

# Access Strategic Plan 2009-2012

June 2009



# Contents

- MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER .....4**
  
- 1. INTRODUCTION .....5**
  - Who we are..... 5
  - Access Policy Statement..... 5
  - Sydney Opera House Strategic Goals..... 6
  
- 2. DATA PROFILE .....7**
  - Prevalence of disability in the community..... 7
  - Customer Profile..... 7
  - Staff Profile ..... 7
  
- 3. ACCESS ACHIEVEMENTS .....8**
  
- 4. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ACCESS MASTERPLAN .....10**
  
- 5. POLICY CONTEXT .....11**
  - Social Policy Objectives ..... 11
  - Legislation..... 11
  
- 6. CONSULTATION PROCESS.....12**
  - Access Barriers ..... 13
  
- 7. REVIEW, MONITORING AND UPDATE OF THE PLAN .....14**
  - Measurement of Progress ..... 14
  
- 8. ACCESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2012 .....15**

***'As time passes and needs change, it is natural to modify the building to suit the needs and techniques at the time'***

*Jørn Utzon, the creative genesis behind the Sydney Opera House.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am delighted to present Sydney Opera House's Access Strategic Plan 2009 - 2012 which was endorsed by the Trust in June 2009.

The Plan expands on our previous plans and represents our ongoing commitment to improve access for people with disabilities at Sydney Opera House.

The Plan is aligned to the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* and incorporates the outcomes set out in the *Guidelines for Disability Action Planning by NSW Government Agencies*. It is focused on creating an environment in which all customers have equal access to our services, facilities, performances and experiences. It also aims to provide leadership in accessibility for the performing arts industry and to create a workplace in which all employees can thrive.

Improving accessibility at Sydney Opera House benefits all our stakeholders, and is an asset that can be used to attract diverse audiences and provide Sydney Opera House with a sustainable future.

Several external community organisations continue to support our efforts to improve accessibility. I would like to thank these community and advocacy organisations for providing us with a greater understanding of the barriers faced in accessing the arts by people with disabilities.

As a result of recent access improvements we head into the next three years with a range of improved accessible seating options in the Western Theatres. With the opening of the new Bennelong lift, independent access will commence for patrons with disabilities that will for the first time link parking, commercial, foyer and theatre areas of Sydney Opera House.

I look forward to more measurable improvements being made over the life of this Plan.

Chief Executive

June 2009

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Who we are

Sydney Opera House is one of the busiest performing arts centres in the world, providing over 1,600 performances each year. Sydney Opera House has seven primary venues: the Concert Hall, Opera Theatre, Drama Theatre, Playhouse, The Studio, Forecourt and Utzon Room. The performance experience is broadened with a harbour side precinct that offers dining, shopping and entertainment opportunities.

As one of the most popular visitor attractions in Australia, Sydney Opera House sees more than seven million people visiting the site each year. Some 1.2 million people attend performances and over 329,000 people take a guided tour to explore the inside of one of the most recognised buildings in the world.

Sydney Opera House is State, National and World Heritage listed. As a performing arts centre, Sydney Opera House promotes and supports many performing arts companies, including the four key resident companies: Sydney Symphony, Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company and The Australian Ballet as well other many other important Australian companies and artists.

Sydney Opera House's own programming *Sydney Opera House Presents* offers an eclectic mix of over 700 performances a year ranging from artistic and cultural activities through to educational and experimental programs for all ages.

## Access Policy Statement

Sydney Opera House is committed to ensuring that it is recognised as a leader and innovator in providing barrier free access, so making the building, site and experiences accessible to all people.

Sydney Opera House is committed to the following access principles:

- Access solutions promote positive community attitudes about people with disabilities;
- Access issues are integrated early in the planning stage of initiatives;
- Attempts will be made to develop access solutions that achieve barrier free and independent access (e.g. people with disabilities use the same access routes as people without disabilities wherever possible);
- Initiatives will comply with relevant disability access standards and legislation;
- Access Audits to determine access requirements will be undertaken for all areas and key initiatives;
- Consultation with people with a disability will be undertaken for key initiatives; and
- Access solutions are in synergy with the heritage values of Sydney Opera House.

## **Sydney Opera House Strategic Goals**

The Access Strategic Plan has been developed with a focus on our long-term strategic goals:

### **Goal 1: Artistic Excellence**

- ✓ To create, produce and present great work by accomplished artists from around the world.
- ✓ To lead, challenge and entertain audiences through an excellent, imaginative, diverse and stimulating programme.
- ✓ To support and present the work of Australia's finest artists and performing arts companies.
- ✓ To be globally acknowledged as an active partner in the generation, exploration and presentation of ideas and new work.

