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Australian National
Maritime Museum
**Disability Inclusion
Action Plan 2024–2027**

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Australian National Maritime Museum Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024–2027

Contributors

The Australian National Maritime Museum would like to acknowledge those who contributed their time, expertise, and feedback to develop this plan, including:

- Our survey respondents
- Our community focus group participants
- Our staff and volunteers
- Accessible Arts

Front cover image: A visitor in the Shaped by the Sea gallery exploring the *Dhaṅaṅ Dhukarr (Many Pathways)* by Mulka Project in low light during the Museum's Sensory Sunday.

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Message from the Director

I am delighted to present the Australian National Maritime Museum's *Accessibility Strategy 2024–2027* and *Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2024–2027*.

The Museum's work is an open invitation to all Australians to connect with conversations about the unique role of our waterways and oceans in the past, present and future of this nation shaped by sea. This Plan, developed in consultation with Museum workers and the community, consolidates earlier policies and practices and is part of our continuing commitment to provide all Australians, including the one in five with disability, with improved access to our:

- programs, tours, and services
- cultural and creative experiences
- maritime collections, exhibitions, research, and archaeology.

We are also committed to providing opportunities for employment to those with a disability and training for all our workers in disability awareness.

Our new Plan sets out clear actions to inspire positive change to empower and engage audiences, collaborators, and Museum workers by improving, and measuring, access and inclusion across the four key areas of:

- attitudes and behaviours
- physical and digital spaces
- employment
- systems and processes

The commitments in this Plan will be incorporated into the Museum's operational plans by the Senior Executive and Leadership Team to ensure that this living document is successful in spite of the constraints of our unique site, limitations of historical vessels and finite resources, in order to achieve the strategic priority, set by the National Cultural Policy—Revive: a *place for every story, a story for every place*, to support people with disability to participate fully in Australia's cultural and creative life.

I extend my sincere thanks to those who generously shared their experiences, knowledge, and time to inform the development of this Plan. I look forward to continuing this collaboration as we progress its implementation.

Daryl Karp
Director and CEO
Australian National Maritime Museum

The Australian National Maritime Museum

Our vision

The oceans and waterways are the heartbeat of who we are. As an island nation – in the Asia Pacific – this nation has been shaped by sea. The Australian National Maritime Museum connects Australians with the past, present and future. Our work adds knowledge, seeks cohesion, and promotes sustainability.

This is a journey for all Australians – and all Australians are invited to be part of it with us.

Our purpose

To inform, challenge and nurture conversations about this nation shaped by sea. We develop, preserve, and present our collection, research, and expertise to connect visitors and their own experiences to stories as old as the continent itself – and yet vital to all our futures.¹

Disability in Australia

The 2006 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* defines people with disability as those 'who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'² It places the responsibility on society to ensure that all people are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential, regardless of their circumstances or disability.

Disability can be permanent or temporary, invisible, or visible. It can arise from accidents, illness, genetics or age and can be mental as well as physical.

It impacts us all. The 2019 Australian Bureau of Statistics *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* found that one in five, or 4.4 million Australians, has a disability. Furthermore:

- over 11 million Australians, or 47 per cent, have one or more chronic conditions.³
- 45 per cent will experience a mental health issue at some time in their life.⁴
- 357,000 people in Australia are blind or partially sighted.⁵
- one in six Australians are impacted by hearing loss. There are approximately 30,000 deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss.⁶
- 45.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over experience disability.⁷

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* provides protection against discrimination based on disability. It requires organisations to prepare a Disability Inclusion Action Plan as a public statement of their commitment to substantive equality for people with disability.

1 [ANMM Strategic Framework 2023-2027](#)

2 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd.

3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "Chronic conditions and multimorbidity" (Topic summary, 7 July 2022) www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/chronic-conditions-and-multimorbidity

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020-21). *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. ABS. abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release

5 Vision 2020 Australia, "A snapshot of blindness and low vision services in Australia" (Resource article no date) vision2020australia.org.au/resources/a-snapshot-of-blindness-and-low-vision-services-in-australia/.

6 Access Economics, Listen Hear! The Economic Impact and Cost of Hearing Loss in Australia (Access Economics report, February 2006) https://www.deafnessforum.org.au/wp-content/uploads/documents/research_publications/listen_hear_-_the_economic_impact_and_cost_of_hearing_loss_in_australia.pdf.

7 ABS 4714.0 – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014–15 abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0.

