

**NATIONAL
PORTRAIT
GALLERY**

**Corporate
Plan**

2026-27



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Acknowledgment of Country

The National Portrait Gallery acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Ancestors and Spirits as the Custodians of the Countries on which we live and work.

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region, on whose lands the Gallery stands. This Country is surrounded by neighbouring peoples including Wiradjuri to the west, Walgalu to the south, Yuin to the east, Ngarigo to the southeast, and Gundungdurra to the northeast. We extend this acknowledgement to all First Nations peoples whose stories are shared through the Gallery’s collection and exhibitions and to whose lands our programs and exhibitions travel.

Cover: Angela
Tiatia *The Matildas*
2025 (detail)
Commissioned
with funds
provided by
Tim Fairfax
AC and the
Commonwealth
Bank of Australia
2025

Introduction

On behalf of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia Board, the accountable authority, I am pleased to present the Gallery’s Corporate Plan 2026–27. The plan covers the period 2026–27 to 2029–30, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth).

The Corporate Plan is the Gallery’s primary planning document and outlines the activities that will be undertaken over the course of the current financial year and forward estimates period.



Sam Meers AO
Chair

Vision

To be a world-leading portrait gallery, connecting curious minds with compelling lives.

Purpose

The National Portrait Gallery’s role is to:

- develop, preserve, maintain and promote a national collection of portraits and other works of art
- develop and engage a national audience for the collection, exhibitions, education, research, publications and programs.

The Gallery’s functions are set out in the *National Portrait Gallery of Australia Act 2012* (Cth).

National Portrait Gallery Values

Creativity	We inspire people, communities and the nation through portraiture. We are bold and adventurous in the work we do and the art we share. We champion creativity across our work.
Innovation	We lead by example, presenting work that is creative, original and meets the highest standards of excellence. We challenge ourselves and our audiences. We consistently reflect this in our work, and through the portraiture we share. We evolve with and respond to our times while acknowledging our commitment to tell Australian stories across generations.
Inclusivity	We are approachable and welcoming to all, and we value diversity and respect differences. We strive for all Australians to be seen and see themselves in our work. We build and maintain strong relationships and connections with our audiences, communities and creative partners. We listen and adapt.
Integrity	We are accountable and responsible for our actions and we act ethically, with honesty and empathy. We respect the focus of our unique collection: the sitters, the artists and their stories. We engage in challenging conversations about our work. We acknowledge our mistakes and learn from them.

About us

The National Portrait Gallery is a National Cultural Institution dedicated to telling and sharing the stories of Australian culture through portraiture. From our position on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, the Gallery foregrounds and respects First Nations peoples’ knowledge and perspectives and prioritises principles of self-determination in our methodologies. Our commitment to reconciliation, disability inclusion, environmental responsibility and ethical conduct guides everything that we do.

The Gallery plays a distinctive role in Australia’s cultural life. Each artist and sitter represented in the National Portrait Collection belongs to a shared narrative of national identity. Through its artistic program and dynamic experiences across exhibitions, commissions and digital engagement, the Gallery fosters creativity and connects audiences with the individuals, ideas and moments that shape our history, culture and public life.

Guided by our purpose and the vision of the National Cultural Policy, *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*, the Gallery will develop the collection to reflect artistic excellence, tell compelling stories of national relevance and increase engagement with diverse and multigenerational audiences both in Canberra and across Australia.

Yankunytjatjara
artist Kaylene
Whiskey and Cathy
Freeman with
Whiskey’s *Super
Cathy* series.
Purchased with
funds provided
by Elizabeth
Dibbs and David
Tudehope 2026
© Kaylene Whiskey



Operating context

The National Portrait Gallery operates within a dynamic cultural, economic and policy environment. Internal and external forces, including economic conditions, tourism trends, evolving audience expectations, shifts in cultural consumption and government policy objectives shape the Gallery’s ability to fulfil its purpose. The Gallery’s priorities are refined by ongoing analysis of the operating context and environment.

National Cultural Policy: Revive

The Gallery will advance the priorities of the National Cultural Policy and the Minister for the Arts’ Statement of Expectations in delivering its purpose and objectives. A refreshed National Cultural Policy is anticipated over the life of the plan, and the Gallery welcomes this development.

The Gallery has participated in consultation on the future policy, drawing on its expertise in collection stewardship, artistic programming, public engagement, education and national access. As Australia’s only institution dedicated to portraiture, the Gallery has offered its distinct perspective on how art brings people together, shapes identity and contributes to the nation’s civic and cultural life.