### **Goal 2: Innovation in Community Engagement**

- ✓ To build community participation and engagement through the establishment of partnerships with artists, schools, institutions and organisations throughout NSW.
- ✓ To clearly communicate our vision and role in the community to artists, organisations, educators, governments, donors and investors.
- ✓ To empower, educate and acknowledge the contribution of our key assets: our people and our partnerships.

### **Goal 3: Audience Accessibility**

- ✓ To ensure the broadest possible audience has access to the range of activities and experiences we provide onsite, offsite and online.
- ✓ To be at the forefront of delivering artistic content using new delivery platforms.
- ✓ To build our role in education by expanding our arts education programme and interacting with artists, students and teachers.

### **Goal 4: A Contemporary and Sustainable Bennelong Point**

- ✓ To be a pre-eminent, vibrant and welcoming cultural destination, exceeding our visitors' expectations.
- ✓ To continue to embrace new technologies to transform and enhance the visitor experience.
- ✓ Undertake the Sydney Opera House Renewal project to ensure our ongoing viability.
- ✓ To maintain the highest standards in conservation, planning and coordination of building development and maintenance.
- ✓ To build and expand our on site commercial partnerships to deliver a vibrant precinct of compelling experiences that ensure a long-term funding stream which support our objectives.

### **Goal 5: Knowing Our Business**

- ✓ To ensure that our business model is efficient, sustainable, modern and fit for purpose.
- ✓ To ensure that our relationship with Government is optimised to support our ongoing contribution to the people and the economy of New South Wales
- ✓ To embed a spirit of cultural entrepreneurship, innovation and teamwork in all that we do.
- ✓ To have an active agenda of continuous improvement and simplification of our systems and processes.

## 2. DATA PROFILE

### **Prevalence of disability in the community**

Approximately 20% of the Australian population lives with some form of disability<sup>1</sup>. In addition, some 2.6 million Australians provide care to those who need assistance due to disability or age.

The incidence of disability increases with age. The rate of disability is therefore expected to increase as the population ages and older adults acquire mobility and sensory disabilities as they age and live longer life spans.

There are an estimated 650 million persons living with disabilities worldwide, and this figure is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the aging process<sup>2</sup>. If one includes the members of their families, there are approximately 2 billion persons who are directly affected by disability, representing almost a third of the world's population.

### **Customer Profile**

Sydney Opera House has three principal groups of customers:

*The public:* includes people who attend events, visit the site, take guided tours and frequent the restaurants, cafes and retail outlets. The public includes domestic and international tourists as well as residents of Sydney and NSW;

*Performing arts presenters and business partners:* who present in and hire venues and services. This includes performing arts companies, schools, community groups, corporations, individuals, Government departments, and operators of the retail outlets and food and beverage services on site; and

*Our staff:* including existing and potential employees.

### **Staff Profile**

Sydney Opera House has a wide variety of job categories including: theatre technical in staging, lighting, sound and audio visual, theatre managers and ushers, tour guides and information, facilities and contract administration, administrative, supervisor and management roles.

Sydney Opera House has over 700 employees (400 full time employees) spread over three sites.

Of these 21 staff members (3.2%) have identified as having a disability and two staff members (0.002%) required adjustment at work in the last 12 months.

---

<sup>1</sup> ABS: 3,958,300 people or 20.0% had a reported disability - 520,000 have a mobility disability, 480,000 are blind or vision impaired, and 1 million are deaf or hearing impaired (ABS 2003)

<sup>2</sup> Sources: United Nations, World Health Organization

### 3. ACCESS ACHIEVEMENTS

Sydney Opera House began actively addressing access for people with disabilities in 1995 when it commissioned a series of access audits and consulted the community to develop its first Access Strategic Plan.

The latest Access Strategic Plan builds on the achievements of previous Plans and continues the momentum for improving access across all areas of Sydney Opera House.

Although there is much left to do to achieve full accessibility, there have been significant achievements to report since the first Plan including:

#### **Access to premises**

- Construction commenced on the *Accessibility and Western Foyers Project* in January 2007. This includes the first public lift with capacity for four wheelchairs from Lower Concourse level to the Vehicle Concourse and Box Office level; and two new escalators to be installed into stairs from Box Office level to Southern Foyers of Concert Hall and Opera Theatre - due for completion in 2009.
- New accessible unisex toilet facility constructed in the Western Foyers (2008).
- The Sydney Opera House Access Masterplan commenced for the public, performing arts presenters and business partner and employee areas of Sydney Opera House (2008).
- Increase in wheelchair and companion seating spaces in the main body of seating in all three Western Theatre venues (2009).
- Two Platform Stairlift climbers were installed on entry to the Playhouse to provide mainstream disability access into the theatre (2009).
- Two accessible toilet facilities created in the Box Office Foyer (2004).
- Platform lift access provided to the Utzon Room (2004).
- Stage Door refurbished to create an accessible entrance for visitors, artists and staff (2003).

