

On Monday 26th August, to Thursday 29th August 2024 I had the privilege of visiting the WA Museum from the Cocos Islands. This experience can only be described as inspiring and incredibly beneficial.

On Cocos, I work in Community Development as a Culture and Heritage Officer, and am the local contact for the Pulu Kokos Museum. We have been working extensively with Tim Eastwood on improving the facility, alongside the Jukong Restoration Project. Over my 4 days of workshops and meetings with various members of the teams at the Maritime Museum, Shipwrecks Gallery and Welshpool Collection Store, I have gained a greater respect for Museum practice and walk away with a deepened understanding of what is required to care for objects and to preserve history.

Through this busy 4 days, I was able to:

- Attend the Maritime Heritage weekly meeting at the Shipwrecks Gallery – understand what sorts of projects the team are working on
- Tour the Shipwrecks Gallery with Deb Shefi
- Tour the Maritime Museum with David O’Sullivan
- Tour the Welshpool Collection Store and view Makmoom – The WA Museum’s Jukong with Tim Eastwood and David O’Sullivan
- Visit Terrestrial Zoology and Oology with Ron Johnstone
- Tour Anthropology and Archeology with Annie Carson + View Jukong models in the World Cultures Collection (Pictured)
- Explore Storage and Conservation techniques with Carmela Corvaia
- Tour History and understand storage techniques with Erica Boyne
- Attend an Acquisition Committee meeting
- Learn about accessioning processes with Alex Patching
- Practice accessioning + understanding inputting Metadata with Theresa Archer
- Viewing Jukong drawings that were brought down from the Cocos Islands and are in Custodial care of the WA Museum



Life on the Cocos Islands can be incredibly challenging regarding difficult and ever-changing logistics, lack of access and high expenses. All of these factors either indirectly, or directly impact the Museum and it’s operation. I found that the WA Museum staff were understanding and sympathetic to the restraints surrounding remote Museum practice, regarding lack of resources and limited funding. Any advice I was given was realistic to these challenges and provided insight into strategic ways to manage the constraints.

It was encouraging to see a number of Cocos resources and items throughout the Museum’s collection, including a full size Jukong, model Jukongs and extensive bird research. We often find that the Cocos Islands can slip under the radar so it is promising to see collection representation in Perth.

I have returned to the Cocos Islands with a new appreciation for implementing systems and ensuring that procedures are followed, so that we can continue to build the Museum into a reputable attraction, and something that people seek out on their travels to Cocos. With new skills and understanding, more attention can be paid to packing and conserving the extensive number of items in our small collection. It would be wonderful to continue this collaborative relationship between the Cocos Islands Shire and the WA Museum as Cocos has an incredibly rich history and it would be wonderful to see greater representation of this in the Museum’s displays.

I would like to thank Tim Eastwood for his ongoing support of the Museum and Cocos Islands culture generally. I would also like to thank everyone who spent time with me over my time in Perth; Corioli Souter, David O’Sullivan, Theresa Archer, Deb Shefi, Ron Johnstone, Carmela Corvaia, Alex Patching, Annie Carson, Erica Boyne. I hope to maintain these connections moving forward.

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