

# **powerful, accessible first nations photography exhibition opens at the Australian Museum**

*Unfinished Business shares the personal stories of 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability through 3D photography, film, sound and powerful installation. Free entry.*

**Sydney, 31 October 2025** – *Unfinished Business*, a groundbreaking, 3D lenticular photographic exhibition, has opened at the Australian Museum (AM), sharing first-person experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities in Australia.

Featuring intimate images and stories told by 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability from remote, regional, and urban communities across Australia, the exhibition was created by Sydney-based human rights documentarian Belinda Mason OAM, with Dieter and Liam Knierim, and developed in collaboration with the First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN).

*Unfinished Business* brings together powerful 3D lenticular portraits - images that appear to move and shift as viewers walk past them - alongside a short documentary film and an insightful new installation to reveal the strength, resilience and diversity of First Nations people with disability across Australia.

Australian Museum Director and CEO, Kim McKay AO, said *Unfinished Business* marks an important milestone in accessibility, inclusion and representation.

"This is a profoundly important exhibition that speaks to inclusion and truth-telling. Each story is told on the participants' own terms, with each selecting their own words, narrators and imagery, challenging perceptions and sparking conversations about disability, identity and community," McKay said.

"For the first time, we are proud to present this exhibition in a more accessible format, ensuring even more visitors can experience these powerful First Nations stories in meaningful ways."

### **Setting new standards in museum accessibility**

Working with Vision Australia and Expression Australia, the AM has embedded accessibility from the outset. The exhibition features tactile panels, audio descriptions, Auslan interpretation and large-print materials, ensuring people who are blind, have low vision, are deaf or hard of hearing can fully connect with the stories being shared.

Visitors can access an Audio Description Tour, an Auslan Tour produced by Expression Australia, and Audio of Exhibition Labels via QR codes throughout the exhibition and online.

Australian Museum Director, First Nations, Laura McBride, said accessibility was central to the design and presentation.

"This exhibition reflects the Museum's commitment to creating spaces that are culturally grounded and accessible. It's critical to recognise that ableism and racism compound the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities—this intersection of oppression remains unfinished business," McBride said.

## From Geneva to Sydney - now even more accessible

The exhibition was launched in September 2013 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, then Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, and Peter Woolcott, Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations. Since then, the exhibition has been travelling globally, but this is the first time it will be presented in such an accessible format.

Creator Belinda Mason OAM said the exhibition reflects the strength and honesty of its participants.

"Unfinished Business amplifies the voices of First Nations people with disability who have too often been unheard. Each portrait and story comes directly from the person pictured. The lenticular portraits bring these stories to life, creating a sense of movement and depth that mirrors the complexity of each individual experience," Mason said.

## Addressing a critical social justice issue

The exhibition draws attention to one of Australia's most critical social justice issues. Research shows that around half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live with a disability or long-term health condition—nearly twice the rate of the non-Indigenous population—yet their stories are rarely seen or heard in mainstream cultural spaces.

Presented with the support of The Balnaves Foundation, *Unfinished Business* at the Australian Museum raises the bar for inclusion and representation in museum practice.

## Confronting the reality of disability support

A powerful new installation developed for the Australian Museum exhibition, *Not Fit for Purpose*, created by Uncle John Baxter (one of the 30 people featured in the exhibition), confronts visitors with the harsh reality of inadequate disability support systems. Uncle John is also a respected Latja Latja and Narungga Elder and [2025 AM Mob at the Museum Cultural Resident](#).

The installation features old and outdated mobility equipment, highlighting the significant difficulty and prohibitive expense associated with obtaining modern equipment. *Not Fit for Purpose* also draws attention to a critical gap: most aids and equipment on the market today are not designed for outdoor use, creating hardship in regional and outback conditions where sealed surfaces, ramps and disability access are lacking.

"We're particularly honoured to have Uncle John Baxter as a cultural collaborator on this exhibition. His decades of advocacy for cultural identity, justice and inclusion, and his willingness to share his lived experience, embody the exhibition's spirit of truth and respect. Visitors can also meet Uncle John at the exhibition to hear his reflections on culture, identity and resilience," McBride said.

## Meet Uncle John: Conversation in the Exhibition

Open conversation in the exhibition space

Saturday 1 November | 11.30am–12.30pm & 1.30pm–2.30pm

## Exhibition Details

Unfinished Business

Australian Museum, 1 William Street, Sydney

1 November 2025 – 19 April 2026

FREE entry

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES: ORIGINAL SPIN**

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## **EDITORS NOTES**

**MEDIA PACK** | Interviews available

## **Socials**

**Facebook:** @australianmuseum

**Instagram:** @australianmuseum

**Twitter:** @austmus

## **About the Australian Museum**

The Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation's first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. The AM's mission is to ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change. The AM's vision is to be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific. The AM commits to transforming the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; being a strong advocate for First Nations cultures; and continuing to develop world-leading science, collections, exhibitions and education programs. With more than 22 million objects and specimens and the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM is not only a dynamic source of reliable scientific information on some of the most pressing environmental and social challenges facing our region, but also an important site of cultural exchange and learning.

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**Australian Museum**

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