



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE  
VISUAL ARTS



# NAVA Disability Action Plan

January 2025–December 2027

## Acknowledgement of Country

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is a national organisation with staff who work across multiple states. The NAVA Board, and the artists, arts workers and organisations that we represent are based across hundreds of sovereign nations and unceded lands throughout the continent that has become colonially known as Australia.

NAVA acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians and knowledge-holders of the unceded lands on which we live, learn, and work. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first artists and storytellers on this continent and pay respect to First Nations communities' ancestors and Elders. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



## Artist acknowledgement

Installation view of *Unsolicited Advice!* by NAVA Member Amy Claire Mills. This work has been developed over a lifetime of navigating awkward and often invasive, unsolicited advice the artist receives because she is disabled.

Extracts from these conversations have been sewn into vibrant quilts and cushions with which the audience is invited to interact. The artworks critique these interactions, amplifying all the cliché and thoughtless advice disabled people are accustomed to receiving — the absurdity of society's compulsion to rescue, change, or fix disabled people.

The installation view is from a solo exhibition at Firstdraft, Sydney in 2021. Photograph by Zan Wimberley.

# Introduction from our Executive Director

I acknowledge the Gadigal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I am grateful to live and work and pay my respects to all First Nations communities' ancestors and Elders.

I am proud to introduce the National Association for the Visual Arts' first Disability Action Plan (DAP). This plan reflects our deep commitment to upholding the high standards set out in the Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design (the Code).

The Code, which has recently been restructured and significantly expanded, now begins with a chapter that addresses Principles, Ethics, and Rights. This reflects the industry's growing focus on justice, access, fair work, and representation - values that are core to NAVA's mission. As we advocate for the rights and voices of artists and arts workers, it is essential that we embody these principles within our own organisation and in our partnerships. This means ensuring equitable treatment, professional pay, and the adoption of good practices throughout NAVA's work.

NAVA's Disability Action Plan is a living document, one that will continuously evolve as we learn, adapt, and respond to the needs and rights of NAVA's community. We recognise that access and inclusion are not static goals, but ongoing processes that require active listening, feedback, and a willingness to be flexible. We are committed to maintaining open conversations with d/Deaf and Disabled people and implementing responsive practices reflecting their experiences and rights.

The arts have long been a catalyst for progressive social change, inspiring and energising communities to take action. At NAVA, we believe it is our responsibility to lead by example and to inspire the arts sector to embrace positive change. By maintaining this Disability Action Plan, we aim to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and just environment within the arts, and to contribute to the broader movement for social change.



**Penelope Benton**  
Executive Director, NAVA

# Who we are

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is the peak advocacy body for visual arts, craft and design. NAVA brings together the many voices of the contemporary arts sector to improve the fundamental conditions of work and practice. We achieve this through advocacy, education and the Code of Practice – ensuring that the arts is sustainable, equitable and ethical.

NAVA's central piece of work is the Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design (the Code). Through the Code, NAVA collaborates with the sector to set good practice approaches to working relationships, ethical standards of access and inclusion, and payment rates for artists and arts workers.

Since its establishment in 1983, NAVA has played a pivotal role in shaping industry standards, as well as policies and legislation to foster the growth, professionalism and recognition of the industry.

Our network comprises over 50,000 artists, arts workers, galleries, arts organisations and industry bodies, with roughly 4,500 paid Members. According to NAVA's 2024 login survey, 7% of Members self-identified as a person with disability.

Approximately 67% of our core funding is derived from Membership fees. The tiers of Membership give access to Opportunities and Guides pages and also include discounted insurance for artists, craft practitioners, designers, conservators, installers, registrars, curators and arts administrators. NAVA has a national reach, with the majority of Members based in New South Wales (40%) and Victoria (28%) followed by Queensland (12%), Western Australia (7%), Tasmania (5%), South Australia (4%), Australian Capital Territory (4%) and Northern Territory (1%).

