

MEDIA RELEASE

MAAS launches national Centre for STEAM

As tomorrow's thinkers, innovators and leaders, young people across Australia will be the focus of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences' (MAAS) new Centre for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM).

The Centre for STEAM sees MAAS collaborate with a range of corporate and education partners, including principal partner, Microsoft, and tertiary education partner, Western Sydney University, to deliver a range of STEAM based initiatives that improve the accessibility, quality and creativity of learning opportunities for teachers, parents and the young people themselves.

In the first year of its operation, the Centre for STEAM will partner with the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) and Microsoft to launch Full STEAM Ahead, a program designed to give over 1000 under-represented Year 8 students across Australia the STEAM skills they need to create change in the world.

MAAS developed ThinkerShields will be distributed to schools and students to support the Western Sydney Coding Club.

Digital media workshops will be hosted in partnership with Information + Cultural Exchange (ICE) in Parramatta, and an annual program of video conferences will give schools across the country access to leaders across the STEAM disciplines.

Upgraded STEAM-focused experiences will also open at the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, including a hands-on digital learning space, *The Lab*, and interactive science gallery, *Experimentations*.

President of the MAAS Board of Trustees, Barney Glover, said "with Australia's mathematical literacy falling against other OECD countries, and our scientific literacy not seeing improvement, there has never been a more crucial time to focus on fostering passion for STEAM disciplines in our young people.

"The Centre for STEAM provides an unprecedented opportunity to bring together education, industry and corporate partners to ensure STEAM subjects remain important and engaging for students to ensure an ongoing commitment to innovation and progress in these areas."

MAAS Director, Dolla Merrillees, said "today's classroom is not contained within four walls. It is a place of learning with few boundaries and infinite possibilities. MAAS is Australia's only museum of applied arts and science and is uniquely positioned to empower students with the skills needed to excel in the 21st Century. The Centre aims to address this widening skills gap by providing learning opportunities that are both useful and engaging."

Microsoft Australia Public Sector Director, Michael Gratton, said "without a doubt, the strength of Australia's economy relies heavily on the digital know-how of our future workforce. In partnership with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Centre for STEAM provides an immersive and inclusive platform that will inspire lifelong learning and develop essential digital skills in our community through the introduction of industry-level tools and services. The opportunities for learning are vast – and Microsoft is proud to be part of this important milestone that is primed to help boost Australia's digital literacy."

Full details on the initiatives offered by the Centre for STEAM can be found online at:

www.maas.museum/centre-for-steam/

About ThinkerShield

ThinkerShield classroom coding kit is a reusable, thoroughly proven, complete computer-science teaching and learning solution to equip both students and teachers with the skills to enhance their competency in coding.

About the Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences

The Powerhouse Museum, alongside Sydney Observatory and Museums Discovery Centre, is part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), Australia's contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has a vast and diverse collection of over 500,000 objects.

For media enquiries contact Eli Wallis, Senior Publicist | eli.wallis@maas.museum | 9217 0564 / 0402 359 016

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