

Strategic  
Direction  
One

# Enhance Access, Visibility and Community Engagement

## Performance Overview

- /// Museum Victoria's website recorded 4.5 million individual user sessions for the year.
- /// The Melbourne Museum Discovery Centre received 92,500 visitors, which is the highest annual visitation since the opening of the museum in October 2000.
- /// A total of 7,302 enquiries were logged on the Discovery Centre enquiries database, an increase of more than 1,500 from the previous year. Of these, 35% were received in person, 34% by email, 26% by phone and 5% by post.
- /// The Discovery Program had contact with 51,330 people, more than 60% of them in regional Victoria. More than 900 presentations were delivered as part of the program
- /// A total of 554 Museum Victoria volunteers contributed 53,236 hours.
- /// Across Museum Victoria, 59 students took part in the Vocational Education Program and a Department of Education industry placement scheme.
- /// 269,002 early-learning, primary, secondary, tertiary, adult and international students attended the Immigration Museum, Melbourne Museum and Scienceworks. 107,065 students attended IMAX education programs.
- /// The Museum Victoria membership program is one of the largest cultural membership programs in Australia, with 9,115 memberships in 2006–07, representing 33,557 individuals.

## Profile

The new visual identity system was introduced during 2006–07; it is a key component of the Museum Victoria brand strategy. The visual identity system aims to raise Museum Victoria's profile by communicating in a consistent and coherent way. It represents Museum Victoria as a family of brands with a common organisational logo. Individual identity is given to each venue through appropriate hero images, colour and graphic palettes. Museum Victoria's new identity was launched in September 2006, with the publication of the 2005–06 annual report. A staged rollout has continued through the year across a range of high-profile communications, including advertising, collateral and signage. Research shows that advertisements in the new identity are well recognised.

In 2006–07, Museum Victoria reviewed its advertising strategy to deliver more effective campaigns. The new visual identity system, effective media partnerships and strong campaigns have undoubtedly contributed to the year's high attendance results.

The profile of Museum Victoria is reflected in a variety of media, including television, radio, online and print. In 2006–07, almost 4,000 articles about Museum Victoria and its activities were generated by the museum's public relations team. Worth more than \$27 million in free publicity, this coverage reached millions of people around Australia and the world.

The good reputation of the museum was reflected in the fact that only 0.55% of mentions in media were unfavourable.

Museum Victoria played host to thousands of stakeholders through high-profile events. A highlight of 2006–07 was the visit of The Right Honourable Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, to launch *Nyonya Kebaya: Women's Costume from Malaysia* at the Immigration Museum.

## Audience Research

During 2006–07, the focus was on developing innovative and more effective methodologies for evaluating all aspects of museum exhibitions and programs. Market Research and Evaluation staff worked closely with project and operation teams to devise research techniques to improve the nature and quality of research outcomes that inform team decision making.

Seventy-eight studies were conducted, including 48 exhibition and program evaluations, eight market research studies and 22 visitor studies. The most significant outcomes included:

- /// identification of benchmarks for the brand strategy;
- /// in-depth environmental scans to inform strategic and tactical planning; and
- /// innovative methodologies for evaluating exhibition text and identifying exhibition titles.

Through its Market Research and Evaluation unit, Museum Victoria regularly measures demographic and psychographic profiles of visitors and non-visitors, drivers for and barriers to visitation, customer loyalty and the delivery of satisfactory visit and online experiences.

## Online Publishing

Museum Victoria websites provide information to a local, national and international audience. A vast array of resources are available via these sites, including corporate, museum, exhibition, collection, research and educational information, as well as many 'showcase' projects.

### Website Redevelopment Project

Museum Victoria's major website redevelopment project continued throughout 2006–07. This project will improve the delivery of web-based content and services, and provide an efficient, comprehensive platform for future development. This includes the establishment of new software, technical infrastructure, workflows, policies and standards.

Detailed planning and consultation across the organisation has set the foundation for this three-year initiative. Outcomes during the 2006–07 phase of the project included the following aspects.

### Information Architecture Plan

This describes the ways in which information is structured, organised and presented to ensure effective communication. This plan establishes goals, guidelines and standards for the future information architecture of Museum Victoria's online presence.

