The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) has received its first significant philanthropic donation since becoming an independent statutory authority on 1 July this year.

“I am delighted to announce that MAGNT received notice earlier this week that it has secured a $125,000 grant from the Gordon Darling Foundation in Melbourne to support the research and production of its Papunya exhibition that is scheduled to open in 2017,” said Minister for Arts and Museums Matt Conlan.

“This is on top of a private donation that was recently received in the amount of $85,000 by Mr Geoff Hassall OAM to support a curatorial contract tied to this project, meaning a total of $210,000 in contributions for one project have been confirmed in the past two months.

“This is a great example of how the new MAGNT can work differently and more independently than it used to and acquire philanthropic donations in addition to its Government funding.

“I thank these benefactors for their generous donations for the Papunya exhibition, which will be of huge local, national and international significance and a key highlight of the FestivalsNT calendar in 2017.”

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory owns what is considered to be the single most important collection of Papunya boards, 226 paintings collected from 1971-1980.

The Papunya Boards represent the very beginnings of modern Aboriginal art and are considered to be among the most significant and unique pieces in MAGNT’s collection.

In March 2013, eight of the bark paintings went on display for the first time at the Araluen Arts Centre following the release of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) report that stated 163 of the 226 paintings could be displayed without breaching any cultural sensitivity.

Director of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Pierre Arpin, said this week’s generous donation by the Gordon Darling Foundation would greatly assist planning for the much larger exhibition of the Papunya boards in 2017.
“We are thrilled to confirm this major commitment from the Gordon Darling Foundation to this exhibition project.” he said. “This grant, tied to the additional private donation, means that the MAGNT can deliver a higher calibre exhibition in 2017.”

The Gordon Darling Foundation was established by Gordon Darling in 1991 to fund Visual Arts activities Australia-wide.

**Media Contact:** Lisa Andrews 0401 579 963