this exhibition that responds to the anniversary of 1770 and why.





Distribution

The 2020 Project Curatorial Team aimed to capture meaningful information across a large representative sample size. The survey was directly distributed to First Nations communities in the following manner:

- In-person, with hard-copies of the survey filled out by the facilitating First Nations team member or First Nations respondents themselves during conversations, face-to-face interviews, and participation in focus groups; and
- Electronically, with the First Nations respondent clicking on a link which was emailed or forwarded to them, taking them to *The 2020 Project's* SurveyMonkey™ digital portal, or via the SurveyMonkey link posted on the 'Indigenous Australian Culture' Facebook™ page during the last week of the consultation campaign.

Given the tight timeframe set for developing *The 2020 Project* and limitations in resourcing, the First Nations Curator and First Nations Assistant Curator initially relied upon their networks of personal and professional contacts in First Nations communities. Emails were sent to a large number of these contacts, as well as to each Local Aboriginal Land Council in NSW and several First Nations service organisations and representative bodies.

Consultation was open to all First Nations communities in Australia, but targeted consultation by *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team took place in NSW as it was impacted early by the British and was typically under-represented in the Museum's past.

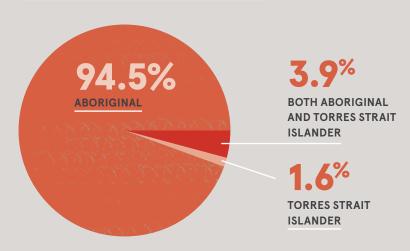
Invitations to participate in *The 2020 Project* community consultation process (summarised in the AM Director's 'Have your say!' accompanying letter) were issued verbally and via electronic media, namely email and the brief period on FacebookTM. *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team took up available opportunities to promote *The 2020 Project* community consultation, attending Indigenous events such as community lunch at Redfern Community Centre, NAIDOC in Hyde Park, and the 2018 Koori Knockout in Dubbo.

Interviews and focus groups were arranged upon request, following the obtaining of necessary cultural permissions. The First Nations Curator travelled to the North Coast, South Coast, and inland western regions of NSW to consult with communities and individuals. The First Nations Assistant Curator travelled to Western Sydney, South Sydney, and the Wollongong areas. In total, 12 focus groups of eight or more people were conducted alongside smaller groups and individual interviews.

Results

Question 1

Are you Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander?



805
First Nations
persons
responded
to the survey

739
persons identified as being Aboriginal

As far as *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team is aware, at least two of these responses came from persons who appear to have deceptively presented themselves as Aboriginal, based on assessment of their responses to other questions in the survey. Therefore, the more accurate figure for respondents specifically identifying as Aboriginal is revised to **737**.

24

persons identified as being from one or more specific Aboriginal cultural, language and/or community groups subsequently in Question Two.

However, regarding Question 1, 13 of these respondents preferred to instead indicate that they were 'Neither' Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons rather than identify under the term of 'Aboriginal' and the other 11 skipped this identification question altogether. Therefore, regarding the total number of Aboriginal persons responding to the survey, this figure of 24 can be added to the above 737 for a further revised total of **761** Aboriginal respondents.

13

persons identified as being Torres Strait Islander

31

persons identified as being both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Therefore,
761 + 13 + 31 = 805
respondents in
total can be
counted as First
Nations persons.
Five people skipped
this question.

60

respondents stated that they are neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander

(for the avoidance of doubt, this number does NOT include the 13 Aboriginal `Neither' respondents noted previously).

Under Question 2, 44 of these respondents specified their individual non-Indigenous cultural heritage, and a further 16 declined to furnish information of their individual cultural heritage so they are not considered in the survey results to be First Nations persons. This figure of 60 non-Indigenous respondents is interesting, considering the fact that the survey very explicitly stated that it was intended only for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons to have their say.

What is your Nation, language group or community?

The 2020 Project Curatorial Team asked this question to ensure that they received feedback and opinions from a range of different First Nations cultural, language, and community groups.

The majority of respondents identified a Nation, cultural, language group or clan as opposed to a community (region, suburb or town). There were 175 different Nations, cultural, language groups, and clans identified by the respondents. 113 of respondents identified as belonging to multiple Nations, groups, and clans.

13 people skipped this question.

53

participants identified 27 communities. The greatest being:

- Western Sydney (10 respondents);
- La Perouse (6 respondents);
- Wreck Bay (4 respondents); and
- Redfern (4 respondents).

Four of these identified communities were islands in the Torres Strait. 10 of these participants also identified a Nation, cultural, language group, or clan.

15

people identified with a regional term of identity as follows:

- Noongar (12 respondents);
- Murri (2 respondents); and
- Goori (1 respondent).

One respondent also identified their non-Indigenous heritage, one respondent also identified their South-Sea Islander heritage, and five respondents stated that they did not know their specific Nation, cultural, language group, or clan.

