



**INTERNATIONAL  
AUDIENCE  
ENGAGEMENT  
NETWORK**

**THE MELBOURNE GROUP MEETING  
15–16 MARCH 2018  
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**

**AUDIENCE  
ENGAGEMENT  
CHAMPIONS THE  
EMOTIONAL AND  
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN AUDIENCES  
AND MUSEUMS  
TO SUSTAIN  
THEIR FUTURE.**

VALUE STATEMENT, WRITTEN BY THE IAE MELBOURNE GROUP

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# REPORT ON OUTCOMES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 15–16 March, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in Melbourne, Australia, hosted the inaugural International Audience Engagement network (IAE) meeting, collaborating with 29 senior audience engagement professionals from museums across the world in a two-day intensive workshop. Achieving a core objective of the meeting, the Melbourne Group drafted a universal value statement, which works to position and define the value of audience engagement as a field of practice in museums.

Two of the key priorities of museum audience engagement – Inclusion and The Audience Experience – were identified in a pre-meeting survey. The other major outcome of the meeting was the development of a draft set of universal guidelines, recommendations and success measures, intended to offer a pathway for museum professionals to develop meaningful and successful strategies that support audience engagement and contribute to a sustainable future for museums.

Following the meeting, the IAE Steering Group assessed all contributions during the two days, synthesising common themes to produce a refined matrix for global guidelines, recommendations and impact measures. A key finding during this process was that many guidelines and recommendations were relevant in equal parts to both of the priority topics. The resulting matrix introduces one set of seven overarching guidelines that are applicable to both of the priorities, as well as across audience engagement goals more broadly.

Together, the value statement and toolkit of high-level guidelines function as a practical, customisable resource for museums looking to introduce, develop or advance audience engagement as a dedicated function. These materials are also a supporting tool for those wishing to build a case for the necessity of an audience engagement strategy within the museum.

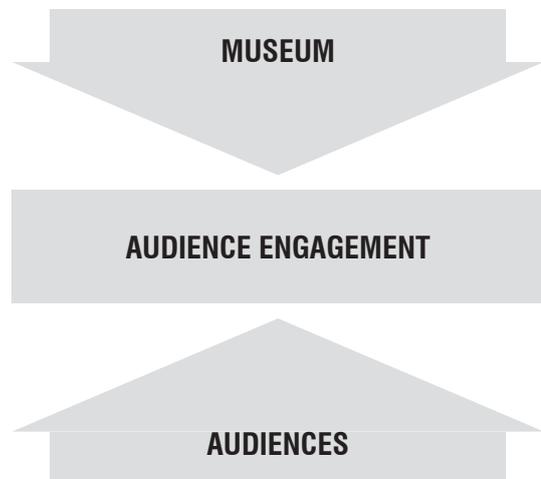
These resources are outlined on the following pages.

The Melbourne Group meeting was co-designed and facilitated by the IAE network Steering Group, the National Gallery of Victoria and project partner Ernst & Young.

## DEFINITION OF AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

For the purposes of the IAE network, audience engagement is defined as any function or set of functions within museums whose core mandate is focused on the strategy, planning, delivery and evaluation of relationship-building with audiences, including the key points of interaction between visitors and a museum.

The defining element of audience engagement is that it is never focussed on one audience touchpoint, but comprises an integrated range of audience-centric functions, which may include any strategic combination of the following: Visitor services, audience research and analytics, ticketing, membership, digital engagement, outreach, education, access or public programs, print or digital communications, curatorial and marketing.



Audience engagement occupies a unique, multidirectional role as ambassador and champion for both the audience and the museum.

# **IAE GUIDELINES FOR MUSEUMS 2018 PRIORITIES**

PRIORITY 1:

**INCLUSION AND  
ENGAGEMENT**

**AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT  
IS A MUSEUM PRIORITY  
TO WELCOME DIVERSE  
COMMUNITIES AND REFLECT  
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.**

PRIORITY 2:

**THE AUDIENCE  
EXPERIENCE**

**THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE  
TAKES PLACE BEFORE, DURING,  
AFTER AND EVEN WITHOUT  
A VISIT. A SUCCESSFUL  
EXPERIENCE INVOLVES EVERY  
MUSEUM STAFF MEMBER.**

# HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

Responding to these two priorities for audience engagement, the seven guidelines outlined on the following pages are designed as a toolkit for museum professionals developing, refining or advocating for holistic audience engagement as part of their strategic planning.

