

OPEN MUSEUMS OPEN MINDS

REPORT FOR
MAITLAND
CITY
COUNCIL

Joe Eisenberg & Janis Wilton

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SYNOPSIS

Maitland is home to a number of collections of items that reveal aspects of Maitland's past, present and future. Some are owned and managed by Council; others are under community care. They are public, social and cultural assets that contribute to the visitor economy and to Maitland's cultural landscape.

Open Museums, Open Minds documents the nature and content of these collections, and the variety of ways in which they invite residents and visitors to engage with the collections and the stories those collections can tell. It also documents the resources they have and use, and the resources they need.

The Report then explores a variety of ways in which cooperation between Council and community organisations could see an enhanced care and use of the collections. The emphasis is on achievable, sustainable, resource efficient and incremental strategies and projects

that build on existing initiatives. The proposal is for an innovative regional museum that has central gateways and a central storehouse and that invites visitors and residents to engage with sites, collections and experiences across the city.

The vision is to see Maitland as an inviting and inspiring place with a well-publicised network of experiences that introduce and extend engagements with the locality and its unique history and identity. Stories and experiences should be encountered in the streets and in museums, on heritage sites and online, in books and through performances. The doors of Maitland's museums should be open and inviting so that people visit and so that the collections and the stories the collections tell can tumble onto the streets, into heritage sites, and into the minds of residents and visitors. Maitland should be memorable for the ways in which open museums open minds.

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OVERVIEW

The key concept to emerge from this consultancy is the recommendation that Maitland should establish an innovative regional museum that operates under the banner of Open Museums Open Minds and that operates outside the idea of a single building as the only destination. This entails recognising, supporting and enhancing the existing collections, sites, places and museum experiences that make Maitland a unique and inviting place to live and visit. These are cultural, social and public assets in terms of a visitor economy and in terms of the lifestyles offered by the locality.

In the long term the concept entails that visitors and residents should be able to access central gateways that entice them to engage with the locality and the experiences it has to offer, and to contribute to the interpretation and development of the city's collections, places and experiences.

Importantly, the concept recognises that:

- Maitland already offers a diverse range, depth and quality of history and heritage collections, places and museum experiences;
- existing museum experiences are developed and maintained by Council, by volunteer community groups, and by private owners;
- existing collections and museum experiences need additional resources and development;
- a variety of new and innovative museum experiences could contribute to invigorating Maitland and marking it as a creative and imaginative locality that opens museums and opens minds onto its past, present and future.

This report focuses on twelve key collections currently housed in the Maitland local government area and uses the documentation and analysis of their contents, nature and resources as a basis for proposing strategies and projects that, in resource efficient and achievable stages, could take better care of the collections and enhance resident and visitor engagement with Maitland's museums, history and heritage.

To this end the report has the following three parts as well as appendices.

Introduction provides the background to the **Open Museums, Open Minds** project, its aims, and key concepts and understandings.

Part 1: Maitland's Collections reports research findings in relation to relevant Council policies, the collections and activities supported by the twelve collecting organisations consulted for **Open Museums, Open Minds**, the community engagement strategies initiated by Council, and community support and action for a regional museum for Maitland.

Part 2: Strategies and Projects identifies and develops strategies and projects that, in incremental and achievable stages, protect Maitland's collections as community assets, enhance and add to Maitland's museum experiences, and promote Maitland as a place where open museums open minds.

This report concludes with an implementation overview that presents short, medium and long term areas of priority to address.



1

RIVERVIEW



INTRODUCTION

The *Open Museums Open Minds* project emerged from Maitland City Council's concern to respond to community requests for action in relation to the delivery of museum experiences in Maitland.

1 AIMS, METHODS, TERMS

1.1 *Aims*

The aims of the project are to:

1. Identify key themes and attributes which are unique to Maitland and determine a framework for assessing relevance and value of items and sites with direct links to Maitland.
2. Identify all existing groups currently working with collections and delineate their various roles and functions including an overview of the themes within their current collections.
3. Distinguish and describe public and social assets within the city and identify opportunities to optimise access to and connection with these assets.
4. Identify a pilot project which introduces alternatives to traditional museums and prompt community conversations about participatory ways to engage in a museum experience, which will be implemented by Maitland City Council in conjunction with other stakeholders.
5. Identify optimal delivery models for collections and innovative ways of presentation including contemporary, alternative approaches to participatory experiences and access to information.
6. Establish strategic links with visitor economy product and activities and marketability as a key visitor experience in Maitland.
7. Identify how these delivery models could be resourced and managed including opportunities for collaboration between existing groups and consolidation of material to strengthen key themes and narratives.
8. Identify funding streams, opportunities to access grants and development programs.
9. Consider the need for a preservation strategy and central storage.

1.2 *Consultants*

Joe Eisenberg and Janis Wilton were engaged as consultants on the project in 2017. Joe Eisenberg and Janis Wilton are arts, history and heritage consultants. Before retiring, Joe was Cultural Director of Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Janis was an Associate Professor in Public and Applied History at the University of New England.

1.3 *Methodology*

The methodology involved:

1. policy and literature review,
2. identification of key themes and frameworks,
3. stakeholder mapping, and
4. consultation and engagement.

1.4 *Key terms and concepts*

1.4.1 *Museums and museum experiences*

The term ‘museum’ tends to convey images of a building that houses and displays collections of objects. This certainly is its historical sense and remains an essential aspect of how we conceive museums and what museums are. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, however, while museums have continued to collect, house, conserve and display collections of items, their purpose and activities have broadened. There is now as much emphasis on audience engagement as on collecting, conserving and presenting, on interpreting and telling stories as on documenting and displaying objects, and on developing and implementing activities that go beyond exhibitions as on researching, curating and presenting exhibitions.

Today, museum experiences include, for example, public programs that engage audiences through talks, walks and virtual encounters; exhibitions, performances and public art that often tumble out from the museum and into the surrounding streets and landscapes and that also flow from neighbourhoods into the museums; pop up, temporary exhibitions of all forms that take objects and narratives to new audiences and that also invite those audiences to contribute their stories; innovative interactive experiences that draw participants into engaging with museums and their collections in new ways and that also invite them to participate in the creation of exhibitions, events and stories and creative approaches to what constitutes a museum collection that offer ideas about museums without objects, whole precincts as museums, and collection items that include places, sites, people, public art.

1.4.2 *Collections*

At the simplest level, a collection is ‘a distinct group of objects, documents or records’.⁰¹ The focus in the

Open Museums Open Minds project is on collections held within the Maitland Local Government Area that have an emphasis on collecting, preserving and making accessible items that provide insights into the unique history and heritage of the locality. This includes collections of objects as well as collections of documentary records, photographs, audio recordings, film, and art.

1.4.3 *Museums as assets*

Museums, their collections and the variety of experiences they support are public, cultural and social assets. They look after significant collections. They gather and present objects, stories and understandings about the past, present and future. They engage varied audiences. They contribute to the local economy by attracting visitors, engaging local audiences and inviting people to spend time and money looking, viewing, participating, engaging, learning and being entertained. As the UNESCO constitution declares:

Museums ... play an important role in education..., social cohesion and sustainable development. ... Museums also support economic development, notably through cultural and creative industries and tourism.⁰²

1.5 *Author identification and acknowledgements*

The draft report has been researched and written by Joe Eisenberg and Janis Wilton in consultation with Maitland City Council staff, the Open Museums, Open Minds advisory group, and representatives from the twelve collecting organisations surveyed for Open Museums, Open Minds (see section 4 Collections following).

Design and layout: Clare Hodgins.

01 Maitland City Council, *Maitland Local Studies Strategy: Connecting Our Past to the Future*, 2010, 2.1.

02 UNESCO Constitution: Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society, 2015, Item 1, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49357&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html



PART 1: MAITLAND'S COLLECTIONS

Part 1 of the *Open Museums, Open Minds* report focuses on the documentation of twelve key history and heritage collections held in Maitland in order to evaluate the nature of the collections, the museum experiences emanating from and around those collections, and the resources available to maintain, conserve and use the collections. It also provides a summary of relevant Maitland City Council policies and plans, identifies key themes that help to define Maitland, notes the variety of other public and social assets that contribute to understanding and engaging with Maitland's history and heritage, provides a summary of the community engagement strategies implemented as part of the *Open Museums, Open Minds* process, and offers an overview of current community support and action for a Maitland regional museum.

The purpose throughout Part 1 is to document, describe and evaluate the museums and museum experiences currently hosted in Maitland, their role in conserving and presenting Maitland's history, and the resources used – and needed – to support their contributions.

Strategies and projects to enhance existing contributions and to present Maitland as a city whose museum experiences invite residents and visitors to spend more time to engage with the city and its past, present and future are presented in Part 2 of the report.



2 COUNCIL POLICIES AND PLANS

Maitland City Council has a number of policies and plans that establish the importance of history and heritage to Maitland's identity and as one focus in the development and implementation of strategies to enhance community and visitor engagement with the city. The following provides a summary of the points that are of particular relevance to **Open Museums, Open Minds**. More detailed accounts of the policies and plans are provided in [Appendix 1: Council policies and plans](#).

2.1 *Themes and issues*

Council's policies and plans demonstrate clear awareness of key factors that shape the nature and identity of Maitland. They also identify the need to address issues that challenge that nature and identity. By drawing these together from across Council documents, the following themes and issues emerge.

- significance and value of Maitland's history and heritage (repeated in all documents);
- concern about the fractured nature of Maitland communities due, partly, to geographical silos (Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan, Maitland Place Activation Plan, Maitland Cultural Plan);
- the creation of a stronger Maitland identity (Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan, Maitland Place Activation Plan, Maitland Cultural Plan);
- importance of Central Maitland and the need to revitalise it as the centre of the city and a focus for enhancing a Maitland identity (Central Maitland Structure Plan, Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan);
- better awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their histories (Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan);
- better awareness of the diversity of communities in the locality – cultural, social, geographical, health (Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan);
- importance of the Hunter River and the need for greater connections to the river (Central Maitland Structure Plan, Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan, Maitland Place Activation Strategy);
- concern about the environment, and the need to maintain a balance between conservation and development (Maitland + 10 Community Strategic Plan); and
- better awareness of the nature and role of the diverse cultural activities across the city (Maitland Cultural Plan).

2.2 *Strategies and action plans*

Council policies and plans set out strategies to address gaps and enhance existing services, experiences and encounters that invite engagement with Maitland's history and lifestyle, and a greater awareness of Maitland as a place to live and visit. These include, for example:

- creation of more accessible, safe and inviting spaces, places and routes (Central Maitland Structure Plan, Central Maitland Interpretation Plan, Maitland Place Activation Strategy);
- identify and provide access to Maitland's local studies collections (Local Studies Strategy);
- public art as a form of engagement with places and heritage (Public Art Policy, Central Maitland Interpretation Plan, High Street Master Plan, Maitland Place Activation Strategy);
- adaptive and creative uses for heritage sites across the city (Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan);
- variety of interpretive media that offer engagement with different aspects of Maitland's history and heritage, and that also enhance the look, feel and experience of being in Maitland (High Street Master Plan, Central Maitland Interpretation Plan, Walka Water Works Interpretation Plan, Maitland Place Activation Strategy);
- improving existing cultural facilities, and creating a new collaborative cultural institution (Maitland Cultural Plan); and
- communication, promotion and marketing of existing cultural activities and other features that make Maitland an inviting place to live and visit (Maitland Cultural Plan).

2.3 *Implementation*

The implementation of Council policies is resulting in an innovative range of new ways to experience Maitland. These include, for example:

- **Apps** that enable people to listen, look, walk and encounter Maitland stories.
- **Exhibitions, trails and experiences**, inside and outside, that invite contemplation of Maitland's historical and natural environments.
- **Interpretive signage** at significant heritage sites.
- **Street art**, temporary and semi-permanent, in a variety of different settings.
- **Public talks** that draw on local and beyond expertise and experiences.
- **Publications**, on line and in print, that provide insights and information on places to visit and the stories that make Maitland unique.
- **Special events** that enliven particular places and spaces, and highlight different aspects of what the city has to offer.

These experiences are initiated and supported from within different sections of Council including City and Visitor Economy, Heritage Office, Community Services, Events, Maitland City Library, Maitland Gaol, and Maitland Regional Art Gallery.



Maitland pavement sign



2.4 *Summary*

These policies and plans, and the implementation of them, provide clear guidelines and inspirational strategies and examples that are slowly adding interpretation and value to Maitland streets and sites. Council recognises, however, that an aspect of Maitland's history and heritage that is absent from these policies and plans is an in-depth investigation and consideration of the nature, place, activities, roles and potential of the number of significant museum collections, collecting organisations and community based initiatives in the Local Government

Area; the ways in which these contribute to the city's history and heritage; and the ways in which they could become integral features in the implementation of a number of Council policies and plans. The clear exception is the **Local Studies Strategy** initiated by Maitland City Library. This strategy, indeed, provided the foundation for the survey of collections conducted for the **Open Museums, Open Minds** project.

Braddon Snape Installation at the Riverlink Building
The Levee, High Street, Central Maitland, 2018



3 THEMES

As Wendy Thorp explains in her thematic history of Maitland, the purpose of identifying historical themes is to define, as concisely as possible, the principal events or catalysts that were influential in the unique development of a particular area.⁰³

The specific purpose in this report is to identify themes that provide a framework to assist with assessing the relevance and value of items and sites with direct links to Maitland.

The original sources and the detailed research and documentation of particular events, places, people and topics that flesh out these themes is found in published local histories and other secondary studies as well as in the collections of objects, documents and other materials that record aspects of life in Maitland.⁰⁴

Within this context, current Council policies and plans identify a number of themes and issues that are central to enhancing understanding of, and engagement with, Maitland as a place to live and a place to visit (see [2.1 Themes and issues](#)). Reports to Council have also listed historical themes seen to define unique features of Maitland, and published histories about Maitland are organised around, or focus on, specific themes.⁰⁵

Drawing on these existing studies, and on further research and consultation during the **Open Museums Open Minds** project, the following are themes that offer an initial framework for assessing the relevance of items and sites for the telling of Maitland stories. It should be emphasised that no one theme or themes are more important than others, and that the order of presentation does not indicate relative importance. It should also be emphasised that the themes are interlinked and that the list is not finite or fixed. New themes, and different emphases within themes, will emerge as Maitland's past, present and future are mined for their objects, sites, stories and messages.

03 *Maitland Heritage Survey Review: Thematic History for Maitland City Council*, Sydney, 1994, p.1.

04 See [19 Bibliography](#) for a selection of published local histories, and [4 Collections](#) on the nature of collections housed in Maitland, especially section 4.4 [Topics](#) on the topics covered by the different collections.

05 *Maitland Heritage Survey Review: Thematic History* provides the most substantial discussion of themes. See also the *Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan*, Maitland City Council, 2014, especially pp.17 and 50-59 and, for an example of a published general local history of Maitland organized around themes see Brian Walsh and Cameron Archer, *Maitland on the Hunter, 2nd Edition*, Tocal, 2007. A selection of other local histories are listed in [19 Bibliography](#).

3.1 *The river and the land*

Maitland sits in a river valley. Its geological and natural history are marked by rock and soil formations that produced resources such as coal, building stones and soils, and by native vegetation, animals, birds and fish that were affected as Europeans chopped, farmed and built their way across the land. The river flowing through, and frequently flooding, the land produced rich soils and swamplands and, for the Indigenous and early European inhabitants, provided a means of transport and communication.

As European settlement spread, the natural environment altered: land was cleared and farmed, foreign plant and animal species imported, the river system silted and polluted, built structures and towns created, and Central Maitland turned its back to the river - flooding was too damaging.

In the twenty first century, Maitland is revitalising its connection to the Hunter River and the natural environment and, in an era of climate change, is considering ways to reinvigorate and protect the natural environment. In Central Maitland there are passageways, walks and events that invite engagement with the river and the altered landscapes that spread out from its edges, and at Walka Water Works an app and signs provide means for identifying native and imported birds.

Stories of the river and the land are drawn from Wonnarua traditions and early and later European records, can be experienced by touring the locality, and flow from and around, for example, geological specimens, fossils, natural history collections, botanical specimens and drawings, taxidermed birds and animals, river transport items, and flood relics.

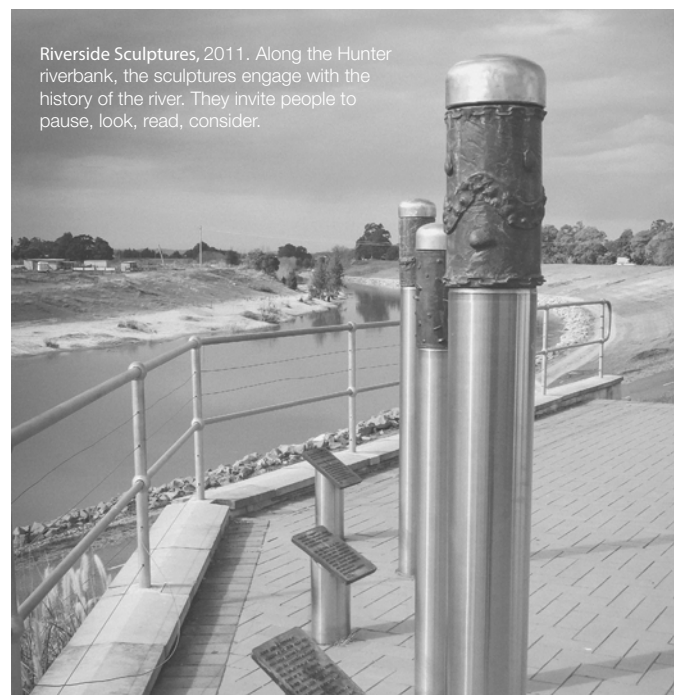
3.2 *Wonnarua country*

Maitland is built on Wonnarua land. This was and always will be Wonnarua country. This acknowledgement underpins all understandings of the history and heritage of the locality.

The Wonnarua, and the neighbouring communities of

the Worimi, Awabal and Darkinjung, have origin stories that explain the topographical features of the area and have a presence in, and knowledge of, country that goes back thousands of years. Their history includes an understanding of the cultural traditions and practices that saw them live with and in a demanding natural environment for generations. It also includes understanding of both peaceful and violent frontier encounters, the undermining and the survival of traditional ways of life, the racism and neglect that battered their lives, their resilience and their significant presence in contemporary life.

Understanding of Wonnarua country and histories emerges from, for example, Wonnarua cultural knowledge and practices, artefacts from traditional Wonnarua sites, craft and art, contemporary items, and 'reading between the lines' in European records.



3.3 *Exploration and convicts*

For Europeans, colonisation was also about exploration, official and unofficial. The aim was to find and claim land that could be settled, farmed and exploited for its natural resources. The aim was also to know and map the unknown.

The earliest Europeans to venture into the area were probably escaped convicts. Then came bursts of official explorers and surveyors who described, mapped, sketched and, at times, collected. At the same time convicts based in the Newcastle penal settlement were among those who came into the area to fell the large cedar trees and float the timber down the river.

Convicts and past convicts were also among the first European settlers in the locality, and convicts provided labour on newly claimed and established estates.

The presence of convicts, along with a perceived threat from the Wonnarua and other Indigenous groups and a broader need to keep law and order in a rough and largely male community, saw the arrival of soldiers and other law enforcement, and the creation of 'stockades' for housing soldiers and prisoners.

Surviving records, journals, maps and sketches provide insights into the European exploration of the area and into the place and role of convicts. So, too, do convict built sites and roads, and convict relics.

3.4 *Claiming land*

The traditional owners of the land are the Wonnarua people. For millennia before the arrival of Europeans, they hunted and walked the land, and lived with and cared for its biodiversity.

English concepts and practices of land ownership displaced the Wonnarua. They entailed allocating land ownership to individuals and enshrining that ownership in legal documents and trails.

From the 1820s, large land grants went to military personnel and prominent citizens and, consequently, enhanced the owners' social and economic status. Developed partly with convict labour, impressive rural properties were created and homesteads were built that proclaimed success and comfort. Eventually these estates were subdivided and broken up: long-term tenant farmers purchased blocks, newer settlers acquired small farms, suburbs and small towns replaced some rural estates.

Some of the stately homesteads that mark the affluence and status of the early large estates are extant. So too are collections of objects and other records that track ownership, document farming and other enterprises, and evoke the lifestyles supported by the estates. Similarly, sub-division, tenant farming and the emergence of smaller farms and of suburbs can be encountered in maps, documents, buildings, and objects, and can be sensed by visiting different parts of the locality.

3.5 *Many settlements*

The Maitland locality, past and present, is characterised by 'a patchwork of towns'.⁰⁶ The earliest European settlement, established between 1818 and 1821, was at Wallis Plains (now Central Maitland). This was followed by the more formal declaration of what is now East Maitland as the government town in the district. These two settlements, along with Morpeth as the port on the Hunter River, provided the nucleus and key services for the spread of other settlements at, for example, Hinton, Largs and Heddon Greta. The sub-division of large estates (see 3.4 *Claiming land*) created another spate of small settlements, many of which eventually became absorbed as suburbs of the larger towns. Lorn, Bolwarra, Telarah and Louth Park provide examples.

As Wendy Thorpe explains, the spread and location of the settlements

often underscore important topographical features that made settlement favourable, such as fertile flats or their positions in natural corridors of movement, or their support of significant local industries such as coal mining.⁰⁷

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the pattern continues. New settlements such as Gillieston Heights and Cliftleigh, and new areas of older settlements such as Aberglassyn, provide homes for a growing population. Their location is partly shaped by access to transport routes and by the need to leave vacant low-lying land that is subject to flooding.

06 Maitland Heritage Survey Review: Thematic History, p. 19.

07 Maitland Heritage Survey Review: Thematic History, p. 21.

This pattern of a 'patchwork of towns' and the often relatively self-contained nature of the different settlements has contributed to the geographical silos that help to fracture Maitland's communities (see [2.1 Themes and issues](#)).

The nature and impact of this pattern of many settlements is conveyed through, for example, maps that plot boundaries and links; records, objects and oral histories of people who lived and live in the different settlements; the nature and histories of each of the settlements; and informed visits to view and experience the layout, buildings and services of different parts of the locality.

3.6 *A regional centre*

By the mid-nineteenth century West and East Maitland and, to a lesser extent, Morpeth were the service centres for the region and the entry point for north and north-west New South Wales. Commerce and trade thrived with West Maitland as the bountiful commercial centre. Services – water, sewerage, gas and electricity – were established. Religious and education institutions emerged to foster and direct a civilized and respectable community. Law and order agencies – police, magistrates, courts – were established, local defence associations emerged, health services and social welfare – including a public hospital – developed, and local government and its public servants became responsible for managing local developments and activities. Cultural and leisure pursuits also became a part of local life: sport, scientific societies, musical and drama groups, art collections and exhibitions, a technological museum.

Maitland boomed as the regional centre and, then, from the later nineteenth century and through improved communications and Newcastle's location as a port and industrial city anchored to BHP, Maitland was replaced by Newcastle as the main regional centre.

In the later twentieth century, Maitland underwent – and is still experiencing – a growth in population. Mining, the proximity of the M1, the attraction of living outside big cities, the provision of services and retail outlets, and

small manufacturing and industrial industries play their part in attracting new residents. So, too, do the range of cultural and leisure pursuits supported in the locality and, the package of Maitland, is increasingly attractive to tourists and visitors.

There is an abundance of material, sites and trails that anchor stories about different aspects of Maitland as a regional centre – both the booming place of the nineteenth century and the different, albeit still regional, centre of today. For example, a walk down High Street in Maitland is a reminder of the affluence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and of the changes during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; a tour of churches and other religious institutions along with objects that tell their stories offer insights into changes and continuities in religious practice and beliefs; and a visit to Walka Water Works provides an encounter with past technology, an appreciation of today's water supply, and exposure to recent interpretation strategies engaging residents and tourists with the history and setting of the site.

3.7 *Keeping in touch*

The Wonnarua had, for generations, established communication and trade routes. They used the rivers and they had tracks across country that enabled them to gather together, pass on messages and collect food.

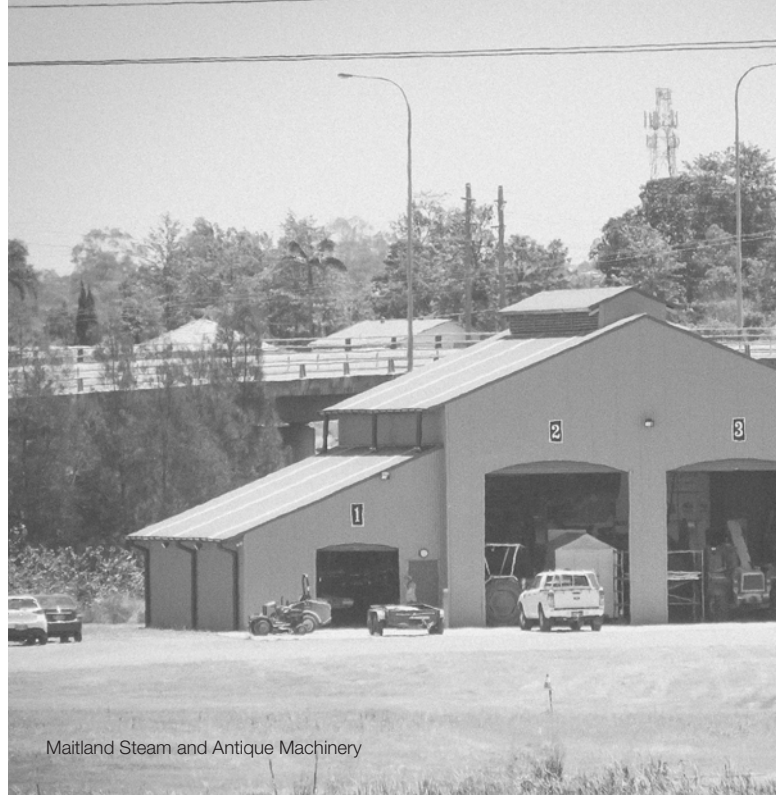
For the early Europeans, by contrast, Maitland was an isolated place. Access and communication were by rough tracks and the river. It took time, was difficult and could be dangerous. As with elsewhere in Australia, as technology and transport improved, the distance and isolation were slowly eradicated. Postal services, newspapers, the telegraph, roads, bridges, railways, trams, motor vehicles, telephones, planes all played their part to ensure that travelling to and from Maitland was faster and safer, and that keeping in touch was easier. In the twenty-first century, the new technologies are transforming the communications landscape as mobile phones, the internet and social media become commonplace and localities like Maitland need to tap into the opportunities and challenges they bring.

The transformation in communications and transport over the past two hundred years, and the impact of this transformation, can be sampled by juxtaposing examples from different eras: a Wonnarua message stick, a nineteenth century letter with pen and ink, an early telephone, a mobile phone. And there are a myriad of sites, constructions, objects and other items that can provoke insights into the nature and impact of changes in communications and transport. Maitland's annual Steamfest provides some exposure to these changes as do the displays at Maitland Rail Museum and Morpeth Museum that tell stories about the railway networks that serviced the locality.

3.8 *Digging and making*

The mineral and other natural resources under and on the land, the richness of the soil, and the mining and farming that evolved to take advantage of these resources were and are significant contributors to Maitland's prosperity and lifestyles. Timber getting, many forms of agriculture, bee-keeping, pastoralism, dairying, mining, and horse-breeding, for example, have a significant history and presence in the locality. All, in different ways, have also contributed to altering and often destroying the fragile balance of a millennia old ecosystem. Alternative and sustainable farming and a greater awareness of the need to address the challenges of climate change are altering some farming practices. Opposition to coal mining also, at least partly, comes from concerns about the environment.

Similarly, and from early on, secondary industries evolved to process natural resources and to manufacture goods and products. Among these are tanneries, boot manufacturers, soap manufacturers, flourmills, breweries, brickyards, iron and brass foundries, coach manufacturers, cordial makers, and textile factories. Trades evolved to provide the skills to manufacture, fit and install the goods and products. Some industries stalled and closed as products went out of fashion and lost markets; new industries emerged. The intense labour, risks, dirtiness and smell of many early manufacturing enterprises disappeared. In the twenty-first century the light industrial areas of Maitland have witnessed a significant growth, and there are enterprises that clearly belong to the



twenty-first century.

The history and varying impact of Maitland's relationship with natural resources and industry is illustrated through, for example, surviving examples of manufactured goods and of mining and farming equipment, the structures on the landscape that mark out farms or stockyards, and accounts and memories of working with and in these industries. There are also sites and places that link to these activities. The Maitland Showground, for example, with its extant late nineteenth century structures and its annual shows marks the significance of agriculture, horticulture and animal breeding in the locality.

3.9 *Diversity*

In its community strategic plan, Maitland City Council calls for better awareness of the diversity of communities in the locality – cultural, social, geographical, health.⁰⁸ One starting point is to recognise that diversity is a long-term characteristic of Maitland's local communities.

When Europeans moved into the area they encroached on Wonnarua land, and first encounters were marked – on both sides – by a mixture of hostility, ignorance, and adaptation. Diverse cultures and histories confronted

⁰⁸ Maitland City Council, *Maitland + 10: Community Strategic Plan*, Maitland, 2013, see also 2.1 Themes and issues.

each other.

The early Europeans were also a diverse lot. They included convicts, ex-convicts, and free settlers; rich and poor; healthy and unwell; rulers and ruled. Class distinctions were exacerbated by the large land grants going to those already prominent in the community, and by the economic and political power that became vested in landowners and successful businessmen. Diversity and division also marked religious practices. The dominant religion was Christianity, although any homogeneity was scarred by the sectarianism that pitted Protestant (especially Anglican) against Roman Catholic. The 1860 McIntyre Riots provide the most notable outburst. Those who were not practicing Christians also challenged homogeneity. They included the significant Jewish community of early Maitland who observed Jewish traditions: businesses were closed on Saturdays, a separate Jewish burial ground was established and, eventually, a synagogue was built.

