

# NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

CHARTER OF  
OPERATIONS  
2008/09

December 2008

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) is to increase the understanding of the Australian people – their identity, history, creativity and culture – through portraiture.

To achieve its purpose the NPG will:

- develop a representative collection of high quality portraits of subjects who have made a major impact upon Australia;
- enhance the cultural value of portraiture through access, display, exhibition, research and interpretation;
- make a wide range of high quality portraits accessible to the public through strongly focussed and innovative exhibitions, displays and via the internet;
- foster enquiry, research, discussion and interpretation of portraiture and undertake programs that reflect the culture, history and diversity of Australia.

**New Building**

In late 2008, the NPG moved into its own, new, purpose designed and constructed building, located on King Edward Terrace, in the Parliamentary zone, adjacent to the High Court of Australia. The new building provides greater opportunities for the NPG to show more of its collection, present more diverse and stimulating programs and events and enhanced visitor services.

**The NPG will provide national leadership within the broader collections sector by:**

- Building relationships with the museum sector in Australia and internationally through collaboration on exhibitions, supporting exchanges and staging and participating in national and international conferences.
- The NPG Director will participate in the biannual forum of international Portrait Gallery Directors.

**The NPG will work collaboratively with other national collecting institutions to explore operational efficiencies through shared services by:**

- Working through the Heads of Cultural Institutions (HOCI) to develop a strategic approach to common collection policy and operational issues, including storage, preservation and digitisation.
- Working with the Corporate Management Forum of the Commonwealth Cultural, Collecting and Exhibiting Agencies to explore and implement opportunities for ongoing cooperation between member agencies with regard to corporate services and other areas of common interest.
- Working with the Commonwealth Collecting Institutions: Public Program Working Group to explore issues and opportunities that will inform and enhance current programming development and delivery and avoid duplication.

**The NPG will jointly agree on the parameters of its collecting with national collecting institutions and avoid overlap by:**

- Having a clearly defined and understood collection development policy and associated implementation strategies, including the commissioning of portraits where appropriate.
- Working through HOCI to develop a strategic approach to common collection acquisition issues and to avoid areas of potential overlap.

**The NPG will develop frameworks and strategies in conjunction with other national collecting institutions around common areas of collection management by:**

- Having regard to the findings and recommendations in the Australian National Audit Office report Safe and Accessible National Collections 2004 in developing, maintaining and providing access to its collection
- Working through established networks covering Registration, Conservation, Security and Facilities Management to develop, implement and promote strategies that improve the safe and

appropriate care of collections.

**The NPG will ensure the widest possible access to collections through the development of exhibitions including touring exhibitions, and education and public programs by:**

Researching and mounting an innovative and diverse exhibitions program across various media focussing on aspects of Australian identity and history in the field of portraiture. Exhibitions and other significant activities and events planned for 2008/09 include:

- The Inaugural Hang (3 December 2008 to 1 March 2009 (coincides with the opening of the new building in December 2008))
  - Comprised of portraits from the NPG's own collection, and supplemented with loans from other galleries, museums, and libraries in Australia and overseas.
- *My Favourite Australian* (3 December 2008 to 1 March 2009)
  - A joint initiative with the ABC, *My Favourite Australian* invited the Australian public to actively develop this exhibition by voting for their favourite Australians.
- *Open Air – Portraits in the Landscape* (3 December 2008 – 1 March 2009)
  - As the new Gallery opens it is timely to mount an exhibition exploring a range of Australian portraits – depictions of named individuals – the sitters of which are purposely situated in a place of particular significance.
- *Vanity Fair Portraits: Photographs 1914-2007* (12 June - 30 August 2009)
  - Curated by the National Portrait Gallery, London, *Vanity Fair Portraits* traces the birth and evolution of photographic portraiture in the twentieth century, through the archives of Vanity Fair magazine.
- *The National Photographic Portrait Prize* (20 March – 24 May 2009)
  - An annual event intended to promote the very best in contemporary photographic portraiture by both professional and aspiring Australian photographers.
- A series of multimedia exhibitions in the purpose built multimedia galleries (under development)
- Travelling *The National Photographic Portrait Prize* exhibition to state and regional venues (under development)
- An active schools education program and public learning program presented through a diverse range of delivery modes - in the exhibition galleries, the education studio, through publications and online.
- Continuing to develop and tour exhibitions to a diversity of states and major regional centres as resources permit.
- Providing access to works of art through loans, partnerships, and joint ventures.
- Increasing access to works of art not on display through publications and online programs.

**The NPG will ensure the widest possible access to the collection by undertaking partnerships with other Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government agencies by:**

- Building partnerships and collaborating with relevant agencies with regard to exhibitions, loans programs and events.

**The NPG will engage strategically with the Australian Government and Cultural Ministers Council key initiatives by:**

- Assisting the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (the Department) as appropriate with the development of a framework for the repatriation on non-Australian Indigenous ancestral remains.
- Actively engaging with the Collections Council of Australia through its key programs, initiatives

and products as appropriate.

- Continuing to work cooperatively with the Minister, the Department and other portfolio agencies to effectively fulfil the NPG's role. This will include:

Fully informing the Minister and the Department in a timely manner of the NPG's activities and of any significant events relating to the NPG's business;

Responding to requests from the Minister's office; and

Finalisation and implementation of the NPG's 2008/11 Corporate Plan.

**The NPG will undertake activities that will develop stronger links with the broader creative and educational sectors and assist them to develop and grow by:**

- Contributing to public debate and discussion to benefit the broader creative sector.
- Staging the *National Youth Self Portrait Prize* (an annual event intended to promote the very best self-portraiture by young Australians).
- Collaborating and consulting with artists and arts communities, particularly in relation to cultural sensitivities.
- Developing a national outreach art education program for delivery to the primary education sector.