Disability Access Plan 2018–22

13 March 2018

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Message from the Director

I am delighted to present the National Museum of Australia's Disability Access Plan 2018–2022 as part of our continuing commitment to providing all Australians with access to our collections, exhibitions and programs.

We are working to give people living with disability more ways to connect with the Museum in our physical and online spaces. We are drawing on the wealth of knowledge shared by visitors and employees with lived experience of disability and impairment.

This plan consolidates earlier policies and practices and demonstrates our commitment to constantly improving and measuring community inclusion, along with the accessibility of our buildings, exhibitions, services and employment.

We have built our plan around principles that ensure that the Museum is accessible to all visitors and employees through its:
- buildings and digital services
- collections and exhibitions
- events and activities.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to integrate accessibility into all our work and we will ensure our policies and practices reflect international best practice.

I extend my warmest thanks to all the people and organisations who generously share their experiences with the Museum, and whose knowledge guided this plan.

I firmly believe this Disability Action Plan will continue to build a supportive, confident and inclusive national institution where all visitors and employees can join the conversation about Australian history.

Mathew Trinca
Director
National Museum of Australia

Disability in Australia

In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* found 18.3 per cent of the population had a disability, as defined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. In 2017, this was more than 4.5 million Australians.

There are many different kinds of disability resulting from accidents, illness, genetics or age.

A disability may affect mobility, senses, ability to learn, or ability to communicate easily. Some people have more than one disability.

A disability may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary, or exist in the future. It may result in minimal or substantial adaptations to people's lives.

The Australian Network on Disability states that:

- 45 per cent of Australians will have a mental health concern in their lifetime
- 1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss. Almost 30,000 people with total hearing loss use Australian sign language (Auslan).
- An estimated 124,400 Australians are blind and 720,300 have an uncorrectable vision impairment.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that up to 15 per cent of Australians use a mobility aid such as walking canes, crutches, wheelchairs, walking frames or modified vehicles.

Disability at the Museum

Since opening in March 2001, the National Museum has consistently improved accessibility to its building, collection, events and services, through:
- providing free loan of mobility scooters and wheelchairs
- making available to people with a sensory impairment
    - hearing induction loops
    - open captioning
    - braille maps, guides and information panels
    - tactile tables
- accessible iOS and Android apps with Auslan and audio descriptions
- implementing procedures, with the assistance of the Australian Human Rights Commission, to identify and help assistance animals and their handlers
- establishing a dedicated position to develop and deliver programs and workshops for people with sensory and neurological disabilities
- implementing the Diversity Action Plan 2014–18 with aims and actions to improve Museum employment for people with a disability
- engaging an independent access consultant to audit the Museum's main building and galleries
- working towards the provision of an accessible website for people who use assistive software.

The Disability Access Plan 2018–2022 is the Museum's public commitment to, and strategy for, identifying and eliminating barriers faced by people with disabilities and any practices that are discriminatory towards them.

This plan outlines the Museum's goals to meet the needs of its employees and visitors, nationally and internationally for the coming five years, by:
- engaging and communicating respectfully with our visitors
- promoting accessibility for all people
- introducing innovative techniques to engage with all audiences
- creating a supportive and inclusive workplace culture
- excelling in everything we do.

Principles, commitments and actions

The Museum is physically accessible

Commitments

1. The Museum will work towards providing a built environment that meets Australian building codes, standards and guidelines for accessibility.

2. The Museum will, during capital works and general maintenance projects, comply with the recommendations of the Building Access Audit 2014.

3. The Museum will provide multiple and accessible wayfinding tools for visitors that may include accessible signage (essential information, high contrasting colouring, enhanced pictograms, and braille), ibeacons, QR tags, tactile numbering and indicators.

4. The Museum will provide induction hearing loops on multimedia with spoken word in all galleries, theatres and venues for public hire.

5. The Museum will provide defined paths of access, internally and externally, free from glare and deep shadow, with solid contrasting colours between floors, walls, doors and furnishings.

Actions	Date
• Ensure staff have access to National Construction Code, associated disability and referenced Australian and New Zealand standards, and best practice guidelines or checklists from other national and international museums and disability groups.	2018
• Create internal procedures and policies to support Museum staff to implement codes, standards, guidelines and accessibility specific checklists.	2020
• Implement all recommendations of the Building Access Audit 2014 as part of ongoing maintenance and redevelopment programs.	2022
• List all applicable codes, standards and best practice national and international guidelines in tender and contract documentation.	2018
• Ensure major building and exhibition projects are assessed and monitored by an access consultant accredited with the Association of Consultants in Access Australia	2019
• Continue to provide free loan of mobility scooters and wheelchairs to visitors.	Ongoing

Actions	Date
• Provide accessible and inclusive seating, guided by Australian standards, with back and arm rests, height requirements for ease of use, colour contrast with floor and walls, and spacing for wheelchairs and scooters.	2019
• Provide dimly lit, silent, calming spaces in permanent galleries for visitors with cognitive and neurological impairments	2020
• Provide additional wayfinding tools such as downloadable maps and guides, braille and tactile, ibeacons, audio guides and tactile numbering.	2019
• Install and maintain induction hearing loops on all multimedia with spoken word in galleries, and at customer service points at the Information Desk, Museum Shop, Museum Cafe and business reception.	2019

The Museum's exhibitions are accessible

Commitments

1. The Museum will develop exhibitions that enable access for congenital, acquired and age onset physical, sensory, learning, cognitive and neurological impairments.

