

*We believe  
the arts are  
for everyone*



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  
ACCESS ARTS ANNUAL REPORT 2016  
**2016**

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Cover: Participants at Marc Brew's Masterclass

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Thomas Bradley QC  
Access Arts President

***2016 was another year of achievements and challenges for Access Arts.***

After much effort by the CEO, staff and management committee, our application to Arts Queensland for a four-year Organisation Fund grant was approved in September 2016. Access Arts' grant was increased by 9.1% from its former level. In addition to the very welcome security of four-year funding, we appreciate the strong support Arts Queensland continues to provide in our dealings with other Government departments and agencies and in encouraging a greater focus on artists with disability in the broader Queensland scene.

Following the outstanding Organisation Fund result, Access Arts was also awarded funding under the Queensland Arts Showcase Program for *Undercover Talent Springs to Life*, a program that began in 2016 with dancer Marc Brew and celebrations for International Day of People with Disability, and continues in 2017 with *Today I Am*, a singer-songwriter initiative to be delivered by internationally acclaimed singer Emma Dean in partnership with Open Minds.

This great funding news was announced in September 2016 by the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, who was then Assistant Minister of State Assisting the Premier. The occasion was the opening of *Scope*, an exhibition of the work of our visual artists from Brisbane Outsider Artists and Camera Wanderers, once again hosted by KPMG in their Riparian Plaza offices overlooking the Brisbane River. We are





The Hon Mark Ryan MP (right) with artist Peter Hughes and Visual Arts Coordinator Jasmin Coleman at *Scope*

very grateful for the ongoing support and collaboration of Rob Jones, Queensland Chairman, KPMG Australia.

Councillor Vicki Howard also attended the *Scope* opening to launch the 2016 \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement (AAA) Award. A little later in the year we were able to congratulate Alexander Procopis, the winner of the AAA Award for 2016 – you can read his story later in this Annual Report. This Award presents a unique opportunity for one Queensland artist each year who experiences disability. This would not be possible without the immense generosity of Access Arts Life Member Peter Vance, who has sponsored the first five years of the AAA Award.

There is an opportunity to sponsor the award for three to five years from 2019. If you are interested in supporting outstanding Queensland artists who experience disability to make a significant

step in their career development, please contact me or our CEO Pat Swell.

The AAA Award is a tremendous compliment to and extension of the professional development and mentoring work of Access Arts.

I acknowledge the support of the Queensland Government: through both Arts Queensland and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

I also would like to thank Australian Government through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for its continued support throughout 2016 of our work with Indigenous artists, undertaken in partnership with Indigenous community organisations.



Brisbane City Councillor Vicki Howard, left, with artist Carmel Drennan at *Scope*

There were changes at the management committee.

In March 2016, long-standing member and Secretary Susan Ball resigned from the management committee. In her time as Secretary, Susan undertook an extensive review of our policies and practices, improved and enhanced our person-centred approach and successfully piloted us through the Human Services Quality Framework audit process. With the support of the management committee, I have proposed that Susan be made an Honorary Life Member of Access Arts, in recognition of her service and commitment.

Following Susan's departure, Liz Crawford stepped into the role of Secretary and Angela Tillmanns joined the management committee. Angela brought her great experience as CEO of CPL (formerly the Cerebral Palsy League) to bear on decisions.



Susan Ball with her daughter, the late Anna Paas, as part of an Access Arts Parade



The Hon Dr Steven Miles MP

In June 2016, we signed a new one-year funding agreement with Disability Services Queensland, shaped to cater for changes as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**) rolls out across the State. This has led to on-going discussions with DSQ and Arts Queensland about the future of our community workshop program. Angela has been a valuable adviser in these discussions. I would also like to thank the Honourable Dr Steven Miles MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef and Member for Mount Coot-tha for facilitating these discussions, which are important to our future planning.

In May 2016, other public duties caused Robert Hoge to step down. A wise and wily counsellor, Robert remains a good friend to Access Arts, but we miss his insights and suggestions on the management committee.



With Robert's departure, Stephanie Parkin was co-opted onto the management committee. Stephanie is a solicitor with experience in intellectual property and a Quandamooka woman from North Stradbroke Island. She has served as a committee member for the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal group and the Indigenous Lawyers Association of Queensland. Stephanie hit the ground running, reviewing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Policy and intellectual property practice in the lead up to our Arts Queensland pitch.

In November 2016, James Cunningham stepped down from the management committee to work directly on our preparation for the introduction of the NDIS. With substantial arts management experience and a deep knowledge of Access Arts, James quickly grasped the intricacies (and eccentricities) of the Scheme. All of us on the management committee appreciate the analysis and information James and Pat are providing to help steer us through the NDIS.

