

# The MAAS Project

Image: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Tin toy car. Photo: Marince Kojdanovski



## The MAAS Project

### Public meeting summary – Wednesday 26 July 2017, Parramatta

#### Introduction

The NSW Government is committed to growing the arts and cultural sector across the whole of NSW. This includes investment in cultural infrastructure to deliver a Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) flagship campus in Western Sydney. To deliver the best possible Museum, an extended business case has been established to ensure all options are investigated, tested and analysed. Community consultation is an important element of the business case.

This document is a summary of the public meeting held on Wednesday 26 July 2017 at Parramatta. A separate summary has been developed for the public meeting on Monday 31 July at Ultimo and is available from the MAAS Project website, [new.maas.museum](http://new.maas.museum).

#### Overview

Eighty-eight people attended the public meeting on Wednesday 26 July 2017.

The Department of Planning and Environment provided an overview of the Department's role, the process of developing a business case and answered questions that were asked by participants through the registration process. Participants were asked to work in small groups, each with a table facilitator, to answer two key questions. In total, one third of the meeting time was spent on presentations and two thirds of the meeting time was spent seeking participant feedback.

#### Common registration questions that were answered at the Meeting

##### ***What is the government position?***

The NSW Government's position is to build the flagship MAAS campus in Parramatta on the Riverbank site. The New Museum will include the best exhibits currently at Ultimo, and will build on them. The New Museum will be bigger and better than anything this State has seen and will be a drawcard for domestic and international visitors.

The decision regarding the ongoing use of Ultimo and the funding package for the MAAS New Museum project will be determined by the NSW Government following the submission of the extended business case towards the end of the year.

##### ***How will the New Museum reflect/be relevant to the people of Western Sydney?***

MAAS already has a strong track record of community engagement in Western Sydney through the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill. The NSW Government is committed to delivering a vibrant, interactive, world-class cultural institution. It is important the New Museum is designed with community input and we are asking the Western Sydney community for their thoughts. We will continue with further consultation via pop up stalls at community events, surveys and ongoing dialogue via the MAAS Project website.

##### ***How will the New Museum link to existing Western Sydney arts and cultural facilities?***

The team is working closely with the City of Parramatta Council to ensure that the New Museum forms part of a vibrant arts and cultural precinct, an anchor for the region and delivers a cohesive rejuvenation of the central business district as well. The Council shares our commitment to the project; it features prominently in their new cultural strategy.

***Can you guarantee the jobs created will go to the people of Western Sydney?***

The economic and social impact for Western Sydney will be tested and analysed by the extended business case to be delivered to government later this year.

***Why is the riverside location preferable?***

Last year, the NSW Government announced the Parramatta Riverbank as the preferred site for the New Museum. The location provides an opportunity to develop an arts and cultural precinct in the heart of Parramatta's CBD. The NSW Government is in discussions with the City of Parramatta Council to acquire the Riverbank site.

***Will there be entry costs to the New Museum?***

The entry costs to the New Museum will be tested and analysed by the extended business case to be delivered to cabinet.

***What will you do to address the risk of flooding on this site?***

Engineering studies have been undertaken as part of the planning process, to address the potential for flooding on the site. The extended business case will be informed by the study findings, and appropriate design mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure the sustainability of the New Museum.

***Please provide more information about the vision and curatorial focus?***

Public meetings and through survey channels we will be asking the community for their views on what they would like to see, do and experience at a New Museum in Western Sydney. These ideas will be considered in the final business case.

**Table facilitation**

Participants were asked to consider two questions during the table facilitated session.

***Question 1: What would you like to see, do and experience at the New Museum in Western Sydney? What would make it an exciting place for you and your family/friends to visit?***

The key themes emerging from participant feedback included:

- » A museum with interactive, technology-driven exhibits - "play, push, move and manipulate."
- » The building needs to be iconic – a statement in architecture inside and out. The building could be an attractor. There was a suggestion of running an international design competition to encourage an iconic design to be developed.
- » The New Museum in Western Sydney needs to provide linkages with other sites across Western Sydney and focus on creating connections and partnerships across the region with other arts and science institutions.
- » There needs to be active engagement with local artists and it is important to involve the community in the design and operation of the New Museum.
- » Content and experience of the New Museum must be attractive to young people.
- » The project provides an opportunity to create a cultural precinct – linking with Sydney Living Museum sites, heritage sites (including the Female Factory) and the Riverside Theatres in the area.
- » The New Museum should be a melting pot of cultural experiences of other countries, food, art, music, handcrafts.
- » Exhibitions should reflect the demographic identity of the area through food, fashion, dance, etc.
- » Programming for the New Museum was viewed as being very important.

- » It is essential to consider how the museum interacts with place. Participants noted the experience of the New Museum was not just contained within the building, but it was important to link to the precinct and the Parramatta River.
- » The museum should appeal to people beyond Parramatta and Western Sydney and attract national and international visitors.
- » Collections should track Australia's past as well as its future.
- » The New Museum should support the local economy, offer jobs and strengthen the community.
- » Create a space for performances for example theatres, live exhibitions, performance art, dance, etc.
- » The New Museum should support the local economy, offer jobs and strengthen the community.

***Question 2: If some Powerhouse Museum presence stays at Ultimo what would you like to see, do and experience?***

The key themes emerging from participant feedback included:

- » Enhance links to the Ultimo area and history e.g. fashion and textiles – a flavour that belongs at Ultimo.
- » Something unique needs to be seen in Parramatta.
- » The Powerhouse collection at Ultimo should remain largely the same.
- » University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and Sydney TAFE interplay where students can collaborate in the space, with a possibility of bringing this to Parramatta.
- » Unpack the distinctive identity of the place and think about best use of the site.
- » Retain the character already developed at the Ultimo site.
- » Encouraging a formal educational use and ensuring linkages with schools and universities.

**Feedback forms**

There were thirty-two feedback forms received at the meeting on Wednesday 26 July.

Comments/questions on the feedback forms focused on the following themes:

1. Ideas and suggestions of what participants would like to see, do and experience at the New Museum (for example designing an eye-catching building rivalling architectural giants abroad, a space for young people to meet and create, an acknowledgment of Indigenous identity and an opportunity to create a cultural precinct linking with other sites in Western Sydney).
2. The division of collections between Ultimo and Parramatta. Comment that Ultimo should remain a flagship MAAS museum and not be diminished in any way by what happens at the Parramatta site.
3. The impacts of the project on arts and cultural organisations / facilities in Western Sydney and what partnerships might be established between them and MAAS.
4. Concern over the proposed Parramatta site due to flooding and impacts to nearby heritage buildings. Comments that consideration be given to the North Parramatta Heritage Precinct or Fleet Street site – looking at adaptive reuse.

**Next steps**

All the feedback received at the meetings on 26 July and 31 July 2017 will be considered as part of the extended business case.

Together with the other inputs, all feedback received during the consultation will help the Department of Planning and Environment to define emerging options. The Department of Planning and Environment will embark upon another round of consultation on the emerging options later in 2017.