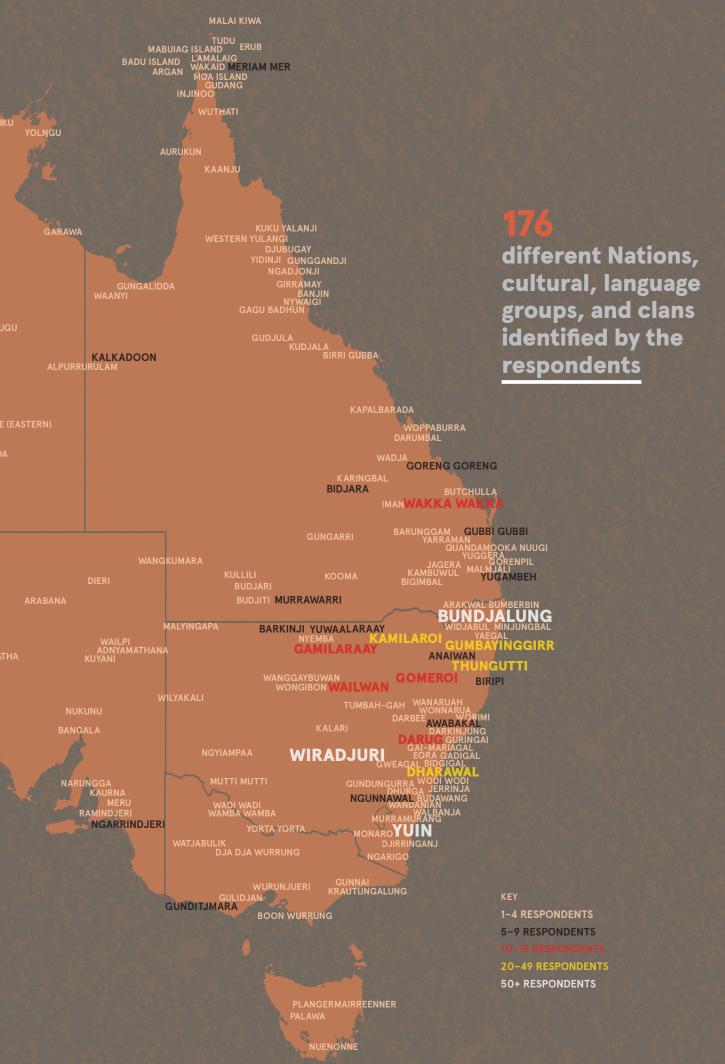
5 2

Adnyamathana Alpurrurulam Anaiwan Arabana Arakwal Bumberbin Aranda Argan Arrente Arrentre (Eastern) Aurukun Awabakal	2 1 7 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 7	Bidjara Bigimbal Biripi Birri Gubba Boon Wurrung Boorooberongal Budawang Budawang Budjari Budjiti Bundjalung Bunitj Butchulla	7 1 9 3 1 3 2 1 1 1 54 1	E Eora Erub G Gadigal Gagu Badhun Gai-mariagal Gamilaraay Garawa Girramay Gomeroi Goreng Goreng
Badu Island	1	Darbee	1	Gorenpil Gubbi Gubbi
Ballardong	1	Darkinjung	1	Gudang
Bangala	1	Darug	16	Gudjula
Banjima	1	Darumbal	1	Gulidjan
Banjin	1	Dharawal	25	Gumbayinggirr
Bardi	1	Dhurga	4	Gunditjmara
Bardi Jawi	1	Dieri	1	Gundungurra
Barkinji	5	Dja Dja Wurrung	1	Gungalidda
Barunggam	1	Djirringanj	1	Gungarri
Bibbulmun	2	Djubugay	1	Gunggandji
Bidgigal	3	Djugun	1	Gunnai

Gurindji	2	Minyunbal	1	Wajarri	3
Guringai	2	Mirning	2	Wakaid	1
Gweagal	1	Moa Island	1	Wakka Wakka	15
Gweagai	'	Monaro	2	Walbanja	1
		Mudburra	1	Wamba Wamba	2
				Wanaruah	1
lman	1	Murramurang	1	Wandanian	2
Inggarda	1	Murrawarri	6	Wanggaybuwan	1
Injinoo	1	Mutti Mutti	1	Wangkumara	1
lwaidja	1	N		Warramugu	2
J				Watjabulik	2
		Naaguja	2	Western Yulangi	1
Jagera	3	Narungga	1	Whadjuk	4
Jerrinja	2	Ngadjonji	1	Widjabul	1
K		Ngarigo	4	Wilyakali	1
K		Ngarinyin	1	Wiradjuri	115
Kaanju	2	Ngarrindjeri	6	Wirangu	2
Kalari	1	Ngunnawal	7	Wodi Wodi	1
Kalkadoon	7	Ngyiampaa	4	Wongibon	2
Kambuwul	1	Noongar	14	Wonnarua	3
Kamilaroi	48	Nuenonne	2	Woolwonga	1
Kapalbarada	1	Nukunu	1	Woppaburra	1
Karingbal	1	Nyemba	2	Worimi	7
Kaurna	1	Nywaigi	1	Wurunjueri	2
Kokatha	1			Wuthati	2
Kooma	4	P		vvutilati	2
Krautungalung	1	Palawa	3	Υ	
Kudjala	1	Palyku	1	Vaawal	4
Kuku Yalanji	1	Plangermairreenner	1	Yaegal	4
Kullili	1			Yamatji Yarraman	5 1
Kunwinjku	1	Q		Yawuru	
Kuyani	1	Quandamooka Nuugi	1	Yidinji	1
na yani	·	_		Yolngu	4
L		R		Yorta Yorta	3
Lamalaig	1	Ramindjeri	1	Yugambeh	8
Larrakia	1	rammajon.	·	Yuggera	1
Larrakia		T		Yuin	50
M		Thungutti / Dhungutti	33	Yuwaalaraay	7
Mabuiag Island	1	Tiwi	1	Tuwaatataay	,
Malai Kiwai	4	Tudu	1		
Malak Malak	1	Tumbah-gah	1		
Malmjali	-	Tallibali gali			
	1	W			
Malyingapa Mardi	1	Maanyi	7		
	1	Waanyi	3		
Martu Mariana Mar	2	Wadi Wadi	1		
Meriam Mer	5	Wadja	1		
Meru	1	Wailpi	1		
Minjungbal	2	Wailwan	18		



Note: Mapping has been distorted by text sizing.



What is your postcode?

