

Arts and Disability

Research Report



Arts and Disability

**A Research Report prepared for the Australia Council by
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Executive Summary

Access

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 18 per cent of the Australian population has a disability.

There is a basic lack of data on participation in the arts by artists with a disability. No figures were available on the number of people with disabilities applying for grants from the Australia Council or from State or Territory arts agencies.

The current dearth of statistical information needs to be overcome by systematic and sustained research.

There are many barriers to arts access experienced by people with disabilities around Australia on a day-to-day basis. Many of these barriers are physical, such as lack of doors accessible for people using wheelchairs. Other barriers are systemic or attitudinal. Some barriers relate to types of disability.

There are a number of preconceptions that stop people with disabilities finding work, and not just in the arts. For example, they are perceived to be a safety risk. But the safety record of people with disabilities is as good as, if not better than, that of non-disabled employees.

A recurrent theme of the consultations with people with disabilities was that one of the main barriers to artists and aspiring artists with a disability is the lack of access to training.

The consultants found no conclusive evidence that there is a widely shared, articulated concept of a 'disability arts' movement in Australia, although there is every possibility of such a movement developing as people with disabilities become more aware of their rights and confident in the exercise of those rights.

Policy makers and funding bodies need to be flexible and enable people with disabilities to participate in the arts in the way they find most appropriate, whether integrated or segregated.

The Legal Framework

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) provides protection against discrimination based on disability.

Disability standards currently being developed will provide a framework for the implementation of the DDA, detailing outcomes and time frames. Contravention of disability standards will be illegal.

Organisations which provide funding for activities which involve discriminatory practices, or which provide that funding in a way that is discriminatory, could be subject to complaint.

The Arts and Disability Movement in Australia

Largely through self-help and the work of a number of not-for-profit organisations around Australia, a range of options have developed for people with disabilities who wish to become involved in the arts, either as participants or as audience members.

Commonwealth and State/Territory arts funding agencies have provided some funding for a few organisations, but there has not been any major injection of infrastructure funding for arts and disability activities.

There is a need for more readily accessible information on arts and disability organisations and activities.

Gatekeepers: Arts Funding Bodies and Arts Venues in Australia

As a federal agency, the Australia Council and its employees have special responsibilities in terms of the DDA. The Commonwealth Disability Strategy makes specific mention of the Australia Council in reference to access to cultural activities.

The Australia Council has funded many worthwhile initiatives and projects in relation to disability, but:

- does not have an adequate, consistent and cohesive approach to policy issues in the disability area and should address those issues as a matter of priority; and
- its guidelines for grant applicants are not sufficient to ensure equity for people with disabilities.

The Council's code of practice is outdated and a new document is needed as a ready reference.

The grants administration process of the Australia Council inhibits access by people with disabilities in a number of ways, including:

- the provision of information about grants;
- guidelines for completion of grant application forms;
- the process of assessment.

The Council should examine the issue of representation of people with disabilities on policy and assessment bodies.

A focused, flexible plan of action should be developed in consultation with the States and Territories, on cooperative funding for organisations to provide resources in information dissemination, advocacy, training and research.

For other organisations, the Council and its Boards should initiate discussions, in the first instance with the organisations they fund on a recurrent basis or which receive substantial project funding, to identify ways in which access for people with disabilities could be improved in specific art form areas.

The imposition of 'stringent guidelines' is not appropriate at this stage, given that the DDA already provides 'guidelines' with the potential of severe penalties for non-compliance. For the time being, the Council should focus on providing information and encouragement and requiring brief annual reports from its main client organisations.

The subject of access for people with disabilities be brought to the attention of the Cultural Ministers' Council, with a strategy for cooperative action.

As indicated earlier, attitudes towards people with disabilities are considered to be as critical as physical provision, if not more so. Therefore it is essential that staff be provided with structured training on the requirements of people with disabilities.

International Experience

There are valuable lessons and examples of practice to be gained from international experience, especially from the United Kingdom and the USA.

Strategy for Change

The research project has identified a pressing need for improved access to the arts for people with disabilities, whatever their disability or level of support needs and however they choose to be involved, whether as consumers, participants, artists/artworkers, employees or freelance workers or consultants in the arts industry.

The Australia Council has a crucial role of leadership and it is therefore proposed that the Australia Council:

- a) Establish a short term working party to study this report and to oversee the publication of the report and implementation of the recommendations.
- b) Manage the proposed Arts and Disability Program and its core budget as a Council initiative.
- c) Appoint a senior person to be a source of advice to Council on arts and disability issues and to coordinate the proposed program.
- d) Maintain an ongoing review of Council policy and practice, including the administration of grants programs, noting that some affirmative action initiatives may be needed in the short to medium term, to redress past neglect.
- e) Promote wider dissemination of information among arts organisations, about disability and about access issues, and support provision for better access by arts organisations to current information and expertise.
- f) Provide and support representation and advocacy, at a senior level, to promote awareness of disability access issues and concerted action to remove barriers to participation in the arts and barriers to education, training and employment.

- g) Develop programs and projects to showcase and disseminate information about models of good practice.
- h) Participate in a concerted approach to employment and training issues for people with disabilities, within the framework of the national training reform agenda.
- i) Initiate action to ensure that the subject of arts and disability policies is considered by the Cultural Ministers' Council before the end of 1995.
- j) Provide support for continuing research, focused on developing a more comprehensive body of information about the arts and disability and on identifying progressively the barriers to participation in specific art forms and for people in specific disability areas.

Recommendations

The report recommends that the Council initiate a five year program of active support for improved access to the arts at all levels, entitled the Arts and Disability Program, to incorporate:

- arts and disability best practice scheme;
- national arts and disability forum;
- arts and disability information and advocacy program;
- arts and disability research.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Australia Council's decision to commission research into the arts and disability is timely, especially given the lack of data in Australia on this subject and a range of recent legislative and administrative developments in the area of disability.

Various individuals and organisations in Australia have been very active in the field of the arts and disability, especially over the past twenty years or so. Nevertheless, in terms of arts policy and arts management practice, the subject represents relatively uncharted territory in Australia. There has been a great deal of research on and consideration given to the subject by the Arts Council of Great Britain, and to a lesser degree by the US National Endowment for the Arts. But in Australian arts organisations, including the Australia Council, there is little evidence of focused, sustained attention at the level of either policy or practice.

A number of developments have contributed to the Australia Council's commissioning of this research project, including:

- introduction of government agreements and legislation affecting people with disabilities, specifically the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA) and the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA);
- recommendations from the 1992 DADAA (Disability and the Arts, Disadvantage and the Arts, Australia) conference;
- the 1992 review by the Australia Council's Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) of its assistance to organisations;

The project has provided an opportunity to address the implications of those developments and at the same time to examine related matters, including:

- the appropriateness of the Australia Council pamphlet, *The Arts and People with Disabilities: A Code of Practice for Arts Organisations* (the Code of Practice);
- deliberations and submissions for the Commonwealth Cultural Policy Statement delivered in October 1994;
- the implications of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, February 1994.¹

The project commenced in February 1994.

1.2 Project Brief

In summary, the project brief required the consultants to:

- Evaluate barriers to intellectual and physical access to the arts for people with disabilities, as audience members, artists/performers and employees/artswriters.
- Assess the appropriateness of the existing arts and disability infrastructure, including key players and support networks, involved in providing services through, or developing access to, the arts for people with disabilities, including artists.
- Examine the emergence of 'disability arts' as a distinct area of arts activity.
- Investigate policies of integration versus segregation.
- Analyse the implications for arts organisations of the 1992 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act and the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement.
- Examine the ways in which people with disabilities are reflected in or represented through the arts.
- Investigate the need for arts funding agencies to provide stringent guidelines on the arts and disability.
- Evaluate the current appropriateness and the effectiveness of the Australia Council's code of practice on the arts and disability.
- Develop a framework for policy on arts and disability.

(A full copy of the brief is included as **Attachment A**.)

While the brief identified a very wide range of issues and objectives, it was clear from the outset that one of the key questions to be considered was that of government financial and other support. In the brief, the Australia Council listed for the consultants' consideration a number of arguments for government support which have been advanced by the arts and disability sector, as follows:

- a) People with disabilities form a significant part of the population (18% according to ABS figures);
- b) People with disabilities have the same rights as other Australians to participate in Australia's artistic and cultural life, but often face greater obstacles in gaining access to venues, resources, employment, training and programs;
- c) People with disabilities can and do contribute to Australia's artistic and cultural life and should have the opportunity to develop their own cultural activities for the enrichment and enjoyment of all Australians;

- d) People with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose to participate in or attend segregated or integrated arts activities;
- e) It is important and efficient for arts funding agencies to support a national network of arts and disability organisations to maximise opportunities and resources and act as advocates on behalf of their sector; and
- f) Public arts funding is the necessary base from which funding from other sources can be negotiated and strategic partnerships developed.

1.3 Methodology

General

The project was carried out through a combination of desk research and consultation.

Consultations were conducted face-to-face in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, and by telephone with organisations in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

People consulted were from a range of arts and disability organisations, Commonwealth and State/Territory arts funding and policy agencies, Commonwealth and State disability funding agencies, arts organisations, disability organisations and people with disabilities.

The study takes a broad view of the 'arts' but with a focus on those areas of the arts which the Australia Council supports directly. Some attention has also been paid to the areas of museums, galleries and libraries.

This report has been prepared primarily for the attention of the Australia Council. One of the key findings of the project is that the Australia Council can play a more definite and focused leadership role in the area of the arts and disability. Accordingly, the recommendations for action emphasise what should be done by the Australia Council. However, the consultants believe that the arguments for action by the Council and suggestions about appropriate initiatives and programs can and should be taken up, with modifications where necessary, by a number of other organisations, including the Department of Communications and the Arts and the State and Territory arts agencies.

Similarly, it is hoped that the report will be prove a useful aid for advocacy by arts and disability organisations and a guide and stimulus to action for other arts or cultural organisations.

While one of the aims of this study has been to provide a picture of what is taking place in the field of arts and disability, the consultants make no claim to providing a definitive picture of all activities taking place in Australia.

Every endeavour has been made to provide fair and up-to-date statements of the role and activities of various organisations, drawing on their own publications and statements in interviews. The consultants were not required to evaluate the efficiency or effectiveness of any specific organisation or group of organisations and this report does not present any such evaluative commentary.

The Council established a reference group to assist with the project, comprising:

- Helen Connors, DADAA representative;
- Andrew Jakubowicz, CCDB member;
- Ron Layne, Strategy and Communications Unit, Australia Council;
- Robert Plant, arts worker, Access Arts;
- Jane Trengrove, artist;
- Tamara Winikoff, CCDB.

The reference group provided guidance on the structuring of the project and people who should be consulted. The group reviewed and commented on an interim report and a draft of this final report.

While many people and organisations provided assistance for this project, special acknowledgment is due to representatives of State and Territory based arts and disability organisations and other organisations involved in the disability field, who provided advice and assistance and spent considerable time and energy in organising and hosting focus groups and other consultations, especially people with disabilities. We also acknowledge gratefully the assistance and advice of Australia Council staff, State and Territory arts officers, and the many other people from the arts and individual people with disabilities who were consulted.

(A list of people consulted is included as **Attachment B**.)

Desk Research

A literature search was conducted through the State Library of New South Wales (AUSTROM: APAIS, AGIS, Sport and Leisure; Wilsondisk; Social Sciences Citation Index, General Publications) and the library of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

However, little relevant information was forthcoming from any of these sources.

Individuals and organisations working in the area supplied some key pieces of literature, as did the Australia Council library.

There has been a lot of work conducted in this area in the United Kingdom. The Arts and Disability Unit of the Arts Council of England has been very generous in supplying a large number of publications. These have been

passed on to the Australia Council, where they are available on loan from the library.

(A bibliography is included as **Attachment C.**)

In addition to the literature review and face-to-face meetings, the consultants contacted a range of organisations by mail or facsimile. These included organisations in Australian States and Territories not visited.

Letters/faxes were also sent to and responses received from arts funders in the United States (National Endowment for the Arts), United Kingdom (Arts Council of England, Scottish Arts Council), Canada (Canada Council) and New Zealand (Queen Elizabeth II Council for the Arts).

Consultation

The aim of the consultative process was to obtain a cross-section of views, rather than attempting a comprehensive survey, which in any case would have been an unrealistic objective within the available time and resources.

Face-to-face consultations were conducted in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Telephone consultations were conducted with people in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Consultations were conducted with representatives of:

- arts and disability organisations;
- arts organisations;
- arts funding organisations;
- disability organisations;
- disability funders; and
- people with disabilities.

Suggestions for individuals and organisations to be consulted were made by the reference group, Australia Council officers, State and Territory arts ministries, local arts and disability organisations and key individuals involved in the area.

In addition, notices advertising the project were posted in magazines and journals published by a range of arts, disability and arts and disability organisations. (These are detailed in **Attachment D.**)

People who responded to the notices were sent further details of the project. Some were followed up during the consultation process. Others were sent questionnaires to be completed.

Our Approach

One of the main techniques used to elicit information and opinions about this subject was the semi-structured interview. The consultants interviewed a number of arts administrators in different artforms, people with disabilities, involved in or interested in the arts, and administrators in areas related to the study.

The meetings with people with disabilities were of the utmost importance. The Australia Council's reference group for this project asked us at the outset not to come back with a report that stated the existence of a problem of access. This fact, they said, was obvious. What was needed was advice on how to remove the barriers to access. So it was very necessary to put the major emphasis on getting the perspective of people with disabilities, and as much as possible at first hand.

As the project progressed, and in meetings with arts managers, it became evident that in order to discuss ways of removing barriers we needed to first spend considerable time explaining the context of the study and providing illustrations of the sorts of access problems experienced by people with disabilities. Because of these experiences, we have included in this report an exposition of issues of access and the legal framework. Further dissemination of information of this kind and opportunities for extended discussion of the issues by arts managers is, in our view, necessary if the report is to gain the attention and understanding of the broad community of arts managers and other gatekeepers, such as members of boards of arts organisations.

Areas not covered by this Study

Given the extensive scope of the brief and the timeframe within which the project was to be completed, it was decided that this project would not seek to address in depth, issues specific to older people and people living with HIV/AIDS. In each of these areas the Australia Council had commissioned, or was completing, separate research. The Council undertook to arrange the necessary cross-referencing of related research projects.

Early in the course of the study, it was noted that a separate project then under way was addressing disability, representation and the media. Accordingly, it was agreed that this study would not seek to provide any extended commentary on these issues. Again, it is expected that the Australia Council will consider the outcomes of that project in relation to the findings of this report.

Scope of this Report

While one of the aims of this study has been to provide a picture of what is taking place in the field of arts and disability, the consultants make no claim to providing here a comprehensive report on what is going on. This is essentially a report which highlights key issues, for the attention of the

Australia Council in the first instance, and proposes a plan of action directed towards steady and progressive change.

In many cases we have had to use an illustrative approach in order to have a reasonable hope of addressing the extensive requirements of the brief.

In that regard, we report that some representatives of arts and disability organisations who were asked to comment on a draft of this report expressed disappointment that there was not a fuller history of the work done in this field by various organisations, that we had not provided more detail about the activities, achievements and potential of such organisations and that we had not described the financial constraints under which they work or highlighted their case for significantly increased Federal and State arts funding.

Organisations forming part of the DADAA network expressed the view that the consultants should acknowledge what the organisations themselves see as the crucial importance of these organisations and of DADAA itself to the successful implementation of an action program.

The report has since been amended to provide some clarification of the roles and significance of various organisations, to the extent that we are able without undertaking a detailed evaluation of the organisations. As has been mentioned above, such an evaluation was not part of the brief and indeed the consultants were not resourced to provide an evaluation of any of the organisations which constitute DADAA.

Nevertheless, we have attempted to provide a suitable acknowledgment of the historical and current significance of the various organisations and to point to their potential importance in any program of action for the future. We have no doubt that there are still many interesting activities which have not been reported here. However, we are confident that this report provides an indication of the broad range of activities, even if it does not succeed in detailing them all. If our recommendations on the development of information activities are accepted, some more detailed attention could then be paid to examining the history of various organisations and their achievements.