The countries of birth of members of the early Jewish community are also reminders that, while the majority of the Jewish and the broader local, community, came from England, Scotland and Ireland, small numbers came, and continued to come, from elsewhere. Among the early Jews were people from Germany, Hungary, Russia and Poland. Later, Germans, Chinese and Greeks were among those who settled prior to the Second World War. The changes in Australian immigration from 1945 and, for Maitland, the nearness of the Greta Migrant Camp, saw a growth in arrivals especially from Eastern Europe. The Polish community is a notable example.

The diversity remains. Maitland today is home to people from different cultural backgrounds, and with a variety of beliefs and practices. There are also social and economic differences that are sometimes played out through access to health and welfare services, and through over-representation in the judicial system, and there are differences due to geographical location that are expressed through lifestyles, expectations and access to services.

This long-term, and changing, diversity in Maitland's communities can be tracked, and interpreted, through the changing demographic make up of Maitland, the objects and sites that tell stories about diversity and the various ways in which it has been addressed, and the records and memories of people from different backgrounds. The Riverlights Festival, the interpretation plans for the Jewish and Glebe cemeteries, and the 'poverty and prosperity' walk currently being developed by Maitland City Council tap into this diversity.

3.10 *Valuing the past*

From early in its European settlement, Maitland attracted lyrical appreciations of the landscape, river and lifestyle in the locality. As stately rural homes were built and impressive commercial, public and residential buildings constructed they, too, attracted admiring descriptions. Residents became attached to the area and its histories. The *Maitland Mercury* recorded nostalgic accounts of times past; almanacs were published to document historical events; and, in 1927 and 1935, commemorative booklets were published.

In the mid to late 20th century this appreciation underpinned concerns to identify and protect buildings and landscapes of local significance, and to conserve and present their histories. The local historical society was created; a number of studies were done to identify and register historic sites; and local agitation opposed development proposals that seemed unsympathetic to existing historical sites. It was the era when the public, cultural and social value of heritage, particularly built heritage, became recognised. Maitland City Council played, and continues to play, its part through commissioning studies and through embedding heritage awareness as a key factor in urban planning and as tourism and lifestyle elements.

In the 21st century the appreciation of the important role of history and heritage in defining Maitland is evident in community and Council initiatives to document, interpret and present the stories of Maitland so that visitors and residents have opportunities to engage with the vestiges that remain of the past and, as well, with understandings



Maitland CBD, Karina Lee Photography

of what has disappeared and changed. The significance and value of Maitland's history and heritage is a recurring theme in Council policy and planning documents relating to the shape, tone and future of the locality (see [2.1 Themes and issues](#)).



4 COLLECTIONS

The collections housed in the Maitland Local Government Area cover a wide range of topics and items. They offer research bases, objects, documentary records and much more that contribute to, and can be utilised in, strategies and projects to interpret and enhance the locality's history, heritage, identity, and visitor experience.

These collections, the items held in them, and the people and organisations that look after them are significant public, social and cultural assets for the city.

This section of the report provides a broad outline of the nature and contents of **twelve key collections** located within the Maitland local government area. The focus is on the twelve collections that are open to the public for viewing and/or use. The collections include three (Maitland Gaol, Maitland Library and Maitland Regional Art Gallery) that are Council entities, and one (Morpeth Museum) that is owned by Council and managed by volunteers. The remaining eight are community and volunteer based organisations.

The information was collected through face-to-face consultation with representatives from each of the collections, and the joint completion of a survey document.

4.1 *Introducing the collections*

The following provide broad descriptions of the focus and content of each of the twelve collections surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**. There is also acknowledgement that there are other collections in Maitland that hold items of relevance to Maitland's history and heritage (see [4.1.13 Other collections](#) and [4.1.14 Private collections](#)).

4.1.1 *Friends of Grossmann House/ National Trust*

**Brough and Grossmann Houses,
73-75 Church Street, Maitland**

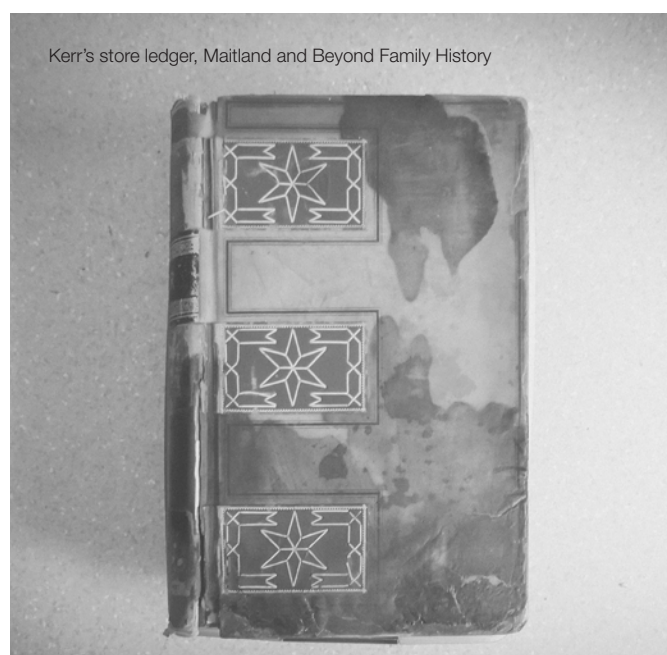
www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/grossmann-brough-house/

Victoriana collection: Grossmann House is furnished and decorated to reflect the style and usage of an 1870s middle class merchant's residence. The collection includes furniture and furnishings, domestic ware and equipment, and decorative items. Some items have a Maitland (or indeed Grossmann/Brough House)

provenance; most do not. The focus is 'on room usage and the operation of a typical colonial residence.'

Costume and textile collection: Clothing and textiles as well as equipment (eg. sewing machines, looms) used in the creation of textiles and costumes. The period focus is the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Local items: Items with a strong local provenance, especially items relating to the Maitland Girls' High School that was located on the site from 1893 to 1964.



4.1.2 Maitland & Beyond Family History

17 Lindesay St, East Maitland

<http://mdgs.org.au/>

The collection of original material consists primarily of photographs, photograph albums, business ledgers, cemetery registers, and a variety of original documents and paper records. The organisation also has the sword that was originally in the hand of the carrara marble angel at the top of the World War I Memorial in Maitland Park.

There is also a collection of family history resources including photographs and research notes. Some of these items are original; others are copies.

Maitland and Beyond Family History also has a reference

library (local histories, military history, Australian history); a variety of online resources and databases (eg. Ancestry); and vertical files containing research conducted on particular families and organised alphabetically by family names.

4.1.3 Maitland and District Historical Society (MDHS)

3 Cathedral St, Maitland

<http://www.maitlandhistorical.org/>

The MDHS Collection started with the formation of the Society in 1977. Approximately 1300 items were collected and listed during the first 25 years of the Society. These included photographs, publications, newspapers and newspaper clippings, documents, maps, framed pictures, clothing and textiles.

The Society went into abeyance for a few years at the beginning of the 21st century and its collection was put in storage (partly at the Morpeth Museum).

The revival of the Society also saw a revival and expansion of the collection. Since 2010, the collection has grown. In addition to an increasing number of the types of material already in the collection, the MDHS collection now includes a variety of other types of objects.

The emphasis in the collection is on material that relates to Maitland and district from early settlement to the present.

Original materials are supported by a growing collection of research materials and notes.

4.1.4 Maitland City Library

480 High Street, Maitland

<http://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/Library/localstudies>

The Local Studies Collection currently holds a variety of original records, documents, maps, plans and photographs as well as oral history recordings. There is also a substantial collection of research resources and of the research records and notes made by a number of local historians.

The Collection's emphasis is on people, issues, events, organisations and places in Maitland's past and present, and covers the period from pre-European settlement to the present.

4.1.5 Maitland Gaol

6-18 John St, East Maitland

<http://www.maitlandgaol.com.au/>

The Maitland Gaol collection consists of items that were held in the Gaol when it closed in 1998 as well as items that relate to the Gaol or the NSW prison system more broadly and have been donated since the Gaol was placed under the management of Maitland City Council.



4.1.6 Maitland Rail Museum

6 Junction Street, Telarah

<http://www.maitlandrailmuseum.com/>

The Maitland Rail Museum was officially formed in 2013. It has a growing collection of artefacts, equipment, rolling stock, photographs and other records relating specifically to the history of the South Maitland Railways and, more broadly, to the history of railways in New South Wales.

4.1.7 Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG)

230 High St, Maitland

www.mrag.org.au

MRAG has a collection of over 5000 works of art. The collection began with the acquisition of works from the 1957 inaugural Maitland Art Prize. In 2016 the Gallery commissioned a significance assessment of its collection. The overview states:

... the Collection demonstrates the diversity of Australian art practice, strengthened by the inclusion of international artists, both contemporary and historical. The Collection also includes the Les Darcy Collection – a sub-collection which relays an historically and nationally significant story of a Maitland born sporting hero – and a number of other sub-collections that highlight, for example, the aesthetics and work of particular artists, different ways of depicting and relating to Maitland through art, and the ways in which spiritual and social significance are intrinsic to specific bodies of work.⁰⁹

4.1.8 Maitland Regional Museum

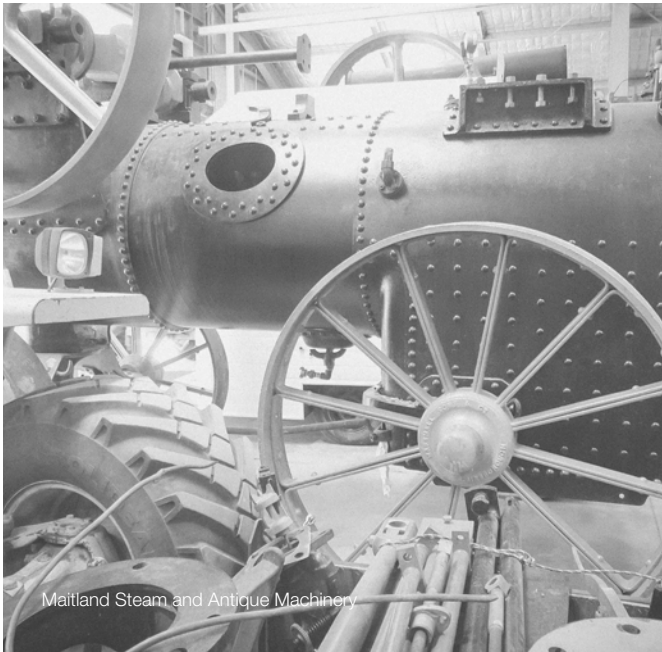
Brough House, 73 Church St, Maitland

<http://www.maitlandregionalmuseum.com/>

Maitland Regional Museum was established in 2014. One of its key aims is to 'collect, preserve, promote and exhibit the Hunter Valley's portable material heritage and natural history.' At the end of 2017, the collection consisted of approximately 20 original items including sports equipment, writing set, violin, stereoscope, and World War I postcards. In January 2018, the Dennis Taylor collection was acquired. It includes a range of dairying, farming and agricultural tools; agricultural show trophies; and a variety of other family, retail, and industry items relating to Maitland and elsewhere.¹⁰ There is also a growing collection of research notes and other resources relating to the history of the locality.

09 Cheryl Farrell and Joe Eisenberg, *The MRAG Collection: Draft Significance Assessment Report*, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, June 2016, pp. 4-5.

10 Belinda-Jane Davis, 'Iconic Taylor collection searching for new home', *Maitland Mercury*, 14 January 2018.



Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery

4.1.9 *Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery Association*

Steam Shed, Steamfest Rally Ground, off Church Street, near the highway overpass

The collection consists of working steam engines of a variety of shapes and sizes. Some have a Maitland provenance; others are in the collection as they are representative of steam engines. The collection also holds other forms of antique machinery.

4.1.10 *Mindaribba Keeping Place*

1a Chelmsford Drive, Metford

The Mindaribba Keeping Place (also known as the Henry Bolt Museum) is in an annex that is attached to the eastern end of the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) building. The Keeping Place collects, displays and stores Aboriginal artefacts. There are three broad categories. These are:

Local artefacts and items: Mindaribba LALC undertakes cultural and heritage site inspections in the local area when a large development project is planned. Through this process, hundreds of Aboriginal artefacts have been documented and saved, and they are now stored and/or displayed in the Mindaribba Keeping Place.

The Keeping Place also attracts donations from the community. Some of these items have local connections.

Items from elsewhere: Donors have also given Aboriginal artefacts and items collected from elsewhere. As well, the Australian Museum and the NSW Lands Council lend items and, from time to time, turn up to swap items.

Contemporary items: Outside the Keeping Place, Mindaribba also holds a small collection of contemporary items. These include, for example, initialled and framed football jerseys and some local artwork.

4.1.11 *Morpeth Museum*

123 Swan St, Morpeth

<http://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/GalleryLibraryMuseum/MorpethMuseum1>

The aim of the Morpeth Museum collection is 'to mirror the history of Morpeth and interpret the courthouse and its uses over 150 years.'¹¹ The collection includes items relating to Morpeth as a river port, the East Maitland to Morpeth railway line (it closed in 1953), significant sites in Morpeth, specific Morpeth individuals and businesses, police and justice in the courthouse, agriculture, and children.

¹¹ Ann Beaumont, *Morpeth Courthouse: a place of justice, a place of community*, Maitland, 2009, p. 39.





Winter Warmers exhibition, museum of Clothing, Brough House, 2017. Maitland Mercury, 24 July 2017

4.1.12 *Museum of Clothing*

Brough House, 73 Church St, Maitland

<http://www.museumofclothing.org/>

The Museum of Clothing currently holds about 6,000 items. The majority of the collection dates from the twentieth century, although there are some 19th and 21st century items. The Museum's website states:

Items in the collection cover men's, women's and children's clothing, both special and everyday garments; articles and accessories associated with clothing, such as handbags; items from other countries, brought home and worn by Australians. Domestic textiles are also represented such as the signature supper cloth.¹²

The collection also includes some textiles (for example, from the Bradmill factory), some sub-collections, photographs relating to items in the collection, and dress and knitting patterns.

Some items have a clear provenance to Maitland.

¹² Museum of Clothing, <https://www.museumofclothing.org/research>, accessed 24 June 2017.

4.1.13 *Other collections (not open to the public)*

There are a number of other organisations and groups that hold collections of items and/or resources that support research into aspects of Maitland's history and heritage. These are collections that are only occasionally open for public view and/or are outside the Maitland City Council footprint. They are collections, however, that include items that are the focus for Maitland stories.

These other collections include, but are not limited to:

Note: asterisked collections are described in the Local Studies Strategy.¹³

Anglican Parish of Maitland*

Australian Plants Society – Newcastle District Group*

<https://austplants.com.au/Newcastle>

Catholic Diocese of Maitland,

<http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/about/research-archives> *

Country Women's Association, East Maitland*

East Maitland Bowling Club (Les Darcy Collection) <http://www.embc.com.au/LesDarcy>

Edgeworth David Museum, Kurri Kurri*

<http://www.coalfieldsheritagegroup.org/>

Maitland Gilbert and Sullivan Musical Theatre Society

Hunter District Organ Music Society*

Maitland Bridge Club*

Maitland District Leagues Club*

Maitland High School*

Maitland Lantern Club*

Maitland Lodge of Unity*

Maitland PCYC*

Hunter River Agricultural and Horticultural Society

Maitland Showground,

<http://www.maitlandshowground.com.au/>

Maitland Embroiderers,

<http://www.maitlandembroiderers.com/>

Maitland Musical Society,

¹³ Maitland City Council, *Maitland Local Studies Strategy: Connecting Our Past to the Future*, 2010, pp. 14-15, and *Maitland History and Heritage Collections*, <https://ehive.com/objects?accountId=3970>

Tracks by Night by Ian de Gruchy, Maitland High St, during Steamfest, 15-17 April 2005. Joint project, MRAG and MCC Marketing: light projections on buildings during Steamfest. Maitland Post Office.



<https://www.facebook.com/MGASAMS/>

Maitland Region Society of Artists,

<http://maitlandartists.com/>

Maitland Repertory Theatre,

<http://www.maitlandreptheatre.org/>

Newcastle Spinners and Weavers Guild,

Maitland Branch,

<http://www.newcastlespinnersandweavers.org.au/>

Paterson Allyn Williams Science Hub <https://www.facebook.com/PatersonAllynWilliamsScienceHub/>

[facebook.com/PatersonAllynWilliamsScienceHub/](https://www.facebook.com/PatersonAllynWilliamsScienceHub/)

Paterson Historical Society and Museum*

<http://www.patersonhistory.org.au/>

Polish Association in NSW, Maitland branch

Richmond Vale Railway Museum*

<http://www.richmondvalerailwaymuseum.org/>

Tocal Homestead* <http://www.tocal.com/>

University of Newcastle Cultural Collections,

<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/library/access/places-and-spaces/cultural-collections>

4.1.14 Private collections

There are a number of big and small private collections that include items of significance for Maitland's history and heritage. The various community groups and cultural organisations occasionally use items from these collections for exhibitions and other museum activities.



4.2 *Topics*

The **Local Studies Strategy** identified a range of topics that address aspects of Maitland's history and heritage.¹⁴ These were used as the basis for the **Open Museums, Open Minds** consultation with the participating organisations about whether items held in their collections relate to specific topics. The list was refined and extended in response to feedback and suggestions from the participating organisations.

Table 4.4 (below) provides an overview of the topics currently addressed by material held in each of the collections. The table, however, does not indicate the depth or nature of this representation within individual collections. In some instances, there are only one or two items of relevance to a topic; in other instances, there is an entire collection. The table also does not indicate where there are duplications of items, overlaps between and across collections, or the number or nature of items that arguably do not sit comfortably within the individual collection policies.

These issues are taken up in section 15.3 Enhance collections.

14 Maitland City Council, *Maitland Local Studies Strategy*, Appendix 1: question 6 lists the topics

Table 4.4: Topics

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Grossmann House</i>	<i>Maitland Family History</i>	<i>Maitland Historical Society</i>	<i>Maitland City Library</i>	<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	<i>Maitland Rail</i>	<i>MRAG</i>	<i>Maitland Museum</i>	<i>Maitland Steam</i>	<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	<i>Museum of Clothing</i>
<i>Agriculture</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	
<i>Architecture</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y				Y	
<i>Arts/Culture/Creative Endeavour</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	
<i>Birth and death</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y
<i>Business/Commerce</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	
<i>Clothing</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y
<i>Communication</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	
<i>Convicts</i>		Y		Y	Y			Y			Y	
<i>Craft</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	Y
<i>Domestic life</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>Education</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y
<i>Family history</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y	
<i>Floods</i>		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y				Y	
<i>Health and medicine</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y						Y	Y
<i>Immigration & ethnic influences</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y				Y	Y
<i>Indigenous cultures & history</i>				Y	Y		Y			Y		
<i>Industry & manufacturing</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
<i>Local history</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Local, state and federal government</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y				Y			
<i>Military history & defence</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y				Y
<i>Mining</i>		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y			
<i>Music</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	
<i>Natural history/environment</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y				
<i>Police & justice/Law & order</i>		Y		Y	Y						Y	
<i>Religion</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	Y
<i>Science & technology</i>			Y	Y		Y		Y	Y		Y	
<i>Social institutions (including service clubs)</i>			Y	Y								
<i>Utilities (ambulance, fire etc)</i>			Y	Y	Y				Y		Y	
<i>Sport & leisure</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>Transport</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	



Maitland and District Historical Society

4.3 *Types of objects*

This section focuses on the types of artefacts and objects held in the collections, and the variety of materials from which they are made. In so doing it provides an indication of the range of items that are available for interpreting and presenting specific topics. It also indicates the diversity of those items in terms of size, weight, dimensions, fragility, shape and materials. These all have implications for the care and conservation of the collections, and for the use of items in exhibitions and other museum experiences. Different types of items require different storage and display facilities and support, and are suited to different types of museum experiences. Some can be easily moved, others not. Some are particularly fragile, others not.

4.3.1 *Materials*

The following table provides an overview of the types of material represented in the twelve collections. It indicates that paper-based items (including maps, photographs and artworks) are held in most of the collections, and that all other types of material are held in between four and eleven of the collections. A more detailed view of the range of three-dimensional objects and artefacts is provided in section [4.3.2 Categories of objects](#).

Table 4.3.1: Types of material

<i>Types of material</i>	<i>Friends of Grossmann House</i>	<i>Maitland & Beyond Family History</i>	<i>MDHS</i>	<i>Maitland City Library</i>	<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	<i>Maitland Rail</i>	<i>MRAG</i>	<i>Maitland Museum</i>	<i>Maitland Steam</i>	<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	<i>Museum of Clothing</i>
ARTEFACTS/OBJECTS												
<i>ceramics</i>	Y		Y		Y		Y			Y	Y	
<i>glass</i>	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
<i>leather</i>	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
<i>metal</i>	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>organic materials</i>	Y		Y		Y		Y			Y	Y	Y
<i>stone</i>	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
<i>textiles</i>	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>wood</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>mixed materials</i>	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
ART WORKS <i>(paintings, sculptures, craft works)</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	
AUDIO RECORDS <i>(vinyl, analogue, digital)</i>			Y	Y	Y		Y					
DIGITAL RECORDS <i>(other than audio, film, photographs)</i>	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
FILM <i>(all formats)</i>			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	
MAPS, CHARTS, PLANS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	
PAPER RECORDS <i>(books, documents, research notes etc)</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
PHOTOGRAPHS <i>(prints, negatives, glass plates, digital)</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

4.3.2 Categories

Table 4.3.2 (below) focuses on the variety of non-paper based, three dimensional objects and artefacts held in the collections. They are organised by categories defined by function and/or type of material.

The Maitland and Beyond Family History and Maitland City Library collections are not included in the table as their collections are primarily paper-based.

A more detailed breakdown of their collections is provided in the *Local Studies Strategy*.¹⁵

The Maitland Regional Art Gallery collection is also not included in the table as, with the exception of the Les Darcy collection, it consists of artworks including sculptures and artists' books.

¹⁵ For overviews of their collections, and other documentary collections, see the results from the Council's *Local Studies Strategy* available at *Maitland History and Heritage Collections*, <https://ehive.com/objects?accountId=3970>

Table 4.3.2: Categories of objects

<i>Categories of objects</i>	<i>Friends of Grossmann Ho</i>	<i>MDHS</i>	<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	<i>Maitland Rail</i>	<i>Maitland Museum</i>	<i>Maitland Steam</i>	<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	<i>Museum of Clothing</i>
<i>agricultural equipment</i>		Y	Y			Y		Y	
<i>aviation items</i>								Y	
<i>boats, boating equipment</i>								Y	
<i>building materials and tools</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	
<i>clothing</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>coins</i>	Y	Y	Y					Y	
<i>convict relics</i>			Y		Y			Y	
<i>dairying equipment</i>	Y	Y						Y	
<i>domestic utensils</i>	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
<i>fishing items</i>			Y				Y	Y	
<i>flags and banners</i>			Y						
<i>flood relics</i>		Y	Y	Y				Y	
<i>food storage items</i>	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	
<i>furnishings</i>	Y	Y	Y						
<i>furniture</i>	Y		Y					Y	
<i>geological specimens</i>		Y	Y		Y			Y	
<i>health, medical, dental equipment</i>		Y	Y					Y	
<i>house linen</i>	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y
<i>hunting equipment (spears, guns etc)</i>							Y	Y	
<i>Indigenous items</i>			Y				Y		
<i>industrial equipment</i>		Y	Y			Y		Y	

Categories of objects

	<i>Friends of Grossmann Ho</i>	<i>MDHS</i>	<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	<i>Maitland Rail</i>	<i>Maitland Museum</i>	<i>Maitland Steam</i>	<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	<i>Museum of Clothing</i>
<i>jewellery</i>	Y	Y						Y	Y
<i>manufacturing equipment</i>		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	
<i>military equipment</i>	Y							Y	
<i>mining equipment</i>				Y		Y			
<i>musical instruments</i>	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	
<i>navigational equipment</i>								Y	
<i>personal accessories</i>	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>photographic equipment</i>		Y			Y			Y	
<i>printing equipment and materials</i>		Y						Y	
<i>prison paraphernalia</i>			Y					Y	
<i>radio, television and other communication items</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
<i>recreational equipment</i>	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	
<i>religious items</i>	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y
<i>retailing equipment</i>		Y						Y	
<i>school equipment, furniture etc</i>	Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	
<i>signage</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
<i>sporting equipment</i>	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	
<i>stamps</i>									
<i>stuffed birds and/or animals</i>	Y	Y						Y	
<i>surveying equipment</i>									
<i>technology</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	
<i>textiles</i>	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y
<i>timepieces</i>	Y	Y		Y				Y	
<i>tools – gardening, building, farming etc</i>		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
<i>toys</i>	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	
<i>transport items</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	
<i>transport vehicles</i>				Y		Y			
<i>uniforms</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y
<i>war relics</i>	Y	Y			Y			Y	Y
<i>weaving equipment</i>	Y								
<i>wine industry equipment – grape press, coopers, bottles etc</i>		Y							



Mindaribba Keeping Place, Maitland

4.4 *Collection care and management*

The collections described in the preceding sections of this report are significant public, cultural and social assets. They are the repositories of material and knowledge that assist in documenting, understanding and presenting the how, what, why, where and who of Maitland's past and present. They are assets that need care, conservation and documentation so that they can be used now and so that they remain assets for the Maitland of the future.

The museum world has well-established practices and guidelines for the care and management of collections. Utilising the guidelines set down in **National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries**,¹⁶ this section of the report identifies key features of good collection care and management, identifies the practices currently in place for Maitland's collecting organisations, and identifies the challenges and opportunities confronting those organisations in terms of collection care and management.

Strategies to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges are provided in section 15 Maitland collects in Part 2 of this report.

¹⁶ *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, Version 1.5*, September 2016, <https://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/national-standards-for-australian-museums-and-galleries>

Standard A4.3 of the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries asserts:

The museum conserves, maintains, protects and documents its (heritage) assets.

These heritage assets consist of ‘a document, picture, artefact, specimen or artwork that has been acquired by a museum for its collection.’¹⁷

Table 4.4 (below) summarises the collection care and management policies, facilities and resources of the twelve collecting organisations. Commentaries on each category are provided in the following sections.

Table 4.4: Resources and facilities

Y = Yes

Y* = yes, but in need of development and/or in process and/or only partial

<i>Resources and facilities</i>	<i>FOGH</i>	<i>Maitland & Beyond Family History</i>	<i>MDHS</i>	<i>Maitland City Library – Central library</i>	<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	<i>Maitland Rail Museum</i>	<i>MRAG</i>	<i>Maitland Museum</i>	<i>Maitland Steam</i>	<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	<i>Museum of Clothing</i>
4.4.1 COLLECTION POLICY	Y		Y*	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y*	Y
4.4.2 CATALOGUE <i>paper-based</i>	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y		Y	Y*			Y	Y
4.4.2 CATALOGUE <i>computer-based</i>	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y			Y			Y*		
4.4.2 CATALOGUE <i>online</i>				Y			Y*					
4.4.3 PHOTOGRAPHS OF COLLECTION ITEMS			Y*	Y*			Y*				Y*	Y*
4.4.4 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT	Y*						Y*					Y*
4.4.5 CONSERVATION PLAN	Y			Y			Y					
4.4.6 CONSERVATION RESOURCES	Y*		Y*	Y*	Y*		Y*		Y		Y*	Y*
4.4.7 STORAGE SPACE AND FACILITIES												

17 National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, p.79.

4.4.1 *Collection policy*

The effective care and management of a collection should be guided by a collection policy. The **National Standards** explains that such a policy is:

A written statement guiding a museum's aims, practices and procedures in managing its collection. The collection policy also identifies the kinds of materials a museum will collect and the conditions or terms governing acquisitions.¹⁸

In particular a collection policy should address:

- the purpose or mission of the organisation,
- what the organisation collects,
- how, from whom, and under what circumstances the organisation collects,
- how it documents its acquisitions,
- how it cares for its collection,
- how it deals with de-accessioning (ie. deciding that an item does not belong in the collection),
- what kind of loans it will enter into and what conditions will apply,
- how the collection and records are made accessible to researchers and members of the general public, and
- how often the policy is reviewed.¹⁹

Maitland experiences

Of the twelve organisations surveyed for **Open Museums**, **Open Minds** four do not have formal collection policies, the remainder either have a well-formed policy or are in the process of developing one.

Opportunities and challenges

- a well developed and focused collection policy strengthens a collection and provides an essential tool for selecting those items that belong in a collection;
- there are a range of guidelines and other

assistance for developing and/or refining a collection policy;²⁰

- Maitland's collecting organisations need access to resources, expertise and guidelines in order to develop and/or refine their collection policies;
- there is some funding available to assist organisations to develop their collection policies (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#));
- a pooling of resources, expertise and experience among the organisations could be beneficial.

4.4.2 *Catalogues*

Catalogues are essential tools for documenting, tracking and providing access to items in a collection. The **National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries** explains that a catalogue records:

all known, relevant information about an object in a museum collection, such as its origin, age, maker, title (e.g. for artworks), physical description (materials and/or techniques used in its making), physical dimensions, use, provenance, etc. These details are recorded on cataloguing worksheets or onto a computer database.²¹

Catalogues serve to document items in a collection and also provide a means to access and track the use of those items.

Maitland experiences

Ten of the twelve organisations have some form of catalogue. Some are very rudimentary. Most are paper-based. Six are either already computer based or in the process of being computerised. Maitland City Library delivers its catalogue online, although it does not include all the original items held in the Library's local studies collection. The Maitland Regional Art Gallery has the facility to deliver its catalogue online, although only the Lionel Lindsay collection is currently there.²² It seems that Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery does not have a catalogue on site.

