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**MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**REGIONAL AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

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**PURPOSE**

To provide an update on the Museum’s commitment to regional and outreach programs across NSW and nationally.

**BACKGROUND**

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), along with sector partners, plays a critical role in supporting vibrant arts and culture nationally and across NSW.

We do this through our programming, exhibitions and community engagement; and by supporting the NSW cultural sector to deliver their goals through skills sharing, professional development and access to our collections.

**OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan 2014-2020 articulates our commitment to regional NSW. The plan sets a clear direction for the Museum and its iconic venues – Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory and Powerhouse Discovery Centre.

The plan outlines our vision, ambition, areas of focus and a new interdisciplinary model of working.

Our Museum requires a sustained and strategic approach to long-term investment. A renewal of permanent galleries and buildings, collections and exhibitions; and a focus on building audiences is required to regain the Museum’s reputation and global standing.

We must balance our collection development with a public responsibility to build knowledge and connect to the community. To achieve this, the Museum needs to be responsive and adaptive. Our themes and disciplines will be used to determine our program and build a consistent identity for our Museum.

The following themes will underpin our activities:

* Our place in time – our past, present and future
* Our place in our state and our region, a focus on Asia
* Innovation and technological change
* Economic and environmental sustainability

MAAS has identified a series of high level success factors to be addressed in the next five years, which include increased regional accessibility to the Museum’s exhibitions and expertise.

**PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

MAAS delivers an extensive range of programs and services to regional NSW.

**Exhibitions, Programs and Community Engagement**

*Touring Exhibitions*

A range of MAAS developed exhibitions tour regionally, nationally and internationally. Many are scalable in approach to suit both medium and smaller gallery and museum spaces. Consult our website for the current range of exhibitions available.

*Programs and Community Engagement*

Our Programs team develops community engagement activities that occur in both Western Sydney and regional NSW. Outreach activities range regular Open Weekends at our Castle Hill Discovery Centre, to our annual participation in Maitland’s *Steamfest* featuring Steam Locomotive 3265, built in 1901, which re-entered service in 2009 after an eleven-year restoration by the Museum.

In addition, our online engagement programs work across regional and culturally diverse storytelling.

*Education*

MAAS provides opportunities for regional students and schools through a range of programs including digital engagement through dedicated websites; student exhibitions, including *design TECH*, and student seminars; as well as student workshops and educator led school tours.

Our digital and video-conference enabled Education programs support primary and secondary learning across NSW and nationally. For example, our highly successful Mars Lab project connects classrooms across NSW to collaborate and drive robots that explore the simulated Martian terrain at the Museum.

*Digital engagement*

MAAS’ digital and media team is responsible for the production, support and delivery of technology-based on-site, off-site and online programs and projects. Digitisation of the collection, internet initiatives, and creative production allows for greater inclusive experiences and access for our digital consumers including our regional and remote audiences.

**Sector Support**

*Advisory Service*

MAAS provides free access to its professional skills and knowledge across collections management, program development and other areas of museum practice to a limited number of NSW cultural organisations each year.

Access to the advisory service is through a simple expression of interest. Working directly with Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) we share requests and responses to ensure organisations receive the most appropriate and timely support from the right agencies. Our advice is provided via email, phone or videoconference. For more complex issues, or where travel or site visits are required, fees do apply.

*Workshops and Presentations*

MAAS staff are available for presentations and workshops in specific professional areas of collection management including registration and conservation services, curation, program development and other areas of our practice. Our staff regularly present and provide professional development programs at local and national conferences and gatherings.

*Regional Cultural Roundtable*

Coproduced with MGNSW, and in collaboration with key State cultural organisations, this annual gathering of those working in and supporting regional arts, culture and heritage organisations provides an essential networking opportunity, acts as an information clearing house and supports shared and collaborative approaches to the challenges and opportunities for this sector.

*Professional Services*

The highly specialist skills at MAAS across collection management, program development, museum technologies and many other areas of our practice are also available to the cultural and commercial sector in a professional consulting capacity. Note that we do not provide price appraisal services.

*Collections Access and Loans*

MAAS’s extensive and diverse collection is available for loan to regional and remote museums, with some subsidised fees available for organisations that face financial hardship. Minimum environmental and security requirements apply. In addition our extensive Library, Archives and Photo Library are also available for access and research.

*Object Name Thesaurus*

The *Object Name Thesaurus* was developed by the Museum to standardise the terms used to describe its own collection. It was first published in 1995 as the *Powerhouse Museum Collection Thesaurus*. Since then, many new terms have been added to the thesaurus within the Powerhouse's collection information and management system. The print version had long been popular with collecting institutions to assist in the documentation of their own collections, while out of print we make the Thesaurus available online, and also available to license for use with your collection management system.

*Australian Dress Register*

The Australian Dress Register is a collaborative, online project about dress: men's, women's and children's clothing ranging from the special occasion to the everyday. Museums and private collectors are encouraged to research their garments and share the stories and photographs while the information is still available and within living memory. The Register encourages people to consider their collections very broadly and share what they know about members of their community, what they wore and life in the past. This provides access to a world-wide audience while keeping the garments in their relevant location. The site and its extensive resources provides a forum for discussion on dress within the museum community.

*Internships, Fellowships and Placements*

MAAS hosts a limited number of internships, fellowships and placements for tertiary and early career professionals and volunteers. Focused on collections management and program development, placements can vary in length, and financial assistance is available to support remote/rural interns.

**Coordination and resources**

The MAAS Strategic Plan and aligned staff structure provides commitment of resources to regional NSW. The key change in this approach is to ensure regional programs become a whole of organisation priority. Changes include:

* a dedicated Programs role to coordinate our regional initiatives;
* two additional roles to ensure the Museum’s locomotives are restored and ready for service through regional NSW;
* an integrated and strategic approach to collections management to ensure a single point of contact and a strong service delivery culture;
* a refocussed Production team with a strong focus on outbound touring;
* a new Festivals and Partnership role to coordinate and manage the Museum’s many partnerships with other cultural organisations and regional museums;
* a new Indigenous producer role to provide creative support and coordination of public programming, co-production, festival and partnerships programming that explores and engages with Indigenous communities across NSW;
* a new Research Coordinator role to manage MAAS research programs and initiatives as well as establishing academic collaborations and partnerships internationally, nationally and across NSW.