Last month our long-serving Treasurer, Catherine Black, stepped down. Cath undertook the challenging, essential and very time consuming task of bringing our financial systems and controls up to date and into a

form to allow the management committee to budget and plan for the future with greater confidence. I cannot thank Cath enough for the intelligence and experience she brought to bear and the many hours of work she gave freely to the task. Our incoming Treasurer will inherit a set of accounts, systems and controls that would normally be beyond the means of a not-for-profit organisation of our size. For all of this we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Cath. On behalf of all on the management committee, I would like to express how grateful we are for her contribution.

Recently, we received the very sad news that our former Secretary Linda Langley passed away after a long illness. I was very reliant on Linda during my first year as President. She made time, thought carefully and took responsibility in the often unsung role as Secretary. Linda left the management committee at the AGM in March 2014. Linda designed and taught academic management and business programs at QUT and, more recently, the University of the Sunshine Coast. She was the Founder and President of the Institute for Holistic Studies. Linda is greatly missed and our thoughts and sympathy are extended to her family and friends.

**Thomas Bradley QC**



Theatre Ensemble members enjoy Peter Vance and Emma Le Strange at Scope

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Pat Swell  
Access Arts Chief Executive Officer

**In 2016 we delivered 60 different activities to 1,500 participants. The artistic practice of our artists and participants was seen and enjoyed by 32,000 people – a significant increase in audience numbers over previous years.**

Our artists showcased their artistic practice at a variety of signature activities.

- Our *Community Sharing Week* was a new initiative where we opened our workshops to the public and, as a result of the interest this generated, we programed two additional weekly community workshops to meet demand.
- *Scope* was our fourth annual exhibition at the Queensland headquarters of international accounting firm KPMG. Over a three month period our artists' artworks were seen by 15,000 people.
- *Kaleidoscopic Project* was the stand-out contribution our Camera Wanderers made to the Brisbane Festival Theatre Republic.
- We brought international dancer and choreographer Marc Brew who is based in the UK to Brisbane to run masterclasses for our dancers. We continued this

initiative through a series of workshops exploring the synergies between dance and sport in preparation for our December celebrations.

- Marking International Day of People with Disability, the year's work climaxed with three extraordinary connected activities: *Inspirational: Art Meets Sport* and *Be Inspired*, complemented by a stunning floral installation called *Be Inspired (to grow)*. These celebrations took place at The Edge and forged strong partnerships with State Library of Queensland and Life Without Barriers.

It's a real credit to the standard of our visual artists that individual artworks they created now hang on the office walls of The Deputy Premier The Honourable Jackie Trad MP; The Honourable Mark Ryan MP, now Minister for Police Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services; and Brisbane City Councillor Vicki Howard.

5,200 people enjoyed our artists' artwork at a variety of exhibitions: *Peace and Quiet* at State Library of Queensland, *Silver Lining: a retrospective* organised by the Mental Illness Fellowship Qld at King George Square, *Pathways To...* at New Farm Library, and two exhibitions organised by Art from the Margins, *Horizons - Land and Sea* and *Inside – Outside*.



Management Committee member Liz Crawford auctions artwork by Lisa Blake at Scope



2016 saw notable successes for our performing artists. It is less than two years since our Theatre Ensemble was formed so it is a great tribute that their work has been recognised by them winning the much coveted residency at Metro Arts for 2017. The Ensemble performed professionally in 2016 at the Anywhere Festival, Metro Arts, KPMG and The Edge, State Library of Queensland.

Our Creative Ageing program in partnership with Lutheran Community Care continued in Woodridge and expanded to Nundah, igniting a sense of fun and pride in residents as well

as giving notable health and relationship-building benefits.

Through partnerships we worked with First Australians in Brisbane, Cairns, Poruma Island, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah, made possible with support from the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

To encourage an inclusive and accessible Queensland and support people with disability to enjoy mainstream services we worked with Scenic Rim Regional Council, Dancenorth, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane City



A member gives feedback through Culture Counts

Council and participated in the National Arts and Disability Strategy consultations.

Philanthropic donations fund our \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award and SAFE grants. The Access Arts Achievement Award has made a significant difference to the career, artistic practice and life of each of the three recipients to date. Our 2016 winner was 18 year old Alexander Procopis, a non-verbal singer who will use the award to develop his elephant whispering voice.

Key organisational development tasks included completion of our 2014-2016 strategic plan and drawing up our next four year plan for the period 2017-2020. In recognition of the high standard of our staff's work we received full accreditation through the Human Services Quality Framework. We undertook full reviews of our policies and staffing, and developed our NDIS readiness program. We evaluated feedback from our members' activities using global leaders in cultural measurement, Culture Counts. We strengthened our financial procedures including a review of our budget methodology by BDO, and successfully underwent a Financial Compliance Review by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Our future funding from Arts Queensland for the next four years is secure. In a highly competitive environment we were fortunate to receive a generous settlement through their Organisation Fund, as well as winning two one-off grants in 2016 through their Arts

Leverage Fund and Queensland Arts Showcase program.