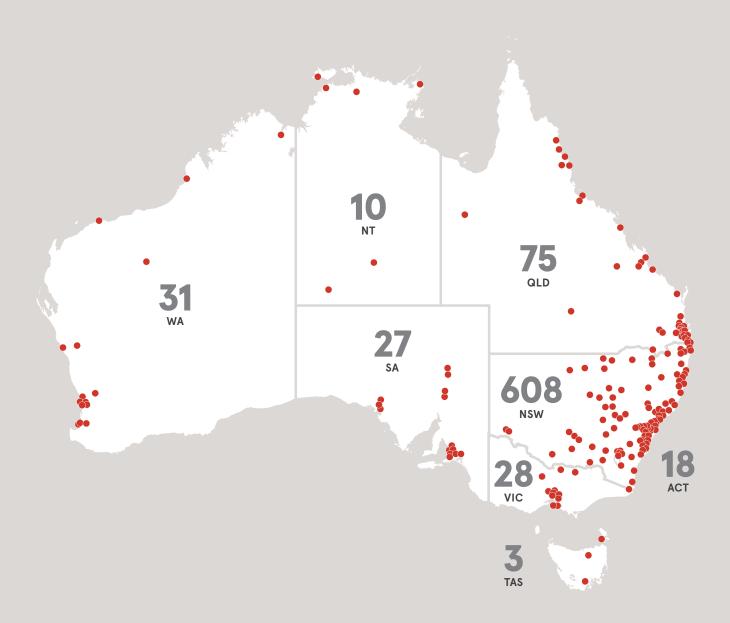
The 2020 Project Curatorial Team asked this question to ensure that they received feedback and opinions from a range of different First Nations persons from locations across Australia.

Every Australian State and major Territory (i.e. Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory) is represented within the respondent group, with the vast majority of respondents living in NSW.

Although 44 respondents identified as Torres Strait Islander, there were no responses from people in residence there. Urban, regional and remote areas are accounted for in the respondent group, with the vast majority of respondents living in urban areas.

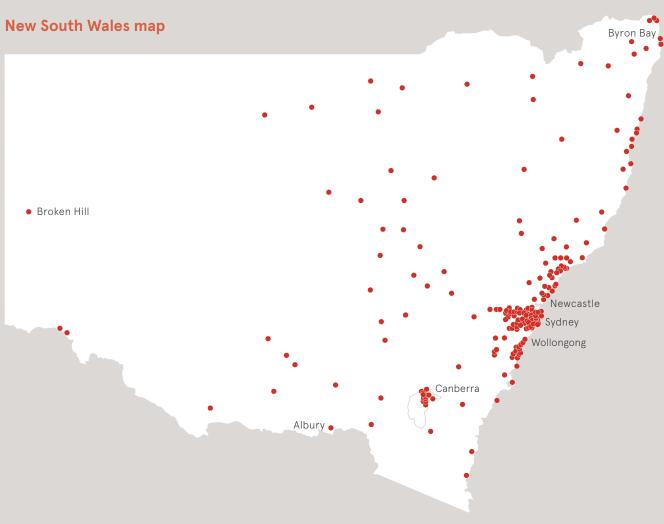
Five respondents skipped this question.

The map below shows the distribution of postcodes across Australia, and the total number of respondents from each state.



608 responses were received from NSW.





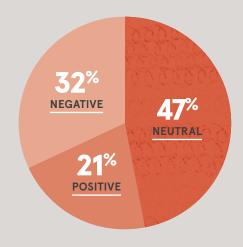
What word(s) or thought(s) come to mind when you think about the Australian Museum?

The 2020 Project Curatorial Team asked this question to understand First Nations peoples' personal reactions, opinions and experiences with the AM.

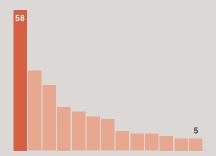
Some respondents identified answers that fit more than one category, producing a total of 1030 answers from the 805 respondents to accurately reflect their views.

This is valuable information for the AM to consider in terms of evaluating past and present performance in the area of First Nations audience engagement, and in prioritising the needs and interests of First Nations audiences in the present and future.

28 people skipped this question.



POSITIVE

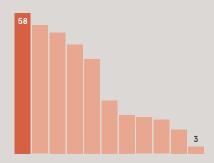


POSITIVE KEY WORDS

58 Positive expression or experience

- **33** A work in progress
- 27 Presence from Indigenous staff
- 18 Great platform to advocate for our people to share stories
- **16** Opportunity to connect and learn
- 14 Respectful, progressive, inclusive
- 13 Interesting and interested
- 8 Mentions current Indigenous exhibitions and/or programs
- 7 Historically important
- 7 Appreciation of its role, changed from previous negative opinion
- 6 Good for kids and families
- 5 Community outreach and engagement with communities
- 5 Role in cultural revival

NEGATIVE

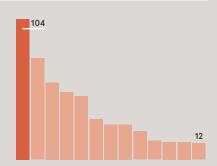


NEGATIVE KEY WORDS

58 WHITE: non-Indigenous control and representation, THEIR history

- 53 Negative description or expression eg. culturally unsafe, corrupt, ignorant, disrespectful, patronising
- **50** Not enough truth-telling, lack of Aboriginal perspectives
- 45 Colonial, colonialism, genocide
- **39** Theft, thieves, invaders, stolen
- 22 Biased, incomplete history, selective
- 16 Calls for repatriation
- **15** Lies, false information
- 14 Doesn't know AM but assumes it justifies and maintains systems of colonialism
- 10 Sadness, grief, loss, unhappy, anger
- **3** Othe

NEUTRAL



NEUTRAL KEY WORDS

104 History, historical

- 75 No thoughts, not sure, not interested
- 57 Collection: eg. dinosaurs, animals, insects, rocks, bones
- 50 Natural History Museum: collecting, storage, cultural heritage material, archives, artefacts, objects
- 47 Education, educational, knowledge
- **30** First Nations history, keeping place, holds objects, custodians
- 26 Australian history
- 26 Descriptive response: eg. museum, oldest, sandstone, building, tourist attraction or location
- 21 Exhibitions, public displays
- 14 Other
- 13 Art, arts, art gallery
- 13 Culture
- 12 Doesn't know Museum's location, incorrectly locates, describes it, refers to other institutions

Disclaimer: Responses have been compiled into common topics



Snapshot of Question 4 responses

'Interesting place, that holds artifacts and records both oral, written and photographic pertaining to my people.'

