

# Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan 2018–2021

Providing Accessible  
and Inclusive Exhibits,  
Programs and Services





Visitors enjoying touch tables and accessible signage in Wild Planet gallery. Photo James Alcock

# Contents

Director & CEO's Message	➤ 2
Our Commitment	➤ 3
Legislative & Policy Framework	➤ 4
Our Customers and Staff	➤ 5
History & Achievements	➤ 6
Consultation Process	➤ 7
Accessibility Strategy	➤ 8
Outcome 1: Attitudes & Behaviours	
Outcome 2: Liveable Communities	
Outcome 3: Employment	
Outcome 4: Systems and Processes	
Monitoring & Review	➤ 12

Published January 2018.

The Australian Museum acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, on whose land the Museum is situated. The Australian Museum respects elders past and present, and welcomes all who visit the Museum.

 The Australian Museum's Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan is available at:  
[australianMuseum.net.au/Accessibility-Inclusion-Action-Plan](http://australianMuseum.net.au/Accessibility-Inclusion-Action-Plan)

# Director & CEO's Message

The community is at the heart of the Australian Museum (AM), where everyone is welcome to learn and be inspired. The inclusion of diverse communities from near and far, young and the young at heart, and people of all identities and backgrounds are celebrated at the AM.

The AM's new Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan 2018-21 (AIAP) builds on the former Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2015-17), shifting the focus to social and physical inclusion rather than disability. Our goal is to create social change, which changes the perception and behavior towards our visitors and staff living with disability.

A significant step forward has been the new Museum Walk pathway and award winning Crystal Hall entrance, built in 2015. For the first time the AM has an accessible entry for everyone. This universal design embodies the AM's commitment to access and inclusion, and it has been wonderful to see how it has welcomed new visitors to the AM who may have found it difficult to access the Museum previously.

We have also been making progress inside the Museum with hearing loops available in the theatre and performance spaces, as well as on tours. Our educational tactile tours have proven popular and audio descriptive tours are now available on the new AM app.

The new AIAP has also been informed by previous work at the AM, including "Many Voices, Making Choices", which provides feedback from those with disability on how the AM can continue to improve its offering.

I'd like to particularly thank our new Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel and the AM Access and Inclusion Steering Committee which have embraced the Museum's commitment for improving access and inclusion, and provided practical advice that has been incorporated into the AIAP.

The AIAP follows the guidelines set out in the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014.

I am very proud to be part of a team at the AM that ensures Australia's first Museum, despite its heritage challenges, is creating a place where everyone can be inspired, explore and understand our natural and cultural world.



**Kim McKay AO**

Director & CEO, Australian Museum



Director & CEO, Kim McKay opening the accessible Crystal Hall entrance - 2015. Photo Tim Levy

# Our Commitment

The AM will champion the importance of accessibility and inclusion by ensuring that the exploration of nature and culture is accessible to all.

The AM is committed to best practice and will strive to become a leader in the Australian and international arts communities by implementing the following actions:

- Access solutions will adhere to the principles of social equity, inclusion and dignity.
- Access requirements will be embedded in the planning stage of new initiatives.
- Initiatives will comply with relevant disability and access standards, and aim to go beyond compliance.
- Consultation with individuals with disability will be undertaken for all future key initiatives.
- Access solutions will be addressed while respecting the AM's heritage obligations.

Access is crucial to the Museum and will be championed in front and back-of-house areas, and at all levels of management.

This AIAP provides clear guidance regarding actions, responsibilities and timeframes, ensuring that the AM will improve access for staff, visitors and volunteers with disability. This Plan demonstrates the dedication to access consistent with the AM's values: fair-mindedness, innovation, truthfulness and mutual respect.

The AM continues to embed the principles of social inclusion and equity throughout its exhibitions, programs, services and venues. The AM recognises that improving access to facilities and services makes good business sense and welcomes the opportunity to include the wider community in their exploration and understanding of the world.



An accessible tour in *Wild Planet* utilising the portable hearing loop. Photo James Alcock



Westpac Long Gallery equipped with accessible interactive tables and seating Photo James Alcock

## Legislative and Policy framework

Accessibility and inclusion plans involve legislation and guiding policy principles, at state, federal and international levels.

The AM recognises the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

At a federal level, the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (NDS) sets out a national plan that identifies the priorities and associated actions to remove barriers and bring about change in all mainstream government services and programs.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, sets out a commitment to inclusion, consultation with people with disability, and protection of their rights.