In 2016 we were fortunate to receive pro bono support from 24 different contributors who collectively provided us with in-kind support to the value of \$350,500. The work you see in our Annual Report would not have been possible without our partners and supporters, to whom we give grateful thanks. Please see the list of our key partners at the end of this report, who have made a very significant difference in making our 2016 work program possible.

Access Arts Life Member Peter Vance praised our artswomen and workshops assistants highly for their *"patience, passion and professionalism"*. I should like to echo his words and pay tribute to all our talented staff and management committee members whose skills, commitment and energy throughout 2016 has given our artists and members unprecedented opportunities, enabling them to excel.

Finally, I should like to leave you with these words from Mike Gilmour, board member and former Chair of the charity Open Minds: *"You are inspirational and very successful. Queensland can and should be proud of Access Arts as a leader in the disability and mental health recovery space"*.

**Pat Swell**

# SIGNATURE ACTIVITIES

## • COMMUNITY SHARING WEEK

A new initiative was our *Community Sharing Week* when we warmly invited friends, family and our broader community to attend. Among the visitors was Brisbane City Councillor Jonathan Sri who came along to take a sneak peak. Members enjoyed showing visitors to the workshops their creative practice and the latest works of art on the boil. We enjoyed seeing everyone's friendly smiles.

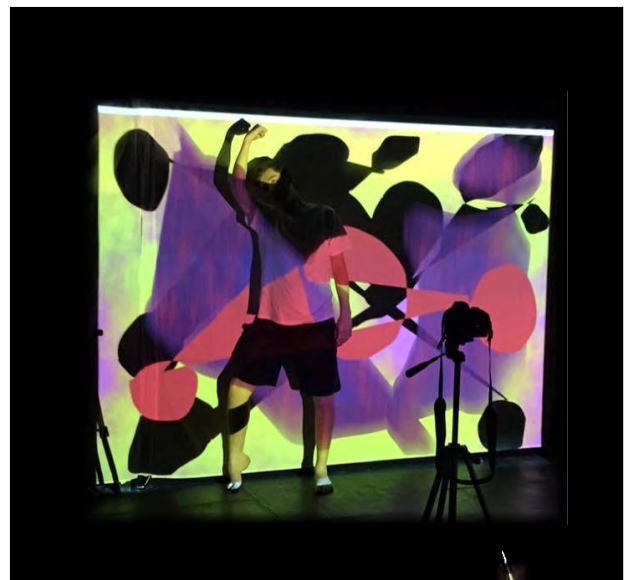
**“ For me the highlight was experiencing the sense of pride choir members had as they shared their skills with their friends/family and strangers that joined us on the day. ”**

– Annie Peterson, artist and facilitator for the Access Arts Singers

## • BRISBANE FESTIVAL

***Our Camera Wanderers contributed an outstanding artwork called Kaleidoscopic Project which was seen by the 2,000 people attending Brisbane Festival's Theatre Republic.***

Based on the premise of celebrating the process and journey of individual and collective artistic expression, it was the result of a new artistic practice for the Wanderers - the fusing of two artforms. They collaborated with our Theatre Ensemble to create a striking photographic feature taken during the dynamic collaborative sharing of artistic ideas that both groups experienced during the workshop process at Metro Arts.



*Kaleidoscopic Project*, an installation that fused two artforms, photography and theatre

