

About Us

Accessible Arts is the peak arts and disability organisation across New South Wales.

Our vision is excellence in arts + disability.

Our mission is to provide leadership in arts + disability through information, advocacy and the facilitation of excellence in professional arts practice.

Highlights

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

\$529,759 in project spending to facilitate pathways to best practice and artistic excellence in professional arts + disability.

Inaugural arts + disability expo at Carriageworks attracted over

1000 attendees across two days with 27 exhibitors.

ARTS DEVELOPMENT

Grants Program

56 applications received.

24 successful projects funded a total of \$198.801.

Locations: Sydney, Lismore, Orange, Ballina, Blue Mountains, Bathurst, Warialda and Nowra.

Front Cover: Catalyst Dance Residency, Carriageworks. Photo Gisella Vollmer.

ACCESS DEVELOPMENT

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs joins Deaf Signing Choir for a world first performance of Handel's Messiah with Auslan integration.

5,653 tickets sold across three performances at the Sydney Opera House.

Over 17,000 Youtube views of the live stream post-event.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

14.3% growth in social media presence.

113,192 unique visitors to www.aarts.net.au

Global audience reach with Catalyst Dance Residency short documentary screened on 2015 International Day of People with Disability at United Nations, New York.

From the Chair



I am pleased to present this 2015 Annual Report. The year incorporated many highlights as our organisation continues to grow in stature and impact, and to respond to the dynamic arts and disability landscapes.

The Board demonstrated that it is an agile and committed governing body. In the context of continuous improvement of organisational governance, the Board formed a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee as a standing committee. This additional layer of input and review in relation to compliance, policy development and financial management has enhanced the Board's oversight of the Company's operations and risk management. I particularly thank Board members Will Thorne and Kate Lidbetter for their active and skilful engagement with the work of this Committee.

In regard to renewal, we welcomed Mark Walton OAM to the Board. Mark brings extensive experience of music, music education and effective regional engagement to the Board, as well as an international dimension through his co-location in Australia and New Zealand. We farewelled Suzanne Becker, a Board member of great value to the organisation over a number of years, and I take the opportunity to thank Suzanne for her sustained and much appreciated contribution.

In 2015 Accessible Arts delivered a number of new programs and projects, including the inaugural 'arts and disability expo', eight artist-run initiatives, and the small and quick response grant program. Partnerships included the acclaimed collaboration with the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs for the signed performances of Handel's 'Messiah'. Our regional projects remain a high priority as we endeavour to fulfil our brief of supporting pathways to excellence outside the major urban areas. 'Heading West', centered in the Armidale and Gunnedah regions, and 'Heading Out' in the Port Macquarie local council area. were important examples of our regional commitment.

It is pleasing to see the consolidation of established projects such as the Catalyst Dance Residency, the Deaf Arts Network, and the Supported Studio Network, alongside the continuation of newer enterprises such as the Delineate grants that have been renegotiated with the Department of Family and Community Services for 2016-2017.

The financial result for this year reflects the refinement of the staffing structure following the period of significant expense related to restructuring, and places Accessible Arts in a healthy financial position going forward.

I offer my thanks for a very successful and productive year to my colleagues of the Board, to CEO, Sancha Donald and the Accessible Arts staff and volunteers, and to our funding agencies and sponsors. It is through our collaborative endeavours that we are able to encourage, support and enable the realisation of the vision of individual artists and facilitators working in the arts + disability sector across NSW and beyond.

Sharman Pretty

Emeritus Professor

From the CEO



Accessible Arts successfully implemented its strategic aims for 2015 through initiatives focused on pathways to practice, professional arts and disability practice, engagement with the sector and strong advocacy.

The development of our 2015-2017 Strategic Plan along with the creation of the 'continuum of arts and disability', provided the impetus to reframe our long-term aspirations, ensuring that we strive to deliver elevated outcomes for artists with disability, arts organisations and the arts and disability sector more generally.