2 Access

2.1 Terminology

The Need for a Clear Understanding of Terminology

It was evident during the course of this research project that the terminology of disability is not widely understood among arts industry people. This is no doubt true also of the general community.

But in order to examine seriously the issues of access to the arts and barriers to such access, and to take effective action, it is necessary to have clear agreement on what is meant by such terms as 'disability', 'disabled', 'impairment' and 'handicap'.

This is not an issue of 'political correctness' but of accuracy. The way the words are used is basic to understanding the perspective of the people concerned and has significant bearing on questions about barriers to access.

Terminology is particularly important when examining official statistics.² The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 18 per cent of the Australian population has a disability.

Concepts of Disability

There are two main uses of the term 'disability', reflecting two perspectives on the lives of people with disabilities. One view may be characterised as defining disability as a 'medical condition',³ the other defines it as a social construct.

The traditional perception of disability, which has come to be known as the **medical model**, sees disability as a 'condition' to be 'cured'. Disability is perceived to be a personal calamity, resulting in a pitying, charity-based response. In this construct disability is defined by a set of physical conditions – e.g., deafness, blindness, paraplegia. The person is defined by the condition: 'a deaf person', 'a blind person', 'a paraplegic'. The connotations are always negative, because the 'conditions' are regarded as establishing insurmountable limitations. The onus for minimising the consequences is on the individual with a disability, with the ultimate aim of 'overcoming' disability and becoming 'normal'.⁴

In the **social construct model**, social attitudes, behaviour and practice relating to physical difference or mental difference are considered to be at the root of 'disability'.

Until recently, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definitions of 'impairment', 'disability' and 'handicap' were the most commonly used.⁵

According to the WHO-ICIDH definitions, **impairment** is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. It is the **physical condition**. For example, the damage or lack of

function of the eye or optic nerve of a person who is blind is an impairment.

A **disability** is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity. It is the functional limitation. The loss of the ability to see effectively by a person who is blind is a disability.

A **handicap** is the disadvantage that the disability has on a person's functioning within society. That is, the handicap need only follow when the situation creates difficulties. According to this definition, it is the society that is handicapping.

Understanding these distinctions helps in understanding that disability does not need to stop a person having a fulfilling life. The focus shifts from the concept of a person as 'disabled' to the barriers in the environment which are 'disabling', because they prevent some people from participating on equal terms in many organised activities of society.

However, the WHO-ICIDH definitions have been perceived as reflecting 'a medical and diagnostic approach'⁶ and they are currently under review. The definition of the terms 'disability' used in Australia's Disability Discrimination Act are based on UN rules of terminology, which tend to reflect the social construct model. The terminology is broad and focuses on the unfair treatment that is experienced as a result of disability, rather than defining disability in terms of diagnostic categories.

In Australia, the term 'people with disabilities' is generally considered to be preferable to 'disabled people' (and certainly preferable to 'the disabled') because it recognises that people with disabilities are people first. They are not defined by their disability; it is only one aspect of their lives. When discussing disability, it is a courtesy to avoid referring to people who do not have a disability as 'normal'. They are 'non-disabled'.

In discussions a few times during this study, people wanted to expand the definition of disability to include social, economic or cultural disadvantage. For example, a person could be seen to be economically disabled if they are on a low income. However, using the terminology of disability in this way indicates a lack of understanding of the particular barriers facing people with disabilities. It also makes it hard to focus on the very real challenges that are created by disability as defined above. (Of course, many people with disabilities suffer also from one or other form of disadvantage which is not part of their disability.)

Not all disabilities are visible. For example, it is usually more obvious that someone has a disability if they are using a wheelchair than it is for someone who is arthritic, or has a visual impairment or epilepsy. Other disabilities can be even more hidden, for example psychiatric illness or a hearing impairment.

In keeping with the social construct of disability, rather than refer to levels or degrees of disability, it is more common to talk about 'support needs'. This takes the focus off the disability and places it on the support that a person needs to function in society.

Proportion of People with Disabilities

In the course of this study, a number of people expressed surprise and some indicated a degree of scepticism at the stated figure of 18 per cent of the population as having a disability. It is therefore important to consider the official statistics.

On the basis of its 1993 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 3,176,000 persons, or 18 per cent of the Australian population, have a disability. In other words, more than one in six people in Australia has a disability. Projections indicate that by the year 2000 the figure will have risen to one in five.

Seventy-nine per cent of those with a disability, or 14 per cent of the total population, are classified as having a handicap.⁷

Two per cent of the Australian population are classified as having a 'profound handicap', 2 per cent as having a 'severe handicap', 3 per cent with a 'moderate handicap' and 5 per cent with a 'mild handicap'.⁸

There is a close relationship between disability/handicap and age, as illustrated by Table 1. While people who have an age-related disability may not identify as having a disability, their needs tend to be similar to people who identify as having a disability.

Table 1: Handicap and Disability Rates by Age
Australia, 1993 (Rate per 1000 population)

Age group (years)	Disability		Total	No disability
	Handicap	No handicap		
0-4	44	—	44	956
5-14	66	17	83	917
15-24	52	22	74	926
25-34	65	34	99	901
35-44	97	40	137	863
45-54	157	50	206	794
55-59	242	65	308	692
60-64	291	73	364	636
65-69	341	86	427	573
70-74	458	107	565	435
75 and over	610	57	667	333
Total	142	38	180	820

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*, 1993, p.13.

Thus, according to ABS data, rates of disability and handicap are directly linked to age.

Up to the age of 35, there are less than 100 people per thousand who have a disability (10%). But from 35 onwards, disability rates rise rapidly. For the age group 45 to 54, 21 per cent of the population have a disability; for those aged 60 to 64, 36 per cent have a disability; 67 per cent of the population aged 75 and older have a disability.

Using children aged 0-4 years as a base population, by age 35-44 years the rate of disability is approximately trebled. By age 60-64, the disability rate has increased over eight times.

For all age groups, there is a higher rate of disability reported among males than among females (18.4 per cent and 17.6 per cent, respectively).

Disabling conditions are reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in response to a set of questions designed to identify the presence of a limitation, restriction or impairment.

The main disabling conditions reported by people with disabilities were arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions (27%); disorders of the ear and mastoid process (14%); all mental disorders (11%); and respiratory diseases (9%).

Physical conditions were reported as the main disabling condition by 89 per cent of persons with a disability and mental disorders by the remaining 11 per cent.

2.2 Arts Experiences of People with Disabilities

What Arts Experiences?

This study takes a broad view of 'the arts', but since it has been commissioned by the Australia Council it has focused on areas of the arts which the Council supports directly – performing arts (including drama, music and dance), visual arts and crafts, literature, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, and community cultural development. Some attention has also been paid to the experiences of people with disabilities with regard to museums, galleries and libraries. On the other hand, the areas of cinema and the electronic media were excluded from the brief.

Questions about access to, experiences of and participation in the arts raise questions about what sort of experiences and what sort of participation people with disabilities expect to have. The simple answer is that they want experiences and participation which the rest of the population take for granted. Importantly, the law now strengthens their capacity to expect, seek and demand the same sort of opportunities others have to experience and participate in the arts.

Thus, people with disabilities expect – and are entitled to have – opportunities to experience attending concerts and plays, visiting

museums, playing musical instruments, performing in plays, hearing or reading poetry, and all the other activities that constitute the arts. They expect and are entitled to seek 'the heightened sense of identity and individual worth that results from the uncovering of hidden talents and skills, whether of performance or of appreciation'.⁹ They are entitled to find the sense of community and the development of physical and perceptual skills that can come through participation in the arts.¹⁰

At the same time, it has to be recognised that there are ways in which arts experiences will be different for people with disabilities.

A Distinctive Experience of the Arts

In listing here some of the ways in which people with disabilities have a different experience of the arts, we are examining the issue in a practical way, and as people with disabilities have indicated to us in discussions around the country. There is a related but separate issue, about 'disability arts', which we discuss later.

In the course of our research, one of the key differences suggested in terms of the role of the arts for people with disabilities is that it provides another form of expression or communication for people who may be limited in traditional means of expression. For example the paintings of a person with an intellectual disability or a person with a hearing impairment can enable them to communicate in different ways.

It is also mentioned that the arts provide ways of examining creatively the experience of disability. This might include a visual representation of an episode of mental illness by a person with a psychiatric disability, or the description of life in a wheelchair by someone with a physical disability. Artistic expression can also provide positive images of people with disabilities in everyday community life.

Whether or not it is a matter of difference of experience or difference in intensity of experience, it was evident many times in the course of this study that a lot of people with disabilities work very hard to satisfy their craving for arts experience, whether as artists or as consumers. We suspect that some people who do not have a disability would give up going to exhibitions and performances, or enrolling for classes, if they had the experiences of inconvenience, inaccessibility and rude treatment which we have heard about in a number of forums. We believe that makes for a real difference in the experience of the arts that people with disabilities have.

Therapy and Artistic Value

There are sometimes negative or unduly limiting notions attached to the arts in relation to disability. This can prevent artists with a disability from having their work taken seriously.

A common attitude is that people with disabilities spend a lot of time involved in 'meaningless' art activity, be it therapeutic, recreational or a

time-filler. It is common for disabled performers to find that their work is treated as therapy, and effectively dismissed, rather than having aesthetic criteria applied to it.¹¹

If these attitudes are held by people in a position to provide or withhold resources – e.g. arts funding, employment subsidies, training programs – the effect of the attitudes can be very serious.

There were also suggestions at the start of the project that people with disabilities might have negative feelings about the arts because of their experience with the arts in therapeutic settings, e.g. providing them with a means of improving motor skills. In fact we came across no instances of this attitude.

People do not have to have a disability to be able to say that they find creative activity to be therapeutic, recreational or time-filling. It would be simplistic to argue that the arts activities of people with disabilities are less 'worthy', or not concerned with artistic excellence, simply because such activity can be therapeutic.

However, it could be expected that, as funding bodies become more aware that there is a need to take account of disability, they may come under pressure to fund groups whose work is perceived by arts funding bodies and peer assessment panels as being more about therapy than about art.

One response would be that arts funding should be directed towards the arts and work that is primarily judged by the therapeutic or diagnostic benefit it brings belongs within the health service and should receive health funding.¹² But there is a real risk of the activity being supported neither through arts programs nor through health programs. There are also some complex issues of aesthetics and development of artistic skills, which are beyond the scope of this study to determine. This is a subject which should be examined carefully by the Australia Council and other government arts bodies, if for no other reason than that they are obliged to ensure equity of access to funding and other support programs.

In some discussions with arts funding officials, there seemed to be an underlying concern that government support for arts activity in relation to disability would take away funds from government support for 'excellence' in the arts. In a number of interviews, an attempt was therefore made to explore the question of notions of excellence in relation to views of disability, but few wanted to pursue the issue seriously.¹³

However, it is considered that there could be some issues of perception and attitude here that need closer examination by the Australia Council as it reviews its policies and practice in the disability area.

Disability Arts

The project brief required an examination of the concept of 'disability arts' as a distinct area of arts activity.

For people not familiar with the subject, some indication of what is involved can be gained from considering the views of people in the deaf/hearing impaired community about their relationship with the broader culture.

Anyone who has dealings with people who are deaf may have come across the view that many deaf people are not, in fact, disabled, but that they form a cultural-linguistic minority, a deaf community.

This is based on the idea that deafness cannot be cured, that development of a 'deaf life' is possible, and that personal identity, stability, independence and happiness are found in such a life, in interaction with both deaf and hearing communities.¹⁴

It is contended that while being heterogeneous as to ethnicity, race, religion and other cultural characteristics, deaf people share attitudes, beliefs, and experiences in common that mark them off from other Australians, and above all, they share a common identity as *deaf* people united by a shared language, Auslan.¹⁵

It is becoming common practice in the hearing community to refer to people in the deaf community as 'hearing impaired', in the belief that this terminology is the most courteous. The good intentions in this practice might not be appreciated by the people most concerned.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that while many people who are deaf and who communicate through the use of Auslan do not consider themselves to have a disability, many people who have a hearing impairment, who lip read and speak English do identify with the term. But there are also people with hearing impairments who identify themselves neither as having a disability nor as being a member of a separate culture.

These distinctions have been applied more generally to other types of impairment, besides deafness, and have led to debate about whether there exists a separate, distinct 'disability culture'.

While it is ultimately only people with disabilities who can make decisions about the existence or not of a disability culture, it is interesting to examine the arguments for and against. It will also have implications for peer assessment in the allocation of funding.

The idea of 'disability arts' is about a view of distinctive cultures, not just about the artwork of people with disabilities. It is sometimes phrased in terms of people with disability being seen as having their own culture, with its own artwork reflecting that culture.

According to the social construct of disability, people with disabilities suffer oppression because of the way society is structured. It can be argued that impairments bring about experiences that are exclusive to people with disabilities, for example institutionalisation, discrimination and lack of access to facilities. Having suffered the same things as a group, people with disabilities have similar emotional and social experiences. In this view,

these mutual experiences contribute to the development of a sub-culture, a disability culture.

There has been some debate – particularly in the United Kingdom – over the existence of such a ‘disability culture’, over the degree to which having a disability *does* actually define a person. In that country there has been a ‘reclaiming’ of the term ‘disabled people’ to indicate that people who have a disability do indeed have a separate culture.

Certainly, as with other minority groups, it may be politically advantageous and personally affirming for people with disabilities to declare their differences.

But our view is that many people with disabilities consulted in the course of our study would dispute that they are members of a distinct group. Instead, they do not feel defined by their disability and want to live fully integrated lives. While they may have experiences in common with other people with disabilities, they do not consider them to be critical to their identity.

For many people with disabilities, transport restrictions and financial constraints may require that they socialise with other people with disabilities. These shared experiences may have come about through a lack of opportunity to mix with the broader community rather than through choice.

Obviously, if there are distinct cultural experiences, it is likely they will be reflected in the arts of people with disabilities. Can this be taken as far as to identify disability art as a form of ‘outsider art’? In the UK, there are those who would see it this way and some proponents of this view shun the mainstream. But this is not an obvious view in Australia. Cheryl Daye of Arts Project Australia thought the artwork of people with disabilities was more likely to be ‘marginal’ than ‘outsider’.

It should be noted here that DADAA has commented that a comparison between Australia and the United Kingdom on this matter ‘is not helpful unless it is explained that the British Council for the Arts has been injecting large amounts of funding to the area of arts and disability’.¹⁷

However, if it is agreed that there is a body of arts practice distinctive to people with disabilities and if there are artistic products which only a person with a disability can produce or understand or interpret, then there may be a case for identifying in funding programs an area of arts activity which is seen distinctively as ‘disability arts’ and is supported accordingly, with its own structure of grants programs, its own system of peer assessment and so on.

We believe a more fundamental or at least a more pressing consideration for arts funding bodies and arts education and training bodies is that they take action to ensure that access to existing programs of arts activities is not ruled out of consideration because of prejudice about the artwork of people with disabilities or ignorance of the facts. This will require some extra effort in listening to people with disabilities and seeking advice from

people with appropriate knowledge and experience. It may require re-design of criteria, application procedures and assessment systems. It may require some inconvenience in arranging peer assessment and seeking advice on areas of disability.

The Australia Council and other agencies should at the same time be open to discussion with and representation by people with disabilities, on the issue of 'disability arts'.

2.3 Barriers To Participation

Who Participates?

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provide evidence that people with disabilities/handicap¹⁸ are less likely to attend arts events than the non-disabled (See Figure 2).

According to special ABS tables commissioned for this study, with information taken from the *Survey of Attendances at Selected Cultural Venues*, 46 per cent of those surveyed had attended a theatre or concert performance in the previous year and 54 per cent had visited a library, museum or gallery. The *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* indicates that in the course of the past year only 31 per cent of people with disabilities had attended a theatre or concert and only 32 per cent had visited a library, museum or gallery.

