

Demonstrating a commitment to Disability and Inclusion Access and Community Engagement frameworks at Gertrude

Supported by duty of care protocols that inform, guide and govern the organisation's engagement with all people regardless of cultural background, gender identity, sexuality, income, or disability; Gertrude outlines in this commitment the steps embedded to support inclusive and equitable access to opportunities in leadership, employment and program engagement with Gertrude.

Importantly, this approach should be sustainable, with mechanisms for accountability and improvement – through consultation, decision-making and governance – to support meaningful and genuine relationships and partnerships at all levels of the organisation. Embracing the principle *nothing about us without us*, which originates from the Disability Rights community, Gertrude understands that d/Deaf and Disabled knowledge and expertise are central to good access work.

Gertrude's Disability and Inclusion Access and Community Engagement frameworks are developed and informed by the values and strategic approaches of Creative Australia, Creative Victoria, and peak body Arts Access Victoria, as well as identifying best practice sector models including services provision and creative output at Arts Project Australia, and Arts House Melbourne's Shaping Access approach.

Gertrude's commitment is to co-author a robust, meaningful, and actionable Disability and Inclusion Access Plan that creates a culture and experience of inclusivity for d/Deaf and Disabled people and the intersections and experiences of creatives and audiences.

The next steps to developing a comprehensive Disability and Inclusion Access Plan, including community consultation with program partners Arts Project Australia, and engaging expert guidance and assessment from peak body Arts Access Victoria, as well as ongoing development opportunities for Gertrude staff and leadership.

Gertrude Strategic Plan 2024 to 2027

The Gertrude Strategic Plan 2024 to 2027 outlines the organisation's vision to be the leading contemporary art organisation in Australia supporting the creation and presentation of new work across its exhibition and studio programs. Ensuring that all artists remain at the very centre of our work, with Gertrude supporting creative career development and contemporary visual art practice as an important contributor in a global network of contemporary arts organisations, includes prioritising principles of equitable access for all artists and audiences.

Artistic Commitment

Implementing the following initiatives supports improved opportunity for artists and audiences of all lived experiences to the programming and artistic development opportunities Gertrude enables and facilitates:

- Continue a standing commitment to increasing opportunities for d/Deaf and Disabled artists to participate in exhibition programming
- Continue to support and strengthen the Gertrude Studio Program and artistic programs to reflect experience and authorship by all people regardless of cultural background, gender identity, sexuality, income, or disability
- Continue to advocate for the Gertrude Studio Program, ensuring the experience of the program is enriching for the artists who participate, and improve avenues for accessing the opportunity each year
- Elevate imaginative, inclusive programming that reinforces the creative power of artists with disability
- Engage and seek community advice in the development and presentation of specific projects or works, with specific approaches and input by individual communities recommended and at times facilitated by key project or artistic partners.

The inclusion of audience members onsite and online is prioritised in the following ways:

- Signage and verbal advisement to indicate the presence and context of access pathways to programs, events and materials
- Signage and acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which Gertrude Contemporary and Gertrude Glasshouse stand, and acknowledgment or Welcome to Country proceedings at the beginning of all formal programming
- Ongoing training and development of staff to ensure a welcoming and comfortable experience for audiences and artists
- Respecting and being led by the artworks, artistic practices, and the contexts and interpretations provided by d/Deaf or Disabled artists for their own artistic representations and practices
- Seeking opportunities for critical writing, interpretation and audience experiences of artworks from audiences from all communities and with intersections of lived experiences.

Operational Commitment

Gertrude is committed to increasing opportunity for leadership and participation at all levels of the organisation and to taking steps to ensure that the organisation better reflects and represents the communities that Gertrude works with and in service of. The Directors and Board actively work to embed opportunities for d/Deaf and Disabled artists, and artists with intersections of experience. This commitment recognises that systemic change requires ongoing attention, time and perseverance, as well as structural capacity for self-reflection, and the long-term maturation of relationships with communities.

Gertrude is committed to increasing and embedding opportunities for engagement with in its organisational structure including leadership and employment pathways:

- Operating within the Social Model of Disability, Gertrude focuses on dismantling societal barriers and fostering inclusion through solidarity and Disability Justice, and plans long-term to embed access and inclusion leadership of the organisation through representation on the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership of Gertrude
- Gertrude's Disability and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), after consultation and development, will outline a comprehensive four-year strategy embedding access across its operations
- Pursue targeted infrastructure enhancements and proactively seek opportunities for physical, sensory, and digital accessibility upgrades
- Embed access costs to ensure activity budgets include allowance for access services—interpreters, audio desc., captioning, etc.
- Support d/Deaf and Disability-led activities in consultation with specific project partners, and accessible design initiatives which incorporate physical, sensory, and digital accessibility—for example universal entrances, quiet zones, touch signage, livestreaming, and automated captioning
- Ensuring transparency and accountability through regular implementation updates and an annual all-staff review, creating regular opportunity for input and improvement
- Undertake ongoing training for staff, board and studio artists, and providing dedicated time for self-assessment and identifying key areas for improvement year-on-year
- Introduce methods and structures for embedding core equity principles in decision-making, which in turn will support programming and audience engagement activities
- Building capacity in Gertrude staff to offer and strengthen access and inclusion initiatives
- Promoting a vision of a fair, connected and creative nation, where the contributions of d/Deaf and Disabled people are embraced across all cultural arenas
- Draws upon practical guidance for accessible research and fieldwork, emphasising inclusion and anti-discrimination.

Community Consultation

- Community Co-design: Involve d/Deaf and Disabled individuals in planning, implementation, and evaluation of access initiatives
- Transparently share updates, including in accessible formats, and ongoing invitations for input
- Engage in partnerships with organisations like AAV for training, consultation, and infrastructure support.

Guiding protocols, policies and regulations

In the continuous review and improvement of Gertrude's approach to maturing competency with Disability and Inclusion Access initiatives, frameworks for engagement, resources, guiding principles with collaborative authorship and input are referenced as best practice standards and benchmarks for Gertrude's organisational capacity building.

These references include but are not limited to:

Title	Source
Raw Law	Arts Access Victoria and Arts Law Centre of Australia
National Cultural Policy— <i>Revive</i> : a place for every story, a story for every place	Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts – Office for the Arts
<i>Equity: the Arts and Disability Associated Plan</i> (2024–2028), aimed at transforming access and equity in arts practices, institutions, and funding. An initiative under Australia's Cultural Policy, <i>Revive</i>	Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts – Office for the Arts
Creative Australia and Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) 2025, <i>Creative Workforce Scoping Study Report: Addressing the challenges with critical skills and sustainable careers</i> .	Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) and Creative Australia
Beyond Access: the creative case for inclusive arts	Arts Access Victoria
Disability and Inclusion Access Plan	Arts House Melbourne

Commitment from Leadership

Gertrude wishes to acknowledge that this is a living document. As protocols evolve and the organisation's competency matures, this document will evolve to recognise these shifts, and is an approach supported and led by the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership of the organisation.

Framework Update Period	Within 12 months and additional reviews as required
Next review due:	August 2027