Our new Vision and Mission statements positioned the organisation to take part in a world first collaboration with the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, establish new sector-wide initiatives and augment the capacity of artists with disability to practice as professional artists.

Specific career pathways were at the forefront of our work in several art forms. Our well-developed 'Catalyst Dance Residency' program offered places to 14 dancers, with and without disability, from across the country enabling them to refine their dance practice in an integrated setting over a two-year period. Year-one culminated in the showing 'As of Now' while the dance residency trailer was selected as part of the United Nations Enable film festival.

Members of the Supported Studio Network Committee met under the leadership of strategist Susan Boccalatte to tease out actions to build capacity, provide resources and strengthen connections to sustain diverse supported studio models.

We established eight artist-run initiatives across NSW to foster the autonomy of creative art groups for emerging artists with disability within their local communities.

In order to aid individuals with disability to make informed choices and to exercise control in relation to new opportunities that will flow from the NDIS, we launched Australia's first 'arts + disability expo', in partnership with Royal Rehab. Attended by over 1000 participants this enterprise is set to become a regular part of our program.

Regional development included 'Heading Out', a partnership with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council that saw three projects executed with arts and disability practice embedded in the Council's place-making strategy from the outset. 'Heading West' in partnership with Arts Out West furthered the development of arts and disability practice in that region.

The Deaf Arts Network broadened to include facilitated information sessions for Deaf populations in Lismore, Campbelltown and Newcastle to become more acquainted with their local arts centre and its programs; a creative skills development school holiday program for Deaf students; and a creative venture with the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. Through this partnership, Accessible Arts facilitated the formation of a Deaf signing choir to perform an Auslan interpretation of Handel's 'Messiah' as part of the performances by the choir. This initiative created a world-first event, attracting over 17,000 views of the live-stream on Youtube.



Grants continued to be a source of assistance for individual artists and initiatives through new funding provided by icare Lifetime Care and Support, while our long-standing partnership with the annual 'Don't DIS my ABILITY' campaign now fosters the development of grant recipients over a two-year period.

Access development was continued through disability awareness training and the continuation of the Accessing the Arts Group. Additionally, for the first time Accessible Arts was engaged by Destination NSW to audio describe a number of the lightwalk installations as part of Vivid Sydney. This activity will be expanded in 2016.

The addition of the Access Quarterly, CEO's quarterly column and Deaf Arts tri-annual e-newsletters have boosted our range of communication channels while an extensive brand refresh has enhanced all our promotional activities.

The small deficit resulting from final adjustments to the staffing structure, positions Accessible Arts to move beyond the financial costs associated with the restructure of 2014. With a healthy Balance Sheet, renewed triennial funding from Arts NSW, and the support of other

financial partners, the organisation is in a strong position to deliver its objectives.

Our thanks go to all our stakeholders, funding partners and partner organisations for their involvement and interest in our work, and also to the staff, volunteers and Directors whose collective guidance and dedication is central to the growth of inclusive practice in NSW. We offer special thanks to our core funding bodies, Arts NSW and the Department of Family and Community Services, which through their support, continue to foster the expansion and development of contemporary arts and disability practice and the engagement of audiences with disability.

The coming year is an exciting one as we celebrate our 30th anniversary, host the 5th Arts Activated Conference at Carriageworks in September, commence a three-year partnership with Art Month Sydney and roll-out the access and inclusion campaign 'Accessing Sydney Collectively', sponsored by the City of Sydney.

Sancha Donald

Chief Executive Officer



Heading West

Accessible Arts and Arts North West successfully applied to Arts NSW to establish 'Heading West', a partnership between Accessible Arts, Arts North West and Arts Northern Rivers. The project was a region-to-region response to identify with the growing arts and disability movement, to reduce isolation of artists with disability, and to promote their artistic skills and outputs. 'Heading West' leveraged the knowledge and resources developed from the three-year 'Creating Connections' project in the neighbouring North and Mid-North Coast.

