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Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Artbank

Strategic Plan 2023-24 to 2027-28

December 2023

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Purpose

Established in 1980, Artbank's purpose is to:

- i. Encourage the development of contemporary Australian artists and art through the acquisition of work by living Australian artists
- ii. Promote the value of Australian contemporary art to the broader community by making this art accessible through an art leasing scheme
- iii. Manage the Artbank collection on behalf of the Australian Government.

Government Policy Context

Artbank delivers against two Australian Government arts policy objectives. These are:

1. *Revive—Australia's Cultural Policy for the next five years, Pillar 3, Centrality of the Artist*¹:

...The growth and stability of Australia's cultural and creative workforce depends on continuous career development that builds confidence in creative sector careers and equips creative practitioners of all ages to utilise their skills as both workers and artists.

...The Government's Artbank initiative directly supports contemporary Australian artists through the acquisition and leasing of artworks to organisations, businesses, governments and individuals across Australia, as well as in overseas posts.

Artbank's collection...reflects the diversity and talent of practising Australian artists. The funds generated from leasing activities are used to acquire new artworks to ensure the collection remains dynamic and supports the livelihoods of living, professional artists.


2. the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts 2022-23 Corporate Plan, Outcome 6.1 – Arts and Cultural Development: Participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture through developing and supporting cultural expression.

Snapshot

Artbank is an Australian Government initiative that is part of the Office for the Arts, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Department).

Founded in 1980 with an endowment of 600 artworks from the National Collection (now the National Gallery of Australia), Artbank acquires the artwork of living, Australian artists and makes these available to the public through a leasing program, through exhibitions and other events, and through loans to other cultural institutions. By 2023, the Artbank collection has grown to around 11,000 artworks and includes some of the best Australian art produced over the past four decades, including an exemplary collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

¹ *Australia's Cultural Policy for the next five years—Revive, Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist*, pp 52 and 53.



Artbank is recognised for the important role it plays in supporting Australian contemporary art – it is often the first public institution to acquire artworks by emerging artists, offering support and validation when it is needed most. Artworks are predominantly acquired on the primary market from commercial galleries, Indigenous art centres, art fairs, non-commercial exhibitions, commissions and directly from artists. All leasing income goes back into running the initiative, including the acquisition of new artworks.

Artbank's leasing scheme brings the work of Australian artists to audiences across Australia and around the world. The revenue from the leasing scheme funds the majority of Artbank's operations, including its artwork acquisitions.

Since it commenced operations in 1980, Artbank has:

- purchased the work of over 3,500 artists
- built a collection of around 11,000 artworks valued in 2022 at \$43 million
- established flagship premises in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a presence in Perth.

Each year, it:

- invests up to \$0.5 million to support Australian contemporary artists by purchasing new artwork
- works with over 500 leasing clients
- manages the movement of approximately 4,000 artworks
- contributes to Australia's cultural diplomacy efforts by leasing artworks to Australian embassies and other offices in approximately 70 countries across the globe
- expends approximately \$0.150 million in affiliated industries, including for freight, framing, conservation and photographic documentation
- presents approximately 18 public events, including exhibitions, forums, artists' and curators' talks.

By June 2023, Artbank had over 4500 artworks on lease, with associated income of around \$3.8 million p.a. or 51 per cent of the potential rental value of its collection.

Five Year Plan

Over the next five years, Artbank will enhance its operations across each of its functions as it aims to increase its leasing operations and revenue. Leasing revenue is considered a key measure of Artbank's success, along with a range of other factors including its:

- support for artists through its acquisitions budget, raised in 2023 from \$0.4 million each year to \$0.5 million each year
- identification of appropriate high-quality artworks for acquisition
- best-practice management of the Artbank collection
- presentation of acclaimed exhibitions and public programs
- national and international reach
- sustained productive relationships with leasing clients and the arts sector.

Artbank will expand its leasing clients nationally and systematically adjust leasing fees in line with its three-yearly collection valuations. In 2024, it will undertake a rental pricing analysis to ensure that its fees for leasing artworks are competitive and appropriate.

To support its expanded leasing scheme, Artbank will also seek to maximise the potential of its current premises and public programming, and investigate the feasibility of enhancing operations in Perth and Brisbane.

Artbank's premises in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth are used to promote the organisation, the artists and their art, to attract clients, and to maintain, store, and then process, leased artworks.

Its flagship premises in Waterloo, Sydney and Collingwood, Melbourne each have high-quality public facing galleries; art storage; and contemporary offices for Artbank staff. In the design process for both premises, consideration was given to the flow between spaces, and this feature enhances how audiences and leasing clients engage with the collection. The Melbourne premises also has an artist's studio that Artbank will seek to activate as an opportunity for contemporary artists and curators.

To improve outcomes from its dynamic program of exhibitions and associated public events, Artbank will devote additional resources to the oversight of its public program, including enhanced marketing and audience engagement. A new marketing plan will brand its various public events across its three existing premises and raise the profile of the collection and leasing scheme. An enhanced digital presence will result in the on-line publication of its annual public program, QR codes to accompany all newly leased artworks with information on the art and the artist, and improved website access for mobile devices.