The Act defines disability as:

*"The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."*

This definition reinforces the importance of viewing disability as the result of interaction between people living with disability and their physical and social environment. Disability is no longer about the individual only. The onus to break down barriers rests with the whole community.

Under the Act, there are four key goals that an Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan must address:

- Changing community attitudes towards people with disability.
- Increasing community participation.
- Increasing employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Removing barriers to systems and processes.

As a NSW Government agency, the AM's AIAP outlines the practical steps taken to break down barriers and promote access to services, information and employment, which promotes the rights of people with disability.



AM Volunteers who support staff and visitors at the Museum. Photo Abram Powell

## Our Customers and Staff

### Services

The AM delivers three main services to clients and stakeholders:

- **Collections management** – the AM maintains and develops the largest natural history and cultural collection in Australia, with more than 18 million items across invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, mineralogy, palaeontology and anthropology from Australia and the Pacific region.
- **Scientific research** – the AM undertakes scientific research on its collection and in the field to expand understanding of the biota and Indigenous cultures of Australia and the Pacific region, through knowledge generation and communication.
- **Public programs** – the AM presents exhibitions, public and educational programs and events, onsite, offsite and online, to raise community awareness of the biota and Indigenous cultures of Australia and the Pacific region.

### Customer Profile

The AM visitor profile comprises visitors to permanent exhibitions, visitors to temporary exhibitions, children attending holiday programs, school groups visiting the AM, students participating in outreach services, such as science communication and people attending members' events.

AM customers include people with disability across all ages and backgrounds.

### Staff Profile

The AM has more than 200 full-time equivalent employees and over 500 volunteers. The diverse workforce covers science and research, exhibitions and creative services, collections management, visitor programming and learning services, library services, communications, partnerships, digital, building services and management of the AM, including finance, facilities and delivery of planning, policy and coordination. In 2018, 1.7% of staff identified as having a disability.

Additionally, a large number of volunteers make a significant contribution to the AM and its programs.

# History & Achievements

## Highlights of Access and inclusion

The AM, founded in 1827, is the nation's first Museum and is an internationally recognised natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. Since the AM's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan in 2010, the Museum has worked to address the heritage constraints of its main site, alongside ensuring our services and programs are inclusive.

Key achievements include:

 **The Museum Walk pathway and award-winning Crystal Hall entrance, built in 2015, are the main entry point to the AM.** They were developed with an Access Consultant and the design and implementation exceeds the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards. The new walkway provides improved ease of traffic flow of visitors and greater equity to all visitors, including those with disability.

 **The AM's education team work directly with specialised schools and community groups** to deliver tailored and accessible programs and resources. Partnerships are being developed with these groups to increase the availability and use of tailored services.

 **The AM offers free tactile tours,** which can be booked via the Museum's website. These tours feature some of the large number of touchable objects on display across the AM. The tours are

located in the AM's Search and Discover area, where staff are available to assist visitors with interactive exhibits.



**The AM has an Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel,** which includes those with disability and carers of those with disability. The advisory panel assists with informing and advising the AM on access and inclusion initiatives.



**The AM website has been developed in line with W3C web access guidelines.**



**The AM has a large number of volunteers,** ranging from those who interact with the public on a daily basis, through to those who assist with scientific and cultural research and digitisation. The work accomplished is varied and significant. Many of the AM's volunteers are aging or have a disability but their work is highly valued and essential to the operation of the Museum.



**Free, accessible daily tours** are run and advertised on the AM website. A portable hearing loop is available when requested by visitors.



**The AM app features audio descriptive tours** of the Museum and audio tours of the galleries.



**Free entry is available for carers who hold a companion card.** Wheelchairs are available to visitors on request.



Tactile tours are available throughout the Museum.  
Photo Abram Powell

# Consultation Process

The AM's AIAP was informed by comprehensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure it adopts the four key goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act.

The AIAP Steering Committee includes a representative from each division of the AM, ensuring that all areas of the Museum were included in the consultation process.

The AM's Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Panel, which helped guide the development of the AIAP, is:

**Sabrina Houssami-Richardson**

Diversity & inclusion advocate

**Mark Tonga**

Opportunity guide

**Naomi Malone**

Access and inclusion specialist advisor

**Syvala Mahmic**

CEO Plumtree Children's Services Inc.

