



Introduction

The Council (the accountable authority) of the National Museum of Australia (the Museum) is pleased to present the Museum's 2026–27 Corporate Plan. The plan covers the four-year reporting period 2026–27 to 2029–30, as required under paragraph 35 (1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

The Corporate Plan is the primary planning document for the Museum. It outlines the activities the Museum will undertake over the course of the current financial year and forward estimates period to achieve our purpose, and the ways in which the outcomes of these activities will be measured and assessed.

The Museum's priorities and key actions for the coming period are also set out in our Strategic Plan 2024–29.

The 2026–27 Corporate Plan and Portfolio Budget Statements set out the Museum's priorities and the Minister for the Arts' expectations to ensure we deliver on our purpose, which is:

To increase awareness and understanding of Australia's history and culture by managing the National Museum's collections and providing access through public programs and exhibitions.

We look forward to presenting performance results for the year in the performance statements contained in the Museum's 2026–27 Annual Report.



Professor Clare Wright OAM

Chair of Council

August 2026



Katherine McMahon

Director

August 2026

Our purpose

The Museum was established to develop and maintain the National Historical Collection for the benefit of the nation, and to bring to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia. Central to the Museum's role as a national institution is our focus on meaningful engagement with all Australians in the telling of their stories, and our commitment to the histories and cultures of Australia's First Nations peoples.

The Museum achieves this by:

- striving to build a just and equitable society that honours and respects the First Nations peoples of this continent and all who have come after
- collecting, documenting, researching and making the collection accessible
- engaging with audiences locally, nationally and internationally to promote learning, dialogue and debate about our past, present and future
- promoting collaborative work across the breadth of artistic and creative practice to enhance the cultural life of our nation.

The Museum is the only national institution that is wholly devoted to the complex and comprehensive story of Australia, from deep time through to the present and into the future. In undertaking our work, we aim to inspire, challenge and empower.

The Museum's functions are set out in our enabling legislation, the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980*.

Our vision and values

Vision

The National Museum of Australia inspires, challenges and empowers people to find their voice and place in the world.

Mission

We strive to build a just and equitable society that honours and respects the First Nations peoples of this continent and all who have come after.

We collect, document, research and make accessible heritage collections that represent the diversity of experience in Australia.

We engage with audiences physically and digitally to promote learning, dialogue and debate about our past, present and future.

We promote collaborative work across the breadth of artistic and creative practice to enhance the cultural life of our nation.

We value and respect the commitment and contribution of all who participate in and contribute to the Museum's community.

Values

The National Museum of Australia will serve the Australian public through:

honesty and integrity

mutual support and openness

inclusion, fairness and equity

innovation and efficiency

excellence and leadership

the quality of our welcome.

Commitment to the National Cultural Policy

The Museum continues to align our ambitions with the National Cultural Policy, *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*. We are committed to implementing the policy's five pillars and have aligned our strategic priorities accordingly.

The Australian Government is currently developing a new National Cultural Policy to guide the future direction of the creative and cultural sector. We note that the new policy will continue to be structured around the five pillars first set out in *Revive*.

1

First Nations first

Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture.

2

a place for every story

Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

3

centrality of the artist

Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating artists as creators.

4

strong cultural infrastructure

Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts, culture and heritage.

5

engaging the audience

Making sure our stories connect with people at home and abroad.

Our operating environment

The National Museum of Australia embraces our role of connecting Australians to their shared histories. We do this by bringing to life the rich and diverse stories of the nation through our galleries, exhibitions, education and other programs and digital media. The Museum is dynamic and resilient in achieving our purpose and delivering programs and services in an innovative and financially sustainable way, adapting to changing audience needs and expectations.

Expectations of government

The Museum recognises its responsibilities as a National Collecting Institution and is accountable to the Australian Government and the public. It operates to the highest standards of governance, compliance and accountability, in accordance with the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The Museum also contributes to the Government's broader arts and cultural objectives, as outlined in the annual Statement of Expectations issued by the Minister for the Arts.

Through cultural leadership, we will continue to advance the National Cultural Policy agenda. Our collection and programming decisions stimulate cultural discussion, support creative progress and demonstrate leadership that shapes the future of our cultural landscape. The Museum is actively participating in consultation for the next National Cultural Policy.

National leadership

As the National Museum of Australia, we occupy a unique position, providing leadership at local, national and international levels. Through cultural leadership, the Museum brings to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia. We engage audiences to promote learning, informed dialogue and debate, and to strengthen understanding of our shared history and culture.

Onsite visitation

The Museum's Acton site recorded 570,714 visits in 2025–26. Audiences of all ages enjoyed the Museum's highly popular *Mr Squiggle and Friends* exhibition, which showcased the major acquisition of the Norman Hetherington collection and provided opportunities for intergenerational sharing. The Museum's 2025–26 summer exhibition, *Hallyu! The Korean Wave* from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, explored how South Korea's creativity has captured imaginations around the world. This show brought new audiences through the Museum's doors, with more than half of those attending *Hallyu!* aged between 18 and 44 years, meeting the Museum's goal of attracting younger and more diverse audiences.

The Museum has continued to develop its forward schedule of major exhibitions and programs to attract new and returning audiences. We anticipate that onsite visitation will grow in 2026–27 and beyond, supported by a combination of exhibitions with an Australian focus and those from major international collections. However the impacts of ongoing global economic uncertainties continue to pose a risk, with potential impacts on both visitation and own-source revenue.

In July 2026 the Museum launched *Antarctica*, a new exhibition that explores Australia's history in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean and showcases over 200 objects from the Museum's collection. The major international exhibition for 2026, *Terracotta Warriors*, on loan from the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Heritage Administration, Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Center and Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, will open in December 2026. *Terracotta Warriors* is part of a major cultural exchange between Australia and China announced following the Australian Prime Minister's visit to China in 2025. The blockbuster exhibition will feature life-size terracotta figures constructed more than 2,000 years ago to protect China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, in the afterlife.

