



**Accessibility
Action Plan
2020–23**

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

The Sydney Opera House was built upon Tubowgule,
Gadigal country.

We acknowledge the Gadigal, the traditional custodians of this place, also known as Bennelong Point. First Nations readers are advised that this document may contain the names and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are now deceased.

The Sydney Opera House supports the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Welcome

I am delighted to present the Sydney Opera House's 2020–23 Accessibility Action Plan (AAP).

The Opera House belongs to everyone, so it's vital that our World Heritage-listed building and the experiences we offer are accessible to all. We are making significant progress both with our Stage 1 Renewal building works improving accessibility across the precinct and a range of other initiatives.

Since the launch of our 2016-18 Access Strategic Plan, we are proud to have:

- Completed major accessibility upgrades to the Joan Sutherland Theatre, funded by the NSW Government, including a new passageway connecting the Southern and Northern Foyers and a new lift providing access to all levels of the Northern Foyer. We are delighted these works have won a UNESCO Asia Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation, in the category of New Design in Heritage Contexts.
- Offered 180 accessible initiatives and performances, enabled in large part by more than \$335,000 in philanthropic donations, such as the Club Weld@Vivid LIVE music residency (offered to musicians with autism) and Whoosh! the newest work by Australia's premiere multi-sensory theatre company for young people with complex and multiple disability.

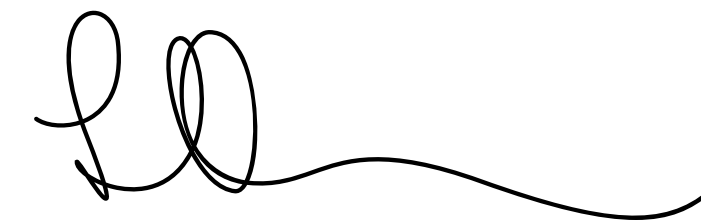
- Trained more than 200 Opera House staff in disability awareness disciplines.
- Hosted our first Creatability Intern in partnership with Create NSW, the Department of Family and Community Services and Accessible Arts.

Consistent with the Opera House's new strategic commitment to the United Nations Global Goals, our new plan sets out clear actions to inspire positive change ahead of our 50th anniversary in 2023, including to:

- Further enhance accessibility in our performance venues and across the precinct, including in the Concert Hall, always with utmost respect for our heritage.
- Develop new community engagement opportunities, including programs for seniors, people with dementia and migrant and refugee communities.
- Enhance access and inclusion provisions in recruitment processes by offering new workplace support for employees with disability and creating opportunities for future employees with disability.

We are grateful to the many disability organisations, advocates and people with disability who have guided us in developing our new plan and helped make the Opera House a more accessible and dynamic cultural institution.

I look forward to working together as we continue opening up the people's house to everyone.



Louise Herron AM
Chief Executive Officer

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Who We Are

As a symbol of modern Australia, the nation's premier tourist destination and one of the world's busiest performing arts centres, the Opera House plays an integral role in Australia's identity. A celebrated community meeting place, the Opera House is operated and maintained on behalf of the NSW Government and the people of NSW by the Sydney Opera House Trust. The State, National and World Heritage-listed site is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a 'masterpiece of human creative genius'. In 2018 it was estimated by global professional service provider Deloitte to have a social asset value of \$6.2 billion and make a \$1.2 billion contribution to the Australian economy annually.

Our vision is to be as bold and inspiring as the Opera House itself. Our mission is two-fold:

- To treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.
- To inspire, and strengthen the community, through everything we do.

The Opera House welcomes almost 11 million people to the site each year, with almost 1.4 million people seeing a show and more than 560,000 visitors taking a guided tour. The Opera House hosts more than 1,800 performances a year, including the work of eight flagship resident companies – Australian Chamber Orchestra, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Opera Australia, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Theatre Company,

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and The Australian Ballet. The Opera House's own programming arm, Sydney Opera House Presents, complements the works of its residence companies through the presentation of First Nations performing arts, contemporary music and performance, talks and ideas, classical music, and children, families and creative learning and artist and sector development. Additionally, a broad range of shows and community events are presented by third parties at the Opera House.

Its reach is not limited to its geographic location – the Opera House is also an online portal for performances, creative learning, ideas and discussions reaching audiences and communities nationally and internationally through an innovative program of digital experiences. 1.1 million hours of video content released by the Opera House was consumed globally in 2018–19.

The Opera House has more than 900 employees located in two sites. The diverse workforce includes technical staff involved in staging, lighting and sound, theatre managers and ushers, tour guides, maintenance, security and administrative staff, and management. Thirteen staff identify with disability.

Our Values

Safety

Our greatest responsibility.

Creative

Be bold and innovative.

Excellence

Strive for the best.

Collaboration

One team.

Accountability

Focus and own it.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Our Valued Supporters

Accessible Performances and Programs

Accessible Performances and Programs are enabled by the Opera House, Dr Eileen Ong and Sydney Opera House Ladies Committee.

All About Women

Event Partner Westpac enabled 32 All About Women sessions to be Auslan interpreted or captioned in 2018 and 2019.

Arts Assist

Arts Assist is enabled by the Opera House, its annual donors, The Greatorex Fund, Sydney Opera House Ladies Committee, and Colin and Richard Adams.

Club Weld@Vivid LIVE

Club Weld@Vivid LIVE was enabled by the Opera House and Rae Assender.

Drama Theatre & Joan Sutherland Theatre Hearing Loop

The Joan Sutherland Theatre and Drama Theatre assistive listening systems were enabled by the Opera House and by Jillian Segal AO and John Roth through The Yarranabbe Foundation.

On The House

On The House is enabled by the Opera House and Rae Assender.

The Balnaves Foundation Open House Program

The Balnaves Foundation Open House Program was enabled by the Opera House and the Balnaves Foundation.



Dancing Story workshop, Utzon Room. Photo by Daniel Boud.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Statistics

What is Disability?

