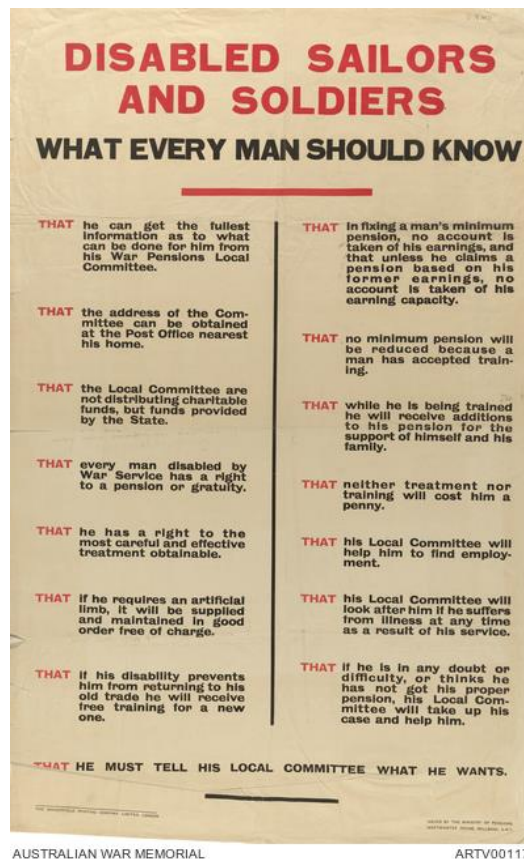# Australian War Memorial Accessibility Action Plan

'Making remembrance, learning and records relating to Australia's wartime experiences available to all.'

TABLE 1: REVISION HISTORY

Version	Author	Version Comment	Approved	Date
V 0.1 - Draft	Chris Widenbar	Initial Draft	-	August 2021
V 0.5 – Consultation Draft	Chris Widenbar	Consultation draft for SMG and Disability Working Group	-	
Draft V1.0	Chris Widenbar	Post working group input	-	May 2022
Draft V3.0	Accessibility Working Group	Updates w/AWG input included	-	June 2022
Final for CMG approval	SMG	SMG consultation input update	CMG	TBC

Cover Image: ARTV000117
Poster issued by the British Ministry of Pensions (formed 1916) to provide information to disabled returned servicemen. It consists of a listing of informative facts and statements emphasising that support is offered via the War Pension's Local Committees and that veterans must contact them to tell them what they need.

Contents

Introduction

The **Australian War Memorial (the Memorial)** assists **all** Australians to remember, interpret, and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact by maintaining, developing, and exhibiting the National Memorial and its collection, through commemorative ceremonies and research.

As part of its ongoing efforts to make these services available to all Australians, and to eliminate barriers to its sites, buildings, exhibitions, collections, the Memorial has prepared and is enacting this Accessibility Action Plan (the Plan).

Accessibility

> **"Disability resides in the society not in the person. Disability is not something that resides in the individual as the result of some impairment.**
>
> **Disability is a result of the interaction between an inaccessible environment and a person'.[1]**

The Memorial has a long history of working with veterans and their families, many of whom have suffered lasting physical and mental consequences as a result of their service. Through this long partnership, and its strong connections with people across the broader Australian community generally, the Memorial has developed a deep understanding that disability does not define people but that it can be, and often is, an integral part of who they are.

That understanding is why the Memorial has developed an Accessibility Action Plan that focuses not on 'disability' but on improving access to everything we do for all Australians, be that commemoration, exhibitions, information, employment or anything else.

We recognise that providing accessibility means removing barriers by adapting or altering our buildings, systems and services to enable all people to fully and equally participate.

The Memorial's staff and client's accessibility needs may be physical, intellectual, mental or sensory related.

We also recognise the diverse and unique range of accessibility needs of our veterans' community, including physical, sensory and psycho-social.

Accessibility Vision

The Memorial's accessibility vision is:

'Making remembrance, learning and records relating to Australia's wartime experiences available to all.'

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[1] UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/faqs.htm>

Consultation

This Plan has been developed in consultation with the Memorial's *Accessibility Working Group (Employees)* and has been informed by outcomes from the *Development Project Access and Inclusion Advisory Group*.

Members of both bodies have lived experience of disability and disability care.

Context

The Australian War Memorial combines a shrine, a world-class museum, and an extensive archive. Its purpose is to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who have died in war and operational service or who have served our nation in times of conflict. Its mission is to lead remembrance and understanding of Australia's wartime experience.