Touring program

Over the past 12 months, the Museum has consolidated our domestic touring program following the conclusion of several national tours and completed a comprehensive survey of partner venues to inform a strategic reset.

In July 2026 the Museum launched the domestic tour of *Mr Squiggle and Friends*. This accessible, family-focused exhibition will engage regional and metropolitan communities and reach a broad national audience.

In parallel, the Museum will commence the international rollout of the *Water Spirits* immersive experience, supported by the ASEAN–Australia Centre. This multi-year program will deliver the immersive component across six venues in Southeast Asia, strengthening cultural diplomacy outcomes and extending the Museum's international footprint.

Concurrently, development will progress on the *Water Spirits* object-based exhibition for presentation alongside the immersive experience at the Museum in Canberra. This combination of international immersive touring and collection-focused exhibition will deliver both global reach and deep local engagement.

The touring program continues to align with the Museum's 2024–29 Strategic Plan and broader government priorities, including the National Cultural Policy. Success will be measured through visitation metrics, geographic reach, cultural impact, strengthened partnerships and meaningful engagement with diverse audiences.

Digital engagement

The Museum has achieved significant growth in digital engagements in recent years, from 2.7 million in 2018–19 to over 6.5 million in 2025–26. Recognising the increasing importance of digital channels to connect audiences with the Museum's collections and the need to update the Museum's ageing digital infrastructure, we continue to invest in initiatives to uplift our digital capabilities.

The National Museum of Australia Operating System (NMA OS) Committee has been established to oversee these initiatives. The committee will ensure that the Museum's major technology, data projects, digital systems and data architectures are strategically aligned and technically sound.

Funding sustainability and revenue

The Museum continues to deliver on priorities established through funding provided in the 2023–24 Federal Budget, including support for cultural workforce employment, improved collection storage and urgent physical and digital infrastructure upgrades. However further investment is required to address larger, unavoidable capital pressures, including major plant replacement and essential gallery refurbishments.

The Museum operates in a constrained fiscal environment and cannot rely on government funding alone to achieve its vision. Government appropriations account for approximately 80% of total funding, with the remaining revenue generated through philanthropy, commercial activities and other own-source income. The Museum continues to identify opportunities to grow and diversify these revenue streams to support the Museum's long-term sustainability and our ability to deliver public value.

Environmental sustainability

The Museum is committed to the government's APS Net Zero 2030 target. A review of our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2023–30 (ESAP) commenced in late 2025 to reflect the work that has occurred since its inception and establish future priorities in line with our Emissions Reduction Pathway.

The Museum has defined its operational emissions boundary and conducted an annual carbon footprint analysis since the 2022–23 financial year. Significant progress has been made to deliver meaningful reductions under Scope 1 and 2 emissions, as we turn our attention to actions to better quantify and reduce Scope 3 emissions.

Our latest carbon footprint inventory includes an emissions hotspot analysis to identify the most significant contributors to our Scope 3 emissions and the greatest opportunities for targeted, near-term reductions and supplier engagement. Our ESAP details our emission reduction strategies including supplier engagement, targeted procurement and improved data collection and transparency.

The Museum is developing our first climate risk assessment, guided by the government's Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program (CROMP). This work will ensure the Museum is well placed to respond to current and future environmental challenges, and will inform our mandatory reporting obligations under the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure policy, which commence in the 2026–27 financial year.

Collections

The National Historical Collection (NHC) is at the heart of the Museum's operations. The Museum will continue to acquire objects of national significance that represent the thematic and geographic breadth of Australia's history. We will continue to address serious, long-term collection storage issues through the funding uplift provided by the Australian Government in the 2023–24 Budget. As part of this process, we are continuing to review and rationalise the collection to ensure the NHC is effectively maintained. Making the collection available to all Australians and to our international audience is a further core activity, achieved through exhibitions, loans and an increased online presence.

The Museum also cares for ancestral remains and First Nations cultural materials that are of a secret, sacred, ceremonial or restricted nature. These are referred to as Special Holdings, better reflecting the specific and cultural nature of their ongoing care and management.

Technology

Continued developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology provide the Museum with opportunities to enhance efficiency, accessibility and insights. The Museum's approach to AI usage and adoption will align with the principles outlined in the Australian Government's "Policy for the responsible use of AI in government". The Museum has appointed a Chief AI Officer and an AI Accountable Official. How AI is used and how AI-related risks are managed will be overseen by the NMA OS Committee and related governance processes.

The global cybersecurity environment is increasingly complex, with the rapid emergence of novel threats posing a high and ongoing risk. The Museum has implemented a cyber security improvement program to strengthen our cyber resilience. This includes uplifting maturity across the Essential Eight domains to ensure robust, sustainable security controls are in place.

The Museum has developed an information governance framework to ensure the appropriate management of our information assets and compliance with the *Archives Act 1983*. We reviewed our information management framework in 2024–25 and received approval to adopt new records authorities. Upgrades to our information management system will be rolled out from 2026–27 to support improved records management practices and governance.

Workforce

The Museum continues to operate under the National Museum of Australia Enterprise Agreement 2024–27 (EA), negotiated as part of the government's service-wide bargaining process. Supported by improved pay and conditions through the EA, including initial steps to address pay fragmentation, the Museum positions itself as an employer of choice, embracing culture-first principles.

We foster a strong and positive workplace culture and offer staff a range of non-cash benefits and opportunities such as genuinely flexible working arrangements, wellbeing programs, free exhibition tickets and discounts in the Museum's cafe and shop.