18 *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*, p. 81.

19 Museums and Galleries NSW, Collection policies, <https://mgnsnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/collection-management/collection-policy/>

20 A starting point is Museums and Galleries NSW, Collection policies.

21 *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*, p.80.

22 Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Explore the collection, <http://mrags.org.au/creative-exchange/collection/explore-the-collection>

Opportunities and challenges

- catalogues are essential tools for documenting and tracking items in a collection, and for inviting members of the public to engage with those collections;
- in the 21st century, the move is towards computer catalogues that also have the potential to be delivered online;
- data about items that is entered into a catalogue needs to be well researched, documented, consistent, and accurately entered;
- some of the Maitland collecting organisations are using computer catalogues, and some have staff experienced in identifying and entering appropriate item data into catalogues;
- some of the Maitland collecting organisations are using the same computer software (Mosaic) for their catalogues;
- a number of the Maitland collecting organisations do not have access to the time, resources, and expertise required to fully catalogue their collections;
- pooling of resources, expertise and software could assist with improving cataloguing processes;
- there are handbooks and guidelines available to assist with cataloguing collections for small museums; and
- there are funding opportunities to assist with documenting and cataloguing collections (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).

4.4.3 Photographs

Photographs of collection items provide an effective means to document and identify items, and to track conservation issues. They should be attached to an item's entry in the collection catalogue and/or held with documents relating to that item.

Such photographs, ideally, are digital and the professional standard required for publication.

However, provided the image is clear and detailed enough to provide identification, it is adequate. Photographing against a plain background helps.

Maitland experiences

Of the twelve organisations, five have photographed at least some of the items, and some have linked the photographs to the catalogues.

Opportunities and challenges

- photographs of items ensure ready recognition, enhance the documentary record, and provide a means to keep track of changes in the condition of more fragile items;
- in the digital era, the equipment for taking photographs is accessible; and
- many of the organisations do not have the time or personnel to devote to taking the photographs and linking them to the catalogue entries.

4.4.4 Significance assessment

Significance assessment is:

The process of studying and understanding the meanings and values of a museum object or collection, enabling the development of sound and reasoned judgements and statements about the importance of objects and collections, and their meanings for communities.²³



Walls that Talk at Maitland City Library

23 *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*, p. 86.

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries recommends:

Standard C1.2: The museum knows the significance of its collection.

Significance, in this context, is:

The historical, aesthetic, scientific or social values that a museum object or collection has for past, present and future generations.²⁴

Significance assessment is recommended as a tool for the more effective management, interpretation, care and use of a collection.²⁵ It provides a means for determining the relevance of item/s to a collection, recording factual and interpretive details about item/s, and establishing the significance of item/s and/or collections for outside bodies especially for funding purposes.

Maitland experiences

Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Friends of Grossmann House have initiated significance assessments of their collections; the Museum of Clothing has significance assessments of some individual items; the remaining nine organisations have yet to initiate significance assessments.

Opportunities and challenges

- significance assessment is an important tool for evaluating the relevance and value of a collection and items in a collection;
- significance assessment can contribute to determining the relevance and value of a collection or items in a collection as evidence of aspects of Maitland's history and heritage, and can be used to evaluate items in relation to key themes in Maitland's history (see [3 Themes](#));
- funding is available to engage outside experts to provide workshops to familiarise organisations

with the significance assessment process and/or to actually assist with the significance assessment of a collection
(see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)):

- the Significance 2.0 manual is readily available online;²⁶ and
- a shared workshop on significance assessment could be beneficial and resource-efficient.

4.4.5 Conservation plan

A conservation plan provides guidelines to ensure that a collection is treated with the care and skills required. It is assisted by a significance assessment that identifies the relative significance of items within the collection and, hence, those items requiring special care.

A conservation plan provides a tool to address the following National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries principles:

Principle C2: The museum preserves its significant collections for future generations.

Standard C2.1: The museum makes decisions on preventive conservation based on current conservation advice and practices.

Conservation entails:

All action aimed at safeguarding cultural material for the future. The purpose of conservation is to study, record, retain and, if appropriate, restore the culturally significant qualities of an object, with the least possible intervention. Issues around treatment, handling, storage and display are all encompassed within conservation.²⁷

Maitland experiences

Three of the collections surveyed have conservation plans.

²⁴ National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, p. 86.

²⁵ Key information and guidelines are available in Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance 2.0*, Canberra, 2009, <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/museums-libraries-and-galleries/significance-20>

²⁶ Russell and Winkworth, *Significance 2.0*.

²⁷ National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, p. 81.

Opportunities and challenges

- identifying conservation requirements and planning how best to address those requirements within the constraints of individual collections is essential if items and their collections are to survive and to survive into the future;
- conservation is a specialised area and identifying requirements and developing plans could benefit from professional assistance;
- resources, and some funding, to assist with developing conservation plans are available (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)); and
- a shared workshop on conservation planning could be beneficial and resource-efficient.

4.4.6 Conservation resources

A range of conservation resources and access to specific expertise are necessary in order to implement and sustain a conservation plan. The needs vary depending on the types of material (see [4.3.1 Materials](#)) and categories of objects (see [4.3.2 Categories](#)) in a collection. Broadly speaking these resources and practices include:

- suitable storage space and facilities (see [4.4.7 Storage space and facilities](#));
- access to conservation advice and expertise as needed;
- a pool of conservation resources including, for example, appropriate packaging, mylar, acid-free tissue, hanging racks, gloves;
- careful handling of items including the use of gloves;
- controlled environment in relation to temperature, humidity, lighting and pest control; and
- regularly cleaned and dust free environments.

Maitland experiences

The conservation resources available to each of the twelve organisations vary. Some organisations operate with very few, if any, conservation resources; others have access to and use an appropriate range.

Opportunities and challenges

- the care and conservation of items is essential if the items are to survive and to survive into the future as markers of particular aspects of Maitland's history and heritage;
- some of the Maitland collecting organisations are practiced in basic conservation strategies and processes;
- there are handbooks, guidelines and assistance that provide sound and practical advice on, and offer some funding for, basic conservation practices;²⁸
- some items will need professional conservation work and, hence, funding will need to be sought; and
- a central pool of conservation resources and expertise could be beneficial and resource-efficient.

4.4.7 Storage space and facilities

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries:

Benchmark A4.3: The museum premises provide a suitable and safe environment for all of the museum's operations, including the storage and display of the collection.

An early UNESCO handbook on storage facilities provides an important warning:

Probably more harm has been done to museum collections through improper storage than by any other means. It is crucial for the future of all museums, as the custodians of a substantial part of mankind's (sic) natural and cultural heritage, that steps be taken to improve storage practices and facilities.²⁹

28 Browse the Museums and Galleries NSW Resources page, <https://mgns.w.org.au/sector/resources/> and, for funding, see Appendix 2 Funding sources.

29 E. Verner Johnson and Joanne C. Horgan, *Museum Collection Storage*, Paris, 1979, p.9, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000423/042316eo.pdf>

Care of a collection entails ensuring that items are stored in controlled conditions that provide the best possible environment so that items are accessible and are preserved for future generations. Conservation and care of a collection consequently requires suitable storage space and facilities that include:

- sufficient space to store items without overcrowding;
- suitable and adequate shelving and packaging from conservation friendly materials;
- storage units that are adapted to the dimensions and types of objects stored;
- stable fixtures able to support the weight of objects;
- a clean and dust free environment;
- light control especially for those items (for example, paper and textiles) likely to be damaged by over-exposure to light;
- stable temperature and relative humidity especially for more sensitive items in order to prevent damp, mould, brittleness;
- separate work space for processing, cataloguing and conservation work;
- integrated pest management;
- fire safety precautions;
- occupational health and safety compliant spaces and facilities; and
- security.

Maitland experiences

None of the twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds** have temperature and humidity control for the storage of their collections, and none have sufficient space to store and conserve items appropriately. A number have totally unsuitable conditions; some have done a reasonable job of adapting the limited space and facilities they have.

The inadequacies are evident in the following brief descriptions of the storage space and facilities currently used by the twelve organisations.

FRIENDS OF GROSSMANN/NATIONAL TRUST NSW

The Victoriana collection is permanently on display in heritage-listed Grossmann House.

The Costume and Textile Collection has some items on semi-permanent display in one of the upstairs rooms at Grossmann House. From 2017, other items are in boxes in what was the upstairs kitchen. It has been fitted with shelves, although not enough shelves. Ideally, compactors would be good, although it is unclear whether the floors could bear the load.

Local items (mainly robust tools, a washing machine, other domestic equipment) are in the repaired and repainted outside laundry.

MAITLAND AND BEYOND FAMILY HISTORY

The collection of photographs, photograph albums, ledgers and other documentary records is currently stored in locked steel cabinets in a building at the back of the barracks. The shelving, location and inadequate storage space put the items at risk.

MAITLAND AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (MDHS)

The majority of the artefacts belonging to the MDHS collection are on permanent display throughout the society's rooms, upstairs and downstairs. The rooms are far from suitable. Downstairs in particular risks damp, pests and flooding.

Textile and paper items (including original photographs) not on display are stored in archives boxes, a steel cabinet and map drawers.

Larger items are stored on private property.

The Society is in need of dedicated and appropriate storage so that items can be rested, conserved and secured.

MAITLAND CITY LIBRARY

The Library has three storage areas for its collections:

- in archival albums and on shelves in the local studies section of the central library;
- on crowded shelves and racks in the offices of the central library; and
- in a storage facility rented at Thornton.

The Library is in need of suitable storage to accommodate the items currently stored in the administrative area and at Thornton and, indeed, to accommodate what is a growing collection.

MAITLAND GAOL

The Gaol has two storage areas for its objects and archival collections in the basement of the reception building, and in the reception store.

Other items in the collections are located throughout the site primarily in the locations where they were used. Many are fixed. They are integral to the interpretation of the use of the site.

Catalogued items are stored in appropriate packaging and on separate shelves. Uncatalogued items are in need of documenting and appropriate storage.

The storage area in the basement of the reception building is compromised by the presence of discarded computers and other technology and by the environment.

MAITLAND RAIL MUSEUM

The majority of the Rail Museum's collection is currently stored in three containers on the South Maitland Railways site. These need to be unpacked and stored in a suitable space.

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

The Art Gallery's collection is stored in the upstairs of the former Technical College building with works on hanging racks, shelves and in solander boxes. The storage space is too small.

MAITLAND REGIONAL MUSEUM

The Museum has no dedicated storage area. Items are currently in boxes on the floor and shelves in the Museum's office.

The inadequacy of MRM's storage facilities is illustrated by the group's acquisition of a private collection (awaiting significance assessment) in early 2018. The donor required that it should be moved and stored fairly quickly. This could only happen because a couple of the Museum volunteers provided space in their home garages: far from suitable storage sites for assessing, security, care, accessibility, accessioning, cataloguing or conservation.

MAITLAND STEAM AND ANTIQUE MACHINERY ASSOCIATION

The Association's collection of machinery is housed, and displayed, in the Steam Shed on the Steamfest grounds.

MINDARIBBA KEEPING PLACE

The Keeping Place does not have a separate storage space for its collection.

Items on semi-permanent display are in locked, glass fronted cabinets.

Other items are stored in numbered boxes, mainly in adjacent offices.

MORPETH MUSEUM

Morpeth Museum has no separate storage area.

The majority of the items in the Museum's collection are on permanent display throughout the Museum.

MUSEUM OF CLOTHING

The Museum's collection is stored in the former Presbyterian Hall in Largs. The interior has been adapted for use as a storage space by setting up a variety of shelving and hanging racks. There are also suitcases stacked on the floor and on shelves, all holding items from the collection; and a variety of boxes, some archival, many not. There are boxes up high on the top of shelves.

The space is crowded with items, is hot in summer and cold in winter, is difficult to clean. It is inadequate.

Opportunities and challenges

- suitable storage is essential for the care and conservation of collections;
- none of the Maitland collections have adequate storage facilities, although some have adapted limited areas and facilities with some success;
- some of the Maitland collections are stored in totally unsuitable, poorly secured and unsafe premises;
- custom made central storage where like materials from across the collections could be stored would provide a resource-efficient solution, and a facility where resources (including paid and volunteer staff), facilities and equipment could be shared;
- creating suitable, adequate and effective storage requires planning and funding;
- there are guidelines for suitable storage³⁰; and
- there are possible sources of funding worth investigating (see [Appendix 2: Funding sources](#)).

4.5 *Access to collections*

An important function of museum and other public collections as public assets is to make the collections available for people from outside the collecting organisation to view and use for research, exhibitions, publications, and curatorial purposes. This is done on the understanding that some items might be too precious, fragile or difficult to lend; and some might require particular care and supervision in handling. It is also done on the understanding that items are well documented, catalogued and stored, and that the care and conservation they require is clearly stated. Once these requirements are in place, guidelines can be created to provide public access and to establish practices and processes for viewing, research and for lending items for displays elsewhere.

Maitland experiences

As [Table 4.5](#) following illustrates, all twelve of the organisations surveyed are willing to provide some form of public access to their collections. There are, naturally, restrictions imposed by, for example, the fragility of items, whether and where they are currently displayed or stored, and the purpose for which they are required. The greater restrictions, however, arise from the need to address aspects of the care and management of the collections as outlined in [4.4 Collection care and management](#), and to have sufficient staff and/or volunteers to assist with providing access.

Inadequate documentation and cataloguing of items, for example, makes it difficult to identify items of relevance for a particular project or exhibition. Similarly, poor storage facilities, including a retrieval system, and inadequate workspace make it very difficult to pull items out for viewing.

As well, the limited opening hours of most of the surveyed organisations (see [6.3.1 Opening hours](#)) and the small pool of staff and volunteers (see [8.1 Staff and volunteers](#)), means that access to most of the collections is by arrangement rather than on a daily or, at least, more regular basis.

³⁰ See, for example, UNESCO, *Cultural Heritage Protection Handbook No. 5: Handling of collections in storage*, Paris, 2010, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001879/187931E.pdf>

Table 4.5 Access to collections

<i>Access to collections</i>		Grossmann House	Maitland and Beyond	Maitland and District Historical	Maitland City Library	Maitland Gaol	Maitland Rail Museum	Maitland Regional Art Gallery	Maitland Regional Museum	Maitland Steam & Antique Machinery	Mindaribba Keeping Place	Morpeth Museum	Museum of Clothing
AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
AVAILABLE FOR REFERENCE AND RESEARCH		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
AVAILABLE FOR EXHIBITION/DISPLAYS		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
ACCESS (DURING OPENING HOURS)													
	<i>daily</i>				Y						Y		
	<i>twice a week</i>		Y	Y									
	<i>fortnightly</i>												
	<i>monthly</i>	Y											
	<i>by arrangement</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Opportunities and challenges

- collections held in Maitland offer a diversity of items that document Maitland's history and heritage;
- the collecting organisations are willing to provide access to the collections for viewing, research, exhibition and other curatorial purposes;
- not all collections are adequately documented and/or catalogued to enable identification of relevant items;
- inadequate storage facilities make access to and working with the collections and individual items from the collections difficult; and
- insufficient staff/volunteers and very limited opening hours for most of the collecting organisations militate against easy access.

4.6 Summary

The twelve collections surveyed for this report care for a variety of types of objects made from different materials, and they provide encounters with items that tell stories about aspects of Maitland's past, present and future.

Focus of the collections

(see [4.1 Introducing the collections](#))

Ten of the collections have a stated specific focus either in terms of the types of material being collected and/or the topics. In summary:

Grossmann House is fitted out with items dating from the late Victorian period and representing a businessman's residence from that time.

Maitland and Beyond Family History holds paper-based records relating primarily to family and business histories in Maitland.

Maitland Gaol's collection consists of items associated with the Gaol itself.

Maitland Rail Museum focuses solely on items relating to the South Maitland Railways.

Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery houses a small number of vehicles and steam engines.

Maitland City Library's collection is paper-based and consists of maps, plans, photographs, documents and a variety of other items that record aspects of local history.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery's collection consists primarily of artworks.

Mindaribba Keeping Place holds indigenous artefacts from Wonnarua country and from elsewhere.

Morpeth Museum has a particular emphasis on items about Morpeth and about the Morpeth Courthouse.

The Museum of Clothing collects clothing with a particular emphasis on everyday clothing from across the twentieth century.

The two remaining collections, Maitland and District Historical Society and Maitland Regional Museum, have a broader brief: their focus is on collecting items that document Maitland's history and heritage more broadly.

Topics (section 4.2)

The collections, individually and as a group, offer material that addresses most of the topics identified as contributing to an understanding of Maitland's history and heritage. The depth and range of this representation, and the extent and nature of overlap, however, requires further documentation and analysis.

Types of objects (section 4.3)

The twelve collections hold a wide variety of objects in terms of size, dimensions, weight, shape, fragility and materials. This has implications for the storage and conservation of items, and also for how and where they can be used for exhibitions and other museum experiences.

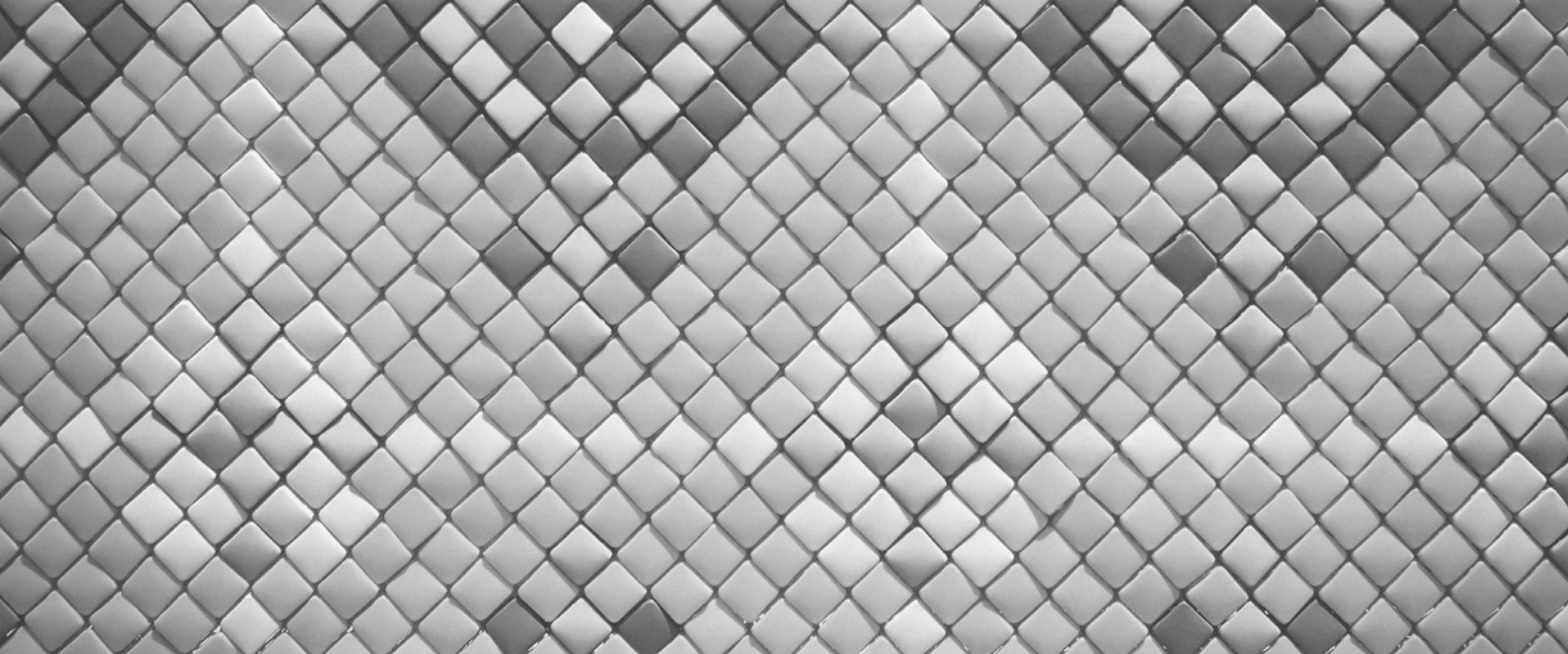
Collection care and management (section 4.4)

The twelve collecting organisations are doing the best they can with current resources and expertise in order to document and take care of their collections about Maitland. Their resources and expertise, however, are limited and, for some tasks, non-existent.

Access to collections (section 4.5)

The twelve collecting organisations are all willing to provide some form of public access to their collections. Most, however, are constrained by a shortage of staff/volunteers, limited opening hours, and the need to improve the documentation and storage of collections.

Strategies and projects for taking advantage of the opportunities and meeting the challenges outlined in this section are provided in section 15 Maitland collects.



5 OTHER PUBLIC & SOCIAL ASSETS

The collections surveyed for this report are significant public, cultural and social assets that contribute to documenting, interpreting and presenting Maitland's history and heritage. There are many other such assets. These include, for example, monuments, streets, cemeteries, parks, sites and buildings.

Council recognises the value of these assets. **The Central Maitland Structure Plan**, for example, argues for the unique heritage value and appeal of Central Maitland's street layout, streetscapes, and individual buildings and sites. Similar arguments are presented for other precincts and sites (including, for example, Morpeth, Maitland Gaol, Walka Water Works), and interpretation and management plans are in place, being developed and being implemented for a number of other places and areas including, for example, the Glebe and Jewish cemeteries. The **Maitland Place Activation Strategy** is also investigating and implementing creative ways to enhance public engagement with, and appreciation of, specific sites and places across the city.

Historic places, sites and precincts are clearly significant elements in Council's ongoing plans for Maitland. They also sit as a key theme and feature in the work done by and for the twelve organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**. As well, a number of the collections are housed in historic buildings; items in the

collections connect to specific places across Maitland; and specific places are home to further collections of objects. The collections, consequently, hold important resources for Maitland's heritage and they are, in themselves, places to visit in order to engage with the city's history and heritage.

The collections, however, should not be treated in isolation. They are part of the wider network of existing and potential experiences that can expose the depth, delights and challenges of what constitutes Maitland. Innovative and creative ways to connect collections to other history and heritage assets, and vice versa, are an important element behind the concept of Open Museums Open Minds. Visitors and residents should have easy access to information and guides that offer different routes to and through these varied assets, and these assets should consistently offer quality innovative and imaginative encounters with the stories that make Maitland unique.

Strategies and projects to optimise access to and connections between all these assets are addressed in sections 13 Current Council assets, 14 Maitland Collects, and 15 Maitland on Show.



George Simmons *Passchendaele* exhibition at Maitland Regional Art Gallery (1887-1917)

6 EXHIBITIONS

The National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries describes an exhibition as:

Objects, words, images, interactive units, audio-visual techniques and other methods combined to communicate an idea, theme or story for public interest and enjoyment.³¹

Effective and engaging exhibitions include the following features:

- . inviting, accessible and well equipped exhibition space/s;
- . a sound research base;
- . a clear narrative, theme and/or message;
- . engaging design and layout;
- . effective selection and labelling of items; and
- . imaginative educational and public programs.

Effective and engaging exhibitions are supported by access to:

- . suitable exhibition venue/s;
- . sufficient exhibition display equipment and resources; and
- . relevant expertise.

6.1 *Maitland experiences*

Currently, Maitland offers a variety of exhibitions and they are a central activity for most of the collecting organisations surveyed for this report. They range from small, not always well displayed, exhibitions to well-designed and deeply researched exhibitions. They are mainly presented within the venues occupied by the collecting organisations, although exhibitions held elsewhere also occur. They are curated locally, and draw largely on the collections housed in Maitland, although there are exhibitions that are brought in from other cultural institutions. The following is an overview of the types of exhibitions listed by host organisation.

³¹ National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, p. 83.

FRIENDS OF GROSSMANN/NATIONAL TRUST NSW

Permanent exhibition: historic house furnished as an 1870s middle class businessman's family residence.

Travelling exhibitions: a small number of exhibitions displayed in Brough House that relate to themes and topics relevant to Grossmann and Brough Houses or to the activities of the National Trust more broadly.

Temporary exhibitions: occasional temporary exhibitions curated from the Grossmann House collections.

MAITLAND & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (MDHS)

Semi-permanent displays: themed displays of items from the MDHS collection throughout the Society's rooms. Currently, most of the collection is on display.

Temporary exhibitions: held in other premises and often done in collaboration with other organisations.

MAITLAND CITY LIBRARY

Walls that Talk: a changing exhibition of images on the outside front wall of the main library building.

Temporary displays: displays about local topics and from local collections presented in the East Maitland Library display cabinet and using the newly installed hanging system.

Touring exhibitions: small displays, usually of secondary material, selected to coincide with significant local and/or national literary and historical events and held in the Central Library building.

MAITLAND GAOL

Locally curated exhibitions: items from the Gaol's collection with a focus on a particular interpretive theme in relation to the Gaol.

Travelling exhibitions: selected as they provide context for the Gaol's histories and/or link to broader aspects of police and justice history.

Permanent exhibition: on site items that help to tell the story of the Gaol.

MAITLAND RAIL MUSEUM

Permanent exhibition: due to open in 2018, the exhibition introduces the history, impact and significance of the South Maitland Railways.

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Permanent display: a number of items from the MRAG collection are on permanent display throughout the building. They provide conversations with art and with the history of the building. These conversations can be accessed through the **MRAG Art and Heritage Audio Tour**.

Locally curated exhibitions: MRAG hosts a range of temporary exhibitions that present the work of individual artists, groups of artists and/or a focus on specific topics or art forms. The contents of the exhibitions are sourced from the MRAG collections, local practicing artists and groups, and public collections in Maitland and elsewhere.

Travelling exhibitions: MRAG regularly hosts exhibitions curated by the national and state galleries and museums, other regional galleries, and independent curators.

MAITLAND REGIONAL MUSEUM

Semi-permanent exhibition: **Do you know?** is a small semi-permanent exhibition at Brough House that presents unexpected features and events about Maitland. The theme remains constant; contents are updated.

Temporary, locally curated exhibitions: the Museum researches, curates and hosts exhibitions that address different aspects of Maitland's history and heritage. The Museum

has also curated and presented exhibitions in partnership with other local organisations and government entities. Currently, all exhibitions are presented at Brough House.

Pop up exhibitions: small displays using items from local collections and created to tell stories about a specific place, person, event or topic.

MAITLAND STEAM & ANTIQUE MACHINERY ASSOCIATION

Permanent display: the Association's collection is permanently on display, and in storage, in the Steam Shed.

Annual displays: working steam machinery is presented at Steamfest and other events in Maitland and elsewhere in regional NSW.

MINDARIBBA KEEPING PLACE

Permanent exhibition: items lent from NSW Land Council and the Australian Museum, and items uncovered through archaeological digs in the lower Hunter.

MORPETH MUSEUM

Themed semi-permanent displays: the items are drawn from the Museum's collection and are curated around themes such as Morpeth Courthouse; Morpeth people, businesses and sites; children's toys and pastimes; shipping; and Arnott's memorabilia.

Temporary exhibitions: temporary exhibitions are curated on themes relating to Morpeth and items already in the museum collection. They are often sourced from local collectors.

MUSEUM OF CLOTHING

Temporary exhibitions: the Museum presents a number of temporary, themed exhibitions curated using items from the Museum collection. These are currently presented at Brough House.

Pop up exhibitions: small exhibitions created for specific events and/or places using items from the Museum's collection.

Opportunities and challenges

- Maitland has a number of cultural organisations actively researching and presenting exhibitions that focus on aspects of Maitland's history and heritage;
- the collections held in Maitland offer a range and variety of topics and objects (see [4.2 Topics](#) and [4.3 Types of objects](#)) that can be interpreted and presented as exhibitions about and for Maitland, and that can be connected to key themes in Maitland's history (see [3 Themes](#));
- the exhibitions are of varying depth, with varying standards of design, and are frequently achieved with very limited resources in terms of funding, expertise and appropriate display furniture and fittings (see [6.3 Resources and facilities](#));
- a pooling of expertise (including curatorial and graphic design), display furniture and fittings, and other resources could be beneficial;
- a central program, marketing and publicity could also be beneficial;
- the support of small pop up exhibits that respond to specific events or places have the potential to engage wider audiences (see [9.4 Collect Maitland](#) for an example);
- consideration of innovative, interactive and participatory types of exhibitions reflecting 21st century museum practices could be enticing;
- there are a number of manuals and guidelines on the skills and resources that assist with curating quality exhibitions;³² and
- there is funding available to develop and present specific exhibitions (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).

32 See, for example, Museums and Galleries NSW, Online Resources, <https://mgns.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/>; and Lynda Kelly, 'Writing text and labels', Australian Museum, <https://australianmuseum.net.au/writing-text-and-labels>.

6.2 Resources and facilities

The exhibitions hosted by Maitland's collecting organisations depend on varied, and often limited, resources and facilities. This section of the report focuses on the resources and facilities available in the venues used for exhibitions, and on the opportunities and challenges involved in enhancing the venues and, consequently, enhancing the exhibition experiences that can be offered.

Note: Brough House is currently the main exhibition venue for Maitland Regional Museum and the Museum of Clothing. It is also used by Friends of Grossmann House/ National Trust NSW for temporary exhibitions.

6.2.1 Opening hours

Exhibitions provide an important, and familiar, means to engage the public with collections, messages, narratives and history. Ideally, they should be open seven days a week so that residents and visitors can call in, visit and

revisit at their convenience. Some museums and galleries also support regular evening openings to cater for visitors who find visiting during the day difficult and/or who are attracted to an evening out at an exhibition.