'Fantastic. I bring my children there every year as it is diverse in topics with many physical examples.'

'History, dinosaurs, a museum that is trying to break free from the dark history of ethnography regarding Indigenous exhibits.'

'I always thought that it was a whitewashed institution until I had the pleasure of seeing the 'GADI' exhibition. I am aware that there are Aboriginal employees with strong, staunch voices advocating for representation. I am excited to see what will come next.'

'Selective representation of true history.'

'Sandstone box that holds our old people, displaced.'

Disclaimer: Quotes have been reproduced verbatim.

'That a few years ago i was allowed to view the private Aboriginal Collection of the Museum and it meant more to me then you will ever know. I thought so much of my culture was lost, and yet in that room, I could clearly see that it still exists. That would have been the most memorable event of my life, except for the birth of my sons'.

'It's a good museum, but it's still a museum. And all the cultural theft/ issues/etc that goes along with that.'

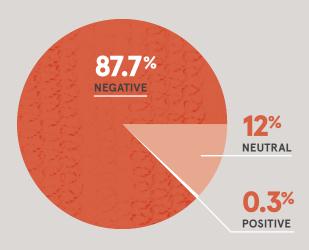
'Traditional museum. Lack of Indigenous voice.'

'Structure of white privilege and palace of stolen cultural heritage.'

'Not sure, don't know much about it. Don't get up to Sydney.'

'Don't know much about it, haven't been to or even know where it's located.'

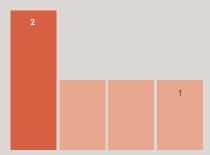
What word(s) or thought(s) come to mind when you hear or see the name Captain James Cook?



Some respondents identified answers that fit more than one category, producing a total of 1309 answers from the 805 respondents to accurately reflect their views.

Six people skipped this question.

POSITIVE



NEGATIVE

145

POSITIVE KEY WORDS 2 Birth of great nation

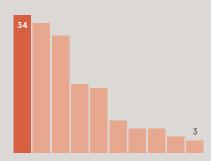
- 1 First settlement
- 1 Resilience
- 1 Learned, moral

NEGATIVE KEY WORDS

145 Invasion, invader

- **143** Negative feelings, expressions
- 99 Murderer, killer, slaughter
- 77 Liar, fraud, deception, con-man, broke the King's orders
- 72 Thief, theft, pillaging, greed
- 58 Colonialism, oppression
- 53 Distorted, false Australian history, myths, whitewash, ethnocentrism
- 51 Holocaust, genocide
- **43** Negative effects of colonisation, assimilation, disease, addiction
- **39** Rape, rapist
- 39 Land grabber
- 38 Destruction, terrorism
- **35** Other
- 32 Massacres, death
- 29 Whiteness, white, white privilege
- 29 Racist, racism, white supremacy
- 26 False Terra Nullius, no man's land
- 24 War, criminal, convicts
- 23 Insignificant, had enough attention
- 21 Negative personality descriptor
- 20 Ignorance, disrespectful
- 20 Taught lies School
- 20 Dispossession
- 13 Anti-monument and statue

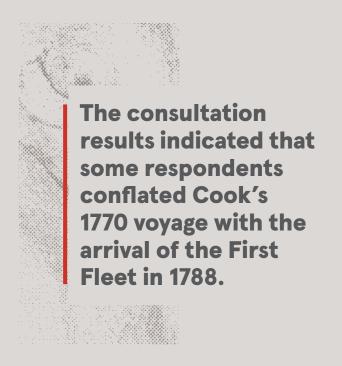
NEUTRAL



NEUTRAL KEY WORDS

34 Mixed emotions

- **32** Description: Lieutenant, Captain, Admiral, conquer, military, botanist, following orders
- 29 Explorer, navigator
- 17 Other
- **16** History
- 8 Seafarer, pioneer
- 6 Change
- 6 Mixed descriptors: blame, empire, lucky
- 4 Object description: Endeavour, ship
- **3** First contact, discovery



Snapshot of Question 5 responses

'Pirate. Thief. Murderer. Invader. Genocide. Though he is just one white man among many who ensured the dispossession of our people.'

'Racist murderer who set the bench mark for convicts against my people. Massacre, slavery, pain and suffering.'

`Landgrabber!'

'Murderer, Racism, History, Stolen land.'

'Coloniser, Oppressor, White supremecy, Rape, pillage, murder. No respect'

'Criminal both to aboriginal people and to his king of England as he disobey his orders to make friends with the natives and liar called Australia unoccupied'

'I feel that Captain Cook was a racist, bigoted, evil individual who completely dismissed the humanity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. He was the root cause for colonisation and genocidal practices.'