We recognise and continue to address the need to grow and develop the capability of our workforce through targeted learning and development strategies, with a focus on critical roles and succession planning.

The Museum launched our new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy in late 2025 and remain committed to fostering and strengthening diversity across the workplace. By valuing diversity, we are better positioned to engage with a broad range of people, bringing diverse perspectives, experiences, ideas and solutions into a safe and inclusive workplace.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a living practice at the Museum. In 2026–27, we will extend our commitment to reconciliation through the reporting and renewal of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), building on the previous [Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) 2022–25. The process will be chaired by the Director and the Deputy Director, First Nations, and will be closely guided by the resources, tools and expertise of Reconciliation Australia.

The RAP is part of a broader reconciliation framework that includes the First Nations Cultural Rights and Engagement policy and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. We will also further our commitment to reconciliation through the redevelopment of the First Australians gallery. This will be a major multi-year project for which we will seek additional funding.

First Nations

The First Nations division has strategic responsibility for engaging broadly and deeply with First Nations people to elevate and amplify their perspectives, ideas and voices. The division will continue to engage with First Nations communities on a national and international scale.

Collection access and engagement

Active engagement with First Nations communities critically informs the care and management of First Nations collections, including Special Holdings which comprise ancestral remains and objects of a secret, sacred and restricted nature. Growing relationships and partnerships with First Nations people and communities further serve to inform the display and development of the First Nations collections held by the Museum.

Strategic community engagement

The Museum has entered a renewed collaborative phase that aims to redefine historical relationships with First Nations people and communities. This phase is service-oriented and is focused on access, custodianship and the cultural care and management of the Museum's collections in partnership with communities. We will lead innovative thinking, research and engagement with First Nations communities, demonstrating our commitment to upholding the principles outlined in key frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), and the National Cultural Policy.

Investment in First Nations capability

Core to the Museum's purpose and function is building awareness and understanding of Australia's full history and culture. We are committed to investing in capabilities within First Nations communities to support the ongoing management of collections of national significance, and the development of an expansive and inclusive national narrative.

Our approach to performance

This section outlines how we will measure and assess our performance during the reporting period using specific performance measures, which are aligned to the Commonwealth Performance Framework.

The Museum continues to improve our performance framework to better reflect what we do, how we do it and what we achieve. Our performance framework is focused on ensuring it is fit for purpose and provides a “clear read” across the Portfolio Budget Statements, corporate plan and annual report. Our performance measures reflect a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.

Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS)

Outcome 1

Increased awareness and understanding of Australia’s history and culture by managing the National Museum’s collections and providing access through public programs and exhibitions.

Program 1.1

The National Museum of Australia increases the awareness and understanding of Australia's history and culture through its collections and research, providing access to the public through its public programs and exhibitions.

Year	Performance measures	Planned performance results
2026–27	Maximise visitor engagement with National Museum of Australia collections and experiences	Total visitor engagements: 7,931,000 Permanent exhibitions: 660,000 Special exhibitions: 300,000 Travelling exhibitions: 80,000 Education and public programs: 250,000 Events and functions: 19,000 Digital experiences: 5,747,000 Social media engagements: 875,000
2027–30	As per 2026–27 measures	Total visitor engagements: 8,121,344 in 2027–28 8,316,256 in 2028–29 8,515,846 in 2029–30

Corporate Plan 2026–27

The Corporate Plan and the Strategic Plan 2024–29 are the Museum's primary planning documents.

We have grouped our activities under 4 strategic priorities. Each priority has corresponding key activities and a suite of performance measures as outlined in the following pages.

Strategic priority 1: First Nations

We will engage broadly and deeply with First Nations peoples to elevate and amplify their perspectives, ideas and voices.

Strategic priority 2: Connection

We will foster social connection and make the Museum a place about our future as much as it is about our past.

Strategic priority 3: Growth

We will grow the Museum's business and audience.

Strategic priority 4: Foundation

We will build operational capability to underpin our strategic ambitions.

Annual performance statement

The Museum reports on the key performance measures included in the PBS and Corporate Plan. Each performance measure relates directly to one or more of our strategic priorities.

Our actual results against performance will be reported to parliament and published in the Museum's Annual Report 2026–27. It will include an assessment of each performance result against the target, with additional contextual information and specific examples of actions and outcomes.

When we rate our performance at the end of the cycle, we will apply the following assessment rating for all key performance indicators except those in the PBS.

Rating	Assessment
Not achieved	Result is 0–49%, or
	The project has not commenced or remains in the initial stages of commencement.
Partially achieved	Result is 50–79% of the target measure, or
	There is evidence of substantial progress but outcomes have not been realised to the expected level.
Substantially achieved	Result is 80–94% of the target measure, or
	There is evidence that the work is largely complete, with only minor elements outstanding.
Achieved	Result is 95–100% of the target measure, or
	There is clear evidence that the target has been fully met.

For PBS performance criteria, the Museum will apply the following assessment rating:

Rating	Assessment
Not achieved	Result is below 95% of the target measure
Achieved	Result is 95–100% or above of the target measure

First Nations

We will engage broadly and deeply with First Nations people to elevate and amplify their perspectives, ideas and voices.

Collection access and engagement

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Percentage of formal enquiries and access requests serviced	85%	90%	95%	100%

Rationale/context

Active engagement with First Nations communities critically informs the care, management, display and development of the First Nations collections held by the Museum. This includes the custodianship and repatriation of the Museum's Special Holdings, which comprise ancestral remains and restricted ceremonial cultural material in our care.

Methodology

The Museum facilitates collection access and engagement through the following key activities:

- onsite access
 - numbers of visits, visitors and collection items accessed
 - cultural affiliations of visitors and the collection items they access, plans for ongoing engagement and any data that serves to enrich the collection, such as provenance information, affiliated community organisations or authorising bodies.