NAVA is composed of a small and nimble team of eight staff members, three of whom are working full-time. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the NAVA team worked remotely from various lands belonging to the Gadigal, Wangal, Dharug, Dharawal, Gundungurra, Ngunnawal, Ngambri, Dja Dja Wurrung and Kurna peoples. In June 2022, we moved our head office into the City of Sydney Creative Studios, based on Gadigal land.

# Terminology

NAVA's Code of Practice follows the social model of disability, which describes disability as a social construct, and the result of interaction between people living with disability and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. These barriers must change or be removed for people with disability to participate on an equal basis with others. NAVA also recognises the human rights model of disability which acknowledges a person's disability as a part of human diversity that must be respected and supported.

NAVA interchangeably uses person first (person with disability) and identity first (Disabled person) language, and acknowledges the complexities of these words and that each individual will have a preference. The term disability can also include people who are Deaf or hard of hearing (HoH). People from the Deaf community may not identify as having disability and may identify as part of a cultural and linguistic group with their first language being Auslan. Deaf (with a capital D) refers to individuals who identify as part of the Deaf community and culture, using Auslan as their primary language. We recognise that terminology for d/Deaf and Disabled people evolves over time. Our current terminology is guided by d/Deaf and Disabled advisors and may be updated based on future recommendations.



Access Rights for d/Deaf and Disabled People Summary of Good Practice Recommendations

## Our context

Currently, in Australia, one in five people live with disability – almost 18% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Disability can involve the physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, immunologic, processing, learning and energy capacities of a person. Disability can also include physical difference and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms (e.g. HIV). A person's disability may be permanent or temporary (likely to last for at least six months), visible or 'invisible', and capacities may vary from day to day.

d/Deaf and Disabled people are as diverse a group as the general population, with varying backgrounds and life experiences. They may face overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation, such as race, gender and/or socio-economic marginalisation. First Nations communities experience disability at more than twice the rates in non-First Nations communities. Overlapping forms of discrimination contribute to the isolation of d/Deaf and Disabled people and reduce their capacity to articulate access needs. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) also plays a role in the lives of d/Deaf and Disabled Australians, affecting access to resources due to scheme regulations and eligibility.

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<sup>1</sup> AIHW report – People with disability in Australia 2020: in brief



NAVA acknowledges that d/Deaf and Disabled people may have conflicting access, and advises that good practice should be based on giving d/Deaf and Disabled people agency (choice, information) in navigating their participation in/engagement in the visual arts.

# Consultation and methodology

This Disability Action Plan has been developed following the revision of the Code of Practice for the Visual Arts, Craft and Design (the Code) released in 2022. This revision included years of consultation with artists, arts workers and organisations across Australia, representing a range of backgrounds and experiences. The learnings from these consultations have fed into this Disability Action Plan which is based on the good practices outlined in the Code and resources provided by Disability Arts Organisations.

As part of the Code revision, NAVA worked with an advisory group of eight Disabled artists and arts workers from across Australia. This group advised on the accessibility of the Code as well as the content. NAVA continues to consult with this advisory group on good practice, advocacy and accessible processes. All advisory group members are paid.

In the years preceding the development of this plan, NAVA has worked on increasing accessibility internally and externally. This work included the accessibility of NAVA's website and social media, developing an accessible Code of Practice website, training, support and adjustments for staff across the organisation, and consultation with Disabled artists, arts workers and Disability Arts Organisations.

Specifically in developing this Disability Action Plan consultation has included:

- Presentation and discussion with all staff as a group
- An external survey of Disabled artists and arts workers with 31 responses
- An all-staff workshop to review the draft plan
- Review by members of the advisory group
- Presentation and discussion with the NAVA Board of Directors

All methods of consultation used in the development of this plan will continue throughout the implementation process and we acknowledge that access and inclusion involve ongoing learning and collaboration with communities.





## Our commitment

NAVA advocates for good practice policies and procedures ensuring inclusion and participation for d/Deaf and Disabled people across all aspects and operations of Australia's contemporary arts – as creatives, arts workers, administrators, and audiences. Striving for equity and access involves a commitment to ongoing conversations with and learning from d/Deaf and Disabled people, and responsive and flexible practices. We encourage all those working in the arts to join us in this commitment.