More restricted opening hours risk lower visitor numbers. Tourists, for example, are invariably in a locality for limited periods and, consequently, can only visit those venues that are open.

Limited opening hours are, however, not uncommon. They are usually dictated by limited resources.

Whatever the visiting hours are, they need to be well advertised.

Maitland experiences

The opening hours of the different Maitland exhibition venues vary significantly, with at least one open only twice a month. [Table 6.2.1](#) lists the current opening hours for each of the venues.

[Table 6.2.1 Opening Hours](#)

ORGANISATION	OPENING HOURS	
<i>Brough House</i>	Saturdays and Sundays	10am — 3pm
<i>Grossmann House</i>	2 nd and 4 th Sundays each month	10am — 3pm
<i>Maitland and Beyond Family History</i>	Wednesdays and Saturdays	9.30am — 3pm
<i>Maitland and District Historical Society</i>	Wednesdays and Saturdays	11am — 3pm
<i>Maitland City Library</i>	Monday, Tuesday to Thursday Friday Saturday	9.00am — 6.00pm 9.00am — 7.00pm 9.00am — 5.00pm 9.00am — 2.00pm
<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	Mondays to Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays	9am — 4pm 10am — 4pm
<i>Maitland Rail Museum</i>	Currently by appointment	
<i>Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery</i>	Tuesdays and Saturdays Annually during Steamfest	10am — 2pm
<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	Mondays to Fridays,	9am — 4pm
<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays	11am — 2pm

Opportunities and challenges

- the opening hours of the different venues vary significantly;
- the venues and their opening hours, and consequently their exhibitions, are marketed haphazardly with some primarily through local flyers;
- central marketing of the venues and their opening hours could benefit and simplify planned visits to the exhibitions;
- extended opening hours for venues would be beneficial, although this requires more resources and funds. Funding for day-to-day running costs is not available from non-local government sources; and
- further investigation into appropriate opening hours and the patterning of opening hours across the venues, especially in relation to current and potential visitor profiles (see [8.3 Visitor numbers and potential](#)), could be useful.

6.2.2 *Exhibition spaces*

Exhibitions require spaces of sufficient size and flexibility to accommodate different types of exhibitions and the display furniture needed. Current exhibition practice places an emphasis on design and layout that affords room around individual items or collections of items. Overcrowding is discouraged.

Effective exhibition spaces should also have the following features:

Access for people with disabilities.³³

Display furniture: a variety of display furniture to accommodate different types and designs of exhibitions as well as access to creating exhibition-specific display furniture.

Hanging system: facilities to hang two-dimensional items. This entails, at a minimum, hanging wires with hooks and a track of some description. The ideal is

purpose built walls that can take screws and be repaired and repainted after each exhibition.

Lighting: a specialised lighting system that can highlight particular objects and that enables control of the lux rating (i.e. the level of brightness of the light). This is both for the conservation of items on exhibit and also as an essential element in exhibition presentation.

Pest control: vermin and insects are a health risk for those who work in and visit the venues. They also need to be controlled for the sake of the items on display.

Security: the security of items on display requires lockable display cases, lockable premises and an alarmed security system, preferably back to base.

Temperature and humidity control: essential features for the care and display of sensitive items.

Maitland experiences

The exhibition spaces and facilities in Maitland are varied. They range from the state of the art space and facilities at the Maitland Regional Art Gallery to far more limited, and sometimes totally inadequate, spaces and facilities at other venues.

[Table 6.3.2](#) (below) provides an overview of the resources and facilities available in the existing exhibition venues. This is followed by brief descriptions of the spaces and facilities at each of the venues.

³³ Guidelines and checklists for making venues and events accessible are available from, for example, Accessible Arts, Resources, <http://www.aarts.net.au/resources/>

Table 6.3.2 Exhibition facilities and resources

Y = Yes

Y* = yes, but in need of development and/or in process and/or only partial

<i>Exhibition facilities and resources</i>	Brough House	Grossmann House	MDHS	Maitland City Library	Maitland Gaol	Maitland Rail	MRAG	Maitland Steam	Mindaribba Keeping Place	Morpeth Museum
<i>disabled access</i>	Y*	Y*		Y	Y*	Y*	Y		Y	Y*
<i>display furniture</i>	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y*	Y		Y*	Y*
<i>hanging system</i>	Y*	Y*		Y*	Y*	Y	Y		Y*	
<i>lighting</i>	Y*				Y*	Y	Y		Y*	Y*
<i>pest control</i>	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
<i>security</i>	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>temperature control</i>				Y			Y			

Descriptions of current exhibition venues

BROUGH HOUSE

Brough House has many small rooms, aged hanging and lighting systems, no temperature or humidity control, limited display furniture and limited disability access. There are also constraints as it is a heritage building.

GROSSMANN HOUSE

Grossmann House is a house museum and, as such, has a series of rooms with fixed exhibits. It has no temperature or humidity control, varied lighting, and limited disability access. It is also a heritage building.

MAITLAND AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Maitland and District Historical Society currently exhibits its collection in the difficult to access two floors of its current premises. The rooms are overcrowded as are the

exhibits, and there is no temperature or humidity control, and the lighting is inadequate. Pest control is also a problem.

MAITLAND CITY LIBRARY

Maitland City Library makes use of floor space in the central library, a display unit and a new hanging system in the East Maitland branch. These are adapted spaces and, with the exception of the East Maitland display case, are not suitable for the display of original items. The Library is making great use of its outside wall as a display device for **Walls that talk**.

MAITLAND GAOL

Maitland Gaol exhibits its collection throughout the Gaol, in a small display in the reception area and in temporary exhibitions presented primarily through the display units in the Gaol auditorium. Temperature and humidity control, lighting, and hanging systems are inadequate.

MAITLAND RAIL MUSEUM

Maitland Rail Museum has adapted two rooms on the South Maitland Railways workshops site to serve as exhibition spaces. They are fitted with lighting and hanging systems but have no temperature and humidity control. Their display furniture is limited. There is some disabled access although the nature of the site makes this difficult.

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Maitland Regional Art Gallery has well-equipped and adequate sized series of galleries with good gallery and museum fixtures and facilities.

MAITLAND STEAM AND ANTIQUE MACHINERY ASSOCIATION

Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery has its collection stored and on display in the Steam Shed. There is no space or facilities for curated exhibitions.

MINDARIBBA KEEPING PLACE

Mindaribba Keeping Place has a dedicated exhibition space with old-fashioned showcases. There is no temperature and humidity control, and inadequate hanging and lighting systems.

MORPETH MUSEUM

Morpeth Museum exhibits its entire collection in the rooms of the former Morpeth Courthouse. There is no temperature and humidity control, inadequate lighting and hanging systems, and the space is overcrowded.

Opportunities and challenges

- Maitland's exhibition venues are very varied and most of them have inadequate resources and/or facilities;
- only Maitland Regional Art Gallery has the facilities and services to host touring exhibitions of original material from state, national and other regional museums and galleries;
- a pool of display furniture, expertise, curatorial, graphic design and other exhibition resources could be beneficial and resource efficient;
- there are a number of manuals and guidelines to assist with evaluating and improving exhibition venues; and³⁴
- a couple of the venues defy regeneration as exhibition spaces, and exhibitions held there should possibly be held elsewhere.

6.3 Summary

The twelve collecting organisations consulted for **Open Museums, Open Minds** initiate and present a range of exhibitions in terms of content, size and quality. They achieve this with, for the most part, limited resources and in spaces that, in the most part, are far from ideal.

Strategies and projects that build on these existing initiatives and that suggest ways to enhance opportunities and address challenges are presented in section 16 Maitland on Show.

34

See, for example, Museums and Galleries NSW, Online Resources, <https://mgns.w.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/>; and Lynda Kelly, 'Writing text and labels', Australian Museum, <https://australianmuseum.net.au/writing-text-and-labels>.



Street performance, The Levee, Maitland

7 OTHER MUSEUM EXPERIENCES

Exhibitions are a key form of museum experience designed to engage different audiences. There are a variety of other museum experiences that occur within museums and galleries, and others that are taken on to the streets and into other venues. This section of the report identifies and describes the variety of museum experiences currently presented by the twelve collecting organisations. It acknowledges, but does not include here, the many experiences initiated by Maitland City Council, especially under its **Maitland Place Activation Strategy**, **Central Maitland Interpretation Plan** and **Public Art Policy** (see [2.3 Implementation](#)). Although, importantly, four of the organisations consulted for **Open Museums**, **Open Minds** (Maitland Gaol, Maitland Library, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Morpeth Museum) are Council entities and, hence, the museum experiences they support are Council initiatives.

[Table 7](#) (page 58) provides an overview of the museum experiences supported by the twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums**, **Open Minds**. Commentaries on each category of museum experience are provided in the following sections.

Table 7: Museum experiences

<i>Museum experiences</i>	<i>7.1 Accessible programs</i>	<i>7.2 Children's activities</i>	<i>7.3 Lectures, talks</i>	<i>7.4 Online</i>	<i>7.5 Performance</i>	<i>7.6 Publications</i>	<i>7.7 Public art</i>	<i>7.8 Special events</i>	<i>7.9 Tours, trails, walks</i>	<i>7.10 Collaborative projects</i>
<i>Friends of Grossmann</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>Maitland and Beyond Family History</i>			Y	Y		Y		Y		Y
<i>Maitland and District Historical Society</i>		Y	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y
<i>Maitland City Library</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y
<i>Maitland Gaol</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Maitland Rail Museum</i>				Y						Y
<i>Maitland Regional Art Gallery</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Maitland Regional Museum</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y
<i>Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery</i>		Y		Y				Y		Y
<i>Mindaribba Keeping Place</i>	Y				Y			Y		Y
<i>Morpeth Museum</i>	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	Y
<i>Museum of Clothing</i>		Y		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y

7.1 Accessible programs

Increasingly museums, galleries and other public collecting organisations acknowledge that people with disabilities require targeted programs to enable them to engage with, and participate in, different museum experiences. This acknowledgement goes beyond providing access to facilities. It involves becoming familiar with, and being creative about, incorporating and addressing different ways in which people with disabilities can engage with exhibitions and other museum experiences. It also involves ensuring that the skills, creativity, experiences, histories and work of people with disabilities are incorporated into exhibition and other museum programs.

Similarly, the museum world is also taking action to engage more overtly with, and cater for, people with mental and other health problems, and those with learning difficulties.

Maitland experiences

Eight of the collecting organisations have taken or are taking action to ensure that access to their venues, toilet facilities, the height and nature of displays, and special assistance for people with specific disabilities are being addressed at least to some degree (see [Table 6.3.2 Exhibition resources and facilities](#)).

Some of the collecting organisations are also creating specific programs for people with disabilities and those with mental and other health problems or with learning difficulties. The programs already initiated are attracting positive feedback in terms of the support they provide for participants and, indeed, in terms of attracting and catering for specific audiences who otherwise are unlikely to participate in museum experiences. Examples include:

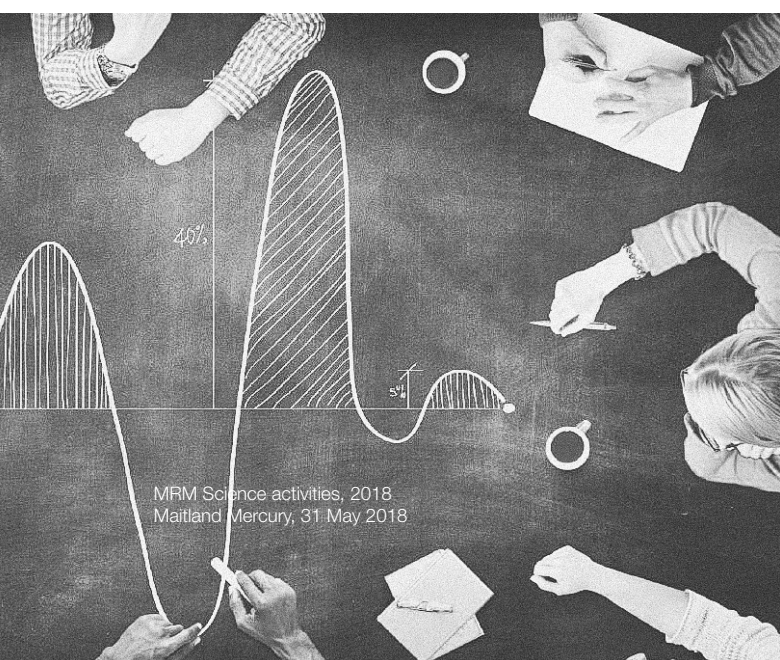
Maitland Gaol audio tour is available in forms suitable for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery's art and dementia program engages an art therapist to lead tours of current exhibitions and art spaces tailored specifically for people living with dementia and their carers.

Maitland Library provides trained tutors in all its branches to assist adults with learning to read, spell and write.

Opportunities and challenges

- providing physical access to some venues is constrained by lack of resources and/or the difficulties of adapting heritage buildings and sites;
- people with disabilities, with health problems and with learning difficulties are specific audiences that can benefit greatly from targeted programs;
- creating targeted and appropriate programs requires resources and specialist skills; and
- there are funding possibilities available to support such initiatives
(see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).



7.2 *Children's and youth activities*

Over the last few decades museums have changed from places where adults go to look, quietly, at precious objects to places where children and youth can be involved in activities presented particularly for them. Children and youth are recognised as distinct and significant museum audiences who are engaged by a variety of activities and who, once introduced to museum experiences at a young age, are more likely to see museums and museum experiences as learning and leisure spaces in their adult lives.

The activities designed for children and youth range from discrete hands-on and/or investigative games associated with particular exhibitions to entire spaces dedicated to innovative and engaging targeted activities. There are also programs designed to address specific aspects of the curriculum, and others that, for example, tap into parental desires to have places to go and things to do during school holidays and at weekends. There are also programs that encourage the active participation of children and youth in exhibitions.

Maitland experiences

Maitland's collecting organisations offer a variety of children's activities of varying quality. There are simple worksheets inviting young visitors to find particular items, opportunities to write comments on walls or stick them up on bits of paper, school holiday workshops and activities, books and cards, worksheets and visits targeted at specific aspects of the school curricula, spaces designated particularly for children and youth, and opportunities for children and youth to contribute to and participate in cultural activities.

Examples include:

Grossmann House's **Butlers and Blackboards** geared to Years 1 and 2 in the Humanities and Social Sciences.³⁵

35

Butlers and Blackboards, National Trust NSW, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/butlers-and-blackboards/>

Maitland City Library holiday activities and clubs are based on learning and interacting with STEM concepts, local environment and local history.

Maitland Gaol's children's self-guided audio tour *Snitch's Gaol Exploration*.³⁶

Maitland Regional Art Gallery's Art Factory, a space dedicated to actively involve children, youth and families in the gallery's exhibitions and other activities.³⁷

Maitland Regional Art Gallery's award winning children's storybook, *Lionel's Place*.³⁸

Maitland Regional Art Gallery's hosting of Maitland High School's performance of 'Soldiers' Home' at the opening of the Passchendaele exhibition.

Maitland Regional Museum's science workshops offered during the 2018 July school holidays.³⁹

Morpeth Museum visits by museum volunteers to primary schools with a focus on comparing the past and the present through photographs and other objects.

Museum of Clothing hosts an annual exhibition of local HSC textile work.

- time and staff/volunteers need to be available during school hours for school group visits, and during school holidays and weekends; and
- targeted advertising and publicity.



MRAG, Art Factory 2017

7.3 *Lectures and talks*

In the museum world, presenting ideas, research, inspiration and stories through public talks and lectures are established and effective means to engage audiences with collections, exhibitions, historical themes, heritage items and other museum experiences.

Maitland experiences

Maitland's collecting organisations host a variety of public talks and lectures that connect to their collections and/or provide engagement with aspects of Maitland's history and heritage.

These are usually held in the premises owned by the collecting organisations and/or in Council premises. The accessibility of the venues and the facilities vary across the organisations. There is no central and well-equipped room suitable for holding the events. As well, events sometimes conflict and/or overlap with each other.

Opportunities and challenges

- children and youth are a well recognised target audience for museums;
- providing effective programs requires appropriate expertise, including knowledge and experience in working with children, youth and, where appropriate, with the relevant school curricula;

36 Maitland Gaol, Self-guided audio tours, <https://www.maitlandgaol.com.au/visit/self-guided-audio-tours>

37 Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Exhibitions – The Art Factory, <http://mrag.org.au/exhibitions/art-factory/>

38 *Lionel's Place* won the 2018 national MAPDA (Museums Australasia Multimedia & Publication Design Awards) award for a children's book. See MAPDA, <http://www.mapda.org.au/2018-winners.html>

39 'Science exhibitions at workshops at Maitland Regional Museum at Brough House', *Maitland Mercury*, 31 May 2018.

Examples of public talks and lectures presented by the collecting organisations include:

Friends of Grossmann House host the bi-annual Harry Boyle Memorial Lecture, and occasional special topic talks and lectures. These are presented in Brough House.

Maitland and Beyond Family History have talks on research sources and strategies for family historians, and on Maitland's history. These are presented in one of the rooms at The Barracks.

Maitland and District Historical Society organises monthly guest lectures on aspects of Maitland's history. These are presented upstairs in the society's rooms.

Maitland City Library provides its annual series of **Look who's talking local history** and **Look who's talking local stories**. These are presented in a variety of venues around the locality. The Library has no suitable room for talks and lectures.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery has regular talks by exhibition curators and/or artists. These are held in the Art Gallery.

Maitland Regional Museum offers occasional talks on topics related to exhibitions or other events. These are usually held in Brough House and its grounds.

Opportunities and challenges

- public talks and lectures are a resource-efficient means to promote engagement with collections and with Maitland's history and heritage;
- there are different audiences attracted to different topics and types of presentations;
- the venues used for the talks are varied and some are less inviting than others;
- a central means to programme and advertise talks and lectures could address overlap and help to attract wider audiences;
- a central store of the equipment (computer,

projector, sound system) often required for speakers could be resource-efficient; and

- some consideration could be given to the amalgamation of some of the programs of talks.

7.4 *Online*

In the 21st century museums are actively, assertively and imaginatively online. They advertise their collections, exhibitions and calendars of events; they offer enticing virtual encounters with particular items; they create virtual exhibitions; they engage through all forms of social media; they invite immersion in collection catalogues. The aim is to deliver encounters with their museums to people who are unable to visit the actual museum; to attract new audiences through demonstrating online the depth, breadth, delight and joy of their collections and activities; and to enable those who are interested to research the contents of their collections. Earlier there was concern that the virtual would replace the real; that visiting an online presence would replace visiting the museum itself. Now, however, there is evidence and recognition that online encounters can increase visitation to, and use of, the actual museum.

Maitland experiences

Most of Maitland's collecting organisations have an online presence through a dedicated website, Facebook page and/or other social media (see [4.1 Introducing the collections](#)). Some make their activities programs, publications, brochures, audio tours and other material available online.

Maitland City Library also provides online access to its catalogues and to a variety of items from its local studies collection including digital copies of photographs, council minutes, maps and other records.

Opportunities and challenges

- an online presence is a requirement for museums in the 21st century, and preferably a presence that does more than outline opening hours and facilities;
- an effective, imaginative and inviting online

presence entails imaginative design, easy navigation, relevant and concise information, regular updating;

- an online presence that offers something unusual or arresting is likely to be more memorable and to suggest that the museum itself is worth visiting – there might be other unusual and arresting experiences to encounter; and
- effective design and content requires professional expertise and resources that are largely outside the budgets of the collecting organisations, especially the community based organisations.



Activating the toilets at the cinema
– performance COTA 2005.

7.5 *Public art*

Public art is art in any media that is designed, planned and presented in a physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. It is usually site specific and invites audiences to engage with the artwork and with its surroundings. It enhances streetscapes, sites, and buildings. It can be permanent, semi-permanent or temporary. Government bodies, cultural institutions, private organisations and/or individuals can sponsor it.

Maitland experiences

Maitland has a growing collection of public art that includes statues, sculptures, wall paintings,

paste-ups, and community art works. The works tell stories about and/or invite engagement with the city. The majority, to date, have been initiated by Maitland City Council, especially under its place activation and public art policies and plans. Examples of those hosted by the twelve collecting organisations include MRAG's now iconic *Fetch Boy*; Maitland City Library's *Creative Bins* and *Walls that talk*; and Maitland Gaol's commemorative art project.

Opportunities and challenges

- public art provides unexpected and memorable opportunities to engage, entertain and delight members of the public, and to provide creative and interpretive media that highlight aspects of Maitland;
- public art provides a means to engage with, and promote, specific items or collections of items;
- public art is site specific;
- public art that can connect to the social, historical and physical context of a specific site depends on sound research, imagination and artistic skill; and
- costs aren't necessarily prohibitive: there are funding sources (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)) and artists can be generous.

7.6 *Publications*

Books, booklets, brochures, flyers, programs, newsletters, magazines, exhibition catalogues and other publications, in print and/or digital, play an important part in delivering museum experiences. They provide mementoes of museum visits and other museum experiences, records and images of exhibition contents and other forms of engagement, programs of events, and items about specific objects, events and/or topics.

Maitland experiences

The twelve collecting organisations surveyed for *Open Museums, Open Minds* produce a range of publications of varying quality and depth. For example:

Maitland and Beyond Family History
has a newsletter and supports
occasional publications.⁴⁰

40 <http://mdgs.org.au/maitland-beyond-family-history-newsletter-september-2017/> ; <http://mdgs.org.au/publications/>

Maitland and District Historical Society has a quarterly *Bulletin* and occasional publications.⁴¹

Maitland City Library publishes an annual and quarterly program of events, as well as local history fact sheets available online.

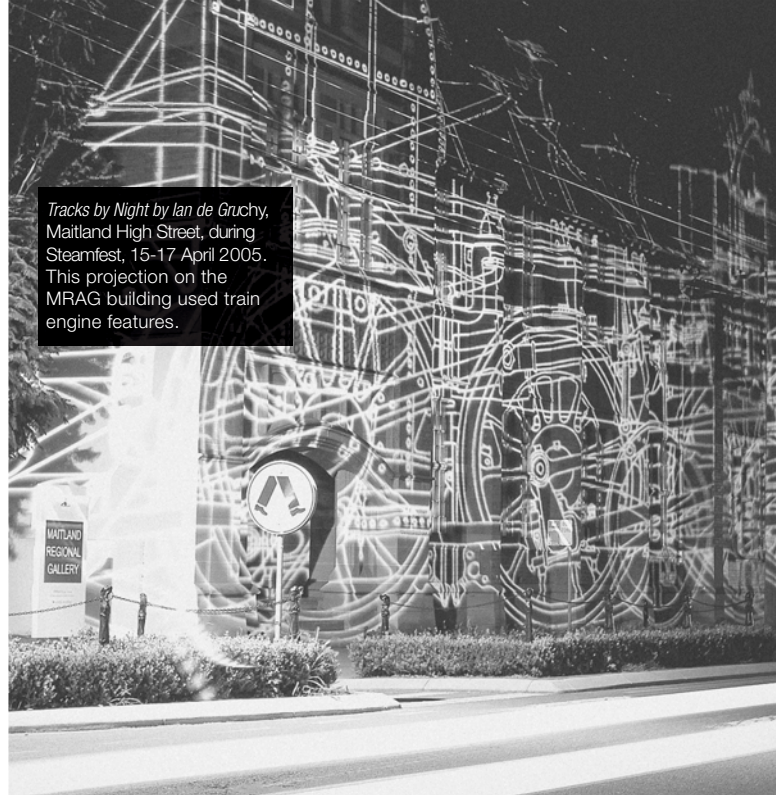
Maitland Gaol produces an annual program of events and supports publications about the Gaol.⁴²

Maitland Regional Art Gallery publishes exhibition catalogues and information sheets, a newsletter for its members and volunteers, and has the children's storybook *Lionel's Place*.

Morpeth Museum has an introductory booklet and occasional exhibition flyers.

Opportunities and challenges

- publications provide an important memento of visits and records of further information researched for museum experiences;
- different types of publications appeal to different audiences;
- good publications demonstrate careful research, writing, design and documentation;
- there is no central directory or repository of all publications produced by the collecting organisations and, indeed, some of the organisation's websites do not list their publications;
- there is possibly some overlap in content with some of the publications, and there could be an advantage in pooling resources and knowledge for some items; and
- there are funding sources available for publications (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).



7.7 Special events

Special events include open days, festivals, hands-on workshops, fashion parades, street performances, and other imaginative ways to engage audiences with museums and their collections, stories and experiences. They can focus on a particular event, place, topic or collection. They can enhance awareness of streets and neighbourhoods. They can be annual, occasional or once only, and cater for big or small audiences.

Maitland experiences

The twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds** host a number of special events. They range from festivals and open days filled with activities to more discrete workshops and fundraising events. They vary in terms of audience numbers and makeup. A number of the organisations also contribute to Council initiated special events such as Steamfest, Riverlights and the Taste and Aroma Festivals.

⁴¹ <http://www.maitlandhistorical.org/bulletin.php>; <http://mdgs.org.au/publications/>

⁴² Maitland Gaol, Public events, <https://www.maitlandgaol.com.au/whats-on/public-events>; *Inside Maitland Gaol: the Maitland Gaol oral history project*, Maitland, 2000; and Cynthia Hunter, *'Hurled into eternity': the sixteen executions at Maitland Gaol*, Maitland, 2009.

Examples include:

Friends of Grossmann House and Maitland Repertory presented 'The Church Street Dramas' in April 2018: a series of short plays about specific sites in Church St and presented at the sites.⁴³

Friends of Grossmann and Newcastle Spinners and Weavers presented 'Spinning in public' in September 2017: display of textiles from the collection accompanied by demonstrations of spinning and weaving on looms donated to the Grossmann House collection.

Maitland Antique and Steam Machinery plays a central role in the annual Hunter Valley Steamfest, and actively takes some of the machines from the collection to similar events across the state.

Maitland City Library together with Maitland's Heritage Officer celebrates NSW History Week with a special event each year.

Maitland Gaol regularly hosts special events including Lock Up for Father's Day; Friday the 13th Sleepover; and Bitter and Twisted Boutique Beer Festival.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery regularly hosts the Olive Tree Markets, concerts, book launches, and fundraising dinners.

Maitland Regional Museum has held garden parties in the grounds of Brough House, and featured year artist Helen Hopcroft in her fantasy year as Marie Antoinette to highlight creativity and imagination as part of cultural regeneration and the push for a museum for Maitland.⁴⁴

Mindaribba supports a range of activities during NAIDOC week each year.

Mindaribba engaged children to plant historic native rainforest trees on the Metford site with the trees donated by the Australian Plant Society.⁴⁵

The Museum of Clothing holds themed fashion parades at different venues.

Opportunities and challenges

- special events have the potential to reach new audiences;
- sharing resources and ideas could result in enhanced and increasingly innovative special events, and help to coordinate programs and overlap; and
- there are funding sources for particular types of special events (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).



Maitland Gaol audio tours

7.8 *Tours, trails, walks*

Visiting sites, following trails, listening to audio-guides, being guided by an expert, following signs and interpretive panels: these provide an embodied means to engage with exhibitions and related museum experiences. The tours can be inside or outside, introduce features of a site and/or exhibition, and encourage engagement with a variety of places.

43 'Gruesome tales of murder and mayhem in Church Street Dramas', *Maitland Mercury*, 19 April 2018.

44 For Helen Hopcroft's explanation of her year of fantasy see Perry Duffin, 'Helen Hopcroft spends a year as Marie Antoinette', *Maitland Mercury*, 28 February 2017.

45 Sage Swinton, 'Tree planting of historic native Maitland trees at Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council', *Maitland Mercury*, 6 July 2018.

Maitland Experiences

The twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds** initiate and support a variety of tours, trails and walks.

For example:

Friends of Grossmann House regularly hosts guided walking tours of Maitland precincts.

Maitland and District Historical Society provides guided bus and walking tours as requested by visitors, offers guided tours at events such as Steamfest, and organises tours to historic sites in the lower Hunter and elsewhere.

Maitland Gaol has guided and self-guided audio tours, including one designed for children.⁴⁶

Maitland Regional Art Gallery has self-guided art and heritage audio tours.

Opportunities and challenges

- tours, trails and walks encourage people to engage with collections, sites and places in an embodied way: walking, viewing, listening;
- tours, trails and walks have the potential to offer new experiences and insights as new technologies, ideas and expertise open the doors on new possibilities;
- different approaches and levels of information and presentation appeal to different audiences; and
- sharing of resources and ideas through workshops and other means could be beneficial in terms of content and approach, and in order to rationalise overlap.



Maitland's Own exhibition at Brough House 2018.
Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Maitland Regional Museum collaboration.

7.9 Collaborative projects

Collaborative projects and initiatives recognise the value of shared resources including staff, volunteers, collection items, expertise, ideas, creativity and knowledge. Working together can also encourage rationalisation and consolidation of research, planning and events.

Maitland experiences

The twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds** are establishing a strong record of collaborative projects.

Examples include:

Brough House: Cooperative and collaborative work with the Museum of Clothing, the Friends of Grossmann House and the National Trust (NSW branch) to rent and use Brough House as a joint exhibition and functions space for the three organisations as well as an administrative base for the Friends of Grossmann, Maitland Regional Museum and the Museum of Clothing.

Friends of Grossmann and the Newcastle Spinners and Weavers collaborated in the restoration and use of newly acquired historic looms, and in the use of an upstairs room at

46 Maitland Gaol, Visit, <https://www.maitlandgaol.com.au/visit>

Brough House for workshops and demonstrations.

