Our Mission
To be a catalyst for creative expression and curious minds.

Our Vision
To be the leading Museum of applied arts and sciences; inspiring people and communities to transform our world.

Our Values
Acknowledgment of country

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) acknowledges Australia’s First Nations Peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

MAAS recognises and shares the value and importance of preserving, revitalising and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements. Central to achieving the MAAS vision for reconciliation is the exploration and fulfilment of a range of mutually beneficial opportunities in partnership with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures and networks, allowing the activities of MAAS to be linked to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a fundamental human right.

Right page: ‘Merrepen’, a screenprinted textile length on linen, designed and made by Gracie Kumbi, Merrepen Art Centre, Nauiyu on the Daly River, Northern Territory, Australia, 2013. Image credit: Marinco Kojdanovski
Introducing MAAS –

Our Museum
Our Themes & Disciplines
Our Collection
Our Place
Introduction

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan sets a clear direction for the Museum, its three venues – the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory and the Museums Discovery Centre – and a plan for its future.

We are Australia’s only museum of applied arts and sciences, with an exceptional collection, significant venues and locations in Sydney, Australia’s global city. This Plan seeks to position us at the forefront of contemporary museums. It outlines our Vision, our areas of focus and an interdisciplinary way of working.

We understand that a successful, more culturally diverse, innovative society is based on the creative use of knowledge. The best ideas emerge from a culture that values experimentation, interdisciplinary conversation and an openness to the unexpected. The Museum’s collection is not bound by time or place; rather it seeks to represent and encompass human creativity in all its expressions to tell a story of innovation, imagination and ingenuity.

Established as part of the 19th century agenda for the advancement of knowledge and social reform following the Sydney International Exhibition of 1879, the Museum honours and continues to build on that legacy. It will continue to transform itself to respond to growth, demographic trends, a dynamic social landscape, and not least to the changing shape of the city and state which it serves.

In this age, the boundaries between the digital and material worlds, and between the arts and the sciences, are increasingly blurred. They provide infinite opportunities to make relevant our increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Professor Barney Glover
President, Board of Trustees

Dolla Merrillees
Director
Our Museum

Our Museum is uniquely placed to demonstrate how the critical interface between arts and sciences is a catalyst for the development of ideas, collaborative thinking and innovative solutions to complex problems.

The Museum’s focus on creativity, ideas and innovation as well as engagement with STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) through its core disciplines, collections, programs and research has seen MAAS rapidly establishing a reputation for the delivery of high quality public engagement initiatives that sit at the nexus of art and science.

Using digital technology and innovation to develop new approaches which are both creative and participative, MAAS will inspire audiences of all ages. With its unique collection, significant venues, and location in Sydney, the Museum furthers the national innovation agenda and contributes to the NSW Government’s infrastructure, digital, educational, social cohesion, creative industries and economic priorities.

As we plan for the Museum’s longer term future, we are excited to embrace a once in a generation opportunity to develop a 21st century museum that responds to growth and the changing shape of Sydney, and to contemporary methods of content delivery, learning and collaboration, conceived as a holistic, audience-centric experience.
Image credit: Jayne Ions
The following themes underpin our vision, mission and activities:

- Discovering our place in time – our past, present and future
- Promoting relevance in our state and our region
- Fostering creativity and innovation in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics
- Building economic and environmental sustainability.

Our Values

Our themes and disciplines inform our collecting priorities, exhibitions and programs and determines the brand and reputation for the Museum.

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Our disciplines represent the core strengths of our collection, and our priorities for engagement across programs, exhibitions, digital experiences and partnerships.

- Architecture and the built environment
- Contemporary culture
- Design and decorative arts
- Engineering
- Fashion
- Health and medicine
- Physical sciences
- Technologies

Our disciplines represent the core strengths of our collection, and our priorities for engagement across programs, exhibitions, digital experiences and partnerships.
Our collection is at the heart of all that we do.

Our collection spans broad applied arts and science disciplines and provides a comprehensive insight into Australia as well as the world.

There are well over 500,000 separate items in the collection, which is in high demand with an active regional, national and international loan program, supported by nearly 50% of our collection objects digitised and globally available 24/7.

The collection is brought to life for visitors across the three MAAS venues and online through outstanding programs, exhibitions, activities and events.

Safnat telephone, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences collection
Our Place

The museum operates three venues across Sydney

- The site of Australia’s earliest dedicated place for science, Sydney Observatory
- Museums Discovery Centre, providing unparalleled collection storage and care and access for MAAS, Sydney Living Museums and Australian Museum collections
- Powerhouse Museum, located in the dynamic digital and creative precinct of Ultimo

With planning underway for our new museum in Parramatta, Sydney’s fastest growing region.

