



**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget**

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- Recommendation 1: That the government continue to include **cultural infrastructure** as a priority category within its infrastructure program. Promoting community engagement, diversity, lifelong learning and contributing to economic growth are critically important functions for cultural institutions to play in a robust contemporary society. Further investment in cultural infrastructure will strengthen Canada’s competitiveness, and facilitate the attraction of talented professionals and business investment.
- Recommendation 2: That the government continue to pursue policies in support of Canada’s **Indigenous** peoples, and in so doing, leverage existing cultural resources like the ROM for engagement, learning, innovation, and pride of cultural ownership.
- Recommendation 3: That the government support **innovation** in institutions such as the ROM with a commitment and track record in thought leadership, so that Canadians of all backgrounds, ages and abilities have opportunities to learn, create and impact their own – and our nation’s – future success.
- Recommendation 4: That the government continue to promote **cultural diplomacy** abroad to generate and share content locally, nationally and internationally, enabling Canada to promote its voice and tell its story to the world.

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is Canada's largest and most comprehensive international museum of art, culture and nature, ranked among the top 10 cultural institutions in North America. Home to a world-class collection of 13 million artworks, cultural objects and natural history specimens, the ROM welcomes more than 1.4 million people annually, who visit our galleries and exhibitions, and participate in our educational and public programs. The ROM is the single most visited museum in Canada.

A source of civic and national pride for more than a century, the ROM is recognized as a leader in culture, learning, community outreach, research and tourism – an economic engine for Toronto, Ontario and Canada.

We applaud the Government of Canada's commitments to priority areas of focus such as supporting culture, youth, Indigenous truth and reconciliation, multiculturalism, education and societal equality, the creative sector, education, science and innovation – all of which will have a significant impact on Canada's economic growth and competitiveness. The ROM is fully aligned with these priorities and stands ready to partner with the government locally, nationally and internationally. As a cultural leader, the ROM can help realize the national and global ambitions of our country; with the aspiration to be an active partner with the Government of Canada, we respectfully make the following recommendations (including ROM context examples):

1. *Continue to include **cultural infrastructure** as a priority category within its infrastructure program. Promoting community engagement, diversity, lifelong learning and contributing to economic growth are critically important functions for cultural institutions to play in a robust contemporary society. Fortify culture and tourism in provincial-federal agreements. Further investment in cultural infrastructure will foster strengthen Canada's competitiveness, and facilitate the attraction of talented professionals and business investment.*

Research demonstrates that enhanced public and cultural spaces have major social and symbolic value, instilling pride, strengthening local economies, deepening understanding and cultural capacity. Dynamic civic hubs bring people of all backgrounds together to connect, share meaningful experiences, and bond as a community.

As the ROM moves forward to realize our 21st century museum vision, capital plans are to create a more vibrant civic hub, with more accessible interior and exterior community space for exhibitions, programs, education, experiences, and amenities to attract and engage visitors from Canada and the world. This will include free admission to 60,000 square feet of public space, exhibitions and our Indigenous gallery on the main floor (an

area larger than most museums in Canada); an additional 40,000 square feet of exhibition and gallery space, and a vibrant outdoor plaza.

The ROM's plans for a progressive new Learning and Innovation Centre include interior and exterior spaces that will offer students and teachers transformative ways to explore art, culture and nature within the context of their lives today, and tomorrow.

Technologically advanced and forward thinking, this Centre will be a creative model for the future and provide exciting new and immersive opportunities for learning and innovation.

We are in the early stages of developing this ambitious plan, based on the established partnership model of federal, provincial and public funding, in the range of \$240 million+.

- 2. Continue to pursue policies in support of Canada's **Indigenous** peoples, and in so doing, leverage existing cultural resources like the ROM for engagement, learning, innovation, and pride of cultural ownership.*

The Indigenous community is the fastest growing segment of Canada's population, and for our country's economic growth and core values as a civil society, must be a confident and skilled part of our workforce. Our cultural institutions have a real role to play. The ROM stewards an important Indigenous collection of art and culture. We are committed to increasing understanding of the historical and contemporary contributions to Canada by Indigenous peoples and sharing their stories and objects in ways that provide the Indigenous community with ownership of its past and its future.

We are expanding Indigenous content and perspectives through renewing the Indigenous gallery; working with an Indigenous Advisory Circle to guide programming; repatriating sacred cultural objects; and hiring a curator of Indigenous art and culture. The ROM recognizes the importance of Indigenous youth in changing the future and provides meaningful onsite and offsite growth experiences. Last school year (2017-18) alone, 2,950 Indigenous students and their peers visited the ROM through the Indigenous Student Engagement Program. The ROM's \$1 million digital learning initiative connects with 5,000 Indigenous students and their peers across Ontario. Our active and engaged Youth Cabinet is a leadership program for Indigenous teens, and we have a full-time intern program for Indigenous youth.