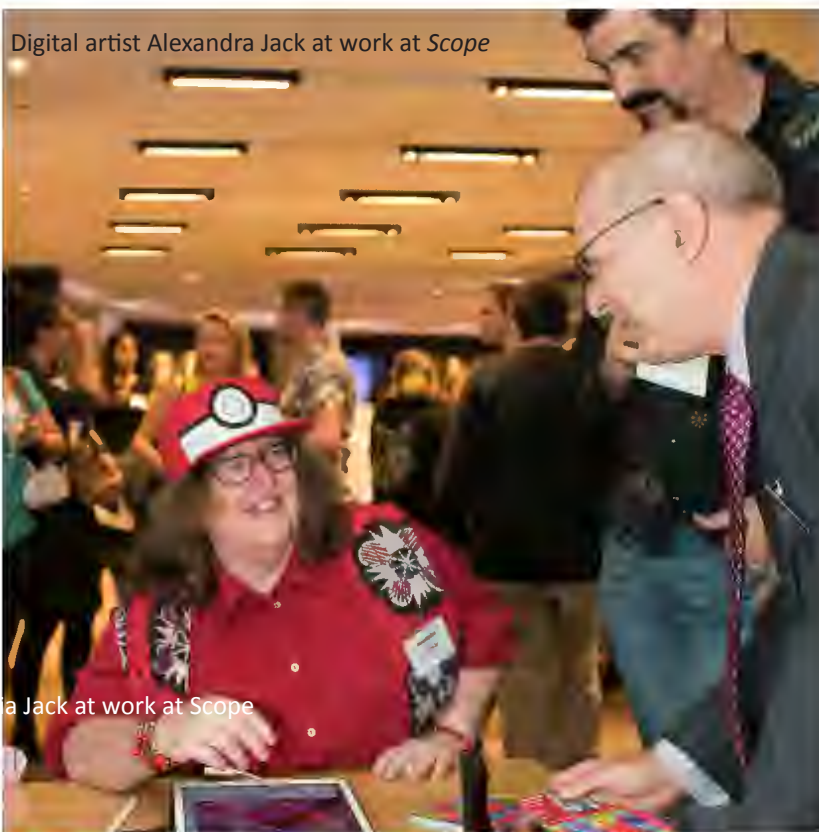


## • SCOPE EXHIBITION

***A record-breaking number of guests came to the private view of our fourth annual art exhibition marking Disability Action Week at KPMG's Queensland riverside headquarters.***

As well as artworks created by Brisbane Outsider and Camera Wanderer artists inspired by the theme *Scope*, this year the exhibition featured a bold large-scale windowbox installation by our Camera Wanderers titled *Kaleidoscopic Light Box* that became a talking feature among KPMG staff and visitors throughout the three-month period that the exhibition hung there.

Opened by the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, then Assistant Minister of State Assisting the Premier: *"It was a real pleasure getting to know the many supporters of Access Arts"*.



Private view guests enjoyed a live artwork created by digital artist Alexander Jack who says *"If I didn't have my art it wouldn't be me, there is no me without it, if that makes sense?"* - which resulted in an article about our exhibition and her artistic practice on the webpage of The Edge, State Library of Queensland. Festivities also featured live performance art by our Theatre Ensemble and a new departure, the auctioning of an artwork created by artist Lisa Blake.

It was also the occasion when Brisbane City Councillor Vicki Howard launched our 2016 \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award.

**KPMG estimates the artworks were seen by 15,000 people and, excitingly, our artists sold more artworks than ever before - with the Camera Wanderers selling all of their photographs.**

## • MARC BREW MASTERCLASSES

- **Kala** - *"I loved being able to express myself more through dance, learning new ways to move my body and communicate with people through body language is exciting".*



International dancer and choreographer Marc Brew in his masterclass

### What they said:

- **Chantel** - *"I liked trusting the people around me".*
- **Michael** - *"I liked working as a team and connecting my dance moves with other people's dance moves".*
- **Freya** - *"I loved the dance and made new friends".*

We brought internationally acclaimed artistic director and choreographer Marc Brew to Brisbane to conduct dance masterclasses. A former dancer with Australian Ballet, a car accident left him tetraplegic. Now based in Glasgow, he has his own dance company and has been working internationally for the past 18 years as dancer, choreographer, teacher and speaker.

Dance enthusiasts, contemporary dancers and established dance artists experienced Marc's unique dance practice. In an inclusive environment and in partnership with Ausdance Queensland, Marc explored possibilities of movement with the participants, providing them with a new vocabulary that enhanced their creativity.

## • ART MEETS SPORT - DANCE WORKSHOPS



Participants in the Art Meets Sport dance workshops

These workshops followed on from the Marc Brew masterclasses. Workshop Assistant Eleonora Ginardi describes the experience: *"The purpose of this series of dance workshops led by Tim Brown was to explore our responses to the topic Art Meets Sport to then showcase our work on the International Day of People with Disability. The emphasis of this workshop was to explore movement and develop ideas around possible synergies between 'Art' and 'Sport'.*

*"We explored body awareness through impulse training techniques, interwoven with various dance disciplines including Classical, Hip Hop and Butoh. We investigated how we respond to various objects in the space and the space itself; and allowed the space, music, images and objects to influence our movement.*

*"We discussed and explored many topics around dance, sport and art, asking such questions as 'Is dance a type of sport'?*

*We encouraged the group to identify their favourite sport, explain why - and explore its rhythm, physical response and emotional attachment. During the workshops we used a variety of artforms to explore the topic Art Meets Sport, including a canvas and coloured pens. A great initiative, thoroughly enjoyed by the participants and audience alike. I hope we get the opportunity to further explore and develop dance workshops in the future".*



## • MARKING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The year climaxed with two iconic events *Inspirational: Art Meets Sport* and *Be Inspired*, together with an installation resulting from a series of public workshops *Be Inspired (to grow)*. All of this took place at The Edge with its stunning riverside view. These activities were partnerships with State Library of Queensland. Jane Cowell, State Library's Executive Director, Engagement and Partnerships, said: *"I was moved. I laughed and I was inspired by the strength, generosity and talents of the participants, and if you missed it this year you missed something very special."*

- Access Arts received over \$3,500 in in-kind contributions that helped make possible these events.
- Our artists sold over \$1,000 of their artworks, which produced an income for them.

