



## **AGNSW Disability Action Plan**

### **Policy Statement**

The Arts Gallery of New South Wales recognises and supports the right of people with disabilities to participate and be involved in the life of the community generally and the cultural life of Sydney in particular. Accordingly the Gallery commits to providing people with disabilities equitable access to our services, the building, information and opportunities.

This Disability Action Plan (DAP) has been prepared using Times New Roman 14 point, as this has been identified as a most accessible font type.

The Gallery will submit the DAP to the NSW Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) by the 30 June 2009. The Gallery will also advise DADHC of any subsequent plans and/or any significant updates to this plan in the future.

### **Overview of AGNSW functions and services**

With over 1 million visitors each year, the Gallery is one of Australia's most popular art museums and plays a vital part of Sydney's cultural life. Since the Gallery's genesis in the 1870s, our objective has been to collect and present to the public the finest works of art available, with special emphasis on the artistic traditions of Australia.

The Gallery has been located at our present site in the Domain since 1885. The splendid old galleries, designed by government architect Walter Liberty Vernon, display the distinguished 19-century Australian and early European collections. The Domain building extensions made in the 1970s and 80s responded to the changing needs of both the collection and our audience, doubling the available exhibition space and celebrating the art of our times with extensive displays of modern and contemporary Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and European art. The beautiful and contemplative Asian galleries, expanded in 2003, affirm the Gallery's commitment to presenting the art and culture of our region.

The Gallery also has responsibility for the management the Brett Whiteley Studio on behalf of the Brett Whiteley Foundation. The Studio, located in Surry Hills, is open only to booked school groups on Thursdays and Fridays and open to the general public each weekend.

Each year the Gallery presents a program of over 30 exhibitions, across the Domain and Surry Hills sites, accompanied by a diverse array of public and educational programs. Both these buildings have free admission for the general public with some admission charges applying only to major temporary exhibitions presented at our domain site from time to time.

### **Characteristics of current and potential customers and staff with a disability**

Based on data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) the estimated current number of people with a physical disability in NSW is 12.6% with potential for this to increase as the population ages. The total population of NSW (June 2008) was 6.9672 million (ABS) which amounts to an estimated 30,000 people with a disability in NSW. The Gallery's policy is that potentially any and all of these people may wish to be Gallery visitors and we should structure our services accordingly. As a consequence, specialist access programs have been developed by the Gallery to assist people with disabilities to participate in public programs and enjoy their arts experience whilst at the Gallery. The details of these Access Programs are listed below in the major outcomes section.

The Gallery has a full-time equivalent workforce of approximately 220 employees with services also provided by a further 300 volunteers. As at June 2009, the Gallery employed five staff who identified as disabled with one person requiring an adjustment to their immediate work environment. All staff and volunteers have access to information about the Gallery's DAP.

Our workforce includes several part-time museum coordinators / educators with responsibilities for the development and delivery of our Access Programs. The Gallery is currently the only museum in Australia which has developed and regularly presents a Gifted and Talented Program.

### **Consultation processes**

The Gallery has worked with community organisations, other government agencies and program sponsors in both the development and promotion of our Access Programs. Community organisations include Ella Community Centre, Chain Reaction Foundation, Holdsworth Community Centre & Services and Fitness 4 All The Disability Trust. Promotion of the Gallery's Access Program has also been supported by Vision Australia, Guide Dogs Australia, Deaf Education Network, Accessible Arts, the Biennale of Sydney and the City of

Sydney (Lord Mayor's Community Access Day). The Gallery has also provided advice on disability programming to other NSW arts institutions including the Powerhouse Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art. The Gallery's current Access Program is financially supported by Clayton Utz, which also supports our program with volunteer from its workforce.

### **Major outcomes achieved from previous Disability Action Plans**

The following section details the current available services Gallery provides for our visitors with disabilities. Many of these items have been in operation for many decades and are well embedded into our core business service provision. Other public and educational programs are (relatively) new initiatives with some currently dependent on sponsorship funding for their continued provision and/or refreshment. In 2006-07, the Gallery entered into a three-year sponsorship partnership with Clayton Utz to support Access Programs.