'I remember learning in school that Captian Cook 'discovered' Australia? i remeber questioning this and telling the teacher that I was always told something very diffrent than this at home and i remeber quietly being shut down and told it was a peaceful process that everyone got along well and there was never any violence'

'I acknowledge his bravery and leadership but am aware that he was the leader of a genocidal colonizing force that bought great trouble to this land. I am also aware that he was effectively the head warden of a prison complex that was directly related to class bias. I see many early convicts as essentially political prisoners.'

'Explorer, humanist, product of the time, journalist, man of vision, negotiator – let's face it, if it wasn't him, it would have been someone else or some other explorer from another European country. His original intent was to observe the solar eclipse in Tahiti and explore other parts of the Pacific and 'found' Australia for the Western world, what happened after that was determined by the British Government/Monarchy.'

'He's a criminal and a liar. To me, Captain
Cook represents the quest of the British
empire to spread across land. I'm reminded
of the egocentric worldview of white
people at this time and their mission to
destroy other cultures for the success of their
own. As an Indigenous person, I can only
associate the story of Cook with being the
beginning of colonisation and the violence
and genocide that came with it.'

'As a descendant of the people that moved throughout Botany Bay at the time of first contact, it is a part of our history and one that reflects the resilience of our people.'

Disclaimer: Quotes have been reproduced verbatim.

What topic(s) or issue(s) would you like the Australian Museum to address in an exhibition that responds to the anniversary of the 1770 events?

Respondents gave multiple answers regarding the objectives, themes, and topics that they would like to see addressed in *The 2020 Project*.

Percentages given are the number of respondents who identified a specific topic or objective.

18 people skipped this question.

It was possible to ascertain two key objectives and four clear themes that First Nations respondents want addressed by *The 2020 Project*. This was determined by the number of responses received per topic, theme and objective.

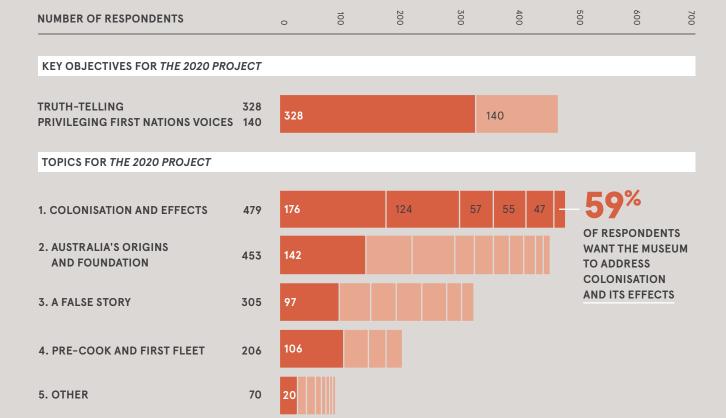
- 328 Truth-telling about Australia's history the true story of Cook and the foundation of Australia (40.74%); and
- 140 Privileging First Nations voices and perspectives (17.4%).

40%

OF FIRST NATIONS
RESPONDENTS WANT
THE TRUE STORY
OF COOK AND THE
FOUNDATION OF
AUSTRALIA TOLD

17%

OF FIRST NATIONS
RESPONDENTS WANT
TO PRIVILEGE FIRST
NATIONS VOICES
AND PERSPECTIVES



Other objectives identified in the consultation:

- 37 Being inclusive and balanced in representation
- 29 Advocating the spirit of repatriation, restitution, compensation
- 21 Ensuring that First Nations peoples contribute to, or participate in *The 2020 Project* through employment and partnerships
- 18 Treating First Nations peoples with sensitivity and respect

From analysing the Question 6 data in detail, the following content topics for *The 2020 Project* have been identified (ranked in order of importance, determined by the number of responses received per topic).

1. Colonisation and effects

479 respondents (59.52%)

- 176 What happened, impacts, ongoing (21.86%)
- 124 Massacres, murders, killing (15.4%)
- 57 Dispossession: loss of culture, land, language (ethnocide) (7.1%)
- **55** Assimilation, genocide (6.83%)
- **47** Stolen Generations (5.84%)
- **20** Ecological disaster and destruction of land (2.49%)

2. Australia's origins and foundation 453 respondents (56.27%)

- 142 Wars, Indigenous resistance, First Nations sovereignty was never ceded (17.64%)
- 78 Legal foundation: why colonization happened in Australia, the chain of events, the legal doctrine/ fiction of Terra Nullius (9.68%)
- 72 It was invasion, not settlement (8.94%)
- **33** No discovery (4.09%)
- 32 James Cook's life, details, truth from his records, encounters, and how he treated us (3.97%)
- 27 Sydney references (3.35%)
- 24 Cook disobeyed his orders, he lied, committed immoral and illegal acts, for personal exploitation and wealth (2.98%)
- 20 Truth of 1770 events and first experiences (2.48%)
- First Nations peoples are not savages, and the British are not superior or more advanced than First Nations peoples (1.49 %)
- 13 International visitors before Cook (1.61%)

3. A false story: Contemporary effects and experiences

305 respondents (37.9%)

- 97 Representation in the media, Australian education system, the government does not teach the truth, lies, keeps us oppressed, makes them not proud of us (12.04%)
- 53 Nationalism: celebrating anniversaries, the flags, why this is bad, it is a time of mourning (6.58%)
- 43 Resilience and survival (5.34%)
- **43** Our heroes and leaders (5.34%)
- 42 Racism and discrimination have been enacted through treatment and policies imposed on First Nations peoples (ethnocentrism), racist legislation (5.21%)
- **25** Treaty (3.10%)
- **21** Healing (2.60%)

4. Pre-Cook and the First Fleet

206 respondents (25.6%)

- 106 Our culture, laws, society, family, spiritual beliefs, knowledges, daily life, peaceful colonization disturbed the peace (13.2%)
- 70 Agriculture, aquaculture, astronomy, trade, economy (8.69%)
- **30** Oldest living culture, we have always been here (3.73%)