Among people with handicaps, the figures are even lower. Only 28 per cent of those with a handicap had attended a theatre or concert performance and only 29 per cent has visited a library, museum or gallery. As the handicap becomes more profound, so the level of involvement in the arts drops.

Among people both with and without a disability, the younger age groups are more likely to attend theatre or concert performances. The proportion attending libraries, museums or galleries increases with age.

What Barriers?

There is no doubt that people with disabilities face a number of barriers to attendance at arts events and other participation in the arts.

For many arts people consulted for this study, the idea of barriers to access to the arts for people with disabilities readily evoked an image of a person who uses a wheelchair being unable to gain access to a building because of physical barriers. However, the barriers to the arts for people with disabilities are far more extensive than just than physical access for audience members and indeed more extensive than the lack of wheelchair ramps.

A number of other barriers, not solely related to the arts, have an impact on the ability of people with disabilities to access the arts, be it as consumer, artist or employee. For example, having a disability often entails extraordinary expenses, including money spent on aids and carers. There

are fewer options, therefore people are likely to end up paying more money on accommodation and so on.

Transport is a barrier for many people with disabilities. Public transport is often inaccessible. People with physical disabilities may not be able to get onto buses, trains or ferries. People with psychiatric disabilities may find public transport to be confronting.

Community transport is sometimes available, but needs to be booked in advance, meaning that any type of spontaneity is not possible. While some people with disabilities have vouchers to reduce the cost of taxis, this remains an expensive mode of transport for people on a limited income.

Barriers to the arts for people with disabilities can be examined from a number of perspectives. We will examine them here in terms of:

- attitudinal and physical barriers;
- experiences of people with disabilities as consumers;
- experiences of people who are, or want to be, artists or employees of some kind within the arts industry;
- barriers for people with reference to types of disabilities;
- barriers specific to artforms.

Attitudinal Barriers

A consistent message from people with disabilities in the consultations conducted around Australia is that one of the most difficult barriers faced by people with disabilities arises through the presence of ignorance, and of negative and sometimes hostile attitudes. These may not even be intentional.

But whether through lack of awareness or through conscious discrimination, these unaware, negative or hostile attitudes of staff of arts organisations and other members of the public can make a visit to an arts performance, exhibition or other event an occasion for embarrassment, humiliation and a sense of loss of dignity.

On the contrary, a well trained, positive staff with a welcoming and helpful attitude can enable people with disabilities to be relatively philosophical about a venue's physical access limitations.

Too often, people with disabilities are treated like a problem. They are seen to make demands above the norm. They are not treated as people who need a little extra attention, but rather as people whose presence has caused a problem.

There are still far too many physical barriers to participation in the arts. So it was interesting that a number of people with disabilities consulted during the course of this study seemed to feel that attitudes are more important than physical provision. This means that the most valuable

measures in removing barriers to the involvement of people with disabilities may not always be the most expensive ones.

It has been said by some people with disabilities consulted in the course of this project that even with wonderful facilities for people with disabilities, they will not attend arts events unless staff have a welcoming attitude.

At the same time, people with disabilities have problems with being singled out for special attention. If provision of facilities or assistance is considered to be a favour, then a great burden is placed on the person with a disability, because they are expected to be grateful for being able to attend an event.

Experiences as Consumers

There were many stories of problems about getting basic access to a venue or an event.

And one of the recurring messages from the consultations for this study is that gaining access to a venue for an arts event is just the beginning of the story. There are many other aspects that for the non-disabled consumer are part of the art event. These include being able to easily purchase the ticket, attending with friends who may or may not have disabilities, and sitting next to them, being able to get to the toilets and the bar during the interval without too much difficulty, or to the café after completing a tour of an exhibition.

While a number of arts organisations have a very strong management commitment to ensuring good access for people with disabilities, this generally seemed to stem from a commitment to equity and social justice. With a few exceptions, there was not much evidence that arts organisations had seen the marketing value of ensuring quality access for people with disabilities.

After many interviews and discussions around the country, involving people with disabilities and arts managers, it seemed to the researchers a wonder that anyone with a physical disability would be willing to go the cinema, the theatre or an exhibition. That so many people do, and persuade their carers to go with them, is surely evidence of a very high level of enthusiasm for the arts among people with disabilities.

So there seems to be a good case for people with disabilities to be more effectively identified and targeted by the arts industry as a potential market. Overcoming barriers would thus be seen by management as a necessary step in creating a new audience for the arts – people who have previously been denied access or who have felt unwelcome at arts events.

But what are some of the practical barriers to consumers of the arts who have a disability?

■ People with physical disabilities

Barriers to people with physical disabilities are often perceived in terms mainly of wheelchair access to buildings. Fourteen years after the

International Year of the Disabled Person, there is still a serious lack of such access to buildings housing the arts. This is probably the complaint that we heard most often in the course of our study.

There are still lots of venues I just can't get into... if you're in an electric wheelchair you have to bring your own ramp.

But there are many other barriers to access faced by people with physical disabilities:

- a lack of parking close by the venue, equally important for wheelchair users and people who have limited mobility but do not use a wheelchair;
- providing access for people with physical disabilities but not providing adequate signage;
- providing ramps without rails;
- requiring people who use wheelchairs to enter by a separate entrance from other people, for example through the loading bay;
- requiring people who use wheelchairs to provide advance warning that they wish to gain entry;
- positioning the box-office window too high for a person in a wheelchair to be seen;
- having stairs and no lifts, so that there are parts of a building which are inaccessible to people who use wheelchairs or who find stairs difficult to climb:

I went to ... in Sydney recently and had to 'bottom down' twenty or so steps to get to my seat, a worthwhile exercise but rather severe on the derriere!

- not providing wheelchair-accessible toilets, or filling them up with cleaning equipment, or putting them on separate floors from toilets for non-disabled people:

...very small wheelie toilets down long, narrow, right-angled corridors and with ridiculous door systems.

- not providing resting spots, e.g. a chair at exhibitions for people who have mobility problems;
- providing only limited seating for people using wheelchairs;
- requiring people to arrive in advance in order to be installed in special areas for wheelchair users, often separate from companions, with a restricted view, at the back of the auditorium:

We are put up the back or at the side in the aisles with poor sight lines, obstructed views and away from our companions.

- paying high prices but not getting good seating:

At ... we are stuck right at the back of the stalls but often have to pay A Reserve prices.

- limitations in the numbers of wheelchairs that can be fitted in;
- requiring wheelchair users to sit on the stage (amazing but we have come across a number of such examples);
- a lack of (accurate) information about facilities:

They tell you that it's wheelchair accessible and you arrive and there's steps in front of the building. If you manage to get a message to someone inside, they come out and offer to carry you in. Well, I weigh nearly 200 pounds and my wheelchair is about 100. So I'd like to see them give it a try.

■ People with hearing impairments and deaf people

The main barriers for people with hearing impairments and the deaf include:

- missing out on information about arts activities because they do not hear about them;
- not being able to contact arts organisations because they do not have a TTY (telephone typewriter used by people who are deaf or hearing impaired);
- low levels of literacy in English among the deaf because Auslan, not English, is their first language;
- not being able to hear what's going on in a performance or when following tours.

Public venues increasingly provide some form of hearing assistance for people who are hearing impaired. This can be either an 'audio loop' system, for use with most hearing aids, or 'infra red' which requires special headsets, available from the box office of venues with this system.

However, there are often complaints that venues do not provide the information that they have such systems or that the systems are often not working because staff have not been trained to be able to maintain or test the system.

A small number of theatre companies offer sign-language interpreted performances. When they do so, it is important that the interpreter has a chance to become familiar with the text and that deaf audience members are positioned where it is possible to see the interpreter.

■ People with visual impairments

Barriers faced by people who have a visual impairment include:

- missing out on information about arts activities, since so much publicity is in written form;
- not being able to see what is happening in a performance and disturbing others by having someone describing it to them;

- not being able to see, or to touch visual art works;
- not being allowed to take guide dogs into buildings;
- small labels in exhibitions;
- climbing up and down stairs, which can be difficult for people with visual impairments, particularly if a handrail is not provided.

Some of these barriers can be overcome without too much difficulty. Providing handling gloves to people with visual impairments will allow them to enjoy sculptures. Some paintings can also be handled. Providing Braille maps and signage can also be very helpful.

Audio description has recently been introduced at the Victorian and Queensland Performing Arts Centres. Audio description provides a verbal description of visual elements by a describer working from a sound proof box. This is relayed to special headphones worn by audience members with visual impairments.

■ **People with psychiatric disabilities**

People with psychiatric disabilities face a number of barriers when accessing the arts:

- many find large buildings to be confronting;
- some people do not like travelling at night, so that only matinee performances are suitable;
- many people do not feel comfortable without a companion to go out with them.

■ **People with epilepsy**

People who have epilepsy may not be able to access buildings that use strip lighting, and certain lighting techniques may trigger a fit.

■ **People with chemical sensitivities**

There are increasing numbers of people who are highly sensitive to chemicals and toxins – including paints, cleaning solvents, plastics, fragrances, cigarette smoke – found in public buildings, particularly those without adequate ventilation. This is sometimes referred to as ‘sick building syndrome.’

For people who have this disability, the best type of arts events are those which take place outdoors. Use of natural materials indoors reduces a negative response.

■ **People with intellectual disabilities**

Some of the barriers for people with intellectual disabilities include:

- not having the skills to buy tickets, attend arts events;

- not being able to follow program notes, not understanding what is happening on stage.

Performing arts activities can be made more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities by providing pre-performance explanation of events that are about to take place, perhaps with cast members introducing themselves.

The Queensland Art Gallery has run a program to develop ways for people with intellectual disabilities to understand the collection.

■ Other barriers

Cost

The most common barrier to accessing the arts, according to people with disabilities, is cost.

People with disabilities often have less disposable income. For people living in residential homes, up to 90 per cent of income may go automatically into basic living costs.

For people who live independently, there are often extra costs associated with the disability, either in terms of aids or care.

Many people with disabilities rely on a carer to be able to attend arts events. Carers are usually required to pay entry to exhibitions or performances, even when they are only there to provide care for a person with a disability. A person with a disability may be able to afford to pay for one entry, but to cover the costs of the carer's attendance can make the outing prohibitively expensive.

Publicity and marketing

Lack of information about facilities is a factor that can present barriers for people with all types of disability.

It is not good enough to simply provide access for people with disabilities. They need to be informed about those facilities.

Arts events should be publicised through appropriate media, including media specifically for people with disabilities. There is no point in hoping to inform people with visual impairments about a tactile exhibition, or audio description of a performance through written materials.

Arts venue organisations seem to be of the view that they are better off not publicising that their building does not have disability access. But among people with disabilities, there is general consensus that honesty is the best policy here, particularly if it means that people will not make a wasted journey.

There is a need to standardise the use of signage and to be clear about what is meant by 'wheelchair access'.

Managers of arts venues making claims of 'wheelchair access' need to be sure that the claims have been properly assessed, preferably by trained people with disabilities.

General barriers

Across all artforms there are limitations in the grants application process. Most funding bodies require applicants to submit written applications and there is rarely any provision for different formats.

Also, there are many people who enjoy participating in the arts but who do not currently wish to become artists in a professional sense.

They are most likely to become involved in the arts at a community level, for example in part-time arts classes run by community colleges, or in community arts programs.

But people with disabilities who wish to take part in community arts activities face the same physical and attitudinal barriers as consumers and professional artists with a disability.

Access to buildings where classes are held presents problems for many people with physical disabilities.

There may be attitudinal barriers to people with all types of disability. They are often not welcomed into classes. People in a discussion group told us of applying to participate in arts workshops, indicating that they had a disability and never receiving a response. Their assessment was that it was perceived as being too hard for them to be accommodated.

For people who have spent significant periods of time living an institutional life with only other people with disabilities, there is sometimes a fear of exposure to the general community. The fear is not allayed when they discover that there are often discriminatory attitudes in the community.

Experiences as Artists or Employees in the Arts

■ Barriers to engagement as artists

Beethoven, Dostoevsky, Van Gogh and Frieda Kahlo all had disabilities. Yet people with disabilities experience various barriers that indicate to them a view in the wider society that if you have a disability you are not likely to be as creative as the non-disabled.

There are many barriers to people being taken seriously as performers, or as being eligible for employment in a number of arts organisations.

One theatre manager said he had always looked at questions of access for people with disabilities solely in terms of audience members and not in terms of performers, backstage employees and so on.¹⁹

Another theatre manager said that it was only when the *Cabaret Erratica* show was coming to his theatre that they really thought about access to stage and backstage facilities.²⁰

There are a number of arts organisations housed on upper floors of buildings without access for people who cannot use stairs. This means that the full scope to develop a career path in the arts, including in arts management, is denied to such people. The irony is that some of these buildings have been made available to arts organisations by governments wishing to support the arts in a practical way.

When the buildings have a high heritage value, there is an additional challenge of finding out how to install appropriate means of access without affecting adversely the fabric of the building. There is also a cost factor. We found a number of arts managers who were very frustrated about their dilemma of having such accommodation which was not expensive but being unable to solve the access problems without adequate sources of finance.

What seems very surprising, to say the least, is that some of these premises have been made available and refurbished in recent years.

This is a matter which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Cultural Ministers' Council for the development of some policies to overcome existing problems and help avoid repetitions of such problems.

■ Barriers to employment in the arts generally

There are many areas of employment within the arts besides those directly associated with the creative process.

But in the course of our research, we found very few examples of people with disabilities working within the arts, even though there are many jobs to which they would be well suited.

Even in the United Kingdom, where the role of people with disabilities within the arts has been promoted substantially, it has been estimated that only 100 out of the 250,000 people working in the subsidised arts sector have a disability.

This is not a phenomenon that is peculiar to the arts. There are a number of preconceptions that stop people with disabilities finding work generally, not just in the arts.

A common concern is that employees with a disability pose a safety risk, possibly resulting in increased insurance and compensation claims. But the safety record of people with disabilities is as good, if not better than, that of non-disabled employees, perhaps because of an increased consciousness of their limitations. In fact, studies have shown that there is a direct positive relationship between the level of disability and job performance.

People with the most severe disabilities have the highest job performance ratings. People who have a visual impairment are constantly aware of the need to evaluate the dangers around them and use their other senses to a greater degree, for example their hearing and sensing movements of air around them.

Research conducted by Jobsupport, an employment service for people with disabilities, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, indicates that people with an intellectual disability are three times less likely to have a job-related injury than other workers.

People with epilepsy are often not given jobs, or are dismissed when they reveal that they have epilepsy, but if they are using medication and have been free from fits for some time, they are probably safer to have in the workplace than employees who drink and smoke heavily and who are at risk from heart attack and stroke.

Employment practices do not encourage the employment of people with disabilities, from the placement and wording of advertisements through to the interview.

While there may need to be modifications made to a working environment, there is government funding available to cover some, if not all, of the costs incurred.

■ Barriers to training

For many artists and aspiring artists, one of the main barriers to creative activity is lack of access to training. As is the case in many fields, it is difficult or impossible for a person to develop their creative abilities without the sort of exposure to different ideas and techniques which training offers and which non-disabled artists take for granted.

The Theatre of the Deaf finds that the lack of professional training for deaf actors is one of their main problems.

This problem is starting to be addressed in the UK, where Heart and Soul, which started as a music project for people with an intellectual disability, now has two performance groups and is starting to run training courses for people with an intellectual disability – Music/Theatre and Workshop Skills and Technical Theatre Skills.

But the lack of access to training for people with disabilities goes back well beyond access to tertiary training. Many people with disabilities went through the school system at a time when people with disabilities were segregated. Education in the special school system tended to focus on providing students with life skills first and foremost, then basic subjects, such as English and mathematics. Areas such as the arts were considered to be unnecessary for people with disabilities.

After school, many people are exposed to the arts through programs run in the local community. Very often, these are housed in inaccessible venues, with little or no support available for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities who wish to pursue art education at a tertiary level often face physical and attitudinal barriers. While some colleges have developed access strategies, there are many that remain inaccessible. Moreover, while some colleges offer access to certain courses, access to the best teaching in a specialised field may not be available.

