MEDIA RELEASE

WESTERN SYDNEY CODING CLUB
launched as part of MAAS 2018 SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) today launched its 2018 Schools Program, aimed at inspiring a life-long engagement for learners across Australia in the subject areas of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). Through the generous support of the NSW Government, Crown Foundation and the Packer Foundation, schools in Western Sydney will also have the opportunity to access free professional development and coding resources for their classrooms through the newly established **Western Sydney Coding Club (WSCC).**

The 2018 Schools program features opportunities for learners to participate in self-directed or educator led experiences across the three MAAS venues, the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory and the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill, as well as joining learners and experts from across the country in virtual classrooms for free and on-demand video conferencing programs.

Presented by the **MAAS Centre for STEAM**, the WSCC will launch in October 2017, providing an entry point for Western Sydney teachers looking for a reliable and tested way to familiarise themselves with coding prior to the introduction of mandatory coding curriculum in 2018. WSCC will use arts and creativity as the vehicle for teaching coding. Through WSCC, 120 schools will be provided with training and resources to learn industry-standard coding using the **ThinkerShield**, an educational tool created by MAAS. WSCC follows a pilot program earlier this year that successfully taught coding skills to 2,000 learners from over 20 schools across Australia.

MAAS Director and CEO, Dolla Merrillees, said learners will develop coding skills to equip them for the jobs of the future thanks to this initiative. "Coding, and the logic and problem-solving skills it fosters, will be the foundation of the jobs of the future, some of which do not yet exist. In order to equip learners of today to be successful leaders of tomorrow it is imperative they have world-class coding in their curriculum. The MAAS Centre for STEAM is committed to developing learning experiences that combine education, industry and corporate partners to deliver engaging and relevant STEAM experiences for learners,"

In 2018 schools will also have the opportunity to explore curriculum mapped limited-season exhibitions at the Powerhouse Museum, participate in the annual **Young Creators Conference,** join in with the **League of Legends learning hub**, and be a part of the **Sydney Science Festival** and **Sydney Design Festival**. Teachers are also invited to participate in new NESA accredited teacher professional development programs, which focus on coding, physical computing and project-based learning for science.

For more information about the MAAS 2018 Education program please visit https://maas.museum/learn/
For more information about the Western Sydney Coding Club please visit http://thinkershield.maas.museum/wscc

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

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

About the MAAS Centre for STEAM
In collaboration with industry leaders, educators, researchers, learners and the public, the MAAS Centre for STEAM presents exhibitions, engaging learning programs, dynamic public events and scholarly inquiry. Our goals are to make STEAM relevant and engaging; build skills for the future; provide meaningful collaborations with industry and reveal the wonder of science. By fostering innovation, collaboration, skills development, and public curiosity, the Centre for STEAM spearheads MAAS' vision of becoming the leading hub for STEAM in Aust**ralia.**

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. Established in 1879, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has a vast and diverse collection of over 500,000 objects and is uniquely placed to demonstrate how technology, engineering, science and design impact Australia and the world.**