5. Other

70 respondents (8.69%)

- 20 Cook is not a hero or saviour (2.48%)
- 12 Cook (negative descriptor): he was disrespectful, ignorant, arrogant, disturbed the peace, was an invader, evil (1.49%)
- 12 Include a comprehensive timeline, recognizing significant events (1.49%)
- 8 Other (0.99%)
- **6** Specific project suggestions (e.g. performances, image references, stories) (0.74%)
- 5 Don't know or left blank (0.62%)
- 4 No Cook or Cook-related things (0.49%)
- **3** Try for some positive approach (0.37%)

Disclaimer: Responses have been compiled into common topics

Snapshot of Question 6 responses

'The truth about what happened.
Not the fairytale story, Aboriginal
people to tell the story. Didn't
welcome him with open arms.'

'Recognition! Push the idea of education and reconciliation. How to address ingrained racism and underrepresentation. Addressing the idea of 'getting over it' and that's not being a possibility.'

'True history, Frontier wars, profile key warriors, after invasion. The chain of events that led on from first contact in 1770: first, fleet, lack of treaty etc.'

'To debunk the myth that Captain Cook discovered Australia. To show / uncover the way that Aboriginal country was entered disrespectfully. To give an example of what coming into country respectfully could have looked like. Want to see massacres of our people addressed. Want to see healing of the atrocities of the past.'

'The real story not the one we have been taught in school and by the government, the people's story.'

'Dont focus on cook, lets talk about us, its our land. Tell the truth what really happened to our people.'

'How our mob over came captain cook.'

`The truth!! An exhibit showing an Aboriginal perspective.'

`The history and strength of Aboriginal people focusing on resilience.'

'Real resistance fighters stories and the ongoing impact colonisation has on indigenous Australians.'

'Tell the truth about the history of Australia since 1770 and onwards up until today ... There is one history of Australia since that day and the truth needs to be told and understood before we will ever see reconciliation in this.'

`Explanation of the massacres and disease and devastation suffered because of the arrival of Cook.'

'Improve misunderstanding and miscommunication. We want people to be proud of our heritage and to understand why Aboriginal people are upset.'

'I don't know. I am emotional now!'

'Indigenous sciences including agriculture, fire farming, environmental management. How the environment was maintained by the peoples.'

'Myths about discovery, educating the public, celebrating our connections to country and place, sharing our knowledge and connections to country to inform the wider community about our ancestors' innovation and reilience.'

'That every non indigenous persons living or visiting Australia is standing on proud aboriginal land and must learn or experience and acknowledge what captain cook and his men have done to our people.'

`Focus on First Nations views – which are complex and diverse'.

'Topics that bring to light the achievements prior to and since Cook's arrival of our people in being the inheritors of the world's oldest living culture, navigators, farmers, inventors, artists etc etc would put his achievements into a truer perspective. It would be interesting to also highlight that Cook's arrival wasn't the first or the last of non-Indigenous people in Australia.'

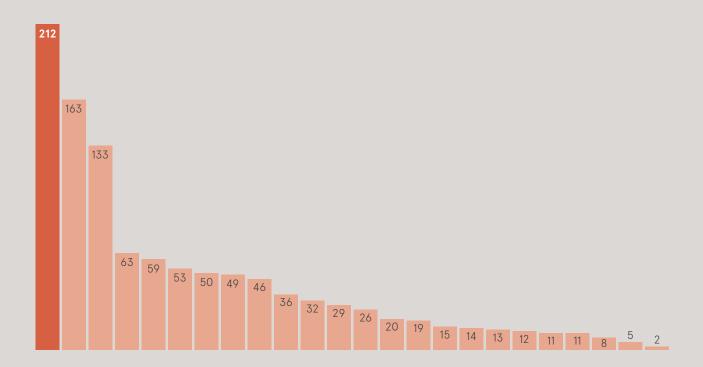
'While we cannot go back and change the history of the landing, I believe we really do need to start to show the whole of Australia and the world just how much influence **Aboriginal peoples and** cultures had on the Australian landscape and that of the fauna [...] The broader non **Aboriginal community** needs to be made aware that a harmony can be achieved by utilising some of our practices.'

Disclaimer: Quotes have been reproduced verbatim.

What is something you would NOT want to see in an exhibition regarding Cook and the events of 1770? And why?

Some respondents identified answers that fit more than one category, producing a total of 1081 answers from the 805 respondents to accurately reflect their views.

43 respondents skipped this question.



212 No praise, glorification, not a hero

- 163 No false history (including current and past school curriculum on this topic), whitewash, colonial fiction
- 133 No discovery, discovered
- 63 No celebrations, fanfare
- 59 No glorification of colonisation, massacres
- 53 No racist views, mainstream views, political propaganda
- 50 Nothing should be omitted, tell everything, the good, bad, ugly
- 49 No Cook
- 46 No peaceful arrival, welcome, friendly relations, settlement
- **36** No flag (English/Australian), altered flag, colonial uniform, colonial artefacts
- 32 No statues, monuments, re-enactments
- 29 No depiction of native, primitive, sub-human
- 26 No Terra Nullius, empty land, land not occupied

- 20 No response or opinion
- 19 Not just Cook
- No depictments of white people unless done by First Nations people
- No graphic, unapproved, inaccurate or unnamed images or content (adding to trauma and which objectify)
- 13 No (white) victory
- 12 No white involvement, control, employment
- 11 No ships, First Fleet
- 11 No bones of my people, dead First Nations people, sacred content and artefacts, Secret knowledge
- 8 Other
- 5 No use of word 'invasion', relating to Cook
- 2 No absence of First Nations symbols, flags, colours

Disclaimer: Responses have

been compiled into common topics

Snapshot of Question 7 responses

'No Captain Cook .'

