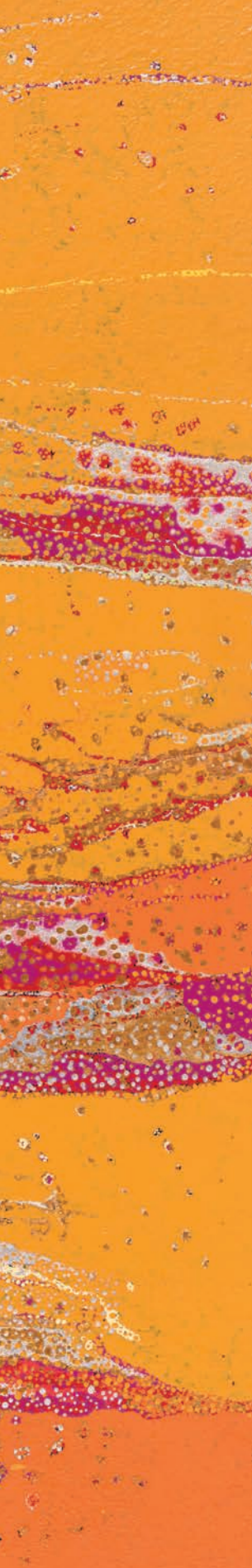


**National Gallery of Australia**

C O R P O R A T E P L A N

**2015–2019**





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(cover)

**Frank Stella** *Pergusa Three* 1983 (detail), colour relief and woodcut printed from five magnesium plates and two woodblocks. Purchased with the assistance of the Orde Poynton Fund 2002. © Frank Stella/ARS. Licensed by Viscopy 2015

**Daniel Walbidi** *Mangala and Yulparija peoples Kirriwirri* 2014 (detail), synthetic polymer paint on linen. Purchased 2014. Courtesy the artist and Short St Gallery, Broome



Mary and the Painter



## Introduction

We present the 2015 National Gallery of Australia Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2015–16 to 2018–19, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Since the establishment of the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in 1967, we have played a leadership role in shaping visual arts culture across Australia and its region and continue to develop exciting and innovative ways to engage visitors with our collection both nationally and internationally, on-site and digitally.

The Plan sets out the NGA's priorities for the next four years to build upon our reputation and to further develop and exhibit our collection.

The Council of the NGA, executive, staff and volunteers will use this plan to guide and deliver our diverse programs and services for the promotion of Australia's greatest visual arts collection.

The Plan will be renewed annually and its coverage extended on a rolling four-year basis.

Allan Myers AO QC

Chairman

Dr Gerard Vaughan AM

Director

**Margaret Preston** *For a little girl* 1929 (detail),  
oil on canvas. Masterpieces for the Nation Fund and  
De Lambert Largesse Foundation, 2015. © Margaret  
Rose Preston Estate. Licensed by Viscopy 2015

To be an inspiration for the people of Australia









## Our Vision

To be an inspiration for the people of Australia.

## Our Purpose

The National Gallery of Australia (NGA), located in Canberra, is the Commonwealth of Australia's national cultural institution for the visual arts and is part of the Ministry of the Arts within the Communications and the Arts portfolio.

The functions of the NGA are prescribed in its enabling legislation, the *National Gallery Act 1975*, which requires the NGA to:

- develop and maintain a national collection of works of art
- exhibit, or make available for exhibition by others, works of art from the national collection or works of art that are in the possession of the Gallery, and use every endeavour to make the most advantageous use of the national collection in the national interest.

The NGA receives funding from the Commonwealth Government and actively seeks, and relies upon, financial and in-kind support from private and corporate sources.

(previous page)  
Visitors to the National Gallery of Australia for  
the Enlighten Festival, 6 March 2015

Visitors to The Aboriginal Memorial,  
National Gallery of Australia, 28 April 2015

## Our Mission

The NGA fulfils its national charter by:

- advancing learning about and enjoyment of the visual arts through the national art collection
- optimising access to the collection, programs and online services by capitalising on new technologies
- championing pride and confidence in Australia's visual culture through inspiring and expanded displays of the nation's collection of Australian art
- presenting internationally important exhibitions of the world's finest art
- showing leadership in promoting the rich cultures of our Asia-Pacific region
- leveraging the Australian curriculum to improve access to the extensive and engaging content of the collection
- maximising opportunities to further develop and support Indigenous engagement.