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) defines disability as ‘any impairment, abnormality, or loss of function, of any part of the body or mind’. This includes:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Learning disability
- Physical disfigurement
- Immunological (the presence of organisms causing disease in the body)

Demographics

- More than 4 million Australians have a disability.
- About 1 million are from a non-English-speaking background.
- 37% of the national Indigenous population 15 years and older have a reported physical disability or a long-term health condition (102,900).
- At least 80% of disabilities are not visible.
- 15% or 2.1 million Australians of working age (15-64 years) have a disability.
- Mental health problems and mental illness are among the greatest causes of disability.
- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age.
- 40% of people with disability are 65 years or older.
- 2.1 million Australians of working age (15-64 years) have disability.
- 35.9% of Australia’s 8.9 million households include a person with disability.

Types of Disability

- Only 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair.
- 1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are about 30,000 Deaf AUSLAN users with total hearing loss.
- Vision Australia estimates 357,000 Australians are blind or have low vision, and that this will increase to 564,000 by 2030. (Refractive error not included.)
- 45% of Australians aged 16-85 years experience a mental health condition in their lifetime.

Source: *The Australian Network on Disability (AND)*
website <https://www.and.org.au/>

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Policy and Legislative Context

The Accessibility Action Plan 2020–23 aligns with the principles in the following state, national and international legislation, agreements and standards.

NSW

- The Disability Inclusion Act (2014) and the Disability Inclusion Regulation (2014) came into effect on 3 December 2014. Part 2 of the Act requires NSW Government departments, local councils and other public authorities (as set out in the regulation) to develop and implement Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

COMMONWEALTH

- The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993 (DDA) recognises the rights of people with disability to equality before the law and makes discrimination based on disability unlawful.
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010, which came into effect on 1 May 2011, aim to provide people with disability with dignified and equitable access to buildings, and provide certainty to industry that they are complying with the DDA.

INTERNATIONAL

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) ratified by Australia in 2008 acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as people without a disability.
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provides recommendations for making web content more accessible to people with disability.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

The Global Goals

In 2015, the United Nations defined 17 goals, known as the Global Goals, to address the world's most pressing challenges by 2030, including inequality, climate, education and justice. The Global Goals provide a to-do list for the world and a roadmap to achieve a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. They have been widely adopted by leading global and Australian companies and government organisations.

Since opening, the Opera House has championed environmental sustainability, creativity, diversity, cultural rights and respect for heritage. Now, almost 50 years on, we remain committed to these ideals and values. They are perfectly encapsulated in the Global Goals. These goals can only be achieved through global action.

You can find out more about what we have done and plan to do, together with our partners, in our most recent Accessibility, Reconciliation and Environment Action Plans.

Through this alignment to the Global Goals, the Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) supports global efforts to promote equality and opportunity for all. The AAP contributes to the following Global Goals, which explicitly include persons with disability:

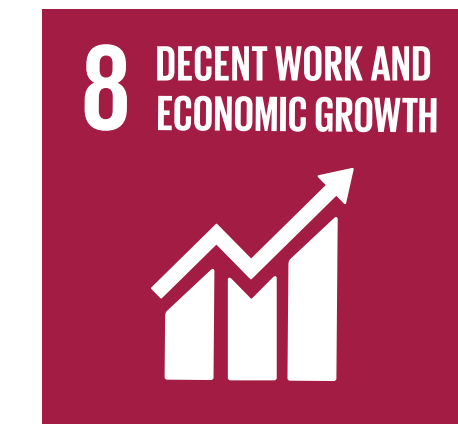
Goal 4: Guarantee equal and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and providing the needed assistance for persons with disabilities.

Goal 8.5: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Goal 10.2: Empower and promote social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status.

Goal 11.7: Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

To see more on how the AAP aligns to the Global Goals, go to page 34.



NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

What We've Achieved

Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) 2016–18

The fourth three-year Sydney Opera House AAP (2016–18) was launched by the NSW Minister for Disability Services in the Utzon Room, in March 2016.

In 2017, the Accessibility Manager role became part of the Opera House's Visitor Experience team. An Accessibility Coordinator role was created in 2019 to provide operational coordination and support across the Opera House Access Program and accessible visitor operations.

The following table is a snapshot of achievements over the previous three years.



Audio-described virtual reality experiences, Vivid LIVE 2017.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

What we said we'd do

The Building

Implement accessibility improvements (as identified in the Accessibility Master Plan) as part of new Stage 1 Renewal projects. This includes access upgrades to wheelchair accessible seating options and toilet amenities; accessible passages linking Southern and Northern Foyer areas; and a lift linking all Northern Foyer levels.

Key deliverables achieved

The NSW Govt committed \$26 million for additional upgrades to the Joan Sutherland Theatre (JST), including accessibility works. Work began on the JST upgrade, including the following accessibility improvements:

- Installation of a new lift and passageway on the western side of the JST to enable wheelchair access to all levels of the Northern Foyers (making this section of the site independently accessible for the first time). The lift also enables older or less mobile patrons to access the theatre's circle seating via a lift rather than the current large number of stairs.
- Increase in the number and capacity of compliant accessible and companion seating in the JST.
- Installation of a new accessible toilet installed in the Northern Foyer and new Function Centre.
- Re-grading of the entrance to the JST from the Southern Foyers to comply with Australian building codes.
- Installation of a new assisted hearing loop system with increased auditorium coverage.

Performances and Experiences

Expand awareness and support for the Opera House Access Program through staging an annual launch event for key industry, government, sponsor and donor stakeholders.

- In March 2016, the Opera House Access Program was launched by the then NSW Minister for Disability Services with a key stakeholder event in the Utzon Room.
- In March 2017, for the first time, the Access Program was launched in the Studio venue with key stakeholder representatives. The launch included a private performance of Backstage in Biscuit Land, by UK performer Jess Thom's Touretteshero, showcasing the Access Program's inclusive and accessible programming.
- In November 2018, a community showcase was held in the Joan Sutherland Theatre Northern Foyer space as an opportunity to highlight the Opera House's Access, Sustainability and Reconciliation programs, as well as new JST accessibility upgrades.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Continued – Performances and Experiences

What we said we'd do

Continue broadening the Access Program, including addressing specific populations such as people living with dementia and Parkinson's disease, as well as people facing social and economic disadvantage.