We value, promote and advocate for the voices of d/Deaf and Disabled people working and participating in the visual arts, including their rights to justice, safety and inclusion.

# Our goals

NAVA's mission is to bring together the many voices of the contemporary arts sector to improve the fundamental conditions of work and practice. NAVA does this through advocacy, education and the Code of Practice for the Visual Arts, Craft and Design. Our vision is that the visual arts are vital, sustainable and ethical.

The goals that NAVA aims to achieve through this Disability Action Plan relate directly to our mission and vision – improving the conditions of work and practice for Disabled people working in the visual arts sector, challenging ableism, and exemplifying good practice.

NAVA's goals are to:

- Change ableist attitudes and behaviours in our sector
- Create an accessible community for NAVA Members
- Support the employment and work of Disabled artists and arts workers
- Create accessible systems and processes internally and for NAVA Members

Inclusivity and accessibility are crucial across all public and private sectors. By ensuring that environments, services, and opportunities are more accessible to everyone, we promote a more equitable society. This commitment to accessibility supports the broader movement towards inclusion and justice and sets a standard for others to follow.



# Attitudes and behaviours

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Develop an organisational culture where staff demonstrate inclusive language and behaviour and feel safe to discuss disability, access and inclusion.</b>	Provide all staff with disability competence and confidence training. Provide further training as required or requested. Training to be delivered by people with disability.	February 2025 and ongoing	General Manager
	Encourage ongoing learning and awareness among staff by creating a space where staff can share learnings, resources, and ideas from the Disability community.	Ongoing	General Manager
	At least one NAVA staff member to attend an arts and disability event once per year and to report back to all staff.	Ongoing	All staff
<b>Lead by example to promote and encourage good practice in access and inclusion across the visual arts sector</b>	Advocate for artists and arts workers with disability across NAVA's advocacy campaigns.	Ongoing	Executive Director and Advocacy and Communications Manager
	Demonstrate accessibility and inclusion in all meetings, events and communications with the sector.	Ongoing	Executive Director, Advocacy and Communications Manager, Professional Development Coordinators, First Nations Outreach Coordinator
	Publicly release NAVA's Disability Action Plan and share successes with our stakeholders.	January 2025 and ongoing	Executive Director and Advocacy and Communications Manager
	Seek opportunities to share learnings about good practice with others within the visual arts sector.	Ongoing	Executive Director and General Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Promote artists and arts workers with disability.</b>	Profile 18% of artists and/or arts workers with disability through NAVA's Artists Files, NAVA News, NAVA Events and image licensing. Percentage is based on Australian population.	Ongoing, yearly	Executive Director, Advocacy and Communications Manager, Professional Development Coordinators, First Nations Outreach Coordinator
<b>Engage and collaborate with d/Deaf and Disabled artists, arts workers, and disability arts organisations.</b>	Maintain NAVA's Disability Focus Group, meeting at least twice per year.	Ongoing, yearly	Finance and Operations Coordinator
	Establish further relationships with d/Deaf and Disabled artists and arts workers to develop a network of advisors and collaborators.	Ongoing	Executive Director
	Establish further relationships and partnerships with disability arts organisations.	Ongoing	Executive Director

# Accessible communities

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Ensure that NAVA’s website maintains an appropriate level of accessibility.</b>	Use software to scan the NAVA website for accessibility errors monthly.	Ongoing, monthly	General Manager
	Ensure new content uploaded to NAVA’s website includes Alt Text, image descriptions, accessible documents and inclusive language.	Ongoing	All staff
	Undertake research and/or training on Simple/Plain English guidelines and how these can be applied to NAVA’s written information.	January 2026	All staff
	Conduct barrier-specific user testing with people with disability on any issues raised in feedback and a broad range of user testing for new functionalities.	Ongoing	General Manager
	New ‘Opportunities’ listed on the NAVA website on behalf of other parties to include consistent accessibility information.	Ongoing	Membership Team
<b>Ensure the Code of Practice website maintains an appropriate level of accessibility.</b>	Use software to scan the Code website for accessibility errors monthly.	Ongoing, monthly	General Manager
	Develop further accessible alternative formats such as 18 Auslan videos, 5 infographics, audio of text and other culturally appropriate resources.	January 2025 – December 2027	General Manager, Professional Development Coordinators, First Nations Outreach Coordinator
	Include the development of accessibility as part of the process and budget when adding new sections to the Code.	Ongoing	Executive Director and General Manager
	Conduct barrier-specific user testing with people with disability on any issues raised in feedback and a broad range of user testing for new functionalities.	Ongoing	General Manager