The Museum's Disability Inclusion Initiatives

The last *Disability Inclusion Action Plan* was developed in 2008 and has led to improvements in access and inclusion through:

- delivery of a monthly program of Sensory Friendly Sundays for those visitors who are sensitive to high levels of noise and light
- provision of Sensory Backpacks, a free borrowable resource for adults and children with sensory sensitivities to make visits to the museum more enjoyable
- introduction of a program for people suffering with dementia and their carers that encourages the sharing of personal recollections through handling of objects from the Education Collection
- partnering with ASPECT, Bayley House and other cultural institutions to launch the Sunflower scheme which aims to make public spaces more accessible for people with hidden disabilities
- installation of a lift to facilitate access between the floors of the museum's public spaces
- commencement of awareness training for staff and volunteers including Disability Confidence Training, How to be a Good Ally and Accessible Exhibition Design / Accessible Festivals and Events
- requiring applicants to the Museum's annual grants program to state how their project will increase accessibility, including for people with disability
- providing opportunities for feedback from visitors through exit surveys and information available on the website.

The Museum's Commitment to Accessibility

The new *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024–2027* demonstrates our commitment to putting in place further actions and initiatives to meet the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act*. It is the result of a six-month collaboration with Accessible Arts and has been informed by:

- two Focus Group discussions — one with external stakeholders with disability and another with staff and volunteers
- a series of interviews with staff and volunteers
- two surveys — one with external stakeholders with disability and another with staff and volunteers
- an Access Walk and Talk conducted in three internal gallery spaces of the main museum building and the outside wharf area including the *Actions Stations Projection Room*, *Exploration Space* and *HMAS Vampire*
- a WCAG 2.1 website compliance audit, and
- a document compliance audit.

The Museum subscribes to the social model of disability which recognises the difference between a person's individual condition or impairment and the barriers created by the environment and society around them. The focus of this Plan is therefore on addressing the barriers that create disadvantage by limiting opportunity, participation, autonomy, and self-expression.

We aim to:

- embed access and inclusion for people with disability into all aspects of the Museum
- continue offering and expanding tailored programs, tours and services for people with disability
- increase disability awareness through staff and volunteer training programs
- create an environment where opportunities are provided for everyone on an equal basis
- deliver memorable, high-quality cultural experiences that demonstrate best practice in accessibility across all aspects of our operation.

Scope of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The research and consultation undertaken in developing this Plan identified the need for action to improve inclusion and access through:

- establishing a baseline commitment by developing internal guidelines and checklists
- improving access to the site, exhibitions, and wayfinding
- ensuring that experiences, including targeted promotions, website and publications, are widely accessible
- providing staff and volunteer engagement and training, and
- encouraging consultation and feedback

Implementation and Review

The Museum will establish an Internal DIAP Working Group with representatives from across the organisation. The Group will meet quarterly to oversee implementation of the Plan and to provide advice on accessibility. It will track progress and report regularly to the Executive Review Group, the Leadership Team and Council.

The Museum's annual report will include a report on progress with implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This will be published on our website and shared with all stakeholder groups.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan is constructed around four pillars:

1. Attitudes and behaviours

These have been described as the single greatest barrier to full access and inclusion for people with disability. Developing positive attitudes involves increasing awareness and changing negative perceptions.

2. Accessible and liveable communities

This is more than modifying the physical environment. It covers areas such as access to transport, community recreation and culture, social engagement, and universal design.

3. Employment

The rates for people with disability are significantly lower than for those without disability. The gap is the result of barriers that people with disability face at all stages of the employment process, ranging from inaccessible interview venues, lack of reasonable adjustments to the work environment, rigid role descriptions and online testing that may place applicants at a disadvantage. Research indicates that organisational commitment to workforce equality and inclusion is closely linked to strong business performance.

4. Systems and processes

A common barrier for people with disability is the difficulty of navigating systems and processes to access the services, venues and support they need. This could include accessing information, communication, or lack of options to access services.

Australian National Maritime Museum

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024 – 2027

PILLAR 1: Attitudes and Behaviours

Goal: The Museum will demonstrate positive attitudes and inclusive behaviours in relation to people with disability, empowering and engaging audiences, stakeholders, and museum workers.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
1.1 Internal Confidence and Competence		
Build staff, volunteers' and contractors' skills and understanding of disability and accessibility	June 2025	All Museum workers (staff and volunteers) receive Disability Awareness Training. A regular program of refresher training established particularly for those with direct contact with the public.
	Ongoing	Disability Awareness Training is part of the onboarding process.
	June 2025	Bespoke training for specialist areas provided: e.g. Accessible Marketing and Communications Training, Auslan and audio description, Curation and Design.
	June 2026	Museum Education staff have additional training to skill them in conducting specialist tours for people with disability.
	June 2025	Digital, Marketing and IT staff to receive training on web accessibility guidelines.
1.2 Internal DIAP Working Group		
Establish and maintain a group to monitor and advance DIAP progress.	Dec 2024 Quarterly, ongoing	Establish an internal DIAP Working Group to monitor the implementation of this plan and report regularly to the Executive Review Group and provide a report for inclusion in the Museum's annual report.
1.3 Partnerships		
Develop strong community engagement	June 2025	Identify key organisations in the local disability sector and develop meaningful partnerships.
	Ongoing	Explore the cross promotion of accessible events and programs with disability organisations to encourage attendance and engagement.
	Ongoing	Promote employment, professional development and volunteer opportunities and ensure the information is provided in multiple formats.
	Sept 2024	Communicate the Disability Inclusion Action Plan to disability organisations and stakeholders.
	Sept 2024	Communicate the Disability Inclusion Action Plan publicly through the Australian Human Rights Commission Register.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
1.4 Communications, Marketing & Promotion		
Ensure all communication channels are accessible and inclusive to everyone.	June 2025	Ensure images of people with disability are used on the website and in social media to strengthen community perceptions of the Museum as a disability-friendly organisation and to encourage more people with disability applying for roles.
	June 2025	Develop and adopt a Marketing and Communications Checklist
	Dec 2025	Clearly communicate the Museum’s commitment to accessibility and ensure that materials meet standards for accessibility.