Understanding that museums may be at different stages of audience engagement and development, and with varying resources, these guidelines, and the corresponding short and long-term recommendations for achieving them, can be implemented in whole or part according to the specific needs of the individual museum. The impact measures are likewise adaptable.



## INTERPRETING SOME COMMON TERMS

The glossary below identifies some of the more common museum terms found in the toolkit, with broad interpretations to assist museum professionals to adapt the recommendations in a way that is workable for their museum.

**Audience:** People who connect with a museum in any way, large or small, long-term or briefly. This includes those physically visiting a museum or interacting with museums without visiting (e.g. digital, communications, through outreach programming).

**Communications:** the ways that a museum speaks to or shares information with audiences. This includes written communications (emails, letters, labels, e-news, digital texts), verbal communications (recordings, customer service and interactions in person or via phone) and body language (e.g. customer service, attitude, eye contact).

**Community:** In the context of the IAE guidelines, refers broadly to the city and region the museum exists in. This includes different individual and cultural groups.

**Co-creation:** When a museum is creating content that authentically reflects, responds to, and is relevant to audiences and the museum’s community. In this context, co-creation can be achieved through developing programs based on audience research, advisory sessions, feedback, community partnerships and collaborations.

**Diverse/Diversity:** Engaging and welcoming as many different groups and individuals as possible, premised on the principle that museums should be a place for everyone.

**Frontline/front-facing:** Museum staff whose roles require them to liaise directly with or are visible to audiences, including customer service staff (retail, hospitality, visitor services, ticketing, online or phone enquiries), security, facilities staff, event or program representatives, educators and tour guides.

**Projects/programs/programming:** Activities, events, content or resources developed by a museum for audiences to participate in or interact with, including but not limited to public programs, interpretation, exhibitions, education and learning activities.

## AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT CHAMPIONS THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUDIENCES AND MUSEUMS TO SUSTAIN THEIR FUTURE.

Success measures for all guidelines should incorporate establishing targets and time frames to implement relevant recommendations.

### GUIDELINE 1.

#### MUSEUMS EXIST TO ENGAGE AUDIENCES

#### SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Initiate a briefing with staff responsible for the museum's brand identity to explore how audience engagement can help the museum to achieve its mission
- Assess existing feedback and evaluation channels and consolidate as many as possible in order to gather data on audience engagement activity and feedback across functions and departments
- Define audience engagement values for the museum with a cross-section of staff, including identifying driving values within specific functions or departments, and as a holistic institution
- When reviewing business and strategic plans at an organisation-wide level, include specific audience engagement goals that will yield reportable outcomes
- Talk about audiences in every staff forum possible (staff emails; daily briefings; project teams; senior management meetings)

#### LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review annually how audience engagement outcomes are affirming the museum's brand
- Set standards for successful audience engagement (KPIs) and meet regularly with staff to evaluate feedback and ensure that targets are being met or exceeded
- All departments and staff share the same value statement for audience engagement, and respond to it in their business planning and reporting
- Advocate for a department of audience engagement to ensure its representation at senior management levels
- Every position description references engaging audiences as a core responsibility

#### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of role descriptions (and temporary contracts) including audience engagement reference
- Audience-focused goals in place for every section of the museum's business/strategic plan

# IAE GUIDELINES

## GUIDELINE 2.

### EVERY PROJECT BEGINS WITH THE AUDIENCE

- Engage early with museum departments to plan exhibitions and projects in relation to diverse audiences. Initiate a cross-departmental planning team focused on audience engagement to start least twelve months prior to each major exhibition, display or project to foster internal collaboration. Example departments include: Curatorial, Marketing, Communications, Public Affairs, Retail, Shops, Visitor Services, Security
- Capture and assess audience feedback throughout the duration of exhibitions or projects and share successes or updates with other departments to enable review
- Find ways to recognise audience engagement initiatives and the contributions of museum departments to key outcomes (i.e. monthly audience engagement update to internal departments; or a regular agenda item for all staff meetings or bulletins)
- Conduct an audit of the museum and its services, from online information, to signage, programs and core services, with diverse audiences in mind