- 3. Support **innovation** in institutions with a commitment and track record in thought leadership like the ROM so that Canadians of all backgrounds, ages and abilities have opportunities to learn, create and impact their own – and our nation's – future success.*

A dynamic leader in lifelong learning, the ROM engages a diverse public with a wide range of experiential hands-on programs and travelling community opportunities and collaborations. We are committed to removing barriers to participation stemming from financial, social, cultural or physical challenges through subsidies for school visits and immigrants, community outreach, free admission to new Canadians and post-secondary students, and digital access to share our collections and knowledge across the country and beyond.

Our School Visits Bursary Program annually provides almost 60,000 visits to underserved youth. ROM in My Backyard brings the Museum to underserved children in their communities. Through partnerships with more than 80 non-profits, the ROM provides free access to more than 100,000 visitors who otherwise would be unable to visit the Museum. The ROM has earned several awards for diverse and accessible programs and is an acknowledged access leader and resource for other museums, recognized through annual awards and accolades.

As Ontario's largest co- and extra-curricular educator, the ROM works with the Ministry of Education syllabus, and offers learners and the community a wide range of educational outreach opportunities. The ROM's innovative Makerspace is a destination for STEM and STEAM problem-based learning using digital technologies and arts-based processes, allowing students to design and prototype solutions using real-world applications.

4. *Continue to promote **cultural diplomacy** abroad, to generate and share content locally, nationally and internationally, enabling Canada to promote its voice and tell its story to the world.*

The ROM stewards exceptional and diverse collections of 13 million artworks, cultural objects and natural history specimens, making it the largest international collection in Canada and 6th largest in North America.; Many of its collections rank among the best in the world. An international leader in original findings in biodiversity, palaeontology, earth sciences, visual arts, material culture and archaeology, the ROM plays a vital role in advancing global understanding of the artistic, cultural and natural world.

We are committed to sharing this vast collection digitally, so that individuals, students, scholars and researchers have unlimited access. Our eMuseum now features 10,000 objects and artifacts online, and will reach 100,000 within five years.

The ROM shares its work globally through major loans such as Egyptian objects, which are now part of exhibitions at museums in China; in Berlin at *Faces of China*, an exhibition including 40 pieces from the ROM; and through our travelling exhibitions such as *A Third Gender* at the Japan Society in New York City. Museums within Canada and China will

host our highly successful *The Blue Whale Story* exhibition. The ROM was proud to be part of Ministry Joly's delegation to China in April.

The ROM is Canada's largest field research institution, with 33 curators researching across Canada and in 32 countries, and a recognized leader in advancing scholarship on a global scale. Our experts and cross-appointed university professors annually publish more than 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and other publications, and collaborate world-wide. For example, the ROM has the most comprehensive collection of Canadian fossils in the world, 4 billion years old, coming from coast to coast. Many are on loan internationally, at other Canadian museums, and to UNESCO Heritage sites and Parks Canada. The history of life on Earth is written in the rocks of Canada, and the past informs contemporary issues like climate change.

Two other considerations speak to support for cultural institutions like the ROM.

5. The Success of Sustained Partnerships

The ROM's excellence and reach are made possible through the support of government grants, earned income, and philanthropy. Our strong relationships with the private sector, foundations, individuals and other non-profits are essential for delivering on the mission of the ROM. Over the past decade, donors have contributed more than \$175 million for infrastructure, collections, learning, curatorial excellence, exhibitions and programs. Last year, gifts of nearly \$20 million included \$1 million from the Slight Family Foundation for Indigenous learning and outreach; \$2.5 million from the Louise Hawley Stone Trust to support acquisitions and publications; \$5 million from Dan Mishra to create a South Asia initiative and endow a curatorship; and a bequest of \$3.7 million towards our outstanding work in Chinese art and culture. In May 2018, the Richard M. Ivey Curator of Invertebrate Palaeontology was established—the first endowed position of its kind in Canada – investing in and retaining extraordinary Canadian talent. This prestigious curatorship will enable the ROM to further develop original research, engaging public programs and educational opportunities.

Our volunteer Board leaders and 1,000 front-line volunteers assure community relevance, reach and engagement.

6. An Economic Engine for Toronto, Ontario and Canada

The economic impact of the ROM is diverse: tourism, museum operations, ancillary community and business operations, education at all levels, academic research and construction/capital improvements. Economic impact studies related to Toronto tourism

indicate that the ROM generates over \$200 million from visitors, equating to a factor of 7.5 times our provincial government grant for operations. Upcoming ROM capital improvements will add to the economy: construction is estimated at \$240 million or more, which will mean hundreds of jobs. Plans for expansion in exhibitions, learning, Indigenous programs, curatorial excellence and community access represent an estimated 10 percent increase in staffing, currently at 641 full and part-time employees.

Conclusion

The ROM is proud to present just a few proof points about the impressive contributions cultural institutions like the Museum offer to Canada's vibrant and sustainable economic growth and competitiveness. We seek a strong, constructive partnership with the federal government that will be mutually beneficial for the initiatives and areas of focus we share. The ROM is eager to work with the Government of Canada on aligned priorities including culture, innovation and learning, Indigenous communities, national and global content creation, and promotion and outreach. We hope our recommendations underscore our desire to make a positive contribution to the ongoing policy dialogue. These significant issues and opportunities are critical to our cultural heritage and our economic and societal potential, as an institution, and as a nation.