



PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

27 July 2015

PGAV FEEDBACK ON MCM DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES WORKING GROUP STAGE 1 REPORT

The Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the MCM Digital Technologies Working Group Stage 1 Report on behalf of our members. The PGAV represents 50 public galleries across metropolitan and regional Victoria including state institutions (4), local government galleries (18 regional, 17 metro), university art museums (6) and independent galleries (5). Our role is to build and strengthen the capacity of public galleries in Victoria to engage people in the visual arts and thereby deliver valuable cultural, social and economic returns to their communities.

Through benchmarking undertaken in 2014 we learned that our members **hold over 170,000 items in their collections with a combined worth of \$4.8 billion**. If you remove the National Gallery of Victoria's collection from these figures, our members hold over 100,000 items worth \$1.1 billion. **Public galleries in metropolitan and regional Victoria have significant holdings of visual art** – spanning European masterpieces, Australian art from the colonial era to the present time and exemplary works of Aboriginal art. **They represent a very important segment of Australia's publicly funded collecting institutions.**

Importantly, there is growing demand for access to the visual arts. Recent research commissioned by Creative Victoria identifies that 91% (or 3.7 million people) engage with the visual arts sector across the state, while Australia Council research indicates we have the fastest growing participation rate of all arts sectors.

The PGAV Board has committed to a **State-wide Digitisation** initiative in Victoria as part of its Strategic Plan 2014-16. We undertook a survey of our members in 2014 **to identify the extent of their digitisation activities, the availability of their collections online and the issues and barriers** to digitisation programs.

This survey revealed that 20% of our members have their collections available online through their websites, while 70% indicated they wanted to make their collections available online. **Public galleries are very aware that they have outstanding collections of visual which are largely invisible. They see digitisation as the best way to increase access to their collections by Australian and international audiences.**

There are tangible issues and barriers, some specific to the visual arts, which are impeding the investment required to make their collections available online. As the peak body for public galleries in Victoria, the PGAV is well placed to partner with Creative Victoria to address the issues specific to public galleries and ensure their significant visual art collections are available online. Our response to this Report is one step in this journey.

BASIS OF RESPONSE

Feedback provided in this submission is drawn from the survey the PGAV conducted with members on the digitisation of their collections, combined with the PGAV's involvement since 2011 with the Victorian Culture Network (VCN) Reference Group, managed by Creative Victoria.

GLAM SECTOR - DIVERSITY

In 2011 the PGAV was invited to be part of the Victorian Culture Network (VCN) Reference Group after the newly elected Baillieu Government identified a need to increase online access to Victoria's public gallery collections. The intention was for the PGAV to work with the VCN to ensure our member's collections were represented on the Collections Victoria website (managed by Museum Victoria and Museums Australia (Victoria)) and stories about these significant collections featured on the Culture Victoria website (managed by Creative Victoria).

Working towards this goal, the PGAV has identified a range of barriers to the integration of visual art collections within the Collections Victoria and, to a lesser extent, the Culture Victoria websites. These barriers relate to the right of attribution and integrity of the work inherent in Moral Rights of Australian Copyright legislation; complex licencing agreements inherent in Australian Copyright legislation and contractual agreements between artists and their Commercial Gallery representatives; as well as nomenclature. **These barriers are specific to the visual arts and stem from museum collection management practices being applied to the gallery sector.** The PGAV will continue to work with the VCN / Creative Victoria to contribute our specialist knowledge to ensure public galleries are able to be appropriately represented on the Collections Victoria and Culture Victoria websites.

What we have learned through our involvement with the VCN is that the individual sectors within GLAM have their own unique issues, which they themselves are best able to address. To ignore sector-specific differences will see a continuation of the current situation, where digitisation progresses in an adhoc manner and the nation's public visual art collections remain largely invisible.

We believe the way forward for national digitisation is for GLAM sector differences to be embraced. Lead agencies and peak bodies within each representative sector must identify their specific needs, issues and barriers to digitisation. Then a tailored, sector-specific strategic plan can be established to guide this project. The development of a sector-specific plan will enable the formation of a national strategic plan, enabling progress to be benchmarked annually.

RECOMMENDATION 1: the MCM adopts GLAM sector diversity. It is responsible for approving sector strategic plans and allocating funding to enable the goals to be met. The MCM maps progress through annual benchmarking.

MAKING THE NATION'S COLLECTIONS VISIBLE

A key benefit of the vast collections of public galleries being featured on the Collection Victoria & Culture Victoria websites is visibility. 20% of our member galleries make their collections available on their own website – requiring a lot of resources to drive visitation. A

story on Culture Victoria can significantly increase traffic to their websites, while uploading their collection data to Collection Victoria makes it available to larger audiences. For the 70% of members who don't currently have their collections online, Collection Victoria provides a low cost and immediate way for small-to-medium sized galleries to make their collections widely accessible online. Once on Collection Victoria and Culture Victoria, public gallery collections are available through TROVE, making their visual art collections widely accessible to national and international audiences.