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Actively foster an internal museum culture based on collaboration and audience engagement by using every key meeting or interaction to share positive results of cross-departmental planning
- Build relationships with local communities and peak organisations to indicate the museum's commitment to its communities (i.e. through targeted exhibition briefings, tours, previews), or informal advisory groups if relevant
- Ensure an audience engagement staff person is represented on each major committee of the museum
- Work towards embedding accessibility into as many functions of the museum as possible

## MEASURING SUCCESS

- Every project or exhibition delivered has had cross-departmental contribution, including audience engagement
- New community partnerships and collaborations are established
- Accessibility is increased or expanded

## GUIDELINE 3.

### MUSEUMS ACTIVELY SEEK TO UNDERSTAND AUDIENCES

- Encourage staff to observe audiences by attending programs, visiting exhibition spaces during busy and quiet times and circulating in information spaces (foyers) or social spaces (catering venues). How is the audience behaving? What services or information do they need?
- Conduct monthly empathy interviews with audiences based on 3 questions and distribute results to a cross-section of staff. Questions might be: Share a museum experience that has made an impact on you; what have you done or seen in the museum today?; why did you choose to visit the museum today?
- Create journey maps of your institution, marking the points of interaction before, during and after a visit (different audiences may undertake different journeys depending on their needs and interests) to identify where improvements are required
- Support all audience-facing staff to understand the importance of data collection (including via ticket sales, informal observations, formal feedback)

- Use qualitative and quantitative research to support action plans for improvements across the museum's spaces and services
- Use qualitative and quantitative data collected over time to support funding applications or internal proposals for new programs and initiatives
- Work across departments to make improvements to primary information sources (website, wayfinding signage, information services) to support a better audience experience
- Implement a single platform information technology system (ticketing and CRM) that can effectively store information and report on the audience's interactions with the museum

- Audience feedback and observations of audience needs are documented and can be used to support funding applications
- Return on investment is evident: Membership, donations, program income
- Journey maps completed and actioned with priorities and time lines
- Increased use of website vs decreased telephone inquiries for general information
- Diversity in programming and services due to empathy interview feedback
- Audience feedback shows content is relevant and resonates with audiences
- Long-range evaluation shows increase in the consistency of audience feedback and ratings
- New audiences engaged through new or improved projects or strategies

# IAE GUIDELINES

## GUIDELINE 4.

### ALL COMMUNITIES ARE SERVED AND REFLECTED ACROSS MUSEUM FUNCTIONS

#### SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Seek observations from staff in frontline positions on a weekly basis to share with broader teams and incorporate into plans for improvements as necessary
- Initiate a cross-department group to write and check labels for consistency and relevance to a range of audiences and cultural backgrounds
- Update recruitment processes to enable the museum to reflect the diverse community in which it exists
- Engage training professionals to provide cultural awareness training if the museum does not possess required skills in the area
- Conduct an audit of communications and signage to ensure the museum is a welcoming space for linguistically diverse audiences
- Ensure that public programs incorporate diverse voices to enable a variety of perspectives on subject matter

#### LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Train all staff and volunteers in cultural competency, aimed at building capability for interactions with audiences of diverse cultures
- Review the museum's permanent collection texts every 6 months for relevance and update language and tone
- Equip staff with language skills to engage local communities and incoming tourist groups
- Identify new audiences and actively pursue through outreach and partnerships
- Develop a framework that ensures relevant communications are multilingual and accessible in tone to reflect the museum's key communities
- View exhibitions, displays, publications and other content from the perspectives of different audience groups and plan accordingly to ensure these communities are well served

#### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Increase in audience-facing staff proficient in languages other than English
- Cultural competency plan in place and reported against
- Audience groups feel welcomed and that the museum is relevant to them

## GUIDELINE 5.

### GENUINE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT RESULTS FROM OPEN CONVERSATIONS

- Establish a readership group for museum communications and interpretive texts (i.e. labels) to ensure they cover a broad, not exclusive, understanding of the subject matter and introduce concepts to new audiences
- Ensure that queries, comments and feedback submitted from audiences via social media are reviewed by key departments and incorporated into planning
- Review the museum's surveys and apply consistent questions across departments in order to gather long-term data on audience motivations and satisfaction. Issue an electronic survey after every program or visit.
- Incentivise audience feedback if return rates are poor
- Create a list of adaptable and practical ways to support co-creation, e.g. through audience research, community discussions and relationship-building