This Accessibility Action Plan aligns with the following policy, legislative and standards requirements and the Memorial's Development Project.

Australian War Memorial Corporate Priorities[2]

Priority	Accessibility Context
Deliver the Development Project, Our Continuing Story	The Development Project is a generational investment in the Memorial; improving accessibility to the Memorial's buildings, exhibitions and records is a key aim of the project.
Improve the sustainability of the Memorial to achieve its mission	*The National Disability Strategy 2021-31* (NDS) clearly outlines the advantages of building an inclusive, diverse workforce for employees, organisations and the broader community. Adapting our workforce systems to increase participation rates by workers with accessibility needs will increase the Memorial's sustainability across these avenues.
Ensure the ongoing relevance of the Memorial's vision and mission to the nation	More than four million Australians have accessibility needs, and one in three of them report that their needs as customers are frequently unmet[3]. Improving accessibility to buildings and visitor offerings including exhibitions, ceremonies and records is key to ensuring the Memorial's relevance for this large section of the nation.
Maximise the value of and access to the National Collection and military history	*Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31* (NDS) clearly outlines how improving accessibility generates increased community value through higher

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[2] Australian War Memorial Corporate Plan 2022-26
[3] The Australian Network on Disability (AND) <www.and.org.au>

participation rates and the addition of new perspectives. Adapting our systems to increase participation rates by Australians with accessibility needs will increase access to, and the value of, the National Collection through increased research opportunities, better understanding and new perspectives on Australia's wartime experiences.

Legislation

The following key legislation has been considered in development of this Plan:

Legislation	Accessibility Context
Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)	The DDA recognises the rights of people with disability to equality before the law and makes discrimination based on disability unlawful.
Commonwealth The Public Service Act 1999	The Public Service Act establishes the APS Values and APS Employment Principles that recognise and foster diversity in public service workspaces.
Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009	The Fair Work Act sets out the Memorial's obligations to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity in employment.
Australian Capital Territory Discrimination Act 1991	The Act is designed to enable people with disabilities to receive the services necessary to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as members of the community and to enable them to achieve a better quality of life including increased independence, employment opportunities and integration in the community.

Standards, Guidelines & Related Strategies

The following key standards, guidelines and other reference documents have been considered in development of this Plan:

Standard/Guidelines	Accessibility Context
Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	The Disability Standards aim to provide people with Accessibility needs with dignified and equitable access to buildings, and assist industry to comply with the DDA.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)	WCAG provides recommendations for making web content more accessible to people with accessibility needs.
Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25	The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25 is an important part of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to improving the employment outcomes for people with disability. Continuing the momentum from the previous APS disability employment strategy, this new Strategy sets out a comprehensive plan to improve the employment outcomes for people with disability. It aligns with the National Disability Strategy and reinforces the Australian Government's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31	Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is Australia's national disability policy framework. It sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over the next ten years.
Australian War Memorial – Values & Behaviours	Improving accessibility aligns with the Memorial's Culture Project aims including the embedding of our Values & behaviours across all areas of the Memorial.

Development Project

From 2019-2028 the Memorial is undertaking major works to modernise and expand our galleries and buildings to tell the continuing story of Australia's contemporary contribution to a better world. In doing so, we will connect the spirit of our past, present and future for generations to come.

While there will be inevitable disruption during this time, by 2028 the new designs will improve physical, intellectual, mental and sensory accessibility to better allow visitors to explore our exhibitions, create improved spaces for education programs, and will include accessible areas for personal reflection, functions and public programs.

The project includes a new southern entrance, a new Anzac Hall and glazed link, new gallery fit-outs in the main building creating additional exhibition galleries, an extension to the CEW Bean Building to house a new research centre and Reading Room, and Parade Ground and landscaping works to accommodate increased attendance at events. The iconic façade of the sandstone building, Commemorative Area housing the Roll of Honour, Pool of Reflection and Hall of Memory, will not change.

Action Plan

The Plan is based on the 10 'Key Areas' identified by the Australian Network on Disability where change can have the greatest positive impact on those with disability:

1. Commitment
2. Premises
3. Workplace Adjustments
4. Communication & Marketing
5. Products & Services
6. ICT
7. Recruitment & Selection
8. Career Development
9. Suppliers & Partners
10. Innovation

2022-25 Focus Areas

Whilst improvements are identified in all Key Areas this plan focuses on *Commitment, Premises, Products & Services* and *Recruitment & Selection* as our initial accessibility improvement priorities.