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Improve the accessibility of the Members' purchase and renewal webpage experience for people with disability.</b>	Conduct broad user testing with people with disability on the Membership purchase and renewal process.	December 2026	General Manager
	Implement recommendations from user testing when incorporating new CRM software.	December 2025	General Manager
<b>Ensure NAVA's resources maintain an appropriate level of accessibility</b>	Develop all new resources to include accessible PDFs and/or Word document versions that meet Website Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Ongoing	Advocacy and Communications Manager
	Develop two accessible resources that explain what NAVA does and the services NAVA provides. Formats may include Auslan, audio and/or infographics.	January 2026	General Manager
<b>Ensure that NAVA Events are accessible and inclusive face-to-face or online.</b>	Identify and consult on minimum accessibility standards for NAVA Events (face-to-face and online) and develop staff resources/guides for implementation.	June 2025	Advocacy and Communications Manager, Professional Development Coordinators, First Nations Outreach Coordinator
	Ensure all NAVA Event listings include consistent accessibility information and meet minimum accessibility standards.	Ongoing	Advocacy and Communications Manager, Professional Development Coordinators

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b>Ensure that NAVA’s social media channels are accessible and inclusive.</b></p>	<p>Ensure all NAVA social media channels meet accessibility standards including Alt Text, image descriptions and Simple English.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Advocacy and Communications Manager, Professional Development Coordinators</p>
	<p>Stay abreast of new social media tools available to embed accessibility in social media.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Advocacy and Communications Manager</p>

# Employment

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Ensure that NAVA's recruitment policies and processes are accessible and inclusive.</b>	Update recruitment documentation to include access, inclusion and reasonable adjustment.	March 2025	General Manager
	Ask staff and contractors for information about their access requirements or access rider as part of the induction process.	Ongoing	Executive Director and General Manager, All Staff
	Establish goal of 20% d/Deaf or Disabled staff. Percentage is based on 2024 NAVA staff.	Ongoing	Executive Director
<b>Ensure that NAVA's HR policies and procedures are accessible and inclusive.</b>	Review HR policies to include access, inclusion and reasonable adjustment.	December 2025	General Manager
	Develop a Workplace Adjustments Policy.	December 2025	Finance Coordinator
<b>Develop and document different ways of working that support access and inclusion.</b>	Document NAVA's current ways of working that support access and inclusion such as flexibility, wellness, relational needs and outcomes-based focus.	June 2026	General Manager
	When considering NAVA office spaces consider a range of access needs for current and future staff.	May 2025	General Manager
	Provide staff with a budget (in addition to any funds provided by JobAccess) for setting up their workspace to meet their needs.	Ongoing	Finance Coordinator
	Include conversations about access needs as part of performance reviews and supervisor check-ins.	Ongoing, yearly	Executive Director and General Manager
	Apply information about staff access requirements and new ways of supporting staff with disability to future workplace design and flexibility policies. Percentage is based on Australian population.	December 2027	General Manager
<b>Employ or contract artists and arts workers with disability.</b>	Employ or contract 18% of artists and/or arts workers with disability through NAVA's Artists Files, NAVA News, NAVA Events, image licensing, and consultations.	Ongoing, yearly	All staff



