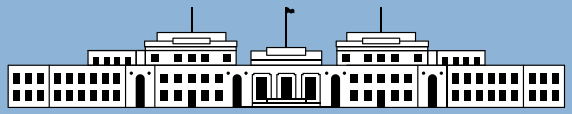
MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY



OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2025-28

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We would like to thank Accessible Arts for their valuable collaboration and guidance in the development of the Museum of Australian Democracy's 2025–2028 Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Their expertise and insights helped ensure the plan reflects best practice in accessibility and inclusion, and supports our ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming and accessible museum for all.

01

Acknowledgement of Country

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MoAD) acknowledges Australia's First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We also acknowledge the Ngunnawal, Ngunawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the region on which MoAD is located.

02

Message from the Director

Statement of Endorsement

The Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD)'s second Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2025-2028 has been developed in consultation with Accessible Arts, MoAD staff and through visitor feedback. The plan demonstrates MoAD's commitment to delivering exhibitions, programs, events and online experiences that are accessible to all, and to improving accessibility within our nationally heritage-listed building. The plan is built around four principles:

- attitudes and behaviours
- liveable communities
- employment opportunities
- systems and processes.

Teams across MoAD are committed to:

- creating a welcoming and accessible Museum for all visitors
- sharing stories in ways that are creative, unique, inclusive and meaningful
- delivering engaging experiences for current audiences and actively broadening community engagement, ensuring programs reflect and include a diversity of voices
- fostering a strong workplace culture committed to integrity, support, inclusivity and respect for all.

MoAD will continue to work with stakeholders to integrate accessibility and develop policies and practices with inclusion at their core. This plan will ensure the Museum maintains a supportive and inclusive environment, welcoming all to explore Old Parliament House, engage with MoAD, and see themselves in Australia's democratic story.

Stephanie Bull

03
About us

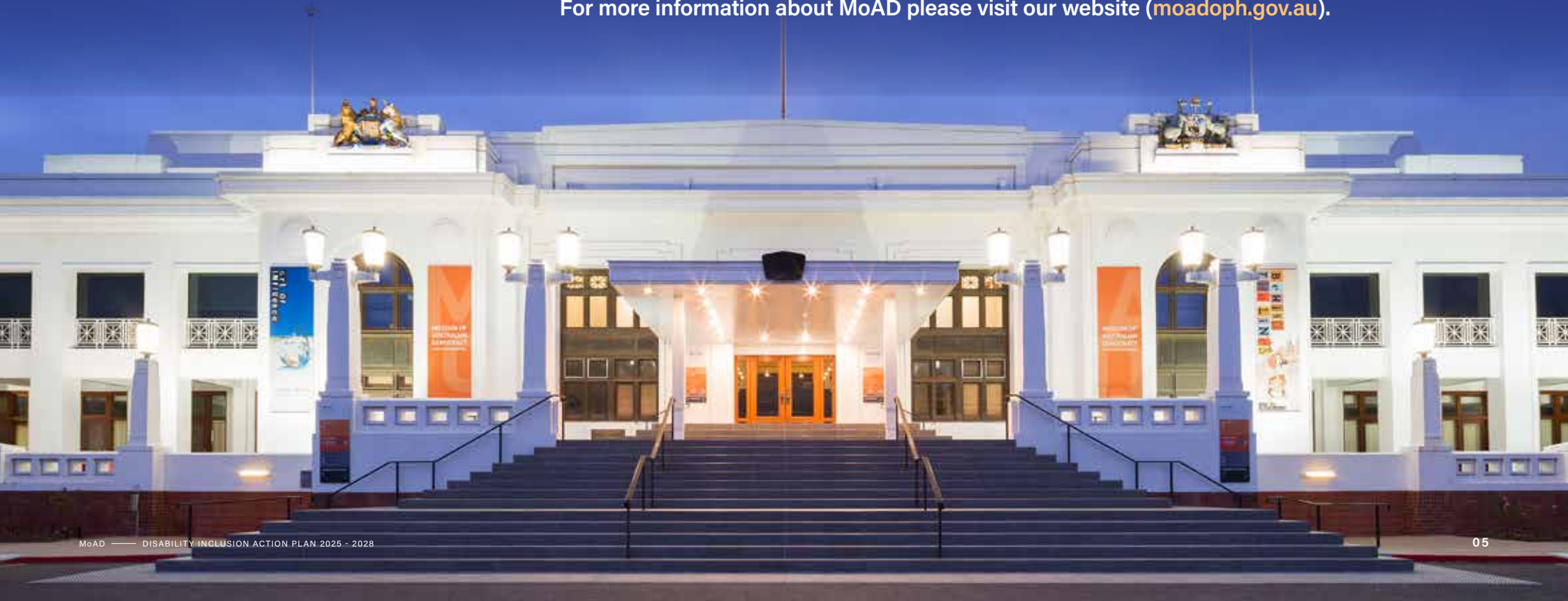
MoAD is a contemporary Museum located inside a nationally significant, heritage-listed building that was home to Australia's federal parliament from 1927 to 1988.

