

Media Release:

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Relocation of Australian Pearling Exhibition Display

Australia's pearling history will soon join other Territory treasures held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) when the Australian Pearling Exhibition closes and some elements of its display are relocated for future exhibition.

MAGNT Acting Director Darlene Lion said the decision to close the Australian Pearling Exhibition and relocate elements to MAGNT provided an opportunity to consolidate historical displays as a result of a reduction in visitor numbers.

"The history of pearling across northern Australia plays a significant role in Territory history, so it's important that Territory locals and visitors continue to have the opportunity to learn about this aspect of our history," Ms Lion said.

"Visitor numbers to the existing exhibition site in the Waterfront Precinct have been progressively declining over several years, so elements of the display will be moved to MAGNT at Bullocky Point in order to maintain the display.

"From July this year we will have a small display located in the Seaview Lounge featuring a 1900s oxygen helmet originally used for submarine escapes and later in shallow water diving, which will be on display for the first time at MAGNT.

"The helmet was donated to MAGNT in 1984 and has been recently returned following a loan to the American Museum of Natural History for the exhibition "*Pearls*" that toured America, Canada, Japan, Abu Dhabi, France and Sydney.

"We are also in the process of planning a larger exhibition around the Territory's pearling history in late 2012, and we look forward to the continuing partnership with Paspaley who are such an important part of Australia's South Sea pearling history."

Ms Lion said the Australian Pearling Exhibition opened in 1994 to provide displays of the history of pearling in northern Australian waters from the historic hard hat days to modern day pearl framing.

"The Territory History collection at MAGNT will be consolidated to include objects from the Australian Pearling Exhibition, while some objects will undergo conservation work," Ms Lion said.

The final day of operation of the Australian Pearling Exhibition will be Thursday 28 April.

For more information on upcoming exhibitions and activities at MAGNT, go to www.magnt.nt.gov.au

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Darlene Lion on 8999 8220.

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