The initial stages of the 'Heading West' project will see the continued development and expansion of the Arts North West 'Enable Arts' network with the appointment of a steering committee comprised of regional artists with disability and key project partners. This committee will be central to the projects overall aim of profile raising and sustainable self-determination by, and for the regional sector.

The project was led by a steering committee and gathered input at forums in Armidale and Gunnedah from representatives of over 60 local organisations.

The key priorities identified were the need for a shared database of networks and organisations across the North-West region to facilitate knowledge of arts and disability practice; and a one-day 'Arts and Disability Expo' in Gunnedah in 2016, to allow organisations to showcase their inclusive arts programs.

'Heading West' partnered with Beyond Empathy in Armidale to establish an Artist Run Initiative (ARI) with artists with disability as a part of the broader AARTS ARI project funded by icare Lifetime Care and Support. This ARI will be facilitated by artist with disability, Ned McDowell, and overseen by Beyond Empathy.

As part of the funding agreement Arts North West Communication Manager, Steph Brummell travelled to the North Coast to look at the sustainable outcomes from the 'Creating Connections' project. This was also to identify new networks that the Arts North West Regional Arts Board could utilise as support during the 'Heading West' project in 2016.

The Regional Arts and Disability
Development Manual, also a funding
requirement, was developed by Julie
Barratt. This document has now been
handed over to Caroline Downer (RADO
ANW) to allow Arts North West (ANW)
to populate the Manual with case studies
as the 'Heading West' project continues
through 2016. All Regional Arts Boards
will have use of the Manual once
it is completed.

Heading Out

The year long 'Heading Out' partnership with the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and funded by icare Lifetime Care and Support aimed to embed inclusive arts opportunities in the Council's newly created place-making initiative. Providing professional coordination between arts and disability projects and their communities in the Mid-North Coast was a key element of the program.

There were three project outcomes: 'Troll Story-Survivor' by Eric Atkins; 'Unique' puppet, performed by Eddi Goodfellow; and the full size whale's tail designed by Port Macquarie public artist, Jo Davidson. All projects were launched on 3 December as part of International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) at the Port Macquarie library, and at Livvy's accessible playground. The projects engaged a total of 200 students, artists and people with disability over the year.

Catalyst Dance Residency, Carriageworks. Photo Gisella Vollmer.

Strategist Susan Boccalatte facilitated a key face-to-face meeting in May. This was an opportunity for the SSN Steering Committee to develop a three-year action plan that will continue to support differing supported studio models and studio artists with disability, in strong professional artistic practice.

Creative Causeway

'Creative Causeway' (formerly known as Creative Programs Network) developed into a new meeting format that sees artists with and without disability, arts organisations and disability services, come together to discuss ideas around arts and disability practice. Key stakeholders share expertise, networks and professional arts practice across art forms.

Integrated dance theatre was a major focus this year with Sarah-Vyne Vassallo (Artistic Director) and Dan Daw (Artistic Associate) from Murmuration Dance Theatre invited to present on their newly formed dance company.

Murmuration is an artist with disability led integrated performance company, based in Sydney. They work closely with multi-disciplinary artists dedicated to creating innovative contemporary dance theatre. Sarah-Vyne and Dan facilitated strong discussion around the use and terminology of integrated dance in Australia, with the Creative Causeway group.

Deaf Arts Network Forums

Accessible Arts partnered with Campbelltown Arts Centre, Newcastle Community Arts Centre, OCTOPOD and Art Gallery of NSW to meet curators, arts organisations and members of the Deaf and/or hard of hearing community to discuss opportunities to engage with the arts community in NSW region. The forums were successful with outcomes intended for 2016.

Supported Studio Network [SSN]

The 'Supported Studio Network' (SSN) Steering Committee held its first meeting with national members from across Australia in February. This included representation from NT, VIC, QLD, NSW and a national representative from Arts Access Australia.