***"They were a fab two days. I always love just being with you all and celebrating together. Thank you so much to the team for all your enthusiastic professional leadership, guidance and support you give to me and all Access Arts members in our artistic endeavours. It's so wonderful to see all the new and diverse relationships building and strong partnerships developing through Access Arts for mutual benefit towards a better quality of life for all".***

– Access Arts Life Member Peter Vance

## • INSPIRATIONAL: ART MEETS SPORT

After a spectacular Welcome to Country by the Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers who opened *Inspirational: Art Meets Sport*, Queensland artists and sportspeople who have reached great heights in their sporting or artistic journey came together to celebrate their achievements. There were presentations from Olympians, dancers, drummers, singers and visual artists who shared one common link: they each live with disability. Minister for Disability the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke MP, and Brisbane City Councillors Fiona King and Jonathan Sri, all spoke. This marked a new partnership with Life Without Barriers, whose Community Engagement State Manager, Julie McGlone, summed up the spirit of the occasion: *"The choreography and artistic direction was sensational – really top class"*.



Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers Welcome to Country at *Inspirational – Art Meets Sport*

## • BE INSPIRED

The next day *Be Inspired* was a big day for our members who showcased their singing, drumming, theatre and dance talents with a variety of visual arts interjections. Member Emma Le Strange said: *"I think I teared up during every performance, it was truly inspirational! What a turn out too!"* Guest speakers were Ian Walker MP and the Honourable Dr Steven Miles, Minister for the Environment and MP for Mount Coot-tha; his Electorate Officer wrote saying: *"Steven was thrilled to be able see firsthand the great work you are undertaking".*



From left, Belinda Mayfield, Life Without Barriers State Director Qld; Pat Swell, Access Arts CEO; the Hon Coralee O'Rourke MP and others enjoying a moment at *Inspirational – Art Meets Sport*





## • BE INSPIRED (TO GROW)

A colourful installation *Be Inspired (to grow)* formed a visual centrepiece for Access Arts' celebrations. It started as a string of visual arts workshops held at the Edge in the run-up to these events. Members of the public were invited to make lily flowers adorned with artworks created by Access Arts' visual artists. These flowers were then planted alongside live lilies to form a spectacular visual blanket of psychedelic colour.



*Be Inspired (to grow): Creating the window*



*Be Inspired (to grow): detail*

*Be Inspired (to grow)* also featured iconic Queensland flora (banana and monstera leaves) along with imaginative digital wall papers created by Access Arts member Alexandra Jack in collaboration with Access Arts and The Edge.

Then, when the celebrations ended, we took the paper flower installation to Nambour Hospital ICU. In a place where real flowers are banned for fear of infection the installation gave brightness to the clinical surroundings and continued to bring joy, this time to patients, visitors and staff.



# COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

## • VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMS

2016 saw our community visual arts stream - *Explore Art Forms* and *Extend Your Skills* - double in size and vitality due to demand. Moorooka-based Spinal Home Help also commissioned us to run a visual arts project for their clients. Collectively, our community arts workshop members created an artwork to mark the longstanding support the Deputy Premier The Honourable Jackie Trad MP has given to Access Arts. Their artwork, presented to the Deputy Premier by staff and artists Jeff and Kate Blunt, now hangs on her office wall.



Artists Jeff Blunt (left) and Kate Blunt (right) with Pat Swell presenting the artwork created by our visual artists to the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jackie Trad MP

## • PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS



The drumming circle

The Drumming Group's focus in 2016 was continuing the powerful drumming circle that encourages each member to try new rhythms and further their own unique talents. Much loved facilitators Velvet Pesu and Tichawona Noble Mashawa said *"at first it is extremely important to prioritise fun and exploration at these initial stages to celebrate each person and allow a sense of trust to emerge from the group"*.



Access Arts Singers performing at *Be Inspired*

Our Access Arts Singers stepped up their harmony and solo performing skill-sets in 2016. Facilitator Annie Peterson said: *"The members are really enjoying it. I was also able to teach the bass line to all the singers so that at some point in the song down the track different singers can break into an acapella 3-part harmony. This will work really well for our performance!"* And it did. The Access Arts Singers surpassed themselves at their performances at the *Community Sharing Week* and *Be Inspired*.

Last word from Peter Vance: *"A very special thanks to our fabulous accompanying keyboard player David Truong".*



David Truong on keyboard



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## • THEATRE ENSEMBLE

Established less than two years ago, our Theatre Ensemble is now led by an artist who experiences disability, Daniele Constance. On seeing their performance entitled *What Do You See* at the *Anywhere Festival*, spectator Mary Waldie said: *"I was pleased to see the progress this Ensemble has made over the last 12 months. Their showing/performance was polished, original and insightful. The blend of movement (dance), music (singing) and voice was a powerful message of who the Ensemble are - what they see in themselves, what they see in each other, and what they see in the world. It was outstanding"*.