Key deliverables achieved

The Dancing Connections initiative, collaboration with the Opera House and Dance for Parkinson's Australia, presented four program series-offering participants with Parkinson's disease both community dance classes and discounted performance tickets. Each series was booked out with significant waiting lists. The series was presented in collaboration with the following visiting dance companies and artists including:

- Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company
- The Australian Ballet
- The Michael Clark Company
- As part of Vivid LIVE, the class was inspired by the Lighting of the Sails installation by Chinese-American visual artist Andrew Thomas Huang and his Austral Flora Ballet.

Both The Balnaves Foundation Open House Program and the later On the House program offered more than 3,000 people facing situations of social and financial disadvantage low cost tickets across eight Sydney Opera House Presents (SOHP) performances.

Connections were made with the team who facilitates the Art and Object engagement program at Macquarie University to explore the connection between the arts and those in the community who have dementia. This was part of investigations into the potential of a pilot program at the Opera House.

Make our festival experiences autism-friendly.

For the first time, the Vivid LIVE contemporary music festival offered a residency program for musicians on the autism spectrum. In the first of its kind, 12 independent musicians on the autism spectrum, who were part of Club Weld, were mentored by three Vivid LIVE alumni artists in the Opera House Broadcast Studio. The new tracks produced by the musicians premiered on FBi Radio, were included in Re-Mix the House compilations, and a record later released by the artists.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Continued – Performances and Experiences

What we said we'd do

Continue to scope quality sensory theatre experiences for audiences with complex and multiple disability.

Increase the number of accessible performances and experiences as well as presenting perspectives of artists with disabilities.

Explore and facilitate new collaborations between the Opera House, its Resident Companies and community groups, to provide access to educational arts experiences for people with disability.

Key deliverables achieved

- The Access Program and Children, Families and Creative Learning teams continued to scope potential multi-sensory theatre experiences for audiences with complex and multiple disabilities. This accumulated in the presentation of Whoosh! the latest work by Australian multi-sensory theatre company Sensorium in August 2019.
- The Access Program and Creative Learning teams presented a masterclass by Christopher Davies, the UK's leading multi-sensory theatre company, Bamboozle Theatre. Teachers, artists and Opera House Creative Learning and Access Program staff were invited to explore new ways of experiencing, planning and presenting theatre for people with multiple and complex disability.
- Over three years we presented 180 accessible Sydney Opera House Presents performances.
- Audio-description was expanded to online and virtual reality Vivid LIVE experiences for the first time.
- Perspectives of artists with disability were programmed across SOHP programming, including the work of Noëmi Lakmaier, Jess Thom, Keaton Heston and Tim Sharp.
- Other performances included: Kaleidoscope, which brought to life the kaleidoscopic world view of Ethan Hugh a 13-year-old boy who has been diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome; and Jodee Munde's Personal, about her experience as a CODA (child of Deaf adults).
- More than 1,000 people (parents, teachers, students and children with disability) participated in a new educational arts experience developed in a three-year collaboration between the Opera House Access Program and The Australian Ballet (TAB) Education Unit. The new Access Residency at the Sydney Opera House provided students with disability both a workshop and performance experience series built around the Sleeping Beauty, Caoppelia and the Nutcracker performances. The inclusive workshops were open to the general public on the weekend with a Dancing Story workshop offering for children aged three to five. As part of this residency, the TAB Education Team also delivered Professional Development sessions for specialist and generalist schoolteachers.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Operations and Customer Experience

What we said we'd do

Accessibility Manager to facilitate annual accessible customer service training for all Front of House, Theatre Managers and Host Team staff.

Ensure the Opera House website complies with WCAG 2.0 AA, including the seat selection process. Investigate alternative access solutions for any areas or functions of the website that cannot reasonably be made AA-compliant.

Develop processes and provide staff training to ensure customer material provided in PDF format on the Opera House website is accessible to customers with vision impairments who use screen-reading technology.

Key deliverables achieved

81 customer-facing staff responded to a staff survey identifying areas for further training and awareness in relation to disability access. The survey informed a 4-hour face-face staff accessibility awareness forum attended by staff across different portfolios. The forum aimed to raise awareness of accessible customer service and communication strategies, event access considerations and access services available at the Opera House. A resource package, including an audio recording of the sessions and presentations, was made available as an online resource for staff who could not attend.

The new Opera House website was built to the WCAG 2.0 AA standard including the seat selection process. The new site was extensively tested by Vision Australia with additional consultation provided by Guide Dogs Australia. In addition, automated monitoring tools were put in place to check that accessibility issues are not re-introduced as new web pages are authored.

An audit of PDF files on the website to identify non-accessible documents that require re-authoring was undertaken. The session aimed to encourage staff that edit and create web pages to ensure the website remains access-friendly by using alt texts, structured headings, and meaningful descriptions as well as best practices in the area of web accessibility.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Continued – Operations and Customer Experience

What we said we'd do

Improve services and facilities for patrons with disability including:

- Additional accessible seating options in foyers.
- A companion card booking line.
- Adult Accessible Changing Place facility.

Key deliverables achieved

Improvements to facilities for patrons who are less mobile were introduced, including additional seating in the Box Office foyers and providing a dedicated Companion Card contact booking line. Investigations began into the feasibility of installing an Adult Accessible Changing Place facility in the Western Foyers.

Install a permanent captioning system in the Playhouse and replace the old captioning screens in the Drama Theatre, thereby ensuring live-theatre captioning is visible to more audience members.

