



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3300 YEAR OLD EGYPTIAN QUEEN RECEIVES ROYAL WELCOME IN TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA — 10th April 2025 - Twenty one linen wrapped human and animals bodies have arrived in Cairns from a US collection as displays of mummified remains for the upcoming Tomb of the Pharaohs exhibition.

The bandaged up skeletal specimens travelled in custom made, highly secure crates, all the way from Madison, Wyoming, a 12,500 kilometre distance involving several inland truck journeys and ocean freight.

They are the first of over 450 exhibition items to arrive, creating great excitement for the curatorial and education team.

As the crates were carefully opened, exhibition CEO & Founder Daniel Leipnik, glanced upon the first mummy.

"Queen Nefertari, the beloved wife of Ramses the Great is finally here in Tropical North Queensland and she's not happy!" he joked.

"But that's all going to change once we reunite her with her incredible burial chamber and lavish palace treasures," he added.

As the team unpacked each carton, Leipnik explained the public's fascination with mummified forms.

"Just as people are intrigued with their own bodies, seeing the shapes and contours of other bodies is equally appealing."

"Grotesque and morbid at first glance, these are in a sense, time-travellers from one of the greatest early civilizations."

"It's one thing to see hand crafted items like wood coffins or clay objects at a museum but human body forms are something that people can really connect with."

The collection of mummies are representative of some of the most well know Pharaohs and their Queens. They will be placed in gilded wood coffins and hieroglyph inscribed stone sarcophagi in the same position the mortuary priests left them in when they were sealed up in hieroglyph decorated tombs thousands of years ago.

Mummified examples of ancient Egypt's great Pharaohs will include King Tutankhamun, Ramses IV, Seti I, Psusennes I, Shoshenq II, and the beloved wife of Ramses the Great, Queen Nefertari.

A series of additional mummied bodies will showcase the seventeen layers of linen wrapping on King Tutankhamun, which, when unwrapped by British Archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922, revealed over 150 pieces of golden treasures hidden between the layers.

And its not just human forms on display, the mummy collection also includes animals. Ibis, cats, dogs, a lion cub and even a crocodile mummy too.

Death, mummification and resurrection was a fundamental part of ancient Egypt's belief systems. Whole cities were established to undertake the rituals around death including the careful burial of the deceased. With an average lifespan of just 35 years and hopes of a wonderful reanimation, death was big business. Most Pharaohs commissioned their own elaborate tombs when they ascended to the throne and every care was taken to safeguard the body during the mummification process.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the entire body had to be carefully protected and remain undamaged - in one piece - in order for the deceased to rise again, whole, to continue living in the afterlife.

The process of mummification in ancient Egypt began over 5000 years ago in pre dynastic times when the remains of people were buried in the dry desert sand and natural dehydration and drying out took place. Over time, ceremonies and rituals took over to a point where the business of death became a significant industry.

Not only were the ancient Egyptians obsessed with death, 4500 years ago, during the Old Kingdom period, animal were mummified in vast quantities too, as gifts to appease the gods but also with an expectation that the spirit of the mummified animal would accompany a deceased person and assist them in the afterlife. In a time where rats and mice feasted on precious household grain stocks, having your own re-born cats in the afterlife would be of great service.

Examples of early mummified forms will be showcased in the first of 11 galleries, featuring a Saqqara Tomb, providing insight into mummification practices which started in the Old Kingdom period.

Other mummies from the New Kingdom period will be placed throughout the burial chambers within the Royal tombs section of the exhibition.

"The mummies are going to be displayed in a very unique way." Leipnik said. "We are recreating the tombs and their contents the way they were sealed up, with mummified remains adorned in gold jewellery and gem encrusted death masks within the elaborate gilded coffins and stone sarcophagi of each tomb."

"This will provide visitor with a glimpse of the past, of how each tomb looked before they were broken into and looted in antiquity."

Each mummy represents a completely different presentation state. Some of the specimens are fully wrapped in fine linen and others reveal aged body parts of the deceased.

"The collection of mummies adds to the realistic portrayal of each of the tombs which showcases hieroglyphic wall and ceiling inscriptions, burial chamber treasures, everyday palace items, jewellery, and the actual people that the tombs were created for." Leipnik concluded

MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITY

WHAT:	UNPACKING / REVEAL OF 21 MUMMIFIED FORMS
WHERE:	Tomb of the Pharaohs Exhibition Entry via 122B Lake Street, Cairns (Cairns Aquarium Loading Bay)
WHEN	<u>9:00am Friday 11th April 2025</u>
WHO	CEO, Daniel Leipnik Product Experience Manager, Kellie Knight Facilities Manager, Gary McKenna Display Manager, Dominic Waddel Education Officer, Sharlee Correa

- END -

ABOUT THE TOMB OF THE PHARAOHS EXPERIENCE

The “Tomb of the Pharaohs” is a 3D, immersive and interactive experience of ancient Egypt. It is the brain child of Cairns Aquarium’s owners and operators Daniel Leipnik & Andrew Preston.

The new attraction has been designed to enable visitors to explore the recreated tombs of ancient Egypt’s most famous Pharaohs such as King Tutankhamun, Ramses IV, Seti I, Psusennes I, Shoshenq II and Queen Nefertari, Each of the eleven tomb rooms are filled with museum grade display items that provide illustrative examples of some of the most incredible antiquities to have ever been found.

The new attraction will provide visitors to Tropical North Queensland with an additional indoors experience right in the heart of Cairns and something completely different to enjoy.

The Tomb of the Pharaohs experience follows on from the highly successful *Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs* exhibition at the Australian Museum in Sydney which concluded in May 2024 after welcoming over 500,000 visitors in its 6 month exhibition period and the blockbuster Pharaohs exhibit at NGV Melbourne and Discovering Ancient Egypt in Canberra. Previous ancient Egyptian exhibitions such as the King Tut exhibition at the Melbourne Museum saw a record breaking 796,000 visitors, with almost half of all attendees travelling from either interstate or overseas.

Tomb of the Pharaohs will be showcasing world first display collections such as the Tanis treasures and the never before seen riches of Queen Nefertari, the illustrious wife of Ramses II. Visitors will also be able to explore the three key chambers within the King Tut tomb; the burial chamber, the antechamber, and treasury, just as British Archaeologist Howard Carter found them in 1922. Non-royal tombs of the Nobles: Yuya and Thuya and Wahtye’s Tomb of Saqqara are also being brought to life.

In total, over 450 stunning display items will be showcased throughout eleven galleries full of pharaonic treasures.

A retail store with private label Egyptian made souvenir items will also be available to Tomb of the Pharaoh visitors. The new attraction is part of the Company’s vision to provide visitors to Cairns with new, exciting and world class experiences.

The “Tomb of the Pharaohs” experience opens in Cairns on June 28th 2025. More information can be found on the Company’s website: www.tombofthepharaohs.com.au

For more information, contact:

Daniel Leipnik, CEO & Founder

Mob: 0447 774 526

E: tickets@tombofthepharaohs.com.au

Kellie Knight, Sales & Marketing Manager

Mob 0432 393 323

E: sales@tombofthepharaohs.com.au



Box F - King Tut #3 + Cat
Box G - Nefretari + Cat
Box H - King Tut #4 + Cat
Box I - King Tut #5 + Cat
Box J - Crocodile + Dog
Box K - Baset + Ibis

Image 1 – Mummified forms from the United States ready for opening by Tomb of the Pharaohs staff



Image 2. Mummified form of a 3300 year old Queen Nefertari



Image 3. Mummified form of a dog or jackal from the Old Kingdom