**Troy King**

Inclusion logistics specialist

We sincerely thank the Advisory Panel and the following individuals and organisations for their help and advice in improving accessibility at the AM:

**Australian Network on Disability**

**Paul Nunnari**

Accessibility consultant

The AM's AIAP Steering Committee includes:

**Zehra Ahmed**

Project Lead, Facilities

**Serena Todd**

Members and Marketing

**Amanda Farrar**

Public Affairs

**Andrew Cutbush**

WHS and HR

**Claude Moelan**

Digital

**Fara Pelarek**

Education and Lifelong Learning

**Franziska Mindrup**

Customer Service

**Serafina Froio**

Commercial Operations

**Matt Ravier**

Programming

**Matthew Oakley**

Exhibitions



AM Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Panel members: Mark Tonga and Naomi Malone in Bayala Nura: Yarning Country. Photo James Alcock

# Accessibility strategy

The AM's AIAP supports the four key goals under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act:

1. Changing community attitudes towards people with disability.
2. Increasing community participation.
3. Increasing employment opportunities for people with disability.
4. Removing barriers to systems and processes.

## Outcome 1: Attitudes and Behaviours

The AM is committed to increasing positive attitudes and perceptions about accessibility and inclusion at the Museum through the actions below.

Action	Target	Responsibility	Timeframe (Cost Ranking)
1.1	Identify a disability champion from the Executive Leadership Team to promote and support access and inclusion within and outside the AM.	A champion is identified and known within the AM and is active in driving awareness and promoting the importance of access and inclusion.	Executive Leadership Team June 2018
1.2	Develop an internal and external communication and marketing plan that promotes the AM's commitments, activities and outcomes of the AIAP, featuring key dates (e.g. International Day of Disability) and the contribution of people with disability to the Museum.	Communication and marketing plan in place, encourage participation of people with disability, and cover access and inclusion stories and case studies.	Manager, Communications and Manager, Marketing and Membership June 2018
1.3	Provide Disability Confidence Training for staff across the AM, including mandatory induction for all front of house staff.  Provide orientation for contractors and suppliers in public-facing roles on the AM's commitment and deliverables for access and inclusion.	Mandatory for front of house staff – 70% of all other staff to complete training.  Contractors and non-AM staff welcome customers with disability and work in line with the AM's commitment to access and inclusion.	Manager, HR Manager, Commercial Operations End of 2019 June 2018
1.4	Provide training and resources for managers to support the recruitment and retention of people with disability.	Resources available to managers on intranet and disability confidence training is part of managers' Personal Development Plans.	Manager, HR June 2019
1.5	Develop training and resources on inclusive education to the programming and education team to ensure AM programs are accessible for everyone.	Accessibility requirements are met and increase the participation of people with disability in AM education programs.	Manager, Programming and Manager, Education End 2018
1.6	Provide dignified access training to the exhibitions team to support them to design accessible and welcoming exhibitions for all.	All exhibitions team receive training on accessibility and inclusion considerations when designing an exhibition.	Manager, HR End 2018
1.7	Provide audio description training to relevant staff, such as Visitor Service Officers.	Visitor program and services staff are able to provide a full and rich experience for visitors who are blind or have low vision.	Manager, Programming and Manager, Education June 2018
1.8	Continue to provide information packs to education partner organisations on how to deliver accessible and inclusive programs.	AM education partners feel confident to communicate with and teach students with disability.	Manager, Education Achieved and ongoing
1.9	Participate in Accessing the Arts Group (ATAG), run through Accessible Arts, and connect with other cultural institutions to drive access and inclusion practices across NSW.	Be identified as a leading Museum providing accessible and inclusive programs.	Accessibility and Inclusion Steering Committee Ongoing

## Outcome 2: Liveable communities

The AM is striving to ensure its premises and extended services create a welcoming environment and provide dignified access through the actions below. Creating liveable communities encompasses more than the physical environment - it also encompasses transport, events, community recreation, social engagement and universal design.