- inquiries and requests for information
 - number of engagements resulting from online, in-person and telephone enquiries
 - affiliations with community organisations or authorising bodies.

Data sources

- data from Access Visit and Collection Enquiry tracking spreadsheet
- access visit documentation
- data from the Museum's collection management system.

Caveats

The 2026–27 year will establish a baseline from which future targets will be developed.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

KPI changed to reflect the Museum's focus on First Nations community access to and engagement with the Museum's collections.

Strategic community engagement

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Number of First Nations community gatherings, engagements or partnerships where the Museum is represented and actively contributes	5 strategic community engagements	6 strategic community engagements	7 strategic community engagements	8 strategic community engagements

Rationale/context

Actively working to position the Museum as a valuable resource to First Nations communities will serve to redefine historical relationships and establish a regenerative and service-oriented, collaborative phase. Characterised by service, the Museum will lead innovative thinking, research and collaboration with First Nations communities nationally. This activity expresses the Museum's commitment to upholding principles outlined in key frameworks such as United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and the National Cultural Policy.

Methodology

This objective is met in the following key activities:

- partnering and collaborating with First Nations arts and cultural organisations at regional and state levels
 - number of engagements with key organisations and number of people involved
 - state and regions serviced.

- participation in key gatherings and forums across First Nations communities and the arts and cultural sector, and contribution to discussions that shape standards among state and national cultural organisations
 - number of gatherings attended
 - location of gatherings, coordinating organisations and scope/reach of the gathering.

Data sources

- engagement numbers from the Museum's programs and events
- community engagement data and logs.

Caveats

The 2026–27 year will establish a baseline from which future targets will be developed.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

KPI expanded to reflect the Museum's ambition to be a valuable resource for communities, lead innovative thinking, research and collaboration with First Nations communities, and commit to upholding principles in key frameworks.

Investment in First Nations capability

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Percentage of total budget committed to investing in capabilities within First Nations communities	Baseline to be established	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth

Rationale/context

Core to the Museum's purpose and function is building awareness and enriching understanding of Australia's history and culture. We are committed to investing in capabilities within First Nations communities to continue the ongoing management of collections of national significance and the development of an expansive and inclusive national narrative.

Methodology

This objective is measured through key activities:

- engagement of First Nations people within the Museum as subject-matter experts in various capacities, including as staff, contractors and consultants (individuals)
 - number of First Nations people engaged and the equivalent dollar figure associated with their employment/engagement
 - region and state where these individuals conduct their work.
- procurement of works and services provided by First Nations businesses and organisations
 - dollar figure of total procurement from First Nations businesses and organisations listed by Supply Nation
 - region and state where these businesses and organisations conduct their work.

Data sources

- procurement activities and expenditure through Supply Nation's data
- data from cross-divisional budget reports
- First Nations employee numbers.

Caveats

The 2026–27 year will establish a baseline from which future targets will be developed.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

KPI expanded to represent the broader investment in First Nations communities and projects across the Museum.

Connection

We will foster social connection and make the Museum a place about our future as much as it is about our past.

National learning

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Geographic reach of learning programs	Baseline established	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth
Growth in participation across early learning, school and youth programs	≥10% year-on-year growth	≥5% year-on-year growth	≥5% year-on-year growth	Sustained year-on-year growth
Australia's Defining Moments Digital Classroom version 2 (ADMDC v2) launched	ADMDC v2 prototyped and developed	ADMDC v2 launched		

Rationale/context

Early learning, school and youth audiences are critical to sustaining the Museum's relevance and long-term impact. Increasing participation provides a clear measure of engagement with these audiences, while improved geographic reach strengthens understanding of access across Australia. Together these measures support a more complete view of how learning programs are connecting with young people nationally and inform more consistent and equitable delivery.

Methodology

The Museum facilitates this through the following key activities:

- delivery of onsite, outreach and digital learning programs
- measurement and reporting of year-on-year growth in participation
- establishment of a baseline for geographic reach across all delivery modes
- ongoing development and refinement of learning programs to support engagement and national access.

Data sources

- school bookings attendance and postcode data (Book Canberra Excursions portal)
- outreach program participation records, including postcode data where available
- digital analytics, including user location data (Digital Classroom / NMA Learn).

Caveats

Performance may be influenced by external factors including school funding, curriculum priorities, travel capacity and cost-of-living pressures.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

KPI has expanded to include geographic reach, introducing postcode measurement to complement participation data and strengthen visibility of national access.

NMA Young

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Onsite learning requirements for young audiences defined to inform future program delivery and capital investment	Current onsite learning provision audited	Learning environment options developed to concept stage, subject to funding	At least 1 onsite learning enhancement in delivery	
NMA Young established as a tested youth engagement model with demonstrated audience demand	Pilot initiatives delivered and evaluated to test approach and audience response	Model refined and expanded across onsite and outreach delivery	NMA Young implemented as an ongoing program model	

Rationale/context

NMA Young is a strategic future initiative to establish a purpose-built learning environment for younger audiences. Delivering this requires both a clear engagement model and an understanding of how current learning environments support different types of experiences.

Existing spaces, including the Discovery Centre, Education rooms and exhibition galleries, provide a baseline for assessing current delivery. Evaluating these alongside targeted NMA Young pilot programs will guide the Museum to better meet the needs of young audiences.

This work will build an evidence base to inform the future development of NMA Young and associated planning for onsite learning environments and capital investment.

Methodology

The Museum facilitates this through the following key activities:

- review of onsite learning environments and identification of future requirements
- development of learning environment options to inform capital planning

- delivery of NMA Young pilot initiatives onsite and online
- evaluation and refinement of the NMA Young model and learning priorities.