2. The Museum will incorporate multiple interpretive tools in permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions, such as digital labels and interactives, alternative formats like large print and braille labels, audio tours and Auslan apps accessible with assistive software.

3. The Museum will include, in the development of exhibitions and programs, experiences that enable visitors to touch and explore objects and their history, including but not limited to digital interactives or virtual and augmented reality.

4. The Museum will provide exhibition text and catalogues in a variety of text-to-speech-enabled electronic formats, including PDF, e-pub and braille ready format for use with e-readers, smart devices and refreshable braille displays.

Actions	Date
• Ensure all applicable codes, standards, best practice national and international guidelines for accessible design, and this plan, are included in tender and contract documentation.	2018
• Provide accessible and inclusive seating in exhibitions, guided by Australian standards. This includes back and arm rests, height requirements, colour contrast with floors and walls and spacing for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.	2019

Actions	Date
• Provide dimly lit, silent, calming spaces in permanent galleries for visitors with cognitive and neurological impairments.	2020
• Include interactive digital panels and tactile experiences in exhibitions through touchable displays with props and/or objects, braille labels and physical manipulation.	Ongoing to 2020
• Design and install text panels and signage with clarity of language, high colour contrast, appropriate text sizes, sans serif fonts and where appropriate, pictograms.	Ongoing to 2020
• Position labels so they can be used by people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters.	Ongoing
• Provide alternative communication forms for visitors, such as Auslan and captioned tour apps, open captions on multimedia and presentations, braille labels, hearing augmentation and the National Relay Service.	Ongoing to 2020
• Ensure major building and exhibition projects are assessed by an access consultant accredited with the Association of Consultants in Access Australia	2018 onwards
• Include provision for the flexibility to connect adaptive devices including Bluetooth, wi-fi or plug and play in interactive spaces such as Kspace, virtual and augmented reality experiences and Discovery Space.	Ongoing to 2020

The Museum's public and education programs are accessible

Commitments

1. The Museum will develop, with disability groups, programs specifically for groups requiring alternative access to the Museum.

2. Digital programs, including outreach programs, will be usable with the accessibility features of smart devices, to enable inclusion and communication with students and visitors.

3. The Museum will provide more than one accessible way to book and pay for public and education programs.

4. The Museum will support alternatives to audio and visual presentations, such as hearing loops, Auslan, captioning, large print, braille and audio description.

Actions	Date
• Ensure online booking and payments comply with AS EN301.549, level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the Web Accessibility Initiative – Accessibility Rich Internet Applications (WAI-ARIA).	2019
• Provide training for relevant staff on the use of the National Relay Service.	Annually to 2020
• Support the provision of open captioning, Auslan, Respeak and portable induction hearing loops without additional fees.	2019
• Install hearing induction loops in all Museum venues available for public hire.	2018
• Ensure app-based education programs delivered through tablets will be usable with iOS, Android or Windows accessibility features.	2020
• When appropriate, use existing alternative communication apps for smart devices, including text to Auslan, text to speech and text to tactile.	2018

The Museum's collections are accessible

Commitments

1. Visitors are able to search the Museum's collections electronically.

2. The Museum will maintain a handling collection of de-accessioned, replica, 3D printed and donated objects.

3. On request the Museum will endeavour to facilitate small group visits to the collection storage facilities, to view specific objects.

4. On request the Museum will endeavour to provide disability groups and providers with supported after-hours access and exclusive opening hours to exhibitions.

Actions	Date
• Ensure all Museum collection search engines meet level AA of the WCAG 2.0, including Piction, EMu and Collection Explorer and Research Library searches.	2019
• Provide collections information staff with training for the WCAG and WAI-ARIA.	2019
• Continue providing supervised access to storage viewing rooms for community groups and individuals.	2018
• Promote the Museum's supported after-hours access service to disability groups and providers	2018

The Museum is digitally accessible

Commitments

1. The Museum will enable all visitors to use its website, digital collection management system and apps, by maintaining them at level AA of the WCAG and implementing the WAI-ARIA.

2. The Museum will use alternative text descriptions for all images on social media posts on Facebook and Twitter.

3. The Museum will enable access to digital content by ensuring it is usable with built-in accessibility tools of smart devices.