While TROVE's reach is extensive, its interface is not engaging – particularly for visual arts audiences. We believe TROVE could benefit from engaging with the broader GLAM sector on its user engagement experience – we would like one which encourages creative engagement with collections.

RECOMMENDATION 2: TROVE continue to serve as the national aggregator of Australia's collections, however the MCM allocate funding for the National Library of Australia to collaborate with the GLAM sector to make TROVE a more creative, engaging user experience.

GLAM SECTOR - IMPROVED COLLABORATION

Public galleries in Victoria are punching above their weight, delivering ambitious programs to growing audiences and exceeding the expectations of stakeholders. In 2014, they presented 536 exhibitions, 866 public programs and 736 education programs to more than 4 million visitors. All this activity means it is difficult for galleries of any size to allocate resources to sector-wide initiatives. **The result is that there is not the flow of information from GLAM Lead Agencies to the small-to-medium sector that is anticipated in the MCM Report, and less across jurisdictions.**

We believe peak bodies are perfectly placed to provide the leadership required to implement a sector-wide initiative like digitisation. We operate across small, medium and large organisations – undertaking consultation, fostering knowledge exchange and delivering programs which build the capacity of the sector. The intimate knowledge we have of the sector means we can act as a short-cut for government and are well positioned to work across jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION 3: MCM fund peak bodies across GLAM sectors to lead the digitisation strategy at a State level, in partnership with lead agencies. This will ensure the requirements of small-to-medium organisations are accommodated, as well as lead agencies, delivering a more inclusive outcome nationally. This will ensure the breadth and depth of Australia's collections are accessible online and visible to national and international audiences.

RECOMMENDATION 4: We recommend a sector-specific approach to the development of a National Digital Strategy. Victoria is used as the example for the State/Territory jurisdiction in the table below:

Jurisdiction	Galleries	Libraries	Archives	Museums
STATE / TERRITORY State Lead Agencies and Peak Bodies work together to set State Strategic Plans .	National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) & Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV)	State Library of Victoria (SLV) & Peak Bodies	Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) & Peak Bodies	Museum Victoria & Museums Australia (Vic) & Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV)
NATIONAL Set National Strategy based on State plans & inform International Strategy .	Council of Australian Art Museum Directors (CAAMD) & Peak Bodies	National & State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) & Peak Bodies	Council of Australasian Archives & Record Authorities (CAARA) & Peak Bodies	Council of Australian Museum Directors (CAMD) & Museums Australia (MA) & Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS)
INTERNATIONAL	TROVE - which is developed in consultation with national GLAM sectors, with funding from the Meeting of Cultural Ministers & Ministry for the Arts..			

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE MCM REPORT

The PGAV endorses the recommendations in the Report, with the following amendments:

Across jurisdictions:

1. Implement a national standard and system for reporting on and benchmarking digital activities within publicly funded collecting organisations – **which are responsive to GLAM sector-specific differences**. (5.1)

Across GLAM sectors through peak bodies and lead organisations:

2. ~~Develop cross domain and cross-jurisdictional digital strategies. (4.1.2)~~ **Develop sector-specific digital strategies and systems for reporting on and benchmarking digital activities within publicly funded collecting organisations.**
3. Engage domain peak bodies to develop greater sharing / standardisation of technical standards for:
 - the creation and storage of digital assets; (4.3.1)
 - descriptive metadata; (4.4.1)
 - reporting and tracking collection items and metadata records online; (4.5.1) and
 - discovery metadata. (4.6.2)
4. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of different digital distribution channels. (4.5.2)
5. Further support API (Application Programming interfaces) development for making collections data more easily available. **Ensure a % of funded APIs are for small-to-medium public collecting agencies (fostering sector-specific collaborative marketing initiatives, or similar).** (4.7.3)

6. Develop and implement national ~~cross-domain~~ procedural guidelines for the application of Creative Commons licensing as a preferred licensing option, unless special circumstances apply. (4.9.2)

Within publicly-funded GLAM institutions:

7. Encourage all collecting institutions to develop and report against a formal digital strategy and digital plan. (4.1.1)
8. Encourage all collecting institutions to engage with or develop collaborative cross domain / jurisdiction open data initiatives. (4.7.2)

We welcome this opportunity to provide feedback on the MCM Digital Technologies Working Group stage 1 report and we look forward to working with MCM to ensure public gallery collections in Victoria are widely accessible through a national digital strategy.

For further comment, please contact:

Anne Robertson
PGAV Executive Officer
Tel: (03) 8662 1585
Mobile: 0403 268 017
Email: anne.robertson@pgav.ngv.vic.gov.au