Pillar 1: First Nations first

First Nations peoples and stories are at the centre of Australian arts and culture. The Gallery respects and amplifies First Nations peoples’ experiences and perspectives and has set targets to increase the number of First Nations peoples represented across its collection, exhibitions and workforce.

Pillar 2: A place for every story

People are at the heart of the Gallery – sitters, artists and their stories are central to the Gallery’s remit. The Gallery reflects the breadth of stories that make up the evolution of Australian culture in its collection, exhibitions and public programs.

Pillar 3: Centrality of the artist

The Gallery recognises that artists and arts workers are essential not only to a healthy cultural ecosystem, but to our society more broadly. It prioritises best practices in the engagement of artists, ensuring collaborations are culturally safe, accessible and fairly remunerated.

Pillar 4: Strong cultural infrastructure

As a National Cultural Institution, the Gallery understands the vital leadership role it plays within Australia’s cultural infrastructure by fostering collaboration across the sector. Through partnerships with institutions, artists and communities both nationally and internationally the Gallery shares expertise, develops capability and supports the creation, preservation and exchange of cultural knowledge for public impact. Care for the collection will continue to be a priority to maintain the works of art for the enjoyment and education of people today and for future generations.

Pillar 5: Engaging the audience

Audiences are why the Gallery exists. The Gallery provides access to the National Portrait Collection through innovative cultural experiences onsite, offsite and online, enhancing multigenerational engagement with the portraits and stories that shape our nation’s story. The Gallery engages with diverse audiences to explore the evolution of Australian identity.

Financial sustainability and economic conditions

The Gallery operates within a near-term macroeconomic environment characterised by ongoing inflationary pressures and constrained fiscal capacity amid global energy market volatility and geopolitical conflict. These economic conditions are expected to drive increases in operating costs and declines in discretionary spending, domestic and international tourism, with impacts on visitation, philanthropy and corporate support. Ongoing capital and infrastructure projects underway in the Gallery’s immediate environment are also expected to impact access and visitation to onsite experiences over the life of the plan.

Government funding remains fundamental to the delivery of the Gallery’s functions and is complemented by own-source revenue generated through private giving, commercial operations and partnerships. The Gallery will continue to report to and work with the Australian Government to ensure it is resourced to deliver public outcomes against its purpose and the objectives of the National Cultural Policy.

The Gallery will prioritise its core activities, strengthen partnerships and pursue opportunities to support long-term sustainability. In 2026–27 these activities will include the development of a Revenue Plan to optimise own-source revenue generation. The Gallery’s Foundation, assisted by the guidance of the Investment Committee, is an important source of revenue through donations and investment earnings. Developing the Gallery’s donor base remains a key priority across the planning period. Collaboration across the arts, culture and tourism sectors is also key to increased resilience.

Enhancing impact through technology and artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are rapidly reshaping how audiences access information, engage with culture and interact with public institutions. As adoption accelerates across government, industry and the creative sector, audience expectations for digital experiences, transparency and trustworthy use of technology will continue to evolve.

Digital innovation expands the Gallery’s national impact, extends its reach and strengthens its leadership as a contemporary cultural institution. Ethical adoption of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies will enhance the Gallery’s capabilities and drive innovation. The Gallery will partner with industry and other cultural institutions to ensure investments in new technologies support delivery of its purpose, enhance accessibility and inclusion, and deliver meaningful public value.

National reach and audience engagement

Desire for high-quality experiences is reshaping audience demand and destination choice. Onsite programming, including education programs and intergenerational engagement programs, attract and resonate with diverse audiences.

The Gallery has a national remit and reaches audiences nationwide through an artistic program that embraces and reflects the diversity of Australian identity, engaging with complex and meaningful people-centred narratives with sensitivity and rigour.

Responsive to the changing modes of audience engagement and shaped by robust curatorial and collection development practices, the

artistic program is multi-faceted, offering opportunities for both deep reflection and short-form storytelling. The coordinated program of high-impact commissions, focused exhibitions, collection displays, participatory experiences and touring activity makes portraiture accessible, inventive and resonant for more Australians.