Action		Target	Responsibility	Timeframe (Cost Ranking) <sup>1</sup>
2.1	All new building works, including the Master Plan, will incorporate accessibility requirements in the planning and design stage.	New infrastructure meets current standards and provides dignified access for visitors and staff with disability.	Master Plan team	2018-2021 ongoing
2.2	When new infrastructure is confirmed, the AM Advisory Panel will inform the design and planning phase.	People with disability are consulted and provide insight on accessibility features during the design and planning stage to ensure new infrastructure provides dignified access.	Master Plan team, Manager, Facilities and Manager, Exhibitions	2021-Masterplan
2.3	Scope the possibility of onsite accessibility parking and drop-off facilities, as part of the Master Plan.	A full review of onsite parking has been completed and alternative options have been explored.	Master Plan team	2021
2.4	Secure funding for wheelchair lift for access to all education spaces at the AM.	Wheelchair lift is funded and installed, providing staff and visitors full access to AM education spaces	Executive Leadership Team	2021
2.5	Create a priority list for all building retrofit works, with timeframes and budgets.	A commitment to priority upgrades with timeframe and costings.	Manager, Facilities	June 2018
2.6	Create procedural checklist for new exhibitions and touring exhibitions that incorporates best practice for accessible exhibition design. Where required, engage an access consultant or advisory panel.	The checklist is in place and used for all new exhibitions. The AM meets accessibility standards and customers have dignified access to the Museum.	Manager, Exhibitions	June 2018
2.7	Review signage to improve wayfinding into and around the AM for people with disability.	Reduce complaints regarding wayfinding from people with disability accessing the AM.	Director, Marketing, Communications, Partnerships	June 2019
2.8	The AM's accessibility services are promoted on the website and made freely available to visitors, such as portable hearing loops, audio descriptive tours, specialised tactile and Auslan interpreted tours, A3 and braille maps	Accessibility information is maintained on the AM website and visitors are aware of how to request services. An increase in requests for adjustments.	Manager, Digital	Mid July 2018
2.9	Review interpretive information in all exhibition spaces to ensure it is placed at the appropriate angle and height, with appropriate use of contrast, colour and lighting.	Feedback through evaluation by older visitors and visitors with low vision is at least 75% positive.	Manager, Exhibitions	December 2019
2.10	Develop AM style guide on providing accessible exhibition interpretive information.	The style guide provides an example of best practice for interpretive signage in Museums	Manager, Exhibitions	December 2019
2.11	Establish audio and audio descriptive recordings for permanent galleries, which are available on the AM app.	Audio and audio description is available to visitors.	Manager, Exhibitions and Manager, Digital	End 2020
2.12	Develop a procedure to incorporate accessibility requirements for public and private events.	Event visitors are asked if they have any access requirements and adjustments are implemented as required.	Manager, Programming and Manager, Commercial Operations	End of June 2018

## Outcome 3: Employment

Employment contributes to a feeling of self-worth, social interaction and mental health as well as economic benefit. The AM is dedicated to retaining and increasing its employment of those with disability, as outlined in the actions below.

Action	Target	Responsibility	Timeframe
3.1	Develop and implement a workplace adjustment policy and procedure for staff and volunteers.	Candidates and employees with disability can request adjustments and managers are clear on the process to implement those adjustments.	Manager, HR December 2018
3.2	Develop a procedure to meet all staff accessibility requirements in staff relocation and office fit outs.	Staff accessibility requirements are considered in the planning stages of fit out and in all office relocations.	Manager, HR, Manager, Facilities and Master Plan team End 2018
3.3	Develop a process for staff to request workplace adjustments for any learning and development opportunities.	Staff and volunteers with disability have access to all training opportunities and material for requesting adjustments.	Manager, HR End 2019
3.4	Develop a Personal Emergency and Evacuation Plan (PEEP) available to all staff if required.	Process in place and staff aware of the PEEPs.	Manager, Security End 2018
3.5	Incorporate accessibility, PEEPs and requests for adjustments in Managers training for inducting new staff members and supporting existing staff, casuals and volunteers.	Managers provide an inclusive induction process.	All Managers End 2018
3.6	Review AM's recruitment practices and remove any unintended barriers for people with disability.	AM has an accessible recruitment process that encourages people with disability to apply for roles.	Manager, HR June 2019
3.7	Develop a strategy to increase the employment of people with disability at the AM, including internships, work experience and mentoring.	Strategy developed with timeframes for implementation.	Manager, HR and AIAP Steering Committee End of 2019
3.8	Include an accessibility and inclusion statement on all job advertisements, encouraging people with disability to apply.	Increased number of people with disability applying.	Manager, HR Ongoing
3.9	Monitor and review the engagement of staff with disability and how this can be improved at the AM.	Engagement of staff with disability improves year to year.	Manager, HR Annually



Interactive tactile children's programming in Search & Discover. Photo Abram Powell

## Outcome 4: Systems and Processes

The AM is committed to ensuring that its systems and processes are accessible to all through the actions below.