Arts Development

Catalyst

The 'Catalyst Dance Residency' is a national artist development program across two years supporting 14 dance practitioners with and without disability who demonstrate commitment to integrated dance practice. The Catalyst program includes masterclasses, dance training, choreographic workshops and research, artistic and career development, and mentorships with key dance practitioners.

In October 2015, Catalyst comprised a 7-day skills and career development residency held at Carriageworks. Residents worked alongside a creative team of key dance professionals, led by Sarah-Vyne Vassallo, Catalyst Program Director.

Throughout the week residents developed fundamental artistic dance theatre skills that evolved into a performance called 'As of Now' at the end of the residency program, choreographed by Kay Armstrong. The program continues throughout 2015 and 2016 as a mentorship program. Catalyst Mentors include, Caroline Bowditch, Philip Channells, Dan Daw, Janice Florence, Paige Gordon and Michelle Ryan.

Accessible Arts and filmmaker Hugh Clark produced a short documentary of the Catalyst Dance Residency that was screened in New York at United Nations Enable Film Festival.

10 "I had the opportunity and was supported to do the kind of dancing that was right for me and my body. The professional attitude of the residency made me take myself seriously, and my desire to dance seriously, and that has had a huge impact on me."

Karen Veldhuizen, Catalyst Resident

Ripple Effect

On 28 September - 2 October, Accessible Arts hosted the five-day 'Ripple Effect Deaf Arts School Program' delivered in South Sydney at Shopfront in Carlton. The Program provided Deaf and/or hard of hearing youth between 10 - 17 years in NSW with an opportunity to participate in drama, dance, visual arts and theatre workshops. All workshops were led by three Deaf artists, one hearing artist with 11 Deaf students participating.

Delineate

A new two-year partnership with the Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign, run by Family and Community Services (FACS), was launched towards the end of the year. The 'Delineate' program is designed to boost disability-led projects that build capacity, leadership skills, and artistic networks for artists with disability, as well as create cultural change.

The partnership is offering six arts grants of \$8000 (\$4000 per year) over two consecutive years, 2016 to 2017.

Accessible Arts Grants Program

A Small Grants Program consisting of Quick Response Grants up to \$5,000 and Small Grants from \$5,000-\$20,000 was initiated in April. With funding from icare Lifetime Care and Support the two-year program is designed to assist not-for-profit arts and disability services/organisations and/or for groups or individual artists with disability living in NSW.

The funding is designed to assist arts and cultural projects at any stage of their creative development and/or public presentation. The Small Grants program delivered \$150,040 in funding to 10 artists; the Quick Response Grants program delivered \$48,761 in funding to 14 artists.

Artist Run Initiative

Accessible Arts' 'Artist Run Initiative (ARI) Project' is supporting the autonomy of eight artist run initiatives for artists with and without disability in their local communities across NSW. The ARI project provides opportunity for social inclusion, networking, artistic and business skills development and professional artist talks, and peer-reviewed practice.



Creative Causeway guest speakers from integrated performance company, Murmuration.



The Committee screenwriting project by Torrid Films; Quick Response Grant recipient.



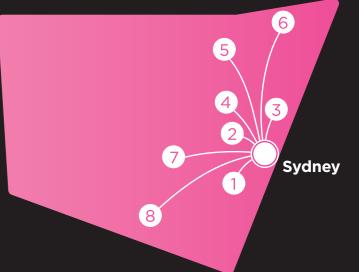
'Unique Van' regional project creators Mike and Wayne with Sancha Donald, CEO.



'Out of Line' Shopfront Bodylines Ensemble at the arts + disability expo.