### Audience Development Plan

The plan identifies goals and strategies to increase usage, engagement and user satisfaction with the Museum Victoria website.

### Content Audit

This comprehensive audit has led to a detailed listing of all Museum Victoria website material, as well as documented ownership and lifecycle information. This documentation will prove invaluable when migrating from the current platform to the new content management system (CMS) environment.

A review of the Museum Victoria domain name was also undertaken as part of the website redevelopment project. The result was a change to a new domain name *www.museumvictoria.com.au*.

## Discovery Centres

Discovery Centres at Melbourne Museum and the Immigration Museum welcomed approximately 125,815 visitors during 2006–07.

### Immigration Discovery Centre

The Immigration Discovery Centre continues to offer advice and resources for those seeking to find out more about diverse communities across Victoria, or to explore their own family histories. The centre manages the Share a Story database of personal stories.

The Sarah and Ballieu Myer family generously provided a grant of \$25,000 for the installation of a new multimedia resource in the Immigration Discovery Centre. It will feature personal and community stories and information about museum objects. One of its innovative outcomes is the ability to record and present Immigration Museum community festivals.

The centre has continued its strong partnership with the National Archives of Australia and the Public Record Office, which both participated in ship reunions and cultural festivals during the year.

The centre also developed a range of information resources and provided public enquiry services to support the Dutch and the Mauritian and Rodriguan cultural festivals.

### Melbourne Museum Discovery Centre

New displays were installed, including three showcasing history and technology collections, Indigenous stone tools and Antarctica collections to celebrate International Polar Year. Also on display is a new acquisition – the Berry family's donation of an antique display case featuring 32 Papua New Guinean bird specimens.

The centre continued a partnership with the Monash Science Centre, taking a key role in supporting the Dinosaur Dreaming volunteer program for the 2007 dig at Inverloch.

## Community Engagement

Much of the activity of Museum Victoria can be identified as community engagement. In 2006, Museum Victoria began developing a strategy to consolidate these activities and place them within an organisational context. The strategy will be rolled out over a three-year period, and will link to State Government policies and to trends within the international museum sector. Overall, the strategy aims to:

- /// increase audience diversification over time, particularly in regard to specific under-represented communities;
- /// develop a framework that provides a whole-of-organisation approach and consolidates Museum Victoria's activities; and
- /// develop a methodology for measuring the impact of Museum Victoria's activities.

### Volunteers

Museum Victoria fosters the participation of volunteers. The Volunteers Program provides a means by which the Victorian community can actively support Museum Victoria's mission and activities.

The demographic profile of the volunteers shows a trend towards younger volunteers, with 31% aged between 21 and 30 years. The youngest volunteer is aged 18, and the oldest is 87. Museum Victoria is partnering with Victoria University on a major research project, Knowing Our Volunteers, exploring motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels. Partly funded by an Australian Research Council grant, the project will provide a greater understanding of the Volunteers Program and inform future planning.

In December 2006, Museum Victoria co-hosted the seminar Volunteering in Cultural Institutions, with speakers from Museum Victoria, Victoria University, Melbourne and Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Highlights of Museum Victoria's Volunteer Recognition Program were:

- /// the International Volunteers Day event in December 2006, which celebrated the contribution of Museum Victoria volunteers with their family members and friends;
- /// the National Volunteer Week event in May 2007, at which the contribution of Museum Victoria volunteers was celebrated by museum management and staff; and
- /// The Horizons Program, which featured 'Meet the Expert' sessions, cultural excursions, exhibition previews and updates on forthcoming exhibitions and programs.

## Discovery Program

This outreach service provides access to Museum Victoria's collections for people who are unable to visit museum venues due to geographic distance, age, hospitalisation or imprisonment. Drawing on the social and natural history collections, the Discovery Program provides three types of interpretation: presentations, learning and reminiscing kits, and family participation activities at significant regional events.