#### **Access to services and facilities**

- Hearing loop system installed in the Box Office counter windows (2008).
- Permanent Captioning system installed in the Drama Theatre (2008).
- New FM hearing radio system installed in all venues (2006).
- Free 22 seater wheelchair accessible mini bus service began transporting elderly and less mobile customers between Circular Quay and Sydney Opera House (2004).
- Public payphones lowered to comply with accessibility requirements (2004).
- Audio Description Service for patrons who are blind or have low vision implemented in partnership with Vision Australia and the Sydney Theatre Company for selected performances in the Drama Theatre (2000).
- Increased level of compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0 priority 1 and the majority of priority 2 checkpoints.

### **Accessible ticket pricing**

- Performances under the banner of *Sydney Opera House Presents* became affiliated with the NSW Companion Card, providing complimentary tickets for attendant carers assisting patrons with severe disabilities (2009).
- Sydney Opera House ticketing policy implemented for patrons using wheelchairs and their companions - offering lowest possible concession prices (2005).

### **Information Access**

A series of new information materials have been developed for patrons and customers with disabilities including:

- *Theatre Access Guide Brochure (2008)*.
- *Online Access Diary - for assisted performance information (2008)*.
- *Quarterly online Access Newsletter (2008)*.
- *Sydney Opera House Public Access Guide* available in MP3, large print, Braille and CD formats (2007).

### **Access Programming**

- In partnership with Accessible Arts, Sydney Opera House hosted the following industry information sessions in the Utzon Room:
  - *Inclusion of People with Disabilities is Core Business for all Arts Organisations*. Presented by Betty Siegel, Director of Accessibility at the Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts, Washington D.C (2008); and
  - *Industry Companion Card Information session*. Presented by National Disability Services (2009).
- In collaboration with Accessible Arts Sydney Opera House hosted the *AART.BOXX* exhibition in the Utzon Room: a collection of works by artists under 25 with a disability. In its second year the exhibition was expanded to include a free *artist talk* public program component (2006 & 2007).
- Discounted Access Tours of Sydney Opera House, including an Auslan - interpreter tour, offered annually, as part of celebrations for *International Day of People with Disabilities* (2006-8).

### **Access Culture**

- Access awareness sessions became integrated into the regular staff induction program (2007).
- *Internal Staff Access Guide* published (2007).
- Program Manager Accessibility position recruited, as a dedicated access resource (2006).
- Disability Access information and resource page created on staff intranet (2006).
- Launch of internal *Sydney Opera House Access Awards*, an annual staff incentive program (2006).

*A special thank you to Sydney Opera House's Building Development and Maintenance Portfolio for their ongoing commitment and support for disability access, without which the realisation of key physical access upgrade projects would not have been achieved.*

## 4. SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ACCESS MASTERPLAN

The previous Access Strategic Plan secured funding for the development of an Access Masterplan which will guide the future design of physical access upgrades at Sydney Opera House. These designs will meet current access design standards and be in synergy with both the heritage and design principles of the building.

To ensure broad input into the development of the Access Masterplan, two workshops were conducted in 2008 with Sydney Opera House's heritage consultant, architects and access consultant as well as input from Accessible Arts and internal staff. The workshops concluded that the customer experience is to be the centre of all planning and produced a methodology for solving potential conflicts should they arise between access code compliance and conserving the heritage and design values of the building.

As part of the Masterplan process the following recent access audits have been undertaken:

- *Wayfinding Report for Sydney Opera House* conducted by Vision Australia Access Consulting Service. The audit consisted of a technical assessment and user experience audit (March 2009); and
- *Back of House Access Audit* conducted by Accessibility Solutions (June 2009)

The completion of the Access Masterplan is expected in year 1 of the Access Strategic Plan and will contain access solutions to back of house performance areas and wayfinding cues across the site. It will also contain designs for improving the accessibility of elements such as handrails, Tactile Ground Indicators (TGI) and public counters.

Under the Masterplan conceptual design options will also be developed for resolving challenging areas for access such as public lift access from Box Office level to the Concert Hall Lift, as well as including conceptual options for increasing accessible seating in the Concert Hall.

Year 2 and 3 of the Access Strategic Plan will concentrate on implementing shorter-term 'quick-fix' physical access solutions, while identifying opportunity projects to improve access as part of scheduled building and site works.

## 5. POLICY CONTEXT

### Social Policy Objectives

By removing barriers to access and participation for people with disabilities, the Access Strategic Plan contributes to the key social objectives set out in both the *NSW State Plan: A New Direction for NSW for People with Disabilities* and *Better for People: A New Direction to Make NSW Government Services Work with a Disability and their Families*.

The Plan incorporates the following planning outcomes set out in the *Guidelines for Disability Action Planning by NSW Government Agencies*:

- Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers for services for people with a disability;
- Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability;
- Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability;
- Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees; and
- Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in NSW public sector.