Over the coming years the NGA's focus will be to continue:

- developing the collection across agreed collecting areas, principally Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian art and 19th to 21st century European, American, Asian and Pacific art
- caring for and promoting the collection
- using the breadth and depth of the collection in innovative and creative ways to deliver lively and vibrant displays, exhibitions and associated programs that inform, educate and engage
- undertaking research and producing publications (in hard copy and digitally) on the collection and visual arts generally

- maximising opportunities to encourage public and corporate support
- maintaining strategic relationships and fulfilling the NGA's statutory and professional obligations to the highest museological and scholarly standards
- maximising opportunities to further engage in cultural diplomacy.

Specific priority activities in addition to these will be:

- completion of the re-hang of the permanent displays by December 2015
- development and implementation of the new NGA brand by December 2015
- a new focus on contemporary art, through the appointment of a senior curator to a newly-created post of Senior Curator, Contemporary Art Practice—Global, and increased promotion of the contemporary art collection, including at NGA Contemporary
- continuation of the Asian Art Research Provenance Project
- enhancement of the visitor experience through improved signage and way-finding, a focus on client service from front-of-house staff and a revised, more informative and welcoming entry foyer
- expansion of the use of social media to promote awareness of the NGA's activities and attractions
- continuation of development of plans for the Stage 2 expansion
- finalisation of a new Enterprise Agreement
- refinement of the NGA's organisation structure
- transition to a shared services arrangement for selected corporate services functions.

## Our Values

At the National Gallery of Australia, we value:

### Art for everyone

We want everyone to experience art. We provide access to art within and beyond the NGA walls. Everyone's life can be enriched by art, and everyone should be able to find something to engage with in the national art collection.

### Striving for excellence

We strive to lead the way in our field and in everything we do. We are open to new ideas and to new ways of doing things.

### Creative engagement

We want all Australians with an interest in art and visual culture to regard the resources of the NGA as interesting and informative, and offering opportunities to expand knowledge about art and artists, and how they reflect Australian society issues and ideas, both historically and right now. We want every visit to the NGA—either on-site or remotely—to be enjoyable and thought provoking.

### Courage

We are not afraid to forge new paths and be progressive.

### Respect

We treat everyone with consideration and courtesy, and we embrace diversity.

**James Turrell** *Virtuality squared* 2014, Ganzfeld:  
built space, LED lights, 800 x 1400 x 1940.5 cm (overall)  
Collection James Turrell

**Marc Newson** *Random pak* 2007, chair, nickel.  
Purchased by the National Gallery of Australia  
Foundation, 2015



## Our Assets

### Our staff

Our staff have a proven track record of being creative, entrepreneurial and collaborative. They are dedicated to robustly supporting our function and our audiences. We have a great range of expertise, including specialist curators and conservators, educators, fundraisers and communication professionals. The NGA has a number of programs for assisting with the training of curators from Australia (including Indigenous trainees) and overseas and we will continue to explore opportunities to provide 'cultural aid' to our Pacific neighbours in particular.

### Our volunteers

Our volunteers are our best ambassadors and play vital roles as tour guides and educators, and occasionally as researchers, conservators and administration assistants, contributing close to 12,000 volunteer-hours per year. We have over 185 volunteer guides supporting daily guided tours of the collection and tours for primary school students at the NGA. In 2014–15, volunteer guides delivered tours of the collection for 10,891 visitors and special exhibition tours for 2321 visitors.

### Our collections

We are leaders in the conservation, interpretation and display of the NGA's exceptional collections, adhering to global museological best practice at all times. The NGA aims to build a collection of outstanding quality through purchase, gift and bequest. We hold the largest collection of any art museum in Australia and are custodians of over 170,000 works of art. Our collection policy builds on the existing strengths of the national collection of art and we aim to be the primary place to see and understand the visual culture of Australia and to preserve it for the Australian people now and in the future. We strive to make the collection available to all Australians through programs, exhibitions and digital services. We will continue to lend curated exhibitions to regional Australia and to invite state and regional galleries to have on long-term loan groups of works which might otherwise remain permanently in store in Canberra. This is a crucial part of our national remit and responsibility.

### **Our site, buildings and facilities**

Our architecturally distinctive building is part of Canberra's heritage and includes exhibition galleries, restaurants, retail and function spaces. We manage our buildings, facilities and ICT systems efficiently to enable access to and enjoyment of our collections. The NGA will continue to work on plans for Stage 2 to create new gallery space to display a much larger range of Australian works, provide a substantial area for global contemporary practice, and deliver enhanced commercial spaces to drive increased earned income.

