



Marion Scrymgour
MINISTER FOR ARTS AND MUSEUMS

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GREAT TERRITORIAN TO BE HONOURED AT MUSEUM

The Territory's very first director of the Museum and Arts Gallery will be honoured with the naming of the Maritime Gallery at the Museum and Art Gallery.

"The Colin Jack-Hinton Maritime Gallery will be a permanent acknowledgement of over two decades of dedication from a man who single-handedly took on the job in 1970; rebuilt after Cyclone Tracy; and in 1981 realised the dream of our permanent facility at Bullocky Point," said Ms Scrymgour.

"Through sheer persistence and—at times—fabulous bloody-mindedness, he then raised the resources to get the Maritime Gallery up in 1992.

"Arguably, Colin Jack-Hinton was the father of Australian maritime archaeology, and 20 years of collecting maritime material culture was realised in what he often joked was his 'boat shed'.

"So it's absolutely fitting that the Northern Territory honours Colin Jack-Hinton's life's work in such a manner."

Ms Scrymgour said that a formal dedication of the re-named Gallery would take place in a few weeks time.

"His funeral was held in New Zealand last Wednesday, and it is his family's wish that his ashes are scattered in Darwin Harbour," she said.

"Given his great love of the sea, and of Darwin itself, it seems all the more appropriate that the Maritime Gallery at Bullocky Point will carry his memory."

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****Media Note: Adjournment attached.**

Adjournment

**Marion Scrymgour, Minister for Arts and Museums
Member for Arafura**

Dr Colin Jack-Hinton

Marine archaeologist, museum director

1 January 1933. Died 22 March 2006

Madam Speaker,

I rise tonight to pay tribute to a Territorian who contributed an enormous amount to the cultural life for us all.

Dr Colin Jack-Hinton, the inaugural director of the Museum of Arts and Sciences, passed away last Wednesday with his family in New Zealand. His funeral was held this afternoon in New Zealand

Perhaps it was the fervently independent Highland Scots from his mother's side, but for one brought up in an "ecclesiastical household", his life was to be far from conventional, ranging from the military to academic life, from accusations of being a spy, to dogged battles with government and bureaucracy in pursuit of Aboriginal rights, close links with south east Asia and the Pacific, and environmental protection, that were far from popular at the time. Somewhere in between all that, he managed to establish the Northern Territory museum and art gallery, organise international boat races, learn six languages, and write scores of books and papers.

Colin Jack-Hinton was born 1 January 1933 in the village of Newchurch on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire. He had an ordinary education at church elementary and grammar schools bolstered by extensive reading, especially about Africa and, through his child's eye, "the exotic east". He remembered spending much of the war years in the cellar, avoiding German bombing raids.

It included a vivid memory one night of being taken out by his ARP Warden father, to witness the distant glow of the firebombing of Coventry, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. He developed "like most Highland Scots, a theological mind, you know ... not so much religion, but about the reality of what life is all about". As much as anything to escape the kinds of professional career expected of him, he joined the army at 18, serving till 1953 with the Gordon Highlanders, including time as a lieutenant during the Malayan Emergency. It was to be a pivotal experience. "Having gone out to Malaya, that had really buggered me for life, because I was so fascinated by the east, that it was a complete changing part in my life".

After second class honours in history and politics at Kings College, University of Aberdeen, Jack-Hinton joined the Overseas Civil Service and was posted to Malaita in the Solomons between 1957-59, and as assistant secretary to the Western Pacific High Commission. Although he served as a political officer, magistrate and community and agricultural development officer, he was hardly your usual colonial factotum. Apart from the politics he never abandoned—"by the time I was 15 I was a dedicated communist, thank God the army never discovered that subsequently, and I fortunately never joined anything"—there was a growing fascination and engagement with the peoples of the Pacific and south east Asia. He was subsequently to publish PhD research on the Solomons, and between 1959-62 joined the department of Pacific history at the ANU researching Portuguese maritime expansion from the 16th century.