Expanded activities, and engaging additional staff to deliver these, will only be progressed if funds are available.

Artbank will continue to implement best-practice collection management, tailored to meet the unique requirements of a collection that has been acquired for the purpose of leasing, and that is housed in a wide variety of locations and environments. This includes continued refinement of its artwork narratives and keyword search system.

It will also comply with the required governance and probity rules, reporting every quarter to its Department-based Governance Committee and undertaking an annual evaluation of its progress against this Strategic Plan. The evaluation will include an online survey of a random sample of leasing clients and annual publication of its data-rich *Year in Review*.

Artbank Governance Committee

The Artbank Governance Committee (the Committee) provides:

- guidance around the strategic direction and oversight of the Artbank program to ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality outcomes
- governance and probity oversight of Artbank's activities, including in relation to:
 - acquisitions to and deaccessions from the collection
 - the leasing scheme
 - management of the collection
 - the outreach and promotion of the collection, including the public program and partnerships.

The Committee is comprised of the following Departmental officers:

- Deputy Secretary, Creative Economy and the Arts – Chair
- First Assistant Secretary, Arts Division
- Chief Operating Officer or delegate
- Chief Financial Officer or delegate
- Assistant Secretary, Creative Industries Branch
- Assistant Secretary, Assurance, Integrity, Risk and Governance Branch

- Director, Strategic Communications
- Director, Visual Arts Section
- Director, Artbank

The Committee meets a minimum of four times a year and is supported by a Secretariat led by the Artbank Director and including other Artbank staff as required.

Across 2024, the Committee will continue to track progress against the recommendations of the 2022-23 Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Report *The Acquisition, Management and Leasing of Works by Artbank*.

Operational Principles

Artbank employees operate under the same conditions as all other Australian Government employees. This includes compliance with the:

- APS Code of Conduct as set out in section 13 of the [Public Service Act 1999 \(legislation.gov.au\)](https://www.legislation.gov.au)
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- Departmental Values
- Department's Integrity Strategy 2022-24, which engages and empowers its employees, through knowledge and accountability, to consider integrity and risk on a daily basis, while undertaking all departmental business activities
- *PGPA Act 2013* and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

Core Functions, Goals and Key Performance Indicators

This Strategic Plan outlines goals, actions and performance indicators over a five-year period, across the following six core functions:

1. Artist Support
2. Client Leasing
3. Managing the Artbank Collection
4. Public Program and Marketing
5. Governance and Accountability
6. Organisational Assets – People, Premises, Resourcing

CORE FUNCTIONS, GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

1. Artist Support

Encourage the development of contemporary Australian artists and art through the acquisition of artwork of living Australian artists.

Items	Goals	Actions
Acquisitions	Artbank Governance Committee agreement to the Annual Acquisition Plan	Artbank team to attend exhibitions, galleries, art fairs and artists' studios, review catalogues and other submissions, develop Annual Acquisition Plan, and provide acquisition recommendations to the Department delegate
	Annual acquisition budget expended	Implement Annual Acquisition Plan
	Annual acquisitions to reflect the diversity of artists active in the art market	Monitor annual acquisitions to support diversity, including but not limited to work by female, non-binary, First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse artists
Artists	Build the profile of artists in the collection	See Function 4 – Public Program and Marketing

2. Client Leasing

Promote the value of Australian contemporary art to the broader community by making this art accessible through an artwork leasing scheme.

Items	Goals	Actions
Increase artwork leasing volume and revenue	Increase leasing operations and revenue	Implement actions in Client Leasing Plan to attract new clients
	Expand leasing footprint through an enhanced presence in Western Australia and Queensland	Investigate feasibility of an enhanced presence in Perth and Brisbane
	Streamline client engagement and management	Investigate ways enhancing client management, potentially using Artbank's existing Collection Management System
	Ensure appropriate art leasing fees	Undertake an analysis of the Artbank leasing fee methodology for the Department's consideration
Clients	Understand client needs, preferences and levels of satisfaction	Undertake an annual on-line survey of a random selection of clients
Clients	Provide potential clients, gallerists, artists and other industry professionals with an opportunity to meet with Artbank	Host <i>Artbank Unpacked</i> in each capital city over a two-year period and invite artists, potential clients and arts industry professionals to attend
	Maintain client numbers across embassies and other Australian Government offices globally	One Artbank Art Consultant dedicated to supporting international clients, primarily through liaison with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Lease management	Renewed lease agreements in place prior to expiration of the previous agreement	Artwork lease renewals created and issued six weeks ahead of the renewal date
	New lease agreements in place prior to artworks being installed at the premises of new clients	New lease agreements drafted within a week of artworks and venues being confirmed
	Reduced administration in the client leasing area	Investigate the feasibility of offering lease agreements of more than 12 months duration

3. Managing the Artbank Collection

Manage the collection on behalf of the Australian Government.