A new permanent captioning system was installed in the Playhouse. The old captioning screens in the Drama Theatre were replaced with new screens, ensuring live-theatre captioning is visible to more audience members.

Install new hearing loops in all Western Foyers venues

New hearing loop systems were installed in both the Drama Theatre and the lower level of The Studio, increasing assisted hearing coverage in both venues.

Workplace

Establish an annual internship opportunity for a person with a disability.

Daniel Graham was announced as the first SOH Creatability Intern at the 3 December 2018 launch on International Day of Disability. This program is a strategic partnership between Create NSW, the Department of Family and Community Services and Accessible Arts and is aimed at creating opportunities across the arts, screen and cultural sectors for people with disability. Daniel was with the Opera House from 5 February to 2 May. For the first part of his internship, Daniel was focused on Front of House and customer service skills. He then conducted a research project on accessible companies and artists for SOHP.

Offer customer-facing staff Introductory Auslan (Australian sign-language).

Introductory Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN) training was offered to all Visitor Services staff as part of events for International Day of People with Disability.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Community Leadership

What we said we'd do

Expand the scale and scope of the Opera House Access Program, and work with the Opera House's Philanthropy and Partnerships teams to further diversify and increase funding to this end.

Share Sydney Opera House resources with smaller arts organisations and festivals by developing a resource hire package that includes autism-friendly performance resources and equipment, as well as sharing Opera House audio-describers and audio-description equipment.

Support disability organisation fund-raising efforts through the donation of performance tickets and other forms of prizes.

Key deliverables achieved

Philanthropic gifts to the Opera House Access Program increased by 294% from 2016 to 2018.

In collaboration with Event Partner Westpac, AUSLAN or captioning was included for 32 sessions at the All about Women Festival between 2018 and 2019. This was the first time all festival talks were accessible to those who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Audio description equipment was upgraded. These new units are being used by Vision Australia for resident company performances and was also loaned to Bus Stop Films for three film premieres off site.

The Access Program provided its autism-friendly performance resources to the Sydney Festival.

The Opera House supported the fundraising efforts of not-for-profit disability organisations including Peninsula Pals, Special Olympics, Fighting Chance Australia and Giant Steps Sydney.

As part of the Vivid LIVE festival, Gig Buddies, a befriending program for people with a learning disability, were invited to attend three diverse contemporary music concerts. This was the first time the organisation had attended rap and dance music genre events.

Create Space Dance Residency was created in collaboration with Ausdance NSW, the Opera House and FORM, giving dance artist with disability Dean Walsh two weeks in a host venue and a bursary of \$5,000. Create Space Dance Residency recognises the lack of development opportunities for artists with disability and wish to offer a supportive and safe space for these artists to continue to expand their work and practice.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Case Studies

[Joan Sutherland Theatre
Passageway & Lift](#)

[Club Weld @ Vivid LIVE](#)

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Case Study 1

Joan Sutherland Theatre Passageway & Lift

IMPROVING PHYSICAL ACCESS WHILE ENHANCING THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

At its 40th Anniversary in 2013, Sydney Opera House began planning for the Decade of Renewal, to prepare for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors. Ensuring that the Opera House is accessible to all is an essential part of Renewal.

The Opera House was designed during a time of different community standards in regards to accessibility. This, combined with changes to the design program part way through construction, created a scenario where the Northern Foyer of the Joan Sutherland Theatre was accessible only via a large set of stairs making it almost impossible for patrons using wheelchairs or with mobility limitations to reach this area.

The accessibility upgrades to the JST completed in 2018 were an important part of the Opera House's Decade of Renewal, and included a new lift in the JST Northern Foyer providing access to all five levels of the foyer and a passageway connecting the Southern and Northern Foyers.



The passageway is seen as an almost invisible new design element, seamlessly fitting into the existing architecture.
Photo by Daniel Boud.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)



The lift design respects Utzon's vision by expressing the lift's structure and services honestly. Photo by Daniel Boud.

‘The experience of these foyer spaces, their power, drama and grandeur, is now available to people who were never before able to access them.’

The upgrades have brought the theatre into line with current accessibility standards while conserving the heritage significance of this UNESCO World Heritage site.

The new passageway and lift seamlessly integrate into the architecture of the building. The design is subtly recognisable as new work, but ensures the primacy of Jørn Utzon's vision and significance of Peter Hall's interiors remain the forefront of the experience of this exceptionally significant space. The design process was driven by the Utzon Design Principles and the Conservation Management Plan Fourth Edition.

The passageway converted existing back-of-house plant rooms to a front-of-house access path. It was designed to minimise impacts to the significance of the foyers and venue. The design adopts the existing materials and finishes of the building – respecting the interior design regime of architect Peter Hall – through granite floor finishes, brush box timber cladding and bronze trim elements.

The key challenge to the project included existing structural and spatial constraints for the new passageway and in its narrowest place, because of being compressed in between two existing structural walls, it had to be constrained to a narrow 1m wide width. This required subtle changes in level and plan but finished in a way that ensures the passage feels like a natural route to the Northern Foyer.

The new lift provides access to all five levels of the Northern Foyer. The lift was placed to the western side of the Northern Foyer – a logical connection from the passageway, sitting parallel to the existing concrete stair ribs. The design respects Utzon's vision by expressing the lift's structure and services honestly. The lift minimises visual impacts internally and externally through location, form and use of materials.

The lift car and its doors are also glazed to minimise the visual impacts on the Northern Foyer whilst ensuring patrons using the lift have a strong visual connection to the foyer and the harbour.

The experience of these foyer spaces, their power, drama and grandeur, is now available to people who were never before able to access them, enhancing the heritage significance of the space.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Case Study 2

Club Weld @ Vivid LIVE

FOSTERING PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS FOR ARTISTS WITH DISABILITY

“The experience at the Opera House ... oh my gosh ... I can’t explain it. I mean, I got to record in a proper studio! Everybody at Club Weld is somewhere on the autism spectrum...we have several musicians who are nonverbal yet they created this amazing music.”