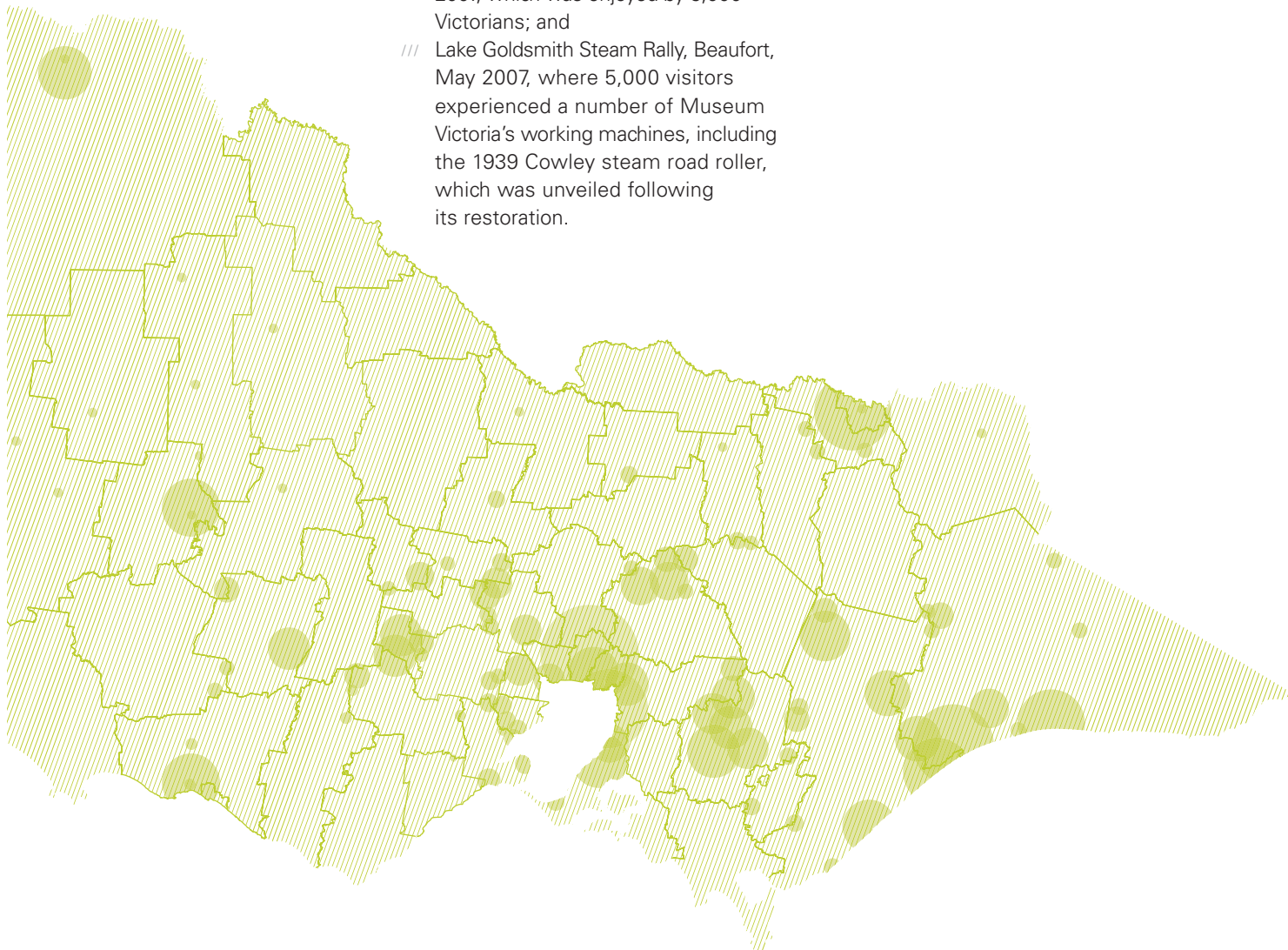
Two 'Museum in a Van' vehicles were in regional Victoria every other week from March to November 2006. Cluster visits were arranged in collaboration with community groups, kindergartens, aged-care facilities and libraries. The areas visited included 28 shire councils and seven regional cities.

Learning and reminiscing kits, hired by schools and community organisations, remain popular. A new learning kit entitled *It's Rocket Science* was developed. It was used by 14 libraries during National Science Week, and continues to be hired by schools and metropolitan and regional libraries, often for school holiday activities.

