

Media Release – EMBARGOED UNTIL 10am 12 AUGUST, 2018

12 August, 2018

Queensland Museum and BHP’s \$7.6 million collaboration unlocks Queensland’s research potential

**Project DIG to help Australian scientists, innovators and researchers find new solutions to
the complex problems facing the world today**

Queensland Museum and BHP today announced a unique partnership, never seen before in Australia, which will transform how the Museum stores, explores and shares its extensive research with students and scientists no matter where they are in the world.

Building on a decade-long partnership, the ground-breaking five-year collaboration will see the Museum’s globally significant collection shared with the world providing opportunities for today’s researchers and tomorrow’s experts to make discoveries of global significance.

The \$7.6 million investment was announced in Mackay today at the start of Queensland Museum’s National Science Week celebrations by Queensland Museum Network Acting CEO Dr Jim Thompson and BHP General Manager Edan Stolberg.

Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch praised the project’s aim to expand the global reach of the Queensland Museum by digitising and visualising research using cutting edge 3D interactive technology.

“Project DIG (Digital Infrastructure Growth) is an alliance that will transform how the Museum shares its extensive research with students and scientists no matter where they are – in a Year Two classroom in Mackay or a university laboratory in Germany.

“The Museum’s educational program will also benefit by sharing new knowledge and ideas with Queensland schools, inspiring young scientists across the state,” Minister Enoch said.

Together Queensland Museum and BHP will embark on a five-year collaboration that will create new education resources, world-class 3D scanning capabilities, interactive visualisation technologies and an extensive online research portal for students, scientists, innovators and researchers to explore.

Project DIG will initially focus on the South Walker Creek Mine site located 40 kilometres west of Nebo in the Bowen Basin, where megafauna, extinct supersized species of mammals, reptiles and marsupials have been discovered by Queensland Museum and BHP scientists during annual digs over the past decade.

The South Walker Creek site will form the baseline project for Project DIG as the Queensland Museum embarks on digitising and visualising the information collected there using cutting-edge 3D interactive technologies.

Queensland Museum Network Acting Chief Executive Officer Jim Thompson said Project DIG was a forward-thinking collaboration and commitment between Queensland Museum and BHP to enabling and rewarding innovative thinking.

“In the age of innovation through collaboration, the Museum needs access to new technologies to extend the reach and impact of its collection and research.

“Project DIG will make that possible – we are excited to have the opportunity to work with BHP and their extensive industry networks in the creation of this world-class eResearch initiative.

“It not only enhances the work already being done by Queensland Museum but benefits all scientists, big or small, in their quest to uncover, discover and solve the challenges facing the world.

“Project DIG will revolutionise how scientists, established and aspiring, use and interact with Queensland’s State Collection of more than 1.2 million objects,” Dr Thompson said.

BHP General Manager Edan Stolberg said the Project DIG collaboration will deliver innovative technologies that will allow scientists to reveal new and exciting information not accessible before.

“As a company focussed on excellence in innovation and technology, we are delighted to continue our partnership with Queensland Museum through Project DIG – together we can build on the state’s eResearch capabilities sharing significant research that will help the scientists of today and tomorrow unlock solutions to global problems. Mr Stolberg said.

“It is our hope that through our continued partnership that communities of researchers, learners, entrepreneurs and innovators can work together to question, challenge and create solutions to the challenges of the future.”

For more information and ongoing project updates please visit

www.projectdig.qm.qld.gov.au

Interviews and photo opportunities are available on request.

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