There is not consistency in access across the tertiary education system.

For students of the arts who have a disability, it is not just a matter of getting into classes. There is a whole array of other considerations.

The disabled student must plan carefully in order to access education at a tertiary level. This is a daily process not one of just selecting a course and carrying out the studies but involving a complex array of procedures of transport (both of self and materials) to and from college each day and may involve alternatives to public transport resulting in extra costs.

Examples of extra costs and work incurred include having to pay for a parking spot within college grounds, having to use a taxi, needing to arrange ahead of schedule to ensure that accessible entry points are open, having to take 'the long way around' to attend a lecture and arriving late.

Students with a disability may also experience attitudinal barriers and discrimination. There is a challenge involved for education and training institutions, in ensuring that special needs are addressed and at the same time not exaggerating differences.

■ Barriers in terms of different types of disabilities

Artists with physical disabilities

For artists with physical disabilities, barriers faced tend to be those associated with access to buildings.

For example, government subsidised studio space is sometimes offered to artists, but at an upper level in buildings with no lifts and thus inaccessible to people who can't use stairs.

Artists with physical disabilities often end up working from home, where they can make necessary adaptations for their own requirements. But working from home can be an isolating experience and artists may result in missing out on the motivation of working with other people.

This seems to be particularly the case for writers who feel limited by not being able to meet to discuss their work with other writers.

People with physical disabilities often tire easily and may need to take regular rests. They may be unable to take on large projects.

Whereas many artists are able to find extra income by taking on part-time work, for many people with physical disabilities this is not a possibility. This leads to restrictions in terms of what materials can be afforded.

Chemical sensitivity to paints and other materials can develop or be aggravated by artistic endeavour.

Visual artists with physical disabilities who work from home and who are unable to enter art galleries may face restricted visibility in artistic circles, hampering their networking and developmental opportunities.

Visual artists with physical disabilities may face difficulties in setting up a canvas, mixing paints, transporting their work and are therefore often dependent on a carer to provide them with assistance. While there is government funding available for aids to assist with employment, and for carers to assist with personal care, there is rarely funding to provide assistance with creative work.

Mobility allowances are available to people who are claiming the Disability Support Pension and working in a recognised establishment, for example a sheltered workshop. It is not available to people who need to travel to a studio.

There are few examples of artists with physical disabilities working within the performing arts. Physical barriers to backstage areas are even worse than those faced by audience members.

*I'm willing to take my chances in an audition, but I'd like to be able to get into the audition!*²¹

We came across no examples of permanent staging which provides ramped access.

And there are attitudinal barriers to people who have physical 'imperfections' working in the performing arts.

Artists with intellectual disabilities

While there is no doubt that people with intellectual disabilities are able to produce creative work, they are often unable to discuss it to the same degree as non-disabled artists.

They miss out on networking opportunities and often need to have an advocate working on their behalf to 'sell' the work.

People with intellectual disabilities often have poor literacy skills and therefore may not be able to remember complex scripts.

There is often a perception that people with intellectual disabilities will be dangerous in a performance space, though these assumptions are not based on direct experience. In fact, people with disabilities have been shown to be safer than the non-disabled.

Artists with psychiatric disabilities

Barriers faced by artists with psychiatric disabilities are often linked to their current state of health. They may feel unmotivated, depressed, lacking in self-esteem or confidence and isolated. People with psychiatric illnesses usually try to steer clear of stressful situations for fear they may trigger the illness. Thus, performing to an audience may be out of the question.

Artists with psychiatric disabilities often express the need for routine and to have a stable environment in which to work.

There are often financial barriers, making it difficult for artists to purchase materials. Once again, these may be due to difficulties faced in finding and keeping work, and thus being able to support creative activities. Moreover, some illnesses result in impulsive overspending, such as buying expensive frames.

People with psychiatric disabilities may have side-effects from medication, such as tremors, making it difficult to draw straight lines and to avoid camera shake.

There are attitudinal barriers, which often stem from a lack of awareness about mental illness.

I have found that critics, gallery directors and art school lecturers have responded less favourably to paintings and sculpture of a personal or psychotic nature than they have to more general themes.

Artists with sensory disabilities -

Artists with sensory disabilities often face barriers in making contact with other artists.

Once again, networking opportunities are limited, particularly for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

There are also sometimes barriers associated with arts practice. It may be surprising to learn that there are many visual artists who have a visual impairment. But through the use of magnifying glasses and large canvasses, they are able to continue painting as their vision deteriorates.

■ Barriers in terms of art forms

In terms of the art forms, visual arts, crafts and literature are probably among the easiest for people with disabilities to work in. They are artforms which do not necessarily require the creator to travel, or to enter specialised buildings. The work, when presented, is often divorced from the creator and therefore less likely to be subjected to negative, discriminatory attitudes.

There appear to be greater barriers to participation for people with disabilities in the performing arts, where there is often discrimination through the audition process on the basis of visible disabilities.

2.4 Integration or Segregation?

Background

Integration has been so successful that people are now saying, 'Give us something to do with our spare time'.

According to the project brief, 'key issues to be addressed by this study include or relate to ... policies of integration versus segregation'.

Over the course of the past decade there have been enormous changes in the provision of services and lifestyles available to people with disabilities.

Public protest over conditions in institutions and the development of the concept of 'normalisation'²² have led to legislative changes at both Commonwealth and State levels and attempts to integrate people with disabilities into the general community, allowing them to become involved in activities in which they can make a contribution and develop their skills.

However, it has been argued that, to date, normalisation has been interpreted primarily in economic terms,²³ whereas it is just as legitimate to view social contribution and productivity in cultural terms, meaning that the integration of people with disabilities into the arts has not been identified as being a priority area for governments.

Cheryl Daye, of Arts Project Australia (an organisation which operates a studio and exhibitions program aimed at developing opportunities in the visual arts for people with an intellectual disability), suggests that in the formulation of policy regarding employment options for people with disabilities, assumptions have been made that all work is economically driven and that the types of work promoted for people with disabilities will come from a range of traditional options which are considered 'normal'.²⁴

The assumptions have taken no account of the possibility of a person with a disability having a 'vocation' which does not necessarily have economic rewards as its prime motivation. This could be an artistic vocation.

It is reasonable to argue that as part of the process of 'normalisation', the integration of people with disabilities into the arts is as significant as their integration into employment.

A critical part of normalisation is that undervalued people benefit from outcomes which enhance their social status or social roles.²⁵ From various discussions the consultants had during this project, it was obvious that opportunities to participate as arts practitioners had made a very positive contribution to a number of people's self-esteem and sense of personal worth.

Because of the emphasis placed on normalisation and integration, funding is being shifted from segregated services for people with disabilities towards services that integrate them into community activities. Any

consideration of the future direction of arts funding needs to take account of this tendency.

Integrated or segregated activities?

Nearly all the people with disabilities consulted in the course of this study would ideally like to take part in integrated activities. Government funding is more likely to go to those activities that integrate people with disabilities than segregated ones.

I think it is very important to be able to use 'mainstream' services.

Segregation is a very negative step, both to the general community and the disabled.

But, as was indicated earlier, many of these activities are perceived by people with disabilities as being inaccessible, unwelcoming, or even hostile.

Moreover, it has been stated in the course of this study that some people with disabilities would like to have some grounding in a particular art form in a 'safe environment' before they embark on a course in the community. It is argued that they wish to be better qualified than non-disabled people and that the provision of segregated classes enables them to have an 'edge'.

Certainly, classes which provide people with disabilities with confidence in their artistic ability and then assist them to move onto integrated classes are in keeping with government philosophy on integration.

But there is a real danger that people do *not* move on from these classes. During our consultations, there have been suggestions that there are people with disabilities who continue to attend segregated programs in a repetitive and ultimately disheartening way. Sometimes it is hard to see how they can make the move from segregated to generic services.

A distinction may need to be drawn between services that are integrated, those that are segregated but integrating, and those that are segregated.

It is also important that, when people do move into integrated activities, they be able to do so as individuals, rather than as members of a group. While this may require greater levels of support, ultimately the person with a disability stands more of a chance of being recognised as a person, and not just the representative of a particular disabled group.

We do not believe there is a simple answer to the question of whether government arts funding bodies should support integrated or segregated programs. We believe that, for the time being at least, there should be a very flexible approach, responsive to the stated needs of people with disabilities.

Segregated or integrated audience?

Prior to the legislative changes associated with 'normalisation' many people with disabilities spent most of their time in institutions with other people

with disabilities and were rarely integrated with the non-disabled community.

At such a time, the only way to ensure that people with disabilities were able to access the arts as consumers was to take the arts to the institutions.

As the large institutions for people with disabilities close down, the need to provide separate concerts, performances or exhibitions for people with disabilities decreases.

However, many people with disabilities still spend much of their time with other people with similar disabilities, either in group homes, in sheltered employment or in enclaves. For an arts organisation which operates from an inaccessible building, an 'outreach' program to some of these settings may be a means of enabling people with disabilities to enjoy their activities.

Implications for Arts Policy Makers

Our assessment is that the key implication to be drawn by arts policy makers from the integration/segregation discussion is to ensure that people with disabilities are given real choices about the nature of activities in which they participate.

Just as women have a range of choices in terms of arts activities available, from radical separatist through to activities fully integrated, and on an equal footing with men, so people with disabilities should ultimately be allowed to choose the setting and mode in which they participate in the arts.

3 The Legal Framework

3.1 A New Body of Law

The legislative framework protecting the rights of people with disabilities has brought about the need for a fundamental shift in attitude, policies and management practices in organisations, including arts organisations. The scope of the legislation is extensive. Consultations conducted for this study indicate that arts organisations and their managers need to be provided with clear information on what the law means by 'disability' and by 'access for people with disabilities'.

Providing access to arts experiences, including careers as artsworkers, for people with disabilities is no longer just a worthy and socially responsible thing to do. It is a matter of law.

Managers of organisations, especially Commonwealth Government agencies such as the Australia Council, have weighty responsibilities under the new legislation. They need now to consider ways in which their organisations might be discriminating against people with disabilities and to develop action plans to ensure equity and access, especially from the point of view of consumers, artists and artsworkers.

3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Purpose and Key Provisions

Clarification of the significance of the various sections of the Disability Discrimination Act has been provided by a document written by Michael White to raise awareness of the disability standards. We have also been assisted by information kits issued by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), consultation with HREOC staff and people with disabilities and their organisations.

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) aims to provide protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability.

The objectives of the Act are:

- (a) *to eliminate as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability in the areas of:*
 - (i) *work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport;*
 - (ii) *the provision of goods, facilities, services and land;*
 - (iii) *existing laws; and*
 - (iv) *the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs;*

- (b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and*
- (c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.*

Types of Disability

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission explains in its DDA information kit that 'disability' for the purposes of the Act can be:²⁶

- Physical, for example quadriplegia, paraplegia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy;
- Intellectual;
- Psychiatric, for example schizophrenia, clinical depression and manic depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention deficit disorder;
- Sensory, for example visual, hearing and tactile impairments;
- Neurological;
- Learning;
- Physical disfigurement;
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms, for example HIV/AIDS.

Applications of the Act

The DDA covers a disability which people:

- Have now,
- Had in the past (for example, a past episode of mental illness),
- May have in the future (for example, where there is a family history of a disability which a person may also develop), or
- Are believed to have (for example, if someone is thought to have HIV or AIDS).

The DDA also covers relatives, friends, carers and co-workers of a person with a disability if they are discriminated against because of the person's disability.

The DDA makes it against the law to discriminate against a person with a disability, in the following areas of life:

- Employment (e.g., trying to get a job, equal pay, training, promotions);
- Education (e.g., for enrolling in or studying at a school, a course at TAFE, university or other colleges);

- Access to premises used by the public (including theatres, museums, shops, libraries, government offices etc);
- Provision of goods, services and facilities;
- Accommodation;
- Buying land;
- Activities of clubs and associations;
- Sport;
- Administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.²⁷

Applying this to the arts, examples of access which the DDA seeks to protect could include:

- Being able to work within and practice the arts;
- Being able to attend arts events;
- Being able to purchase tickets for a performance, have a reasonable place to sit and so on;
- Being able to apply for an arts grant and not be excluded by, for instance, a form of application designed for non-disabled people.

The DDA goes beyond existing State legislation in that it offers the opportunity to make a representative or 'class action' complaint. That is a complaint may be made by a representative either on behalf of an individual or a general group of people.

Thus a complaint can be made by:

- a person who claims he or she has been discriminated against;
- a person affected by discrimination – on his or her own behalf and on behalf of others affected in the same way;
- a person acting on behalf of another person or other people who claim they have been discriminated against (for example an advocate);
- an organisation acting on behalf of a person or other people who claim they have been discriminated against (for example a trade union).

If an individual or group wishes to lodge a complaint it must be made in writing to HREOC.

HREOC will then check that the complaint is within its jurisdiction, before contacting the party against whom the complaint has been made to gather information about their side of the story.

Both parties will be invited to participate in conciliation. This may result in:

- job reinstatement;
- job promotion;

- an apology;
- changes in policies or practices;
- withdrawal of the complaint;
- payment of damages; and/or
- some other outcome.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved by conciliation, a formal determination can be made by the Commission, which is enforced in the Federal Court.

Disability Standards

Section 31 of the DDA allows for the introduction of disability standards. These standards will provide a framework for the implementation of the DDA, detailing outcomes and timeframes.

This Section of the Act allows the Minister to formulate standards, 'to be known as disability standards', in relation to:

- a) the employment of persons with a disability; and
- b) the education of persons with a disability; and
- c) the accommodation of persons with a disability; and
- d) the provision of public transportation and facilities by
 - the Commonwealth; and
 - a State; and
 - a Territory; and
 - a public authority of the Commonwealth; and
 - an instrumentality of a State; and
 - a public authority of a Territory; and
 - any other person;
- e) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs in respect of persons with a disability.

The standards are considered to be critical to the effectiveness of the DDA, since, according to Section 32, it will be 'unlawful for a person to contravene a disability standard'.

During their formulation, there will be decisions made about what is to be covered by each standard, and what will be excluded. Community support for the standards will be critical in balancing the power of vested interests. Concern has been expressed that without a strong disability sector arguing for effective standards, those sectors that stand to lose the most from their imposition will have their way.

According to Section 34 of the DDA, 'If a person acts in accordance with a disability standard this Part does not apply to the person's act'.

Thus, once the Standard is introduced, any person or organisation complying with the standards will be exempt from being challenged successfully, even if they are involved in a practice which is unlawful under the anti-discrimination provisions of the DDA.

But the Standards will also allow people or organisations to take positive action to address discriminatory practices through a gradual implementation of the disability standards.

They will also relieve people with disabilities, or their representatives, of the current requirement under the DDA to prove a complaint of discriminatory practice. For many people with disabilities, this is simply too difficult, tiring, and confronting. Moreover, it has been observed that Australians, compared with for example citizens of the United States of America, are less likely to enter a legal battle over such issues.

Potential Impact on Arts Organisations

There was not a high level of awareness of the Act or its implications, among arts organisations consulted. Few seem to have considered formally, at an organisational or board of directors level, what they would do if they were subject to a complaint. Most seemed to understand the legislation to apply only to new buildings and primarily in terms of providing physical access to people who use wheelchairs.

While most complaints to date have centred on employment, it may well be that the greatest impact that the DDA will have on arts organisations is in terms of access to premises.

The DDA makes it illegal for public places to be inaccessible to people with disabilities. This applies to existing places as well as places under construction. Existing places must be modified and be accessible.

HREOC literature indicates that:

- places used by the public should be accessible at the entrance and inside;
- facilities in these places should also be accessible (wheelchair accessible toilets, lift buttons within reach, tactile and audible lift signals for people with vision impairments); and
- rather than being confined to a segregated space or the worst seats, all areas within places used by the public should be accessible to people with disabilities.