The new learning kit *Raccontami la tua storia*, based on immigration stories sourced through the Italian Historical Society, has proved popular with schools and community aged-care facilities. Eighty sets of Federation handbells were available for hire to community groups, educators and professional performance organisations.

Participation in regional events during the period of review included:

- /// Wodonga Children's Festival, October 2006, where more than 15,000 children and their families engaged with a selection of fossils, Australian animals and social history objects;
- /// Elmhurst Festival, Ararat, March 2007, which was enjoyed by 5,000 Victorians; and
- /// Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally, Beaufort, May 2007, where 5,000 visitors experienced a number of Museum Victoria's working machines, including the 1939 Cowley steam road roller, which was unveiled following its restoration.



## Education

Museum Victoria student learning programs are based on its research and collections, and linked directly to exhibitions, the Lightning Room and Melbourne Planetarium. At each of the museums, students participate in between one and three programs per visit, making Museum Victoria a preferred learning excursion destination. In 2006–07, there were 314,313 primary and secondary student program interactions at the Immigration Museum, Melbourne Museum and Scienceworks.

During 2006–07, a range of existing programs were reviewed and updated. New programs were developed for key exhibitions, such as *The Great Wall of China*, *Top Designs 2007*, *Sci-Quest* and *Water, Wine and Stone*.

### Teachers and Professional Learning

A major research study, *Voice of the Teacher*, demonstrated that Museum Victoria is recognised as a trusted and preferred excursion destination, supported by experts and specialist knowledge, which connects learning and teaching with communities and practice beyond the classroom.

MV Teachers, an annual membership program for teachers, entered its second year and membership grew to 2,246. This program aims to build an ongoing relationship with teachers and other educators in Victoria.

More than 4,000 teachers accessed Museum Victoria's professional learning programs at the Immigration Museum, Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and IMAX, as well as offsite at conferences and in other professional learning environments. The programs covered a broad range of specialist topics and explored the museum as a dynamic, real-world learning environment.

Highlights included:

- /// Melbourne Museum's participation in the *Shadowers of History* project, aimed at new teachers of history and supported by the Commonwealth History Project Professional Learning for Teachers Program.
- /// The formation of the Robotics Project Group, supported by the Federal Government Quality Teacher Program and the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne. The group comprises five local schools and meets regularly at Scienceworks to share information and resources and to develop skills.
- /// The Socratic Circles project, hosted by the Immigration Museum and convened by Melbourne Interfaith Intercultural Cluster. The project, part of the Values Education Good Practice Schools project, involved 60 student representatives of different faiths and cultural backgrounds who discussed issues of community identity and cultural values.
- /// More than 590 trainee teachers participated in pre-service teacher programs.

### Online Learning and Resources

Education kits are published in print, CD-Rom and/or web formats, providing resources for teachers to deliver integrated units of work. They include teacher notes and curriculum links, topical information, student excursion activities and school-based activities. The following new education sector materials were published:

- /// *The Human Body* (Years 3 to 10 Sciences and VCE Biology)
- /// *Colliding Worlds: First Contact in the Western Desert, 1932–1984* (Years 9 to 12 Humanities)
- /// *The Great Wall of China: Dynasties, Dragons and Warriors* (activities for Years 5 to 10 Humanities and LOTE Chinese)
- /// *Mimetismo e ecosistemi* (middle and later years LOTE Italian), highlighting adaptation and ecosystem exhibits at Melbourne Museum
- /// *Top Designs 2007* (VCE Visual Communication and Design, Design and Technology, Food and Technology, Systems Engineering)
- /// *Water, Wine and Stone: Swiss and Italians of Hepburn* (Years 5 to 10 and VCE LOTE Italian), and
- /// *Sci-Quest* (Years 3 to 10 Sciences).