Now married with two daughters, Jack-Hinton's life during the 1970s was that of the peripatetic academic, travelling and researching widely in the Pacific and as far a field as Portugal.

A stint employed at the University of Singapore from 1962-65, teaching and supervising archaeological sites on the Malay peninsula was brought short. Caught between the paranoia of Lee Kwan Yew and the rise of Sukarno, the tension of *konfrontasi* led to threats of charges of spying for the British, which he denied, and a quick exit—this time to the Western Australian museum. From 1965-69 he worked on Australia's first professional marine archaeology projects, retrieving, restoring and displaying Dutch East Indies shipwrecks, including early work on the *Gilt Dragon*, and establishment of the Fremantle maritime museum. It was from this experience he garnered the unofficial title of “father of marine archaeology” in Australia largely, he said, “because no one had ever done it before”.

His appointment as inaugural director of the Northern Territory museum of arts and sciences in 1970 was an inspired choice, and followed recommendations urging the establishment of a museum in Darwin at a 1968 conference on prehistoric monuments and antiquities in Australia. But, like so many approaches to the Northern Territory—Jack-Hinton described it “as a colony of Canberra” on many occasions—everything was to be done on a shoestring: his initial operational and collections budget was \$3000. Trained by the British colonial service, it was a game of poacher turned gamekeeper as Jack-Hinton was to prove an adept and diligent scrounger of resources locally, as well as from his colonial Canberra masters. It was aided by a studied indifference to the bureaucracy: “rules are, in my opinion, created usually by idiots to be administered by idiots, and avoided by those who know what they are doing”. The initial collection “was almost non-existent” and was housed in the decaying shell of the old Palmerston Town Hall. Lacking a vehicle, he bought a 4 wheel drive and sent the bill to Canberra, much to the horror of the local bureaucrats. Almost certainly illegally, he insured the building and its contents in the name of the museum board—something that was to prove a prescient move. Cyclone Tracy destroyed the building and much of the collection: the insurance pay-out helped re-build the collection.

Just as importantly he adopted a boots and all approach to the museum and its collection, identifying from the first six months of his tenure the focus of the nation's only museum in the tropics. Citing its proximity to south east Asia—Darwin was “a south east Asian city as much as an Australian city, in a geographical and ... cultural sense”—a major focus was taken on the art and material culture of the region. For reasons which now seem obvious, but virtually unheard of at the time, Aboriginal art from northern and central Australia was to occupy a central role for the museum. Uniquely for the time, he recognised the importance of this element of the collection as “more than obvious to the Aborigines themselves ... in preserving (and) regenerating a necessary pride and interest in his and past on the part of the Aborigine ... in these traumatic times of cultural change”. He launched into extensive field trips for the collection on the Tiwi islands, Gunbalanya and Maningrida, often accompanied by rock art specialist George Chaloupka. In his turn Chaloupka, with strong encouragement from Jack-Hinton, began the task of recording over 2000 rock art sites, as well as early work on recording sacred sites—a task taken on a decade later by the Sacred Sites Authority. As an important foot note to the history of central desert art, Jack-Hinton signed off on the delivery of the first three consignments of painted boards from Papunya.

Early in the piece, Jack-Hinton realised that there was little point in collecting the work of famous European artists. It wasn't just a matter of prohibitive cost: it was also an issue of the Museum's art collection representing the Northern Territory to the world in ways its Indigenous holdings couldn't. Between 1980-91, as part of a joint inspiration with internationally respected Australian artist Frank Hodgkinson, Jack-Hinton hosted an annual artists' camp in Kakadu. It was not an attempt to establish a late 20th century answer to the Heidelberg School—far from it—it was an era too far and the artists involved were far too diverse for that. It was to be work “inspired by northern Australia”. Led by Hodgkinson for the first half dozen years, the artists' camps included Clifton Pugh, John Firth-Smith, David Aspden, Tim Storrier and Colin Lancely in the first four years, followed by many others in the succeeding seven, including artists from Malaysia, the UK and Canada. Annual group or one-person shows followed each year, and while some works were acquired for the museum, many more formed a tradition of donations from the artists to the permanent collection.