### **Our knowledge, skills and experience**

We maintain professional expertise in conservation, research, curation and collection management, community engagement, government and business relations. The NGA Research Library is the best and most extensive art library in Australia, and we will continue to reposition the NGA as the natural centre of research on the history of Australian art and the visual cultures of our region.

### **Our profile and reputation**

We put our visitors, communities, business partners and the public at the centre of everything we do. We aim to achieve the widest possible audience for the collection by attracting visitors to the NGA and sending works of art around Australia and overseas. Over the next four years we will continue to focus on activities that significantly raise the profile and reputation of the NGA among national and international audiences, peers and decision-makers.

## Our Environment

In planning for the future, we recognise a number of challenges potentially affecting our environment and our work. A reducing resource base in terms of funding and resources will always provide an enormous challenge for the NGA. Given current levels of Commonwealth funding and the challenge in securing non-government funding streams, we will need to be even more entrepreneurial and imaginative in securing a sound financial basis to ensure we remain relevant to the community and can deliver on both public expectations and meeting our obligations.

We must be innovative in reaching our audience—both on-site and through our outreach programs and digital initiatives. Importantly, we must capitalise on the latest technology to keep abreast of developments in galleries and museums worldwide, where audiences have come to expect ‘art at their fingertips’, or at least on their latest electronic device. In this regard, the NGA will continue with its digital art, education and access initiatives, within the limits of available resources.

Existing infrastructure also presents its challenges. The original NGA building is now 34 years old, with a design and structure that is not friendly to the needs of state-of-the-art technology, nor readily facilitates meeting the changing needs of today’s audiences. This has been redressed somewhat with the opening of the Stage 1 extension, which provided a new entrance, improved way-finding, and spacious galleries for Indigenous Australian art.

Adequate display space is a major challenge. Around only two per cent of the NGA’s collection is ever on display, which impacts on the need to provide and maintain costly storage. Looking ahead, the NGA is preparing for the time when it can commence construction of the Stage 2 extension, which will include ‘The Centre for Australian Art’ and greatly expanded display space, as well as enhanced visitor access and services.

It is appropriate that the NGA is situated in Canberra, jointly with the other major national cultural institutions. However, this geographical location—being away from the large population centres of other state capitals that are naturally popular as destinations for national and international travellers—means that we must continue to work hard to attract visitors. The NGA’s

**Albert Croker** Tiwi and Iwaidja peoples *The buffalo*  
c1959, natural earth pigments on wood. Purchased 2014



relative success in this regard will be influenced significantly by the quality of its exhibitions and public programs, as well as ongoing fruitful and mutually beneficial relationships with the ACT Government to assist in attracting visitors to the ACT.

The NGA has always been well-served by the quality and reputation of its nationally and internationally renowned professional staff, some of whom have been with the NGA since its early days.



## Our Priorities

The NGA's three priorities are:

**Priority 1:** Develop, preserve and protect an outstanding national art collection.

**Priority 2:** Increase engagement with the national art collection, its exhibitions and programs, in the broadest possible way.

**Priority 3:** Maximise government and community support for NGA operations and plans.



## Priority 1: Develop, preserve and protect an outstanding national art collection.

This goal is supported by two broad objectives:

- (i) develop and strengthen the national art collection
- (ii) preserve, protect and manage the national art collection.

The key strategies we will implement to achieve this goal include:

- acquiring, by purchase, gift or bequest, works of art of outstanding quality in line with the Acquisitions Policy and Ten Year Acquisition Strategy
- encouraging, facilitating and acknowledging Government funding (including the tax rebate for gifts), donations, gifts and bequests that enhance the national art collection
- conserving and maintaining the national art collection and providing appropriate storage, security and environmental conditions
- documenting and managing the national art collection
- continuing digitisation of the national art collection.

The main indicators of our success will be:

- the quality of the collection
- the level of funding and donations attracted for development of the collection
- the number of works of art in the collection that are digitised annually.

**Yinka Shonibare** *Refugee astronaut* 2015, fibreglass, printed cotton, net, wood, metal and plastic objects, steel baseplate. Purchased 2015. Courtesy of the artist, James Cohan Gallery, New York, Shanghai

## Priority 2: Increase engagement with the national art collection, its exhibitions and programs, in the broadest possible way.