PILLAR 2: Physical and Digital Spaces – Accessible and Liveable Communities

Goal: The Museum commits to continuous improvement in our physical and digital spaces to welcome our communities onsite, online and on tour.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
2.1 Accessible Programming		
Ensure programs we offer are accessible to those with a range of access requirements.	June 2025	Site accessibility Create a checklist for front of house to ensure that access requirements are captured with all bookings.
	Dec 2025	Update website to provide schools with information about what access requirements will be met.
	June 2026	Ensure that signage for the entry is clear and the experience is welcoming.
	June 2026	Scope a Priority/Early Seating program to manage queuing and assist those who cannot stand for any length of time.
	Ongoing	Program accessibility Continue to offer specific programs that broaden access to people with disability (e.g. Sensory Sundays, Sunflower Project, Dementia Friendly program) and scope ways to expand (e.g. increase frequency, access to whole museum, quiet times, adult, or youth focused and includes the whole family).
	June 2026	Scope the potential of developing new programs for specific access requirements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education programs - Auslan tours - self-guided audio tours - sensory friendly tours - quiet time tours
	Ongoing	Consult and engage with people with disability to develop, promote and advertise accessible tours through disability sector networks and media.
2.2 Accessible Exhibition Design		
Ensure exhibitions are designed and delivered with access and inclusion in mind.	Dec 2025	Develop an in-house checklist to address disability access drawing on the Smithsonian <i>Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design</i> .
	Ongoing	Review policies and procedures to ensure the checklist is used in the planning of all exhibitions.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
2.3 Physical Site		
Continue to make access improvements to the built environment over time.	Dec 2024	From the <i>Walk and Talk Audit</i> determine the suggestions that can be implemented and prepare a plan to progressively undertake these works to ensure that the way into the Museum is clear and welcoming, review entry, signage and communications.
	June 2025	Scope possibilities to improve access to vessels and the lighthouse, including providing digital access.
	Ongoing	Offer a variety of seating options guided by Australian standards. This includes back and arm rests, height requirements, colour contrasts and spacing for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
	Dec 2025	Provide access to calming spaces (lower sound and light levels) for visitors with cognitive and neurological impairments.
	Dec 2024	Review the emergency plan and enhance staff training to ensure people with disability can be safely evacuated.
	June 2025	Conduct a review of parking and transport options and signage to ensure accessibility for people with disability.
2.4 Mobility Devices		
Provide mobility devices for visitors who require them.	Ongoing	Continue to offer pre-booking for wheelchairs and improve the signage and communication around their availability.
	June 2025	Review the capacity of wheelchairs to navigate exhibition spaces, <i>Action Stations</i> , the boardwalk, and Wharf 7 and make recommendations for any improvements identified.
	June 2025	Scope options for getting wheelchairs onto vessels using existing ramps and possible ways to get wheelchairs onto vessels in the future.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
2.5 Wayfinding and Signage		
Improve wayfinding and signage experiences for people to access the building independently without assistance.	Ongoing	Continue to improve signage and wayfinding across the museum including visible access signage at front-of-house to encourage questions around access.
	June 2026	Evaluate provision of accessible formats of signage (e.g. Braille, large font text for exhibit information, both hard copy and digital formats, wayfinding stations throughout the museum with a SmartScreen).
	Ongoing	Ensure all signage meets Universal Design Principles.
	Dec 2025	Improve signage messaging around access (including warnings such as being an enclosed space, and that there is no audio and no wheelchair access.)
	June 2026	Scope a variety of maps including hardcopy and digital formats. Including reviewing and expanding the Museum's 'visual story' (visual guide of how to get to and through the museum).