Clare Brown, Club Weld musician

In a first-of-its kind project, the Opera House Access Program and Contemporary Music team collaborated with Autism Spectrum Australia music studio Club Weld to offer a two-day paid residency program during the Vivid LIVE contemporary music festival.

As part of the project, Vivid LIVE alumni artists Rainbow Chan, George Nicholas (Seekae) and Eugene Ward (Dro Carey/Tuff Sherm) mentored 12 musicians on the autism spectrum to make their own music in the Opera House’s Broadcast Studio, a project enabled by the Opera House and major donor Rae Assender.



Club Weld@Vivid LIVE. Photo by Daniel Boud.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)



Weld@Vivid LIVE. Photo by Yaya Stempler.

As part of the residency schedule, the Opera House’s professional audio engineering staff provided training on audio engineering, music production and composition, while producer Eugene Ward gave a keynote speech on living with the challenges of anxiety and depression, and how these experiences have informed his work as a professional musician.

Prior to the recording sessions, the participants were given the opportunity to undertake a Remix the House tour, which involved conducting sounds recordings or ‘samples’ from around the Opera House to use in future compositions. This involved a behind-the-scenes tour of the Opera House, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see parts of the building that are inaccessible to the general public.

From the clang of stage winches and the pattering ballerinas’ shoes to the creaking of underground seawater pumps and the Opera House Concert Hall grand organ, Remix the House produces unique musical compositions by some of the most interesting Australian producers. Using similar techniques, Club Weld musicians captured field recordings around the building to produce original musical that reflect the art, acoustics and architecture of the Opera House.

The residency produced a series of original tracks featuring sounds and atmospheric noises captured around the Opera House. The tracks produced were premiered on FBi Radio and was

later pressed to a vinyl LP. In September 2018 Club Weld announced that ABC Music was distributing Club Weld Remix the House from the Opera House to digital platforms.

The impact of the residency was summed up by Club Weld Facilitator Sam Worrada:

“Having the opportunity to record in the Sydney Opera House had a palpable impact on the musicians from Club Weld, evident in the fact that the collective was essentially able to write and record an album’s worth of material in four days. While visiting new locations can be stressful for people on the autism spectrum, the iconic nature of the Opera House provided a sense of familiarity and occasion, and allowed the musicians to quickly find a unanimity of purpose when they got down to work in the studio.

The stature of the building was matched by a sensitive and professional supporting crew who helped make the players comfortable – a critical element for any musician. Many artists with disabilities struggle to be taken seriously, and so the offer of a Vivid Residency has been a deeply positive and validating experience. A number of the musicians also gained great satisfaction from the studio sessions being pressed to a vinyl LP, which is now stocked in respected record shops in Australia and abroad.”

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Accessibility Action Plan 2020–23

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Our Mission

The Opera House belongs to everyone. As an organisation, our goal is to provide barrier-free access, making the site, building and the experiences accessible to all people.

The Accessibility Action Plan focuses on improving access across the following key pillars of the broader enterprise strategy:

1. Building
2. Experiences
3. People



Vivid LIVE Tactile Tour 2018. Photo by Daniel Boud.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Building

Physical Access

The primary strategy under this pillar is the implementation of large-scale accessibility upgrades as part of the Renewal capital works program.

As a result of these upgrades, including new accessible public lifts and passageways, the first independent accessible path of travel will be established to all front of house areas of the building and site. Patrons currently require some assisted back-of-house access.

Key features of this upgrade will also include a significant increase in the number and location of accessible wheelchair and companion seating in the Concert Hall, additional accessible bathrooms and a new graded access way at the entry to the site.

The key goal under this pillar will be achieved through the following actions, to be implemented over the next three years:



Joan Sutherland Theatre Lift Opening 2018. Photo by Daniel Boud.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Goal

1. The Opera House is an accessible building and site.

Building Initiatives

Implement accessibility improvements as part of Renewal projects. Works which begin in February 2020 will include:

The design of the Concert Hall renewal project including:

- Upgrading an existing back-of-house lift to connect the main Box Office foyer to the Concert Hall Southern Foyer.
- A new accessible passageway connecting the Concert Hall Southern and Northern Foyers.
- New wheelchair-accessible positions in various locations inside the Concert Hall.
- These works will provide an independent path of travel to and around the Concert Hall foyers and to accessible seating locations within the venue.

Other works as part of the design include:

- Accessibility upgrades to back-of-house areas.
- Reducing the level difference between the stage and anterooms, and widening the wing space and corridors to make it easier for performers to access the stage.

In addition to these works, upgrades are under way to improve access in other areas of the Opera House, including:

- Removing steps on the western side of the East Circular Quay entrance and replacing them with a ramp. There are two ramps, one being created to replace the stairs (but is not compliant) with a compliant ramp completed that goes right of the escalators round toward the Security Gatehouse.
- A new lift in the main Box Office Foyer will provide an independent path of travel in the Joan Sutherland Theatre. This will complement the new lift and passageway to the Northern Foyers which opened in November 2018.
- Upgrading the area under the Monumental Steps with new, even paving to create a lighter space and remove trip hazards.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Our Accessibility Journey – Physical Access

The nature of the building and this history has presented overwhelming challenges to improving physical access over the past two decades. This is a timeline of our past strategies and actions towards providing access for all:

2004

- Platform lift access to the Utzon Room
- Accessible toilet facilities created in the Box Office Foyer

2006

- Replacement of dated hearing loop facilities with a new FM hearing radio system installed in all venues for customers with a hearing impairment

2009

- Two new accessible unisex toilet facility in Western Foyers
- First public lift with capacity for four wheelchairs installed from Lower Concourse level to Concourse and Box Office level
- Two wheelchair stair platform lifts installed on entry to Playhouse

2015

- Sydney Opera House Access Masterplan created which includes concept designs developed to inform future building renewal access upgrades

2016

- A new Sesame lift was installed in the Bennelong restaurant entrance providing mainstream access for the first time

2017

- New hearing loop system installed in the Drama Theatre and downstairs in the Studio venue

2019

- Increase in the capacity of compliant accessible and companion seating in the Joan Sutherland Theatre
- Installation of a new accessible toilet installed in the Northern Foyer and new Function Centre
- Installation of a new public lift and passageway on the western side of the Joan Sutherland Theatre to enable wheelchair access to all levels of the Northern Foyers



Jan Utzon and Opera House Access Program Ambassador Louise Sauvage at the opening of the first public lift 2009.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Experiences

Creative Access

Under this pillar the Accessibility Action Plan is focused on three areas:

- Community Experience.
- Customer Experience.
- Artists and Audience Experience.