### Legislation

The Access Strategic Plan also works towards achieving the goals of the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992*. The DDA provides protection against discrimination based on disability in the following areas of life:

- employment;
- education;
- access to premises used by the public;
- provision of goods, services and facilities;
- accommodation;
- buying land;
- sport; and
- administration of Commonwealth Government Laws and Programs.

In addition, the Plan aims to achieve compliance, as far as possible, with the following standards, codes and government social justice commitments:

- *Australian Standards for Design of Access and Mobility 1428 Parts 1 – 4*: prescribes the basic design requirements for physical access to buildings and facilities;
- *Building Code of Australia (BCA) and draft Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards*. Changes to the BCA are currently being proposed to align building regulations with the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)*. Complying with new Disability Standards would therefore ensure compliance with the DDA. The BCA and Draft Premises Standards apply to access provisions for new buildings and those undergoing significant refurbishment or alteration. The Draft Premises Standard are currently under review with the House of Representatives Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs;

- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)'s *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG), as far as possible, and the reference sources for compliance with the DDA; and
- The Plan also aims to contribute towards the progressive realisation of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Australia ratified the Convention on 18 July 2008) Article 30 - *Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport*:
  - 1) State Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to take part, on an equal basis with others, in cultural life,
  - 2) and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:
    - enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;
    - enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;
    - enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and as far as possible;
    - enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

## 6. CONSULTATION PROCESS

An important step in developing the Access Strategic Plan was consulting with key internal and external stakeholders. The consultation identified access barriers and opportunities for improvement as well as identifying many areas of current good practice.

Consultation with staff across the business identified opportunities to implement initiatives that reflect each business unit's ability to achieve realistic initiatives within the external and internal environments in which they operate.

We would like to sincerely thank the following organisations for their ongoing feedback and support for access improvements at Sydney Opera House:

- Accessible Arts
- Deaf Society of NSW
- Disability Council of NSW
- Guide Dogs Association
- NSW Council on the Ageing, COTA
- Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH)
- Spinal Cord Injury Australia (SCIA)
- University of Technology, Sydney
- Vision Australia

Sydney Opera House will continue to work closely with peak agencies in the aged and disability sectors throughout the life of this Plan.

## Access Barriers

The following is a summary of issues that were highlighted as part of the external stakeholder consultations:

- Review wayfinding around the site: lack of wayfinding cues/tactile signage from station to key entry points and need for improved visual/tactile signage for people who are blind and have low vision;
- Look to secure funds for additional public lift access to all areas of the premises;
- Installation of an accessible ATM, one which is audio enabled, as well as incorporating Braille and correct height specs;
- Introduce an *Accessibility Impact Statement* for SOH redevelopments considering the impacts on patrons and customers with sensory and mobility disabilities;
- Organisation's ticketing policy should reflect the *Companion Card* and best practice hold/release procedures for new accessible seating in the Western Theatres;
- Broaden audio description and captioning performances and increase promotion of these performances;
- Upgrade quality of hearing loop coverage in theatres;
- Increase access to the performing arts for people with intellectual disabilities, autism and behavioural issues;
- Incorporate accessibility information into mainstream advertising;
- Develop an inclusive internship/mentorship program including opportunities for technical work experience opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Increase employment across the organisation for people with disabilities;
- Expand the range of courtesy wheelchairs;
- Engage people with disabilities to inform and 'test out' new accessible services and facilities to ensure quality and usability;
- Promote Sydney Opera House accessibility through disability networks such as Council of the Ageing's (COTA), enews bulletin, and through the Deaf society's email and word of mouth, Vision Australia's newsletter and 2RPH;
- Upgrade the Studio venue's access lift for improved usability and reliability;
- Develop a tactile model of Sydney Opera House for patrons who are blind or have low vision;
- Provide regular access awareness updates for security staff and other customer-facing staff areas with high turn-over; and
- Make people with disabilities feel part of the loop, welcomed and informed on what's on, using plasma screens in foyer areas to convey audio/signed and captioned information.

## 7. REVIEW, MONITORING AND UPDATE OF THE PLAN

The Sydney Opera House Trust and the Chief Executive of Sydney Opera House will ensure that progress towards the outcomes of the Access Strategic Plan is reviewed and reported on annually to the Sydney Opera House Trust.

Feedback from customers, Sydney Opera House staff and access organisations will be used to inform the Plan at its annual review.

The Plan may be updated to take into account stakeholder feedback, advances in accessible technology and any other opportunities to increase access that may arise.

The Plan's implementation will be monitored and supported by the dedicated Program Manager Accessibility. Achievements under the Plan will be celebrated at the annual staff Access Awards presided over by the Chief Executive. Achievements will also be reported in the online Sydney Opera House Access Newsletter and in the publications of disability access organisations.