Words borne out by Celia White, Artistic Director of Vulcana Women's Circus: *"Most strongly felt was the commitment of the group to each other and the rapport they all shared through movement and improvisation. I look forward to seeing more work from this Ensemble"*.

In 2016 our Ensemble also appeared at KPMG and State Library of Queensland showcasing Brisbane as an inclusive and accessible city, and won the much coveted Metro Arts residency for 2017.



*What Do You See? - Theatre Ensemble performing at the Anywhere Festival*



## • BRISBANE OUTSIDER ARTISTS

2016 has seen members from the Brisbane Outsider Artists Studio build upon existing skills and experiment with new modes of practice such as sculpture and installation. Coming from a background of painting, Belinda Peel extended her practice through creating a large-scale Kookaburra made from papier-mâché and felt. This striking artwork formed the centrepiece of the vibrant plant based installation called *Be Inspired (to grow)* shown in partnership with The Edge, State Library of Queensland at our International Day of People with Disability celebrations. Other members contributed to this installation by providing design elements for cut-out leaves, forming a colourful backdrop. Levi Diball progressed toward her solo exhibition, creating a range of work including a horn shaped head-piece made from a bicycle helmet, plaster of Paris and paint. Other artists such as Andrew Pemberton and Dion Halse refined their acrylic paintings by using paint pens to add detail and define shapes. In the field of arts business, members had the opportunity to design and operate their own merchandise stalls, bringing in record sales. Participants find the studio a happy place to work in – as artist Lisa Blake says: “*The BOA workshop is an awesome program. I love coming*”.

## • CAMERA WANDERERS

Our Camera Wanderers became peripatetic in 2016 conducting their workshops in a variety of novel locations across Brisbane. Led by expert facilitator Marty O’Hare, the Wanderers undertook some challenging exhibition projects where they developed new skills in experimental photography techniques and collaborative practice. An example was the highly ingenious *Kaleidoscopic Light Box* they created for *Scope* which became a talking point during its three month exhibition in KPMG’s foyer.



*Kaleidoscopic Light Box at KPMG (with Theatre Ensemble)*

## • MENTORING

Mentorships provide one-on-one support for members to gain specific guidance in their current artistic projects. In 2016, Karen Lee Roberts worked with mentor and Co-Artistic Director of Indelability Arts Catarina Hebbard to develop her solo cabaret show *It's Not Easy Being Green* which she performed as part of the 2016 West End Festival. Karen says *"Thanks again to Access Arts for all they have done for me this year"*.



Karen Lee Roberts as the naughty fairy MC-ing *Be Inspired*, with Life Member Peter Vance



Bill Thomas reading his poem, a tribute to the late Carol Burns, at *Be Inspired*

One of our mentors, the late Carol Burns who made a significant contribution to Access Arts over many years, was celebrated in a poem written by Bill Thomas who has been a member of Access Arts since 1987. Bill read the poem he had written in her honour at *Be Inspired*. Here is an extract:

*"The versatile genius of deceased Brisbane-born actress  
Carol Burns could be measured in many different ways.  
Whether it be Carol's acting on television, film or plays.  
Such as her iconic, most famous, popular TV role in  
'Prisoner' ...*

*It was Carol's unique brilliance and versatility as an Actress that made her talent complete..."*

# CREATIVE AGEING



Trinder Park Residents performing *The Accidental Visitor*

During 2016, Access Arts delivered the creative ageing theatre program. The lively workshop program ended by showcasing very different, original pieces of theatre created by the residents.

Zion residents based in Lutheran Community Care's home in Nundah performed *The Waters Run Deep*, a series of sketches taking water as the theme, ending with a very emotional reading from a book depicting the journey by sea of displaced persons from Europe to Australia in 1948. One resident was a passenger on the boat and her story moved the audience, including her three granddaughters, to tears.

Trinder Park residential in Woodridge created *The Accidental Visitor*, a colourful romp that started in the pub with no beer and ended in the surgery of Dr Evil, which was attended by an enthusiastic audience of residents, family and friends. Volunteer Lyn observed: "*When we first started they were quiet and had difficulty projecting, but now they easily deliver their lines with strength and personality*".



Fun Factory Thespians

The 'Fun Factory Thespians' is a direct legacy of the Trinder Park program. The Thespians are now a regular weekly drama club who pack their wigs, hats and costumes and go on tour to Lutheran Community Care services around south-east Queensland.

These workshops and performances are not just about creating theatre but we are also noticing the health and relationship benefits for the participants. It's about learning new skills, finding pride in their achievements, improving communication skills and relationships with other residents, staff and family members, and learning to play all over again.