Data sources

- audit of onsite learning environments, including use, participation and engagement
- NMA Young pilot participation data and evaluation reports
- audience research and feedback, including from youth cohorts
- facilities reporting and capital development documentation.

Caveats

Progression of learning environment enhancements and expansion of NMA Young is subject to funding availability, capital planning priorities and partnership opportunities.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

New deliverables introduce a coordinated approach to understanding onsite learning provision for young audiences and piloting NMA Young. This establishes an evidence-based foundation for future program development and capital investment.

Collection care and management

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Number of objects from the NHC available to audiences through Museum touring exhibitions, displays and loans	1,000	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed
Number of objects accessioned	5,000	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed
Number of objects made available online	5,000	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed

Rationale/context

These measures ensure transparency and accountability in relation to the management and accessibility of the National Historical Collection. They are key to achieving the strategic vision of a rich, cohesive, relevant and accessible collection that is recognised as one of Australia's great historical resources.

Methodology

Regular reports drawn from the Museum's collection management system will provide relevant data and track progress.

Data sources

- Collection Management System (KEmu).

Caveats

These key performance indicators may be affected by issues beyond the Museum's control. Geopolitical issues may result in the cancellation or rescheduling of touring exhibitions. Staff resourcing associated with exhibition demands and critical work required on collection storage projects may also affect the number of objects that can either be accessioned or made available online.

It should be noted that not all objects accessioned into the collection can be made available online due to cultural sensitivities.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

The 2025–26 year has been used to establish a baseline for 2026–27 targets.

Growth

We will grow the Museum's business and audience.

Brand strength

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Develop and grow a strong, cohesive brand that connects with new and existing audiences	Update the Museum's brand	Year-on-year growth in onsite and online visitation	Year-on-year growth in onsite and online visitation	Year-on-year growth in onsite and online visitation

Rationale/context

With a growing audience and solid financial base backed by philanthropic support, we can explore new territory, have bold ideas and push our leadership and impact well beyond our core capability.

The current Museum brand was developed in 2011. Since then, the Museum's go-to-market proposition has matured significantly and the way in which people engage with cultural institutions has changed. Key shifts include:

- a visit to the Museum is just as likely to be driven by attendance at events (either Museum programs or private functions), the Cafe or the Museum Shop as it is by an exhibition
- digital experiences are now the largest contributor to overall engagements, through the Museum's website, social channels and the Digital Classroom
- audience visitation is equally likely to be through a domestic or international travelling exhibition as it is to be at an exhibition in Canberra.

Methodology

- develop a new brand direction supported by an audience segmentation model, core organising idea and supporting brand experience architecture

- develop a visual and vocal identity that clearly articulates the core organising idea and brand experience architecture in a way that resonates with audience segments
- establish a baseline of metrics including current new and recurring visitation by audience segments, volume of branded search and direct digital engagement.

Data sources

- 2026 brand proposition
- brand visual and vocal identity
- Museum analytics (various data sources).

Caveats

This performance indicator may be impacted by the lag between the launch of the new brand identity and shifts in customer behaviour. Risks are mitigated through extensive audience research, and test-and-learn and always-on marketing optimisation.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

Brand and audience development activities have been combined into a single KPI to reflect the integrated nature of these strategies.

Own-source revenue

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Grow profitable own-source revenue across commercial and philanthropic revenue streams, including retail, cafe, tourism, corporate partnerships and philanthropic donations	Achieve \$5.8m in own-source revenue	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth	Year-on-year growth

Rationale/context

The Museum generates revenue across multiple streams that, in most cases, work together as an integrated proposition for target audiences. Key considerations include:

- audience engagement with the Museum provides an opportunity to generate own-source revenue through physical and online shops, cafe operations, venue hire and membership programs. Canberra receives 3.4 million visitors a year – a mix of domestic and international, day trips and overnight stays – which represents a significant opportunity for visitation.
- building long-term relationships with corporate partners, trusts, foundations and individuals generates financial and value-in-kind donations that help fund Museum activities.

Methodology

- develop and implement compelling marketing campaigns and offers that drive visitation
- continue to build, refine and optimise retail offerings through merchandise available in Museum shops (permanent, exhibition and online)
- strengthen the Museum's catering partnership to continuously refine cafe and event offers to drive first-time and repeat visitation

- strengthen relationships with corporate and tourism partners (e.g. VisitCanberra, Tourism Australia, hotel partners) and expand presence across national and international online travel agents
- develop and grow our philanthropic program across individual giving, patrons and major gifts.

Data sources

- Museum financial reports.

Caveats

Performance indicators may be impacted by external factors beyond the Museum's control. These include, but are not limited to, consumer sentiment and cost-of-living factors.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

Commercial and Development objectives have been combined into an integrated own-source revenue objective that simplifies focus and recognises connectively between activities.

Digital uplift

Transform our digital and technology environment to improve and increase access, reach and engagement, amplifying our brand, building our audience and broadening our relevance and social impact.

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Simplify, modernise, integrate and optimise customer, collection and corporate systems and platforms	Procure and implement CMS	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed
	Optimise CRM, collection search and API			

Rationale/context

The Museum's digital ecosystem supports access to the collection, engages diverse audiences and provides the corporate platforms our people need to work efficiently. Our priorities are:

- simplify and modernise our suite of platforms, upgrading those that are fit for purpose to the latest versions
- drive integration to ensure efficient and effective deployment of platforms and deliver seamless experiences for key audience segments
- focus on continuous optimisation and the implementation of artificial intelligence where it aligns to Australian Government guidelines and delivers enhanced functionality and user experience.