8 Artist Run Initiative Projects funded for a total \$51,500

- 1. 'Creatively Connected' visual arts ARI in South Western Sydney at Campbelltown Arts Centre
- Vision Impaired Drama Society' theatre and movement based ARI in Sydney
- 3. 'ARIN' visual arts ARI in Newcastle
- **4.** 'Write on! Hunter Blogging' blogging ARI in the hunter region
- **5.** 'Our Space' multidisciplinary arts ARI in Gunnedah
- **6.** 'Run with it' visual arts ARI in Armidale
- 7. 'Out There' multidisciplinary arts ARI in Central West and based in Orange
- 8. 'Friendship, Fabric and Rivers' textile arts ARI in Western Riverina



1 Campbelltown/Bankstown

- **2** Parramatta
- **3** Newcastle
- **4** Hunter Region
- 5 Gunnedah
- **6** Armidale
- **7** Orange
- 8 Leeton/Narrandera

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Access Development

Disability Awareness Training

In 2015 we began offering our highly successful general training sessions in the ground floor meeting rooms of our new premises at The Arts Exchange.

The training covered disability history, legislation, culture, appropriate language, access barriers and access solutions.

During the year, the Access and Training role changed to a part-time position.

Sarah Houbolt was appointed as the Access and Training Manager in June. In her role she revised the content and resources for this training and created an online registration process. Great feedback has been received and participants also appreciated connecting with other people interested in access and inclusion.

Accessible Arts presented tailor-made training to Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney Festival, Office of Environment and Heritage, and Carriageworks. In October, Sarah travelled to Tamworth to deliver disability awareness training and disability action plan training to arts professionals in that region.

"Great mix of take home resources, good visual aids, relevant stories and examples, engaging group activities in a relaxed and open learning environment." Sydney Festival

Destination NSW, Vivid Sydney

In a new partnership arrangement with Destination NSW, Accessible Arts was contracted to provide a number of audio descriptions for light works for 'Vivid Sydney'. Artist Imogen Yang created the audio files which were then uploaded onto the 'Vivid Sydney' website in mp3 format alongside general information about the work. This initiative marks the first year of audio description at the high profile festival. Accessible Arts will again provide audio description at 'Vivid Sydney' 2016.

City of Sydney Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program

Accessible Arts received \$30,000 in sponsorship from the City of Sydney to launch its print digital campaign, 'Accessing Sydney Collectively'. The campaign will produce 10,000 pocket guides and a mobile site (www.asyd. co) that will aggregate the access information of twelve of the city's leading cultural organisations and venues.

A unique campaign icon is to be developed to be shared, with a city-wide approach to standardise access information on the websites of the participating organisations. The principal is to meet WCAG 2.0 best practice when marketing and publishing their access initiatives online.

Accessing the Arts Group, ATAG

'Accessing the Arts Group' is a professional development group for arts organisations and venues, aiming to provide both support and information to improve disability access and social inclusion in the arts. At least three meetings are held every year. There is now an online form on the Accessible Arts website to register for membership to this group.





Deaf Signing Choir

In a world first, Accessible Arts partnered with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs to present three performances of Handel's 'Messiah' at the Sydney Opera House on 3, 5 and 6 December 2015.

Conducted by Brett Weymark the 'Messiah' this year had an Auslan integrated Deaf signing choir directed by Alex Jones. The performance comprised 500 voices alongside five hearing and nine Deaf choir signing members. Jenny Spinak, Accessibility

Manager at the Sydney Opera House, widened access and broadened audience engagement of the event by delivering a live stream of the 5th December performance. The live stream of the performance is on Youtube with over 17,000 views.

5,653 tickets sold across three performances at the Sydney Opera House

Communications and Marketing

The following information services, opportunities and networks are fostered to expand and support arts and disability practices across the community.

During the last twelve months Accessible Arts has been in the process of a brand optimisation. This has involved an extensive brand re-fresh with marketing and design company Alphabet Design, that revisited and contemporised the main organisational logo, as well as realigned the tone and look for core operations sub-branding. This revision was designed to preserve the brands identity, infuse new energy and strengthen sector positioning.

The Communications Manager furthered this brand system transformation by changing to a new mail subscription service that led to a fresh design for the monthly sector electronic newsletter. This success extended to the development of the CEO quarterly column, Access Quarterly and Deaf Arts tri-annual e-newsletters, and project specific EDM (electronic direct mail) campaigns.