The program for 2026–27 celebrates the power of portraiture to connect people, stories and communities. Works of art from across the collection are spotlighted through dynamic displays that engage audiences in new and compelling ways. New commissions for the collection celebrate individuals shaping contemporary Australian culture such as Courtney Act, Andy Griffiths and Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo. Inspired by the portrait of Andy Griffiths, adjacent programming including an immersive space and the Gallery’s annual Art. Make. Create. family day will offer artist-informed creative experiences that encourage participation and imagination for audiences of all ages. Exhibition highlights will include the final National Photographic Portrait Prize, accompanied by a retrospective presentation celebrating the award’s enduring contribution to Australian photographic practice. Through *Thread: Connecting Stories and Community*, a collaborative project developed with Logan Art Gallery and enabled through Australian Government grant funding, the Gallery has created new opportunities for connection and collaboration, profiling local stories on a national stage.

Through ambitious digital programming, the Gallery connects Australians with the National Portrait Collection regardless of geography, ensuring access for audiences who may never have the ability to visit in person. Investment in immersive and digital experiences will enrich audience engagement, broaden national and international reach and create new points of connection with portraiture onsite, offsite and on demand.



Visitors in *Power suits: The fit within the frame*, featuring Montalbetti + Campbell *Tim Rogers (You Am I)* 1995 and Bruce Armstrong *Peter Carey in Kelly country* 2000 © Montalbetti + Campbell, Bruce Armstrong



Key activities and performance measures

Strategic priorities

The National Portrait Gallery aims to present a broad and diverse picture of Australian life, inspiring audiences to engage with meaningful human stories through portraiture. The artists and sitters represented in the National Portrait Collection reflect, as far as possible, Australia's geographic, vocational, professional, cultural and social diversity.

The Gallery champions artistic excellence and connects people with Australian identity, achievements, challenges and creative endeavour across multiple points of access. This extends beyond an onsite experience to developing engaging digital programs, and dynamic national and international touring and collaborative programs.

The core purpose of the Gallery is to develop a National Portrait Collection and provide the broadest possible access to all Australians. This is supported by creating a sustainable and viable organisation, by improving capability and ensuring stewardship of the Gallery into the future.

The Gallery's performance measures and targets align to its core purpose and the five pillars of *Revive*, and are connected to the following strategic priorities:

- **Enrich the collection**
- **Inspire a national audience**
- **Create connection**

Georges Antoni *Tina* 2025
Printer: Warren Macris
Stylist: Mikey Ayoubi
Makeup artist: Victoria Baron
Hair stylist: Daren Borthwick
Commissioned with funds provided
by lead donor Sam Meers AO and with
major support from Ros Murphy 2025

01

Enrich the collection

Ambition statement

Through its acquisitions and commissions program, the Gallery will grow the National Portrait Collection and capture the diversity of Australian stories. The Gallery values and embraces the complexity of Australian culture, navigating sensitivities while maintaining its independence through ensuring transparent and ethical practices. First Nations peoples' voices and narratives are elevated and embedded at the heart of the Gallery's work.

The Gallery develops its collection to present the breadth and innovation of contemporary portraiture and showcase the highest standards of artistic excellence. The Gallery will adapt to evolving economic conditions to ensure the collection grows, remains accessible and delivers public value. Through its active support of artists and their collaborators, the Gallery fosters ambitious commissions and exhibitions that present the collection in new and dynamic ways. Compelling digital content and publications make the collection more accessible, forging meaningful connections between audiences, artists, sitters and their stories.

1.1

Number of First Nations artists and sitters represented in the collection

2026-27 Measures	A. >5 acquired works of art are of First Nations sitters or by First Nations artists B. At least 1 commission is a First Nations sitter or artist C. >20 collection works of art by First Nations artists, or which engage with First Nations stories, displayed
Methodology	A. Acquisitions recorded in the Gallery's collection management system (CMS), based on artist and sitter identification data B. Commissioned works approved and recorded by the Gallery C. Relevant works of art recorded as on display in the Gallery's CMS
2027-28 to 2029-30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 1, 2, 3 and 5

1.2

Number of works of art of artistic merit are added to the National Portrait Collection

2026-27 Measures	A. > 30 works of art are added to the National Portrait Collection B. >2 artists commissioned to produce portraits of sitters
Methodology	A. Acquisitions recorded in the Gallery's CMS B. Commissioned works approved and recorded by the Gallery
2027-28 to 2029-30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 2,3 and 5

1.3

Works of art are shared in an accessible and meaningful way

2026-27 Measures	A. New accessibility resources made available online and onsite B. >4 interactive experiences, including digital, available onsite to enhance exhibitions C. >6 Portrait Story interviews recorded and published
Methodology	A. Number of new resources made available onsite and online B. Number of experiences delivered, excluding accessibility-specific resources C. Portrait Stories published across Gallery platforms
2027-28 to 2029-30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillar 5

02

Inspire a national audience

Ambition statement

The Gallery will increase access to the National Portrait Collection through its vibrant onsite, digital and offsite initiatives. The Gallery’s remit gives it powerful legitimacy to engage with complex narratives and its programs strive to be inclusive, thought-provoking and encourage nuanced perspectives and ideas. Onsite exhibitions and programs will resonate broadly with national audiences, connecting people across Australia with the collection, portraiture and diverse ideas of identity.

