



MEDIA RELEASE

“Egyptomania” takes hold of Tropical North Queensland

For immediate release:

10th December 2025 - Known as the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforest, a new immersive exhibition in Cairns is transforming the public’s perception of Tropical North Queensland into a city that offers to fulfil Australian’s love of ancient history with a completely unique experience for modern audiences.

Created in collaboration with Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA), eleven of ancient Egypt’s most lavishly decorated tombs found in the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens have been meticulously recreated within the blockbuster “Tomb of the Pharaohs” exhibition, making its debut in Cairns as part of an international tour.

The experience offers visitors the opportunity to walk through the burial chambers of New Kingdom Period Kings and Queens, a time when ancient Egypt was under the reign of some of the most powerful and revered pharaohs.

Rulers such as Ramses I, Ramses IV, Ramses V & IV, Seti I and King Tutankhamun were interred in some of the finest tombs comprising long descending passageways ending in burial chambers adorned in colourful hieroglyphs on every surface, each comes to life in this extraordinary attraction.



The vaulted ceiling burial chamber and carved sarcophagus and coffin lid of King Seti I

The burial chambers and gold funerary treasures of some lesser known, but equally significant Pharaohs, who ruled in the Third Intermediate Period, include King Psusennes I and Shoshenq II are also revealed. Branded by archaeologists as the “Silver Pharaohs”, Psusennes and Shoshenq were buried in solid silver coffins, deemed more valuable than gold due to its scarcity in Egypt at the time.

“The Ramses lineage was a phenomenon. It started with Ramses I, a commoner that rose up to become General and was appointed Pharaoh in the absence of a natural heir by King Horemheb, the previous ruler,” says Daniel Leipnik, the Tomb of the Pharaoh’s Creative Director and CEO. “Responsible for countless temples, pyramids, statues, and enormous tombs, this was an influential family of eleven Ramses, spanning hundreds of years and leaving their mark on Egypt with monuments of their works surviving for over 4000 years.”

Of the exhibition’s 453 display items, the star attraction is King Tut’s three gold coffins. Unearthed in 1922 by English archaeologist Howard Carter and his team, the coffins were nestled one inside each other as part of the Egyptian belief that these provided divine protection for the king’s mummified remains. The exhibition also showcases three of the five King Tut tomb rooms: The Burial Chamber, The Antechamber and Treasury.



The gold and gem encrusted coffins and gold and lapis death mask of the “Boy King”, King Tutankhamun,

One of the initial burial chambers presented within the exhibition belongs to High Priest Wahtye, revealed to the world for the first time in the Netflix documentary “Secrets of Saqqara”. The recreation of Wahtye’s tomb, complete with rows of life-sized carved human figures within wall cavities has never been shown outside of Egypt. With Wahtye’s actual tomb in Egypt closed off to the public, this hand-crafted version within the “Tomb of the Pharaohs” exhibition,

provides visitors with an experience only Egyptian Government officials and select archaeologists would normally see.



Guests exploring High Priest Wahte's Tomb of Saqqara.

Other objects demonstrating the artistic innovation of each pharaoh's reign include golden death masks, carved granite sarcophagi, ornate burial jewellery and even a mummified lion cub display.

But this is no ordinary museum. "Tomb of the Pharaohs" is a journey back in time, one royal burial chamber after the next, with walls, ceiling and pillars covered in the same hieroglyphs seen in the actual tombs and filled to the brim with burial treasures the way the priests left them, thousands of years ago when they sealed up the Pharaohs inside.

"Tomb of the Pharaohs" offers a unique presentation of ancient Egypt, to see the Pharaoh's burial chambers the way they were originally left and the same way archaeologists discovered them in the 19th and 20th centuries.

"Tomb of the Pharaohs" is the latest of several Egypt-focused shows to travel to Australia. Over 1.3 million visitors have so far enjoyed ancient Egypt exhibitions in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane over the past two years.

Predictions are that "Tomb of the Pharaohs" will see over 400,000 visitors per year during its limited stay in Cairns with the upcoming Christmas New Year holiday period looking to be booked out.

"Most of the visitors so far are from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, with international guests travelling from as far as Europe, Japan, the US and India", Leipnik says.

Despite other Egyptian exhibitions throughout Australia having seen record crowds already, Leipnik believes there are plenty more people fascinated to see what the burial chambers of past Pharaohs actually look like.



The four-pillar burial chamber of Ramses the Great's beloved wife, Queen Nefertari.

“Visitors continue to have an appreciation and interest in this amazing culture. Australia’s fascination with ancient Egypt is part of a larger obsession the West has with the subject - a phenomenon that prompted the coining of the term “Egyptomania,” which can be traced back to Napoleon Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt in the late 18th century and galvanised during the international media frenzy associated with the King Tutankhamun tomb find in 1922.

“It’s a human-interest story, a profound curiosity to go back in time and see how others, particularly royalty lived,” he says.

“The Tomb of the Pharaohs” is located right in the city centre of Cairns, adjacent to the Cairns Aquarium. This indoors, air-conditioned exhibition offers self-guided general admission, guided afternoon and evening tours and tour and dinner packages. Tickets are available at www.tombofthepharaohs.com.au

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