

7.2.4 MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY (MAPH) STRATEGY 2026-2030

Responsible Manager:	Margherita Barbante, Manager Arts and Libraries
Responsible Director:	Tanya Scicluna, Director Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Museum of Australian Photography Strategy 2026-2030.

INTRODUCTION

The Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh) is the preeminent national photography museum, dedicated to championing Australian photography, and inspire audiences to embrace, explore, and value photography.

As Australia's leading public art gallery devoted to the collection and exhibition of photography, we engage local, national, and international audiences in arts and cultural experiences.

An initiative of the City of Monash, MAPh opened in 1990. The museum is the proud custodian of over 4,000 Australian photographs and provides access to the community both digitally and through museum exhibitions. Located in Wheelers Hill, MAPh is a key cultural facility and a popular destination for those interested in art and photography from across Melbourne.

In 2025, the previous strategy concluded and a process to revise the MAPh strategy was initiated. This report presents the revised version to Council for consideration and endorsement.

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A healthy, safe and connected community

A community where all people have the opportunity to experience enhanced levels of social, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

BACKGROUND

The MAPh Committee of Management (COM) is a Community Asset Committee under Section 65 of the 2020 Local Government Act. The CEO has delegated to the COM a range of strategic, business development and collection development responsibilities that accord with its Section 65 status. At its meeting on 27 January 2026, Council resolved to establish under section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020, a revised Museum of Australian Photography Community Asset Committee Terms and Reference. The recommendations of this report comply with the Terms of Reference.

Under section 6 of the Terms of Reference, the COM is to assist the MAPh Director in the preparation of a Strategic Plan and provide it to Council for approval. It is to cover a four-year period, or such other period as directed by Council, and is to include a statement of the vision, values and objectives of the MAPh and the strategies that the MAPh will adopt to achieve that vision and those values and objectives.

The Draft Museum of Australia Photography Strategy 2026-30 is in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

DISCUSSION

An internal working group comprised of MAPH Director, Senior Curator, COM and Foundation Trustees lead the development of the draft strategy. In February 2026, MAPH held a facilitated workshop with MAPH staff, COM members, Foundation Trustees, Manager Arts and Libraries and Councils Creative Industries Lead to develop the new strategic plan.

The intent was to leverage the work done to date and seek an evolution and further growth in the strategic direction of MAPH.

MAPh's **purpose** is *to cultivate a diverse community that is actively engaged with Australian photography and to empower and champion its artists.*

Our **vision** for MAPH is that *we are the preeminent national institution and destination dedicated to championing Australian photography and its vital role in culture and society.*

This purpose and vision are further defined through our strategic statement:

We are Australia's leading national museum wholly devoted to photography. We will expand the profile, reach and recognition of Australian photographic art and artists. We will create accessible, thought provoking and inspiring physical and digital experiences for local, national, and international audiences.

From this position, four core goals are defined:

1. Recognised as Australia's preeminent national photography museum and destination.
2. Grow and inspire diverse local, national, and international audiences to engage with Australian photography.
3. Champion the vital role of Australian photography and empower its artists.
4. Develop a thriving and sustainable museum that fosters innovation and collaboration.

The major refinement from the previous strategic plan is to the first goal. The previous strategic plan saw the Museum transform and rebrand, from Monash Gallery of Art to the Museum of Australian Photography.

With the rebrand complete, the strategic focus is to leverage our position and grow audience reach, engagement and standing within the sector. The other three goals focus on audience, exhibition and collection and organisational development and growth, with the success and strategic priorities refined and consolidated to provide greater clarity and direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Museum of Australian Photography Strategy 2026-2030 will be delivered within Councils annual Operating and Capital renewal program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications to this report.

CONSULTATION

MAPh undertakes visitor surveys for all its exhibitions and public programs which informed the development of the new strategy. MAPH's COM, Foundation, staff and Manager Arts and Libraries and Creative Industries Lead were consulted through an online survey which assisted in framing the conversation for the facilitated workshop that was held in March 2026.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The social implication of this report is the development of a new strategic plan that documents the arts, cultural and community aspirations of MAPH, which will benefit the community through increased opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities that support the achievement of positive social outcomes.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no human rights implications for this report.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) has been completed as part of this work because this policy/program/service is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community.

The GIA found that gender impacts have been considered throughout the development of the new strategy and are already embedded into MAPH's exhibitions, collection development and audience engagement plan. As a result of the GIA, there were no major changes made. However, in the future we will:

- Continue to create a safe and inclusive physical and psychological environment.
- Enhance the visitor survey to develop more comprehensive information about the audience's experience in relation to identity, safety and inclusivity.
- Enhance facilities to be gender-inclusive and culturally safe, including scoping improvements to the site and facility (e.g. adult changeroom, enhanced hearing loop, increased translation of texts).
- Enhance reporting on key statistics regarding gender equity to COM for artists and audiences.
- Review all flow on strategies and plans to ensure adherence to the GIA, this includes the collections development policy which includes a focus on increasing representation of women and gender diverse artists and audiences.

CONCLUSION

The Museum of Australian Photography Strategy 2026-30 will be delivered over the next 4 years. Regular progress reports will be provided to Council via the Museums Annual Report. A public facing MAPH Strategy on a Page document is attached to this report.



ATTACHMENT LIST

1. MAPH PPT [**7.2.4.1** - 2 pages]

MAPh Strategy on a page (2026–2030)

Purpose	To cultivate a diverse community that is actively engaged with Australian photography and to empower and champion its artists			
Vision	We are the preeminent national institution and destination dedicated to championing Australian photography and its vital role in culture and society			
Goals	Recognised as Australia's preeminent national photography museum and destination	Grow and inspire diverse local, national and international audiences to engage with Australian photography	Champion the vital role of Australian photography and empower its artists	Develop a thriving and sustainable museum that fosters innovation and collaboration
What success looks like	• Recognised as the leading institution engaged with photography across key audience and stakeholder groups • A destination for photography: increasing our profile and reach digitally and in-person with local, national and international audiences • Provide a platform for cultural exchange, embracing the breadth of cultural heritage in Australia, and nurturing international audiences and international content for Australian audiences	• Nurture existing and grow new and diverse audiences across our audience segments • Provide exceptional end-to-end audience experiences (physical and digital) which builds social, intellectual and emotional connection through photography	• Provide rich opportunities for photographic artists that supports them to exhibit, engage with the sector as professionals and develop their practices • Develop the collection to represent key moments, artists and iconic works across the spectrum of Australian photography • Activate the collection to make it accessible (onsite and online) and to build knowledge and awareness of Australian photography • Elevate photography within broader Australian art history as a distinctive art form and enable a better understanding of Australian photographic history • Curate bold and ambitious exhibitions and commission artists in ways that actively engage and educate audiences through inspirational storytelling	• Execute a strong development and commercial program that provides funding certainty • Drive strong philanthropic engagement and outcomes through close collaboration with the MAPH Foundation • Nurture and develop our team and their expertise • Develop effective and collaborative relationships across the sector • Adopt a responsible approach to ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) • Support health and wellbeing, economic development and community connection and belonging

Values				
Value	Integrity	Inclusive	Creative	Optimistic
Definition	We do the right thing in the right way	We are accessible, welcoming and engaging for our audience and our staff	We are driven by innovation, problem solving, collaboration and courageousness	We are hopeful and confident about the future

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