This priority is supported by the following objectives:

- (i) display and exhibit works of art according to the highest museological standards
- (ii) increase access to the collection, both nationally and internationally
- (iii) provide inspirational educational and public programs
- (iv) promote the NGA
- (v) provide high-quality services and enjoyable experiences for visitors.

The key strategies we will implement to achieve this goal include:

- displaying works from the national art collection in a meaningful and engaging way
- presenting a well-researched, balanced, stimulating, informative and enjoyable exhibition program in Canberra, throughout Australia and internationally
- using collection displays, exhibitions, travelling exhibitions, loans, publications, programs and technology to increase access to the national art collection
- providing greater access to contemporary art
- implementing the Digital Art Education and Access Initiative and pursuing innovation and other opportunities presented by expanded national broadband coverage and the Government initiatives to improve access to the national art collection
- finalising plans and seeking Government support for the Stage 2 building expansion, incorporating 'The Centre for Australian Art'
- providing leadership in the visual arts sector by presenting innovative and informative programs about the visual arts
- stimulating engagement with and understanding of the visual arts through events, research, publications, conferences and symposia



Sculpture Garden Sunday, 1 March 2015

- engaging with national education bodies to develop educational resources to deliver targeted programs for students and teachers
- embedding works from the national art collection into the national curriculum
- promoting the national art collection and exhibitions and programs to increase visitation and audience engagement
- strengthening and promoting the National Gallery of Australia brand
- continuously improving services that deliver high-quality visitor experiences
- seeking visitor feedback and respond appropriately.

The main indicators of our success will be:

- the number of people who access the national art collection on-site and remotely, and NGA exhibitions, programs and facilities, and their level of satisfaction
- the number of works from the national collection publicly available through displays, loans, tours, online and in publications and reproductions.

### Priority 3: Maximise Government and community support for NGA operations and plans.

This goal is supported by the following objectives:

- (i) secure and manage adequate financial resources
- (ii) manage NGA infrastructure and services
- (iii) further develop NGA infrastructure
- (iv) continuously improve risk management and corporate governance
- (v) secure and develop human resources
- (vi) develop and maintain strategic relationships.

The key strategies we will implement to achieve this goal include:

- securing funding and support for operations and programs from Government, corporate and private sources
- maximising returns from commercial operations
- managing financial resources effectively, with close alignment of strategic and financial plans
- ensuring continuous high standards of maintenance and operation of NGA buildings and infrastructure and effectively managing such assets
- implementing key infrastructure strategies in the Strategic Asset Management Plan
- incorporating consideration of environmental sustainability in operations
- applying innovative and emerging technology to strengthen information and communications infrastructure and resources to better serve the needs of the NGA and its audience
- monitoring and managing current and emerging risks
- applying best practice standards in corporate governance and management



Opening of NGA Contemporary, 25 September 2014

- providing a safe and healthy work environment
- attracting, developing and retaining staff
- ensuring a supportive and positive workplace culture
- engaging actively with Government and Members of Parliament
- working cooperatively with our portfolio department, colleague institutions and other agencies
- developing and maintaining productive relationships with artists, donors, sponsors, members and other key stakeholders.

The main indicators of our success will be:

- a sound financial position
- achieving satisfactory facilities and services
- progression of key NGA plans.

## Our Capability

### Staffing

The NGA's staffing level for the four-year period is expected to average 238 full-time equivalent staff. This represents a reduction from the 2014–15 staffing level of 245, and is the result of:

- continuation of the outsourcing of security services (being undertaken on the basis of replacing departing permanent staff with outsourced services)
- targeted reductions in specific areas.

It is anticipated that the figure of 238 will reduce slightly more over the planning period due to the transition to shared services and the harvesting of productivity savings that will be identified during the negotiation of the NGA's Enterprise Agreement.

The current turnover rate of ongoing staff is around eight per cent per annum, or approximately 18 staff. This is considered to be an acceptable level that provides the opportunity both for refreshing and renewing our professional resources, as well as the capacity to adjust staffing numbers in the light of budgetary imperatives. In addition to our usual complement of around 215 ongoing staff, the NGA is supported by around 40 non-ongoing staff, as well as up to 90 casual staff, depending on the level and nature of exhibitions and public programs throughout the year.

There are expected retirements among some of our long-serving staff over the planning period, and these are being managed within the context of the NGA strategic workforce plan, to ensure that there is no diminution in capacity and capability.