We invite all visitors to engage with and participate in our democracy through our exhibitions, events, collections, programs and rich online collection of stories, objects and resources.

MoAD's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan guides our work to:

- showcase Old Parliament House
- foster a museum for the people
- share the story of Australian democracy and
- inspire all to help shape Australia's future.

For more information about MoAD please visit our website (moadoph.gov.au).



04

Our commitment

MoAD is committed to deepening public understanding of Australia's democracy in all its diversity. We value individual experiences and recognise the multidimensionality of the disability community. Our goal is to identify and address barriers to equitable participation, ensuring that everyone can engage meaningfully with the Museum and its programs.

We acknowledge that not everyone who experiences barriers identifies as a person with disability or as part of the disability community. Identity is personal and may change over time. We are committed to listening, learning and responding to the diverse voices and requirements of the disability community.



Our goal is to ensure everyone can engage meaningfully with our Museum

05

Disability in Australia

In 2007, Australia signed the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' in a global effort to promote the equal and active participation of all people with disability. The Convention defines disability as including 'long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.[1]

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in its Personal Safety Survey: User Guide defines 'a person has a disability if they report they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months and restricts everyday activities'.[2] Disability may be temporary or permanent, visible or non-visible, total or partial and acquired or lifelong. It can result from injury, trauma, genetics or disease.

The ABS notes disability prevalence has increased between 2018 and 2022 across all age groups under 70 and remained the same for age groups over 70. Several factors which may have contributed to the increase, but not limited to:

- growing awareness and recognition of disability in Australia
- an overall increase in some long-term health conditions
- an ageing population
- introduction of an online, self-completion questionnaire by the ABS for the first time in 2022.[3]

[1]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), UN Website, accessed 15 January 2025. [2]Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Personal safety survey: User guide, ABS Website, accessed 15 January 2025. [3]Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, ABS Website, accessed 15 January 2025.

06 Definitions

6.1. Person first language

This plan uses person-first language of 'person with disability', recognising that disability is just one aspect of a person's life and does not define who they are. The plan also uses uncountable nouns (e.g. 'a person with chronic condition') to acknowledge disability as a state or experience that cannot be reduced to a list of conditions. We recognise that language preferences vary across individuals, communities and cultures.

6.2. The social model of disability

The social model of disability distinguishes between a person's condition and the barriers imposed by society. In this model, the term 'disability' refers to these external barriers rather than the medical condition itself.

6.3. Access and barriers

Access refers to recognising and removing barriers to full and equal participation for all. Barriers can be grouped into five categories: attitudes, communication, physical environment, transportation and social factors. Access ensures that services, spaces, programs, events and employment are inclusive of everyone, regardless of ability.

6.4. Inclusion

Inclusion refers to embracing and valuing the full diversity of people across age, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. It is not just about representation, it is about creating spaces where everyone can participate meaningfully, feel respected and experience a sense of belonging.
An inclusive community is one where all people are recognised, welcomed and empowered to contribute.

6.5. Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises the ways in which aspects of a person's identity can overlap and expose them to varying forms of marginalisation. Being part of more than one underrepresented group can compound the barriers experienced by an individual. These groups include First Nations people, people from culturally and lingusitically diverse backgrounds, diverse people, women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people from regional and remote areas, older people, children and young people and people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

6.6. Universal access

Universal access refers to designing environments, systems and services to be usable by all people, regardless of age, size, ability or background. Universal design anticipates and accommodates diverse needs from the outset, not as an afterthought. This includes physical spaces, information, technologies and customer service. Universal access is a shared responsibility and a key principle of inclusive design.