The Plan will be available on the Sydney Opera House website [sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com). Hard copies of the Plan, including copies in alternate formats can be requested from: Ms Jenny Spinak, Program Manager Accessibility, Sydney Opera House, GPO Box 4274, Sydney NSW Australia 2001.

Telephone: 61 2 92507175  
Facsimile: 61 2 92507135  
Email: [jspinak@sydneyoperahouse.com](mailto:jspinak@sydneyoperahouse.com)

### Measurement of Progress

Performance indicators will include:

- Extremely low numbers of complaints relating to accessibility issues;
- Accessibility requirements scoped for 100% of relevant new organisational initiatives;
- Increase in the % of people accessing assisted performances, accessible venue seating and other access services - where baseline measurements and monitoring are available;
- Positive feedback from disability organisations and customer satisfaction surveys regarding the quality of access at Sydney Opera House; and
- Increase employment of people with disabilities across the organisation.

Further development of performance indicators will occur over the life of the plan.

The Plan will be submitted to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare. Sydney Opera House Annual Report publishes achievements of the Access Strategic Plan.

## 8. ACCESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2012

### **Overall Access Strategic Plan Goal**

To provide equal access and increase participation of people with disabilities in Sydney Opera House, as performers, employees and members of the public.

### **Outcome areas**

This Plan has adopted strategies that are realistic and achievable in the current economic environment, while making a difference in the everyday experience of patrons and staff with disabilities.

The following outcome areas have been identified:

**Outcome 1:** Improve operational processes across the site to provide seamless accessibility that blends into customer service and event operations;

**Outcome 2:** Market and increase awareness of Sydney Opera House's access services, ticketing policies and events to patrons and visitors with disabilities to increase visitation and utilisation of services by people with disabilities;

**Outcome 3:** Continue to improve access to Sydney Opera House experiences for people with disabilities including access to performances, website and building and facilities, through implementing best practice planning and access provisions;

**Outcome 4:** Increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and improve workplace support to existing employees with disabilities; and

**Outcome 5:** Continue Sydney Opera House's involvement in activities that promote it's commitment to making the performing arts more accessible to people with disabilities.

**OUTCOME 1:** Improve operational processes across the site to provide seamless accessibility that blends into customer service and event operations.

**Objectives:**

- Ensure all customer-facing staff are aware and updated regularly about what accessibility services and policies are available and are familiar with the overall physical access of the site, to be able to respond to patrons access inquires and requests;
- Review and monitor operations to ensure new accessible upgrades operate to provide a seamless and enjoyable visiting experience for patrons and visitors with disabilities; and
- Utilise, where possible, plasma screens and digital signage to inform patrons and visitors with disabilities of available access services and connect visitors to *what's on*.

**Action 1.1** Develop, facilitate and evaluate tailored access awareness training sessions for the following:

- New Sydney Opera House inductees (Monthly)
- Ticketing staff induction
- New Security staff intakes (3 sessions per year)
- New Host Team intakes (as required)

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility/Learning and Development and relevant portfolio managers

**Timeframe** Per training timetable

**Evaluation** All customer-facing staff are aware of access services/facilities available, ticketing policies and other access policies, and can communicate effectively to assist customers with access inquires.

**Action 1.2**

Provide ongoing refresher/updated access information sessions at:

- Theatre Manager briefings
- Box office sellers briefings
- Host Team meetings
- Hold briefings to Box Office Managers, Assistant Managers, permanent and part-time staff with managers to brief casuals and new employees
- Pass on customer feedback and provide short access updates through email communication and through *Seller tips*

**Responsibility:** Program Manager Accessibility/Ticketing

**Timeframe:** Following the completion of the *Accessibility and Western Foyers Project* at end of June 2009 and annually, or as required.

**Evaluation:** All customer-facing staff are aware of access services/facilities available and best seats for accessing these services, as well as ticketing policies and can communicate effectively to assist customers with access requirements.

**Action 1.3**

Review Front of House operations to reflect new *Accessibility & Western Foyers Project* access provisions, including investigating options for providing an assisted access desk at Box Office level to assist patrons to the Southern Foyers of the Concert Hall and Opera Theatre.

**Responsibility** Accessibility Program Manager/Front of House/Building Development and Maintenance Portfolio.

**Timeframe** Following the completion of *Accessibility and Western Foyers* in 2009

**Evaluation** Patrons and visitors with disabilities experience a seamless visiting experience.

**Action 1.4**

Monitor operational processes between Ticketing, Front of House and Facilities to ensure new Playhouse platform stairlift climber and new accessible seating operations are meeting the needs of patrons with disabilities.

**Responsibility** Facilities/Ticketing/ Front of House/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Patrons and visitors experience seamless visiting experience.

**Action 1.5**

Investigate the need to re-direct courtesy wheelchairs from Central Passage to the cloakroom area of the Western Foyers for patrons accessing the Western Theatres.