Items	Goals	Actions
Stocktake	Maintain an accurate record of the collection	Annual stocktake undertaken with the department's finance team
Registration	Maintain accurate records for each artwork	For each artwork hold a record in EMu collection management system
	Successfully process a high volume of artworks	Manage systems for handling, packing, dispatch and movement of artworks
Condition Reporting	Maintain the condition of each artwork	Complete a condition check for each artwork when it enters or leaves the store or when damaged or proposed for deaccession, and keep appropriate records
	Monitor leased high-value artwork	Two-yearly condition reports for high-value artworks that are offsite - done where feasible by Artbank, otherwise by the client
Conservation	Maintain the condition of artworks and protect the collection in the event of an emergency	Implement and maintain an annual Conservation and Maintenance Plan. Maintain a Counter Disaster Management Plan and undertake annual staff training

4. Public Program and Marketing

- Encourage the development of contemporary Australian artists and art through the acquisition of work of living Australian artists
- Promote the value of Australian contemporary art to the broader community by making this art accessible through an art leasing scheme

Items	Goals	Actions
Promote the collection and leasing scheme	Promote the value of contemporary Australian art and raise awareness of the collection and leasing scheme	<p>Energise the collection and attract potential clients through a dynamic range of collection-related public events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exhibitions featuring works from the collection - sessions with industry stakeholders - periodic extended opening hours - artist and curator talks <p>Partner with external cultural events and organisations where possible</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of activating the Melbourne studio for artists and curators in residence</p>
First Nations	Improved cultural integrity in relation to First Nations activities and artworks held in the collection	Enhance engagement with First Nation's people, in particular artists and curators

Resourcing	Public programming efforts maximised through enhanced planning, delivery and promotion	Devote additional resources to the oversight and delivery of the public program, including marketing and audience engagement
Marketing	Public programming efforts maximised through a co-ordinated Marketing Plan	Develop and deliver a Marketing Plan to complement the public program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear branding to differentiate the various events across the three premises - collateral for social media campaigns - on-line publication of the annual public program
		Details of artworks kept current on the Artbank website
		Update Artbank website capability for mobile devices
		Measure the impact of the enhanced website by collecting and analysing website visitor metrics
	Improve digital reach to better promote Artbank's services	Labels on newly leased artwork to include a QR code that links to information about the art and the artist
Enhanced website use of artwork narratives and other information from EMu	Website re-design to improve searchability and integration with EMu data, and to minimise double data entries	

5. Governance and Accountability

Ensure that governance and operations comply with relevant Government legislation and rules.

Items	Goals	Actions
Governance	The Department-based Governance Committee has clear oversight of Artbank compliance, and its delivery against the Strategic Plan	Committee to meet four times per annum. Artbank to provide secretariat, report against the Strategic Plan and progress relevant action items
Relevant Money	Compliance with the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act) and the Accountable Authority Instructions (AAIs)	All expenditure of relevant money from the Artbank Special Account to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - align with Artbank's purpose - comply with agreed plans and procedures, including compliant delegate approval processes, record keeping and reporting - be supported by relevant agreements, contracts or quotes - be monitored and the outcomes measured and evaluated
	Compliance with the <i>Commonwealth Procurement Rules</i> (CPRs) (Dept of Finance 13 June 2023)	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all proposed expenditure to include a value for money assessment and appropriate records kept - all contracts valued at or above \$10,000 reported on AusTender within 42 days of entering the contract

		- Artbank's procurement plan linked to the Department's Annual Procurement Plan
	Align with art market methodologies to ensure that quality artworks, appropriate for a leasing collection, and as identified in the Acquisition Plan, can be purchased	For artwork acquisitions, Artbank will adhere to CPRs Limited Tender, Rule 10.3 (d) (i): 10.3 A relevant entity must only conduct a procurement at or above the relevant procurement threshold through limited tender in the following circumstances: d. when the goods and services can be supplied only by a particular business and there is no reasonable alternative or substitute for one of the following reasons: i. the requirement is for works of art
	Actively pursue any unpaid leasing fees	Debt management process implemented - art consults to liaise with clients, then escalated to the Department's finance team, and then debt recovery as needed

6. Organisational Assets – People, Premises, Resourcing

Items	Goals	Actions
People	Recruit and retain staff with the appropriate expertise to deliver this Strategic Plan	<p>Design the staff structure to align with organisational priorities and re-assess each time a position becomes vacant</p> <p>All employees to undertake Thrive@Work Performance Reviews in-line with Departmental HR requirements</p> <p>All employees have access to the Departments HR support programs, including learning and development</p>
	Maintain clear lines of communication across the team	Convene regular all-staff meetings and other curatorial, registration, leasing and administration meetings as required
Premises	Maintain fit-for-purpose premises in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth	Liaise with the Department's property team to undertake the annual premises inspection and update the building maintenance plan
Resourcing	Funding available towards delivery of this Strategic Plan	Assess leasing income and develop an appropriate annual budget to support activities across Artbank's six functions