Over the duration of this plan we commit to:

- Build on our success at Sydney Observatory, ensuring it becomes a leading tourism attraction
- Leverage the Museums Discovery Centre, a unique three-museum partnership to grow audience participation, and maximise the benefits of our collaboration
- Continue investment at the Powerhouse Museum which supports audience growth and ensures a smooth transition to our new museum
- Plan and start implementation of a new world-leading museum for Sydney
- Work beyond physical sites, commit to diverse experiences across online, loan programs and outreach.
Fostering Australia’s knowledge economy

The knowledge economy is critical to Australia’s future economic and social success. The Museum supports research and learning in science, technology, arts, engineering and mathematics, to provide next generation knowledge experts, global leadership and productivity. The Museum contributes to NSW government priority sectors including digital, education, social cohesion, creative and health.

Global Sydney

Sydney is a global city with its natural advantages of lifestyle and climate and its matrix of economic and cultural influences. The Museum, as one of Sydney’s most valuable and historic cultural institutions is recognised and admired worldwide for its programs, research, collections and exhibitions. Capturing the best of Australian ingenuity and creativity the Museum plays an active role in supporting Sydney’s global city status.

Creative Industries

Australian creative industries are of global importance and relevance. The Museum provides context and knowledge as the unique custodian of critical parts of our nation’s story in applied arts and sciences. We provide a platform for the creative industries to learn from the past while inventing the future.

Audience Engagement

MAAS takes a long-term, holistic view of engaging with audiences. Our visitors are culturally, linguistically and geographically diverse, and we commit to providing similarly diverse experiences across our venues, online and through our outreach and loans programs. Through an ongoing program of conversation and research we seek to better know our audiences and to continually refine our experiences to better meet their needs and interests.

Sustainable Agencies

Our Museum provides direct employment, and economic support for a range of allied businesses. MAAS generates varied revenue streams to diversify its funding base and reduce reliance of core government grants, through a range of commercial, retail, food and beverage activities, and ticketed events.
We will deliver our vision through four strategic commitments. These are interdependent, fostering a whole-of-organisation approach.
Curiosity

Museums provide new ways to see the world.

- Our experiences (people, collections, research, programs and exhibitions) will evoke curiosity in our audiences and provide new pathways for participation, and act as a catalyst for learning.
- We will support government, industry and the education sectors by providing engaging opportunities for lifelong learning.
- We will share the knowledge we generate using all communication modes and platforms.
- We will identify areas of future research and investigation and undertake a rigorous program of interdisciplinary research across applied arts and sciences.
- We will foster curiosity in our workforce.

The desire to know and learn.
Creativity is integral to arts and sciences.

- We will inspire and support creativity and innovation in our diverse community.
- Our experiences and collection will be entertaining, creative, engaging, participatory and productive.
- We will encourage and support the production of creative content.
- We will provide an environment that supports a creative thinking process.
- Our collections will inspire creativity.
The future of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences relies on our ability to initiate and maintain successful partnerships.

- Our audiences and communities are our most important partners, and we will provide them with environments for co-creation, social and individual engagement.
- We will share our knowledge and expertise, and establish partnerships with commercial, national and international organisations to ensure a two-way relationship with our stakeholders.

- We will ensure that our marketing and communications builds audiences and reputation.
- We will build agile interdisciplinary teams empowering our workforce to innovate and excel.
- We will build an exemplary service culture that will underpin all interactions with stakeholders and staff.
Supporting long term relevance.

In order to thrive, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences must adapt, grow and deliver a meaningful museum experience well into the future.

- We will ensure sound business modelling, resilience, and fiscal sustainability to maximise commercial returns and secure public, workforce and stakeholder trust.
- We will develop competitive opportunities and increase self-generated income through sponsors, donors and a sound commercial plan.
- We will conserve and strategically manage and develop our collections for future generations and maintain excellent buildings and ensure safe environments for both visitors and our workforce.
- Our decisions and planning processes will be made within sound governance frameworks with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Our organisational structure and workforce will be agile and efficient, positioning us as an employer of choice which nurtures and develops an engaged, talented and sustainable workforce reflective of our community’s cultural diversity.
## High level success measures

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<tr>
<th>Success Factor</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Onsite and online audience growth</td>
<td>5% annual growth in line with the Premier’s Priorities of 15% growth in cultural attendance by 2019</td>
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<td>Increased satisfaction with the visitor experience</td>
<td>Sustain a visitor satisfaction rating of above 90%</td>
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<td>Significant contribution to NSW tourism</td>
<td>Continue to increase the number of tourists across MAAS venues, contributing to the NSW Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP)</td>
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<td>Diversity and quality of partnerships</td>
<td>Increase number and quality of partnerships across corporate and tertiary areas</td>
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<td>A sustainable organisation for future generations</td>
<td>Continued growth in self-generated revenue</td>
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<td>Enrichment of the collection</td>
<td>Enhanced quality of access, loans, research outcomes, publishing and acquisitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing national and international reputation</td>
<td>Enhanced quality of networks and number of conference speaking engagements, international media coverage and awards.</td>
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<td>Increased accessibility of programs and exhibitions</td>
<td>Increased access to programs and collection regionally, internationally and digitally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education audience growth</td>
<td>Growth in the number of education visits and digital education engagement</td>
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The Museum is an Executive Agency of the NSW Government within the NSW Department of Justice, governed by a Board of Trustees under the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945 (MAAS Act).