Dancing Connections, Utzon Room. Photo by Jacquie Manning.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Community Experience

The Opera House Access Program offers more than 75 accessible performances a year (including audio-described, live-captioned, Auslan-interpreted, autism-friendly and multi-sensory performances), as well as a range of inclusive performing arts experiences, workshops and residencies.

Over the next three years, this program will be expanded in its reach and suite of experiences to continue to bring to life the Opera House's broader mission to:

'further deepen and enrich our relationships with the community & inspire, and strengthen the community, through everything we do.'

Increasing evidence supports the idea that creative participation with the arts can make the highest contribution to overall wellbeing, social inclusion and quality of life for people of all ages.

The strong interrelationship between arts and individual and community well-being is seen as one of the key foundation of building sustainable and resilient communities. However, engagement with the arts tends to be lower among people living in circumstances of financial and social disadvantage.

In the next three years, the Access Program will focus on using performing arts experiences to help meet major challenges facing community wellbeing: ageing, chronic health conditions, social disadvantage, while building community capacity.

This includes working with:

- Refugee and migrant communities
- An ageing population and people living with chronic health conditions and dementia
- Post-school age young adults with moderate to severe disability.

To deliver on this we will broaden our existing partnerships with our community, disability and performing arts partners as well as developing new partnerships with organisations who work with these target groups in the community.

The highest quality Opera House performing arts experience will remain central to all new programs while collaboration with our partners and community will shape the nature of what we offer.

The aim is to pilot these new programs during 2020–22 with the aim to implementing a regular program schedule when a new and permanent creative space opens in 2022.

During the scheduled Concert Hall closure and associated works, the Access Program will use this opportunity to expand outreach activities into education, health and community settings, utilising the Opera House recording studio as well as digital programming options.

Our overall goal is to ensure everyone is able to experience the magic of the Opera House, no matter their ability, language, life stage, or financial and social circumstances.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Visitor Experience

The Accessibility Action Plan will look to finesse the current accessible visitor experience, both onsite and online, coinciding with the accessibility improvements to be delivered under the Renewal capital works projects.

The Plan under this area will include strategies to promote public awareness of the new accessibility arrangements and encourage more people with disability to visit and attend a performance, utilising these improved accessibility arrangements.

The focus of the Plan in this area is twofold: to empower patrons to independently access the site and performances while also strengthening the skills of front line staff to meet the needs of people with disability through personalised customer care.

This will involve researching and trialling new assistive technologies on the market to assist patrons in the areas of wayfinding, navigation and accessing live-performances, as well as developing the capability to book wheelchair accessible seats online for the first time, maintaining web accessibility compliance for planned website upgrades and offering in-depth accessibility customer service training to frontline staff.

Artist and Audience Experience

Artists with disability offer audiences unique and diverse perspectives, artistry and aesthetics.

Artists with disability have been increasingly integrated into Sydney Opera House Presents programming as audience interest in work from diverse perspectives increases.

As a major performing arts venue, the Opera House recognises the importance of enhancing its commitment to programming work by artists with disability. The Plan looks to do this in collaboration with performing arts.

The key goal under this pillar will be achieved through the following actions, to be implemented over the next three years:

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Goal

2. An innovative Access Program that allows a diverse audience to engage and benefit from all that the Opera House has on offer.

Community Experience Initiatives

- Broaden the scope of the Access Program to offer creative opportunities to sections of the community with limited access to the performing arts as well as targeting programs that deliver well-being benefits to the community through participation in the arts.
- Work with our existing Access Program partners to expand our reach into the community and explore new partnerships with groups working at ‘eye level’ with the community.

In the next three years, we will pilot the following new programs with our existing partnerships:

The Australian Ballet Education Unit

- Pilot bespoke program for school leavers with moderate to severe disability with a focus on using dance to develop skills useful for employment or general enjoyment and wellbeing.
- Pilot a bespoke combined intergenerational seniors, early years’ class, and performance program.

Dancing Connection Facilitators

- Investigate the opportunity to expand the Dancing Connections model to provide classes people living with other chronic illness.
- Live-stream Dancing Connections classes into existing regional, interstate and Asia-Pacific Dance for PD classes.

Sensorium Theatre

- Create new sensory classical music sessions ‘Classical Access’ (working title) for audiences with autism and those with complex and multiple disabilities.

New Partnerships:

- Pilot new Opera House program for people with dementia with Macquarie University Art and Dementia Program
- Pilot music residency with community development organisation LOST IN BOOKS in the Opera House Recording Studio. Support the development of diverse musical voices that celebrate languages other than English by working with emerging artists from refugee and migrant communities in South Western Sydney.
- Find a corporate partner for the Access Program to ensure the programs are sustainable with broad financial support.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Goal

2.1 A 'seamless' experience is offered through accessible customer service and event operations.

Customers with Disability

- 36% of people with disability are often treated less favourably than customers without disability.
- 28% of people with disability have experienced discrimination by one or more of the organisations they've recently interacted with.
- 1 in 3 people with disability report that their customer needs are often unmet.