# ENGAGING FIRST AUSTRALIANS

*Access Arts is committed to our work with First Australians. Here's what we did in 2016.*

## • WUJAL WUJAL

We joined with Umi Arts on a program of music, ceremony and story-telling in Wujal Wujal that was shaped by the Aboriginal community through their Elders, artists and council officials. Guest artists for the music industry workshops were the legendary SK Boiiz who originated from Seisia, Northern Peninsula Area. These role models from a rural community similar to Wujal Wujal who have now made it to the Big City were particularly inspiring to young participants, showing that they too could have a chance to make it big. Elders' stories were captured, sorry business took place. The grand finale of this intensive program was a spectacular celebratory performance on 1 April.



## • YOU ME IN CULTURAL BUSINESS



To prepare Indigenous Cairns artists and craftspeople in the business of selling their wares at the signature Big Talk One Fire Festival in July, a part of the Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair that attracts 40,000 visitors and where business worth \$1.2 million is done, we partnered again with Umi Arts for these artisans to hold stalls in the lead-up, and sharpen their business

skills. Called *You Me in Cultural Business*, the markets took place on 5 April, 20 May and 3 June. For the stall holders, the market experience helped them become more 'market ready' to sell at Big Talk One Fire, furthering their economic independence.

This was particularly important for participants from Manoora, a community striving to overcome the Murray Street Massacre tragedy of December 2014 by producing arts and cultural artefacts such as basket weaving. Being part of *You Me* - the experience of the markets, the opportunity of having a stall at Big Talk One Fire, and having their artist profiles developed for future business engagements - were all paths that brought hope and recovery, opening doors to other positive opportunities for them in support of their healing.

## • MELODIES FROM HEAVEN



We collaborated with the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) for their students to form a Gospel Choir, leading up to a public performance on 25 May.

To develop the Gospel Choir, experts from the University of Tasmania - Australia's gospel legend Dr Andrew Legg and vocal coach Maria Lurighi – came to Brisbane and ran masterclasses with the ACPA students in preparation for the final performance.

*"Had an absolute killer time last night listening to the ACPA Gospel Choir!! AMAZING!! I love it when music really hits you in the soul!!"* - **Charlotte (audience member)**

*"Last night was THE best moment of my life and I can guarantee that! Just to think that if none of us came to meet each other, this night would have never happened!"* - **Liam (ACPA student)**

During this the students were supported with a strong mentoring program in health and wellbeing, run by 2 Spirits.

## • PORUMA ISLAND

We partnered with one of Australia's leading dance companies, Dancenorth, and Poruma Island's traditional dance ensemble, Urab Dancers. An exciting week-long workshop and cultural interchange in the Torres Strait ended in a spectacular public performance on Poruma Island on 19 August.



## • YARRABAH BAND FESTIVAL



Children performing with Shellie Morris

We collaborated with Queensland Music Festival and, with cultural advice from the Gindija Treatment and Healing Corporation, supported an intensive week-long music residency in the Yarrabah schools. The Wiggles paid a visit to Yarrabah State School to perform for the kids and for the kids to perform a Wiggles song, Rock-a-bye your Bear, which they had learnt in the Gunggandji Language. The fun built up to a grand finale, firstly Local Band Night on 4 November and then the Yarrabah Band Festival itself on 5 November.

- 59 Indigenous people were employed in the project
- 475 Indigenous people participated in 28 workshops
- 19 local bands were engaged

## • NGALI GUMAN - WE ARE ONE

We partnered with Biddigal Performing Arts on an immersive program of workshops for young people, primarily in dance but also including a range of other artforms. Experiences included Yidinji cultural dancing and West Papuan urban dancing. At different stages the young people engaged with elders from Giddimay, Yidinji and West Papua as well as professional artists, including members of Australian Ballet. The program culminated in exceptional public performances which included audio, video and special guest performances from the West Papuan community between 14 – 16 December at COCA, one of Cairns' most prestigious venues.



Teaching Australian Ballet members Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island Culture



# ENCOURAGING AN INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE QUEENSLAND

***A key role of our work is to advocate and encourage mainstream services in Queensland to become more inclusive and accessible.***

Scenic Rim Regional Council commissioned us to undertake an access appraisal of their arts and cultural facilities which took place over the course of a year and included three consultative community cafes. We appraised Townsville-based Dancenorth's disability action plan and advised State Library of Queensland in the preparation of their 2017 Plan.

We participated in the consultation for the National Arts and Disability Strategy, and took part in brainstorming led by The University of Technology, Sydney, to inform Brisbane City Council's thinking for their next Access and Inclusion Plan. We ran disability awareness training attended by our artswriters, staff and management committee members.



