

# Engagement Strategy



The National Library of Australia acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples – the First Australians – as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

## Purpose

In accordance with the *National Library Act 1960*, the Library collects and preserves documentary resources, particularly relating to Australia and the Australian people, so Australians can discover, learn, and create new knowledge, now and in the future.

## Mission

We connect with communities and connect communities with their national collections.

## Engagement Strategy Goal

The National Library provides rich experiences for those able to visit our heritage building in Canberra: Reading Room access to our 10 million item collection; exhibitions drawn from our own and other collections; our Australian focused Bookshop; and events and programming for visitors young and old.

However, the vast majority of the national community we serve lives far from the Library building, and the overwhelming majority of current engagement with the Library is via digital channels.

While continuing our onsite excellence, we will accelerate opening up the Library's collections and experiences to a dispersed and diverse Australian community. We will make access to our collections and experiences more equitable, and lower barriers for all Australians, so that they can explore and use the collections more easily, independently, enjoyably and meaningfully.

## How we will engage the community

The Library receives over 30 million visits annually, through onsite services, our website and social media presences, learning webinars, online programming, expert reference services, collection copy services, our Digital Classroom – our principal offering for school-aged Australians – and our award-winning publications, drawing out new stories from our collections. Through Trove, Australians can connect independently with the Library's own digital collection, and digital collections from hundreds of Trove partners across Australia.

The Library will continue offering and deepening this range of engagement opportunities and – to the extent that resources permit – find new opportunities to reach under-served communities.

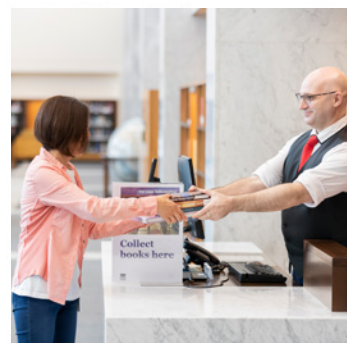
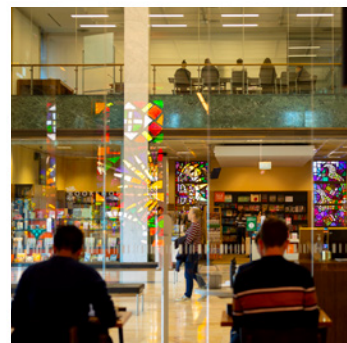
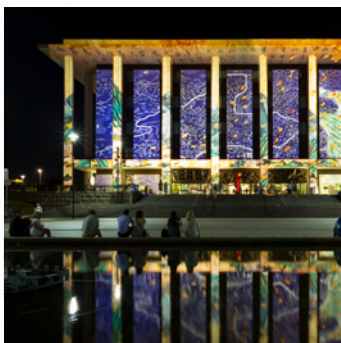
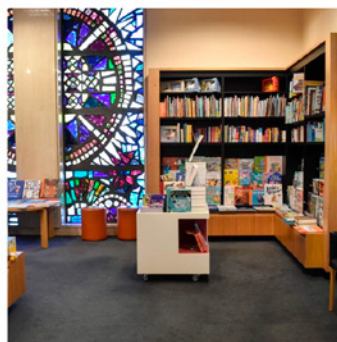
Australia is home to the world's oldest living cultures, and today is a vibrant, multicultural country reflecting many stories and experiences. To increase engagement with and contributions from Australians of all communities and of all ages, we will focus on three specific community groups:

- **Regional, Rural and Remote Australians** to support equitable access to national cultural information, resources and experiences. While we know that Australians living in regional, rural and remote areas are already well-represented among our digital community, we aim to improve access through large-scale digitisation of our collections. Our Treasured Voices philanthropic campaign, supported by Australian Government funding progresses this goal. Many of the collections we are digitising are directly related to life on the land, and in rural communities.
- **First Nations Australians** to build on our commitment to reconciliation and to collaboration, and in acknowledgement that our collections are rich sources for First Nations communities reconnecting with or deepening connection to language, culture and country. The Library is simultaneously focused on further enriching collections relevant to First Nations Australians. Our Indigenous Engagement Section – established in 2020 – guides our work in engaging respectfully and in culturally appropriate ways with First Nations peoples.

- **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse** people to ensure our collection and services reflect a community which is increasingly diverse, with more than one-quarter of all Australians speaking a language other than English at home. The Library is also committed to ensuring our collecting reflects community diversity, with targeted collecting campaigns with specific CALD communities.

**In aiming to better serve these and the broader communities, we will:**

1. **Increase awareness** of what the Library offers, so that more Australians know about and are motivated to use the Library's services. At an operational level, this will include a focus on digital marketing campaigns and improving the search engine optimisation for our website. At a strategic level, we will identify and develop strategic promotional partnerships.
2. **Increase access** by creating new pathways into the collections that enhance the user experience. We will improve our website accessibility and simplify our communication, making it easier to engage with. We will continue to improve access and inclusion across all Library services, both onsite and digital, for people with disability.
3. **Increase connection** with the contemporary Australian community by engaging in new conversations, building new connections and deepening existing relationships. In 2023, we will deliver a major exhibition on Australians' experience of migration (including online and outreach activity) and use our exhibitions to explore new opportunities for community participation across audiences of all ages.



**To achieve our aims, we will ensure our thinking, decisions and actions are:**

- **Digital first** – recognising that not every Australian can visit the Library in Canberra and that more Australians are connecting with the Library digitally;
- **Audience-centred** – ask, and act on what users want and expect from their National Library;
- **Data-driven** – we will embed analysis, data and reasoning into our decision-making processes; and
- **Tactical and practical** – we recognise that specific approaches will be required for the different audience segments that the Library serves, across geographic, cultural and age demographics.

The pandemic has seen a shift and acceleration of a combination of onsite and digital activities. We are investing less in onsite activities, by reducing the number of onsite events which primarily benefit a Canberra based audience.

We will invest more in digital activities, for example, learning webinars and online programming and building on our Digital Classroom to take to a broader audience. We will invest more in digital capability, to ensure that our messages reach audiences wherever they are and whenever they are ready.

We will invest more in visiting, listening to and working actively with specific communities around the country including, for First Nations communities, *on country*. We will measure our success through a range of robust quantitative and qualitative metrics in a culturally safe manner.