Source: *The Australian Network on Disability (AND) website*
<https://www.and.org.au/>

Visitor Experience Initiatives

Online visitor experience:

- Ensure the Sydney Opera House website maintains compliance with WCAG 2.0 AA. To this end:
 - Include accessibility as a core consideration during each stage of the webpage redesign and event page template upgrade including user-testing where appropriate.
 - Incorporate a section on accessibility in the Opera House Content Management Governance document so all staff who create content for the web are aware of how to produce accessible content.
- Launch an awareness campaign to promote new Concert Hall / Renewal access upgrades, including an online video chronicling the new visitor journey and amenities.
- Update online customer information relating to the new accessibility arrangements and review flow chart of customer journey.
- Investigate options for providing online wheelchair and companion seat bookings within the existing ticketing system.

Onsite visitor experience:

- Continue investigations into installing an Adult Accessible Changing Place facility in the Western Foyers.
- Offer the Opera House Tour Guides audio-description training to develop a pool of internal audio-describers for SOH performances and events.
- Identify frontline Access Ambassadors to receive more in-depth accessibility awareness.
- Create a fact sheet resource for frontline staff on accessible customer service communication and etiquette tips as part of future customer service training.
- Trial new wayfinding, navigational, audio-description and captioning technology to enhance the visiting experience for people with sensory disabilities.
- Secure funding for the installation of a new hearing loop in the Playhouse venue to ensure all Western Theatre venues have an updated loop system.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Goal

2.3 Integrate and promote the work of artists with disability in regular programming.

Artist and Audience Experience Initiatives

- Develop accessibility initiatives within the Artistic Strategy encompassing audiences, artists and staff.
- Identify and commit to a minimum number of events per year that focus on artists, themes or audiences with different access needs.
- Work with Marketing to gain insights into the engagement and attendance patterns of people with disability at SOH performances (including accessible performances). Use these insights to inform an audience development strategy to increase audiences with disability and address any barriers to attending performances.

Creative Participation: People with Disability

- Australians with disability creatively participate in the arts at a higher rate than people without disability: 61% (with disability) to 41% (without disability)
- Attendance at arts events by Australians with disability is growing: 58% (2009) 73% (2016)
- While 49% of people with disability are in the lowest two income quintiles, they are more likely to give money to the arts 21% (of Australians with disability) donated to the arts 9% (of Australians without disability donated to the arts).
- There are ongoing barriers to connecting with the arts as an audience member, including transport, cost, physical access to venues, and accessible information about events.

Source: Australian Council's results of the National Arts Participation Survey 2009; 2013; and 2016.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

People

Workplace Access

People with disability are significantly underrepresented in Australia's workforce and the gap in employment outcomes for people with and without disabilities has widened in recent years.

Improving employment opportunities is important for enhancing the quality of life for people with disability, their families and carers.

The focus of the Accessibility Action Plan under this pillar is on building disability confidence in the workplace. This involves initiatives to encourage employees to provide information on their access requirements, feeling confident that they will be met. This will include improving engagement and support for employees with disability and enhancing employee networks.

The Plan will also look to identify a pipeline for hiring people with disability and scoping appropriate positions in the organisation for people with intellectual disability. Current recruitment processes will be reviewed to ensure access and inclusion considerations are included. These strategies will aim to have the organisation ready to focus on the recruitment of people with disability, when the Concert Hall reopens.

The key outcome areas under this pillar will be achieved through the following actions, to be implemented over the next three years:



Backstage in Biscuit Land, The Studio. Photo by Anna Kucera.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Goal

The Opera House is an inclusive workplace that advances the skills, experiences and employment of people with disability.

People Initiatives

- Invite employees with disability to an annual employee forum to form networks of peer support, identify areas for improving workplace accessibility (physical, attitudinal and communication). Accessibility Manager to convene the forum and work with relevant areas of the organisation to implement ideas and suggestions raised.
- To raise awareness and encourage open conversations about disability use International Day of People with Disability to highlight the experiences of employees with disability, as well as those who are carers, by sharing their story on InTouch.
- Investigate potential job roles and duties that could be created for a person with an intellectual disability as well as a person on the autism spectrum. Identify potential supported employment services who could recruit and support any identified roles and investigate a funding source for the role creation. Build disability confidence within the identified portfolio to support any position created.
- Work with HR to ensure access and inclusion considerations are embedded into the employment lifecycle recruitment processes currently under review, ensure the skills and experience of people with disabilities are fully recognised in the recruitment processes and vacancies are accessible to people with disability.

Employment of People with Disability

- People aged between 15 and 64 years with disability have both lower participation (53%) and higher unemployment rates (9.4%) than people without disability (83% and 4.9% respectively).
- There are 2.1 million Australians of working age with disability. Of these, just over 1 million are employed and another 114,900 are looking for work.
- Graduates with disability take 56.2 % longer to gain fulltime employment than other graduates.

Source: *The Australian Network on Disability (AND) website <https://www.and.org.au/>*

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)


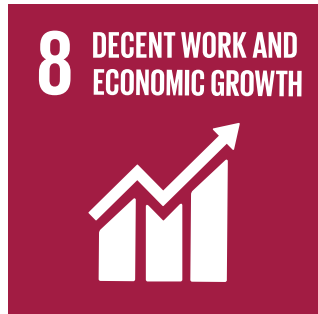
[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Aligning to the Global Goals

The Accessibility Action Plan is underpinned by the philosophy that the Opera House belongs to everyone. Our focus on inclusion and equality, in close consultation with people with disability, is fundamental to the Opera House's support of the Global Goals.