However, there is acknowledgment in the DDA that changes need not be made if they will cause 'unjustifiable hardship'.

However, before 'unjustifiable hardship' can be claimed, a person or organisation needs to:

- thoroughly discuss how access might be improved;

- discuss this directly with the person involved; and
- consultation with relevant sources of advice.

It is up to the person or organisation to show that providing access would create unjustifiable hardship.

Among most arts organisations contacted, compliance with the DDA is seen as being dependent upon having the funds to make alterations to premises. Since many are in rented accommodation, often at a minimal rent, it is unclear as to who would be responsible for paying for the changes.

Touring agencies and hirers of venues do not perceive it be their problem.

A number of arts managers spoke positively from a humanitarian, egalitarian perspective, about the need for access for people with disabilities. But under the new body of law, words and positive attitudes are not enough. The consultants believe that there is need for a more extensive and intensive program of information dissemination and training before arts venue managers will generally be ready and equipped to respond to access issues in the new, legally enforceable, human rights context.

Impact on the Australia Council and other Funding Bodies

The legislation has quite serious implications for the Australia Council and State, Territory and local government agencies responsible for arts funding, as for organisations in other fields of government support. It may be that the extent of these implications will not be recognised fully until there have been complaints made and upheld.

The HREOC information kit on the DDA puts the situation clearly:

...all governments in Australia – Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government – have responsibilities under the DDA along with other areas such as employment, education, access to premises, and the provision of goods, services and facilities.

Those responsible for Commonwealth laws or programs (for instance, funding programs of the Australia Council) need to recognise that ‘it is against the law for any government body to treat a person with a disability less fairly than a person without a disability.’

This includes, according to HREOC, access to places where Commonwealth programs are being run and equal access to information on Commonwealth law – for example, getting information on taxation law in braille, on audio tape, or through a TTY information line.

Thus, organisations that provide funding which is used in discriminatory practices, or who provide that funding in a way that is discriminatory, could be subject to complaint.

For example, a funding organisation, especially a Federal body, which insists that grant applications be completed on a form, using a typewriter,

could in our view be seen to be discriminating against people with visual impairments or some other disability which makes using a typewriter too difficult.

Awareness and Attitudes among People with Disabilities

While awareness of the DDA is relatively high among people with disabilities, and while most people with disabilities can describe instances where they feel they have experienced discrimination, it seems that few are prepared at this stage to take the onerous step of lodging a complaint.

At best, there is a wait-and-see attitude towards the DDA. At worst, there is a view that there is little hope of proving discriminatory practices. Somewhere between the two is a feeling of cynicism at the time it takes to process a complaint, even if it can be proved.

We have come across no instances where complaints have been made against arts organisations by 'consumers'. Potentially though, the field is wide open.

3.3 Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA)

The Agreement

Information on the CSDA has been drawn from literature supplied by various departments and from consultations with arts and disability organisations, disability funders and arts ministries.

The CSDA is a five year agreement between the Commonwealth and the States about the administration of non-medical services for people with an intellectual, physical, sensory or psychiatric disability.²⁸

The CSDA was introduced to rationalise responsibilities for various types of services for people with disabilities. Whereas previously there had been administrative duplication and some overlap in the funding of disability services, under the CSDA the Commonwealth will administer employment services and State/Territory Governments will administer accommodation and other support services. (Advocacy and research will continue to be the responsibility of both levels of government.)

This requires a transfer of funds from the Commonwealth to the States to fund the transfer of existing services. Additional funds have been made available to fund new accommodation places and to improve the quality of services.

Under the CSDA, State and Territory Governments have been required to introduce legislation complementary to the Commonwealth Disability Services Act (1986), affirming the rights of people with disabilities to the same basic human rights as other members of Australian society.

Services transferred to the States/Territories have been funded at existing levels for 12 months, after which point each government has had the ability to increase or reduce the level of funding.

Significance for the Arts

The greatest impact of the CSDA on the arts and disability sector is likely to be in the transfer of funding for recreation. However, it would seem that recreation services rarely consider arts activities other than in a therapeutic way, and do not consider arts as a career or a valid employment option.

The Agreement has provided for programs of one-off and recurrent funding, which tends to be for accommodation, respite, day programs, community access and recreation.

Under the Agreement, the Federal government is now only responsible for funding employment, training and some advocacy. Funding for all other areas, including accommodation and recreation, is now the responsibility of State/Territory governments.

It is still too early to assess the long term impact on arts and disability organisations.

3.4 Other Relevant State/Territory Legislation

All States and Territories, except Tasmania, currently have anti-discrimination legislation, often similar to the DDA, though none offer the possibility of disability standards.

Our understanding of the situation is that complainants currently are able to choose whether they lodge their complaint under Federal or State law.

However, if there are inconsistencies between the Federal and State Laws then the Federal law will prevail. It is still a hazy area, but potentially, a disability standard might override State and Territory anti-discrimination law.

3.5 Practical Implications of the New Legislative Environment

The legislative framework protecting the rights of people with disabilities has brought about the need for a fundamental shift in attitude, policies and management practices in organisations, including arts organisations. The consultations conducted for this project tell us that, insofar as the arts managers consulted are a reasonable cross-section, there is a lot of work to be done before the arts management community comprehends adequately the extensive scope of the disability discrimination legislation.

Providing access to arts experiences, including careers as artsworkers, for people with disabilities, is no longer just a worthy and socially responsible thing to do. It is a matter of law.

For artists and those who would be artists or work in some position in the arts industry, there must be fair access to information about grants program processes, to training institutions, to studio spaces and

exhibition/performance spaces, fair opportunities to be auditioned or interviewed for a position, and fair assessment of capability.

For audience members, there is increased scope to make complaints about lack of appropriate access. People will be less and less willing to be brought in the back door, through a store room, up in a goods lift, an hour before the performance, just to go to the theatre. People will be less willing to accept assurances that a grants process is fair if the way information is provided is inaccessible to people with disabilities. They will be less willing to accept assurances that jobs are open to all if it is patently obvious that some places of work are simply inaccessible. It is inevitable that more people, consumers and artists and people looking for a job, will lodge formal complaints.

Arts managers will inevitably become more aware that carers of people with disabilities are also covered by the provisions of the DDA, so that is unlawful to discriminate against someone caring for a person with a disability (e.g. in work or in access to venues, etc).

Managers of arts organisations must start to consider ways in which their organisations might be discriminating against people with disabilities and develop a plan to ensure equity and access.

4 The Arts and Disability Movement in Australia

4.1 General

The Historical Framework

Rather than provide a detailed history, this study has focused deliberately on the current situation in Australia regarding arts and disability. From the range of activity which takes place around Australia, there is obviously an important story to be told about how the arts and disability movement has developed in Australia. This could be part of further research and information programs which are recommended in this report.

Largely through self-help and the work of a number of not-for-profit organisations around Australia, a range of options have been developed for people with disabilities who wish to become involved in the arts, either as participants or as audience members. As indicated previously, there are also many barriers to involvement.

Commonwealth and State/Territory arts funding agencies have provided some funding for a few organisations and for specific projects, but it cannot be said that there has been any major injection of infrastructure funding for arts and disability activities in terms of professional development, opportunities for participation or audience development.

This section provides a broad overview of the current scene, listing some of the organisations that offer arts activities to people with disabilities in Australia. It is not by any means definitive in its coverage. Most of the organisations listed were consulted in the course of the study, either face-to-face, by telephone or by mail/facsimile.

Arts and Disability Organisations and Resources

There is no centralised, national organisation concerned with the arts and disability. However, there is a national network, Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia (DADAA), which does not have a central office, but comprises people working in arts and disability organisations and others who have an interest in the area. The Melbourne-based organisation, Arts Access, has been given funding by the Australia Council's Community Cultural Development Board to provide some national coordination, but the consultants' assessment is that the level of funding so provided is in no way adequate to support any serious effort at nationwide service.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, a number of State-based organisations were established in Australia, with a variety of objectives related to arts and disability. They provide a variety of services, such as information to people with disabilities about their options in the arts, advocacy to arts organisations on behalf of people with disabilities, and arranging arts

programs for people with disabilities. Sometimes they are called upon to provide advice to other arts organisations on issues of access.

Some of these organisations work solely in the arts and specifically with people with disabilities. Some organisations focus on a specific type of disability and/or on specific artforms.

Other organisations have a broader membership or client group of the 'disadvantaged', and include services for people with social, economic or cultural disadvantages, as well as people with disabilities.

There are also recreation services for people with disabilities that include increased access to the arts as one of their objectives.

Several organisations have historically been funded by the Australia Council and State/Territory governments on the basis that they were able to provide general services of support in their areas and in some instances are still being funded by State/Territory governments on that basis.

These organisations have thus acquired a considerable amount of experience and information which – without prejudice to the capabilities of other organisations in the arts and disability field – should obviously be drawn upon for the implementation of a number of recommendations contained in this report.

Section 5 addresses the question of future funding for arts and disability organisations.

Disability Organisations with Arts Components

Just as people with disabilities are rarely a priority audience for arts organisations, among disability organisations and agencies funding disability services the arts are rarely seen as a critical area.

Instead, issues such as employment and accommodation tend to be seen as the most important. There did not seem to be much awareness among the disability-focused organisations of the size and significance of the arts and cultural industries as an employer.

There are organisations which are aware that the arts offer a means whereby people with disabilities can achieve goals such as acquiring living skills, recovering from a mental illness and building up motor skills. We came across a number of examples of art programs where artistic and creative development were not the primary objective of the activities.

But there were also examples of disability organisations which understood the broader potential of the arts in the lives of people with disabilities and which were keen to develop this potential.

Directories

A number of arts and disability organisations, especially those which have been funded to provide general State and Territory based resources, maintain contact information on facilities, organisations and activities.

There is also the NICAN Australia wide directory on recreation and sport for people with disabilities. The directory is available in printed form and on floppy disc. This directory contains many entries on arts and disability organisations, but as it is a self-nominating directory and relies on the various organisations to update their entries, it cannot be regarded as in any way a comprehensive, up-to-date listing of arts and disability groups.

There is a need for more readily accessible information on arts and disability organisations and activities.

4.2 National Network: Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia (DADAA)

In 1990, individuals and representatives from organisations working in or interested in the field of arts and disability met for a national forum in Melbourne.

There was agreement on the need to form a national network, with the aim of increasing recognition of the arts for people with disabilities or facing disadvantage.

The network took the name, DADAA – Disability and Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia, later changing to Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia.

An inaugural conference, 'Crossing the Boundaries – National Artability Conference', funded by the Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) of the Australia Council and Arts Queensland, took place over three days in Brisbane in October 1992.

Topics addressed during the conference included the integration of people with disabilities, the role of the media, funding strategies and policies, art and health and regional issues

The conference produced 33 resolutions relating to issues including:

- government assistance in creating greater access to the arts for people with disabilities, including artists with a disability;
- the production of a more detailed code of practice on arts and people with disabilities;
- the facilitation of inter-departmental dialogue to secure more public support for arts and disability and 'disability arts';
- the involvement of people with disabilities in public policy relating to disability arts and arts and disability.

DADAA Committees are now established, or being established, in most States and Territories.

Access Arts receives CCDB funding to support national meetings/teleconferences of DADAA.

4.3 State-Based Arts and Disability Organisations

The following list of organisations have been identified by Federal and State/Territory arts funding bodies as having a coordination or infrastructure role. It is not intended as a list of the most important or significant organisations in the field of arts and disability, although in the consultants' opinion most, if not all, of the organisations appear to be involved in very valuable work.²⁹

Accessible Arts, New South Wales

Accessible Arts started as an arts project of the Community Activities Network in 1986 and was established as an independent association in 1989.

Accessible Arts operates throughout NSW to develop and stimulate the involvement of people with disabilities in cultural activities as creators, audiences, participants and consumers.

Accessible Arts operates an information and resource service – telephone service, resource/reference library and database – from the Garry Owen Building in Sydney's Rozelle Hospital grounds. The service can provide details of cultural and arts facilities, venues, programs, training, activities and resources available to people with disabilities in New South Wales.

Accessible Arts also acts as a consultant, assisting the general community, people with disabilities and the arts industry to develop and initiate art programs and projects. In addition, training seminars, conferences and workshops are provided.

Regional networks have been established and these networks are assisted in the development of strategies to involve people with disabilities in the arts.

A recent project that has been developed is *House Gang*, a comedy drama series for television, about people with an intellectual disability sharing a house; negotiations are underway for Film Australia to finance script development and production of the series.

The Museum of Contemporary Art has requested that Accessible Arts present a proposal to conduct a forum focussing on artists with a disability and the role of mainstream arts institutions.

In 1993, Accessible Arts coordinated 'Arts Extraordinaire', a 10 day arts festival 'to celebrate the creative talents and artistic skills of people with disabilities'.³⁰ Film and radio, visual arts and craft exhibitions, sound, music and technology and theatre and dance were all represented in the festival. Performances, workshops and forums for artists with a disability and other artists were held to explore issues around arts and disability.

Accessible Arts employs one full-time coordinator and a part-time administration/project officer.

Income for 1993 totalled \$137,745: \$40,875 came from the Australia Council, \$29,306 from the Federal Department of Human Services and Health, \$22,308 from the NSW Department of Community Services and \$20,000 from the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

The New South Wales Ministry has now increased their grant by over 100% to \$47,000. Senior officers of the NSW Ministry for the Arts indicated that they see Accessible Arts as playing an important and continuing role in developing opportunities for access to the arts for people with disabilities.

Arts Access, Victoria

Arts Access was established in 1974 and formally incorporated in 1981.

The organisation provides access to the arts for people who are disadvantaged by physical, intellectual, emotional or social conditions.

Arts Access operates three core programs from its Melbourne offices. They are:

- the Artistic Program;
- the Entertainment Access Service (EASE);
- the Resource Unit.

The Artistic Program comprises practical arts projects in all art forms, with the aim of developing the artistic, social and physical skills of participants and promoting their personal well-being.

Projects have included a range of partnerships with State, Federal and local government bodies (e.g. Juvenile Justice, Werribee City Council, Community Services Victoria), research programs (e.g. The Healthy Arts Project), working in regional centres and promotional events, including major exhibitions.

The Entertainment Access Service (EASE) provides a low cost ticketing and specialised seating service.

EASE also produces a venue access guide and has provided promoters with information about the DDA and offered assistance with the formulation of disability access policies.

EASE staff encourage clients to go direct to ticket outlets and are working with these agencies to raise awareness of disability issues.

EASE has worked with the Association for the Blind in the development of Audio Description at the Victorian Arts Centre. Through the use of a transmitter and ear piece, people with visual impairments are given descriptions of scenery, costumes, physical action and body language as a performance progresses.

The Resource Unit provides organisations and individuals with information, resources and training to assist in the establishment of arts programs.

There is an expectation that in the future Arts Access will devote itself increasingly to developing this area. Rather than provide arts programs directly, it is possible that the organisation will act as a training and information resource for others who wish to establish their own programs.

In order to fulfil this role, the Resource Unit has documented a variety of models which can be used by other organisations.

Previous programs run by Arts Access have included a Community Linking Program, which built up a database of individuals, organisations and venues. However, the resources have not been available to keep all of the information up to date; currently the database concentrates on venues and organisations.

Arts Access is the largest of the State organisations, with nine tenured staff plus casual project coordinators and sessional artists.

Income for 1993 was \$608,100. The larger part (\$320,000) came from the Victorian Department of Health and Community Services. Arts Victoria provided funding of \$60,800.

Officials of Arts Victoria spoke highly of the work of Arts Access and see it as the key general resource body in Victoria for the arts and disability area.

Arts Access is the only arts and disability organisation receiving organisational funding from the CCDB of the Australia Council (\$31,000 in 1993).

Arts Access is currently conducting a Trust Appeal, fundraising, with the objective of raising \$1,000,000. The expectation is that the funds will result in a diminished reliance on government and provide income that will allow greater risk-taking with programs.

