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MCA UNVEILS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

NEW BUILDING TO TRANSFORM MCA INTO GLOBAL CONTEMPORARY ARTS HUB BY 2011



Sydney, Australia: The Museum of Contemporary Art has today revealed plans that will see the institution transformed into a global hub for contemporary art and ideas by 2011, including the building of a new northern wing and the refurbishment of its current headquarters on Sydney's Circular Quay.

MCA Director Elizabeth Ann Macgregor unveiled the redevelopment plans with MCA Chairman Andrew Love and MCA Foundation Co-Chair Simon Mordant, at a briefing in the MCA galleries.

"The redevelopment will transform the MCA to create a truly national and international institution serving the audiences of the future," said Ms Macgregor.

The redevelopment, designed by Sydney architect Sam Marshall and to be implemented in partnership with the NSW Government Architect, involves building a contemporary extension linked to the northern end of the MCA's existing building on West Circular Quay.

The proposal responds to the demands of increasing attendances, which have exacerbated the poor accessibility and circulation in the existing building. More than half a million people now visit MCA exhibitions each year, with a further 100,000 using the building's popular venue spaces.

Education is a central focus, with the new building housing a National Centre for Creative Learning with workshop spaces for schools and after-school youth programs. There will be new facilities for the Museum's renowned Bella program for young people with special needs, a digital classroom, multi-media room, library and resource room and a lecture theatre/new media events space.

New media, enhanced online capabilities and improved facilities will enable the MCA to deliver a greater range of educational programs to more Australians living in remote and regional areas.

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“As the only institution in Australia dedicated to both collecting and exhibiting contemporary art, living artists are at the heart of all the MCA’s activities. The new facilities will give people across Australia the opportunity to engage with the artists of today,” said Elizabeth Ann Macgregor.

New and improved gallery spaces in the new extension and the existing building will allow a greater presence for the MCA permanent collection. This includes important works by contemporary Australian and international artists and a significant collection of early Indigenous bark paintings.

A prominent new entrance links Circular Quay with George Street. Visitors enter through one central level which provides access to galleries over three floors.

“Creating a new highly visible entrance that serves visitors from both the Quayside and George Street and simplifying the circulation with galleries on three floors is a dynamic solution that complements the existing building,” says MCA Foundation Co-Chair Simon Mordant.

The new MCA will maximise its prime location by creating a new informal rooftop café and sculpture terrace with spectacular views of Sydney Opera House and the harbour. Two new external covered commercial function spaces with spectacular views of Sydney Harbour will be created on the top level of the existing MCA building.

MCA Chairman Andrew Love said: “The new function spaces and café will not only provide for the needs of our audience but will help to provide financial stability for the Museum into the future.”

Environmentally sustainable design (ESD) and the reduction of the MCA’s carbon footprint are also key elements of the redevelopment. The plans incorporate a seawater heat exchange with a fully integrated air-conditioning system offering energy savings of up to 30%. Other initiatives include ESD compliant lighting, energy monitoring throughout the building, insulation of gallery spaces, as well as water and materials recycling.

- Ends -



NOTES TO EDITORS:

For further information and to request interviews and high resolution imagery of building renderings and interiors please contact Kym Elphinstone, MCA PR & Communications Manager on 02 9245 2434 or 0421 106 139 or email kym.elphinstone@mca.com.au

Further detail included in media backgrounders – **MCA Redevelopment & Architecture** and **History of MCA site & building** - available on request.

ABOUT THE MCA FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN:

The MCA has raised \$27million of the \$50million expected total project cost. The fundraising campaign, launched in August 2007, has raised \$16million from the private sector and \$11million from government grants. In 2008, the MCA received a \$10million grant from the New South Wales Government and \$1 million from the City of Sydney.

ABOUT THE MCA:

The MCA is the only institution in Australia dedicated to both collecting and exhibiting contemporary art., from this nation and around the world. The MCA makes art accessible and engaging for a broad spectrum of public audiences through stimulating exhibitions, educational programs and special events.

- The MCA is continually recognised for its excellence and was recently voted Sydney’s favourite museum (Best of Sydney Awards, August 2008)
- The MCA attracts over 500,000 visitors per year, an increase of more than fourfold since 1999
- 65% of the MCA audience is under the age of 35
- Over 8,500 people participate in more than 70 MCA public programs each year
- Over 25,000 students participate in MCA programs each year
- MCA touring exhibitions are seen by over 90,000 people each year

ABOUT THE ARCHITECT:

Sam Marshall is the principal of an award-winning private architectural practice Marshall Architect, headquartered in Sydney’s Surry Hills. He commenced private practice in 1989, after graduating from UNSW with honours and working as an associate at Marsh Freedman Associates. Marshall was awarded the 2000 RAIWA Wilkinson Award, President’s Award for Recycled Buildings and the Conservation Award for his design involving a warehouse conversion in Darlinghurst. He is a recipient of the Dulux Colour Award for Best Interior, the Marrickville Medal and the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship, for which he mounted the exhibition “Supermodels”. Notable completed works include numerous residential projects; the cutting edge design for Dinosaur Design retail stores in New York and Paddington; interiors for four film production studios; and works to art galleries including Sydney’s Darren Knight Gallery and Object Gallery. He has been a member of the NSW Ministry for the Arts Capital Infrastructure Committee and is currently a Board Member of the Australian Centre for Photography.