

27 March 2026

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for the Arts
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Dear Minister Burke,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 November 2025 setting out your Statement of Expectations for the National Portrait Gallery of Australia (the Gallery) for the 2025–26 financial year.

On behalf of the Board, the Gallery's accountable authority, I am pleased to attach our Statement of Intent in response.

The National Portrait Gallery is Australia's national institution dedicated to telling the story of the nation through people. Through portraiture, the Gallery connects Australians with the people, stories and ideas that shape our cultural, civic and public life. In doing so, it provides one of the most immediate and accessible entry points into arts and culture for Australians of all ages and backgrounds.

As an extra small agency with a national remit, the National Portrait Gallery delivers exceptional public value. With continued Government investment, complemented by growing private support, the Gallery will further strengthen its reach, sustainability and cultural impact.

The Gallery welcomes the direction provided through *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place* and will continue to deliver against that vision through artistic excellence, national access, strong partnerships and responsible stewardship of public investment.

The Gallery appreciates the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to Australia's cultural landscape, and we look forward to working closely with you and the Department to achieve these shared goals.

Sincerely,



Sam Meers AO
Chair, Board of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

STATEMENT OF INTENT 2025-26

This Statement of Intent outlines how the National Portrait Gallery of Australia (the Gallery) will respond to the Australian Government's (the Government) Statement of Expectations for 2025-26.

The Gallery holds a distinctive place in Australia's cultural life. It tells the story of the nation through people: the individuals who shape our history, creativity, identity and public imagination. Through the National Portrait Collection, exhibitions, commissions and digital engagement, the Gallery connects Australians with one another and with the ideas and experiences that define contemporary Australia.

The Gallery's work is guided by its legislative functions under the *National Portrait Gallery of Australia Act 2012* and by three strategic priorities:

1. *Enrich the Collection*
Grow, preserve and interpret the National Portrait Collection to reflect Australia's diversity, complexity, and artistic excellence.
2. *Inspire a National Audience*
Expand access to the Collection through exhibitions, touring, digital engagement and learning.
3. *Create Connection*
Build relationships, partnerships and philanthropic support that increase impact and long-term sustainability.

The Gallery will continue to align its work with *Revive* and the Government's expectations for National Collecting Institutions by delivering high-quality cultural experiences, reaching Australians where they are, and using portraiture to tell people-centred Australian stories.

In 2025-2026, it is our intention to:

Assist in the delivery of *Revive*, including supporting visual and performing artists, craftspeople and researchers, and contributing to actions such as the refresh of *Significance 2.0*:

The Gallery contributes directly to the delivery of *Revive* through its commissions, exhibitions, acquisitions, publishing, research and public programs. Its Commissioning Program is a key way the Gallery backs contemporary Australian artists while also building the National Portrait Collection for future generations.

The Gallery also contributes to national cultural capability through research, interpretation and Collection stewardship, and welcomes the opportunity to support the refresh of *Significance 2.0*.

Participate in the Government's consultation on a new National Cultural Policy:

The Gallery looks forward to participating constructively in consultation on a new National Cultural Policy. As Australia's national institution for portraiture, the Gallery brings a distinctive perspective on how culture shapes identity, public memory and civic life, informed by expertise in Collection stewardship, artistic ambition, public engagement, education and national access.

Foster appreciation and understanding of First Nations arts, culture and knowledge systems in line with the principle that First Nations arts and culture are First Nations led.

The Gallery recognises that First Nations arts and culture are central to Australia's cultural life and must be First Nations led. This commitment is reflected in the Gallery's collection development, commissions, exhibitions and public programming, and is supported by its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2026.

A major expression of this commitment is the presentation of *Super Kaylene Whiskey*, a landmark exhibition led by the distinctive vision of proud Yankunytjatjara woman, Kaylene Whiskey. The project extends beyond the Gallery through a new animation presented as part of *Enlighten 2026*, created in collaboration with First Nations animation studio Studio Gilay.

The Gallery has multi-year targets to increase First Nations representation through acquisitions, commissions and exhibition programming.

Work closely with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts and other parties, especially other National Collecting Institutions, to efficiently achieve the objectives of *Revive*.

The Gallery values strong portfolio relationships and practical collaboration in delivering national cultural outcomes. It will continue to work closely with the Office for the Arts, the Department and peer institutions on policy, reporting, audience development and shared opportunities.

In early 2026, the Gallery will co-present *Fighting Spirit: the Art of Boxing* in Tasmania and New South Wales, drawing primarily from the collections of the National Portrait Gallery and the National Film and Sound Archive, alongside loans from Maitland Regional Gallery.

Over summer 2025-26, the Gallery will work strategically with the National Gallery of Australia to align *Super Kaylene Whiskey* with the National Gallery of Australia's *After the Rain*, creating a coordinated cross-institutional moment of First Nations excellence. This deliberate alignment strengthens Canberra's summer cultural offer, encourages cross-visitation, and demonstrates how collaboration can expand audience reach, tourism appeal and public value.

Provide strong leadership and collaboration within national and international galleries and cultural sectors, including developing networks and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific and working with Pacific diaspora communities.

The Gallery plays an important leadership role within Australia's cultural infrastructure. It will continue to build relationships with artists, institutions and communities across Australia and internationally, including through work in the Indo-Pacific and with Pacific diaspora communities.

This includes public programs featuring Pacific voices and perspectives, education activity with Papua New Guinean-Australian artist Lisa Hilli, and the Pilot National Engagement Project with Logan

Art Gallery. Grounded in community consultation, the Pilot Project is designed to engage Pacific diaspora communities in ways that are meaningful both locally and nationally.