Access Arts, Queensland

Access Arts was established in 1983. The organisation is a not-for-profit company which is based in Brisbane, but has organised projects also in regional Queensland. Access Arts supports people with disabilities to pursue their ambitions in the arts.

Access Arts activities include:

- a core program of three terms of up to six different art-form workshops;
- co-ordination and direction of community projects, dance and theatre projects; *Private Passions* toured nationally in 1994;
- book publication;
- organisation of advocacy projects;
- acting as a regional community arts resource;
- providing individual arts support for members.

Recent projects have included *Across the Palettes*, an exhibition in association with the Queensland Art Gallery, which matched three artists with a disability with three non-disabled artists, and *Cabaret Erratica*, a

theatre project funded by Playing Australia to tour Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.³¹

Through funding from the Department of Human Services and Health, Access Arts is developing a model to integrate people with mental illnesses into the community, using arts practice. They are also helping mental health services and institutions to develop cultural policies that address the social rather than clinical aspects of mental health.

Access Arts has four full-time staff, as well as part-time and casual artists and support workers. Membership is currently around 230. Members are interviewed regularly about their goals for their artwork (Art Paths).

Funding for Access Arts for 1993 was \$315,744 with over half the funding coming from the Queensland Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (\$168,898), \$61,700 from Arts Queensland and \$25,000 from the CCDB of the Australia Council.

It was evident in consultations for this study the State arts funding body, Arts Queensland, and semi-government bodies such as the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the Queensland Art Gallery see Access Arts as a valuable source of advice and collaboration.

Recreation Network and DADAA, Western Australia

Up until recently, Recreation Network represented Western Australia in the DADAA network. A State branch of DADAA was established during the course of this study project.

Recreation Network is a service which aims to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream recreation options, including the arts. The organisation operates as a mediating structure with primary responsibility to the service user.

Recreation Network receives no arts specific funding.

After the formation of the DADAA National Committee, Recreation Network accepted responsibility for forming a DADAA State Working Party.

The WA Lotteries Commission funded an Arts Project Officer to research arts opportunities for people with disabilities and to develop an access plan.

The *Report on Arts and Disability in Western Australia* addresses these and other issues. Following on from the release of the report, a committee of artists with a disability and other interested parties was established with the objective of incorporating to form DADAA (WA) Inc.

Priorities identified for DADAA (WA) Inc. include applying for funding to the Lotteries Commission to establish the organisation and to the Department for the Arts to promote access to the arts for people with disabilities.

Arts in Action, South Australia

Arts in Action is a community arts organisation which works on the philosophy that every person has the right to participate in the arts.

The organisation focuses on people with disabilities and those who are socially and culturally disadvantaged by access, language, geographical location, cultural background, age or gender.

Arts in Action organises community events, advocates on behalf of people with disabilities to make venues more accessible and aims to educate the broader community about the needs and creative potential of people who are disadvantaged or who have a disability.

Over the past year, Arts in Action's activities have centred around the 'Our Place' project, a major community cultural development project which involved people with disabilities in the planning and coordination, and 'Fringe Out West', a community-based multi-arts festival that was included in the 1994 Adelaide Festival of the Arts, highlighting the contribution of people with disabilities in the arts.

It is hoped that they will be models for future festivals based on access and integration, community involvement and collaboration.

Arts in Action employs one Community Arts Officer, a position which is job shared by two people and casual administrative staff.

Artists are employed on projects as required.

Arts in Action is funded by the South Australian Department for the Arts and Cultural Development and by the Community Cultural Development Board.

CACTI, Tasmania

There is no organisation in Tasmania which is specifically devoted to facilitating participation in the arts by people with disabilities. Until 1993, there were a number of community arts organisations that initiated and administered programs with people with disabilities. Together they formed the Arts and Abilities Network.

CACTI, a Launceston-based organisation, received funding from the Australia Council to address the needs of people with disabilities from 1986 to 1993. This funding ceased with the CCDB's change in policy on annual grants to organisations.

As of September 1994, CACTI no longer employs anyone to carry out its program. It now operates purely as a community based, voluntary advocacy and lobbying body. The former Executive Officer is now working on a fee-for-service basis as a consultant in the area of arts and disability.

Previous CACTI projects which specifically targeted people with disabilities as participants have included 'Keys and Boxes'. The project involved a series of workshops involving people with disabilities in creative writing,

dance, music, design and acting; the project culminated in performance seasons by two groups, one in Hobart and one in Launceston.

Browns Mart, Northern Territory

Since 1990, Browns Mart Community Arts, a Darwin-based arts agency, has identified people with disabilities as a high priority community to target and consult regarding involvement in arts activities.

In conjunction with local disability and arts agencies, a number of strategic partnerships have been created to provide arts activities for people with disabilities.

Arts and disability projects have include work on the Malak Path, the Artability Performance Troupe, Music Therapy, Theatre for the Deaf, Ability Awareness training for artswokers and the Old Spice Club Cabaret.

Browns Mart is funded by the Northern Territory Office for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the Australia Council through the Performing Arts Board, the Aboriginal Arts Board and the Community Cultural Development Board.

Australian Capital Territory

Currently, there is no arts and disability organisation operating in the ACT. However, an individual, Keris Delaney, is negotiating with the ACT Arts Council to establish a DADAA group for the region.

4.4 Other Arts and Disability Organisations

Other organisations play an important role in providing services and/or activities by and for people with disabilities and in matters of advocacy and resourcing.

The following brief notes outline some of the roles and activities of some of these organisations. This does not purport to be a complete list, but rather an illustration of the diversity of the current Australian arts and disability scene. The listing of the organisations is in alphabetical order.

Arts Project Australia

Arts Project Australia, based in Melbourne, began in 1975 as an arts-based advocacy group for people with an intellectual disability.

In 1984, Arts Project Australia established its own studio-workshop, to enable artists with an intellectual disability to develop their practice in conjunction with practising contemporary artists. The classes are structured to meet a wide range of individual needs and abilities, and are open to all interested people.

Recent projects include an exhibition, Inside Out/Outside In, featuring the paintings of artists with a disability, held at the National Gallery of Victoria's Access Gallery in 1992. Arts Project Australia also participated in

the recent highly successful Australian Contemporary Art Fair at Melbourne's Exhibition Building.

Arts Project Australia has negotiated with the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health to support six clients to become self-employed as professional visual artists.

Artists from Arts Project Australia have met with success. Julian Martin has exhibited in the 1994 Moet et Chandon Touring Exhibition and Valerio Ciccone's portraits of political and sporting identities will be familiar to many.

Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (AMFPA)

The Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (AMFPA) was founded in 1956 by a group of mainly Swiss and German artists.

There are currently eight full-time members of AMFPA in Australia. Anyone who has lost the use of his or her hands and paints using mouth or feet to grasp the brush can apply to join AMFPA. However, it is a fundamental principle that the artist's work should be of a standard that enables it to be exhibited alongside the work of non-disabled artists.

The Association acts as a promotional and marketing vehicle for the artists' paintings, which are reproduced as greeting cards, calendars, wrapping paper and gift tags.

AMFPA receives no government funding, deriving income from the sales to cover costs of production, staff salaries and artists' guaranteed incomes.

Integrated Arts Australia

Integrated Arts Australia, based in Lennox Heads, NSW, is an organisation that works with people with disabilities. It operates on a 'people first' principle and is closely associated with the Australian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID).

The organisation emphasises programs that are needs based/outcomes-based, focusing on skills for life, e.g. to improve communication and social skills.

The belief is that labels are used to attract funding, but that this limits the people to whom the funding is directed. The only label that Integrated Arts use is 'label me able'.

The organisation was invited to make a presentation at the 1994 Very Special Arts International Festival, held in Brussels.

Integrated Arts Australia receives no government funding but says many trained special educators work for the organisation.

Theatre of the Deaf

Sydney-based Theatre of the Deaf is the only full-time professional deaf theatre company in Australia. It has an explicit commitment to reflecting Deaf experience and sensibilities, to representing a culture and language that is not 'given voice' in any other theatre company in Australia.

Since its formation in 1979 the Theatre of the Deaf has developed a unique visual theatrical style and a solid audience base within the schools system, the general public and the Deaf community. The company tours nationally and internationally with a program of performances for both mainstage and schools. It also runs workshop programs for schools and the general public.

Funding support is received from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council and the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

Backstares, South Australia

Backstares Theatre Company, based in South Australia, has undertaken a number of productions involving people with disabilities.

Over the Rainbow had a cast of thirty, including people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Backstares has since changed its focus to youth theatre, but continues to integrate people with disabilities at all levels.

Funding comes from the South Australian Youth Arts Board, the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council and SPARC.

Back to Back Theatre, Geelong, Victoria

Back to Back Theatre is a professional Australian theatre company which integrates people with an intellectual disability and professional artists. Artists are paid award wages for the times when they are training, rehearsing and performing.

Back to Back Theatre was established in 1987 by Corrilong, a community disability organisation based in Geelong, Victoria, and has since toured throughout south-eastern Australia and overseas.

Recently Back to Back produced *Voices of Desire*, its tenth major production since 1987. The play focuses on issues relating to sexuality and intellectual disability. The successful Australian season of this production was followed by a season at the International Special Arts Festival in Brussels, Belgium.

As well as putting on productions, Back to Back runs workshops for people with and without disabilities.

The company receives Federal government funding to provide supported employment to people with an intellectual disability, as well as funding from the Australia Council (Performing Arts Board, CCDB) and Arts Victoria.

However, the supported employment funding is currently under threat. It is considered to be too high for the number of individuals supported. In addition, the move towards individualised funding will further threaten the future of Back to Back as a supported employment program.

Big Bag, Geelong, Victoria

Big Bag is a rock band that integrates musicians with an intellectual disability with non-disabled musicians. Big Bag was also established by Corrilong.

Big Bag started out as a community arts project and formed into a band in 1989.

In 1993-94 Big Bag performed at Sydney's Accessible Arts Festival, Melbourne International Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival (with Restless Dance Company) and the Melbourne Next Wave Festival.

Big Bag have been funded by the CCDB to produce a video 'documenting the emerging disability culture as it relates to their arts practice.'³²

They have had a number of releases on CD and cassette and have toured around Australia.

The Colour Gang, Bairnsdale, Victoria

The Noweyung Centre in Bairnsdale, Victoria, offers a wide range of vocational and further education options for adults with an intellectual disability.

The Colour Gang is a group of artists operating out of the Noweyung Centre. The group started when a local artist began working with Noweyung clients who had expressed an interest in the arts. The first project was a mural painted on the walls of the Centre's art room, using a grant from Arts Access.

Some members of the group have taken part in TAFE art courses. Group exhibitions have been held throughout Victoria and in Sydney.

The group is currently funded by the Noweyung auspice, with a half-time coordinator and money for materials.

Designers Unlimited, Bendigo, Victoria

Designers Unlimited, another Corrilong project, operates as an artistic cooperative, employing and training artists with an intellectual disability, supported by professional artists.

Poetry in Motion, Bairnsdale, Victoria

The Poetry in Motion drama group provides opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups to participate in the production, planning and presentation of dramatic works.

Most participants have an intellectual disability. Two people have crossed over into the Production Line Theatre Company, and another has been integrated into the Sale Theatre Company with the assistance of a support worker.

Poetry in Motion has toured as support for The Flying Fruit Fly Circus.

A \$7,000 grant was received from the Myer Foundation in 1991. There has also been a small amount raised through donations and sponsorship.

The Psychic Visionaries, Victoria

A group of visual artists with mental illness, the Psychic Visionaries came together through art classes that were held at the Glenhuntly Centre, an activity centre attached to Larundel Hospital.

They have exhibited in galleries throughout the Melbourne area.

The Glenhuntly Centre has since closed and the artists have no permanent space from which to work.

Restless Dance Company, Adelaide, SA

Restless Dance Company, based in Adelaide, integrates people with an intellectual disability with people who are non-disabled.

The Company has performed throughout Australia.

Nambucca Valley Phoenix, Nambucca, NSW

Nambucca Valley Phoenix is an organisation which provides supported employment for adults with an intellectual disability.

The organisation runs a craft business which produces one-off designs in ceramics, silk scarf painting, paintings, papier mache and screen printing.

Works created are displayed in the 'Bank Gallery' and in other galleries and shops on the North Coast of NSW.

4.5 Arts/Community Arts Organisations providing Programs for People with Disabilities

Throughout Australia, community arts organisations offer arts programs to a range of groups, often including people with disabilities.

There is also a small number of 'mainstream' organisations that have developed programs specifically addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

Some programs integrate people with disabilities with the non-disabled, others offer programs specifically for people with disabilities.

Examples of such programs include:

City of Northcote, Victoria

The Council of the City of Northcote has identified access to the arts for people with disabilities as a policy area and provides \$6,000 funding to finance programs.

Groups approached to be involved in the project have included the deaf, people with multiple sclerosis and people with Downs Syndrome.

Footscray Community Arts, Footscray, Victoria

The Adult Training and Leisure Program, funded through the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, aims to develop interests and skills in the arts as well as enhancing life skills for independent living.

Footscray Community Arts offers theatre, music and visual arts projects and often includes people with a range of disabilities.

Ipswich City Council, Queensland

Ipswich City Council have an arts worker who runs programs for people with disabilities. Ipswich has a higher than average proportion of people with disabilities, with a number of hospitals and institutions in the area, many of which have closed down, leaving little in their place to occupy people with disabilities. There are City Council members with prior experience working with people with disabilities.

Funding for the programs comes from the Cultural Services Group of the City Council and from Arts Queensland's Regional Arts Development Fund.

Programs have included a paper making workshop and drama workshops. There are plans to expand the program, bringing in sculpture and painting, to be held in community locations.

While the classes are set up for people with disabilities, they are also open to the general community. For example, the cartooning workshop began as an opportunity for people with disabilities, but there were other people who wanted to, and did, get involved.

Metro TV, Paddington, NSW

Metro TV have been involved in the production of the pilot of *House Gang*, a situation comedy based around a household of people with intellectual disabilities.

As part of the *House Gang* project a number of 'special needs courses' have been conducted, including a South Sydney region course for people with psychological disabilities, a women and HIV workshop, and for people with intellectual disabilities.

There are plans to conduct workshops with young people with HIV during 1994-95.

Queensland Performing Arts Trust, Brisbane

The Queensland Performing Arts Centre, located on Brisbane's South Bank, has an officer working part-time on matters relating to the arts and disability. The Centre has a long-standing program, D'Arts, which has a key focus on providing access and participation for people with disabilities. In spite of cutbacks in government funding in recent years, the management remains committed to a pro-active program of involving people with disabilities in the activities of the Centre.

Ready, Willing and Able, Port Adelaide, SA

An Australia Council Art and Working Life–United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia initiative, looking at people with disabilities, their families and care givers and their relationship with paid and unpaid work.

Artists conducted workshops with people with disabilities over a three month period, followed by an exhibition of the artistic outcomes of the project.

Windsor and Newton

As part of their annual arts exhibition held at the Sydney Showground, Windsor and Newton have a special category for artists with a disability.

4.6 Individual Artswriters

We spoke with a number of artswriters who have been involved in arts programs for people with disabilities. Some are linked with specific organisations, while others work on a project basis.

There were a number of common experiences.

Most artswriters have little or no experience of people with disabilities when they first start working in this area.

Rarely are people given any instruction about special needs of people with disabilities, or how to go about asking people with disabilities themselves. This often leads to apprehension on the part of artswriters. As with many other members of the general community, disability is an unknown. People are afraid of not being able to communicate or of experiencing behaviours that they do not know how to handle.

But after working in the area for only a short time, artswriters tend to describe it as very fulfilling work and the participants as highly creative.

There is sometimes a negative response from other artswriters to people who work in this area. It is sometimes considered to be a fringe activity, an area for those who cannot 'cut it' in the mainstream.

4.7 Disability Organisations with Arts Components

Just as people with disabilities are rarely a priority audience among arts organisations, the arts are rarely seen as a critical area by disability organisations and disability funders.