4. The Museum's (ICT) systems will meet Australian standards for accessibility.

Actions	Date
• Provide training to all web, multimedia, social media and information technology staff in WCAG, WAI-ARIA and the requirements of AS EN301.549 accessibility requirements suitable for the public procurement of information and communications technology (ICT) products and services.	2020
• Meet W3C standards of accessibility to the AA standard, in keeping with the Digital Services Standard of the Digital Transformation Agency.	2020
• Make content accessible across all devices, leveraging the Digital Transformation Agency Agenda to create a responsive site.	2020
• Ensure compatibility with built-in accessibility settings of operating systems, such as pinch-to-zoom, ease of access, reachability and access shortcut key.	2019

The Museum will actively listen and engage with stakeholders to integrate access in all its work

Commitments

1. The Museum will seek to engage and work cooperatively with various disability stakeholders when undergoing major redevelopment of its galleries, public areas and venues.

2. In addition to the Client Service Charter, visitors will be provided with a dedicated avenue to inform the Museum of feedback regarding accessibility matters and the Museum will provide a timely response.

Actions	Date
• Incorporate diverse focus groups in the research and design phases of major projects.	2018
• Establish the disability@nma.gov.au email mailbox, to be managed by the Diversity and Wellbeing Support Officer.	2018
• Respond to visitor feedback about access promptly and respectfully, in accordance with the Client Service Charter, the Complaints Handling Procedures and if applicable, in consultation with groups representing disability and the aged.	2018
• Create guidelines for project managers to engage diverse focus groups as part of research and design of major building and exhibition projects for the Museum at their initiation and throughout their development.	2018

The Museum's internal policies and procedures will reflect best practice

Commitments

1. The Museum is committed to implementing best practice and this will be reflected in its policies and procedures.

2. The Museum will build disability awareness among staff and contractors through programs and training.

3. The Museum will enable visitors to access all Museum publications through implementation of the *Copyright Act 1968* (amended 2017) and the ratified Marrakesh Treaty.

Actions	Date
• Create Museum policies and procedures that reflect international best practice on accessibility.	2020
• Ensure all policies, procedures, guidelines and checklists for Accessibility are reviewed, up to date and distributed to staff.	2020
• Provide disability awareness programs for all Museum staff, including but not limited to: o Accessible Arts o Access Institute o Better Hearing Australia o Black Mountain Special School o Dementia Australia o Guide Dogs NSW/ACT o LearnHub o Vision Australia.	Every second year from 2018
• Provide training to copyright and publishing staff on the amended Copyright Act.	2019
• Provide copyright and publishing staff with training on creating accessible documents and formats, such as braille-ready, accessible PDFs and e-pubs.	2019

Key performance indicators

Category	Target	Date
Physical	• Staff access to the SAI Global Building Code of Australia online portal is maintained.	Each year
	• Accessibility checklists for the performance requirements in section 3.1 of the Mandatory Accessibility in the Museum guidelines are created	2019
	• 80 per cent of Disability Access Audit recommendations are implemented in line with the Gallery Development Plan.	2022
	• 100 per cent of Disability Access Audit recommendations are implemented in line with the Gallery Development Plan.	2024–25
Exhibitions and collections	• Supplementary checklists are developed for the Hall, forecourt, exhibitions and building projects, in line with Australian and international best practice for accessibility	2020
	• Visitors are able to access exhibition, multimedia and web material with a variety of alternative formats, assistive technologies and software.	2020
	• Each permanent and temporary exhibition includes tactile objects and labels for visitors to explore.	Ongoing to 2022
Customer service, education and public programs	• Museum staff complete training in customer service and delivery of programs for visitors with disabilities.	Every second year from 2018
	• Develop, deliver and report on programs specifically created for people with disabilities.	Each year to 2022
	• Information and bookings for events and programs is provided in alternative formats, including but not limited to braille, large print, text-to-speech, Auslan and National Relay Service.	2019 onwards

Category	Target	Date
Digital	• Museum staff complete training on implementing level AA of WCAG and WAI-ARIA for websites, web applications, social media and applications for smart devices.	2020
	• Meet W3C standards for accessibility to AA standard in keeping with the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Service Standards.	2020
	• Make content accessible across all devices.	2020
	• The Museum and potential and contracted service providers include AS EN 301.549 as part of tender and contract documentation for all IT and multimedia systems.	2019
Community engagement	• All staff complete the LearnHub modules on disability awareness and building disability confidence.	2018
	• Checklist for engagement and database of contacts is created for involving disability groups in all major redevelopments of galleries, venues and public areas.	2019
	• Reported barriers encountered by people with a disability and those over 65 years of age reduces by: 50 per cent 90 per cent.	 2020 2022

Acknowledgements

References

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Australian Human Rights Commission: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth): https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A04426

Australian Government Digital Transformation Agenda: https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/about-us/budget/budget-2015-16/budget-measures/improving-services/digital-transformation-agenda-stage-one-and-establishment-digital

National Museum of Australia – Diversity Action Plan 2014–2018: http://www.nma.gov.au/about_us/ips/diversity_action_plan_2014-18

W3C – Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0: http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

W3C – Web Accessibility Initiative – Accessible Rich Internet Applications: https://www.w3.org/TR/2017/REC-wai-aria-1.1-20171214/

National Museum of Australia Digital Strategy 2016–2020