Maitland remembers Passchendaele: a series of events and exhibitions to mark the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele in 2017 and the part played by the 34th Battalion, 'Maitland's Own'. Maitland and District Historical Society, Maitland Regional Museum, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Maitland City Library and Maitland Visitor Information Centre collaborated on the research and presentation of exhibitions, displays and complementary events and exhibitions. Other groups, including the RSL and St Peter's Anglican Church, organised and hosted other events.

Les Darcy Centenary, 2017: a variety of events marking the centenary of Darcy's death including Maitland Lions Club memorial bronze, a public ceremony, screening of films, an exhibition at MRAG, and **Walls that Talk** at Maitland Library.

Collect Maitland: the pop up exhibition curated as part of the **Open Museums, Open Minds** consultancy (see section 9.4 **Collect Maitland**) involved collaboration between Maitland City Council and the twelve collecting organisations consulted for this report.

Hunter Red: a collaborative series of exhibitions during 2018 created by Hunter-based galleries: Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, Newcastle Art Gallery and The Lock Up (Newcastle).⁴⁷

Maitland 200 years: a series of events and displays that commenced in April 2018 to mark the last 200 years of Maitland's history. Most of the twelve collecting organisations consulted for this report are participating, and are getting support from local businesses, other community groups and the **Maitland Mercury**.⁴⁸

Challenges and opportunities

- collaborative projects encourage a pooling of resources and ideas and, hence, can be resource-efficient;
- central coordination and management with appropriate administrative back up can enhance the efficiency of organising and sustaining collaborative projects;
- collaborative projects could be enhanced by establishing a shared pool of equipment, skills, signage, labels, marquees and other appropriate items and equipment; and
- funding is available for specific projects (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)).

7.10 Summary

The twelve collecting organisations consulted for **Open Museums, Open Minds** host a variety of museum experiences both within their institutions and at a variety of venues across the local government area. The museum experiences include public talks, tours, special events, publications, public art and programs designed for specific audiences. Collaborative projects are also increasing and considered a growth opportunity for social connectedness and visitor economy outcomes.

There are opportunities and challenges embedded in each type of museum experience. **At core, the key opportunity is to extend and enhance the existing museum experiences, and to envision and implement new and innovative museum experiences, in order to spread magic and engagement across the locality.** The key challenge is the access to resources, expertise, knowledge, time, imagination and the equipment and facilities needed to realise and sustain museum experiences.

Strategies and projects to address these opportunities and challenges are presented in section 16 Maitland on show.

47 *Hunter Red*, <http://mrag.org.au/exhibition/hunter-red-the-evolution-of-cultural-identity-through-art/>

48 For example, Sage Swinton, 'Maitland 200 years event to acknowledge history and people of Maitland', *Maitland Mercury*,

21 March 2018; and Sage Swinton, 'Maitland 200 years committee calls groups to join community day on September 16', *Maitland Mercury*, 15 July 2018.



My Year as a Fairytale, *Maitland Mercury*, 4 July 2017.

8 STAFF, FUNDING AND VISITORS

The collections, exhibitions and other museum experiences hosted by the twelve collecting organisations and summarised in the preceding sections of this report are dependent on the paid and volunteer staff who do the work, and on access to, and the raising of, sufficient funds. The following sections [8.1 Staff and volunteers](#) and [8.2 Funding](#) provide a broad overview of the nature and limits of these resources.

The final section, [8.3 Visitor profiles and potential](#) looks briefly at current and potential visitor numbers as one indicator of where and how the work of these organisations contributes to Maitland's social and cultural life, and to its visitor economy. Significantly, however, visitor numbers indicate only the public engagement role and potential of the collections and the activities and events they support. The less quantifiable benefits come from collecting, caring for and raising awareness about significant Maitland public, cultural and social assets.

8.1 *Staff and volunteers*

Only the three local government entities (Maitland Gaol, Library and the Art Gallery), Mindaribba and, from 2017, Grossmann House (a very part-time curator paid for by National Trust NSW) have paid professional staff. They also rely heavily on volunteers. The remaining seven organisations are run entirely by volunteers. The work they do includes more than minding the collections and curating exhibitions and museum experiences. Their contributions include caring, data entry, cleaning, talking to the public, cataloguing, encouraging new volunteers and visitors, working regularly on committees (including Council administered committees), fundraising, collecting money, providing food and beverages, and administration.

A concern across the volunteer based organisations is the age profile (mainly older residents), the decreasing number of their active supporters, and the decreasing amounts of time volunteers have to devote to the organisations. There is also concern about limited access to the specialised skills that can assist with effective collection care and management, curating and lay out of exhibitions, and the creation and hosting of other expected museum experiences.

Opportunities and challenges

- pooling of resources and personnel across the organisations could be resource-efficient and beneficial both for the individuals concerned and for the organisations;
- shared workshops on specific aspects of

collection management and exhibitions would be helpful; and

- some consideration of the amalgamation of collections, events and resources could also assist.

8.2 *Funding*

The core funding for the Gaol, Library and Art Gallery comes from Council. Morpeth Museum, as a Council owned property, gets assistance in kind and some funding from Council. Friends of Grossmann get some assistance from National Trust (NSW). The core funding for Mindaribba is from government sources and other agencies. The remaining six organisations depend on volunteers, fundraising, donations and applying for grants to fund, resource and support all their museum activities.

Opportunities and challenges

- pooling of resources and facilities could help to rationalise the amount of money and in-kind support needed; and
- volunteers working together across the organisations could be beneficial.

8.3 *Visitor numbers and potential*

A key purpose of museum exhibitions and other experiences is to attract audiences to visit, enjoy, be engaged, learn and re-visit.

The **Open Museums, Open Minds** brief did not ask for audience development or analysis. However, some sense of visitor numbers could assist in understanding the current and potential appeal of Maitland's collections and museum experiences.

Australian Bureau of Statistics studies during 2005 to 2007, for example, established that an estimated 3.6 million Australian adults visited a museum over the twelve months preceding the study. This represented 23% of Australians aged 15 years and over. In addition, there were 51.5 million unique online visits to museums with a total of 127.3 million web pages viewed in a twelve-month period, and this was a decade ago.⁴⁹ Museums and galleries are places Australians like to visit.

There are some numbers and profiles of visitors to Maitland's collections and exhibitions. Most of the community-based organisations do not have the resources to document detailed statistics. Some do, however, keep rough figures and anecdotal accounts. Maitland Regional Museum, for example, established that the exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Diocese held in the Catholic Hall in High Street attracted approximately 75 people to the opening, and over 1000 during the exhibition. It was open for limited hours over a three week period in 2017. The fossils and minerals exhibition presented by Maitland Regional Museum at Brough House for a three week period in 2016 and, again, with limited opening hours (two days a week for five hours each day) attracted 350 visitors, approximately half of whom were school children, and a lecture associated with the exhibition attracted a further audience of approximately 50.⁵⁰



Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery

49 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4114.0 – Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia, 2005-06, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4114.0Main+Features12005-06?OpenDocument>; and Australian Bureau of Statistics, 8560.0 - Museums, Australia, 2007-08, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8560.0>.

50 Figures supplied by Maitland Regional Museum Inc.

The Maitland Regional Museum patterns are roughly representative of visitor numbers to the other community-based organisations. The pattern and small numbers are arguably shaped by, for example, the limited opening hours, limited publicity and marketing, and perhaps, at times, the need to enhance facilities and the quality of the exhibitions and events being offered.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery keeps records of visitors. These figures indicate that there is a strong interest in engaging with cultural institutions among residents and visitors. In 2017 just under 70,000 people visited the Art Gallery. The figures demonstrate that just over half the visitation was from locals, a further 26% from the Hunter Valley and 22% from the rest of Australia.⁵¹ The visitors to the Art Gallery are also likely to be interested in at least some of the exhibitions and other experiences offered by the other collecting organisations. Interest in these types of activities and experiences is also affirmed by attendance at events such as Steamfest and Maitland Gaol's 2018 open day. More than 60,000 people from across the region and beyond, for example, turned out for the 31st anniversary of Steamfest in 2017, and over 7000 people attended the Gaol's 2018 open day.⁵²

In terms of overall annual visitation to Maitland, figures for 2016 establish that around 648,000 people visit the city, contributing \$94 million to the economy. The majority of these are day visitors attracted particularly by events. There are, however, around 133,000 domestic overnight visitors who stay an average of two nights. Most overnight visitors are spending time with friends and relatives.⁵³

As Maitland City Council's Marketing and Communications section notes,

The most efficient and cost effective way to reach the visiting friends and relatives market is through providing information to local residents and encouraging them to become ambassadors for the city, urging their friends

and relatives to visit.⁵⁴

A key strategy for achieving this and, indeed, for attracting locals and visitors to spend more time engaging with what the city has to offer is to market a range of experiences in a single package or series of packages. This provides residents and visitors with easy to access information and ideas about what to do, where to visit, where to eat and where to stay, and should highlight that there are a variety of places and experiences that will be engaging and worth visiting.

Another key strategy is to utilise the events that draw significant visitor numbers to the city to market other activities and experiences in the city.

Enhancing and extending the exhibitions and other museum experiences already available in Maitland, and creating an innovative, creative and well advertised package of quality exhibitions and museum experiences has the potential to heighten Maitland's appeal as a place where residents and visitors alike can spend more time to encounter and engage with its unique history and heritage.

Opportunities and challenges

- Maitland's community based collecting organisations have a sound, if at times relatively small, visitor base and, as evidenced by the Art Gallery figures, have the potential to attract greater visitor numbers;
- a better collection of visitor statistics could be beneficial;
- more detailed work on audience identification and development could be beneficial;
- there is funding available for audience development for museums; and⁵⁵
- packaging products together with other complementary tourist products is resource efficient and could increase visitor interest and numbers.

51 Figures supplied by Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

52 Figures supplied by Marketing and Communications, Maitland City Council; 'Hunter Valley Steamfest 2017 success', *Maitland Mercury*, 9 April 2017; and Lachlan Leeming, '7000 go behind bars at Maitland Gaol open day', *Maitland Mercury*, 29 January 2018.

53 Marketing and Communications, Maitland City Council, drawing on the figures presented by Tourism Research Australia, Local Government Area Profiles, <https://www.tra.gov.au/research/regional-tourism/local-government-area-profiles/local-government-area-profiles>

54 This quote and the following points come from Matt vanderWall, Marketing and Communications, Maitland City Council, July 2018.

55 For example, Museums and Galleries NSW, Audience Development Fund, <https://mgnsnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/gallery-grants/audience-development-fund/>



Stillsbury Lane, Aroma Festival, 2017

9 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Open Museums, Open Minds consultancy process, Council initiated two phases of community engagement. The first was during August to September 2017 and the second from 14 February to 12 March 2018.

This section of the report presents a summary of the findings from the community engagement process. It also presents a summary and evaluation of the process of working with collecting organisations and Council to curate the pop up exhibition in Maitland Riverside Plaza that was the focus of Phase Two of the community engagement strategy.

9.1 Purpose

The purpose of the community engagement component of Open Museums, Open Minds was to:

Phase 1:

1. understand the support, demand and nature of museum experiences the broader community would like to have access to in Maitland, and
2. inform Council's decision making on its position on museums in Maitland through examining the level of broad community support for the delivery of museum experiences in Maitland and seeking citizen input into various museum options.⁵⁶

Phase 2:

3. identify how citizens would like to experience the

history and heritage of the city, and

4. gain a greater understanding of phase one's engagement findings.⁵⁷

9.2 Methods and Responses

9.2.1 Phase One: August to September 2017

A short survey was available in hard copy or online and delivered through various channels.

The survey questions were:

- Do you think it's important to understand the history and heritage of Maitland?
- How have you learnt about Maitland's history and heritage to date?
- What parts of Maitland's history interest you?

⁵⁶ Maitland City Council, *Engagement Report: Open Museum, Open Minds – Phase One*, November 2017, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Maitland City Council, *Engagement Report: Open Museums, Open Minds – Phase Two*, March 2018, p.2.

- There are many different ways to engage with and experience history and heritage including through exhibitions, books and oral histories, artworks and displays, music and theatre.
How would you like to learn more about Maitland's history and heritage?
- Maitland City Council manages and coordinates a number of key events and venues across the city that focus on sharing our city's history and heritage. In the last 12 months have you visited the following events and venues and if yes, how often? (A total of 10 events and venues were listed.)
- Do you have any other feedback or comments on how you would like to experience Maitland's history and heritage?

A total of 270 survey responses were received. Further feedback was also received via other methods including, for example, postings on the **Maitland Your Say** Facebook page, and writing ideas on **Open Museums, Open Minds** posters erected in Stillsbury Lane during the Aroma Coffee and Chocolate Festival in August 2017.

9.2.2 Phase Two: February to March 2018

Phase Two consultation was sought through a range of methods including online and hard copy surveys, maitlandyoursay.com.au, face-to-face consultation and at Council's pop up museum **Collect Maitland** in the Riverside Plaza at The Levee, Central Maitland.

The community survey was available online, at Maitland Taste, Council libraries, Council administration building, and Maitland Visitor Information Centre.

The **Collect Maitland** survey was available to visitors to the **Collect Maitland** pop up in Riverside Plaza.

The questions on the community survey:

- Have you visited a museum like experience in Maitland in the last 12 months?
- If no, why?
- If yes, what experiences have you visited?
- If there was more diversity in museum like experiences what would be your preferred way to experience Maitland heritage and history?

- How often would you visit these museum like experiences? (a list of 9 options)

The questions on the **Collect Maitland** pop up survey:

- What did you like about the museum experience today? e.g. location, accessibility, type of display.
- Would you visit a museum like experience again?
- There are many different ways you can experience objects and places that tell stories about Maitland, such as virtual encounters, traditional museum, story telling or street performance. Can you give an example of the preferred ways you would like to experience Maitland's heritage and history?

The community survey attracted 103 completed surveys, and the **Collect Maitland** survey attracted 274 completed surveys.

9.3 Community engagement findings

The following summarises the key findings from both phases of the community engagement.

9.3.1 Phase One

Responses and feedback established:

- a strong interest in understanding Maitland's history and heritage [in order] to not only understand our past but to help shape our future;
- understanding Maitland's history, heritage and culture provides people with a connection to the city, develops a sense of community, creates greater appreciation of the region and engenders value in our assets such as our heritage buildings;
- education and accessibility are key factors in knowledge preservation and sharing;
- a variety of venues and means are used to learn about Maitland's history and heritage;
- there is interest in a broad spectrum of Maitland's history and heritage, with a particular emphasis on Maitland's old buildings and historical events;
- experiencing history and heritage through a variety of forms including themed events and festivals,

outdoor exhibitions, heritage trails and tours, new technologies as well as a traditional museum;

- the benefits of a museum to house Maitland's historical artefacts and support interactive displays; and
- MRAG was the most frequently visited of the listed venues, followed by Walka Water Works and the Library; annual events (eg Steamfest and Riverlights) and Maitland Gaol also received a strong response.

9.3.2 *Phase Two*

Community survey findings:

- 58% of participants said they had visited a museum experience in the last 12 months;
- 80% who had not visited said they were unaware of the available experiences on offer;
- the top five preferred ways to experience Maitland's history and heritage included traditional/permanent museum (51%), open days for historical buildings (42%), pop up/temporary museums (34%), public art (34%) walking or driving trails (30%); public displays, street performance, outdoor exhibitions, storytelling or interactive talks and self guided/guided tours (21 to 27%); temporary installations, theatre and re-enactments, signage and plaques, projections/lighting, virtual reality/digital/online (10 to 20%);
- the top four museum experiences expected to have the highest visitation rates were public art, outdoor exhibitions, traditional/permanent museum, pop up/temporary exhibitions; and
- 50% of participants indicated that they would visit a traditional/permanent museum only once a year, 46% indicated a potential monthly visit, and 4% stated never.

Collect Maitland pop up survey findings:

- when visitors were asked what they liked about the *Collect Maitland* pop up experience, the highest ranking aspects (from highest to lowest) were the type of display, accessibility, location, overall experience, Maitland's history, and volunteers;

- 98% of visitors said they would visit a museum like experience again; and
- the four top preferred ways to experience Maitland's history and heritage are a traditional/permanent museum (46%), storytelling/interactive talks (19%), street performance (12%), pop up or temporary (11%).

9.4 *Collect Maitland*



One of the aims of the *Open Museums, Open Minds* project was to

Identify a pilot project which introduces alternatives to traditional museums and prompt community conversations about participatory ways to engage in a museum experience, which will be implemented by Maitland City Council in conjunction with other stakeholders.⁵⁸

Council decided that a pop-up museum was the preferred medium for the pilot project. The *Open Museum, Open Minds* consultants were engaged to work with Council staff to develop and curate the pop-up.

9.4.1 *Why a pop up museum?*

Pop up museums are small, and appear unexpectedly in unexpected places, for a short time and with an

⁵⁸ See [1.1 Aims](#) of this report.

emphasis on encouraging conversations among diverse people. The duration can be for a few hours, a few days or a few weeks. The content can be accessed from collections and/or provided by community members.

The purpose of the **Open Museums, Open Minds** pop up was to:

- invite visitors to the pop up to share their impressions and expectations about the pop up itself and about museum experiences more broadly as part of the community engagement process;
- showcase items from the twelve collections surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**, and to raise awareness about the collections; and
- experience and document the processes and resources entailed in presenting this type of museum experience.

9.4.2 Identifying a venue

The initial idea was to secure the use of a currently vacant shop in Central Maitland and, along the lines of **Renew Australia** projects⁵⁹, install an inviting pop up museum. The available empty shops were either too big, unavailable, and/or required too much repair work to make them suitable.

An enticing alternative was the space outside Aldi and Best and Less in Maitland Riverside Plaza at The Levee. Riverside Plaza management agreed and were very supportive of the concept.

9.4.3 Selecting a focus

The broad focus of the pop up was to engage visitors with a variety of the types of objects and topics represented in the twelve collections surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**, and to provide engagement with specific topics, places and people that evoke Maitland's history and heritage. The aim was to encourage people to pause, look, remember, share and, also, to fill in the survey.

The specific topics and objects were drawn from the twelve collections. They emerged from the curators' work

in surveying the collections and in working with staff and volunteers at the twelve collecting organisations. The emphasis was on selecting specific items that could tell stories about Maitland.

In summary, **Collect Maitland** provided encounters with items that told stories about, for example: Wonnarua country, sport and leisure, railways, law and order, food, technology, photography, dressmaking, and local government.

9.4.4 Design and exhibition furniture

The open space in Riverside Plaza meant that the display furniture needed to be lockable, and the display area clearly and invitingly defined and designed.

Five display cases were accessed from the Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Maitland Gaol. These were all display cases that were no longer in use.

A space was defined by the use of carpet squares on the white floor, and by the design and construction of 'walls' on two sides of the space.

Particular attention was paid to the design and layout of signage, labels and items. Paste-ups of photographs and an artwork from the Art Gallery filled some of the walls and the back of one of the showcases.

9.4.5 Borrowing items

A loan form was devised and signed with each of the collecting organisations. The form listed the items on loan, where and how they would be stored and transported, and for how long they would be on loan.

9.4.6 Installation

Installation took a day and involved assistance from Burton's Signs (the walls, signage and paste-ups), Council staff, MRAG staff and the **Open Museum, Open Minds** consultants.

9.4.7 Brochures and survey forms

Visitors to the pop up were offered a brochure listing the twelve participating collections and their locations, and

59 Renew Australia, <http://renewaustralia.org/>

the community engagement survey to fill in.

9.4.8 Attendants

Council put out a call for volunteers to engage with visitors to the pop up. More than twenty volunteers, mainly from the participating collecting organisations, spent time at the pop up, talking to visitors and encouraging participation in the survey. A number of the volunteers also brought and distributed publicity material for their specific organisations.

9.4.9 Publicity

The pop up gained media coverage in the **Maitland Mercury**, **Lower Hunter Star**, **Hunter Independent**, **ABC Radio Newcastle**, and **2NUR**.

9.4.10 Visitor numbers

The community engagement report noted that, based on visitor tallying and video evaluation, approximately 132 visitors attended the pop up per day, equating to approximately 3,432 visitors for the duration of the pop up.⁶⁰

Key findings of the video evaluation include:

- the most popular time to visit the pop up was between 11am and 2pm, 'lunch time', with the spike in visitation at this time related to accessibility and location of the experience;
- visitation by gender was 50/50;
- about 50% of visitors were over 55 years, 32% between 18 to 55, and 19% under 18 years; and
- weekend visitors were more likely to stay for a longer duration than those visiting on a weekday.

9.5 Summary

The two phases of the Community Engagement Strategy highlighted that:

- Maitland residents acknowledge and support the significant role of Maitland's history and heritage in defining the city;
- with the exception of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery, the Library, and Maitland Gaol, Maitland's collections and the exhibitions and museum experiences they support are not well-known;
- there is community support for a traditional/permanent museum for Maitland, although 50% of respondents indicated they were only likely to visit once a year; and
- there is community support for a variety of museum experiences in expected and unexpected places.

The process of developing, curating and presenting the **Collect Maitland** pop up highlighted that:

- there is a wealth of topics and items housed in current Maitland collections that provide engaging material for pop up and other museum experiences;
- there is strong support for museum experiences of this type; and
- the process of developing and curating pop up and other museum experiences would be assisted by an accessible pool of flexible, portable and well designed display furniture, and by access to other needed resources.

⁶⁰ Community Engagement Report, pp. 2-3.



Sydney Biennale, 2011

10 A REGIONAL MUSEUM

10.1 *Types of regional museums*

There are an increasing number of regional museums in New South Wales and elsewhere. Their purpose is to bring together collections and resources from across a region, and to host exhibitions and other museum experiences that engage the public with different aspects of a region's history, heritage and lifestyles. By concentrating resources and experiences regional museums are resource-efficient, able to create and sustain a range of exhibitions and experiences, and are embedded as integral and high profile aspects of what a region has to offer to residents and visitors. They are generally managed by local government with trained museum staff assisted by volunteers. Examples include the Museum of the Riverina in Wagga Wagga, Orange Regional Museum and Tweed Regional Museum.

There are, however, **different approaches to the form of a regional museum.**

The more traditional approach is to focus on creating an iconic building that becomes the regional museum and all resources and efforts are concentrated there. More recent approaches have focused on creating regional museums by networking across different sites and experiences, and coordinating and collaborating with different collections. This latter approach recognises and incorporates long-standing and volunteer-run local historical societies, museums and other organisations that take care of local history collections. Tweed Regional Museum, for example, is described as 'one museum that operates across three branch locations', the Museum of the Riverina operates across two sites, and Albury Museum and Albury Library are accommodated in the same new building, provide a starting point for exploring the region and its history and are home to a number of significant local collections.⁶¹

⁶¹ Tweed Regional Museum, <https://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/TheMuseum>; Museum of the Riverina, <http://museumriverina.com.au/about-us>; Albury Library Museum, <http://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/leisure-and-culture/libraries-and-museum>

10.2 *Maitland and a regional museum*

Maitland does not have a regional museum of any form. It does have, as this report has illustrated, a variety of museum and other collections and hosts a variety of exhibitions and other museum experiences in a variety of venues. As the **Open Museums, Open Minds** community engagement strategy indicated, most of these are not well-known (see [9.3.2 Phase two](#)). The exceptions are Maitland Regional Art Gallery, the Library and Maitland Gaol (see [9.3.1 Phase one](#)). None of these three cultural institutions fulfil the role of a regional museum.

In this context, responses to the **Open Museums, Open Minds** community engagement survey included calls for Maitland to create what would essentially be a regional museum and one that is concentrated in a single, well-publicised and highly visible building. Examples of comments include:

‘Large Maitland Museum, please, like the one in Windsor’

‘A dedicated Maitland Museum building with the capability to showcase the region’s history through many interactive experiences.’

‘Bring all the collections to one museum.’

‘It would be awesome to have it all in one place eg. Maitland Museum, great tourist attraction too.’

‘A place where we can see changing exhibits, travelling exhibitions learn new things take our kids to discover stuff.’

‘Why doesn’t Maitland have a museum?’

‘Build a museum.’

‘Many collections are being lost elsewhere or hidden away because of the lack of a Maitland Regional Museum. A full picture of our history needs space.’

‘It would be lovely to have a permanent museum in Maitland where visitors and residents could visit. There are so many stories to tell...’

‘Dedicated museum building with ease of access, transport etc’

‘Maitland would benefit from a dedicated museum where you can rotate donated artefacts etc.’

‘Always love museums, when are we going to get a real one?’

‘Just build a museum already.’

‘Love the traditional museum experience. Where is Maitland’s?’

‘I’d like to see a purpose-built space to house Maitland’s various collections and heritage groups.’

‘A large museum with a local indigenous focus.’

‘A mixture of all that is in one central place – similar to Newcastle and even near the Art Gallery or along the river. Too much is separated and in people’s garages, paddocks etc. Such a resource connects people with where they live as it was and now.’

‘Museum that everyone can walk thru along the river foreshore.’

‘Build a museum, as big as the art gallery.’

‘Develop a permanent museum that Maitland can be proud of.’

10.3 *Maitland Regional Museum*

Comments in the **Open Museums, Open Minds** community engagement survey calling for a museum for Maitland are reflective of the support and lobbying for a Maitland museum that underpins the work of Maitland Regional Museum Inc (MRM).

MRM emerged following a public meeting in July 2013.⁶² The main objective of the group is to realise a regional museum for Maitland.

In its submission to Maitland City Council in June 2014, MRM explained:

Maitland already has a number of organisations with extensive collections and experience in collating, storing and displaying heritage items. The plan is to consolidate that expertise and these holdings.⁶³

MRM's vision of a regional museum is of one building that provides state of the art exhibition spaces and storage facilities, workshop and meeting spaces, research and audio-visual facilities, administration offices, a café and other required facilities (toilets, bathroom, accessibility).⁶⁴ The vision entails bringing together at least some of the currently separate collections and using them as a basis for establishing a vibrant collection and a vibrant museum. In the words of John Stubbs, secretary of MRM:

Our vision is to create a museum that explores and displays Maitland's history, built and natural environments, science and technology in a vibrant cultural hub.⁶⁵

To this end, MRM has lobbied Council as well as state and federal politicians, hosted exhibitions, started collecting items and, in 2017, entered into a relationship with the National Trust (NSW) and a collaborative partnership with the Museum of Clothing and Friends of Grossmann to lease Brough House and use the premises as an exhibition and administrative base for the MRM, Friends of Grossmann and Museum of Clothing. In 2018 it is in conversation with Maitland and District Historical Society about rationalising their museum collections and activities.

A key strategy for MRM is to lobby within the community and especially politicians to realise the acquisition of either a new building or a building that can be adapted for use as a regional museum. In 2018 the focus of this lobbying is to identify a suitable building or site and to apply for a grant from the NSW Regional Cultural Fund (see [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#)). The lobbying has attracted media attention, community and political support, and the group has established a fundraising campaign.⁶⁶

10.4 Summary

There is strong community support for a regional museum for Maitland, and community groups are actively seeking to achieve this goal. Their emphasis is on a 'traditional' museum in the form of a single building that consolidates existing collections, has space for new items and collections, provides suitable storage and conservation facilities, can host exhibitions and has the necessary administrative and other facilities needed to make the museum sustainable and viable.

The research done for this report indicates that there are other means to achieve the objective of a regional museum. In particular, there are models that consolidate collections, exhibitions and resources across a number of sites and different types of collections. **It is these models that provide the basis for the plans and strategies presented in Part 2 of this report.** The emphasis is on creating a sustainable, highly visible and appealing regional museum that incorporates and enhances existing collections and museum experiences, and that invites residents and visitors to engage with a variety of museum experiences at different sites throughout the city. The emphasis is also on strategies to ensure the documentation, conservation and care of heritage collections for future generations.

62 For an account of the public meeting 'Museum move is "a step in the right direction"', *Maitland Mercury*, 26 July 2013.

63 Maitland Regional Museum Inc, Submission to Maitland City Council, 4 June 2014

64 Maitland Regional Museum Inc, Submission to Maitland City Council, 4 June 2014.

65 John Stubbs, Secretary, Maitland Regional Museum Inc, February 2018.

66 See, for example, Lachlan Leeming, 'Uncertainty over future of historic East Maitland Lands Office', *Maitland Mercury*, 28 June 2018.

11.3 *Museum experiences*

Greater recognition of, and support for, the museum experiences initiated and implemented by Maitland's collecting organisations.

The local government entities and community groups that currently look after collections of material that help to document and tell Maitland stories provide a range of museum experiences with a particular emphasis on exhibitions. They do this despite inadequate resources and facilities. Their current tasks and, indeed the potential for future new and innovative forms of engagement, would benefit from assistance and support.

11.4 *New strategies and projects*

Creation of, and support for, innovative new strategies and projects that engage with Maitland's collections to enable their stories and experiences to be presented and experienced in a variety of ways.

Maitland has a rich history and there are diverse collections of material and other public, cultural and social assets that are being used to engage visitors and residents with this history. This use could be enhanced. It has the potential to see the creation and support of a range of new and innovative projects and strategies that could help to mark and market Maitland as a place where open museums open minds and where encountering the past is exciting, stimulating and a pleasure.



Braddon Snape Installation at the Riverlink Building The Levee, High Street, Central Maitland, 2018

PART 2: STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

Part 1 of this report presents the findings from research and consultation about the museums and collections held in the Maitland local government area that are repositories for items that document Maitland's history and heritage. It describes those collections, documents the exhibitions and other museum experiences they support, and explores the opportunities and challenges identified against this background and within the context of developments in the museum world more broadly. It also presents the results from the **Open Museums, Open Minds** community engagement strategies, and documents current moves in Maitland to realise a regional museum. Importantly, this documentation and evaluation of existing museums and museum experiences in Maitland is introduced by a summary of Maitland City Council policies and plans relating to the central role of Maitland's history and heritage in defining and promoting the city, and by an overview of key themes that help to explain the unique features of Maitland past and present. It ends with broad recommendations about ways in which Maitland's museums and museum experiences could be enhanced and extended.