'Show all, no holding back on Cook he is part of history. Cook is important.'

'Captain Cook. Arthur Phillip. Any of the others ... Ships . They don't teach us anything but they 'Traumatise' LOTS.'

'The false history that the media, government and schools try to say is true but is devisive to make Aboriginal people look bad [...]'

'Celebrating his 'heroism' because he is not a hero. No sense of celebration what so ever. Because like I said before it is not a time of celebration it is a time of sadness, heartache and mourning.'

'Use of images of First People's without naming them, this dehumanises them and positions them as objects. Perpetuation of the hero narrative of the colonisers. Erasure of the histories of First People's – I'm tired of the violence perpetuated against us within exhibits which imply terranullius and the hunter gatherer lie. Or present our existence as only historical, not present day. Or only being arts and dance.'

'The continued 'white-washing' of history, and the celebration of invasion and colonisation.'

Absolutely do not want to see Cook being portrayed as a hero in any shape or form....

Discovery is a lie, particularly when our people have been here for thousands of years. It is so disrespectful to Koori communities today and our warriors who defended our lands.

Do not want to see the Union Jack displayed, as symbolism is everything and this flag does not represent the true sovereign peoples of this land. No statues or portraits of Cook.'

`colonisation, promoting Cook as the birthplace of a nation as this is false history.'

'Honestly, I have zero respect for Cook. So I personally would rather see nothing, in fact I dread the anniversary because all we will hear is the voices of white people and what a hero Cook is which makes me ill to the stomach. I will be avoiding all celebrations that involve the invasion/oppression and transgenerational trauma of my people.'

'The exaggeration of Cook's landing as being peaceful and their encounters with the Aboriginal peoples. Because it was biased and racial.'

'Huge memorials to Cook, we live constantly reminded of this 'event', we don't need to see a concentration of it. Enactments of Cook's landing; it's painful, like it's happening all over again. Glorification of colonisation [...] British flags, guns, red & blue coats....'

Disclaimer: Quotes have been reproduced verbatim.

Critical Summary

The survey responses will be used by The 2020 Project Curatorial Team to privilege First Nations perspectives and stories as part of a positive vision which reframes the ethnocentric Anglo-Australian foundation narrative. The below critical summary of issues is based on the survey results alongside secondary research carried out by The 2020 Project Curatorial Team.

The First Nations respondents critically engaged with ideas around how a colonial institution such as the AM and the medium of a museum exhibition could be effective platforms for change in challenging the national narrative structured around Cook, which had effectively displaced First Nations histories and disempowered First Nations peoples.

In light of debates around the Australian education system being considered as 'a tool of colonisation' and the need for spaces based on Indigenous ways of learning and perspectives, the AM, as an institution which similarly teaches knowledge and disseminates information, should reflect on how it can value principles of Indigenous self-determination and act upon them to balance how history is constructed in Australia.

The consultation data illustrates a trend of changing perceptions about the Museum by First Nations respondents, acknowledging that the Museum is improving its practices regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection, interpretation of these objects and Aboriginal culture and history within the Museum.

Former consultant to the United Nations (UN) cultural organisation, UNESCO, Dr Ragbir Bhathal recently wrote a critical essay about the need in Australia for a museum which has the primary task to tell the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, and politics.³ His advice regarding a standalone 'museum of the First Peoples of Australia' could also be applied to how museum exhibitions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, histories, and cultures should be developed.

In an interview on ABC Radio with Linda Mottram, Dr Bhathal noted that such exhibitions are more often than not curated and controlled by non-Indigenous curators. In his opinion, the curators of these exhibitions should be First Nations people, and the job of curators 'should be telling the truth and they should be the strong supporters of telling the truth'.

In his general overview of Australia's regional and state museums, he states that:6

'The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices of dissent are not seen through black eyes but through the eyes of the descendants of the invaders.'

Dr Bhathal goes on to say that museums 'have to be places for social change', and that:⁷

'The voices of the Indigenous peoples need to be heard, interpreted and given centre stage in the history and culture of the nation through their eyes. Their history has shaped the Australia we have today. They can no longer be relegated to second rate status or silenced.'

This research backs up *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team's vision for *The 2020 Project*'s exhibition to prioritise First Nations in responding to the 1770 events and the aftermath.

First Nations respondents voiced their strong desire for truth-telling about Australia's history and nationhood. This trend is consistent with the topic of truth-telling becoming high profile and of common usage in recent times, for example, the identification of it as a priority for Australia in the Federal Government's Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Interim and Final Reports.⁸

These results correlate with Reconciliation Australia's 2018 national reconciliation barometer survey findings, which indicated that an overwhelming majority of Australians support a formal process of truth-telling, and most Australians 'accept key facts about historical realities and Australia's past institutional prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.9

The 2020 Project Curatorial Team argues that based on community feedback in the survey results, Cook's arrival in 1770 had paved the way for the invasion of the First Fleet in Warrane (Sydney Cove) in 1788, leading to the devastating effects of colonisation such as disease, massacres, and racist policies which have contributed to present disadvantage and intergenerational trauma experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Conclusion

In the opinion of *The 2020 Project* Curatorial Team, the pervasive narrative of Cook being the 'founding father' of modern Australia through his 'discovery' of this continent appears to be further reinforced through exhibitions and programming which prominently focus on him and his achievements, regardless of the degree in which other perspectives are also presented. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, perspectives, and accounts essentially compete with those of Cook and his crew.

As the First Nations community consultation data indicates, the role that Cook plays in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories is very different and contrasts with how he features in Anglo-Australian narratives.