Responsive to economic, technological and social change, the Gallery will advance its nationally distinctive audience engagement approach, bringing together artistic programming, participatory experiences, digital access and strategic partnerships to create meaningful points of connection with audiences across Australia. Connecting programming to nationally resonant stories and coordinated audience activation, the Gallery will translate strong public interest into deeper engagement, broader reach and enduring public value.

2.1

Collection works of art displayed onsite, online and offsite

2026–27 Measures	A. >2 loan-based exhibitions, >1 artist project and >5 exhibitions/projects dedicated to collection works B. 8 touring exhibition venues C. Maintain 99% digitisation of the collection
Methodology	A. Exhibition and project delivery recorded against the Gallery’s exhibition schedule and other internal records B. Touring exhibition venues recorded through formal agreements C. Digitised collection works recorded in the Gallery’s CMS and published publicly on digital platforms
2027–28 to 2029–30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 2 and 5

2.2

Engagement with artistic program onsite, online and offsite

2026–27 Measures	A. Increase overall engagement onsite, online and offsite B. Increase demographic diversity of onsite audiences
Methodology	A. Engagement data captured across ticketing systems, digital analytics and partner reporting B. Demographic data collected through visitor surveys
2027–28 to 2029–30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillar 5

2.3

Engagement with targeted national programs

2026–27 Measures	A. 2 public unveilings of commissioned works B. Increase attendees at onsite and online education programs C. Education audiences represent 80% of federal electorates
Methodology	A. Commission unveilings detailed in program and event records B. Education program attendance captured through booking and ticketing systems C. Geographic data captured through booking sites and ticketing systems
2027–28 to 2029–30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 2, 3 and 5

Strategic priority

03

Create connection

Ambition statement

The Gallery fosters dynamic, collaborative relationships with peer cultural institutions, businesses and supporters to meet its strategic ambitions. In a constrained economic environment, the Gallery will cultivate enduring relationships with donors, supporters and partners. The Gallery actively pursues strategic cultural and commercial alliances that align with the Gallery values and amplify the impact of its work.

The Gallery champions creativity and elevates diverse perspectives and identities. Enabling an artist-forward approach to exhibitions and projects ensures the centrality of the artist voice and supports audiences to explore portraiture in new and exciting ways.



3.1 Growth in private giving and partnerships	
2026-27 Measures	A. Increase donations to the Foundation including support for collection development and commissions B. Maintain 4 high-value commercial partnerships
Methodology	A. Donations recorded against the Gallery's audited financial statements B. Commercial partnerships recorded by formal agreement
2027-28 to 2029-30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 4 and 5

3.2 Number of artists and arts professionals engaged	
2026-27 Measures	A. >30 living artists supported through the onsite and offsite exhibition and acquisitions programs B. 2 internships engaged C. 2 partnerships within the arts sector D. 2 educator professional development sessions held
Methodology	A. Artist agreements recorded across exhibition, acquisition and commissioning records B. Internships recorded by formal agreement C. Sector partnerships recorded by formal agreement D. Sessions recorded against program, booking and ticketing system records
2027-28 to 2029-30	Target results are equal to or greater than previous year
Revive	Pillars 3 and 4

Capability

The Gallery has approximately 55 full-time equivalent staff and works with over 20 commercial contractors to deliver its programs and activities. Staff are employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*, and remuneration and conditions are set out in the Gallery's *Enterprise Agreement 2024-27*.

The Gallery values a diverse, skilled and supported workforce as a key enabler of organisational success. With a focus on attracting, retaining and nurturing talent, the Gallery ensures its workforce supports operational needs and fosters a workplace culture of collaboration, creativity and innovation. Organisational investment in learning and development programs, health and wellbeing initiatives and flexible working arrangements enhance workforce capability and promote a balanced and sustainable approach to work. By investing in its people, the Gallery advances its ability to deliver inspiring artistic and cultural experiences now and into the future.

Building capability across the organisation ensures that the Gallery's workforce is future ready and empowered to embrace opportunities, respond to emerging risks and navigate change.

