

Ramses the Great's coffin in Sydney for the first time

By Aziz Al Saifin, Australia Correspondent | Fri, Nov 17



The sarcophagus of Ramses II. Image: Sandro Vannini, Yvan Lebert (Source: Supplied)

The Australian Museum in Sydney is now the temporary home to one of history's most enigmatic leaders, Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great.

For the first time in Australasia, visitors can witness the coffin of the pharaoh who ruled Egypt for nearly seven decades.

The exhibition, titled Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs, showcases over 180 artefacts from Ramses II's era, including his intricately designed coffin.



Ramses the Great's coffin in Sydney for the first time 4:55

Kim McKay AO, director and chief executive of The Australian Museum, expressed her excitement.

"This is a monumental occasion. We're bringing a piece of ancient history to life, right here in Sydney."

Discovered in 1881, the coffin is not only a significant archaeological find but also a masterpiece of ancient Egyptian craftsmanship.

Mostafa Waziry, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities and a descendant of Ramses II, said the moment was full circle.

"Seeing these artefacts, especially the coffin of King Ramses, is like stepping back in time," he said.

"It will be something different when you come here and feel it. You're just centimetres to be away from the statue of King Ramses"



The sarcophagus of Ramses II. Image: Sandro Vannini, Yvan Lebert (Source: Supplied)

Ramses II, who reigned from 1279-1213 BCE, was known for his extensive building programs and numerous military campaigns. He was also a prolific father, with over 100 children to his name.

The exhibition's highlight is undoubtedly the coffin of Ramses II. It represents a unique opportunity for visitors to connect with a past that shaped the world's history.

"We decided a couple of months ago to bring the coffin to here and it's the first time all the visitors are going to see the coffin of King Ramses standing up like this," said Waziry.



Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs exhibition. (Source: Supplied)

Some of those artefacts that will be seen for the first time include one of Waziry's own discoveries, the animal mummies, which have never left Egypt before now.

"I'm very proud that some of these pieces here in this exhibition are from my excavations in the Saqqara," said Waziry.

"I discovered the animal mummies by my hand, you can imagine the feeling. I will never ever forget for the rest of my life."

Of those discoveries include a rare lion cub, one of five ever discovered, mummified scarabs which served as a world-first discovery too, and a crocodile.



Bust of Ramses II. (Source: Supplied)

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Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs opens tomorrow.

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