**Responsibility** Front of House/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Following the completion of *Accessibility and Western Foyers* in 2009

**Evaluation** Patrons and visitors experience seamless visiting experience.

**Action 1.6**

Continue to update the organisations access policies to reflect best practice in accessibility and changes in the DDA legislation i.e. assistance animal policy, hold/release wheelchair seating policies.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Access policies updated, placed on staff intranet and communicated to staff.

**Action 1.7**

Where possible, use plasma screens in the foyer areas to display disability access information to assist people with disabilities.

**Responsibility** /Program Manager Accessibility/appropriate marketing team

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Patrons and visitors experience seamless visiting experience.

## **OUTCOME 2:**

Market and increase awareness of Sydney Opera House's access services, ticketing policies and events to patrons and visitors with disabilities to increase visitation and utilisation of services by people with disabilities:

### **Objectives:**

- Consolidate and promote accessible information on existing and new accessible access facilities and upgrades;
- Ensure access information is available in a range of accessible formats on request;
- Market access services directly through targeted disability networks as well as integrating accessibility information into mainstream advertising and promotions; and
- Leverage *International Day of People with Disabilities* to launch an Assisted Performance awareness campaign targeted at retaining older audiences and developing new audiences of people with disabilities.

### **Action 2.1**

At the completion of the *Accessibility and Western Foyers Project* in 2009 update the:

- Plain text on-line version of the SOH Public Access Guide
- Online MP3 files
- Large Print version
- CD and Braille Public Access Guide master copies for production on request.

**Responsibility** Planning & Governance

**Timeframe** End of June 2010

**Evaluation** Increased awareness of accessibility provisions leading to increased visitation by older people and people with a disability.

### **Action 2.2**

Refer to Sydney Opera House's accessibility information links wherever possible in:

- Sydney Opera House *What's On* guide
- *Inhouse* newsletter
- Spectrum banner ads
- Digital screens in public foyers

**Responsibility** Marketing/ Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Increase awareness of available accessible services, facilities and events in mainstream publications leading to increased visitation by people with a disability.

**Action 2.3**

Continue to update accessibility information and activities in the online Access Newsletter and Theatre Access pamphlet;

Distribute updates to:

- Presenters
- Disability organisation's networks and newsletters
- Front of House

**Responsibility** Planning & Governance

**Timeframe** Ongoing/Quarterly

**Evaluation** Improved awareness of accessible services, facilities and events leading to increased visitation by people with a disability.

**Action 2.4**

At the completion of the *Accessibility and Western Foyers* Project in 2009 promote the access upgrades in the Sydney Morning Herald's *At the House* insert within appropriate corporate editorial stories.

**Responsibility** Marketing

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Improved awareness of available accessible services, facilities and events leading to increased visitation by people with a disability.

**Action 2.5**

Leading up to *International Day of People with Disabilities*, in collaboration with Accessible Arts implement a campaign to promote awareness of assisted performances (Captioning and Audio-description) available for older audiences and people with disabilities.

**Responsibility** Accessibility Program Manager/Accessible Arts

**Timeframe** Annually

**Evaluation** Program Manager Accessibility/Accessible Arts

### **OUTCOME 3:**

Continue to improve access to Sydney Opera House experiences for people with disabilities including access to performances, website and building and facilities, through implementing best practice planning and access provisions.

#### **Objectives:**

- Implement program of priority Access Masterplan initiatives;
- Ensure accessibility is considered in relevant initiatives under Sydney Opera House's strategic focus areas including: *Precinct* and the *Digital Distribution of Content*;
- Ensure compliance, as far as possible, with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)'s latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, priority 1 and majority 2 Checkpoints; and
- Ensure products purchased have accessible features – information technology equipment, telephone systems, furniture etc.

#### **Action 3.1**

Ensure access compliance requirements are included at the scoping stage of new Information System (IS) projects.

**Responsibility** Information Systems/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Where appropriate, new web functionality and Information Technology software is W3C compliant.

#### **Action 3.2**

Evaluate website against new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 requirements and:

- Identify applicable upgrades required to make the site meet new priority 1 & 2 checkpoints; and
- Prioritise WCAG compliance upgrades that could be implemented within existing resources.

**Responsibility** Information Systems/Program Manager Accessibility/Marketing

**Timeframe** Required changes identified and prioritised (June 2010) Implementation of priorities commence (ongoing)

**Evaluation** Website conforms to WCAG 2.0 priority 1 & majority 2 checkpoints.

**Action 3.3**

Conduct ongoing internal validation of website to ensure maintenance of existing levels of W3C compliance level.

**Responsibility** Information Systems

**Timeframe** Annually

**Evaluation** W3C compliance levels maintained.

**Action 3.4**

Through Content Management System (CMS) training provide new CMS content authors with the alt text guide developed to ensure the accessibility of graphics and images on the website.