Through 2026-27, the Gallery will strengthen its internal capability by prioritising:

- leveraging new and existing technologies, including artificial intelligence, to support staff
- developing a workforce capability and planning-focused People and Culture Strategy
- modernising policies and procedures to improve decision-making and operational efficiency.

Strategic Commissioning Framework

The Gallery operates in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework, ensuring that core work is primarily undertaken by APS employees and that any outsourcing of core work is minimal and aligns with the limited circumstances permitted under the framework. The Gallery will continue to assess its workforce composition and identify mechanisms to build capability over the period of this plan.

Infrastructure

The Gallery in Canberra supports and houses the National Portrait Collection and is a destination for visitors. The facility is managed using a life cycle capital works program that prioritises critical maintenance, ensuring staff and visitor safety, environmental conditions, public amenities and the aesthetic of the building are maintained.

Information Communications Technology (ICT)

The Gallery's digital program reaches audiences across Australia and globally. Strategic investment in digital capability, infrastructure and specialist expertise enables the Gallery to anticipate and respond to evolving audience expectations while driving innovation in the creation and delivery of engaging digital experiences. The Gallery will proactively embrace emerging technologies and artificial intelligence to improve operational efficiency and enhance its stewardship of the National Portrait Collection. By adopting AI responsibly and ethically it will streamline administrative processes and enable staff to focus on activities that achieve the Gallery's purpose and increase audience engagement.

Kaylene Whiskey's
*Queens of the
Desert 2026*
projected onto the
Gallery building
during the 2026
Enlighten Festival
© Kaylene Whiskey



Risk oversight and management

The Gallery takes a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to managing risks to improve decision-making, realise opportunities and minimise risk impacts.

Risk management is embedded across the Gallery’s strategic and operational activities through the Risk and Opportunity Framework, associated procedures, risk register and risk assessments. The framework supports a proactive and consistent approach to identifying, assessing and managing risks, and promotes clear roles and responsibilities across the organisation. Risk is monitored and reported through established governance arrangements and escalation pathways, including regular reporting to the Executive, Audit and Risk Committee and Board.

During 2026–27, the Gallery will strengthen its risk management capability and maturity, including progressing the evolution of the Risk and Opportunity Framework.

Strategic risks	Controls
Audience engagement The Gallery is unable to effectively engage audiences onsite, offsite or on demand resulting in reduced reach and impact.	■ Business continuity and emergency management arrangements, processes and procedures ■ Risk assessment processes ■ ICT system security management ■ Monitoring of external conditions and emerging risks ■ Artistic programming model and audience engagement strategies
Staff capacity and capability The Gallery is unable to attract or retain talent, particularly First Nations talent. The Gallery has insufficient workforce capability or capacity to deliver its core business.	■ Develop a People and Culture Strategy ■ Workforce planning ■ Investment in training and professional development opportunities for staff ■ Recruitment and retention strategies ■ Diversity, inclusion and cultural safety initiatives and health and wellbeing programs
Collection Loss of, or damage to, objects in the National Portrait Collection or on loan to the Gallery.	■ Business continuity and collection disaster planning ■ Risk assessment and management processes ■ Integrated pest management ■ Preservation and conservation planning ■ Exhibition design ■ Operational collection handling and security controls
Reputation and public trust The Gallery’s programs, activities or governance practices adversely impact its reputation or public trust.	■ Curatorial model, exhibition policy, collection development policies and collection management processes ■ Stakeholder engagement and visitor experience approaches ■ Marketing and communications processes, brand guidelines ■ Risk assessment and management processes

Strategic risks	Controls
Funding and financial sustainability The Gallery has insufficient funds to achieve its legislative purpose and pursue its strategic and corporate planning objectives.	■ Ongoing engagement with government and stakeholders ■ Investment oversight through Investment Committee ■ Revenue planning and financial management frameworks and controls ■ Review and updates to financial policies and procedures
Governance and compliance The Gallery is unable to maintain an effective system of governance impacting decision-making, accountability or compliance.	■ Regular review of governance practices ■ Policy management in accordance with the Policy Review Plan ■ Internal audit and assurance processes ■ Executive and Audit and Risk Committee oversight
ICT and cybersecurity ICT systems and cybersecurity arrangements are insufficient to protect against evolving threats, impacting operations, information security or service delivery.	■ Implementation of controls aligned to the Essential Eight ■ Monitoring of systems, threats and vulnerabilities ■ Business continuity and cyber incident response arrangements ■ Penetration and intrusion testing ■ Long-term planning and improvement of ICT systems and cybersecurity capabilities

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