Commitment

Any effective change to disability outcomes begins with a clear and active commitment to best practice for accessibility and inclusion for all people with disability.

Through this Plan the Memorial commits to making improved disability outcomes an organisational priority and, importantly, to ensuring that it does so by actively listening to and working with people with disability.

Activities in this focus also support the broader government initiatives in *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31* in seeking to make Australia a more inclusive and accessible society generally.

Premises

With more than one million visitors a year, including many with physical, intellectual, mental or sensory disabilities, the Memorial is one of Australia's most visited public buildings. Ensuring that not only the Main Memorial Building but all physical facilities and sites operated at both the Campbell and Mitchell Precincts are inclusive, safe and accessible for visitors and the workforce is critical to the ongoing relevance and use of the Memorial.

The focus in this accessibility stream is on mitigating the impacts of the Development Project on the accessibility of the Campbell Precinct during construction works from 2021-

24 and on ensuring that these works, when complete, enhance accessibility and support future accessibility initiatives.

Products & Services

The Memorial delivers 'products and services' such as exhibitions, publications, ceremonies, education programs and records access in order to facilitate its role as a 'shrine, a museum and an archive'.

Ensuring that as many of these 'products and services' as possible are available to all Australians is at the heart of this Plan and initiatives in this focus area seek to improve accessibility on-site and online in particular.

This focus area also establishes initiatives to improve awareness of existing accessibility options at the Memorial, such as automatic closed captioning on our Last Post Ceremony YouTube channel or the availability of AUSLAN options on our digital tour guide application.

Recruitment & Selection

Working-age people with disability are more likely to be unemployed or under-employed than those without disability. They are also more likely to be unemployed or under-employed for longer[4]. Creating a more diverse, inclusive and accessible workplace has proven productivity and community benefits including increased engagement, diversity in problem solving and enhanced teamwork[5].

Workplace accessibility is also important for the Memorial's volunteer workforce and they are included in the terms 'employee' and 'workforce' within this plan.

Initiatives in this area focus on diversifying the Memorial's workforce and building disability confidence across the organisation to deliver improved support for those with accessibility needs as part of overall organisational capacity building ahead of the late 2024 opening of newly delivered buildings and galleries under the Development Project.

This activity stream also supports the broader *Australian Public Service (APS) Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25* goal of having employees with disability making up not less than 7% of the APS workforce.

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[4] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/unemployment>

[5] NSW Health Department, <www.health.nsw.gov.au/workforce/dib/Pages/disability-inclusiveness-employee.aspx>

Leadership, Outcomes and Governance

Leadership

The Assistant Director, Branch Head Corporate Services is the executive sponsor of this plan.

The Deputy Project Director (Development Project) will lead the initial establishment, governance and reporting of this Plan in 2022 and transition action plan activities to the Memorial's Annual Business Plan for ongoing action and reporting from 2023.

The Memorial will promote the Plan and share information on our progress internal and external stakeholders throughout the life of the plan.

Outcomes

The success of this Plan will be measured through use of the Australian Network on Disability *'Access and Inclusion Index'* assessment.

An initial baseline will be set by undertaking this assessment in 2022-23 and then again in 2024-25 with the overall target being a 40% improvement in the Memorial's assessment score by the final year of the Plan.

Each accessibility initiative is also linked to immediate *Indicators* for FY22-23 and longer term goals for FY23-25 to provide interim measurement of progress.

Governance

The Deputy Project Director (Development Project) will report to the Corporate Management Group on the outcomes of this Plan quarterly until end 2022 and establishment of permanent governance arrangements.

The Director will report to the Council of the Australian War Memorial (the Council) on the outcomes of this plan annually.

At the end of the Plan's life the Memorial will publish an update outlining progress against all indicators and changes in its overall Australian Network on Disability *'Access and Inclusion Index'* assessment online.