07

MoAD Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

2025-2028



7.1.
Attitudes and behaviours

Model inclusive behaviours for visitors and staff

MoAD actively models inclusive behaviours in all we do: within the organisation and through external partnerships and collaborations.

Our commitment

Action	Date
Rollout a training plan, with ongoing access to relevant resources, to ensure access and inclusion competence across the organisation.	2026 - 2027
Continue to build partnerships with disability communities and networks to enhance offerings for the public.	2025 - 2028
Join and continue to participate in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. Implement mandatory training for all front of house staff.	2025 - 2028
Identify and showcase stories, objects and collection items made by or featuring people with disability in exhibitions, interpretive content and online platforms.	2025 - 2028
Promote programs, events and exhibitions with clear information about available services and facilities, using universal access symbols and multiple accessible formats.	2025 - 2028

7.2.
Liveable communities

Ensure the ongoing conservation of Old Parliament House while maximising access.

MoAD works to ensure programs, spaces and services are accessible and welcoming, while also protecting heritage values.

Our commitment

Action	Date
Collaborate with National Capital Authority (NCA) to improve public access to MoAD (e.g. pedestrian crossing on King George Terrace, public transport and accessible parking).	2026 - 2028
Regularly review website to ensure clear up-to-date visitor information.	2025 - 2028
Continue to improve accessibility in exhibitions design and building infrastructure.	2025 - 2028
Continue to evaluate and review signage, wayfinding and maps, including universal access symbols, to support independent navigation.	2025 - 2028
Continue and build new partnerships with disability organisations to consult on, co-design or deliver programs, events, tours and experiences.	2025 - 2028
Pilot a sensory experience linked to school programs.	2026 - 2027
Develop a public quiet space.	2027
Scope a dedicated quiet or low sensory visiting time and implement findings.	2028

7.3.
Employment opportunities

Build an inclusive and diverse workforce

MoAD is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will continue to invest in staff training and professional development, building capacity around disability inclusion and social and cultural awareness.

Our commitment

Action	Date
Regularly review and update employment policies to encourage applications from people with disability (e.g. ensure broader promotion of onsite tours to prospective employees).	2025 - 2028
Provide information, support materials and training as part of the onboarding process for new staff.	2025 - 2028
Seek input and feedback from staff on an annual basis relating to workplace barriers and solutions.	2025 - 2028

7.4.
Systems and processes

Improve MoAD's systems and process to maximise accessibility and inclusion

MoAD will embed access and inclusion into our systems, processes and technologies through an ongoing cycle of feedback, review, reflection and implementation.

Our commitment

Action	Date
Establish a Disability Reference Group (DRG), which includes external stakeholders, to inform and support the internal DIAP working committee.	2026 - 2027
Maintain the internal DIAP working group and ensure representatives from across the organisation.	2025 - 2028
Continue to embed Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design into our work on exhibitions, public and interpreted spaces.	2026 - 2027
Regularly review and evaluate website and social media content design and functionality (e.g. search function, keywords associated with navigation, enhance metadata).	2025 - 2028
Respond to staff and public feedback about accessibility. Use feedback to implement and improve the DIAP.	2025 - 2028

Supporting Documents



01

MoAD DIAP 2021-2024

Key deliverables

Our first DIAP spanned 2021-2024 and built on earlier improvements identified by the Museum. Over its course, we delivered initiatives that created more inclusive and accessible experiences while balancing our heritage management responsibilities.

1.1. Attitudes and behaviours

- Delivered Disability Confidence Training to Museum Experience and Learning teams, along with bespoke training on web accessibility guidelines, accessible documents and hearing loops
- Consulted with Accessible Arts to develop accessible exhibitions and programs
- Provided Auslan tours, audio description tours for Behind the Lines (onsite and online) and sensory kits for schools
- Ran an International Day of People with Disability program annually, beginning in 2022
- Conducted a photo and video shoot featuring people with disability for use in marketing materials.

1.2. Liveable communities

- Upgraded external and internal signage and wayfinding, including universal access symbols and updated branding
- Introduced taxi call options with clear signage
- Commenced development of an alternate accessible entry
- Installed wheelchair viewing platforms in both the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers
- Installed fully independent doors for exhibitions and interpreted spaces
- Identified sensory-friendly areas on the access map
- Commenced development of a dedicated quiet space.