And it was the museum he lived for. Partly as a result of federal funds for re-building; partly from the pay out from his barely-legal Cyclone Tracy insurance pay out; mostly from lobbying, Jack-Hinton achieved the seemingly impossible in 1981 with the construction of the museum at Bullocky Point. After initial hostile relations with the then Chief Minister Paul Everingham, he eventually succeeded in overseeing the opening in September 1981 of the Bullocky Point museum. In celebrating its 25th anniversary later this year, we will not forget Jack-Hinton's contribution.

Madam Speaker,

Most people who go in for collecting go for small things like stamps or antique clocks. With typical extravagance of form and style, Colin Jack-Hinton collected boats—boats of all sizes and shapes.

While doing everything else, Jack-Hinton was quietly collecting for his beloved “boat shed”, and what was to become over time the maritime gallery of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

With the certain knowledge that the immediate region of south eastern Indonesia represented one of the richest traditions of wooden sea going craft in the world, Colin Jack-Hinton spent 20 years steadily accumulating the collection that even today overflows the Maritime Gallery at Bullocky Point. They include everything from fishing boats to boats used by refugees to reach our northern shores. The Australian Customs service were a constant target: a new boat would turn up and he would be down there: “Yes Colin, we've been waiting for you” he would be greeted, with a chance to acquire the latest seizure for the museum. This collection of boats would ultimately form the basis for the superb maritime collection at the museum at Bullocky Point, which was finally built in 1992. Prior to that, much of it has been stored in the old Parap picture theatre.

I have said that Colin Jack-Hinton was a constant resister of government interference. As he said:

I always felt I was never really part of government. I always felt myself as being the museum, in a sense agin government, because unless government was on my side, and helping, then I was agin them, because they were agin me.

He was to face this in spades in the early part of the 1990s. In many ways, especially after Mike Reed became the arts minister. In a sense, the culture wars that were played out a decade later in the rest of the nation, were played out here in the Territory. The then-government sought to re-make Jack-Hinton's vision of a museum and art gallery as an institution that would represent ideas of Indigenous and south east Asian connections, and replace it with a narrow folk museum of the pastoral industry and colonial conquest. Reed stacked the board with the specific intent of removing Colin Jack-Hinton—and he ultimately achieved Jack-Hinton's resignation in January 1993. The then arts minister ran an unprincipled campaign of innuendo, which he intensified during the period Jack-Hinton was on a well-deserved, and long overdue, sabbatical. It was something of a tragedy, but one that Jack-Hinton bore with very little apparent ill will—certainly towards his fellow Territorians, no matter what he thought of the politicians.

Since then, Madam Speaker, Colin Jack-Hinton has worked with a myriad of institutions in south east Asia in the areas of museums and marine archaeology. As recently as 2004 he was attending meetings of the Australasian Institute for Marine Archaeology.

George Chaloupka, his collaborator of 35 years, today praised Colin Jack-Hinton. He thanked Colin for allowing him the academic freedom back in the 1970s to give evidence in the Ranger inquiry on behalf of Aboriginal people. Just as importantly, he praised his support for the staff he chose to work with him. "He gave us the tools to do the job, and then told us to go ahead and do it."

In a sense, that sums up Jack-Hinton's life. In an extraordinary life he acquired the tools to do an amazing job—and he did it for us all. His contribution, and the recognition of what he achieved, will only gain greater reputation over time.

I suspect, Madam Speaker, had I been minister for the museum during the term of Colin Jack-Hinton's tenure, I would have faced a heap of challenges.

But it would have been an incredibly interesting ride, and I pay tribute to what he achieved. Of course, I am acutely aware that his early work took place on the Tiwi islands, Gunbalanya and Maningrida, not to mention Kakadu—all of which are in my electorate of Arafura. I also pay tribute to Colin Jack-Hinton on behalf of my constituents,

Thank you.