The aim of this second section of the report is to suggest strategies and projects that could see enhanced museum collections and experiences that can assist in implementing Council's recognition of history and heritage as defining features of Maitland and as increasingly significant contributors to the visitor economy and to the lifestyle that Maitland has to offer.

A key challenge is that eight of the twelve collecting organisations consulted for **Open Museums, Open Minds** are community-based, owned and managed entities. Only four (Maitland Gaol, Maitland Library, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Morpeth Museum) are Council assets and

overtly Council's responsibility. All twelve, however, are important public, cultural and social assets, and the collections and museum experiences they support should be factored into visions and plans to more effectively care for, regenerate, enhance and promote Maitland's collections and museum experiences. To achieve this means recognising and respecting the autonomy of the community-based organisations and that they are ultimately responsible for the development, care and use of their collections.

The suggestion here is that Council should take a leading role through:

- establishing a vision, framework and process that fosters and supports Council and the community organisations to work together in order to pool resources, ideas and expertise;
- implementing strategies and projects that support that vision in relation to Council's four assets – the Gaol, Library, Art Gallery and Morpeth Museum; and
- establishing a working party with representatives from all the collecting organisations.

To this end, this part of the report outlines the vision for Maitland that has emerged from the research presented in Part 1; identifies a framework, strategies and projects that should help to realise this vision; and provides examples of how addressing the opportunities and challenges confronting Council's four assets takes steps towards realising this vision as well as providing leadership and examples for community based organisations.

The emphasis throughout is on seeking strategies and projects that are resource (including finances) efficient, able to attract some outside funding, and are incremental, achievable and sustainable.





Eye by Tony Tasset, Chicago

12 VISION

Maitland has a rich and unique history that contributes to the shape, tone and lifestyles of the locality today. Aspects of this history are cared for and presented through a number of collections located throughout the area and through the variety of museum experiences they support. These are currently not all well known, many falter for lack of resources and expertise, and some are at risk of being lost.

The vision here is to see the care and conservation of the collections, and the quality and nature of the museum experiences they support enhanced, extended and more effectively marketed. The vision is to see the creation of well advertised, inviting and clear entry points that invite residents and visitors to engage with the collections located throughout the city and, as well, to experience the variety of other ways in which Maitland's history and heritage can be explored. The vision is also to ensure that the collections are well documented and saved for future generations.

The challenge is to ensure that the collections and experiences promoted in this way are accessible, inviting and well cared for; that new and innovative ways of engaging with the collections and, more broadly, with Maitland's history and heritage can be developed and supported; and that effective mechanisms are established that support collaboration between Council and the community organisations

The following suggest strategies and projects that could assist to realise this vision.

CITY OF MAITLAND
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OFFICES



277

279



THIS BUILDING
OFFICIALLY OPENED
BY A. S. Mc DONALD
ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1934

13 COUNCIL ASSETS

Of the twelve collecting organisations surveyed for this report, four are Maitland City Council assets, namely Maitland City Library, Maitland Gaol, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and Morpeth Museum.

A starting point for realising the **Open Museums, Open Minds** vision (see [12 Vision](#)) is to consider ways in which the opportunities and challenges facing these Council assets could be addressed.

The following highlight some of the issues and possible strategies in relation to Council's four collecting organisations. They provide starting points for detailed reviews and strategy development.

13.1 *Maitland City Library*

13.1.1 *Current activities*

The Library houses a key collection of documentary and photographic records relating to Maitland's history and heritage. It is, subject to resources, progressively digitising items and delivering them online. The Library also hosts talks and events relating to Maitland's history and heritage, hosts small displays and exhibitions in the libraries as well as the new **Walls that Talk** program, and provides research and other assistance through its local studies staff. Given the increasing digital access to the collections, the long and regular opening hours of the library, and the public nature of the talks and events, the Library and its history and heritage collection and events are accessible, well utilised and well attended.

13.1.2 *Issues to address*

Full and effective access to and use of the collection, its long-term preservation, and its ability to engage residents and visitors through a variety of new experiences requires strategies and projects that address the following.

Inadequate storage facilities



Currently, the original items in the Library collection are stored on shelves in the administrative section of the library and in a container that the Library rents at Thornton. The facilities are crowded, inappropriate and not easily accessible. The Library also has a collection of demountable display furniture and other items that are stored in the garage of the Central Library.

A central storage facility (see [15.4.2 Maitland Storehouse](#)) could provide a resource-efficient means to:

- store and conserve the Library's collection of original material;
- locate similar material from other collections in the same place;
- provide a means to identify and collate details about overlap and complementary material across collections; and
- store display furniture and have it available alongside other pooled exhibition and museum experience furniture and equipment.

Overlap

A number of the community based collecting organisations also collect original documentary records, photographs and maps. The Library initiated the **Local Studies Strategy** with the aim of creating a digital gateway to these collections. The strategy identified the benefits of doing this, and resulted in an initial list that is available online.⁶⁷ The online presence is, however, not well advertised.

The suggestion here is that the concept should be extended to include objects as well as documentary records, and that the list should be prominently available online. The [Virtual Gateway \(16.4.1\)](#) proposed in this Report could fulfil this role while extending the list to include collections of objects as well as documentary records.

Some consideration could also be given to working with the community organisations to see whether there can be some rationalisation of the collection of original



documentary records, photographs, maps and other material from across the collections. The proposal of a working party/advisory group presented in section [14 Collaboration](#) raises this as a possible strategy.

Exhibitions, displays and events

The Library hosts an impressive range of displays and events utilising especially the display cases and hanging system at East Maitland Library, and freeing floor space in all the libraries for temporary and travelling self-contained exhibitions. It does not, however, currently have access to the facilities or resources to present exhibitions and other museum experiences that specifically draw on its collection of original materials.

The creation of a [Maitland Storehouse \(15.4.2\)](#) should free some space especially in Central Maitland Library to create an exhibition/display facility so that individual items or collections of items from the Library collection could be on display in the Library.

The proposal for a [Fixed Gateway \(16.4.3\)](#) at the Maitland Visitor Information Centre as an entry point for Maitland's museums, collections and other history and heritage experiences would provide the Library (and all the other collecting organisations) with suitable exhibition spaces and facilities for temporary exhibitions from their collections, and for working with other collecting organisations to present innovative exhibitions and other museum experiences.

⁶⁷ Maitland City Council, *Maitland Local Studies Strategy: Connecting Our Past to the Future*, 2010. The list is online at e-Hive, Maitland History and Heritage Collections, <https://ehive.com/collections/3970/maitland-history-and-heritage-collections>



13.2 *Maitland Gaol*

13.2.1 *Current activities*

Maitland Gaol is a well-publicised and iconic heritage site and museum experience in Maitland. It hosts a variety of events and is home to a collection of significant items that assist with documenting and telling the history of the Gaol and stories associated with those who worked or were imprisoned there.

13.2.2 *Issues to address*

Documentation of the collection

The Gaol catalogue is currently paper based. The Gaol has acquired the Mosaic software for a computer catalogue and is waiting for the time and resources to transfer the catalogue entries to Mosaic. Mosaic also has the facility to deliver the catalogue online.

Other collections in Maitland are also using the Mosaic software. As suggested in [14 Collaboration](#) there could be benefits in pooling resources with some of the other organisations and, for example, holding workshops on the use of the software and people to do data entry.

Storage and conservation

The items in the Gaol collection are stored in the basement of the reception building, and in the reception store. Other items are on permanent display throughout the Gaol. The storage and conservation facilities are inadequate. For example, although stored in archival boxes, the boxes are on shelves surrounded by a variety of discarded items, and in conditions not suitable for the safe storage and conservation of, for example, paper and textile items.

A [Maitland Storehouse \(15.3.2\)](#) would provide the required controlled conditions and purpose-built storage to store items from the collection not currently on exhibition. It would also provide workspace, and a pool of conservation facilities, materials and expertise.

Exhibitions and exhibition spaces

For presenting exhibitions and displays of items from its collection and travelling exhibitions the Gaol currently uses display units in the Gaol Auditorium, the Gaol Chapel and B Wing. None of these spaces are purpose-built for exhibitions. As well, using the Chapel as an exhibition space means that it is not available for functions and the interpretation of the Chapel itself is partly compromised when an exhibition is in place.

Some consideration could be given to identifying and adapting a more suitable space within the Gaol for temporary and touring exhibitions. As well, the site could benefit from a dedicated introductory interpretation centre in which, through innovative and interactive presentations, visitors could get an engaging overview of the site's background that could enhance their experience and memory of visiting.

[Enhance current exhibitions \(16.2\)](#) suggests strategies for evaluating and addressing existing exhibition spaces, and also for developing new exhibition content and forms of presentation.



13.3 *Maitland Regional Art Gallery*

13.3.1 *Current activities*

Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) has the best facilities of the four Council collecting organisations. It utilises these to present a variety of high quality exhibitions and museum experiences; to collect, catalogue and digitise its significant art collection; and to attract the ongoing and growing support of residents and visitors to the locality. Its storage facilities, however, are inadequate.

13.3.2 *Issues to address*

Storage and conservation

The MRAG collection (now valued at around eight million dollars) is currently housed in the main upstairs room of the 1910 Technical College Building. There is no temperature or humidity control and, although MRAG staff have optimised the use of the space and use appropriate shelving and storage, the space is too small.

The suggestion in this report for a Maitland Storehouse (15.4.2) could serve the purpose for MRAG as well as for Council's other three collecting organisations and, subject to their agreement and participation, the community collecting organisations. This entails a concentration of resources and collections on the one site.

13.4 *Morpeth Museum*

13.4.1 *Current activities*

Morpeth Museum and its collection are Council assets. However, unlike Council's other three cultural institutions (the Library, Gaol and Art Gallery) that have paid professional staff, Council's financial investment is primarily in the care and maintenance of the heritage building in which the Museum is housed. A team of volunteers manage the development and care of the collection, and the presenting of the museum displays and other museum experiences. Over the past few years the Museum has benefitted from the oversight of a volunteer curator. Within these constraints, attention has been paid to improving the permanent exhibits in the museum, hosting temporary exhibitions, and ensuring that the exhibits are kept as dust and vermin free as possible.

The volunteer base also means that the Museum is open for limited hours (Thursdays to Saturdays, 11am to 3pm) and does not have ready access to the resources needed to document the collection and to make the collection and the museum more inviting and accessible.

13.4.2 *Issues to address*

Collection documentation

The Museum has a list of items in the collection. It is not a formally constituted catalogue with, for example, separate fields describing items, their provenance and where they are currently located in the museum. As well, not all items are included in the list. This should be addressed in order to document and track the collection. See [4.4.2 Catalogues](#) and [15.2 Document collections](#).

Collection focus

The collection has a stated focus on items relating to the history of Morpeth and to the history of the Morpeth Courthouse. There are, however, items in the collection that arguably sit outside this policy. This should be addressed.

[Enhance collections \(15.3\)](#), especially a significance assessment of the collection, would assist with the process.

Storage

The Museum has limited storage space. Consequently, most items in the collection are on permanent display. This means that it is difficult to curate changing exhibitions or host touring exhibitions. There is also no suitable workspace for conserving and documenting items. It also means that the more fragile items that need to be rested, and some perhaps conserved, are at risk from being on permanent display.

[Maitland Storehouse \(15.4.2\)](#) would provide a facility for storage and conservation.

Exhibition spaces

The Museum presents its exhibitions in a heritage building with the constraints and challenges of doing that. The look and content of exhibitions and displays are also constrained by the display furniture available, the need to have most collection items on show, and very limited resources to conceive, develop and implement innovative exhibitions and other museum experiences. Constraints are also imposed by the limited ability to change exhibitions and, hence, a limited ability to attract repeat visitation.

A review that considers the issues outlined in [Resources and facilities \(6.2\)](#) would be beneficial.

Exhibition focus

The core of the existing collection relates to Morpeth, to Morpeth as a river port and to the Morpeth Courthouse. Given the location and nature of the site, this makes sense. It relates directly to the surrounding neighbourhood and experiences.

It could be beneficial to take greater advantage of these aspects of the collection and the site and develop the museum into an interactive and innovative encounter with the place of the Hunter River and its tributaries and of Morpeth in shaping the nature of the Maitland area.



Chicago River Museum, 2010

The Chicago River Museum provides an example.⁶⁸

As a specialised and focused experience it could become a destination museum that complements and attracts current and future visitors to Morpeth.

There would be funding opportunities for developing aspects of such a museum (see [Appendix 2: Funding sources](#)). As well, some consideration could be given to the extent to which the whole building is needed for this purpose and whether, for example, some of the side rooms could be leased to heritage and history related enterprises.

Regional museum?

In the course of consultation for **Open Museums, Open Minds**, Morpeth Museum has been suggested as a possible site for a Maitland regional museum.

The heritage building, its location, and the limitations to expansion and adaption, however, rule it out as a potential site for a museum of Maitland. As well, it already has inadequate space and facilities to house, present and display its current collection. It should, however, be part of the range of other museum, history and heritage experiences that are introduced and promoted through the [Gateways](#) suggested in

section [16.4](#) following.

Its potential is arguably as an exciting and innovative small museum for Morpeth and the river.

Succession planning

A current core problem is the small number of volunteers who look after Morpeth Museum. Like so many community organisations, their numbers are decreasing and their time is consumed by keeping the place going rather than in seeking and implementing innovative ways to add value to the Museum, its collection and exhibitions as Council and community assets.

A responsible review that considers the best way to manage the museum into the future would be beneficial. It should factor in and include the important role played by volunteers, the need to assess the significance of the collection, the potential to create more innovative exhibitions and museum experiences especially as a museum of Morpeth and the river, and the ability to make the Museum and its collection more accessible through longer opening hours and through the development of [Gateways](#) (section 16.4) recommended in this report.

⁶⁸ McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum, <http://www.bridgehousemuseum.org/>



METHODIST CHURCH



14 COLLABORATION

As illustrated in section [7.9 Collaborative projects](#), initiatives involving a number of Maitland's collecting organisations are a growing feature of the museum experiences they support.

The benefits of these collaborative projects include:

- pooling of resources and expertise,
- engaging wider and more diverse audiences, and
- exposure to greater diversity in ideas and approaches.

Building on the success of existing collaborative efforts, the suggestion here is that **an Open Museums, Open Minds Working Party be established under Council auspices to provide a regular means to share resources, ideas and expertise.**

Tasks for the OMOM Working Party might include, for example:

- establishing guidelines and practices for the management and care of new collections and items as they are identified;
- organising workshops and classes of relevance for all stakeholders;
- identifying suitable funding sources and in kind support;
- developing collaborative museum projects and/or exhibitions;
- working together to identify viable solutions for the care and conservation of collections.





Toitu Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin, 2014.

15 MAITLAND COLLECTS

Maitland Collects advocates consolidating, supporting, enhancing and promoting existing collections, and the resources available to them. The collections are public, cultural and social assets that contribute to the identity and lifestyle of the locality and to the visitor economy. The organisations caring for them are performing a duty for Maitland's past, present and future. To this end, the following strategies are proposed as means to assist in storing and caring for the collections, addressing gaps in the collections, and ensuring that they are well documented, conserved and accessible for current and future use. The key concept is to create sustainable collections (section [15.1 Sustainable collections](#)).

The responsibility for deciding to pursue these strategies and, indeed, implement them rests largely with the individual collecting organisations.

Council can assist by:

- implementing the strategies in relation to its own assets (see [13 Council Assets](#));
- establishing an Open Museums, Open Minds working party with the brief of pooling resources, ideas, expertise and funding opportunities (see [14 Collaboration](#)); and
- pro-actively pursuing the strategy of establishing a [Maitland Storehouse\(15.4.2\)](#).

Potential funding sources to assist with these strategies are identified in [15 Implementation overview](#) and in [Appendix 2: Funding sources](#).



15.1 *Sustainable collections*

The strategies proposed below for Maitland's collections are partly predicated on the advice and vision presented by museum consultant Kylie Winkworth in her reflections on why and how museums and groups need to strive for sustainable collections. She expresses concern about the tendency to create more museums and collect more things in favour of researching, documenting, consolidating, rationalising and conserving existing collections. She argues that, **before consideration is given to creating more museums, it is vitally important to audit, assess, document and care for what already exists.** She also argues that the task is important if the aim is that future generations should show support for museums: they need to know and understand the significance of the items already collected and also have the facilities and space to add to the collections.⁶⁹

The strategies are also influenced by the initiatives taken by councils in different parts of regional New South Wales. Of particular relevance are those of Orange, Cabonne and Blayney Shires with their Sustainable Collections Project, and Tweed Shire Council and Wagga Wagga City Council in the conception and creation of, respectively, Tweed Regional Museum and the Museum of the Riverina and, through these, the support of a number of different collections in their localities.⁷⁰

69 Kylie Winkworth, 'More on the museum diet: ten strategies for sustainable museums and collections' in Andrew Simpson and Gina Hammond (eds), *A Cultural Cacophony: Museum Perspectives and Projects*, Museums Galleries Australia NSW Branch, Online version, 2015, pp. 72-84.

70 *Sustainable Collections Project: Orange, Cabonne and Blayney*, <http://www.centralnswmuseums.orangemuseum.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SustainableCollectionsProjects1.pdf>; 'The Museum', *Tweed Regional Museum*, <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/TheMuseum>; and Museum of the Riverina, <http://museumriverina.com.au/museum>



Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington



15.2 Document collections

Information about items in the collections including details of their provenance and their associations with Maitland is vital for:

- assessing the significance of items and collections (see [4.1.4 Significance assessment](#)),
- de-accessioning items that no longer belong; and
- using items in exhibitions and other museum experiences (as, for example, in the Collect Maitland pop up: see [9.4 Collect Maitland](#)).

Ideally, in the 21st century, museum collections use computer-based catalogues and deliver their catalogues online.

At present (see section [4.4.2 Catalogues](#)) most of the collections in Maitland have catalogues of some sort. The form, level of information provided and accessibility of the catalogues, however, is very varied.

It is essential that, where necessary, catalogues should be upgraded, updated and kept up to date.

Responsible parties

The upgrading, updating and maintaining of collection catalogues is the responsibility of the individual collecting organisations. The tasks, however, could be assisted by:

- pooling resources, funding, ideas and expertise through an Open Museums, Open Minds Working Party (see [14 Collaboration](#)); and
- considering whether the same collection management software could be used by a number of the collections. This would facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise including the holding of workshops on the why, what, how, when and where for using the software and cataloguing more broadly.







Museum of Sydney, 2018

15.3 *Enhance collections*

As section [4 Collections](#) of this report demonstrates, the twelve collecting organisations hold a range of types of objects and items that contribute to documenting, understanding and presenting topics and experiences that reveal aspects of Maitland's history and heritage.

What is not yet clear (and was beyond the brief of *Open Museums, Open Minds*) is:

- the extent to which there is overlap between the collections;
- where there are gaps in individual collections and across the collections;
- whether and where there are items that should be de-accessioned (let go); and
- the extent to which significant individual items are in need of conservation work.

Maitland's collections would benefit from detailed assessments of their nature, content and significance.

Responsible parties

The tasks involved in addressing these issues are, at core, the responsibility of the individual collecting organisations. They could, however, be assisted by the pooling of resources, expertise and funding suggested through the formation of an *Open Museums, Open Minds* Working Party (see [14 Collaboration](#)).

Tasks

The tasks include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring each collection has a well-defined collection policy (see [4.4.1 Collection policy](#));
- assessing current items in the collections in terms of their relevance to their collection policies, and de-accession when appropriate;
- identifying and rationalising any overlap between the collections;
- conducting significance assessments of the collections (see [4.4.4 Significance assessment](#));
- identifying and addressing where the collections lack depth (consideration of key themes in Maitland's history could be of assistance – see [3 Themes](#));
- identifying items to fill any gaps; and
- identifying significant items in need of repair and/or conservation.



15.4 *Storage and conservation*

As sections 4.4.5 to 4.5.7 (Conservation plan, Conservation resources and Storage space and facilities) demonstrate, Maitland's collections are, with some exceptions, poorly stored and conserved. This puts at risk these public, cultural and social assets. It also makes it very difficult to access items for use in exhibitions and other museum experiences.

The strategy presented here to address the need to provide better storage and conservation facilities and resources is twofold. The first part (15.4.1 Existing facilities) considers whether and how existing facilities can be improved. The second part (15.4.2 Maitland storehouse) suggests that Maitland City Council should establish a central storage facility that, in the first instance, caters for the Council's collecting organisations (see 13 Council assets) and also, in consultation with other collecting organisations, makes the facility available for the storage of other history and heritage collections from Maitland.

15.4.1 Existing storage facilities

Existing storage and conservation facilities are inadequate and, following evaluation, could be improved.

Some improvement to existing storage and conservation facilities could be made through:

- a detailed evaluation of the suitability of spaces and facilities currently in use (an initial overview is provided in [4.4.7 Storage space and facilities](#));
- adaptation of existing spaces to make them more suitable; and
- the identification, costing, funding and acquisition of suitable storage and conservation packaging, shelving and other materials.

Responsible parties

These tasks would need to be undertaken by the individual collecting organisations although, as with other tasks identified in this report, they could be greatly assisted by the pooling of resources, expertise, funding and other materials advocated through the formation of an Open Museums, Open Minds Working Part (see [14 Collaboration](#)).

15.4.2 Maitland storehouse

Even if the improvement and adaptation suggested in [15.4.1 Existing facilities](#) occurs, there will still be insufficient space to house the collections owned and cared for by the Council organisations, let alone those owned and cared for by community organisations (see [4.4.7 Storage space and conservation](#)). Consequently, **there is a need to work towards the creation of a central storage and conservation facility that has the ability to cater for all the collections, and that can also act as a local history and heritage hub.** It is a need also identified in the Maitland Library's *Local Studies Strategy*.⁷¹

A central Maitland storehouse could also help to address the need for better processes for public access to the collections (see [4.5 Access to collections](#)).

Responsible parties

The initiative for a Maitland Storehouse would need to be taken by Council and the facility would need to be under Council management. As such, it would cater for collections that are already Council responsibilities, and Council would be providing leadership in identifying and taking care of Maitland's history and heritage collections for present and future generations.

It is envisaged, however, that community collecting organisations that elect to make use of the Storehouse, could make significant contributions to its establishment and ongoing running costs through, for example, in-kind support, sharing resources (including some funding) and providing volunteers to assist with looking after the collections and the facility.

Process

The process of establishing a Maitland Storehouse would entail:

- Council accepting responsibility for overseeing the creation of the Storehouse, and for managing the ongoing staffing and maintenance of the facility;
- consultation and collaboration with, and a pooling of resources among, the collecting organisations (currently, for example, most of the collecting organisations are paying rent for premises in which to store their collections, and have either paid or volunteer staff managing the collections: these resources could be pooled);
- planning the required facilities (see below);
- identifying a suitable site;
- establishing a significance assessment and inventory system for items to be stored in the Storehouse that takes into account themes that make Maitland unique (see [3 Themes](#));
- establishing a management, storage and retrieval system that stores like items with like items while ensuring that the collections to which individual items belong are clearly identified and retain ownership of all items in their collection; and
- costing and funding the creation of the Maitland Storehouse.

⁷¹ Maitland City Council, *Maitland Local Studies Strategy: Connecting Our Past to the Future*, 2010.

Features and facilities

The following features and facilities should be considered when developing plans for a Maitland Storehouse:

- consultation and cooperation with participating collecting organisations to determine the extent and nature of the storage and work spaces required;
- a purpose built or adapted building or group of buildings in a suitable, flood-free, location (this could, for example, be in one of the light industrial areas of Maitland) with the potential to expand if needed;
- temperature, light and humidity control as needed;
- suitable shelving and storage materials and equipment;
- areas for different types of material;
- a pool of conservation resources and expertise, acknowledging that some items will require consultant conservators;
- workspaces for administration, meetings, workshops and conservation;
- storage space for a pool of display and exhibition furniture and equipment;
- a management structure and inventory system that accommodates the storage of items from different collections;
- access to suitable transport and equipment for moving and lifting items; and
- paid professional staff along with a pool of volunteers to manage and supervise the facility and the collections housed there.

An added, and visitor engaging feature, would be to make at least a part of the storage facility open to the public either on a regular basis or at specific times when professional and/or volunteer staff are available. This is the approach adopted collectively by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Australian Museum and Sydney Living Museums at their combined Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre.⁷² This is a central storage facility for all the museums but is designed in such a way that visitors of all ages can engage with aspects of the

72 Museums Discovery Centre, <https://maas.museum/museums-discovery-centre/>

collections and with items from across the collections. Similarly, but on a smaller scale, The Tweed Regional Museum Collection store provides guided behind-the-scenes tours of the store on the third Thursday of every month.⁷³

Funding

A possible funding source is the NSW Regional Cultural Fund.⁷⁴ Consideration should be given to having a funding application ready for 2019 as it may be the last round of this particular funding.

Example

Tweed Regional Museum's Collection Store provides an example of a regional council working with and for the collections in its community to provide a central, purpose-built storage facility. Completed in 2012 the Tweed Collection store provides:

... secure, purpose-designed, flood-free storage for items in the museum collection, to better protect these pieces and allow greater flexibility with displays at museum branches.

The collection store incorporates a 'pod' that provides the ideal environment for particularly sensitive items such as textiles, paper based and organic collection objects.⁷⁵

Tweed Council also produced a manual documenting the processes entailed in moving items to the Collection Store.⁷⁶

73 'Collection Store Tours', Tweed Regional Museum, <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/TalksAndEvents>

74 Create NSW, NSW Regional Cultural Fund, <https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/funding-and-support/regional-cultural-fund/regional-cultural-fund-2/>

75 'The Museum', Tweed Regional Museum, <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/TheMuseum>

76 Tweed Regional Museum, *Collection and Relocation Project, Murwillumbah Manual 2012*, http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Museum/TSC04481_Museum_Redevelopment_Manual.pdf





3

16 MAITLAND ON SHOW

As section [2 Council policies and plans](#) of this report demonstrates, current Maitland City Council policies and plans pay particular attention to the value of reinvigorating Maitland as a place to migrate to, live in and visit. In particular, the **Maitland Place Activation Strategy**, the **Central Maitland Interpretation Plan**, the **High Street Masterplan** and the **Maitland Cultural Plan** identify strategies to enhance the ways in which residents and visitors can engage with and spend time in public spaces. Some of the strategies involve specific engagement with aspects of Maitland's history and heritage; all involve spending time, being stimulated, sometimes learning, enjoying and relaxing in different places. Similarly, the collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds** aim to engage audiences with their collections, exhibitions and other activities (see [6 Exhibitions](#) and [7 Other museum experiences](#)) and, through these, inspire a greater familiarity with and appreciation of the unique nature of the locality. Some of their activities spill into the streets and take people on walks and tours, guided or independently directed.

These emphases and activities mark Maitland, especially Central Maitland, as a place in which open museums open minds. Public, cultural and social assets to visit and experience include the individual collections identified in this report (see [4.1 Introducing collections](#)); significant buildings, places and sites, and the public art that is out on the streets, in parks and laneways (see [5 Other public and social assets](#)); and the people who lived and live in the locality. The museum experiences include visits to the collections and exhibitions hosted by the collecting organisations; tours, trails and walks hosted by different organisations and by Council; site-specific interpretation; lectures and talks; special events; publications; performances (see [7 Other museum experiences](#)).

The idea that experiencing Maitland's history and heritage through museums and through encounters elsewhere also responds to ideas and preferences gathered through the community engagement phases of **Open Museums, Open Minds** (see [9 Community engagement](#)). Responses emphasised the importance of history and heritage to Maitland, a desire for traditional museum experiences and delight in varied and new museum experiences.

The suggestion here is that Maitland should be promoted under the Open Museums Open Minds catch phrase: it is **a creative and heritage rich place with things to see and do in the streets and with collections, exhibitions and other indoor and site specific experiences.**

The suggestion entails paying attention to existing museum experiences, exploring and implementing new museum experiences, and establishing virtual, portable and physical gateways to Open Museums Open Minds. These issues are the focus of the strategies proposed in this section of the report.