# Systems and processes

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Embed access and inclusion in our systems and processes.</b>	Review all policies and procedures from the perspective of access and inclusion.	December 2025	General Manager
	Review contracts and agreements to ensure that accessibility is included as a deliverable.	December 2025	General Manager and Advocacy and Communications Manager
	Ensure that there are adequate resources to enact the Disability Action Plan and that staff have capacity to deliver actions.	Ongoing	Executive Director and General Manager
	Implement and document a flexible standard for processes that allows staff and contractors adequate time and space they need to complete tasks or achieve outcomes.	December 2026	Executive Director and General Manager
<b>Ensure that NAVA's HR policies and procedures are accessible and inclusive.</b>	Review HR policies to include access, inclusion and reasonable adjustment.	December 2025	General Manager
	Develop a Workplace Adjustments Policy.	December 2025	Finance Coordinator
<b>Ensure access and inclusion are considered in the development and implementation of projects.</b>	Review project processes from the perspective of access and inclusion including collaborations and feedback mechanisms.	Ongoing	All staff
	Provide resources about the minimum accessibility standards for NAVA Events and online resources to current and new staff upon induction.	Ongoing	General Manager
	Create budget guidelines to be used when applying for funding or when planning a project to ensure adequate allocation of funds for accessibility requirements.	June 2025	Finance Coordinator

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>Ensure that NAVA's internal and external communications and operational documents are accessible.</b>	Produce NAVA's external and internal documents and forms in accessible PDFs, Word Documents that meet Website Content Accessibility Guidelines or other accessible formats where appropriate.	Ongoing	All staff
<b>Monitor feedback and make access improvements.</b>	Implement consultation and feedback mechanisms to continue to improve accessibility.	Ongoing, yearly	General Manager, Professional Development Coordinators, First Nations Outreach Coordinator
	Implement further accessibility beyond this Disability Action Plan where possible.	Ongoing	All staff
	Include progress made on this Disability Action Plan as part of staff meetings, supervisor check-ins and performance reviews.	Ongoing	Executive Director and General Manager
	Present to the Board of Directors annually on progress made on this Disability Action Plan.	December each year	Executive Director
	Stay up to date on advancements in accessibility that could be implemented and communicate these to other staff.	Ongoing	All staff



## Monitoring and reporting

NAVA will report on progress on the Disability Action Plan in our annual report. NAVA's Board of Directors will also be updated on progress annually.

NAVA will report progress on the Disability Action Plan to the advisory group once a year. At this meeting feedback on the plan will also be discussed. The group will also continue to meet to discuss advocacy and good practice issues throughout the year.

The Disability Action Plan will also be a standing agenda item at weekly staff meetings so staff can monitor progress and report achievements and feedback.

This Disability Action Plan works alongside NAVA's Reconciliation Action Plan as well as the Strategic Action Plan and Operations Plan. When reporting on or further developing a plan the other plans will also be reviewed to ensure that NAVA's actions are consistent and cohesive.

## Image credits

**Cover image** | Amy Claire Mills, Unsolicited Advice!, 2021. Installation view, Firstdraft, Sydney, 2021. Photo by Zan Wimberley.

**Page 3** | Installation view of Unsolicited Advice! by NAVA Member Amy Claire Mills. Photo by Zan Wimberley.

**Page 6** | Still from "Access Rights for d/Deaf and Disabled People" Auslan video on the Code of Practice website. Video by Auslan Consultancy.

**Page 7** | Uncle Paul Calcott, member of NAVA's Disability Focus Group, photo by The Human Story Productions.

**Page 9** | Code of Practice contributors: (L-R) Laura Curtis and Terri Janke (Terri Janke and Company), Vanessa Low, Sue Jo Wright, Debra Keenahan, Claudia Chinyere Akole, Connie Anthes, Monique Choy, Lachlan Herd and Penelope Benton. Photographed at Join the Dots, Marrickville NSW by Jacquie Manning 2022.

**Page 10** | NAVA Artist File: Digby Webster, photo by Kim Batterham, courtesy of Yarra Bank Films.

**Page 19** | Excerpt from Greg Sindel, Getting Paid as an Artist, 2023. From the Code of Practice website. Greg Sindel is represented by Studio A.

## Get in touch

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