PILLAR 3: Employment

Goal: The Museum will prioritise improving the inclusivity and accessibility of its workplace.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
3.1 Promoting Opportunities		
Ensure job advertisements are shared widely and in accessible places.	Ongoing	Increase the number of museum workers with disability.
	June 2025	Review employment policies to ensure that people with disabilities are encouraged to apply and feel welcome to ask questions about access needs.
	June 2025	Include an inclusion and diversity statement in job advertisements to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply.
	Dec 2025	Scope organisations and disability job boards to ensure job advertisements are advertised widely.
	June 2025	Ensure job advertisements are published in accessible formats and that various accessible formats of application are accepted.
	June 2026	Scope opportunities for internships, traineeships, and work experience programs people with disability.
3.2 Volunteers		
Attract and support a diverse group of volunteers with access requirements.	Ongoing	Clearly communicate that volunteer access requirements will be supported on all marketing/communication around volunteering opportunities.
	June 2025	Ensure volunteers have the same procedures as staff for disclosing access requirements and then ensure these are supported.

PILLAR 4: Systems and Processes

Goal: The Museum will embed access and inclusion into our systems and processes to ensure our information, services and programs are designed well to give people with disability choice and control.

ACTION	TIMELINE	SUCCESS MEASURES
4.1 Embed Access and Inclusion		
Ensure access and inclusion principles and values are embedded across the organisation.	Dec 2024	Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors receive a copy of the DIAP and information about their responsibilities.
	Ongoing	Include the Accessibility Strategy in the agenda of regular team meetings to ensure implementation and progress.
	Ongoing	Ensure integration of DIAP across organisational processes, including overall operational and departmental plans.
4.2 Inclusive Language and Communication		
Ensure Museum communications are accessible and inclusive.	Dec 2024	Review and where possible implement the suggestions of the Document Review by Accessible Arts.
	June 2025	Develop Inclusive Language Policy to ensure it promotes the social model of disability.
	Ongoing	Promotion of programs, events, and exhibitions to include disability services and facilities available as well as the appropriate access symbols.
	Dec 2025	Create a dedicated web page to promote disability access to services and facilities.
4.3 Booking and ticketing		
Ensure that ticketing processes are accessible for people with a range of access requirements and affordable.	June 2025	Ensure that booking and ticketing processes are accessible for people with a range of access requirements.
4.4 Ongoing Evaluation and Improvement		
Ensure mechanisms are in place to continue improving access.	June 2025	Ensure there is a range of ways to request information and submit feedback.
	Annually (June)	Review feedback provided about issues raised in relation to disability access.
4.5 Technology		
Ensure appropriate technology is utilised that can enhance accessible experiences at the museum.	Dec 2024	Check that current hearing loops and sound systems are in order.
	June 2025	Develop a plan to implement the priority recommendations of the Website Audit Report to ensure the website is accessible for people with a range of access requirements.

Attachment 1

Terminology

Language can be a personal and political choice. We recognise that there are varying views on language and terminology around disability in Australia and internationally. We use the person-first language of ‘person with disability’ to recognise that disability is just one aspect of a person’s life and does not determine who they are.

The Social Model of Disability makes a distinction between conditions - the condition, illness or loss/lack of function – and disability – barriers and discrimination. So, the term ‘disability’ refers to barriers, rather than medical conditions. The Social Model looks at the environment instead of individual conditions.

Inclusion is about creating an environment that celebrates diversity and is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. This environment recognises, utilises, and values the knowledge, abilities, skills and ideas of people, irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion, gender or sexual orientation, education level, socio-economic background, age, disability or family responsibility.⁸

Access is about creating the necessary conditions for all individuals and organisations to utilise services, facilities, programs and employment opportunities. Access is about making space for the unique characteristics that each person brings. Barriers to equitable access fall into the categories of physical, communication, economic, social, and attitudinal.

Universal Access is about the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used by all people regardless of their age, size or ability. An environment (or any building, product or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.⁹

Legislation and Policy

This Plan aligns with international and national social policy and legislative frameworks including:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 (UNCRPD)
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (NDS)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
- Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- National Arts and Disability Strategy 2009
- Disability Services Act 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)
- Disability Justice Strategy 2019 - 2029 (Australian Capital Territory)

⁸ University of Western Australian Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

<https://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/daip/Disability-Access-and-Inclusion-Plan-2020-2025.pdf>

⁹ National Disability Authority. What is Universal Design. <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/definition-and-overview>

Contact

An accessible PDF version of our DIAP Plan is available to the public through our website. Hard copy formats in both large and standard print and other alternative formats are also available on request. This plan is also registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

We value community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals and actions outlined in our DIAP. We encourage individuals and organisations to share their thoughts and experiences with us to ensure our continued improvement.

ANMM internal DIAP working group contact officer:

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For general enquiries, feedback and services, please contact:

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If you are deaf or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 02 9298 3777

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 02 9298 3777

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 02 9298 3777