Ensure policies and procedures are in place to promote diversity, sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion.

The Gallery is committed to embedding diversity, sustainability, reconciliation and inclusion in both its public work and institutional practice.

These commitments are reflected in key planning and policy frameworks, including its Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Access Plan and broader governance and workforce settings.

Ensure the Gallery has a current Disability Action Plan to support greater equity, access and inclusion for d/Deaf and disabled artists and arts workers, and audiences with disability, in line with the government's *Equity: the Arts and Disability Associated Plan*.

The Gallery is committed to improving access and inclusion for d/Deaf and disabled artists, arts workers and audiences.

Its Disability Inclusion Access Plan 2023–25 (the Plan) provides the framework for this work across exhibitions, programs, employment practices, events and facilities. The Gallery will continue to implement and review the Plan to ensure alignment with *Equity: the Arts and Disability Associated Plan* and contemporary best practice.

Provide greater opportunities for all Australians to access arts and culture, including through a diverse range of exhibitions, programs, events and digital offerings, and engage in activities to enrich arts and cultural education at all levels.

The National Portrait Gallery gives Australians access to culture through the most direct and relatable subject there is: people. Portraiture is one of the most immediate and accessible entry points into arts and culture, allowing Australians to encounter the nation through human stories that are familiar, surprising and emotionally resonant.

This is one of the Gallery's distinctive strengths. The Gallery reaches Australians through exhibitions, commissions, learning programs, digital content and national participation initiatives that meet people where they are: in galleries, online, in schools and in major public settings beyond the museum sector.

The Gallery's uplifted Commissions Program is especially powerful in this regard. By connecting portraiture with subjects already present in public life and imagination, the Gallery embeds portraiture in cultural conversations beyond the Gallery and creates unexpected entry points into arts and culture. Recent commissions and collaborations have taken portraiture into major national moments and platforms – from Angela Tiatia's portrait of the Commbank Matildas 2023 FIFA World Cup Squad, previewed at Polytec Stadium in Gosford ahead of the Matildas' match against New Zealand, to Georges Antoni's portrait of Tina Arena tied to celebrating her 50 years in music, and the Gallery's collaboration with the ABC on the *Portrait Artist of the Year* series in 2025 and 2026.

Every day, the Gallery creates opportunities for Australians to participate directly in cultural life. *My Awesome Australian* invites children across the country to share portraits of someone important through a national online exhibition. Launched by the Governor-General, the project demonstrates

the Gallery's ability to foster creativity, representation and belonging at a national scale. The inaugural *People's Portrait* also invited Australians to help shape a major new commission through public voting, culminating in the unveiling of Rob McHaffie's portrait of Costa Georgiadis at a major Spring Family Day in late 2025.

Digital access remains a priority, including continued progress towards making 98% of the Collection available online. Through its onsite and online learning programs, the Gallery already reaches students and teachers in almost 95% of federal electorates. The Gallery will continue to expand this work, using portraiture as a powerful way into history, identity, creativity and civic understanding.

Support and promote artists and arts and cultural workers and ensure they are remunerated appropriately and able to work safely.

The Gallery recognises that artists and arts workers are essential not only to a healthy cultural ecosystem, but to our society more broadly. It is committed to fair remuneration, professional engagement and safe working environments across its exhibitions, commissions, prizes and public programs. Artist fees are paid in line with, or above, relevant benchmarks wherever applicable, and the Gallery continues to strengthen its settings to reduce barriers to participation.

Recent changes to prize settings reflect this commitment, including the removal of entry fees for finalists, and support for key participation costs such as freight and travel.

Manage information in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* and the National Archives of Australia's *Building trust in the public record: managing information and data for government and community policy*.

The Gallery understands that strong information management supports accountability, operational effectiveness and public trust. It will continue to strengthen its policies, systems and internal practices in line with the *Archives Act 1983* and National Archives guidance.

Ensure those appointed to the Gallery's Board understand their obligations, including under the *Corporations Act 2001* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, and that Board members and Gallery staff are aware of, and abide by, the requirements of the Gallery's social media policy.

The Gallery maintains robust governance arrangements to support effective oversight, sound decision-making and legislative compliance.

Board members receive induction and ongoing support in relation to their obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and other relevant legislation, and understand the importance of a strong governance framework. Staff are also supported through clear policy settings, including in relation to social media, conduct and governance expectations.

The Gallery will continue to reinforce these standards through induction, training and policy communication.

The Gallery also notes:

The Government's Funding Commitment

The Gallery is grateful for the Government's investment in National Collecting Institutions and acknowledges the importance of using that investment strategically and responsibly.

Public funding is critical to the Gallery's ability to steward the National Portrait Collection, present ambitious exhibitions and commissions, expand access and education, and maintain the capability required of a national institution.

The Gallery delivers strong public value as an extra small agency with a national remit. It does so by combining artistic quality with contemporary audience engagement, practical partnership and considered prioritisation.

Alongside Government investment, the Gallery will continue to grow support through philanthropy, partnerships, hospitality, tourism and other mission-aligned revenue streams, strengthening long-term sustainability and capacity.

Capital Works

The Gallery in Kamberri/Canberra is both the home of the National Portrait Collection and an important public asset.

The Gallery will continue to manage the facility through a planned approach to capital works and maintenance, with a focus on collection care, safety, environmental performance and visitor experience.

Additional Reporting

The Gallery will also continue to provide timely and accurate reporting to its Board and the Department, including through biannual financial and asset reporting. Good stewardship, transparency and early identification of risk remain central to the Gallery's approach.