**Responsibility** Marketing/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Internal evaluation demonstrates alt text applied correctly.

**Action 3.5**

Explore feasibility for providing closed captioning on the Essential Tour video.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility/Tourism

**Timeframe** When video content is updated

**Evaluation** Video offers captions for visitors who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

**Action 3.6**

Develop a tactile model of the Sydney Opera House to be developed as a resource for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Tactile model available to enhance the tour experience of people who are blind or have low vision.

**Action 3.7**

Completion of the Sydney Opera House Access Masterplan for Backstage, Presenter and Public Areas with endorsement from both the Trust Building Committee and Trust.

**Responsibility** Building Development and Maintenance Portfolio/Program Manager  
Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Sydney Opera House Masterplan provides blue print for all future physical access upgrades.

**Action 3.8**

Implement Access Masterplan designs as per the Plan's implementation priorities and through opportunity projects and new building works.

**Responsibility** Building Development and Maintenance Portfolio/Program Manager  
Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Program of physical access upgrades implemented according to available funding.

**Action 3.9**

Promote the Access Masterplan document across the organisation through the staff intranet and briefings of Building Development & Maintenance Project Managers.

**Responsibility** Building Development & Maintenance Portfolio

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Building Development & Maintenance managers are aware of Access Masterplan.

**Action 3.10**

Confirm annual SAM bids for Masterplan Project priorities.

**Responsibility** Building Development & Maintenance Portfolio/Program Manager  
Accessibility.

**Timeframe** Annually

**Evaluation** Program of physical access upgrades to key areas and elements of the site as per available funding opportunities.

**Action 3.11**

Complete upgrade and refurbishment of the Lower Concourse Accessible toilet facility.

**Responsibility** Building Development & Maintenance Portfolio

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Accessible facility upgraded providing automatic doors and improved circulation space and amenities for patrons on the new accessible route of travel to the Bennelong lift on Lower Concourse Level.

**Action 3.12**

Complete upgrade to accessible lift in The Studio venue to improve wheelchair access, mouverability and reliability.

**Responsibility** Building Development & Maintenance Portfolio

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Upgraded lift in The Studio operational to assist patrons using wheelchairs access all levels of the venue.

**Action 3.13**

Ensure disability access is a key feature of any new precinct redevelopment, fitout or merchandise infrastructure.

**Responsibility** Commercial Operations/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing, as appropriate

**Evaluation** New developments enhance accessibility.

**Action 3.14**

- Identify possible funding sources for implementing accessible digital content features in relation to new digital content initiatives;
- Investigate software technology options for integrating closed caption and audio-description technology; and
- Research accessible digital content provisions on other Arts related websites for benchmarking purposes.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing, as appropriate

**Evaluation** Digital content accessibility options identified and possible funding sources identified.

**Action 3.15**

Organise for Sound/Audio Visual support staff to test existing FM radio units and headsets and liaise with Front of House staff to ensure correct reprogramming and maintenance of equipment.

**Responsibility** Sound/Audio and Visual/Front of House/ Program Manger Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Increase usage and satisfaction from patrons using FM hearing equipment.

**Action 3.16**

Organise for Sound/Audio Visual to audit FM radio equipment and investigate options for updating to more discreet headset equipment.

**Responsibility** Sound Audio Visual/ Program Manger Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2011

**Evaluation** Improved and discreet equipment provided to patrons to improve theatre experience.

**Action 3.17**

Ensure accessibility is considered as key feature of corporate sponsorship in-kind products, where appropriate opportunities exist.

**Responsibility** Corporate Sponsorship

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** In-kind products include accessibility features where appropriate.

**Action 3.18**

Develop a spreadsheet detailing access projects for funding through possible Corporate Sponsorship/Philanthropy channels including:

- Accessible ATM for the Western Foyer;
- Replacement of existing induction loop amplifiers in theatres; and
- Increase range of courtesy wheelchairs and mobility aides for patrons.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Projects identified for possible funding.

**Action 3.19**

Implement process to ensure staff making procurement decisions are briefed on accessibility features required of new products for specification to suppliers i.e. IT equipment, telephone systems, office furniture, etc.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** All relevant products procured at Sydney Opera House are accessible.

## **OUTCOME 4:**

Increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and improve workplace support to existing employees with disabilities.

### **Objectives:**

- Enable employees with disabilities to be the most efficient they can by encouraging workplace support and accommodations;
- Ensure people with disabilities feel they are being invited to apply for positions at Sydney Opera House, and the organisation is seen as a welcoming and responsive employer for people with disabilities;
- Work more closely with recruitment suppliers to attract candidates with disabilities and facilitate their success; and
- Develop basic mental health awareness and education for inclusion in leadership training.

#### **Action 4.1**

Establish links with recruitment agencies for people with disabilities.