Methodology

- establishment of the National Museum of Australia Operating System (NMA OS) Design Authority supported by an Integrated Technology Working Committee
- establishment and maintenance of technical standards and architecture principles

- development and reviews of NMA OS technology roadmap, data architecture and sequencing
- development of a cohesive suite of technology-related policies and guidelines.

Data sources

- digital and collections uplift project reports
- Museum financial reports.

Caveats

Nil.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

Changes reflect the delivery of earlier objectives (Customer Relationships Management platform and Trusted Digital Repository) and the establishment of the NMA OS.

Foundation

We will build operational capability to underpin our strategic ambitions.

Safeguard the National Historical Collection

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Collection care and management	29,000 objects	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed

Rationale/context

By tracking improvements against set collection management criteria, we will monitor how collection management improves object conditions and significantly reduces risk to the collection.

Methodology

- assessment against set collection management criteria, including conditions, treatments, hazard checks and remediation, object housing, documentation and security
- the above criteria are applied to specific projects and key business-as-usual activity streams.

Data sources

- quarterly reports against the set criteria from the Registration and Conservation team.

Caveats

This key performance indicator can be significantly affected by changes to the Museum's collection-related programming (exhibitions, loans, gallery redevelopment), including the touring program and collection storage project cadence and deliverables.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

No change. However, this is a new measure introduced in 2025 so a baseline has been established for the 2026–27 year.

Collection storage

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Collection storage facility improvements	Existing facility: upgrades to large technology and pallet storage areas	New facility: build and fit-out	New facility: collection intake	N/A (project completed)

Rationale/context

Establishing a new collection storage facility and upgrading existing facilities is a key priority and milestones have been established for the delivery of the project, until its completion in 2028–29.

Methodology

Head, Registration and Conservation and Head, Facilities and Security will track progress and report against construction and delivery schedules.

Data sources

- collection storage project reports and contracts for delivery of works.

Caveats

Nil.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

No change.

Care for the Museum building and site

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Securing the Museum's building and operations through strategic asset management	Deliver year 1 of SAMP	Deliver year 2 of SAMP	Deliver year 3 of SAMP	Deliver year 4 of SAMP
	Reduction in unplanned maintenance expenditure on prior year	Reduction in unplanned maintenance expenditure on prior year	Reduction in unplanned maintenance expenditure on prior year	Reduction in unplanned maintenance expenditure on prior year

Rationale/context

The Museum's Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) determines expenditure requirements for the management of the Museum's facilities and infrastructure assets. It addresses capital upgrade requirements based on the asset lifecycle and condition, supports the effective and efficient operation of the building, and helps minimise unplanned maintenance work.

Methodology

Annual operating and capital works budgets and expenditure will determine progress.

Data sources

- SAMP and Museum financial reports.

Caveats

SAMP budget excludes major unfunded projects that are forecast in the SAMP but which are outside the Museum's current funding envelope.

Unplanned facilities maintenance expenditure excludes expenditure related to the Museum's Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

No change.

Environment and Sustainability Action Plan

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Reduce the Museum's carbon footprint and environmental impact	Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions from previous year	Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions from previous year	Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions from previous year	Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions from previous year
	Develop a roadmap for Scope 3 emissions	TBC	TBC	TBC

Rationale/context

The Museum is committed to the government's APS Net Zero 2030 target. Following the launch of our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2023–30, significant work has occurred on benchmarking and implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions.

Methodology

- measurement of emissions will be used to determine year-on-year performance against Scope 1 and 2 emissions
- further analysis of Scope 3 emissions activities will determine an approach to reducing Scope 3 emissions, including consultation with suppliers.

Data sources

- energy monitoring and usage reports; Museum financial reports; supplier questionnaires.
- additional data-capture mechanisms will be developed over time.

Caveats

Nil.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

No change.

Diversity

Key performance indicator	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Disability Inclusion Action Plan implemented to support inclusive participation and access	Endorsed by 28 February 2027, with at least 80% of annual actions delivered on time	At least 80% of annual actions delivered on time	At least 80% of annual actions delivered on time	At least 80% of annual actions delivered on time

Rationale/context

Implementing a Disability Inclusion Action Plan strengthens inclusive practice across the Museum and supports a coordinated approach to accessibility, participation and equity for people with disability. Clear and measurable actions ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Methodology

- development and endorsement of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- monitoring of progress against deliverables
- annual reporting of completion rates and outcomes.

Data sources

- Disability Inclusion Action Plan and annual action schedules
- internal progress and performance reports.

Caveats

Successful delivery is dependent on resourcing, cross-departmental collaboration and the timing of related operational or capital initiatives.

Changes since 2025–26 Corporate Plan

Updated deliverable introduces an organisation-wide Disability Inclusion Action Plan focused on audience experience, strengthening accountability and aligning with contemporary accessibility expectations.

Capability

Workforce planning

The APS Employee Census tells us that the Museum has a highly engaged and invested workforce. As part of the Australian Government's "Delivering for Australians" reform agenda, the Museum continues to invest in and build our internal capability to meet the expectations of government and the Australian public, with a focus on:

- attracting, building and retaining skills, expertise and talent
- embracing data, technology and flexible and responsive workforce models
- strengthening integrity and purposeful leadership.

The Museum's Strategic Workforce Plan sets out key initiatives that will help us achieve this, with measures addressing capability, leadership and performance growth; enhancing diversity and inclusion; prioritising health and wellbeing; and improving attraction and recruitment practices. The plan will be reviewed and updated in 2026 to align with the Museum's Strategic Plan 2024–29.

The Museum will establish a professional development and capability plan, informed by the [Australian Public Service Commission's Highly Capable, Future Ready: APS Learning and Development Strategy](#), to identify and implement activities that support individual, team and organisational growth.