- Include different museum staff perspectives and expertise in delivering public programs, writing labels, contributing to museum publications in order to increase variety, diversity and accessibility of voices
- Open up more avenues for audiences to communicate with the museum to ensure it is accessible to audiences across the channels they use
- Embrace negative results to create actions that lead to innovation
- Evaluate all major decisions concerning audience engagement on the basis of data (qualitative and quantitative)
- Commit to the principle of co-creation: a commitment to sourcing ideas not only internally, but via external research and a connection to what is happening in the museum's community. Implement processes to achieve this.

- Target for percentage of communications assessed by readership team is met or exceeded of communications reviewed by readership group
- Survey questions convert audience sentiment (i.e. social impact) to statistical data (i.e. 'On a scale of 1-5, how relevant was this program to you')
- Multi-departmental teams or internal advisory groups established
- Co-creation is evident through projects and outcomes that reflect audience needs and interests (validated through media or feedback)

## GUIDELINE 6.

### MUSEUMS ARE PLACES TO EXPLORE CURRENT IDEAS

#### SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with other staff to identify key works, themes or ideas that front-facing teams will need to assist with communicating to audiences and aim to conduct briefings at least 6 weeks prior to exhibition opening. Focus on works or ideas that may elicit varied responses from audiences
- Introduce a 'newsroom' approach to short-term planning - a news item that becomes the starting point for programming or social media content that connects the museum with contemporary life
- Forward-plan by drafting an integrated public program and content plan for every exhibition or display, drawing ideas and themes from internal and external sources

#### LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that staff are aware of the parameters in their discussions with audiences and escalation paths for difficult conversations, to ensure they represent the museum in their interactions and are supported by the museum
- Foster a working environment based on awareness, interest and communication across a wide range of disciplines and topics
- Identify partners who can provide content that addresses gaps in the museum's internal skills in relation to current topics or debates (i.e. work with local universities, artists, musicians, writers or think tanks)

#### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Feedback shows that audiences feel content is relevant to contemporary society
- Percentage or number of new exhibitions or displays are linked to at least one current idea or contemporary topic through audience engagement programs, interpretation, communications or similar content
- Audience-facing staff feel they can communicate confidently to audiences about key works, including those that are topical or complex

## GUIDELINE 7.

### ALL AUDIENCES FEEL WELCOME, ALWAYS

- Ensure that all audiences are welcomed and farewelled at each interaction point with good eye contact and a smile
- Begin to champion the audience in everyday interactions (i.e. sharing positive stories about new audiences attending the museum's exhibitions or programs; preparing welcome scripts for audience-facing staff; briefing teams about the positive contribution of diverse audiences)
- When planning, identify any potential or known barriers to audience engagement and incorporate ways to address these (i.e. hold a program in a more relaxed venue, or seek a speaker or writer from a particular community or with expertise or a unique perspective)
- Conduct an audit of communications to ensure the museum is a welcoming space and create a style guide to enable simple checks for readability/natural language

- Equip staff with ways to de-escalate issues before they become formal complaints
- Develop institution-wide customer service standards that support staff to create a positive experience for all audiences. Ensure these standards are able to be measured
- Build a database of innovative ways to engage the museum's known and unknown audiences and refer to this in planning and review stages of the project's development
- Develop a framework that ensures all communications are considered across the museum (i.e. multilingual and accessible signage and tone) and implement a cross-departmental team of staff to review communications

- Staff training is up to date
- Service standards are measurable and show improvements and increase in consistency of service across all areas
- Reduced escalation
- Audiences associate the museum's brand with its quality of service
- Staff associate the museum's brand with its quality of service
- Communication style guides and internal advisory groups created and in use across the institution