As stated by Maria Nugent in her 2009 book, Cook Was Here:10

'Aboriginal people use the character called Captain Cook to tell histories of their relations with white people, to explain their plight under British colonization, to mark time before and after the arrival of colonists and settlers, and to outline their vision of a future that restores their law and sovereignty, among other things.'

The arrival of Cook provides a focal point for the exploration of Indigenous perspectives, experiences and attitudes. However, Cook himself or the mythology that surrounds him are not essential to this exploration.

- ² McQuire, H. (2019, 14 February). As an Aboriginal child I had to listen while taught Captain Cook 'discovered' Australia, *The Guardian*: https://www.theguardian.com/ commentisfree/2019/feb/14/as-an-aboriginal-child-i-had-to-listen-in-classwhile-taught-captain-cook-discovered-australia (accessed 18/02/2019).
- ³ See Bhathal, R. (2018, 20 December). Why not a museum of the First Peoples of Australia, *Campus Review*: https://www.campusreview.com.au/2018/12/why-not-a-museum-of-the-first-peoples-of-australia/ (accessed 18/02/2019).
- Mottram, L. (2019, 21 January). Former UNESCO consultant asks, why isn't there a museum of the First Peoples of Australia? ABC News: https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/why-isn%E2%80%99t-there-a-museum-of-the-first-peoples-of-australia/10733386 (accessed 18/02/2019).
- Mottram, L. (2019, 21 January). Former UNESCO consultant asks, why isn't there a museum of the First Peoples of Australia? ABC News: https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/pm/why-isn%E2%80%99t-there-a-museum-of-the-first-peoples-of-australia/10733386 (accessed 18/02/2019).
- ⁶ Bhathal, R. (2018, 20 December). Why not a museum of the First Peoples of Australia, Campus Review: https://www.campusreview.com.au/2018/12/whynot-a-museum-of-the-first-peoples-of-australia/ (accessed 18/02/2019).

- Bhathal, R. (2018, 20 December). Why not a museum of the First Peoples of Australia, Campus Review: https://www.campusreview.com.au/2018/12/whynot-a-museum-of-the-first-peoples-of-australia/ (accessed 18/02/2019).
- ⁸ Australian Federal Government (2018). Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Canberra: Author): https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/ Constitutional_Recognition_2018 (accessed 12/03/2019).
- Reconciliation Australia (2018). 2018 Australian Reconciliation Barometer (Kingston, ACT: Author), p. 3; and Smee, B. (2019, 11 February). Truth-telling: 80% say past injustices against Indigenous people should be recognized, The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/feb/11/ truth-telling-80-say-past-injustices-against-indigenous-people-should-berecognised (accessed 25/02/2019).
- Nugent, M. (2009). Captain Cook Was Here (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press), p. 106.

Appendices

Have your say!



Dear friends,

Re: The 2020 Project

The Australian Museum (AM) respects the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to represent themselves and their culture within the Australian Museum. We understand that historically the museum has not fully respected those rights.

In 2020, Australia faces the 250th anniversary of first contact with the British on the East Coast of Australia by Lieutenant James Cook (1770). Historically, Aboriginal voices and perspectives on these events, and their consequences, have been largely ignored.

Given this one-sided view of history, the Australian Museum would like to provide a platform for Aboriginal communities to respond to the events of 1770 and ongoing consequences through *The 2020 Project*. This project will result in an Indigenous-led exhibition and/or programming, events and outreach in the year 2020.

To understand what topics and stories Aboriginal communities would like to have told, the AM's First Nations team will be conducting consultation, focused within NSW, from July to October 2018. We invite you to have your say, to tell us what themes and narratives you would like to see addressed.

You can have your say by completing The 2020 Project Survey and/or by contacting the First Nations team to arrange an interview or meeting.

Email: the2020project@austmus.gov.au

Phone: (02) 9320 6410

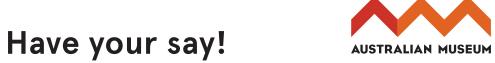
We thank you for your participation and feedback.

Kim McKay AO

Director & CEO

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM 1 William Street Sydney NSW 2010 Australia australianmuseum.net.au T 61 2 9320 6410 E the2020project@austmus.gov.au

Appendix 1: 'Have your say!' letter from the Director of the Australian Museum



This is a voluntary survey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The information from this survey will be used to formulate a topical response from the Aboriginal communities about the events of 1770 for exhibition (and/or programming) within the Australian Museum.

Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Both
What is your N	ation, language group or commu	nity (optional)?
What is your po	ostcode?	
What word/s o	or thought/s come to mind when	you think about the Australian Museum?
	or thought/s first come to mind w	hen you hear or see the name Captain
	or thought/s first come to mind w	hen you hear or see the name Captain
	or thought/s first come to mind w	when you hear or see the name Captain
What word/s o James Cook?	or thought/s first come to mind w	hen you hear or see the name Captain
	or thought/s first come to mind w	then you hear or see the name Captain

Appendix 2: 'Have your say!' seven question survey, page 1

What topics or issue	es would you like the Australian Museum to ac	ddress in an
	onds to the anniversary of the 1770 events?	
What is something y	ou would not want to see in an exhibition reg	garding Cook
and the events of 17	70? And why?	

Appendix 2: 'Have your say!' seven question survey, page 2

The 2020 Project: First Nations Community Consultation Report 2019

The 2020 Project team
Australian Museum
1 William Street Sydney
NSW 2010 Australia
T + 61 2 9320 6410
E the 2020 project @austmus.gov.au

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1 William Street Sydney NSW 2010 Australia T +61 2 9320 6000 australianmuseum.net.au