Our direct messaging hierarchy was further reinforced through the implementation of a new sector communications strategy and accompanying style guide. This extended to implementing project specific individualised marketing, including high quality print program booklets, branded banners, t-shirts, and tote bags. The brand optimisation project is on target for completion with the final aspect of the launch of the new Accessible Arts website in 2016.

Accessible Arts continued its strong social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We communicated to the Deaf and/or hard of hearing community through the Auslan interpretation of the newsletter, and through Deaf Arts Facebook group. Project specific websites for the 'Arts Activated Conference', 'Catalyst' and the 'arts + disability expo' remained relevant and in use.

The organisation gained a global audience with its first film festival screening success at the UN Enable International Film Festival. The 'Catalyst' dance residency short documentary was one of 15 films selected (out of 100 submissions) by an in-house Committee at the United Nations, in New York. The winning films were screened at UN Headquarters as part of the 2015 International Day of People with Disability. The film was captioned and audio described, and captures the success of Accessible Arts' long-term commitment to integrated dance development.

Digital Engagement



3.532 Facebook Followers



417 Instagram Followers



6,067 Twitter Followers



354 members: Deaf Facebook Closed Group



1,919 subscribers: Monthly eNewsletter



113,192 AARTS Website unique visits

14.3% growth in social media presence

Board, Staff, Volunteers, **Committees**

BOARD

Chair

Emeritus Professor Sharman Pretty

Directors

Andrew Buchanan Vice Chair William Thorne Treasurer Kate Lidbetter Company Secretary Suzanne Becker **Kenneth Groves** Lisa Havilah Sarah-Jane Rennie Mark Watson OAM

STAFF

Sancha Donald Chief Executive Officer **Matthew Pethybridge** Operations Manager **Tammy Brennan** Communications Manager Kristina Tito Arts Development Manager **Julie Barratt** Regional Arts Manager (end 24/12/2015)

Ellen Lowrey Strategic Projects Manager Sarah Houbolt Access and Training

Manager (from 22/05/15)

Louise Anderson Administration Officer **Joanna Agius** Deaf Arts Officer (end 18/12/2015) Beatrice Giorgi Expo Coordinator

(end 29/09/2015)

Gemma Collocott Strategic Projects

Manager (end 8/07/2015)

Sophie Clausen Access Development Manager (end 27/03/2015)

Paul Baylis Development Manager (end 27/03/2015)

VOLUNTEERS

Michael Doyle, Johanna Garvin, Carolyne Gilbert, Beatrice Giorgi and Fiona Matthews.

Accessible Arts would like to thank seasonal staff for paid and unpaid contributions to project specific work and events.

COMMITTEES

Accessible Arts would like to thank the members of the following committees for their contribution to the deliver of these projects:

Heading West

Julie Barratt Julie Priest Kevin Williams Jo Davidson

Heading Out

Stephanie Brummell Caroline Downer Julie Barratt Anna Watt Glen Innes Kylie Hawkins Jason Reed Ned McDowell Chris Durham

Deaf Arts Network

Joannna Agius Vivienne Wood Gemma Galea Stevie-Lee Bounader Kate Matairavula Young-Joo Byun

Supported Studio Network

Anne Kwasner Debbie Chilton Sarah McEwan Sim Luttin Kirstin Sillitoe Kieren Sanderson Susie Waller Aliey Ball Evan Hughes Gabrielle Mordy Josie Cavallaro Suzanne Boccalatte Professor Colin Rhodes

Catalyst Dance Residency

Michelle Silby Dan Daw Melinda Tyquin Matthew Shillcock

LTCSA Grants

Grea Kileen Paul Tweddell Robyn Chapman

PARTNERS





icare lifetime care

With thanks to Lucy Giumelli Saini Trust.

To view the 2015 financial statement go to www.aarts.net.au or request a copy by phone or email.

Accessible Arts is assisted by the NSW Government through Arts NSW.

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