1.3. Employment

- Reviewed and updated recruitment policies to encourage applicants with disability
- Implemented onsite tours for prospective employees
- Participated in the 2022 Disability and Culturally Diverse Internship Program
- Reviewed and updated position descriptions to improve accessibility
- Conducted annual access requirements check-in with staff.

1.4. Systems and processes

- Updated the Museum's Inclusive Language Policy and emergency evacuation procedures
- Created an accessibility checklist for digital content
- Produced an access map (digital and print)
- Updated the Museum website with disability services and facilities, universal symbols, and access page
- Incorporated alt-text across the website and marketing materials.

02

Case studies

2.1. Accessibility upgrade to the Chambers

The accessibility upgrades made to the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers included the installation of a hearing loop in the House of Representatives Chamber and the availability of portable ramps for both Chambers.

The Chambers are highly significant spaces within Old Parliament House and consistent with the heritage values and continuity of use, interpretation in these spaces is primarily delivered verbally, via guided tours and events. The spaces are visited by up to 80,000 school students per year.

Previous access audits highlighted that mobility device users were confined to the Chamber entryways, leaving them unable to fully engage with the spaces. Development of the portable ramp solution to improve wheelchair access to the centre of the Chambers was an iterative process. Professional advice sought from an architect, access consultant, risk and safety consultant and the peak arts and disability organisation Accessible Arts all indicated that a ramp would be suitable for public use. However, during internal trials of the installed ramp and turning circle at the base, it was apparent that aspects of the installation presented a trip hazard and the decision was made to remove the ramp.

As a result, two different types of portable ramps were procured. Several trials were held for both ramps and alterations made to ensure their suitability for use in the Chambers. This included custom fabricated wedges and transition strips for ease of entering and exiting the ramp and to smooth out joins between ramp components.

Wheelchair viewing points and contrast stair nosing strips were installed in both Chambers as an additional accessibility and safety upgrade. The designated viewing points and portable ramps procured for both Chambers provide increased access to each Chamber for mobility aid users. This project achieved goals identified within Program 1 of the 2021-2024 DIAP – Liveable Communities.

2.2. Accessibility upgrade to the Lower Entry

The upgrade to MoAD's Accessible Entry has transformed a previously challenging access point into a welcoming and inclusive arrival experience for all visitors.

Upgrades addressed a range of accessible and experience challenges, including the lack of air conditioning, outdated electrical and lighting systems, and worn finishes. The design drew inspiration from John Smith Murdoch's original 1924 design for OPH, reinforcing the space's architectural continuity.

Located beneath the main entry stairs, the new access point now features improved lighting, airlocks to buffer external weather, seating for waiting visitors, enhanced signage and wayfinding, a window into the guards' area to increase transparency and engagement, and a direct connection to staffed areas, providing a smooth and comfortable transition into the building.

Visitors using prams or with mobility needs are now greeted by a wheelchair-accessible reception counter positioned close to the newly refurbished shop area. This layout enables staff to provide immediate assistance with orientation and visit planning, enhancing the overall visitor experience.



03

Legislation and policy

The Museum's DIAP draws on Australian legislative requirements and strategies.

Internationally, Australia is a signatory to the United Nations 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (2006). This Convention recognises that disability is 'an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'[4]

At the federal level, Australia has the 'Disability Discrimination Act' (1992), supported by various standards and frameworks, including:

- 'Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards (2010)'
- 'Building Code of Australia (BCA)'
- 'Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport' (2002)
- 'World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes' (2014)
- 'Disability Standards for Education' (2005).

The 'Australian Disability Strategy' (ADS) 2021-2031 is a national framework that all Australian governments agreed to. Its purpose is to continue developing an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

Our DIAP aligns with other international, national and Australian Capital Territory social policy and frameworks, including:

- 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' (2017)
- 'Disability Discrimination Act' 1992 (Commonwealth)
- 'Disability Services Act' 1986 (Commonwealth)
- 'Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy' 2020-2025 (Commonwealth)
- 'National Arts and Disability Strategy' 2009 (Commonwealth)
- 'Disability Services Act' 1991 (Australian Capital Territory)
- 'Disability Justice Strategy' 2019-2029 (Australian Capital Territory)
- 'World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines' (WCAG).

[4]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), UN Website, accessed 15 January 2025.

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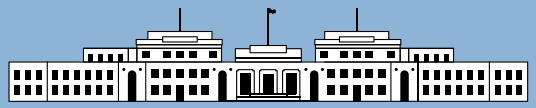

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