**Responsibility** Human Resources

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Increase in enquiries, applications and successful recruitment of candidates with a disability.

#### **Action 4.2**

Identify and advertise physical requirements for employment positions that are advertised.

**Responsibility** Human Resources

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Encourage people with disabilities to apply for appropriate positions at Sydney Opera House.

#### **Action 4.3**

Increase recruiting manager's awareness of reasonable adjustment policies.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Ensure recruiting Managers make unbiased recruitment decisions.

**Action 4.4**

Create a link to Accessibility Program Manager details on the Learning and Development intranet site - for staff with specific access requirements to contact for support.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Provide support to staff with disabilities.

**Action 4.5**

Trial mental illness awareness training for managers covering issues of identifying signs, stigma, available support and resilience training.

**Responsibility** Learning & Development

**Timeframe** Scope possible providers and develop business case (June 2010) Trial training (June 2011) evaluate training (June 2012).

**Evaluation** Increase awareness and support around mental health issues in the workplace.

**Action 4.6**

Develop a Staff Satisfaction Survey on the staff intranet for employees with disabilities which maintains privacy and identifies areas of concern and improved support for existing employees with disabilities. Develop strategies to improve workplace support.

**Responsibility** Human Resources/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010/Ongoing

**Evaluation** Areas for improved support are identified and actions to address these areas are implemented.

**Action 4.7**

Develop information resource for new inductees with disabilities that provides information on accessibility at Sydney Opera House and identifies special employee assistance for accessing computer workstations and staff intranet.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility /Human Resources/Information Systems

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Increase support to employees with disabilities.

**Action 4.8**

Develop an internal resource to ensure Human Resource consultants are aware of accessibility issues in order to support employees in the workplace.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** June 2010

**Evaluation** Increase support to employees with disabilities.

**Action 4.9**

Increase accessibility of staff intranet pages by:

- Modifying current stylesheets so that wherever possible intranet pages have scalable fonts; and
- When new pages are created layers are used for positioning instead of tables.

**Responsibility** Information Systems

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Extend and maintain accessible design guidelines to the staff intranet.

**Action 4.10**

Implement internal process for Human Resources to notify the Information Systems team for staff requiring IT workstation assessments and installation of specialised equipment and accessibility applications.

**Responsibility** Information Systems/Human Resources/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Able to adapt workstations to employee's access needs. Increased completion of and satisfaction with workplace modifications.

**Action 4.11**

Create special style sheets on the staff intranet that are tailored to the needs of individual staff with specific access needs.

**Responsibility** Information Systems

**Timeframe** Ongoing

**Evaluation** Able to adapt intranet to individual employee's access needs.

**Action 4.12**

Conduct internal focus group to determine usability of the staff intranet and identify common accessibility issues – review design principles to enhance the intranet experience of staff.

**Responsibility** Information Systems

**Timeframe** Focus group conducted and design principles reviewed (June 2011)

**Evaluation** Able to adapt Intranet provisions to employee's access needs.

**Action 4.13**

In partnership with Accessible Arts investigate implementing an inclusive mentoring/work experience program for emerging arts workers with disabilities including identifying appropriate roles, training and funding support.

**Responsibility** Accessible Arts/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Proposal completed (June 2010) Implementation (2012)

**Evaluation** Inclusive work experience program scoped.

## **OUTCOME 5:**

Continue Sydney Opera House's involvement in activities that promote the organisation's commitment to making the performing arts more accessible to people with disabilities.

### **Objective:**

- Demonstrate leadership in access by brokering new partnerships and facilitating new learning experiences across the arts industry and access community.

### **Action 5.1**

In partnership with Accessible Arts host an annual access and the arts information session to educate and raise awareness of best practice issues for the arts industry - investigate opportunities to host international speakers on access issues.

**Responsibility** Accessible Arts/Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Annually

The first information session provided for arts/cultural institutions is planned for September 2009 and facilitated by the Program Manager Accessibility, to share knowledge from the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD conference), taking place at the Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts, Washington D.C in August.

**Evaluation** Sydney Opera House is acknowledged as playing a leadership role in facilitating access awareness across the arts industry.

### **Action 5.2**

Continue annual Access Awards incentive program to acknowledge the work and support of staff and external partners towards improving access at Sydney Opera House.

**Responsibility** Planning & Governance

**Timeframe** Annually (in December)

**Evaluation** Awards implemented and staff and partners acknowledged for their achievements, organisational momentum for access is further increased.

### **Action 5.3**

Implement annual activity that increases access to the performing arts for people with disabilities and/or promotes the abilities of people with disabilities to the wider community.

**Responsibility** Program Manager Accessibility

**Timeframe** Annually (December - to coincide with *International Day of People with Disabilities*)

**Evaluation** Promote positive images of people with disabilities, and their promote access to the performing arts.