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**Australian Museums and Galleries Association welcomes outstanding keynote speakers to first national conference in Alice Springs**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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Returning to the Northern Territory for the first time since 1997, and for the first time in Alice Springs, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) National Conference, *At the Centre*, will tackle some of the biggest thematic areas that occupy much of our national conversation, and the important role of museums and galleries in these national conversations about identity, community, the environment, and shaping the future we want.

National president, Dr Robin Hirst, said: “Delegates will explore the theme *At the Centre* and the importance of museums and galleries to local communities and national cultural life, while also exploring the majesty and wonder of the Central Australian physical and cultural landscape.”

Almost 400 delegates are registered for the conference. Over 60 delegates were fully or partially funded to attend through a national bursary program supported by AMaGA, philanthropic donations, the federal Department of Communications and the Arts, and the Northern Territory Government.

The keynote speakers are a diverse and passionate group of people who will be challenging and inspirational. Keynote speakers include former Director of the British Museum, and one of the UK’s most compelling art communicators, Neil MacGregor OM AO FSA; award-winning Australian artist, Ben Quilty; CEO and Founder of Indigital, Mikaela Jade (named one of Australia’s most influential female entrepreneurs in 2019); Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Pat Dodson; internationally recognised digital and cultural thinker, Keir Winesmith; and an exciting mix of local, national and international speakers. Indigenous culture and perspectives have been woven throughout the conference program, including events and speakers.

The conference program includes cultural tours and other opportunities for delegates to explore Central Australia, a national awards ceremony, and the launch of *First Peoples: a roadmap for Indigenous engagement in museums and galleries*. A special Desert Mob Marketplace will feature thousands of remarkable and affordable artworks for sale. All proceeds will flow directly back to remote communities.

AMaGA is the national association and peak advocacy body representing museums and galleries with a vision of inspiring Australia’s cultural life through a thriving and valued museum and gallery sector. The annual national conference is hosted in a different state/territory each year.

The conference will be held from 13-17 May 2019 [www.mga2019.org.au](http://www.mga2019.org.au)

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*The Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) is the national body representing museums and galleries, committed to inspiring Australia’s cultural life through a thriving and valued museum and gallery sector*

**amaga.org.au**