# IAE NETWORK 2018 THE MELBOURNE GROUP

NAME	ROLE	MUSEUM
Heather Robertson	Head of Learning and Participation	Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
Katie Getchell	Deputy Director and Chief Brand Officer	Boston Museum of Fine Arts, USA
Cécile Garreau De Loubresse	CRM & Loyalty Marketing Manager	Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Sabine Haag	Director General	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria
Sarah Jesse	Associate Vice President of Education	Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA
Kristin Prestegaard	Chief Engagement Officer	Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA
Sumika Takashima	Leader of Learning	Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
Eise Shiraki	Associate Curator of Learning	Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
Noelia Ibáñez	Head of the Service of Analysis and Statistics	Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain
Víctor Cageao	General Coordinator of Programming	Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain
Audrey Stoltz	Assistant Director of Visitor Engagement	Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Lara Schweller	Coordinator for Community and Access Programs	Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Màiri Lafferty	Curator of Engagement	National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh
Anabeth Guthrie	Chief of Communications	National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA
Jean-François Bilodeau	Deputy Director, Advancement & Public Engagement	National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
Donna McColm	Associate Director, Audience Engagement & Learning	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Elisha Buttler	Senior Audience Engagement Officer	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Kate Ryan	The Truby and Florence Williams Curator of Children's Programs	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Andrea Stahel	Senior Project Officer, Public Programs	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Jes Wawrzynski	Senior Public Programmer	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Leigh Cartwright	Front of House Manager	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Michele Stockley	Senior Educator	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Chris Lee	Chief Marketing Officer	National Gallery Singapore
Suenne Megan Tan	Director, Audience Development & Engagement	National Gallery Singapore
Dr Eugene Tan	Director	National Gallery Singapore
Philippe Rivière	Head of Digital Department	Paris Musées, France
Lynn Sim	Head, Marketing Communications, Partnership and Patronage, Strategic Planning	Singapore Art Museum
Adam Rozan	Director of Programs and Audience Development	National Museum of American History, Washington D.C., USA
Claire Clutterbuck	Head of Insight	The Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom

# IAE NETWORK 2018

## THE MELBOURNE GROUP: PRESENTATIONS

### IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION:

<b>Kristin Prestegaard</b>	Museum as Site for Social Action (MASSAction)
<b>Philippe Rivière</b>	CulturoGame- a funny way to engage new audience outside museums
<b>Audrey Stoltz</b>	#ArtSpeaks- a day of community and conversation
<b>Jean-François Bilodeau</b>	The Visitor Journey- committing to a visitor-centric approach
<b>Donna McColm</b>	With Elisha Buttler and Leigh Cartwright: NGV Service Standards- a collaborative, cross-departmental workshop program
<b>Audrey Stoltz</b>	MoMAyou- Culture and Visitor Engagement training program
<b>Chris Lee</b>	Know-Our-Visitor Co-Lab
<b>Víctor Cageao</b>	Statistics Automation System (SAE)
<b>Claire Clutterbuck</b>	Who's Out There? Audience focused practice through segmentation
<b>Màiri Lafferty</b>	GENERATION: Co-production
<b>Sumika Takashima</b>	Pedro Reyes, PalasporPistolas [Shovels for Guns]
<b>Kristin Prestegaard</b>	My Mia: A New Membership Model

# THANK YOU

## ABOUT THE IAE NETWORK

The International Audience Engagement network was established in 2017 as an initiative of an international steering group comprising audience engagement leaders based in museums worldwide. The network was formed as a direct response to one of the biggest priorities facing museums and cultural institutions today – nurturing authentic, cohesive engagement with diverse audiences across many interactions with the museum in the twenty-first century.

Our mission is to create a global network of art museum leaders in audience engagement committed to advancing the public value of museums through supporting an authentic internal and external focus on the audience experience.

## STEERING GROUP

<b>Jean-François Bilodeau</b>	Deputy Director, Advancement and Public Engagement, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
<b>Chris Lee</b>	Chief Marketing Officer, National Gallery Singapore
<b>Donna McColm</b>	Associate Director, Audience Engagement and Learning, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
<b>Kristin Prestegaard</b>	Chief Engagement Officer, Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA
<b>Audrey Stoltz</b>	Assistant Director of Visitor Engagement, and <b>Sonya Shrier</b> , Director of Visitor Engagement, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA
<b>Adam Reed Rozan</b>	Director of Programs and Audience Development, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, Washington D.C.; Adjunct Professor, Harvard University Extension School, Cambridge, USA

## CONTACT

For information on the IAE network please email your Steering Group contact or via [IAEN@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:IAEN@ngv.vic.gov.au)

THE MELBOURNE GROUP MEETING.  
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