Pop Up Ice Cream Museum, Los Angeles, 2017

16.1 *Enhance current exhibitions*

Exhibitions are the core means through which the collecting organisations present their collections, and they do so with varied and often limited resources (see [6 Exhibitions](#)). Given the limited resources of some of the collecting organisations, the exhibitions presented across the various venues are of varied depth, quality and design. They range from professional, award-winning exhibitions to more constrained, loosely designed and limited exhibitions and displays. The suggestion here is that **attention and resources need to be given to the improvement of current exhibition facilities, and to strategies for improving the curatorial content and presentation of exhibitions.**

Responsible parties

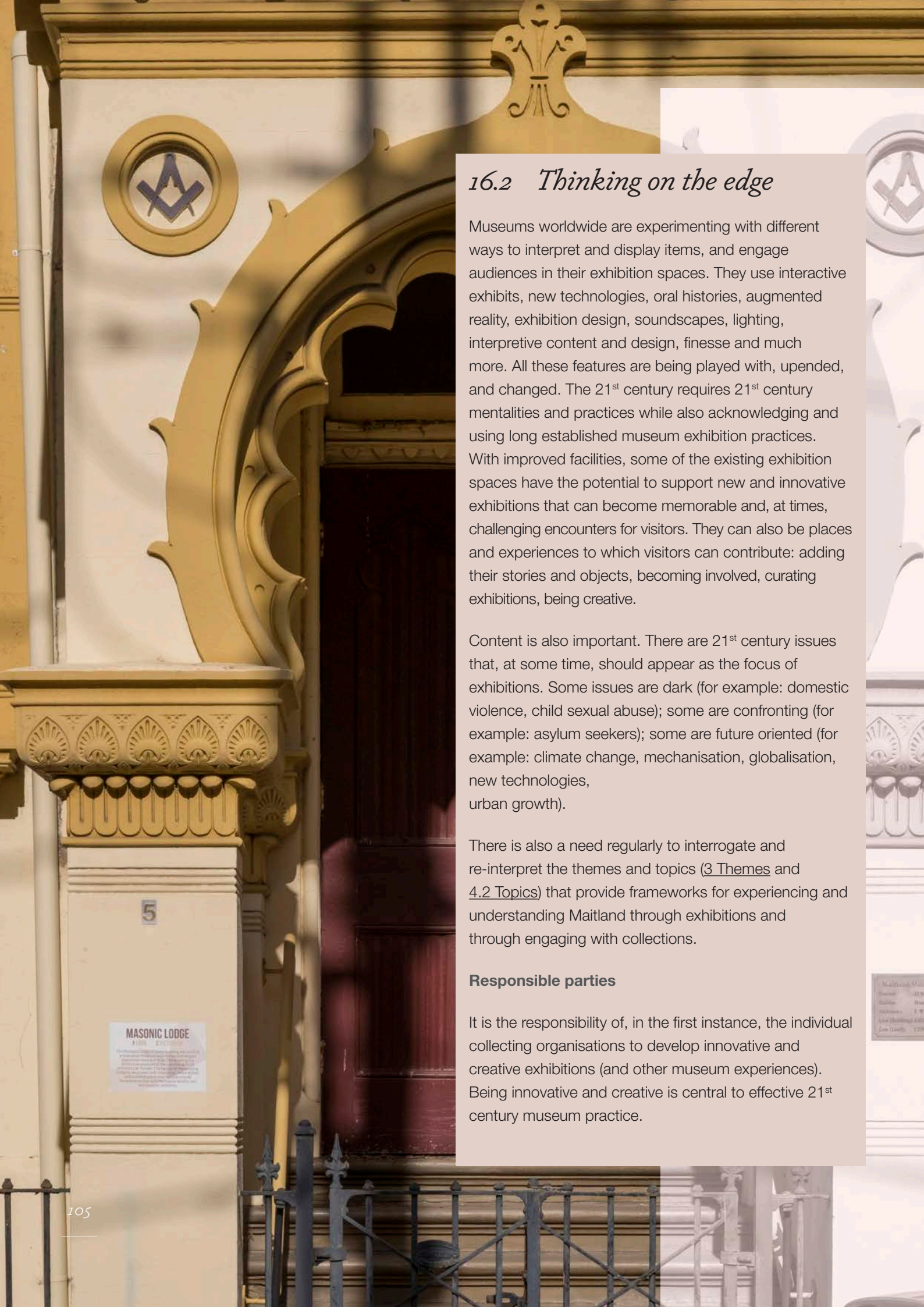
The responsibility for enhancing current exhibition facilities, content and presentation rests with the individual collecting organisations.

However, the pooling of resources, ideas and expertise through the Open Museums Open Minds Working Party ([14 Collaboration](#)) could be of assistance. So, too, could a [Maitland storehouse](#) ([15.3.2](#)) that could provide a space and means to acquire and store a pool of exhibition furniture and resources.

Tasks

Improvements to the exhibition venues and the curating of exhibitions would be assisted by:

- a detailed evaluation of the most appropriate way to utilise and/or adapt existing spaces for exhibitions;
- costing, funding and implementation of improved facilities;
- a pool of exhibition furniture, equipment and fittings that can be borrowed by the different collecting organisations;
- access to curatorial, and exhibition and graphic design assistance and expertise as needed; and
- workshops and training in strategies for curating and presenting exhibitions.



16.2 *Thinking on the edge*

Museums worldwide are experimenting with different ways to interpret and display items, and engage audiences in their exhibition spaces. They use interactive exhibits, new technologies, oral histories, augmented reality, exhibition design, soundscapes, lighting, interpretive content and design, finesse and much more. All these features are being played with, upended, and changed. The 21st century requires 21st century mentalities and practices while also acknowledging and using long established museum exhibition practices. With improved facilities, some of the existing exhibition spaces have the potential to support new and innovative exhibitions that can become memorable and, at times, challenging encounters for visitors. They can also be places and experiences to which visitors can contribute: adding their stories and objects, becoming involved, curating exhibitions, being creative.

Content is also important. There are 21st century issues that, at some time, should appear as the focus of exhibitions. Some issues are dark (for example: domestic violence, child sexual abuse); some are confronting (for example: asylum seekers); some are future oriented (for example: climate change, mechanisation, globalisation, new technologies, urban growth).

There is also a need regularly to interrogate and re-interpret the themes and topics ([3 Themes](#) and [4.2 Topics](#)) that provide frameworks for experiencing and understanding Maitland through exhibitions and through engaging with collections.

Responsible parties

It is the responsibility of, in the first instance, the individual collecting organisations to develop innovative and creative exhibitions (and other museum experiences). Being innovative and creative is central to effective 21st century museum practice.

The Collaborative projects listed in section 7.9, however, demonstrate that working together and across institutions can also produce diverse ideas and approaches, as well as provide a pooling of other resources. The Open Museums Open Minds Working Party (see 14 Collaboration) could provide one means.

Ideas and possibilities

Inspiration and ideas for different interpretive and presentation approaches can emerge from workshoping different possibilities, being immersed in the nature and scope of the collections available, exploring key themes, being bold and inventive, and regularly and constantly visiting, experiencing and exploring the innovative practices of museums and curators elsewhere.

Key examples here are Fred Wilson's **Mining the Museum** and Grayson Perry's more recent work at the British Museum.⁷⁷ These are artists and curators who ask different questions of, and see different angles in, the collections with which they are working. There are, of course, a multitude of other examples.

The following also provide some possible starting points for thinking a little differently about the themes and topics for exhibitions about Maitland. The emphasis is on establishing an interpretive theme or issue on which an exhibition focuses, and then developing it into an innovative presentation using different types of objects and forms of presentation.

- The other Les Darcys. Les Darcy's story is often told: what about his opponents, the places he fought, other locals who became boxers, the place of boxing as a working class sport, the contrast with other sports in Maitland.
- Dis/quiet: mapping water and the river. Maitland is known for its floods, especially the 1955 flood. Not as much attention is paid to understanding the river and its history with flooding as an integral part of that history. An exhibition exploring the nature

and flow of water; the changing course of the river; the plants, animals, fish and birds that were and are on and around the river; different uses – and abuses – of the river from traditional Wonnarua practices through European tree clearing, farming, building.

- Disappeared. Features, items, and places that, from early in European settlement, have disappeared. These include, for example, the red cedars that lined the Hunter River; a variety of native plants, birds and animals; buildings; walking tracks; industries.
- Childhood. The experience of childhood has changed over time and has different shapes and forms influenced by cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. These aspects could be explored through toys, clothing, and other items held in the collections.
- Stoned. Exploring the work of local stonemasons, makers and designers, and of local monumental stone especially, for example, Ravensfield sandstone. Include photographic close ups and details, samples of stone and stonework, re-enactments of the stonemason's craft.
- Clubbing. Social, service, sporting and community clubs have always provided a backbone for Maitland community life and culture including funding. Through objects, oral histories, documents and innovative technological encounters the exhibition could explore their purpose, composition, aims, and successes and failures alongside understandings of who is involved, why and what this indicates about social groups and interests within the community.
- Ten of the Best. Invite residents to select 'my ten best objects' that describe Maitland. Create an interactive exhibition, including online, drawing on their responses.
- Life without coal. On the history of coal mining in the district shaped around the question: what was and what could life be like without coal?

77 See, for example, 'Fred Wilson', Archives Creative Practice, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, <http://www.archivesandcreativepractice.com/fred-wilson/>; Elisabeth Ginsberg, 'Case study: mining the museum', *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution*, <http://beautifultrouble.org/case/mining-the-museum/>; Felicity Spector, 'Grayson Perry curates at the British Museum', *Channel 4 News*, 4 October 2011, <https://www.channel4.com/news/behind-the-scenes-at-the-british-museum>

16.3 *On the streets*

The Open Museums, Open Minds community engagement strategies and the Collect Maitland pop up highlighted that community members enjoy encountering museum experiences in unexpected places and diverse ways alongside visiting traditional museums (see [9 Community engagement](#)). In the detailed responses to the community engagement surveys the types of museum experiences (apart from visiting traditional museums) that were listed included (in no particular order):



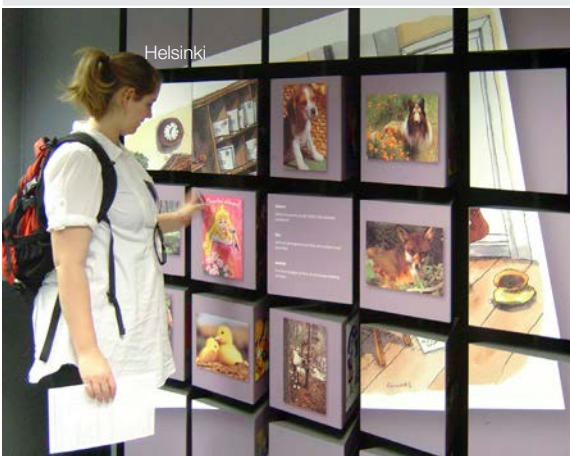
projections/lighting



public art



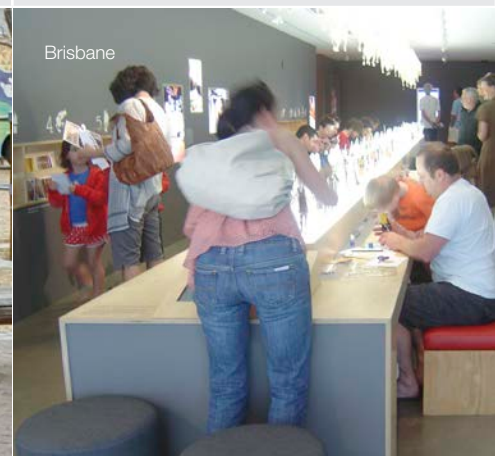
pop up exhibitions



storytelling or interactive talks



street performances



interactive experiences



virtual/digital/online experiences



pop up experiences



events



Christchurch

temporary installations



North Sydney

open days at historical buildings



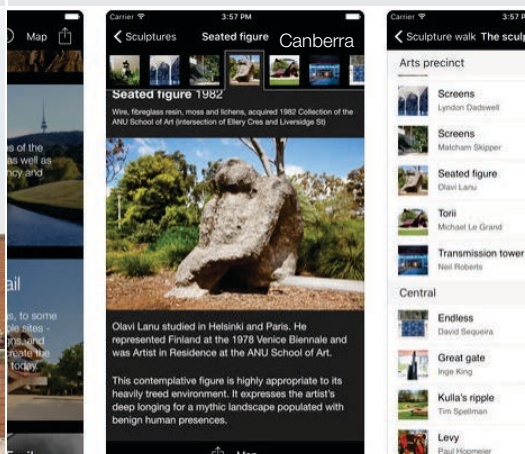
San Francisco

wall painting



Budapest

re-enactments

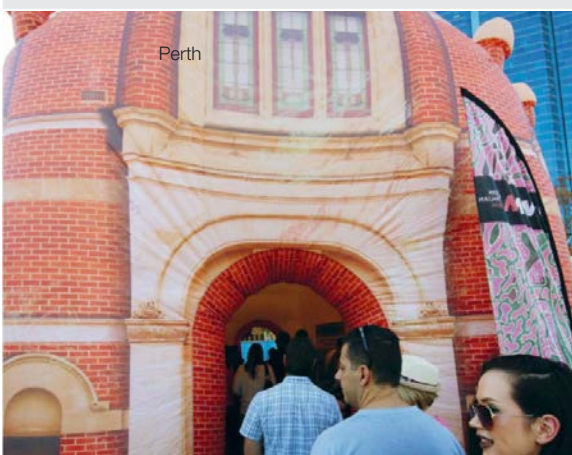


audio guides and apps



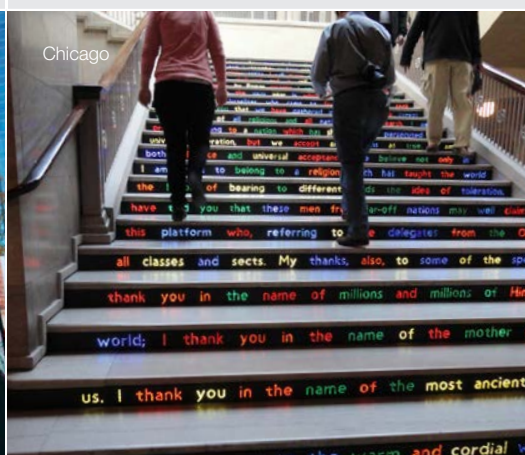
Budapest

visiting monuments



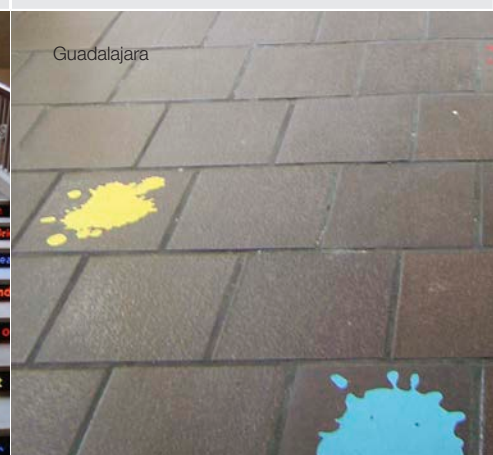
Perth

mobile museums



Chicago

signage and plaques



Guadalajara

walking or driving trails

Maitland City Council and Maitland's collecting organisations already initiate and support a variety of these types of museum experiences (see [2 Council policies and plans](#) and [7 Other museum experiences](#)). There are, however, a range of new and innovative museum experiences that could be initiated, especially ones that draw on the collections and on the work of the collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**, and that aim to link the collections to other public history and heritage assets (see [5 Other public and social assets](#)).

Responsible parties

Creating and presenting 'On the streets' experiences are tasks already undertaken by the collecting organisations and by Council, and are also undertaken as collaborative projects. This should continue. It could be enhanced, however, through regular sharing of ideas and resources through, for example, an Open Museums, Open Minds Working Party (see [14 Collaboration](#)), and the acquiring, pooling and sharing of resources through a [Maitland storehouse \(15.4.2\)](#).

Tasks

Conceiving, creating and realising diverse new and innovative museum experiences can benefit from:

- being exposed to the diverse variety of museum experiences available worldwide;
- being open to the traditional but also to the odd, the unexpected and the quirky;
- working with collections and community members to identify objects, topics and experiences that address Maitland themes, have substance and can engage different audiences;
- planning, costing and funding; and
- sharing of resources and ideas.

Ideas and possibilities

Imagination and creativity, along with a deep familiarity with Maitland's various collections, the themes that shape Maitland's uniqueness and identity and other public history and heritage assets are the keys (see [4.1 Introducing the collections](#), [3 Themes](#) and [5 Other public and social aspects](#)).

The following are a bundle of initial suggestions, possibilities and starting points. They build on and are inspired by existing 'on the streets' museum experiences in Maitland ([7 Other museum experiences](#)) and draw on examples from elsewhere. They can be adapted, imagined, extended, upended, discarded.

IMAGINED SPACES

Reclaim and reconfigure public spaces and fixtures (eg. bus shelters, garbage bins, street furniture, electricity boxes) to convey messages about change and continuity, and the past, present and future.

Use objects, ideas and information drawn from Maitland's collections.

MAITLAND OPEN/PASSPORT TO MAITLAND

A Maitland Open Day perhaps every two years when a selection of historical buildings along with the collections are open and offer guided tours and a variety of events including displays of objects and other memorabilia associated with each site. Visits to buildings could include introductions to the workings behind the scenes: eg. lifting kegs, the workings of the Town Hall clock, changing tracks for the railway service, upstairs and downstairs in riverbank commercial properties.

Community participation could include having a system for visitors to vote for their favourite room in each building and to share their reasons why it is their favourite. For example, include a floor plan at each site and invite visitors to stick a pin on their favourite room, write a note about why. Comments could be posted online.



Examples of city-wide open days:

LithGlow,

<http://www.lithglow.lithgow.com/>

Open House Chicago,

<https://openhousechicago.org/>

Sydney Open,

<https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/sydneyopen>

MOVING OBJECTS

Temporary re-location and interpretation of items from the collections to associated sites.

Examples and possibilities:

- Barden and Ribee saddlery items from Maitland and District Historical Society on display in the Maneeya Restaurant – the former Barden and Ribee premises - and/or in the Dennerley Leather Shop in The Levee;
- taxidermed birds from Maitland and District Historical Society on the riverbank;
- technology and natural history items from the collections on display in the old gallery at Maitland Regional Art Gallery – to mark the Technology Museum that was there from 1910 to 1955;
- using musical instruments from the collections to create a band and/or performance that moves through Maitland streets; and
- having stalls, displays, performances, events, pop ups at Council sponsored special events (Riverlights, Aroma, Taste, Steamfest) using objects from the collections.

NOW AND THEN

Drawing on the ABC's project of the same name and particularly the work of local photographer Pete Smith⁷⁸, create a trail of visual and/or virtual Now and Then stopping points.

PAINTING PEOPLE

Portraits of local residents, past and present, in relevant

78 'therealpetesmith', *ABC Open*, <https://open.abc.net.au/people/3229>; and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/54834780@N06/>

places. These could be individual, group or family portraits. They should include both notable people (perhaps initially drawing ideas from Maitland's Hall of Fame⁷⁹) and the many ordinary residents who through volunteering and other means shape the locality.

PAINTING PLACES

Wall paintings that present past, present and future views of a neighbourhood and/or particular place.

PICTURE THIS!

Using Maitland Library's Picture Maitland collection and photographs from the other collecting organisations, fill the windows of vacant premises and decorate other fixtures with photographs of the premises and/or their neighbourhood at different times. **Now and Then** (see earlier) photographs could also be presented this way.

PRECIOUS OBJECTS

Showcase particular collections by inviting residents to bring objects relating to the collection that can then be valued by an invited expert valuer. A variation on the television program **Antiques Roadshow**.

REVEALING STORIES

Select items from the collections and, through online crowd sourcing, gather information that creates stories around the objects.

Example:

- Maitland School of Arts Minute Book from Maitland Library Collection: digitise; put online; create an environment in which people can share information and stories about the people, events and places mentioned in the Minute Book.

TALKING OBJECTS

Exhibitions, displays, podcasts and videos about particular objects and the ways in which they invite engagement with Maitland collections.

79 Maitland City Council, Hall of Fame, <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/service-awards/hall-of-fame>

Examples and possibilities:

- ABC Radio National's **Treasure Trove** provides an example of podcasts;⁸⁰
- the **MyMaitland Stories** videos on the Council website provide a format for an online delivery of object stories that invite custodians of the collections and community members to talk about an object;⁸¹
- pop up community workshops/events that adapt and utilise the resources and ideas from Sheffield University's **Every Object Tells a Story**⁸² to invite community members to participate and share objects that tell Maitland stories;
- exhibitions/displays created around community members' selected objects and their Maitland stories.

UNEXPECTED

Pop up exhibitions, events, and public art in unlikely and unexpected places (for example: barns, parks, shopping malls, railway stations, hospital) and/or on unexpected uses and views of objects from the collections.

Examples:

- Water uses: a temporary installation using pumps, washing machines, steam engines on the riverbank and/or at Walka Water Works to tell the story of the variety of ways in which water was and is used;
- Reimagining objects: invite artists to select an object or objects from one of Maitland's collections and use it/them as the focus for an artwork or installation in an unexpected location.
- Remake. Copying the patterns of clothes and garments in the collections and/or in specific photographs, and then remaking the clothes and garments using new materials and sewing equipment. Perhaps display old and new side-by-side in shop windows. Display different era sewing equipment eg. treadle versus electric sewing

machine.

- Choose 2 too. Juxtapose items from different eras that serve a common function, and locate pairs at different times in a variety of venues. For example: a hand wringer and a modern washing machine; a phone hand set and a mobile phone. Invite visitors to comment and/or share stories about social and cultural changes brought about by the exhibited examples and/or create imaginative stories that connect the two items.
- Use Me. Examples of old technology that visitors can use. For example: typewriters, shoe lasts.

WALKING, SEEING AND HEARING

A variety of trails, tours and apps that create connections between objects and the places, people and events that give them meaning. If print based, the emphasis should be on short, focused and memorable text; if an app, the use of audio is essential so that people can hear, look and walk.

To encourage night walks and tours, lighting particular buildings, streetscapes, gardens and landscapes should be considered.

Examples:

- an app with a Pokemon type experience with objects replacing the Pokemon figures;
- apps that utilise augmented reality;
- London based **Memoryscape** and **Ports of Call** tours provide good starting points for the use of audio and incorporating the voices and memories of local residents as key features in delivering engaging messages;⁸³
- public art trails and walks; and
- **The MP3 Experiments**, <https://improveverywhere.com/missions/the-mp3-experiments/>.

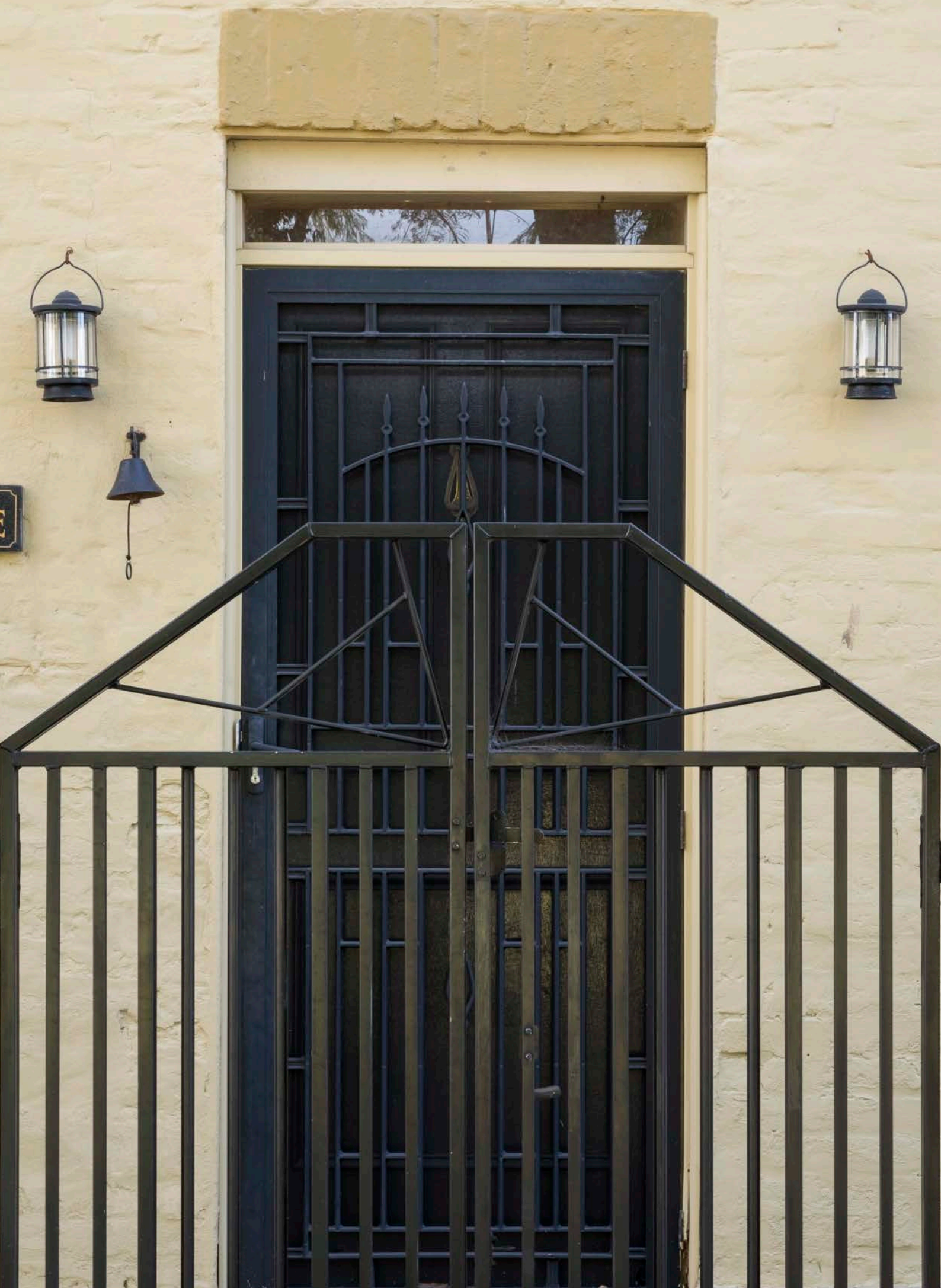
80 *Treasure Trove*, ABC Radio National, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/01/28/3124411.htm>

81 *#MyMaitland Stories*, <http://www.mymaitland.com.au/stories/>

82 *Every Object Tells a Story*, Sheffield University, <http://www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk/index.php>
The website includes a downloadable learning resources pack.

83 *Memoryscape: Voices from the hidden history of the Thames*, <http://memoryscape.org.uk/>, and *Ports of Call: Walks of Art at the Royal Docks*, <http://www.portsofcall.org.uk/index.html>





16.4 Gateways

There is a diverse and exciting range of existing and potential places, collections, exhibitions, events and other experiences in Maitland that can cluster under the Open Museums Open Minds banner. Some need enhancement and further resources; others are new and need to be initiated. Sections [16.1 to 16.3](#) ([Enhance current exhibitions](#); [Thinking on the edge](#); [On the streets](#)) address these issues. The concept, however, falters if residents and visitors do not know about the experiences on offer. This final part of the report consequently focuses on **ways of engaging people with the variety of Open Museums Open Minds experiences and, consequently, of encouraging residents and visitors to spend time, and money, to get to know Maitland.**

It also addresses the issue of a regional museum for Maitland by advocating the model of a regional museum that consists of a network of museum collections and experiences outlined in section [10.1 Types of regional museum](#), albeit a network with clear virtual, print and physical gateways.

16.4.1 Virtual gateway

At present, each of the collecting organisations has their own website, and some – but not all – of their exhibitions and other museum experiences are promoted through, for example, different sections of the Maitland City Council website. What could be beneficial is a website that acts as **a central virtual gateway that provides an enticing introduction to the variety of Open Museums Open Minds experiences and encounters Maitland has to offer, provides links to the websites of the collecting organisations, and presents a variety of virtual museum experiences.**

Responsible parties

As part of its promotion of Maitland as a city of history and heritage and its overall role as caretaker of the locality, Maitland City Council is best suited to host the virtual gateway with support from participating

organisations and groups.

Tasks

Tasks involved in creating and maintaining the virtual gateway include:

- consultation and planning with contributing organisations to identify the resources they can offer to the project as well as the type of content that could be most suitable;
- scoping of web content and web design;
- costing and funding of the website; and
- ongoing maintenance, updating and development.

Examples

The following websites provide examples of consolidated virtual introductions to museum projects and experiences within specific localities. Significantly, they are collaborative projects (see [14 Collaboration](#)).

Central NSW Museums, <http://www.centralnswmuseums.orangemuseum.com.au/>
Our Rivers, Our History, <http://www.oroh.com.au/>
Tweed Regional Museum, <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/>

16.4.2 Portable gateways

Visitors and residents inspired to experience aspects of Open Museums Open Minds and visit collections, sites and places need portable guides that can be carried while walking, driving, cycling around the local government area. The guides should provide locations, directions, and introductory and enticing descriptions to individual experiences.

The portable gateways can be in a variety of forms: brochures, a booklet, an app or apps.

The emphasis should be on providing visitors and residents with overall guides to the history and heritage collections, sites, places, events and other cultural, public

and social assets that make Maitland a locality in which to spend time. There could also be an Open Museums Open Minds resource kit for local schools developed collectively across the collecting organisations.

Responsible parties

There are already a number of these portable gateways available or under development (see [7.6 Publications](#) and [7.8 Tours, trails, walks](#)). These are produced by the individual collecting organisations, by Council and sometimes as collaborative projects. This should continue.

However, some coordination and sharing of resources and ideas could improve quality, eliminate overlap, concentrate resources, inspire new initiatives and help to create an enticing package of portable gateways. These issues could be partly addressed through the Open Museums Open Minds Working Party (see [14 Collaboration](#)).

Maitland City Council could also consider establishing an Open Museums Open Minds brand or logo that could be included in those portable gateways that contribute to Maitland's Open Museums Open Minds experience.

Tasks

The creation and implementation of portable gateways will require:

- consultation and planning among contributing organisations,
- scoping and creation of content, format and design,
- costing and funding,
- development, publication and distribution.

16.4.3 Fixed gateway

Maitland offers a variety of museum experiences including the activities supported by the twelve collecting organisations surveyed for **Open Museums, Open Minds**. There is, however, no obvious, centrally located and outstanding physical starting point to cause residents and visitors to pause, visit, look, be stimulated, become

curious, and spend time to engage further with the museum experiences available in the locality.

The suggestion here is to **convert Maitland Visitor Information Centre (VIC) into a central and arresting fixed gateway** and to have it established as the front open door to Maitland's museum collections and experiences, and to the range of other public assets and experiences that can engage visitors and residents with Maitland's history and heritage and with Maitland as a place to visit and a place to live.

The features of the site, and the current building, that make it suitable include:

- location at the entrance to Central Maitland;
- accessibility;
- essential facilities including parking, toilets and picnic grounds;
- a café;
- existing spaces that could be converted to exhibition spaces with the required temperature and humidity control, hanging and lighting systems and equipment;
- outside spaces that lend themselves to public art and other 'on the streets' museum experiences (see [16.3 On the streets](#));
- potential, in the long term and if needed, to extend the building and develop the site into an iconic museum for Maitland; and
- cost effective.