| Global Goal | Targets | Opera House Commitment | How the AAP will contribute |
|--|------------|---|--|
|  | 4.7 | The Opera House will promote quality education and learning opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broaden the scope of the Access Program to offer performing arts opportunities for school leavers with moderate to severe disability with a focus on using dance to develop skills useful for employment (refer Goal 2 – Community Experience).• Pilot new music residency in the Opera House Recording Studio for emerging artists from refugee and migrant communities in South Western Sydney – an opportunity for promoting cultural diversity and skills development (refer Goal 2 – Community Experience).• Identify frontline staff Access Ambassadors to receive more in-depth accessibility awareness training to pass down and disseminate to the Visitor Experience teams (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience).• Offer the Opera House Tour Guides audio-description training to develop a pool of internal audio-describers for the Opera House performances and events (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience). |
|  | 8.5 | The Opera House will champion diversity, and human rights in its workforce and business operations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance access and inclusion provisions in our existing recruitment processes; introduce new workplace support for existing employees with disability; and develop employment roles for employees with intellectual disability (refer Goal 3 – People). |

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)



[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

| Global Goal | Targets | Opera House Commitment | How the AAP will contribute |
|---|-------------|--|---|
|  | 10.2 | The Opera House will improve inclusion and accessibility on and off stage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop new creative community engagement opportunities for seniors, people living with dementia and people with chronic health conditions (refer Goal 2 – Community Experience).• In collaboration with the performing arts to develop access initiatives within the Artistic Strategy encompassing audience, artists and staff; identify and commit to a minimum number of events per year that focus on artists, themes or audiences with different access needs (refer Goal 2.3 – Artists and Audience Experience).• Work with Marketing Team to gather insights into the engagement and attendance patterns of people with disability at SOH performances. Use these insights to inform an audience development strategy with the goal to increase audiences with disability and address any barriers to attending performances (refer Goal 2.3 – Artists and Audience experience). |
|  | 11.7 | The Opera House will safeguard and revitalise cultural practices, heritage and sustainability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significantly improve building accessibility as part of the Opera House's Stage 1 Renewal capital works program (refer Goal 1 – Building).• Continue investigations into installing an Adult Accessible Changing Place facility in the Western Foyers (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience).• Trial new wayfinding, navigational, audio-description and captioning technology to enhance the visiting experience for people with sensory disabilities (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience).• Secure funding for the installation of a new hearing loop in the Playhouse venue to ensure all Western Theatre venues have an updated loop system (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience).• Investigate options for providing online wheelchair and companion seat bookings within the existing ticketing system (refer Goal 2.1 – Visitor Experience). |

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Global Goal

Targets

Opera House Commitment

How the AAP will contribute



17.16

The Opera House will deepen and enrich its relationships with partners.

- Work with our existing Access Program partners to expand our reach into the community and explore new partnerships with groups working at ‘eye level’ with the community (**refer Goal 2.1 – Community Access**).
- Find a corporate partner for the Access Program to ensure the programs are financially sustainable over the long-term (**refer Goal 2.1 – Community Access**).

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Consultation, Review and Monitoring

Consultation Process

Key internal and external stakeholder consultations have informed our latest Access Strategic Plan. The consultation identified remaining access barriers and explored current trends and best practice in the area of access and inclusion.

We sincerely thank the following representatives for their participation in the consultation process and their ongoing support for improving access at the Opera House:

- Dr Jane Bringolf, Liveable Communities, COTA
- Greg Killen, Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer, Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
- Kerry Comerford, CEO, Accessible Arts
- Carl Southern, St Edmunds College
- Vanessa Lucas, Giant Steps School
- Penelope Earp, Assistant Principal Wairoa SSP
- Jennifer Moon, Community Education & Access Advisor, Guide Dogs NSW
- Jaci Armstrong, Principal Policy Advisor, Guide Dogs NSW

- Julie Jones, HWWT
- Lise Clews, Deaf Awareness Trainer
- Suzanne Becker, CEO Lifestart
- Wendy Banfield, Education and Operations Manager, Physical Disability Council of New South Wales
- Members of the Physical Disability Council NSW: Michael Rabbit, Jane Scott, Glenn Redmayne, Declan Lee, Julie Duong and John Moxom
- Opera House Patrons: Kathy Charlton, Richard Lush and Lara Friedman.

The Opera House will continue to foster strong relationships and work collaboratively with our partners in the disability sector throughout the life of this plan.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)

Review, Monitoring and Update of the Plan

The Accessibility Action Plan will be monitored and implemented by the Opera House's Accessibility Manager, working with the relevant portfolios across the organisation and key external stakeholders.

Feedback from patrons, visitors and disability organisations will be sought throughout the life of the plan, as the views of people with disability will help determine the success of the plan's initiatives.

The Opera House's Chief Executive Officer will ensure that progress is reviewed and reported.

Measurement of Progress

The Accessibility Action Plan's success will be assessed against qualitative and quantitative measures, including:

- Actions successfully implemented over the life of the Plan – outputs and outcomes will be identified for each initiative to allow progress to be clearly measured.
- Progress measured against government, legislative, regulatory and compliance reporting requirements.
- Regularly engaging with the stakeholders that have been consulted and contributed to the development of the Plan to seek feedback and inform ongoing direction of the Plan.

The Plan will be registered with the Australian Disability Rights Commission and achievements will be noted in the Opera House's Annual Report.

The Plan will be available on sydneyoperahouse.com and hard copies, including copies in alternate formats (Braille, large print and easy English) can be requested from Jenny Spinak, Accessibility Manager. Her details can be found on the last page.

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)



[Previous](#)

39

[Next](#)

NAVIGATION

[Acknowledgement](#)

[Welcome](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Policy and Legislative Context](#)

[The Global Goals](#)

[What We've Achieved](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Accessibility Action Plan
2020–23](#)

[Our Mission](#)

[Building](#)

[Experiences](#)

[People](#)

[Aligning to the Global Goals](#)

[Consultation, Review
and Monitoring](#)



**The Sydney Opera House exists because
a few brave people dared to think differently
They made the impossible possible, and inspired a nation**

**And so we stand as a proud testament
to the power of dreaming in public
To the transformative potential of art and ideas**

**We expand horizons, shift perspectives and stir emotions
If you're ready for the extraordinary, we're ready for you**

For further information contact

Jenny Spinak

Accessibility Manager

jspinak@sydneyoperahouse.com

02 9250 7175