Irene Clelland (standing, left) leading disability awareness training with Auslan interpreter

# GRANTS AND AWARDS

## • \$10,000 ACCESS ARTS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

***Eighteen-year-old Alexander Procopis swept the floor winning the \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award against stiff competition from across Queensland.***

Alexander is non-verbal and cannot speak. But when multitalented Zimbabwean musician Tichawona Noble Mashawa heard Alexander sing for the first time he was amazed and said: *"If he would have been brought up in Zimbabwe, he'd have been chosen as a potential elephant whisperer"*.

Alexander's entry faced fierce competition from 20 highly talented entrants across Queensland.

The distinguished panel of judges were Liz Crawford, National Practice Leader, KPMG and member of Access Arts Management Committee; James Cunningham, Co-Director of Igneous and member of Access Arts Management Committee; Tarragh Cunningham, Assistant Director, Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art;



Winner of the 2016 Access Arts Achievement Award Alexander Procopis (left) with Tichawona Noble Mashawa

Suellen Maunder, Artistic Director and CEO Jute Theatre Company, Cairns; and Katie Woods, CEO of Queensland Writers Centre. 18 potential entrants attended the grant writing workshop led by Arts Queensland to prepare 2016 applicants in their submission-writing.

Made possible by the immense generosity of Peter Vance, Access Arts Life Member, who committed \$50,000 so the Award could be given for five years, it has made a significant difference to the career of each winner since the Award started in 2014. The Award is open to Queensland artists who experience disability.

## • SAFE GRANTS

***SAFE grants assist artists with disability along their career pathway. In 2016, Paul Gray and Megan Louise West were awarded SAFE Grants of up to \$1,000 each to support professional development activities in their chosen artform.***



Visual artist Paul Gray

Paul, a long-standing member of our visual arts workshops, purchased a camera to further his artistic practice, to “feel more confident in handling a professional standard camera” and “develop technical skills in photography through the assistance of the Camera Wanderers facilitator”. As a result Paul created an artwork that was exhibited in our KPMG exhibition *Scope* which was one of the many artworks sold.

Megan has been a member of our Theatre Ensemble since its inception in 2015. Megan received a SAFE grant to fund further studies of physical theatre and dance, which included Butoh, vocal training and storytelling techniques.

Megan says she “aims to use these new skills for further performance opportunities in solo and ensemble work in 2017, with the view to participating in Queensland festivals and beyond”.



Performing artist Megan Louise West



# OUR THANKS

**To our Patron,** His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC Governor of Queensland

**To you, our artists, members and supporters**

**To our donors for your generosity in 2016:** Catherine Black, Thomas Bradley, John Cosgrove, Liz Crawford, Joshua Donellan, Carmel Drennan, Georgia Johnson, Marissa Ker, Rod Limbert, Esme Lloyd, Angus MacFarlane, Rachel Missingham, Sam Nicolosi, Michael Peterson, Porttel Pty Ltd, Pat Swell, Angela Tillmanns, Andrew Townsend, Deputy Premier Jacki Trad, Lauren Watson and Jessica White

**To the people whose work makes all this possible:**

- **Our artswriters:** Francesca Co-Beng, Daniele Constance, Leah Cotterell, Ruby Donohoe, Rebecca Dostal, Eleonora Ginardi, Sarah Greenwood, Virginia Jones, Felicity Kelly-Cruise, Tammy Law, Saskia Levy, Tichawona Noble Mashawa, Wendy Muche, Marty O'Hare, Anthea Patrick, Velvet Pesu, Annie Peterson and Tarra Worth
- **Our staff who served during 2016:** Carmelo Abate, Tim Brown, Jasmin Coleman, Chris Collins, James Cunningham, Harmonie Downes, Rachel Gaffney-Dawson, Cat Holland, Alex Lawton, Mary Schneider, Pat Swell and Angela Witcher
- **Our management committee members who served during 2016:** Thomas Bradley, Susan Ball, Catherine Black, Liz Crawford, James Cunningham, Robert Hoge, Patrice McKay, Sam Nicolosi, Stephanie Parkin and Angela Tillmanns



Celebrating the end of 2016 at *Inspirational: Art Meets Sport*, a partnership with Life Without Barriers and State Library of Queensland marking International Day of People with Disability.

*Access Arts thanks Ashgrove West United Church, BDO, Bruce Heiser, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Qld, Deaf Services Queensland, Ellie Hatte Photography, Expressions Dance Studio, Fair Work Australia, Joshua MaGuire Stills and Video, Mappins Nursery, and NDS for their support to us in 2016.*

*We are also indebted to our major partners and funders:*



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*Access Arts transforms lives. We have 34 years' history pioneering opportunities through art for people who experience disability or disadvantage. Our pivotal difference is the quality of what we do, achieving life-changing results for people across the spectrum of disabilities. We offer a safe place for artists with disability or disadvantage to experiment, take risks and excel.*



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