Key online projects for the year were:

- /// The *Journeys to Australia* website, which provides resources for Immigration Museum education programs and interstate schools visiting the *Destination Australia* exhibition during its national tour.
- /// The Learning Federation *Online Learning Assets* pilot project, based on objects and interpretive material from Museum Victoria history and sciences collections. An initiative of the State, Territory and Federal Governments of Australia, these stand-alone illustrated digital resources will be distributed to all schools in Australia and New Zealand
- /// Development of an interactive educational program, *Italian Carlton*, in collaboration with the Italian Historical Society. The project targets 10 to 18-year-old students of Italian and history from metropolitan and regional Victoria.
- /// The Melbourne stage of the *Australian 2007 History Mysteries Youth Challenge*, hosted by Melbourne Museum and developed by the National Museum of Australia. Students from 16 Victorian schools participated. *The Challenge* focused on enquiry and problem-solving approaches to the study of history.

### Vocational Education

Of the 59 students who participated in the Vocational Education Program during the year, 41 were secondary students (Year 10 work experience, VELS and TAFE), and 18 were student participants in the Tertiary Studies Fieldwork Program from local and international educational institutions.

A selection process that aimed to achieve representation in the Year 10 work experience program from across educational sectors resulted in 44% of participants from Catholic schools, 41% from government schools and 15% from other independent schools.

Development began on a program to support Year 10 Indigenous students undertaking work experience at Museum Victoria. It will be implemented from 2007–08.

Strategic  
Direction  
One  
Case Study:  
Discovering  
Science at  
the Museum



*A participant in the  
Melbourne Museums  
Discovering Science  
Sessions. Families for the  
project came from the  
Fitzroy Learning Network  
and Napier Street Child and  
Family Resource Centre.*  
– Jon Augier  
– Museum Victoria

In 2006, as part of the Department of Education, Science and Training's Adult Literacy project, Museum Victoria was awarded one of 11 Innovative Project grants.

The initiative aims to enhance adult literacy on a national level by creating quality products and building models for national collaboration and resource sharing, and by providing individuals and communities with resources to support lifelong learning.

Making connections between literacy, science, local communities, museums and science centres, Discovering Science at the Museum is a unique national project. Its objectives are to:

- /// assist families from local neighbourhoods recognise public museums as places that belong to them, and which can be used as resources for family learning;
- /// introduce scientific concepts to families, along with the language and literacy to continue discussions at home, in language classes and in playgroups; provide enjoyable activities that will enable families to continue language and science learning together at home, in community settings and in subsequent independent visits to the museum; and assist parents in providing their pre-school children with some of the skills they will need to start out in Australian schools.

Stage one of the project commenced in October 2006, piloting a series of family learning sessions that have been documented according to the adult learning framework (National Reporting System). During the pilot phase, Melbourne Museum worked with local public-housing residents from refugee backgrounds and others with low-level English language. The Brotherhood of St Laurence's Napier Street Child and Family Resource Centre facilitated these local Fitzroy connections.

Scienceworks piloted the program with young parents aged between 14 and 25 from the local area. The Melbourne City Mission and the City of Hobson's Bay facilitated these connections. The project's national partner is Perth-based Scitech, which worked with local residents from refugee and non-English backgrounds through the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre Mirrabooka, Perth.

Stage two will be implemented between August and October 2007. Museum Victoria staff will deliver program training to other museums throughout Australia, so they in turn can run the Discovering Science at the Museum Program.

Museum Victoria science researchers and science program staff from Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and Scitech are members of the project team. The steering committee has representatives from Museum Victoria, Australian Catholic University, CAE, Fitzroy Learning Network and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Representatives from Scienceworks and Melbourne Museum attended the National Forum on Early Childhood Learning in Science in October 2006. The forum recognised that science centres, museums, science education centres, zoos and science festivals provide significant informal learning opportunities for very young children and their parents and carers through a range of exhibit and program activities, as well as associated support materials and resources.

Those involved in the pilot phase of the project have observed that science concepts and related exhibitions and activities are an excellent avenue to develop language skills. Whether it's touching and naming Australian animals, or discussing the lifecycles of insects, project community workers recognise joint parent and child participation as particularly relevant to language acquisition.

Discovering Science at the Museum is a sustained community engagement program that connects families locally and fosters the ability and confidence to participate fully in the lifelong learning opportunities museums offer.

Parents, grandparents,  
teachers and children from  
the Fitzroy Learning  
Network and Napier Street  
Child and Family Resource  
Centre at Melbourne  
Museum for Discovering  
Science Sessions  
– Jon Augier  
– Museum Victoria

