

## **New Initiatives at Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) - APEC 2017**

### **Rationale**

MoAD's vision is to support all Australians to understand and celebrate the spirit of Australian democracy and the 'power of their voice' within it. To help young Australians understand this difficult concept, MoAD recognises that learning is a complex and personal process occurring in many contexts with personal experience, transformation, understanding, identity and agency at its core.

This vision underpins MoAD Learning's strategic priority and our learning philosophy – *to grow the museum as a leading educational institution providing safe opportunities for deep engagement in the ideas and practices of democracy and civic participation...by providing unique and transformative learning experiences that explore what it means to be an informed and engaged citizen.*

We realize this approach by embedding the following set of guiding principles across all our programs:

- 1) Enjoyment
- 2) Engagement
- 3) Inclusion
- 4) Provocation
- 5) Immersion
- 6) Identity and empathy.

In the past 12 months, we have continued our onsite delivery of quality, curriculum- based school programs and increased our online resources but we have also been investigating digital technologies and learning opportunities for new outreach programs to build awareness of MoAD and to reach those schools who cannot visit us physically. We have also been exploring how we can support teachers and their learning and what we can develop for them in the areas of HASS and Civics and Citizenship.

### **A strategy for future learning directions**

The delivery strategy for MoAD Learning has been to focus on selective and focussed learning experiences for growth. The following aspirational outcomes indicate where we have concentrated our efforts across onsite, online and outreach areas:

#### **1. Improve and refresh existing onsite and online programs**

As part of our core commitment to visiting schools, we evaluate all onsite programs using teacher and student feedback surveys. We have developed and implemented a learning philosophy and a set of guiding principles to ensure that our programs continue to be learner-focussed and relevant with current curriculum and learning trends.

#### **2. Identify new markets for our programs**

This strategy has seen MoAD Learning expand and consolidate MoAD's young adult program experiences with two new and distinctly different civics and citizenship experiences, in partnership with other agencies – Australian Youth Leaders Forum and National Indigenous Youth Parliament. These programs are about leadership, community and active democracy.

#### **3. Present outcomes of our work**

This approach informed our decision to submit papers for presentations at key national and state conferences attended by teachers, academics, field experts and museum colleagues. This not only raises the profile of MoAD but it also provides us

with insight into the needs of teachers and the initiatives of industry colleagues. We have also contributed articles to educational publications subscribed to by teachers.

#### **4. Develop new onsite, online and outreach programs**

To test our assumptions on museum learning, digital technology and school needs and be strategic in our growth we have been road-mapping future directions and trends in museum learning and the school sector. Our current feedback surveys reveal that teachers and students are highly satisfied with the programs we offer and express interest in returning. However, what about the schools who do not visit MoAD and those who do not know us? It is very important for our strategic priority that we find out who and why.

This outcome took the form of a brand new project of targeted desktop research and audience evaluation initiatives that we have been doing over last 5 months with the help of an external consultant. The research and evaluation includes:

- staff workshops on MoAD's unique learning offer and what it means for our visitors
- local teacher focus group workshops
- online survey of teachers who know us, visit us
- national online survey of teachers who may not know us – targeting metropolitan, regional and remote schools.

This data, its analysis and the final report will help us to plan, develop and deliver onsite, online and outreach programs and products that are relevant for teachers and students and their learning and curriculum needs.

#### **5. Outreach Initiative – increasing our audience through digital media**

The 2014 GLAM *Innovation Study* found that “The sector is undergoing profound shifts driven by a number of trends, chiefly those arising from the dramatic changes in how people access, share and engage in digital services and social media”. The shift to digital has changed audience expectations and provides new channels for engagement.<sup>1</sup> We have been considering these trends and exploring ways our learning programs can be accessed more easily. This is not limited to our capacity to resource onsite programs there are also external factors that affect student visitation to MoAD. These include financial costs associated with an extended interstate excursion experience<sup>2</sup>, curriculum relevance,<sup>3</sup> internal school approval processes and the time taken to organise an offsite excursion, as well as the demographic of the school (e.g. cultural backgrounds, special needs, health restrictions, and remoteness).

To provide an avenue for this group of school visitor to access our learning programs easily – we have been exploring digital excursion opportunities through a pilot digital outreach program. It is our belief that investing in digital excursion programs will increase MoAD's outreach and thereby provide an avenue to deliver on our strategic priority. The pilot program is a way to test this belief and prove the concept through research and evaluation from teachers and students.

#### **6. Teacher professional development**

MoAD Learning has been involved in development and delivery of successful professional development to local and interstate teachers for a number of years. We have achieved this primarily through teacher programs organised by National Capital

---

<sup>1</sup> Mansfield, T., Winter, C., Griffith, C., Dockerty, A., Brown, T. (2014) [Innovation Study: Challenges and Opportunities for Australia's Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums, Australian Centre for Broadband Innovation, CSIRO and Smart Services CRC](#)

<sup>2</sup> Dale, N., Keating, B. (2016) *Size and effect of school excursions to the National Capital 2015*, Centre for Tourism Research, University of Canberra

<sup>3</sup> Dale, N., (2013) *Destination choice by school excursion groups in Australia: Understanding factors that influence preference*, University of Canberra

Education Tourism Project (NCETP) and our annual local teacher workshop. More recently, we have worked with some universities to deliver PD programs for pre-service teachers. This opportunity is very valuable for the student teacher' professional learning as well as for us and we are keen to build on these relationships. This year we took our first accreditation steps and had our institution accredited as a professional learning provider in ACT and participated in a BOSTES accredited program for ACT/NSW teachers in July this year. Our plan is to develop an ACT accredited professional development program next year based on the research from our audience evaluation project.

## **7. The welcome experience**

MoAD is located in Old Parliament House (OPH), the first purpose-built home of the federal parliament and used as such from 1927 until 1988. It is listed on the national register as an iconic building of important cultural, political and historic significance. Heritage interpretation and values education have always been a core component in MoAD learning programs. Historic role-plays and white gloves are two powerful tools we use successfully. Some new initiatives we have introduced are:

- A 'thank you' to students and teachers for their active citizenship during their visit to the Museum. This is in the form of a special Certificate of Appreciation for those school groups whose students were exemplary in their knowledge, participation and/or behaviour in their learning program
- A very large WELCOME mat for the school entrance. The mat not only helps protect the floor surfaces in the building but it also acts as a powerful welcome sign to the Museum of Australian Democracy.

## **Summation**

The outcomes outlined have put MoAD in a strong position to ensure that we continue to develop and deliver our high quality, relevant and unique onsite, online and outreach learning programs. We anticipate audience growth to come from targeted teacher professional development programs, the development of distance learning models and partnerships with specific providers. The audience evaluation report should give us clear indicators of school requirements, learning needs and future directions we need to consider for growth and reach.

The feedback so far from the pilot digital outreach program, teacher focus group workshop, desktop research and online surveys confirms many of our assumptions on teacher needs, classroom environments and transformative learning. The surprises have been around the excited responses to the pilot digital outreach program and the enthusiastic commitment by teachers to help us in our research and testing endeavours.