Issues such as employment and accommodation tend to be seen as more important. Indeed, many of the disability services contacted in the course of this study had little involvement in the arts, or understanding of its importance, and often referred us to arts and disability organisations.

There are organisations which have awareness that the arts offer a medium whereby people with disabilities can achieve goals such as the acquisition of living skills, recovering from a mental illness, building up motor skills.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we came across examples of arts programs that were being conducted for purposes other than artistic and creative development.

But there were also examples of disability organisations who understood the potential for the arts and were keen to develop this area of activity.

While arts programs specifically for people with disabilities may run counter to recent legislative changes that promote the use of generic, rather than specialised services, disability organisations often indicate that, due to physical and attitudinal barriers, mainstream services are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Examples of activities

Community Preparation Program, Bendigo, Victoria

The Community Preparation Program uses drama as a means of integrating people and teaching them skills.

Cornwall Arts Council, Launceston, Tasmania

The Cornwall Arts Council was set up in March 1993 by a range of services in Northern Tasmania, including those working in the area of intellectual disability.

Workshops have included Creative Writing and Visual Arts. Two exhibitions have been hosted.

Cornwall Arts was able to obtain funding from the Arts Tasmania's Performing Arts Touring Scheme and the Department of Community and Health Services to tour Back to Back Theatre around Northern Tasmania.

Golden North Centre, Bendigo, Victoria

A centre for people with cerebral palsy in Bendigo with an innovative approach to providing arts activities for clients.

A local artist came to an arrangement with the centre that in return for the use of studio space, weekly arts classes for clients would be conducted.

The group received funding from the Victorian Ministry for the Arts to pay for artswomen to work on a project entitled *Me, Myself, I*.

Holdsworth Street Community Centre, Woollahra, NSW

Drama workshops for young people with an intellectual disability. The group have performed as part of the Sydney Fringe at the Bondi Pavilion and some members have been selected for parts in *House Gang*, the television series developed by Film Australia.

Into Rec, Townsville, Queensland

Into Rec is a community based recreation organisation which encourages individuals with a disability to become involved in community life through recreation/leisure.

The organisation provides support to people with disabilities, information on the availability of recreation opportunities and resources for clubs, organisations and community groups to support the integration of people with disabilities.

They have attempted to integrate a number of clients into arts activities, with varying levels of success. Unsatisfactory outcomes have been due to physical or attitudinal barriers.

4.8 Directory Services

The State/Territory type organisations listed above maintain contact information on facilities, organisations and activities.

The only general directory available on computer disc, which lists organisations in the arts and disability area, is that offered by NICAN.

NICAN

NICAN is an Australia wide directory on recreation and sport for people with disabilities. NICAN offers a telephone, fax or written service to refer people to organisations providing recreation and sports activities.

NICAN's directory is available on disk by subscription.

The directory includes information about arts activities for people with disabilities.

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), NSW

SHHH produce listings of organisations with public access in NSW and ACT (metropolitan and country) that have installed any kind of listening system to assist people with hearing loss.

SHHH have negotiated with the *Sydney Morning Herald* for venues advertising the availability of such systems to be provided with the necessary extra advertising space free of charge.

5 Gatekeepers: Arts Funding Bodies and Venues in Australia

5.1 General

Within the scope of the study, direct consultations could be held with only a selection of arts organisations. We were particularly interested in gaining an understanding of the policies and programs of Federal and State/Territory arts funding and advisory bodies and of some peak arts organisations and key arts venues.

In the view of the consultants, the Australia Council has an evident leadership responsibility, especially in improving access to the arts for people with disabilities. But the Council does not have unlimited resources. To achieve real change, the Council will need to collaborate with other bodies, including the Department of Communications and the Arts, State and Territory arts funding and advisory bodies, local government, Arts Training Australia, and with other arts organisations, arts and disability organisations and government and non-government bodies with expertise in and responsibility for disability issues and services.

5.2 Australia Council

Council Responsibilities

As a federal agency, the Australia Council and its employees have special responsibilities in terms of the DDA, as highlighted by Section 29 of the Act:

It is unlawful for a person who performs any function or exercises any power under a Commonwealth law or for the purposes of a Commonwealth program or has any other responsibility for the administration of a Commonwealth law or the conduct of a Commonwealth program, to discriminate against another person on the ground of the other person's disability, or a disability of any of the other person's associates in the performance of that function, the exercise of that power or the fulfilment of that responsibility.

Also, as mentioned previously the Commonwealth Disability Strategy makes specific mention of the Australia Council in reference to access to cultural activities.

Australia Council Act

The Australia Council Act specifies the Council's functions:

- (a) to formulate and carry out policies designed:
 - (i) to promote excellence in the arts;

- (ii) *to provide and encourage provision of opportunities for persons to practise the arts;*
- (iii) *to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts;*
- (iv) *to promote the general application of the arts in the community;*
- (v) *to foster the expression of a national identity by means of the arts;*
- (vi) *to uphold and promote the rights of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts;*
- (vii) *to promote the knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries;*
- (viii) *to promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the practice of the arts;*
- (ix) *to encourage the support of the arts by the States, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations.*
- (b) *to furnish advice to the Government of The Commonwealth, either of its own motion or upon request made to it by the Minister, on matters connected with the promotion of the arts or otherwise relating to the performance of its functions.*
- (c) *to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the foregoing functions.*

It would be possible to produce a commentary on how each of these functions could be addressed usefully in terms of access for people with disabilities. However, during the course of the study attention has been drawn to two particular functions:

- promotion of excellence in the arts; and
- provision and encouragement of provision of opportunities for persons to practice the arts.

There seems to be little dispute that people with disabilities face barriers in their access to the arts, as audience members, practitioners and employees. Certainly, as practitioners, they do not have the same opportunities as the non-disabled.

However, there is a general feeling among many of those consulted that the Australia Council has pursued the goal of excellence in an extremely narrow way, so far as the perspective of people with disabilities is concerned, and sometimes to the exclusion of the other goals, including the provision and encouragement of opportunities for persons to practice the arts.

It was not uncommon to come across the view that consideration of disability as an issue in funding has up till now been effectively dismissed

by the Australia Council, because support for artistic activity on the basis of any consideration of disability is considered to take away from the promotion of excellence.

Some of our discussions with staff of the Council led us to believe that this external view of attitudes at the Council was not entirely unfounded. Certainly we believe the issue needs to be faced squarely by the Council, so that the Council's policy in these matters can be clarified and spelled out. We would argue that it is appropriate for the Australia Council to pay more attention to disability issues than seems to be the case at present.

Firstly, the Act does not enjoin the Council to promote excellence to the exclusion of all other considerations and indeed it is evident that the Council does not do this.

Secondly, the argument for the support of excellence 'versus' access for people with disabilities was advanced so seriously that we believe there is a need for a serious examination of what is meant by the term 'excellence'. Many people would surely argue that, within the arts, excellence is a fairly subjective notion. But even if there can be an agreed definition of excellence within the arts, it is our contention that there are barriers to people with disabilities being able to demonstrate or pursue such excellence, as participants or practitioners. There are also demonstrable barriers for people with disabilities as audiences or consumers.³⁹

One of the realities of peer review, which underpins much of the Council's operation, is surely that judgements of 'excellence' in the various artforms are made by an established group of people who have had similar opportunities for arts education, practice and participation and have a sufficiently shared view of their artform to be able to reach agreement on people and projects to be supported. But it is also a reality that people with disabilities have generally been excluded or hindered from participating in those kinds of experience and indeed often from opportunities to compare notes and exchange ideas with other artists and critics.

There is the related issue of how practice and products of 'disability arts', which some see as a genuine emerging art form, or distinct area of arts practice, can be compared in qualitative terms with the practice and products of able bodied artists in the various artforms? The consultants have found few people in the arts willing to discuss this issue in any depth, but we believe it is an issue to which the Australia Council should give attention once the more urgent issues have been addressed effectively.

Some of those consulted in the disability community feel that members of the Australia Council are afraid of becoming involved too deeply in issues of access and equity, because they feel that this may be construed as 'social engineering'. We would suggest that in refusing to seriously address issues of access by people with disabilities, the Australia Council could, in fact, be involved in a more subtle form of social engineering, by helping to maintain the *status quo*.

There is likely to be a response along the lines of non-arts objectives being placed on arts organisations. But in order to bring about change, someone has to make some rules. There's also likely to be a visceral clutch, 'Oh no, not more work!'

But the problem may be that the underlying issues have not been addressed in any depth by Council and Board members and staff.

Given the breadth of the Council's functions as expressed in the legislation and the requirements of the DDA and those proposed for the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, the consultants were surprised to find among the Council a fairly low level of awareness of the issues and, at least initially, a lack of enthusiasm among staff for any review of policy and practice in this area.

No doubt, in these respects the Council is not alone among Commonwealth agencies. In proposing a two stage action strategy, the Commonwealth Disability Strategy comments:

In the past Commonwealth departments and authorities have not always communicated effectively with many clients who experience access difficulties because of a disability. Its Social Justice Strategy demands that all Australians receive a fair go and a fair share.

Awareness of Disability Issues

Information about the study was sent to the Executive Director of each of the Australia Council program units – Literature, Performing Arts, Visual Arts/Craft, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, and Community Cultural Development – along with a request to meet to discuss issues identified in the brief. We wished particularly to have the opportunity to meet these key officers of the Council before consulting widely in the arts and disability communities.

In most cases, the consultants were referred to another officer within the relevant unit.³⁴

Other than in the Community Cultural Development Board, which has had a traditional responsibility for funding in this area, we found little evidence that disability has been given much focused consideration in the various programs, either in terms of policy and practice for general access and equity or as a distinct category of arts activity. Among those consulted, there was not a high level of awareness of disability issues and, in some cases, little awareness of basic terminology concerning disability. In the initial consultations, few officers expressed interest in seeing specific arts and disability policy and programs developed, although more interest was shown after our draft report had been read by some Council staff.

While each program has, on occasion, provided funding to organisations involved in disability-related projects, recall of such projects was often fuzzy. Staff of the CCDB and the Performing Arts Board were more aware of specific grants. There is no consolidated, quantitative data on

applications from people with disabilities. We were advised that what data there is on grants for organisations or projects in the disability area needs careful interpretation, as the basis on which data had been collected and coded was not always clear.

Policies of Boards

The **Performing Arts Board**'s position on their quite substantial funding of the Theatre of the Deaf and grants to other theatre groups with a disability focus was presented initially in terms of a statement that this funding is on the basis of artistic merit, and not out of considerations of social justice or equity with regard to disability. After considering a draft of this report, the Performing Arts Board provided the following clarification of their policy:

The PAB committees do fund Theatre of the Deaf, Back to Back Theatre and Restless Dance Company, for example, on the basis of 'artistic merit'. They don't fund them solely on the basis of standards of excellence, however. These companies have stated that they do not wish to be considered on the basis of a 'social justice' framework but on artistic merit within the context of their own practice.

Artistic merit is a much broader concept than the common view of excellence and this difference needs to be highlighted.

Artistic merit can be assessed in relation to the board's goals (as published in the divisional plan), the priorities and the criteria.

The Board's priorities include 'artistic innovation in content, development and presentation' as well as 'work that comments upon, reflects or contributes to the complete spectrum of Australia's diverse society'.

The Board's criteria – in addition to 'calibre of the artists', etc – include 'the artistic quality of the proposal' (e.g. its ideas and processes).

Companies which explore the possibilities of their own artistic languages and/or forms and which are then able to reflect the quality of that exploration through performance, can be seen to possess significant artistic merit.³⁵

The distinction drawn between 'excellence' and 'artistic merit' is noted.

As mentioned above, the **Community Cultural Development Board** has historically provided substantial recurrent funding for organisations providing services in the arts and disability area, but that recurrent funding has been cut back. Only one arts and disability organisation, Arts Access, receives recurrent funding. The CCDB's position is that ensuring access for people with disabilities should not be solely or mainly the responsibility of the CCDB – a view with which we would agree.

Like the Performing Arts Board, the Community Cultural Development Board provided a written statement of its position after the main report had been drafted. Given the significance of the Board's past funding in the

arts and disability field and the extent of concern among organisations previously and currently funded by the Board, we believe that the fairest course of action is to quote the Board's statement verbatim.

As a result of a review of organisational funding in 1992 the Community Cultural Development Board (CCDB) withdrew annual funding for all clients assessed by its Grants Committee as falling outside of the following categories:

- *clients of national significance;*
- *clients of strategic significance;*
- *clients which are a key tool in forging strategic partnerships;*
- *clients of geographic importance;*
- *clients which are cultivating new strategic partnerships.*

Arts Access and Arts in Action continued to receive support following implementation of this policy while other arts and disability organisations were advised to seek project funding. They were further advised that the CCDB would reconsider their eligibility for organisational funding when Council's review of arts and disability was completed.

The Board's 1992 review however has been superseded by new policies and programs approved as a result of CCDB's 1994-1995 Strategic Plan, which are published in the current Programs of Assistance Booklet.

These programs neither exclude nor target arts and disability organisations for funding. Rather (subject to the outcomes of the current Arts and Disability Review), they are eligible for support under all current programs.

The Board recognises its limitations in effectively managing intensive affirmative action strategies for all Access and Equity target groups, but nevertheless aims to ensure an inclusive approach to all of them. It has identified rural and remote areas, non-English speaking background communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as those which should be targeted for special intensive support for the next three years. It is intended that another set of target groups (probably from among the Access and Equity target groups) will be identified for 'special priority' support as part of the 1997-2000 strategic plan.

The CCDB considers it shares responsibility for support in the Arts and Disability area with all Boards of Council, and that applications from this sector should be considered against existing program criteria. It recognises that efforts must be made to ensure that these criteria do not disadvantage Arts and Disability groups. It further affirms the principle that artistic innovation and excellence are not limited to non-disability arts organisations especially considering their record of achievement in this area against CCDB and other artform Board criteria. The Board no longer recognises 'disability' as a criteria of funding in any of its programs.

We must observe that we do not find this statement totally enlightening as to the Board's views or intentions, but we suspect that – unless we have missed something or misinterpreted the statement – it offers cold comfort to the arts and disability organisations and little prospect of any special consideration before 1997 at the earliest.

The references to the 'current arts and disability review' are presumably to this project. Accordingly, it will be noted that in developing this report's recommendations, the consultants have not presumed to make any specific recommendations about funding for specific organisations or by specific Boards. However, we trust that the general principles and the proposed broad framework for action will provide some assistance to the CCDB in the further development of its policies and practice regarding people with disabilities and their organisations. We note also for the record that in a discussion shortly before finalisation of this report, the Executive Director, Community Cultural Development, spoke enthusiastically about the 'variety, depth and excellence' of the achievements of the arts and disability organisations and the high quality of many projects and performances by such organisations.

The **Literature Board's** comments on the draft report included the following observation that:

While the Board does not have a 'proactive' policy for people with disabilities, the Board has always been very responsive to applications under its various programs where it is aware that there is a disability component: for example, it funded the Braille talking Book of the Year Award for many years.

Various grants were mentioned, including:

- commission or playwright/dramaturg-in-residence grants to companies such as the Theatre of the Deaf and Back to Back;
- grants under the Writer-in-Community program for writers to work with people with disabilities;
- writers' grants to applicants who have known disabilities, for example a Writer's Project Grant in 1993 to a woman with severe cerebral palsy to pay the costs of an editor to work with her on her autobiography.

The Board has expressed some hesitation about including questions about disability in application forms, 'as it could so easily be seen to be an invasion of the applicant's privacy and also seen by applicants as having nothing to do with the person's writing or other artistic ability (we have suffered from this type of criticism in regard to multicultural questions).'

We have commented elsewhere on this subject of requests for information on application forms.

Our general comments on the notes provided by the Literature Board are:

- we do not question that the Board has provided many worthwhile grants over the years, which have supported activity by or with people with disabilities; but
- there is a new legal and Commonwealth policy framework, which we understand to enjoin Literature Board staff and all of the Council's managers to review their policies and practices and articulate a coherent policy and action plan in relation to access and equity for people with disabilities.