Action	Target	Responsibility	Timeframe
4.1	Establish an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory panel to inform the AM in the development of significant projects, including public programs, exhibitions and capital works.	Advisory Panel in place and the views and input of people with disability are captured in the design and planning stages of any new work.	Manager, Facilities Ongoing
4.2	Increase the number of partnerships with disability organisations	Increasing the number of visitors with disability to the AM.	Manager, Programming, Manager, Education and Manager, HR December 2018
4.3	Develop style and access guides for exhibitions, publications and digital media to ensure information is created in an accessible format. Use appropriate language and imagery in relation to people with disability.	Guidelines are in place and followed.	Manager, Communications, Manager, Marketing, Manager, Exhibitions and Manager, Digital January 2019
4.4	Review the AM website against the Worldwide Web Consortium's Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0  Review the AM and intranet against the (WCAG) 2.0	All content available via the sites is accessible for people with disability and meets WCAG 2.0 level AA.	Manager, Digital Manager, ICT Achieved and ongoing End 2019
4.5	Include in Procurement Policy the AM's commitment to access and inclusion of people with disability, and outline expectations for the organisations the AM works with to have similar goals.	The AM works with suppliers that are committed to access and inclusion, and their commitment is considered as part of the selection process.	CFO and Manager, Commercial Operations July 2019
4.6	Develop a policy and procedure to ensure all new products and services are accessible for people with disability.	New products and services are accessible for people with disability.	CFO and Manager, Commercial Operations July 2019
4.7	Develop a process for all customer and employee feedback and complaints regarding accessibility at the AM to be addressed by the AIAP Steering Committee.	Feedback regarding all aspects of accessibility at the AM are meaningfully recorded, responded to and reviewed by the AIAP Steering Committee for future action(s).	AIAP Steering Committee By Nov 2018 (ongoing)
4.8	Develop a process for all visitors to be offered a Generic Emergency and Evacuation Plan.	The fire wardens are aware of any access requirements for visitors with disability and that visitors with disability are evacuated safely.	Manager, Security End 2018



# Monitoring and Review

The AIAP Steering Committee will meet every two months and help drive the implementation of the plan. The Steering Committee is responsible for reporting on progress of the AIAP.

The AIAP will be made available on the AM website and included in staff orientation packages. Procedures and updates will be given to staff via the AM intranet and at regular staff meetings. This AIAP and future Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plans will be lodged with the Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

## Implementation & Measurement of Progress

All AM staff are responsible for championing accessibility and inclusion in their department and across the Museum. The Steering Committee and managers are responsible for ensuring that actions relevant to their area are budgeted for and implemented. Key targets will be included in staff personal development plans where applicable. The implementation of these actions will be reported to the AM's Executive Leadership Team.

The AIAP is embedded in the AM's Corporate Strategic Plan, which is reported to the AM Trust bi-annually. An annual update of the AIAP will be also included in the AM's annual report.

The AIAP includes an indicative cost for each action. Of the 38 actions:

- **28 are considered to be low cost**  
(i.e. may cost less than \$20,000).
- **6 are considered to be medium cost**  
(i.e. may cost between \$20,000 and \$100,000).
- **4 are considered to be high cost**  
(i.e. may cost more than \$100,000).

## Review

The AIAP will be completed by December 2021. The AIAP will be reviewed in 2021 to enable a new plan for the following three-year period, 2021-2024. The review will include:

- An assessment of the implementation of the AIAP 2018-2021 will include completing two access and inclusion index assessments by the Australian Network in Disability, to provide an evaluation of progress and benchmarking.
- An audit of all aspects of accessibility at the AM.
- External and internal inclusive consultations with people with disability to inform the AM on progress and areas for improvement. The consultation will include people who represent all definitions of disability provided under the Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

## Contact

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Children interact with specimens in Search and Discover. Photo Stuart Humphreys

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**Cover Image** Mark Tonga from the AM  
Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Panel  
with friend in *Bayala Nura: Yarning Country*.

**Photo** James Alcock

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