In 2008-09 access awareness training was delivered to Teacher-Lectures, Gallery Officers, Information desk staff, Shop staff, Volunteer Children's Guides and Community Ambassadors (Asian languages tour guides) through seven sessions presented with Accessible Arts NSW. The sessions focused on increasing people's understanding of issues effecting people with a disability and strategies for removing social barriers. Plans are in place to deliver Access training each year to Gallery staff and volunteers.

The Gallery's official website ([www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au)) can display large-print screen versions of all information. The About Us section of our website has an accessibility information page which outlines our access services and programs ([www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/access](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/access)). The Gallery's website also incorporates myVirtualGallery, which provides people with limited mobility the opportunity to have an interactive arts experience ([www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/myvirtualgallery](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/myvirtualgallery)).

#### *Visitors with a physical disability:*

There are four dedicated disabled parking spaces at the front of the Gallery and two at the rear. Special arrangements are also made for bus parking. Access to the spaces at the rear of the Gallery is via the service road on the southern side of the building. From the rear of the Gallery, access to all exhibitions, displays, and public and administrative areas is by way of ramps and lifts and is signposted.

The Domain Theatre and Centenary Auditorium have access space designed for wheelchair users. The Gallery provides wheelchairs, which are available from Security. All exhibition spaces are accessible by lift for people in wheelchairs.

Toilets for visitors with disabilities are located throughout the building on the Upper Level, Level 1 and Level 3.

*Visitors who are deaf and hearing impaired:*

*Signing Art*, Auslan interpreted tours and events for deaf and hearing impaired people is the gallery's longest running Access Program held at 1.30pm on the last Sunday of every month (excl. December). Also the last Sunday of the month *Gallerykids* performances is Auslan interpreted.

Auslan interpretation of selected *Art After Hours* celebrity talks has occurred in the past several years. And an event in association with Deaf awareness week will be programmed.

Groups of visitors who are deaf and who make a booking are provided with sign language interpreters free of charge. The TTY number, (02) 9225 1711, is listed in the Telstra TTY directory.

Our Domain Theatre is equipped with audio-induction loop facilities for all lectures and films and an FM microphone system for hearing aid users is available on request for guided tours throughout the Gallery.

*Visitors who are visually impaired:*

The Gallery's *In Touch* program provides people who are visually impaired the opportunity to explore artworks through touch. Specially trained volunteer guides help visitors experience the tactile qualities of marble, bronze and stone and discover the stories and ideas surrounding these unique objects. We have developed a sensory trolley, which includes tactile materials and props that complement the *In Touch* tours of the Gallery. These tours can also include art-making workshops to expand the experience of enjoying art.

In the past year the gallery has responded to requests in the community to develop audio described tours of two dimensional works to compliant the *In Touch* tours.

The elevator servicing Lower Level 1, the Ground Floor and the Upper Level, has voice notification of the floor and access information, as well as Braille floor buttons.

*Children with an intellectual disability:*

The Gallery's *Da Vinci Program* is an initiative specially designed for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. *Da Vinci* provides students with the opportunity to experience art through stimulating and fun-filled workshops which include discussion, role-play and the use of sensory materials.

### **Current issues effecting equitable access to our buildings**

The Gallery has two public buildings under its management control – the Art Gallery of New South Wales located in Sydney’s domain parklands and the Brett Whiteley Studio located in Surry Hills.

The public entrance to the domain building is via the front doors situated in the heritage section of our building – these are the original front doors and have operated as the Gallery’s only public entrance since 1885. The building extension completed in the late 1980s provided for a separate disabled entrance at the side of the building via the Gallery’s carpark. Once visitor’s are inside the building there is access available to all public areas of the Gallery.

The Gallery has, over the years, attempted to address this inequality with the development of plans to alter the front of the building to allow easy entry to all visitors regardless of their mobility restrictions. The high costs associated with the development of plans which need to be acceptable to the Gallery, heritage agencies and key stakeholders has proved, to date, to be beyond the funding capacity of the Gallery.