Accessibility Action Plan 2022-25

Key Area	Goal(s)	Initiatives	FY22-23 Indicators	FY23-25 Indicator(s)
Commitment	Ensure persons with disabilities are consulted genuinely and effectively on matters that impact them	Advisory/Working Groups	• AWM Development Project Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group meets twice/year • Memorial's Accessibility Working Group (Employees) meets at least once/year to review the Disability Action Plan and outcomes	• AWM Development Project Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group meets twice/year • Memorial's Accessibility Working Group (Employees) meets at least once/year to review the Disability Action Plan and outcomes
Commitment	Ensure that the Memorial develops, delivers and measures data based accessibility outcomes	Benchmarking Regular use of the Australian Network on Disability's 'Access and Inclusion Index' benchmarking tool to evaluate the effectiveness of this Plan and identify areas for improvement	• Complete the Australian Network on Disability's 'Access and Inclusion Index' assessment and set 'baseline' score	• At least a 40% overall improvement to 'Access and Inclusion Index' assessment score by 30 June 2025

Commitment	Increase awareness of veterans with disability and the impact of service on many who have served	Veterans' Disability Awareness Week Conduct a veterans' disability awareness week during the next Invictus Games event	N/A	• At least one disability related public program held on-site • Encourage staff to attend or volunteer in support of disability program or activities at the Memorial • At least one veterans' disability advocacy address to staff
Premises	Accessibility Improvements Remediate existing physical accessibility constraints, particularly within the 80 year old Main Memorial Building.	Development Project – DDA Compliance Improvements The project sees the overdue replacement of the current non-compliant lift with a new DDA solution for access to Level 3 of the Commemorative Area. Maintaining accessible access to these key features during construction is a critical outcome.	• N/A	• Deliver accessibility improvements to the Main Memorial Building through construction of the Southern Entrance and New Anzac Hall including increased availability of rest/respite areas and seating in new buildings • Deliver accessibility improvements to records and research facilities through construction of the new CEW Bean Building Research Centre

Premises	Mitigate the impact of Development Project construction works on building accessibility through 2021-24.	Maintain accessible access to the Memorial Main Building during construction works	• Current First and Second World War galleries accessibility outcomes not compromised as indicated by <5% reduction in visitor experience survey outcomes relating to accessible services during construction works	• Current First and Second World War galleries accessibility outcomes not compromised as indicated by <5% reduction in visitor experience survey outcomes relating to accessible services during construction works
		Maintain DDA access to the Hall of Memory and Rolls of Honour during lift replacement	• Install stair lifter to provide access from Level 2 to Level 3 in the Commemorative area • Consult on and develop an accessibility management plan for the stair lifter	• Ensure minimum 90% availability of stair lifter until completion of new DDA systems as part of Development Project • < 10% increase in complaints relating to Commemorative Area accessibility during construction works

Premises	Balance heritage and accessibility requirements.	Heritage Self-Assessment Documentation Improve internal processes to better identify accessibility impacts of works assessed under the Heritage Management Plan to ensure appropriate balance between conservation of heritage values and meeting of accessibility requirements for any future changes.	• Update AWM *'Self-Assessment of a Proposed Action'* form to include an accessibility impact section	• Ensure consideration of *2022 Heritage Management Plan* **S5.5.3 Site Use – Accessibility** in any development is undertaken and clearly documented via self-assessment form
Workplace Adjustments	Improve AWM workplace adjustment systems and offers for staff	Introduce a formal workplace adjustment assessment process and policy for employees with existing or acquired disability	• N/A	• Process developed and in place
Communications & Marketing	Embed accessible principles and representation in Memorial communications	Improve accessibility of communications/marketing services with a focus on visitor information	• Create an *Accessibility for Visitors* guide in accessible format(s) and publish prominently on AWM website • Create an internal best practice	• Increase in % of communications/marketing material and visitor information (incl. for major events) available in accessible format(s) and/or new languages

			'language guide' for staff • Include an 'accessibility requirements' option in all AWM event invites • Include an 'accessibility requirements' option on all AWM entry tickets	
		Increased representation of disability diversity in published content	• N/A	• Increase in % of communications/marketing material featuring accessibility information • Increase in % of communications/marketing material featuring people with disability
Products & Services	Improve the on-site experience for visitors with accessibility needs	Raise awareness and openness about servicing people with accessibility needs for front of house staff and those developing public programs including exhibitions and ceremonies	• N/A	• Provide at least one annual talk/presentation by people with lived experience of disability or disability support to all staff servicing visitors

