

National Chinese Museum of Australia Ltd. T/A

**GOLDEN DRAGON MUSEUM**

**YI YUAN GARDENS & GUAN YIN TEMPLE**

Dai Gum San

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MEDIA RELEASE

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EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT THURSDAY 15 AUGUST 2024

**World's oldest Imperial Processional Dragon**

**shows a new way to share its history**

Bendigo’s Golden Dragon Museum – home of the world’s oldest Imperial Processional Dragon - will provide unprecedented access to the Deaf and hard of hearing community through the *Golden Dragon Museum Auslan Self-Guided Tour,* a series of Auslan videos created to tell the stories of some of its key exhibits.

The self-guided Auslan tour will be a permanent part of the museum and ensures immediate access for Deaf visitors providing cultural and heritage information in Auslan and replacing the need to book an interpreter in advance which in regional towns can incur significant travel costs.

Deaf advocate Sophie Li, the daughter of bestselling author of Mao’s last Dancer, Li Cunxin AO, is launching the video series and says having equal access is empowering and allows greater autonomy and independence.

“A spontaneous visit to a museum is something the hearing community take for granted. For a Deaf person to be able to wander and absorb the stories of the treasures within the museum in their preferred language of Auslan and at their leisure is a new benchmark in accessibility. The Deaf community in Australia will now get opportunities to learn more of my family’s rich Chinese heritage, reaching a much deeper level through these videos.”

Created by the Deaf for the Deaf, the videos were produced in association with Expression Australia’s Deaf Hub Bendigo, project lead Hilary Callaghan says authentic representation is important. “Using Deaf members from the local community to record the videos gave the project additional layers of inclusivity and incorporated a range of signing styles, it’s been a valuable exercise in building confidence and skills.”

Upon entry to the museum a tour guide brochure is made available that lists exhibits with an Auslan translation, Deaf visitors use their mobile device to scan the QR codes to activate the video that details the history of the exhibits. Videos translations are each between two and six minutes in duration.

Ten key exhibits or themes were selected to launch the initiative, Museum CEO Hugo Leschen says he hopes there will be more opportunities to expand the catalogue of Auslan translation videos. “Golden Dragon Museum has the largest collection of Chinese heritage and cultural objects in Australia, and we have worked closely with the Deaf community to select objects and stories that best highlight features that are part of the Auslan interpretations including Loong, the oldest intact Imperial Processional Dragon in the world. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the rich history of the Bendigo Chinese and Chinese art and culture with an entirely new audience. It has been a pleasure to work with Deaf

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Hub Bendigo and the local Deaf community in developing and delivering this important project which was supported by Telematics Trust. “

Ricci Swart, AM Chair Telematics Trust commented “Telematics Trust was pleased to support Golden Dragon Museums Auslan self-guided tour project. It is essential that every Victorian should be able to access the important cultural and heritage information that the Golden Dragon Museum has to offer.”

**Golden Dragon Museum will host a Deaf Community Day on:**

**Saturday 17 August**

**9:30am – 4.30pm.
Free entry for Deaf and Hard of Hearing visitors**

To celebrate the launch of the *Golden Dragon Museum Auslan Self-Guided Tour* on Saturday 17 August the Museum is hosting a special Deaf Community Day. Entry for Deaf and Hard of Hearing visitors to the Museum will be free for the day and there will be a community lunch in the Emperor’s Dragon Restaurant at 12:00pm, people to purchase their own meals.

A complete list of the exhibits that have Auslan Videos can be found here:

Guardian Lions.
Dragons and the Bendigo Easter Parade.
Lions and other performance practices.
Community Alcove.
Loong.
Dragon Chariot of Ten Thousand Sages.
Mandarin Jacket.
Dai Gum San Precinct.
Yi Yuan Gardens.

Guan Yin Temple.

**END**

**Photo Captions:**

Photo 1: Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo.

Photo 2: Loong, one of the featured objects in the Golden Dragon Museum Auslan Self-Guided Tour.

Photos credit: Jess White Photography

***Golden Dragon Museum Auslan Self-Guided Tour* Launch Event**

The media is invited to join Sophie Li and invited guests at the Launch event at **11.30am, Friday 16 August 2024** at Golden Dragon Museum

**Media Inquiries and Interview Opportunities**

Please contact Hugo Leschen, Chief Executive Officer, Golden Dragon Museum on 0417 100 229 with any inquiries and to organise interviews.

For interviews with Deaf Hub Bendigo and Sophie Li - Please contact: Kellie Curtain M: 0412339690

