

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 April 2015

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Statement from Mr Angus Trumble Director of the National Portrait Gallery

Today, Mr Angus Trumble, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, expanded on his reasons for removing the photographic portrait of Indonesian President Joko Widodo from exhibition.

Mr Trumble has taken the pre-emptive action to remove the portrait temporarily, in the wake of the news of and public reaction to the executions.

‘My feeling yesterday, on Wednesday morning, was that in view of the circumstances and our operations, and my best assessment of the risk of damage to the work of art, it was necessary to remove it from public display,’ he said.

‘Also, I was swayed by the statements of both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition and of course the position of the parliament and the recall of our ambassador.

‘It’s a temporary measure.’

He said while there had not yet been any incident relating to the work and taking it down had been a preventative measure, he had a responsibility to protect all works in the gallery.

‘My primary responsibility is the care of the works in our collection and the safety of our visitors,’ he said.

There has been some negative reaction to the portrait by the Gallery’s visitors, indicating strong feelings with regard to the subject matter.

‘I respectfully disagree with the artist, Adam Ferguson, who feels the work should remain on display,’ Mr Trumble stated. ‘Adam and I continue to stay in touch during this fluid period.’

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