		Increased availability and awareness of accessibility support for public programs	• Promote existing AUSLAN supported tour opportunities through *Accessibility for Visitors Guide*	• Live Auslan interpreter on audience screens for Remembrance Day and Anzac Day • Provide descriptive tour training to selected CVE staff
		Investigate portable/temporary hearing assistance (T-Loop etc.) system for major ceremonies	• N/A	• Portable/temporary hearing assistance system at Remembrance Day and Anzac Day events
		Highlights Audio Tour (HAT) Increase use and suitability of HAT system for visitors w/audio access requirements or non-native English speakers	• Make Highlights Audio Tour available to free for visitors w/audio access requirements	• Assess Highlights Audio Tour for further inclusions ie. descriptive tour option or additional languages
Products & Services	Improve the online experience for users with accessibility needs	Website Accessibility Continue the 2022 website upgrade program including adoption and implementation of WCAG 2.1 over current WCAG2.0 compliance	• % increase in WCAG2.1 compliant web pages • % increase in WCAG2.1 compliant social media posts • Annual third party compliance check of	• % increase in WCAG2.1 or WCAG3.0 compliant web pages • % increase in WCAG2.1 or WCAG3.0 compliant social media posts • % increase in PDF documents available in

| | | Develop web content writing training material – in the form of a mandatory training course for web content writers/authors.

Develop Content Management System automated tooling to identify and flag potential accessibility compliance issues when authoring content, prior to publishing.

Progressively improve the a11y compliance of legacy content within the AWM website | website at conclusion (via a11yproject.com partner)
• Annual System Usability Survey (SUS) at conclusion of 2022 program to assess outcomes. | screen reader friendly HTML formats through a dedicated annual accessibility publishing budget
• % net decrease in accessibility issues found using the memorial's website accessibility tool (Monsido)
• Web content staff training course implemented
• % improvement between annual third party a11yproject and SUS survey results and prior years |
| | | Develop a common whole of organisation minimum accessibility requirement for National Collection digitisation programs | • N/A | • Requirement developed and implemented in all future digitisation efforts |

ICT	Make greater use of automated closed captioning services	Adopt or improve automated Closed Captioning services for meetings, Last Post Ceremony videos and public programs	• Update website & YouTube channel description to improve awareness of existing Last Post Ceremony closed caption offer • Ensure closed captioning is enabled by default for video based meetings and public programs such as Zoom, WebEx	• Offer video streaming or recording with closed captioning for public programs such as lectures, launches or education programs
Recruitment & Selection	Attract and recruit more people with disability in the Memorial's workforce to support the overall NDS 2021-31 goal of 7% of employees with disability in the APS.	Build employment accessibility needs confidence across through increased learning and development resources	• % increase in staff completing *APS Building Disability Confidence* training module	• % increase in staff completing *APS Building Disability Confidence* training module • *APS Building Disability Confidence* training module is mandated as part of induction/training requirements for managers

		Review recruitment processes to improve access and inclusion provisions including providing training to interviewers in interviewing people with accessibility needs.	• N/AN/A	• % increase of staff identifying as having a disability • % increase in *RecruitAbility* supported applications and interviews • Provide accessible versions of all documents relating to employment opportunities online as a default and expand *RecruitAbility* page on AWM Website
Career Development	Retain more people with disability in the Memorial's workforce to support the overall NDS 2021-31 goal of 7% of employees with disability in the APS.	Offer mentor and leadership training to current staff with disabilities to allow them to provide support to new staff with disability to improve retention and create an internal support network	• Increased retention rates and average duration of service for employees with disability	• Increased retention rates and average duration of service for employees with disability
		Remove internal barriers to retention through increased awareness of, and comfort with, employees with disability across the organisation	• % increase of staff completing APS Disability Awareness Learning Module	• % increase of staff completing APS Disability Awareness Learning Module • Increased representation of disability in corporate documents such as the

				Year in Review, Corporate Chatter and planning documents
Suppliers & Partners	Increased procurement sourced from social enterprises	**Social Procurement** Within the Commonwealth Procurement Framework seek to increase the Memorial's procurement of services sourced from social enterprises (who employ Australians with disabilities) or who have implemented disability support programs for their own employees.	• N/A	• Develop a standard social enterprise criteria (including veterans' engagement) and scoring system for inclusion in AWM tenders over $7.5m
Innovation	Improve availability, number and type of Accessible Museum Experiences on-site and online	Seek advice from AWM Development Project Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group on innovative accessible museum ideas and experiences for new gallery spaces	• Trial accessibility friendly tours and times for differing types of needs • AWM Development Project Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group meets twice/year	• Offer permanent accessibility friendly tours or times for different needs • AWM Development Project Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group meets twice/year • # of new accessible experiences included as part of Development Project exhibitions