The Museum will continue to enact the principles of the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework to grow the capability of our workforce.

ICT capability

The Museum will continue to strengthen its IT governance arrangements while implementing a program focused on digital uplift, improved digital literacy and refreshing core foundation platforms.

Priorities in 2026–27 include:

- continuing to provide the necessary platforms to support our uplift in digital capability, including a new Content Management System, and exploring ways to use Museum data more effectively
- enhancing visitor experiences by upgrading our digital ecosystem to provide improved services that make it easier to shop, purchase tickets, discover exhibitions and explore our collection
- continuing to strengthen our cybersecurity posture, including maintaining the Museum's Essential Eight maturity levels
- developing a roadmap to grow our artificial intelligence capability that will empower our workforce and enhance the digital engagement experience for our audiences.

Infrastructure

The Museum has maintained an asset management plan for our Acton site since 2004. In late 2025 a new 10-year Strategic Asset Management Plan was finalised. It details expenditure of \$180 million required over the next 10 years to maintain and update an ageing asset base. With the Museum now more than 25 years old, critical building plant infrastructure is approaching or has reached the end of its useful life.

The funding uplift in the 2023–24 Budget enabled the Museum to commence urgent and unavoidable interventions in critical infrastructure, including the building management and fire safety systems. This work has been supported by a reinvigorated annual maintenance and upgrades program that will continue in 2026–27, responding to legacy issues over the previous decade.

The Museum continues to work with government to identify and address funding pressures for major works that cannot be managed within existing capital funding. Initial concept designs and feasibility studies have been developed in anticipation of the replacement of the end-of-life Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system.

A new Acton building lighting master plan will guide our approach to managing, maintaining and upgrading our ageing lighting systems from 2026–27 onwards. As halogen and fluorescent lighting is phased out across the country, these works will not only reduce the risk of failures but also deliver meaningful reductions in energy use and day-to-day maintenance expenditure.

Risk oversight and management

The Museum is committed to proactively addressing risk at all levels of our operations. The Museum actively maintains a Risk Management Framework that is reviewed annually and complies with both the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 2023 and ISO 31000:2018 risk management guidelines.

Key elements of our Risk Management Framework include:

- a risk management policy that outlines our overall approach in relation to risk management, including governance arrangements
- risk appetite and tolerance statements that outline the level of risk we are willing to accept
- tools and training that empower staff to effectively assess and manage risks and opportunities
- a risk committee drawn from key areas of the Museum that contributes to our risk-informed strategic direction
- strategic and operational risk registers.

Risk assessments and treatment plans are developed at the business unit and project level, focusing on operational, program-wide and project-specific risks. Strategic and operational risks are regularly reported to the Museum's Executive. Updates on critical strategic and operational risks are reported to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and to Council at each quarterly meeting.

The key areas of risk identified through this framework and how they are mitigated are described on the following page.

Strategic risk	How the risk is managed
IT and cybersecurity Unauthorised access and disruption to Museum or Commonwealth resources, IT systems and networks	Adopt measures articulated by the Australian Cyber Security Centre guidelines. Invest in improving protections including the Essential Eight maturity model. Strengthen IT security policies and procedures, including for staff travelling abroad.
Funding and financial sustainability Insufficient funds to pursue all objectives of the strategic and corporate plans	Report regularly to government about significant future investment needs for major infrastructure replacement. Develop funding strategies for forward years. Implement own-source revenue strategies, including identification of new revenue-generating opportunities. Manage expenditure priorities and identify opportunities for efficiencies.
Deterioration of NHC objects NHC, other collection or loaned objects stolen, lost, damaged or provenance challenged	Review and assess collections held across all storage facilities to determine appropriate storage solutions that would best mitigate the risk of deterioration and loss. Undertake targeted upgrades at storage facilities. Use of offsite commercial storage for at-risk and vulnerable collections.
Critical skills and capability Workforce unable to deliver strategic priorities or legislative requirements	Embed the realigned organisational structure to better align workforce resourcing and capability with strategic and operational priorities. Develop a strong employee proposition, offering flexible working arrangements and fostering a positive workplace culture. Identify key capability and capacity needs and implement programs to address gaps and promote workforce stability.
Technology Current and emerging technological trends and issues, including adoption of AI, information and data management and use	Research and assess impacts and opportunities of emerging technologies. Strengthen and apply developed AI, data and information management policies and procedures, including learning and development opportunities for staff.
Performance Delivery against performance measures and effectiveness of engaging with and presenting social history, including exhibitions/galleries, programs, events, etc.	Review and assess the Museum's performance through the strategic and corporate planning process. Audience research to support exhibitions, programs, events, etc. Develop exhibition, program and event strategies for forward years.
Climate change Impacts and responses to adverse climate trends and events, including social responsibility, policy objectives and regulatory obligations	Embed the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan. Apply the Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program (CROMP) to assess climate change risks and develop and implement appropriate responses. Strengthen and apply environmental sustainability policies and procedures, including building workforce and organisational knowledge.
Reputation Criticism of the Museum's public positions, affiliations, partnerships, etc. in an increasingly contested public and political discourse	Management of the Museum's work, exhibitions and programs conducted in line with the organisation's vision, mission and values. Potential reputational issues escalated and managed as required, with Museum Executive oversight.

Cooperation

Cultural organisations

The Museum has a strong record of collaboration with Australian cultural organisations and strengthening these relationships remains a key priority under the Strategic Plan 2024–29. The Museum will continue to work cooperatively with partners across the country to loan objects, expand access to the National Historical Collection and develop a rich touring exhibition program, increasing reach to regional and metropolitan audiences.

