



# PAUL FLETCHER MP

Federal Member for Bradfield  
Minister for Communications,  
Urban Infrastructure,  
Cities & the Arts

MS21-002325

Mr Ryan Stokes AO  
Chair  
Council of the National Gallery of Australia  
GPO Box 1150  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr <sup>Ryan</sup>Stokes

I am writing to outline my expectations for the National Gallery of Australia (the Gallery) for the 2021-22 financial year.

Before doing this, I wish to acknowledge the work of the Gallery in 2020-21, and its success in navigating the challenges related to COVID-19 lockdowns, restrictions and border closures. In particular, I congratulate the Gallery on the success of the *Botticelli to Van Gogh: Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London* exhibition, which contributed significantly to the ACT economy and achieved the Gallery's highest exhibition visitation numbers in a decade.

Cultural and creative content has proven to be vitally important in maintaining the wellbeing of people and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Gallery for continuing to provide Australian audiences with meaningful opportunities to access and engage with its collections both in-person, whenever that was possible, and online.

The Government understands the significant ongoing impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on Australia, and in particular the arts and cultural sector, and the business activities of our National Collecting Institutions. In response, the Government has provided substantial additional funding to the arts sector over the course of the pandemic, including specific funding relief to the Gallery. Government policy is now focussed on maximising our economic, social and cultural recovery as vaccination targets are reached and exceeded across the country.

The Gallery's continued successes despite the impact of COVID-19 are due to strong leadership from the Council and senior management. Both should continue to provide the foundations for a strong and productive institution through clear leadership and pursue available opportunities to support the following strategic government priorities in 2021-22:

- provide leadership and foster collaboration within national and international arts and gallery sectors as they recover from the effects of COVID-19;
- contribute to Australian economic and cultural activity as restrictions ease, institutions reopen to the public and tourism resumes;
- support recovery in regional, remote and outer metropolitan areas through collection touring, exhibitions, and outreach activities;
- promote inclusion, diversity and social cohesion by providing greater opportunities for all Australians to access arts and culture, including through digital channels;
- continue to foster appreciation and understanding of Indigenous arts, culture and knowledge systems, and contribute to a professional, viable and ethical Indigenous arts sector;
- engage in activities to enrich arts and cultural education at all levels; and
- maintain and strengthen the financial sustainability of the Gallery by increasing own-source revenue, philanthropy and private-sector support.

I am aware that the Gallery is already progressing many of these areas and have included them as part of its 2021-22 Corporate Plan. That Plan outlines a number of priorities which include a greater focus on loans and exhibition touring to regional areas, enhanced digital access to the collection, the advancement of living artists, advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and leadership and increasing the financial sustainability of the Gallery.

As you will be aware, the Office for the Arts is undertaking work to review the long-term financial sustainability needs of each of the National Collecting Institutions ahead of the 2022-23 Budget. In 2022 the Government will also be considering further opportunities for National Collecting Institutions, both within and outside the portfolio, to share physical and digital storage, and digital access infrastructure.

I expect the Gallery will continue to work cooperatively with the Office for the Arts and other portfolio agencies, especially the other National Collecting Institutions, in contributing to the Government's policy priorities and to achieve cost efficiencies through collaboration wherever opportunities can be leveraged. I also ask that you alert me and the Office for the Arts of any significant events or developments related to the Gallery's activities and functions.

This Statement of Expectations and your corresponding Statement of Intent form an important component of the Gallery's governance framework. As such, I anticipate both documents will be made publicly available. I have written to other arts portfolio agencies in similar terms and have copied this letter to the Gallery's Director, Mr Nick Mitzevich.

I wish the Gallery every success in meeting its objectives in 2021-22.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Fletcher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Fletcher

21 / 11 / 2021