Vision

The vision is that one space in the VIC would host a semi-permanent exhibition introducing key themes about Maitland (see [3 Themes](#)) and the various experiences and places throughout the locality that these themes can be encountered. This should be an innovative, arresting and interactive 21st century use of the space. It should inspire people to want to visit the museums, exhibitions and other experiences and places scattered across the locality.

A second space would be devoted to temporary exhibitions and/or installations curated by and from Maitland's collections individually or collectively (see 4.1 Introducing the collections) and/or for relevant touring exhibitions from national, state and other regional museums. The emphasis in these exhibitions would be on interrogating and presenting topical, and occasionally challenging, exhibitions to 21st century museum standards.

There should also be access to the Virtual gateway (16.4.1) and the Portable gateways (16.4.2).

It should be noted that the VIC does not have the space or facilities for storing and conserving the collections. This is the purpose of a Maitland storehouse (15.4.2)

Responsible parties

As the VIC is a Council asset, the responsibility for converting and managing it as a fixed gateway rests with Council.

Assistance and resources in the form of in kind support, volunteers, exhibitions and exhibition content, exhibition facilities and furniture, and even funding should be forthcoming from participating collecting organisations as well as other community and business groups.

As with the Maitland storehouse (15.4.2), the conversion of the VIC also has the potential for substantial funding from the Regional Cultural Fund. Indeed, packaging the two facilities as the core of Maitland's Open Museums Open Minds model of a regional museum could be a useful strategy for this, and other, funding.



Tasks

The conversion of the VIC into exhibition spaces and a fixed gateway to Maitland's history and heritage encounters will require:

- re-location of current administrative uses of the offices at the VIC;
- planning and costing for the adaptation and fitting out of the building;
- planning and costing of staffing, taking into consideration existing paid and volunteer staff at both Council and community collecting organisations; and
- planning and costing of ongoing maintenance and of an exhibition program also taking into consideration the likelihood of strong community participation and support.





Festival of Light, Quito, Ecuador, 2018

17 CONCLUSION

Maitland is home to a number of collections that document the city's history and heritage. They are located in different parts of the city. Some are managed by Council; the others by a diversity of community groups. All the collections are stored and cared for in rooms and other spaces that are inadequate in terms of size and suitable facilities. Some are inadequately documented. Despite these constraints, all the collecting organisations initiate and offer a variety of ways for residents and visitors to engage with the items and stories their collections have to offer.

This is achieved with varying and often limited resources and to varying standards. As well, for most of the community organisations, access and participation is frequently constrained by limited opening hours and limited marketing.

These collections and the exhibitions and other museum experiences are important public, cultural and social assets. They could, however, be better cared for, utilised and promoted. This concern underpins current community action to create a regional museum for Maitland that brings a number of the collections, their organisations and exhibitions into a single, large, suitably equipped new or adapted building. This is one option for addressing the risks the collections currently face and the potential the collections and their organisations offer for creating new exhibitions and other museum experiences that could increase visitor numbers and awareness of Maitland's unique history and heritage among residents as well as visitors to the city.

Open Museums, Open Minds suggests a different option, albeit one that addresses the same concerns and that takes into account that eight of the twelve collecting organisations surveyed are anchored to the sites they currently occupy: the sites themselves are part of the history they are presenting. The Open Museums Open Minds option also aims overtly to link the history and heritage collections to a variety of existing

and new experiences across the city that engage with and promote why and how Maitland was and continues to be a unique and vibrant place to live and to visit. The option builds on and extends existing models of regional museums that work across a number of sites and collections, and that seek innovative means to care for, promote and use those collections.

The Open Museums Open Minds model addresses the need for vastly improved storage and care for the collections by recommending a new central storehouse that can accommodate, and care for, the range of items currently held in collections across the city, and do so while retaining the integrity and identity of individual collections. It also recommends that part of the process is to encourage the collecting organisations to document their collections and to complete significance assessments of them.

The Open Museums Open Minds model addresses the need for improved exhibition spaces and increased visibility of the collections and the experiences they support by recommending the creation of a physical gateway at the Maitland Visitor Information Centre that includes state of the art exhibition spaces; a virtual gateway through a website that links all the collections, their activities and their websites; and a number of portable gateways that provide packages for visiting and experiencing the collections, exhibitions and other history and heritage experiences that can be encountered across the city. It also recommends that attention be paid to improving existing exhibition facilities and, indeed, the depth, range and, at times, quality of exhibition and other museum experiences.

Underpinning these recommendations is recognition that an important route for achieving these possibilities is to build on current collaborative projects and foster a close working relationship between Council and the relevant community collecting organisations. Hence the creation of an Open Museums Open Minds working party is recommended.

The perceived benefits of the proposed Open Museums Open Minds model are that it addresses the recognised need for Maitland to have a regional museum but does so in an arguably more resource-efficient and achievable form than concentrating all funding and efforts on one iconic building that could take significant time, money and resources to fund, design and establish and that would entail focusing all resources on the one project and the one site. The model also offers strategies that encourage immediate action in relation to existing as well as new museum experiences, and to ways and means to improve the documentation and care of collections.

There are also perceived benefits in terms of making the collections more accessible by being better documented and stored, and in making Maitland's history and heritage experiences an enticing focal point for encouraging visitors and residents to spend time engaging with different collections and places across the city.

The Open Museums Open Minds vision is to see Maitland as a city that cares for, uses and promotes its history and heritage collections in a variety of innovative and inviting ways, and that the museum experiences spill out across the city and can be encountered in both expected and unexpected ways.



**THE
MAITLAND
CULTURAL
CENTRE**



18 IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The projects and strategies suggested in Part 2 of this report emerged from the consultation and research documented in Part 1. The vision is to see the museum collections and museum experiences currently available in Maitland enhanced, extended and integrated into a network of engaging and stimulating encounters with the themes and stories that shape Maitland's unique past and present. The vision is also to see the collections well documented, stored and conserved for current use and for future generations. The challenge is that the collections and the museum experiences they support are created and sustained by a number of community and Council cultural organisations in different parts of Maitland. They are all public, cultural and social assets. They are not all, however, the direct responsibility of Council.

The solution proposed here is that Council could take a leading role in enhancing Maitland's collections and museum experiences by, in the first instance, addressing the opportunities and challenges identified in this report in relation to [Council assets \(13\)](#) and, in the second instance, working with the community organisations to develop and, where appropriate, implement the strategies and projects outlined in [15 Maitland collects](#) and [16 Maitland on show](#).

[Table 17](#) (see below) provides a summary of the proposed strategies and projects, connects them to the recommendations presented in section [11 Recommendations](#) (summarised versions presented below), ranks their priority, lists who should be responsible for their implementation, and identifies some potential funding sources. Details about the funding sources are provided in [Appendix 2 Funding sources](#).

Recommendations (see [11 Recommendations](#)):

- 11.1 Council policies: integration of Maitland's collections into Council policies and plans.
- 11.2 Collections: a greater recognition of, and support for, Maitland's collections.
- 11.3 Museum experiences: a greater recognition of, and support for, the museum experiences initiated and implemented by Maitland's collection organisations.
- 11.4 New projects and strategies: creation of, and support for, innovative new projects and strategies that engage with Maitland's collections to enable their stories and experiences to be presented and experienced in a variety of ways.

Table 18: Implementation overview

Priority ranking

- A** high priority: should be commenced as soon as possible, is needed in order to implement other strategies and projects, has a funding application deadline to meet, and/or provides immediate and achievable means to create new experiences
- B** medium priority
- C** lower priority

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Relating to recommendations</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible parties</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>
COUNCIL ASSETS (section 13)	11.1, 11.2, 11.3,11.4	A	MCC	
COLLABORATION <i>establish a working party</i> (section 14)	11.1, 11.2, 11.3,11.4	A	MCC & collecting organisations	
MAITLAND COLLECTS (section 15)				
<i>Document collections (15.2)</i>	11.1, 11.2	B	Collecting organisations	FRRR Small Grants National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grants
<i>Enhance collections (15.3)</i>	11.1, 11.2	C	Collecting organisations	Australian Communities Foundation FRRR Small Grants for Rural Communities MGNSW – Museum Standards MGNSW – Project Development Grants MGNSW – Skills Development Grants National Cultural Heritage Account National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grants
<i>Existing storage facilities (15.4.1)</i>	11.1, 11.2	B	Collecting organisations	Copland Foundation FRRR Small Grants MGNSW Building Improvement Grants MGNSW Small Grants National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grants
<i>Maitland storehouse (15.4.2)</i>	11.1, 11.2, 11.4	B	MCC in partnership with collecting organisations	Building Better Regions – Infrastructure Projects Create NSW - Regional Cultural Fund – apply in 2019. John T Reid Charitable Trusts

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Relating to recommendations</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsible parties</i>	<i>Potential Funding Sources</i>
MAITLAND ON SHOW (section 16)				
<i>Enhance current exhibitions (16.1)</i>	11.1, 11.3	B	Collecting organisations	Australia Council – Arts Projects, Organisations ClubGrants Ian Potter Foundation Inspiring Australia
<i>Thinking on the edge (16.2)</i>	11.4	C	Collecting organisations	
<i>On the streets (16.3)</i>	11.1, 11.4	B	MCC & collecting organisations	Australia Council – Arts Projects, Organisations Australian Cultural Fund Building Better Regions Fund – Community Investments Stream Festivals Australia FRRR Small Grants Gordon Darling Foundation Harold Mitchell Foundation Inspiring Australia
<i>Virtual gateway (16.4.1)</i>	11.1, 11.4	C	MCC in partnership with collecting organisations	FRR Small Grants Gordon Darling Foundation John T Reid Charitable Trusts
<i>Portable gateways (16.4.2)</i>	11.1, 11.4	C	MCC in partnership with collecting organisations	FRR Small Grants Harold Mitchell Foundation Royal Australian Historical Society - Create NSW Cultural Grants Program
<i>Fixed gateway (16.4.3)</i>	11.1, 11.4	B	MCC in partnership with collecting organisations	Building Better Regions Fund – Infrastructure Projects ClubGrants Create NSW - Regional Cultural Fund John T Reid Charitable Trusts



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Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, <http://bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au/about-us/>

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Orange Regional Museum, <http://www.orangemuseum.com.au/>

Parramatta Heritage Centre, <http://arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au/>

Port Macquarie Museum, <http://portmuseum.org.au/>

Tweed Regional Museum, <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/>

Western Plains Cultural Centre, <https://www.westernplainsculturalcentre.org/home>

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Destination NSW, <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/>

ICCRM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), <https://www.iccrom.org/>

ICOM – Australia (International Council of Museums – Australia), <http://icom.org.au/site/index.php>

ICOM (International Council of Museums), <http://icom.museum/>

Museums and Galleries NSW, <https://mgns.org.au/>

Museums and Galleries, Queensland, <http://www.magsq.com.au/>

Museums Galleries Australia, <https://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/>

Renew Australia, <http://renewaustralia.org/>

Royal Australian Historical Society, <https://www.rahs.org.au/>

APPENDIX 1: COUNCIL POLICIES AND PLANS

Maitland City Council has a number of documents, plans and policies that include visions and strategies relating to the research, interpretation, preservation, accessibility, presentation, and community and visitor engagement with the history and heritage of the city. These underpin initiatives being undertaken by Council, and inform key aspects of **Open Museum, Open Minds**. The following provide brief summaries of the relevant aspects of the key documents along with some comments, where relevant, on implementation to date. The documents are listed by date of publication in order to provide a sense of the ways in which the plans and policies build on and complement each other.

Maitland Heritage Survey and Thematic History, 1994

(Adopted)

The survey report includes an inventory of sites identified as having heritage significance. The thematic history is organised under the following main headings and themes:

- The river and the land – the influence of topography.
- Exploration, exploitation and convicts.
- Estate development – pioneers, gentlemen and tenants.
- Urban growth.
- A regional centre.
- Communications.
- Industry and natural resources.
- A unique resource – preservation, conservation and heritage.

Central Maitland Structure Plan, 2009

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/publications-plans-and-strategies/planning-strategies/central-maitland-structure-plan>

(Adopted)

The Plan offers strategies to guide the growth and development of the Central Maitland precinct over the next two decades. The strategies build on existing strengths.

The strengths include the significance and value of Maitland's heritage and the desirability of protecting, documenting, enhancing and promoting this heritage. The vision includes creating more accessible, safe and inviting spaces, places and routes in order to encourage increased use of the precinct.

Maitland Local Studies Strategy, 2010

(Adopted and implemented)

The strategy was developed and implemented by Maitland City Library following a city-wide strategic review which 'highlighted the importance of fostering the growth of local history studies in Maitland'. The strategy entailed a survey of existing public and private collections of documentary historical material in the Maitland Local Government Area. Key findings from the survey include:

- The richness and variety of existing documentary collections.
- The need for a community wide focus on best practice standards for the preservation and management of historical records.
- The need for 'guidelines to assist in categorising and describing resources in a systematic way'.
- The benefit of a single electronic gateway to local history and heritage resources. This, importantly, was seen 'to define and enhance the historical profile of Maitland.'
- The benefits of partnerships between community groups, government departments, organisations and individuals.
- The benefits of the creation of digital content including resources and digital copies of original material.
- The need for adequate physical storage with the possibility of a central resource centre.

See also:

Kerryl Collard, 'Connecting our past with our future: a new gateway to Maitland's history and heritage', **Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services**, 24/4, 2011, pp. 153-159.

Maitland Public Art Policy, 2010

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/governance-and-transparency/policies>

(Under review)

The policy provides a definition of public art, highlights the ways in which it can benefit Maitland and its community, and establishes guidelines for the assessment, funding, commissioning, management, conservation and maintenance of public artworks.

High Street Master Plan and Laneways Action Plan, 2013

(Adopted)

This Plan follows on from the 2009 **Central Maitland Structure Plan** (see previously) and focuses on the revitalisation of High Street and specific laneways in the Central Maitland area.

As with the **Structure Plan**, the incorporation of public art and the improvement of views to historic buildings are important parts of the suggested improvements and enhancements.

This Plan and the **Structure Plan** offer holistic visions and plans, and provide frameworks, contexts and ideas for developing forms of engagement across the city of Maitland, especially Central Maitland.

Maitland + 10: Community Strategic Plan, 2013

(Adopted and progressive implementation)

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/long-term-planning/maitland-10-community-strategic-plan>

Drawing on community engagement feedback, the plan presents the Council's visions for the future of the city and outlines strategies designed to see those visions become realities. Themes of particular relevance to **Open Museums, Open Minds** include emphasis on valuing, sustaining and developing:

- Proud people, great lifestyle: 'our sense of place and pride in our city whilst welcoming diversity and change';
- Our built space: 'our unique built heritage ... coupled

with sustainable new developments...';

- Our natural environment: including 'local rivers and floodplains';
- A prosperous and vibrant city: with 'Central Maitland (as) the vibrant heart of our city'.
- Connected and collaborative community leaders.

Among the strategies identified to achieve these aims, the following are of particular relevance to **Open Museums, Open Minds**:

- welcoming new people and developing programs to 'foster community appreciation and pride in the city's appearance, rich heritage and future potential';
- ensuring Central Maitland and our built heritage remain 'integral to the distinct character of our city', and that the CBD reclaims 'its place as the heart of the city, through changes to the built form and streetscapes, along with active partnerships';
- identifying 'ways to become better connected with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their history and culture';
- valuing 'all community members, including children and young people, the elderly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds';
- embracing 'arts and cultural activities ... for their role in sustaining creative and connected communities';
- delivering 'innovative programs and services' for life long learning;
- celebrating and utilising the Hunter River, and ensuring that 'the Hunter River will no longer be at the back door of Central Maitland';
- staging an annual program of events, festivals, sporting and cultural activities;
- growing the city's capacity for tourism;
- exploring and promoting 'adaptive and creative uses for heritage sites and buildings across the city'; and
- implementing 'sustainability and environmental education programmes ... across the city';

Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan, 2014

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/publications-plans-and-strategies/central-maitland-interpretation-plan>

(Adopted and progressive implementation)

The value of innovative and varied forms of heritage interpretation are at the core of this plan that focuses on history and heritage as vital elements in the revitalisation of Central Maitland. Underpinned by an analysis of the visitor economy and audience profiles, the plan identifies key themes in Maitland's history and proposes different interpretation media to engage visitors and residents with these themes and with Maitland as a destination and/or place of residence.

In terms of interpretation media, a key emphasis is on a series of themed heritage walks with sites activated through vertical markers, bench seats, pavers, planter boxes and a variety of digital technologies. There are also recommendations for a variety of signage, installations, public art, digital media, public events and laneway activations. The latter are particularly in accord with recommendations in the *Central Maitland Structure Plan* to make more use of the laneways that are scattered across Central Maitland.

The four themes identified in the report as the focus for the heritage walks and, implicitly, as significant themes in the interpretation of Maitland are:

- 'The River Speaks'
- Poverty and prosperity
- Heroes and villains
- Architecture

Significantly for the *Open Museums, Open Minds* project, the *Central Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan* includes a 'living museum program' as a long-term project. The idea came from consultation with the Maitland and District Historical Society and is described as "a living and changing outdoor museum" that stretches from the Railway Station along Church Street and High Street to the Court House at the western end and the Visitor Information Centre at the eastern end.'

Walka Water Works Interpretation Master Plan, 2016

(Adopted and progressive implementation)

The interpretation plan proposes key themes relevant to the site, develops specific stories within those themes, and identifies a variety of interpretation media to deliver the messages and stories and to engage a variety of visitors. Attention is also paid to different groups of visitors. The proposed interpretation media include an upgrade of the website, a small orientation pavilion, a multimedia production, a trail upgrade, development of bird observer platforms, an audio tour to accompany the miniature railway.

Implementation to date of the masterplan includes development of an education resource package, design and construction of an ecology viewing platform and accompanying seating, wayfinding and marking posts on the walking trail, a brochure for the ecology walk, a database of bird types, onsite information panels, and a Walka bird app.⁸⁴

Maitland Showground Interpretation Plan, 2015

(Adopted)

The interpretation plan provides a thematic history of the Maitland Showground and its parent organisation, the Hunter River Agricultural and Horticultural Association, and proposes a variety of interpretation media to enhance community engagement with the significance of the showground and its place in Maitland's past, present and future.

84 See, for example, Walka Water Works Education Programs, <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/education-programs/heritage-education-programs/walka-water-works-education-programs>

Citizen Engagement Strategy, 2016

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/planning-and-reporting/publications-plans-and-strategies/citizen-engagement-strategy>

(Adopted)

The strategy outlines Council's emphasis on, and guidelines for, consulting residents as an integral part of the development of Council policies and plans.

Maitland Place Activation Strategy, 2016

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/play-explore/arts-and-culture/place-activation> (Adopted)

The **Place Activation Strategy** focuses on innovative and engaging processes to attract people to, and enhance the use of, different public spaces across the city. Among the themes that emerged from the community engagement process and are of particular relevance to the **Open Museums, Open Minds** project process are (p33):

- the desire for greater connections to the river,
- creation of a stronger Maitland identity,
- opportunities to learn and share Maitland's history, and
- activations specifically for children and their parents.

Four broad types of place activation are identified, namely: Street art, After dark, Interpretation, Repurpose.

Cultural Plan 2016 – 2019

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/play-explore/arts-and-culture/cultural-plan>

(Adopted)

The plan identifies the range and variety of cultural activities across the local government area including those relating to history and heritage. Through a community consultation process, the **Cultural Plan** identified key issues in relation to those cultural activities, and established priorities for action. Of particular relevance to **Open Museums, Open Minds** are the following priorities:

- improving cultural facilities and venues;
- communication, promotion and marketing;
- maintaining cultural heritage;
- a new cultural institution;
- making culture central to urban renewal;
- encouraging cultural entrepreneurship; and
- maximising community resources.

Among the projects identified in the action plan, the development and facilitation of a Maitland Cultural Cooperative offers an important framework for proposals that have emerged from **Open Museums, Open Minds**.

Activating Laneways Policy, 2017

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/my-council/governance-and-transparency/policies>

(Adopted and progressively implemented)

The policy provides a rationale and guidelines for encouraging the use of laneways as a means of access across and through Maitland, and to do so through cultural activities and other forms of laneway activation.

APPENDIX 2: FUNDING SOURCES

The following list identifies a number of the funding sources that could assist with different aspects of the strategies and projects suggested in *Open Museums, Open Minds*. [Table 17 Implementation overview](#) connects specific strategies to specific funding sources.

For overviews of some of the grants available view presentations from the MGNSW Access to Funding 2017 workshop, <https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/grants-and-funding/access-funding-2017-presentations/>

Australia Council: Arts Projects – Organisations

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/funding-index/arts-projects-organisations/>

To support a range of activities that deliver benefits to the arts sector and wider public, including national and international audiences.

Examples of activities this grant supports include the creation of new work, practice based research, creative development, experimentation, collaborations, touring, festivals, productions, exhibitions, performances, publishing, recording and market development activity. Supported activities must last no longer than two years from the proposed start date.

Australian Communities Foundation

<http://www.communityfoundation.org.au/>

For examples of projects that have received grants visit <http://www.communityfoundation.org.au/grants/grant-recipient-stories/>

Australian Cultural Fund

<https://australianculturalfund.org.au/>

This is a fundraising platform for Australian artists, managed by Creative Partnerships Australia.

Eligible projects: Architecture, design, circus, physical theatre, community arts, cultural development, dance, festivals, events, exhibitions, screen, photography, indigenous arts, literature, publishing, live arts, hybrid arts, museums, galleries, heritage, music, opera, music theatre, cabaret, theatre, performance, visual arts and craft.

Balnaves Foundation

<http://balnavesfoundation.com/>

The Foundation supports organisations that aim to create a better Australia through education, medicine and the arts with a focus on young people, the disadvantaged, and Indigenous communities.

Building Better Regions Fund – Community Investments Stream

<https://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Building-Better-Regions-Fund/Building-Better-Regions-Fund-Community-Investments>

Managed by the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, funding is available for community activities, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, and leadership and capability strengthening activities.

A project must fall into one of the following categories:

Local events and activities – including arts and culture events, community and public events, business events, community sporting events, events or activities which attract tourists and visitors to a region.

Strategic planning – including regional skills audit, research projects to support regional development strategic plans, collection of socio-economic information, and plan development costs.

Building Better Regions Fund – Infrastructure Projects Stream

<https://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Building-Better-Regions-Fund/Building-Better-Regions-Fund-Infrastructure-Projects>

Managed by the Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, funding is available to support regional projects that involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure that provides economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas.

Must be a capital project involving the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or an extension of existing infrastructure. The replacement of existing infrastructure will only be eligible where you can demonstrate significant increase in benefit.

ClubGrants

<https://www.clubsnsw.com.au/community/clubgrants/about-clubgrants>

Supported by Clubs NSW, Category 3 grants cover Arts and Culture Infrastructure Projects.

For examples of projects funded under this category visit <https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/Documents/clubs/community-involvement/nov-2017-arts-culture-clubgrants-category-3-recipient-list.pdf>

Copland Foundation

<https://www.coplandfoundation.com.au/grants>

Supports the study, management, conservation, acquisition, and interpretation of collections

Create NSW – Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy

<https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/arts-in-nsw/nsw-aboriginal-arts-and-cultural-strategy-2015-2018-connection-culture-pathways/>

Create NSW – Regional Cultural Fund

<https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/funding-and-support/regional-cultural-fund/regional-cultural-fund-2/>

'The Regional Cultural Fund was established by the NSW Government to support the development of cultural infrastructure in regional NSW that enables bold, exciting and diverse arts and cultural activities.'

Festivals Australia

<https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/festivals-australia>

Managed by Australian Department of Communications and the Arts to support community participation in, and access to, the arts and aims to support partnerships and collaboration across the sector.

High-quality arts and cultural heritage projects that invite community participation and audience engagement. Projects can include, but are not limited to a parade, performance, workshop, installation or exhibition.

FRRR – Small Grants for Rural Communities

<https://www.frrr.org.au/grants/small-grants-for-rural-communities-round33.php>

Supported by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), examples of projects funded under the scheme include improvements to a community hall, lighting for a community art exhibition space, purchase of software for Adopt a Convict database, outdoor furniture at an historical society, public art projects.

Gordon Darling Foundation

<http://gordondarlingfoundation.org.au/index.php>

Funding for a range of visual arts projects across Australia. Funding may be provided for catalogues and publications; exhibition development excluding marketing or promotional costs; professional education initiatives including individual professional development; research projects; symposia.

GrantGuru

<https://grantguru.com.au/>

Searchable online database of grants.

Harold Mitchell Foundation – Community Grants Scheme

<http://hmfoundation.com.au/>

To fund programs in health, education and the arts that make a difference in Australia and our region.

Ian Potter Foundation

<http://www.ianpotter.org.au/>

Funding objectives in the arts program area include: to support cultural institutions and organisations in Australia that are distinctive in artistic achievement, imagination and innovation in fostering development across a sector or art form.

Inspiring Australia – Science Engagement Grants

<https://inspiringnsw.org.au/grants/>

Grants to deliver high profile community events that engage with Science, during National Science Week and at other times of the year.

John T Reid Charitable Trusts

<https://www.johntreidtrusts.com.au/> Arts and heritage are included among the projects the Trusts fund.

MCC (Maitland City Council)

Community Grants

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/sponsorship-and-grants/community-grants>

Local Heritage Fund

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/sponsorship-and-grants/local-heritage-fund>

My Place Grants

<https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/our-services/community/sponsorship-and-grants/my-place-grants>

MGNSW (Museums and Galleries NSW)

Aboriginal Culture, Heritage and Arts Association

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/aboriginal/>

Building improvement program

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/building-improvement/>
Up to \$15,000.

Leg Up Grants

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/volunteer-museum-grants/leg-up/>

Matched funding of \$50 – \$500 for volunteers to attend or host development activities in NSW. The grants can cover the cost of attending a workshop, conference or course, bringing

a presenter to your museum or the travel costs of a group of volunteers visiting another museum.

Museums Standards Program

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/support/standards-program/>

Project Development Grants <https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/volunteer-museum-grants/project-development/>

Previous Project Development Grants have funded strategic and marketing plans, significance assessments, exhibition development, touring exhibitions and public programs. \$2,500 to \$7,500.

Regional Museum Advisor Program

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/support/museum-advisor-program/>

Skills Development Grants

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/volunteer-museum-grants/skills-development/>

Up to \$4000 for the development and delivery of skill development training and networking events. The events are expected to involve more than one museum and usually bring in a professional consultant to run one or a series of workshops.

Small Grants

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/volunteer-museum-grants/small-grants/>

Up to \$2,000 for short-term, collection based projects. Previous Small Grants have funded the purchase of computer cataloguing software, exhibition mannequins and display cases, oral history recording equipment and archival storage items.

Volunteer Placements

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/funding/grants-we-administer/placement-programs/volunteer-placements/>

Volunteer Placements provide volunteers from NSW volunteer managed museums and Aboriginal cultural centres with the opportunity to spend two weeks with staff and resources of larger or more specialised cultural organisation. Up to \$1,000 per placement.

National Cultural Heritage Account

<https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/national-cultural-heritage-account>

Managed by the Australian Department of Communications and the Arts, the National Heritage Account provides assistance for buying significant objects that an organisation could not otherwise afford to buy. Examples of acquisitions funded under the program include significant paintings, geological specimens, furniture, engines, glass plate negative collection, motorcar, journal, decorative art.

NLA (National Library of Australia) - Community Heritage Grants

<http://www.nla.gov.au/awards-and-grants/chg>

Grants of up to \$15,000 to community organisations to assist with the preservation of locally owned, but nationally significant collections of materials that are publicly accessible including artefacts, letters, diaries, maps, photographs, and audio visual material.

NSW Heritage Grants

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/funding/index.htm>

Managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, the grants fall under the following headings: Aboriginal Heritage Projects, Community Heritage Projects, Local Heritage Places.

NSW Heritage Near Me Incentives Program

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage/support-for-local-heritage/heritage-near-me-incentives-program>

Managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, for examples of projects funded by Heritage Near Me visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage/support-for-local-heritage/heritage-heroes>

Regional Arts NSW

Country Arts Support Program (CASP)

<http://regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/casp/>

Grants of up to \$3000 or \$5000 for, for example, workshops, artist-in-residence programs, public art and design projects, arts and cultural directories, seminars, exhibitions.

Grants

<http://regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/>

Lists range of grants available to organisations in regional areas.

Quick Response Grants

<http://regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/qrg/>

Browse previously funded projects.

Regional Arts Fund (RAF) Community Grants

<http://regionalartsnsw.com.au/grants/raf/>

Browse previously funded projects.

Royal Australian Historical Society

Create NSW Cultural Grants Program

<https://www.rahs.org.au/grants/arts-nsw-cultural-grants-program/>

To assist historical research and publication of local, community and regional history projects.

Transport Heritage Grants

<https://www.rahs.org.au/grants/transport-heritage-grants-program/>

Categories for funding: 1 – restoration, reconstruction or preservation of a heritage transport item; 2 – education, publication or interpretation of an event, item/s or person/s that will promote heritage transport; 3 – study, consultation, report or review that will assist in managing a heritage transport place or item.

Sidney Myer Fund and The Myer Foundation

<http://myerfoundation.org.au/grants/arts-humanities/>

The Foundation funds a variety of projects under the Arts and Humanities banner.

OPEN MUSEUMS OPEN MINDS

DRAFT REPORT FOR

MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL

Joe Eisenberg & Janis Wilton