This next phase of delivery is underpinned by a growing network of international partnerships. The Museum continues to work closely with leading global institutions to develop major exhibition opportunities, object loans and co-curated projects that will strengthen the Museum's global profile and bring world-class cultural content to Australian audiences.

International touring remains a central pillar of the exhibition program. From 2027 the Museum will commence the international rollout of the *Water Spirits* immersive experience across Southeast Asia, delivered in partnership with the ASEAN–Australia Centre and First Nations collaborators. This program extends the Museum's cultural diplomacy objectives while creating pathways for deeper engagement through the concurrent development of the *Water Spirits* object-based exhibition for presentation at the Museum in Canberra.

The Museum also maintains strong institutional relationships across the region, including formal agreements with key partners in China and an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with the Singapore National Heritage Board.

These partnerships support exhibition exchange and professional collaboration and create a platform showcasing Australian stories and culture to the world.

Collaboration continues to be embedded across all areas of practice. Through the First Nations division, the Museum is strengthening partnerships with First Nations communities and organisations at local, national and international levels. These relationships are central to shaping the Museum's program, ensuring cultural authority and reinforcing the Museum's role as a leader within a connected global network of First Nations voices and institutions.

Commonwealth-sector collaboration

The Museum collaborates with other Commonwealth entities to assist in meeting shared objectives. Strong relationships exist among the National Collecting Institutions and vary from formal working groups and committees based on professional expertise to informal peer engagement. Outside of the Arts portfolio, we maintain a significant relationship with DFAT for mutual support for touring programs and events.

The Museum continues to work with the Australian Antarctic Division to provide access to the National Antarctic Heritage Collection through a major new exhibition and online records. We also continue to work with the National Capital Authority to improve access for our visitors and provide better connections between the Acton Peninsula, the Australian National University and the city centre.

Research collaboration

Research and scholarship are central to the Museum's activities. Through our exhibitions, programs and publications, we provide leadership and contribute to scholarship and discussion of Australia's past, present and future. This relies on collaboration with internal and external researchers, and on funding and partnerships with sponsors and donors, other collecting institutions, research bodies and academia.

The Museum generates research and collaborates with key thought leaders in our exhibitions, programs and publications, including *The Museum* magazine, exhibition catalogues and books. As part of our commitment to researching historical collections relating to Australian history, collections and museology, we collaborate with the Australian National University to contribute to student learning and extend public access to historical knowledge with the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. We are also partners with RMIT University, Melbourne, on a National Industry PhD Program. We participate in Australian Research Council grant projects with universities, First Nations communities and other cultural institutions, and collaborate with the Western Australian Museum on an Emerging Curators program. Our Research Associates program connects independent scholars with the collections and intellectual life of the Museum.

Philanthropy and corporate partners

Philanthropy and corporate partnerships play a crucial role in supporting the Museum's purpose of bringing to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia. Private support enables the Museum to be ambitious in our vision for future growth, and to build capacity and sustainability in own-source revenue streams. Philanthropic support allows the Museum to imagine boldly, grow sustainably and create experiences that resonate nationally and internationally.

The Museum's donors and corporate partners support the care and development of the National Historical Collection, including the donation of objects; our permanent and temporary exhibition program at the Museum and on tour domestically and internationally; and education and access programs for people of all ages.

As we look to the future, the Museum continues to seek investment in our collection, exhibitions, education and programs, as well as long-term capital projects such as gallery redevelopment. These contributions deepen public engagement, broaden impact and ensure that the stories we safeguard today continue to inspire generations to come.

Subsidiaries

The Museum does not have any subsidiaries.

List of requirements

PGPA Rule reference	Required element	Legislative requirement	Page number(s)
s16E(2) item 1 of the PGPA Rule	Introduction	The following: (a) a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Act; (b) the reporting period for which the plan is prepared; (c) the reporting periods covered by the plan.	2
s16E(2) item 2 of the PGPA Rule	Purposes	The purposes of the entity.	3
s16E(2) item 3 of the PGPA Rule	Key activities	For the entire period covered by the plan, the key activities that the entity will undertake in order to achieve its purposes.	14–27
s16E(2) item 4 of the PGPA Rule	Operating context	For the entire period covered by the plan, the following:	6–10, 28–33
s16E(2) item 4(a) of the PGPA Rule	(a) Environment	The environment in which the entity will operate;	6–10
s16E(2) item 4(b) of the PGPA Rule	(b) Capability	The strategies and plans the entity will implement to have the capability it needs to undertake its key activities and achieve its purposes;	28–29
s16E(2) item 4(c) of the PGPA Rule	(c) Risk	A summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity, and the key risks that the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed;	30–31
s16E(2) item 4(d) of the PGPA Rule	(d) Cooperation	Details of any organisation or body that will make a significant contribution towards achieving the entity's purposes through cooperation with the entity, including how that cooperation will help achieve those purposes;	32–33
s16E(2) item 4(e) of the PGPA Rule	(e) Subsidiaries	How any subsidiary of the entity will contribute to achieving the entity's purposes.	33
s16E(2) item 5 of the PGPA Rule	Performance	For each reporting period covered by the plan, details of how the entity's performance in achieving the entity's purposes will be measured and assessed through: (a) specified performance measures for the entity that meet the requirements of section 16EA; and (b) specified targets for each of those performance measures for which it is reasonably practicable to set a target.	11–13



Visitors to the *Antarctica* exhibition, July 2026.
Photo: Tim Ngo. National Museum of Australia

Contact us

Open 9am–5pm daily (closed Christmas Day)
Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 1901, Canberra ACT 2601

Freecall: 1800 026 132

Email: information@nma.gov.au

The National Museum of Australia acknowledges the
Ngunnawal and Ngambri Kambri peoples, the traditional
custodians of the country on which the Museum stands.

nma.gov.au