

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Details	
Title	Curator
Classification	APS 6, PN6013
Salary	\$99,734 - \$116,758
Section	Curatorial & Collection
Security Clearance	N/A
Contact Officer	Serena Bentley, Senior Curator serena.bentley@npg.gov.au

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region, upon whose lands the National Portrait Gallery stands.

About us

The National Portrait Gallery reflects the face of Australia and increases understanding and appreciation of Australian people and their stories through the art of portraiture. Guided by our values of creativity, innovation, inclusivity and integrity, our purpose is to develop a national portrait collection and provide the broadest possible access to all Australians. We do this through presenting engaging exhibitions and live and educational programs onsite in our award-winning building in Canberra, offsite across Australia, and on demand.

The Gallery is a dynamic and inclusive workplace and recognises the great contribution of our team. We're committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our team and our visitors, and to sustaining a safe workplace and inclusive culture. We support flexible working practices, including working from home, and respect family and caring responsibilities.

The Gallery is committed to equal opportunity and diversity. We welcome applications from First Nations people, LGBTQIA+ people, people with a disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The position

The curatorial team is central to the delivery of the NPG's artistic program and the development of its permanent collection. Curators are appointed for their expert knowledge of art history, and visual culture, particularly related to portraiture, for the critical work of developing and presenting an innovative and engaging exhibition program, and building and interpreting the National Portrait Gallery's collection.

The Curator will work with the exhibitions and registration team in the development and delivery of exhibitions and programs across the Gallery's programming areas, including onsite, touring and online; contribute to the development and care of the collection; and liaise with and build strong relationships with key stakeholders, locally and across Australia.

The Curator must possess a strong knowledge of Australian art and history and significant experience in both curating exhibitions and collection building. The role requires the candidate to possess excellent written and spoken communication skills; keen spatial awareness and an aptitude for devising exhibition layouts; and highly developed research skills. The Curator should be directly engaged with current discourse and thinking relating to both curatorial work and artistic practice, foregrounding ideas of truth telling, care and polyvocal storytelling. They should be alert to the potential of portraiture to challenge the way we think and bring an inquisitive, analytical, and thoughtful attitude to the role.

The occupant of this position reports to the Senior Curator.

Specific Tasks

1. Research and curate innovative exhibitions of the highest quality and contribute to the development of the Gallery's onsite, touring and online exhibition program.
2. Contribute to the interpretation of the Collection internally and externally through research, and the display of the Collection; and through presentations at conferences and other events.
3. Contribute to the development of the Collection, through participation in all stages of the acquisitions process.
4. Compose a range of texts including correspondence, reports, essays, exhibition texts, online content and other published material associated with exhibitions, the collection, and the Gallery.
5. Develop the layout and physical installation of exhibition projects, working closely with the exhibition designer to devise ambitious and innovative displays.
6. Undertake public speaking activities including engagement with the media.
7. Actively participate in the delivery of Gallery learning and access programs and other events, and provide mentoring conducive to internship training.
8. Actively participate in the Gallery's philanthropic activities by participating in events and related engagements.
9. Work independently and as an active member of the Curatorial & Collection Section as well as in project-specific multi-disciplinary teams.
10. Develop and maintain professional networks that support the Gallery and its programs.

Selection Criteria

1. A demonstrated understanding of Australian art, history and visual culture and an engagement with portraiture, and demonstrated curatorial experience within a gallery or museum.
2. Able to demonstrate the relationship between organisational goals and operational tasks. Identifying problems and thinks laterally, identifies, implements and promotes improved work practices.
3. Demonstrated time management skills and the ability to work independently across multiple projects with competing priorities within deadlines and available resources.
4. Builds and sustains positive relationships with team members and stakeholders and anticipates stakeholder needs and expectations. Consults and involves others and works collaboratively as an effective team member.
5. Adopts a principled approach and adheres to the APS Values and Code of Conduct. Takes personal responsibility for meeting objectives, shows initiative and drive to see that goals are achieved.
6. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in written and spoken forms and a record of published writing.
7. The Curator should possess tertiary qualifications in Australian art history or an associated field, or equivalent experience.
8. Experience in the cultural sector, in an art gallery or museum environment required.

Applicant information

In no more than two A4 pages, please tell us how your skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications make you the best person for this job.

Email your application, a current CV and the [application coversheet](#) to hrservices@npg.gov.au by the deadline listed below.

If you need more information, please get in touch with Serena Bentley by email serena.bentley@npg.gov.au.

Applications close midnight Tuesday 8 September 2026.

SAFETY AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS	FREQUENCY
Computer based work, sitting or standing at a desk	Frequently
Extensive typing or data entry	Frequently
Graphical, video production or analytical work	Occasionally
Access to designated workstation	Frequently

WORKING HOURS	FREQUENCY
Flexible working hours	Frequently
Fixed start/finish times	Occasionally
Intensive work over an extended period to achieve a deadline	Frequently
After hours events or programs	Occasionally
Peaks and troughs of high and low workload	Occasionally
Overtime	Occasionally
Rostered shift work	Never
Rostered 24/7 on call	Never

SOCIAL DEMANDS	FREQUENCY
Work with others towards shared goals in a team environment	Frequently
Work in isolation from other staff (remote supervision)	Frequently
Work directly with visitors and the public	Frequently
Produce work that is subject to critique or external review	Frequently

PHYSICAL DEMANDS	FREQUENCY
Walking long distances	Rarely
Standing for long periods	Occasionally
Working outdoors	Rarely

MANUAL HANDLING	FREQUENCY
Lifting 0 – 5kg	Frequently
Lifting 5 – 10kg	Frequently
Lifting 10kg+	Occasionally
Handling collection items	Frequently
Climbing	Rarely
Reaching	Occasionally
Bending/squatting	Occasionally
Push/pull	Occasionally
Repetitive movements in a short amount of time	Rarely

TRAVEL	FREQUENCY
Locally	Frequently
Interstate	Occasionally

SPECIFIC HAZARDS	FREQUENCY
Working at heights	Rarely
Exposure to extreme temperatures	Rarely
Operation of heavy machinery e.g. forklift	Never
Excessive noise	Rarely
Low lighting	Rarely
Handling of dangerous goods/equipment	Never
Mandatory Personal Protective Equipment required	Rarely
MANDATORY PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	REQUIRED
Safety Footwear (operation of heavy machinery/lifting)	X
Gloves (Lifting/exposure to extreme temperatures/ handling of dangerous goods/equipment)	X
Hearing Protection (excessive noise)	X
Hi Visibility Clothing (operation of heavy machinery)	X
Protective Eyewear (handling of dangerous goods/equipment)	X
Warm Clothing (exposure to extreme temperatures)	X

SAFETY TRAINING, PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES	REQUIRED
NPG Induction	✓
Driver's Licence	X
WHS Awareness for Workers	✓
WHS Awareness for Supervisors	X
Manual Handling	✓
Provide First Aid	X
Fire Warden	X
Chief Warden	X
Business Continuity	X
Hostile Intruder and Lockdown	✓
White Card	X
High Risk Work Licence	X
Work Safely at Heights	X
Elevated Work Platform	X
Verification of Competency for plant and equipment	X

Applicants must possess or have the ability to obtain the required safety training, permits and certificates. Any safety training required is provided by the NPG.

DESIGNATED EMERGENCY ROLES	REQUIRED
First Aid Officer	X
Area Warden	X
Floor Warden	X
Deputy/Chief Fire Warden	X
Business Continuity Team Member	X
Business Continuity Team Leader/Deputy	X
Authorised Officer	X