However, several preliminary drawings for revised access at the front of the building are under consideration and a business case will be developed for submission to the NSW government for new funding in the next two years.

The Studio in Surry hills was the former working studio of the renowned Australian artist Brett Whiteley right up until the time of his death in 1992. Previously this two storage terrace building was an old T-shirt factory with concrete floors, dusty brick walls and a large roller door onto Raper Street. The only access to the second floor of the Studio building is via a single internal staircase. This building does not have any capacity for development of disabled access to the second floor. Information about the Studio’s exhibition program is available on-line at [www.brettwhiteley.org](http://www.brettwhiteley.org) in the What’s On section.

### **Monitoring and review**

The Gallery’s executive management team will monitor and review the achievement of planned target KPIs on an annual basis. Progress will be reported in the Director’s annual performance review to the AGNSW Trust President and the Director-General, Department of Communities (formerly Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation).

## AGNSW DAP - Action measures

Outcome	Timeframe	Services	Responsible Officer	Target KPIs
<p>Identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability.</p>	<p>Annual review all existing services; Assess potential barriers for any new services under development prior to implementation of service.</p>	<p>Access awareness training for Gallery staff and Volunteers.</p> <p>Assisted access to our admission fees exhibition and events programs with the introduction of the Companion Card NSW.</p> <p>Program an event in association with Deaf awareness week.</p> <p>Develop a program of events in association with Senior's Week and International Day for people with a Disability.</p> <p>Program cooperatively with other NSW arts institutions.</p>	<p>Head of Public Programs / Manager Exhibitions</p>	<p>Annual program of access awareness training delivered to key front-of-house service providers.</p> <p>The AGNSW to become established as an official affiliate to the Companion Card NSW by June 2009.</p> <p>Deaf awareness week event delivered for the Deaf and hearing impaired.</p> <p>Services were delivered for the community in relation to Senior's Week and IDD.</p> <p>Delivery services / events across arts institutions for people with disabilities.</p>

<p>Provide information in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.</p>	<p>Annual review all existing services; Assess potential barriers for any new services under development prior to implementation of service.</p>	<p>Auslan interpreted performances; Website publications. Audio publications; Hardcopy publications.</p>	<p>Deputy Director / Head of Public Programs</p>	<p>Increase to 10 the number of free Auslan interpreted Art After Hours 6.30pm celebrity talks each year.</p>
<p>Making the Gallery buildings accessible to people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Audit of all buildings owned / managed by the Gallery to be completed by 30 June 2010; Develop plans for the implementation of the building audit's recommendation by 30 June 2011.</p>	<p>Heritage building in domain; Whiteley Studio in Surry Hills; Off-site storage facility in Lilyfield.</p>	<p>Deputy Director / Manager Building Services / Assistant Director Finance and Resources</p>	<p>A documented register of our compliance against the relevant building codes completed by 30 June 2010.</p> <p>The Gallery's annual building maintenance program will have included adjustments / conversions works required to address access compliance issues as can be funded within the existing maintenance allocation. Priority will be given to these issues when developing the annual scope of building works.</p>

				<p>The Gallery's Total Asset Management (TAM) Plan as at 1 July 2010 will include a business case for funding for the conversion of the heritage front of the building to allow equal access for all visitors.</p>
<p>Increasing employment participation at the Gallery for people with a disability.</p>	<p>Review current position for barriers to employment by people with a disability by 30 June 2011; Access potential for barriers for all new positions prior to their advertisement.</p>	<p>Current positions; future new positions</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Finance and Resources / Manager Human Resources</p>	<p>The Gallery only reviews existing positions on an as needs basis due to an externally imposed staff freeze, however all existing positions exempt from the freeze and considered for recruitment action have had a decision recorded as to suitability for the employment of a person with disabilities.</p> <p>All new positions will be reviewed and a decision recorded as to suitability for the employment of a person with disabilities.</p>