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VISITATION UP AT CITY MUSEUM AT OLD TREASURY AFTER ONLY ONE YEAR

City Museum at Old Treasury Melbourne has a good reason to celebrate its first birthday this week. In only one year since the former Gold Treasury Museum was relaunched as 'City Museum at Old Treasury' visitation has increased by 25%.

The Museum's Director Jo-Anne Cooper attributed some of the increase to the installation of dramatic six metre high red sculptural signs on the steps of the historic building, facing Collins Street.

"The signs have made it very obvious that this wonderful old building is open to the general public" she said. "During this busy year, we hosted four very successful seasonal exhibitions - each one cleverly conceived and designed to complement the heritage exhibition spaces. Our giant upside down statue of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe installed in Gordon Reserve, next to the City Museum was also a major talking point, attracting great media coverage."

Ms Cooper said that visitation to the museum's permanent exhibitions *Built on Gold* in the evocative vaults and *Making Melbourne* also increased - virtually ensuring the 'new' museum's survival in the increasingly busy small museum sector.

Ms Cooper also believes the name change more effectively communicates 'what's on offer' to Melburnians and tourists alike. The growth of 'city museums' - dedicated

solely to the history and contemporary life of a particular city has been a worldwide trend, providing amongst other things an ideal orientation point for tourists.

Although completely independent from the City of Melbourne, Ms Cooper cites the marketing support provided by them, as being another plank in the museum's initial success. 'Like many small or boutique museums our marketing and staffing resources are very limited, so the umbrella campaigns operated by the City of Melbourne have been very helpful in getting the word out about us'.

The City Museum at Old Treasury has also been fortunate to have the support of so many wonderful lenders across a broad spectrum - from major public institutions to private collectors. Curator Simon Gregg comments 'Although our key Melbourne stories remain constant our supporting artefacts are always changing giving repeat visitors the chance to see something new on every visit'.

Whilst numbers have increased Ms Cooper is realistic about the potential for large volumes of visitors. 'Our 25% increase comes off a very low base and much has to be done to attract the 50,000 visitors per annum it is believed the museum could comfortably accommodate.'

'As we are situated in, arguably, the most significant heritage building in Victoria, which we share with a number of other tenants, there will always be limits to the visitor numbers we can accommodate without damaging the fabric of the building.'

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