Although the Australia Council has provided some funding to organisations and projects involving people with disabilities and at times addressed issues pertinent to them, many of those consulted in the arts and disability area felt that the Council needs to have a more definite policy and be able to communicate that policy in a convincing way.

In the consultants' view, while the Council and its Boards have without doubt over the years supported many organisations and activities to do with the development of the arts in a disability context, in the current legal and Commonwealth policy environment:

- The Council does not have an adequate, consistent and cohesive approach to policy issues in the disability area and should address those issues as a matter of priority;
- The Council's guidelines for grant applicants are simply not sufficient to provide transparent assurance of equity of access for people with disabilities.

It came as a surprise to a number of arts managers to learn that the Australia Council already has an Access and Equity Plan and a published Code of Practice on arts and disability. Within the Council itself, some staff knew of the existence of the Council's Code of Practice brochure, but there was little indication that it is referred to for guidance. That is probably not a bad thing, as the document is now quite dated and is misleading in that it makes no reference to the new legislative environment.

The Arts and People with Disabilities: A Code of Practice for Arts Organisations

This brochure, published in 1989, addresses issues such as program access, ticket pricing policies, information and publicity, improving physical access, changing attitudes, and employment policies.

Much of the information given is valuable, but the document is quite dated and needs replacing as a matter of priority. A new document is needed to bring arts organisations up to date on the implications of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, and to draw their attention to State legislation addressing discrimination against people with disabilities.

Such a document should be situated as one element of a broader communications strategy. Indications are that the code was distributed to all clients when it was first published, but that there has been no follow up, and that new clients have not been provided with a copy of the code. We were advised that arts and disability organisations which approached the Council for copies had been told that it was no longer being printed.

Awareness of the Code of Practice was low among the Australia Council staff consulted. Some were not even aware of its existence, let alone details of areas it covered.

Among arts organisations, awareness is extremely low. Only a very small number are aware of the existence of the code, and these tend to be people who work in organisations which have attempted to address access by people with disabilities, or else who have a personal interest in the area.

Besides, the code is just that: a code. Because it pre-dates the DDA, there is no indication in the code that there is any legal requirement for any of the recommendations to be followed. Rather, the implication is that implementing changes to increase access by people with disabilities is a matter of choice for arts managers.

Access and Equity Plan

The Australia Council's Access and Equity Plan (1991) is a good policy statement, as far as it goes. The Plan covers a number of areas including women, youth, and people from a non-English speaking background. Like the Code of Practice, it pre-dates the DDA and is thus a limited guide to current needs relating to disability.

The section on people with disabilities states that the aim is to encourage client organisations to make every effort to meet the needs of people with disabilities – and to do so as part of normal activity.

Several strategies are listed to meet this aim. They include:

- distribution of the Code of Practice,
- liaison with local organisations,
- inclusion, rather than the provision of separate programs,
- consideration of people with disabilities in outreach programs,
- including information on promotional materials,
- making premises fully accessible,
- providing assistance to arts organisations that address the needs of disabled people,
- encouragement of concessionary ticket schemes.

Our judgement is that the inclusion of people with disabilities as a target in the Access and Equity Plan is not widely known among Australia Council staff nor among arts managers outside the Council.

It has been pointed out to the consultants by people outside the Council that in a number of areas (women in the arts, the arts and people of non-English speaking background, the arts and local government) the Australia Council has played a significant role in changing attitudes, processes and outcomes. Some wonder therefore why the Council is, in their view, reluctant to play such a leadership role in the disability area.

Whereas all other groups addressed in the Access and Equity Plan have, at some point, been identified as target groups, disability does not appear to have received a similar degree of attention.

Moreover, in the Programs of Assistance booklets published each year by the Australia Council, there is no consistency from year to year in mentioning disability.

- For example, the 1991 Performing Arts booklet stated under the heading 'Policy Objectives' that 'the Council is committed to equality of opportunity in all its activities. Council has specific interests in developing opportunities for women, for multicultural arts, for the cultural traditions of Australian workers, and for people with disabilities'. Then a number of areas are given which are considered to 'merit particular affirmative action'. They are Women in the Arts, Arts for a Multicultural Australia, Art and Working Life, Youth Arts and Childcare. There is no further mention of disability.

The same situation occurs in the 1992-93 information, though there are slightly different areas deemed suitable for 'affirmative action'. In that year, in came Local Government and Arts for People Living in Rural and Remote Areas and out went Childcare.

The current booklets do not indicate any priority consideration for disability.

Scope for Re-focusing the Policy

Consultation with officers working to the Australia Council's various Boards indicated that they see no reason to take up disability as a priority area without a change being initiated at the Council level. The consultants formed the view that some Council officers felt that their Boards could not or would not consider disability as a funding criterion or issue for special consideration without a direction to that effect from the Council.

Informal discussions indicate that there is often a feeling that disability should be the responsibility of the Community Cultural Development Board, and that other Boards need not concern themselves with the area.

But even if the other Boards assume more responsibility in this area, as we believe they are obliged to do, it is necessary to take account of the argument sometimes advanced that the CCDB should maintain some responsibility for the area of disability, because if responsibility is handed over completely to the other Boards, the issues may not be fully understood and appreciated and the decisions made might suffer.

There is no question that the Council's policies and practice on access and equity issues are seen by people in the arts and disability field as inconsistent and discriminatory towards people with disabilities.

Employment

This study has not looked closely at the issue of employment in the Australia Council, but it is noted that the latest available EEO statistical data from the Council, on representation of EEO target groups, shows 6 staff out of a total 106 (5.6%) as identifying themselves as having a disability.

The statistic has limited value, in that it is dependent on staff self identification as being a person with a disability.

We were not advised of any training programs for Council staff which provided awareness training on disability issues. Given the emphasis placed for some years on this area by bodies such as the Arts Council of Great Britain (now Arts Council of England), this would be an area in which the Australia Council should be able to obtain models of good practice and implement its own training initiatives for staff.

Grants Administration

In our view the grants administration process of the Australia Council inhibits access by people with disabilities in a number of ways:

- in the provision of information about grants;
- in guidelines for completion of grant application forms;
- in peer review, through lack of explicit representation on Council and its Boards and Committees.³⁶

A person with a visual impairment may face barriers accessing information about available grants and in completing the relevant application form. People with low literacy skills, such as the deaf and people with an intellectual disability, or people who cannot use a typewriter or computer keyboard³⁷ may also face difficulties with the written format.

Application forms do not seek any information about whether the applicant has a disability. Thus, it is very difficult to identify whether grants do indeed go to people with disabilities, and to identify the proportion of unsuccessful applicants who are people with disabilities. Some non-disabled people consulted in the course of the study expressed concern that people may not want to identify as disabled on their application form, because they may want to be judged on the basis of their work as an artist, and not as a person with a disability.

One said:

There are others who negate [their disability] as part of their work. They wouldn't want to be identified as such. They might question whether they're only getting the grant because of their disability.

This suggestion is strange, since people with disabilities are not currently given favourable consideration because of their disability. Providing a response to such questions need not be compulsory and most people with disabilities consulted have not expressed any concerns about identifying as such. Rather, some have suggested that the information is not currently gathered because, once it is available, it will have to be acted upon.

As indicated, we have no figures for membership by people with disabilities on any of the Boards of the Australia Council, or on the Council itself.³⁸

Even if a person managed to overcome the barriers presented by application forms and procedures, they still might not receive appropriate attention, if there is no one on a Board or the Council who is seen to have a good understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. Without some prior knowledge of the area, any application by an artist with a disability or by individuals or organisations to conduct work in the area of disability arts may not be fully appreciated.

The Australia Council currently evaluates grant applications through a process of 'peer review', where decisions on policy, priorities and grant selections are made by artists and community representatives who are the peers of those being assessed. This is well-known as a fundamental principle of the Council's operation. Our understanding is that the peers who assess grant applications and develop policies are people of acknowledged achievement and capability in the relevant artforms and/or representative of the arts community. It is not evident that the interests or perspectives of people with disabilities have been considered in the selection and appointment of people to the various decision and review bodies, including the Council itself.³⁹

It appears that in the policy development and grants assessment structure of the Australia Council, as in other areas of Australian life, people with disability are the invisible 18 per cent.

It is recognised that it may not be possible to represent all groups on every Board. For example, just as a person of a certain ethnic background may not be a peer representative of all other ethnic backgrounds, so a person with a particular disability may not be able to represent all other disabilities. But the logic of representation on peer review bodies indicates the need for some representation of people with disabilities. Also, if the notion of a disability culture is accepted, then there is even more reason for the peer review bodies to include people with disabilities, whatever that disability.

This will not be an easy matter to resolve. For one thing, there is a relatively small number of artists with disabilities who can participate in peer review bodies, because of the previous and existing barriers to their involvement in the arts.

The Council should discuss the issue of representation with the Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Human Rights and Equal

Opportunities Commission, in the first instance, and with arts and disability organisations. They understand the practicalities and sensitivities of organising representation of people with disabilities.

Support for Organisations

As indicated in the previous section, there are a number of organisations working in the area of arts and disability which have received or currently receive funding from the various Boards of the Australia Council.

The greatest proportion of funding comes from the Community Cultural Development Board.

The only organisation that has received substantial funding for work in this area from a Board other than the CCDB is the Theatre of the Deaf, which has received funding from the Performing Arts Board. However, this organisation does not associate its work with the term 'disability' for reasons given above and the Board does not fund it in consideration of disability issues (as mentioned above).

Other arts and disability organisations that have received funding from the Performing Arts Board include Hands On Art (Melbourne), Gestures Theatre of the Deaf, Restless Dance Company (Adelaide), Back to Back Theatre (Geelong) and Holdsworth Street Community Centre (Sydney).

Even those organisations that do currently receive funding for work conducted in the field of arts and disability indicate that they face a number of difficulties.

Funding from State and local sources is often dependent upon Australia Council funding. With funding from the Australia Council under review, the very future of these organisations has been brought into question.

Most of these organisations act as sources of information and advocacy, as well as work on specific projects. However, recent changes in the allocation of funding by the CCDB has meant that only one organisation (Arts Access in Melbourne) has been granted organisational funding. Others are able to apply for project funding.

Project funding is seen by the applicant organisations as inherently problematic. Applications for funding are often made long in advance of their receipt. Putting in an applications requires considerable effort and resources. Artists who will work on projects need to be contacted in advance of the application going in, but by the time the funds come through, they may be working on something else. These problems may not be peculiar to the disability area, but the frustrations and disappointments involved compound the disadvantages already experienced.

■ Funding of arts and disability resource organisations

The importance of Australia Council funding

Funding from State and local sources is often dependent upon Australia Council funding. With funding from the Australia Council withdrawn or under review for a number of organisations, there is inevitably a concern that State and Territory funding is at risk. There is certainly a related reduction in the services available to people with disabilities and to arts organisations wanting advice and guidance on how to provide improved access.

It is natural and possibly inevitable that all arts organisations would want general purpose funding, preferably on a multiyear commitment basis. Project funding in the arts and elsewhere is always problematic if the basic organisational and ongoing activities are short of resources. Not surprisingly, the consultants have been urged to present a case for infrastructure support to be restored to organisations funded previously by the Council's Community Cultural Development Board.

As far as the consultants can ascertain, the view of the CCDB is that the funding of activities relating to the arts and disability should be accepted as a Council-wide responsibility, and that the CCDB's decision to withdraw recurrent funding from the State and Territory based resource organisations should stand.

In the light of that position, the argument has been put that the Council itself should accept responsibility for core infrastructure funding for appropriate organisations to enable necessary resources to be available for the nurturing and development of the arts in relation to disability.

When that argument was presented to senior Australia Council staff, the response was that the Council would be most unlikely to take on a direct funding responsibility of any specific area in the long term, but that consideration could be given to the earmarking of Council funds for a specific program of time-defined action in the area of the arts and disability.

The consultants are concerned that action in this area does not become stalled once more because of problems about which area of the Council should be responsible. Ultimately the Council will have to decide. Our recommendation is that the Council at least initiate a concerted program of action and ensure that it is funded either centrally or on a devolved basis by the Boards, or a combination of both, for a recommended five year term, with periodic evaluations. The critical issue is that the Council take responsibility firmly for this area of Australians' entitlements to access to the arts.

Assuming that decision is taken, the Council should then ensure that, in consultation with the State and Territory governments, consideration is given to the question of how best to provide support for information, advocacy, training and research activities without either dissipating the

funds available or simply re-instating previous arrangements without further consideration.

Funding for national resourcing

A specific requirement of the brief was that advice be provided on whether it is feasible to fund one organisation to provide national coverage to arts and disability in Australia, and what form that coverage might take.

This is a sensitive issue. The existing State/Territory based, multi-artform, organisations which have historically been funded by the Australia Council and/or the State and Territory governments to provide general resourcing in the arts and disability area believe they have the necessary capabilities, have more than proved themselves and should now be given adequate resources to get on with the job.

There is no question that there is a group of organisations around Australia with extensive knowledge of arts and disability issues and a record of achievement in the field. Common sense and the effective use of resources would indicate that these organisations should be consulted and their support enlisted, under suitable financial arrangements, for any program of action for the arts and disability.

At the same time, we must state that, to a degree, we have had to depend on these organisations for their own telling of their story, and – to some extent we have had to rely on their own assessment of their significance and potential.

There is no doubt that several of these organisations are nevertheless held in very positive regard by the Australia Council's Community Cultural Development Board and by a number of State and Territory government arts agencies. However, the consultants believe that the best course of action for the future might not be simply a matter of re-instating and amplifying former funding arrangements for organisations funded in the past as parts of a national infrastructure.

Without doubt there are tasks to be carried out and there are organisations whose experience, knowledge and skill base give them a good claim to be considered as the appropriate key agents of action. But the consultants are of the view that the matter is not cut and dried. We observe therefore that whether the members of the DADAA network or DADAA itself are to be the main ones receiving government support to help implement the recommended program of action is a matter to be determined through the proper processes of program and policy definition, application, evaluation, peer assessment and negotiation, which apply generally to arts organisations in Australia. These are matters for the further consideration of the Australia Council and other funding bodies.

Thus we have aimed to provide a framework for informed action, by the Australia Council and others, on issues associated with arts and disability and to offer actionable recommendations. We believe that future support

from government for arts and disability organisations and activities is likely to be more assured and long-lasting if it comes about through the processes and programs recommended in this report.

It may be that the Council will need to supplement the findings of this report with a more focused evaluation of specific organisations. Such a decision, if made, would suitably arise out of a broader policy and programs review, not simply as a result of a recommendation which might have been made – but is not – in this report.

In fact, concerns have been put to the consultants that the past practice of funding mainly these State/Territory based organisations has been too narrow a response to the need for infrastructure support and has effectively locked out other organisations which might have some claim to be supported, given a more flexible approach.

As has been stated, it was not part of the brief for this project to evaluate the effectiveness of past funding, or to assess the capability of individual arts and disability organisations. The consultants are thus not able to state firmly that this or that organisation should or should not be funded. Our recommendations in this matter have thus been framed in terms which permit and encourage the funding bodies to have a flexible but nevertheless determined approach to achieving appropriate coordination of resources.

In summary, the consultants' views in this matter are as follows:

- For any real progress to be made in ensuring that people with disabilities achieve their rightful access to arts participation, substantial funding will be required for information and advocacy, training and research programs;
- There are important objectives about the design and re-design of buildings and fitouts, which are not within the Australia Council's power to fund directly, but where the Council can play an effective role through support for lobbying and advocacy;
- There is currently no single organisation which would be generally accepted by all the other organisations in this field as suitable and ready to take on a national coordination role
- While it may be appropriate at some time in the future to provide infrastructure funding for one national organisation, this is not an appropriate measure at this stage
- Support for State/Territory and regional development of resources, in cooperation with State and Territory arts agencies and building on capabilities already established, is likely to be more effective than funding one organisation to provide national coverage – a term not easily translated into realistic programs of resource provision
- The question of which organisations should be funded for these purposes should be a matter for further discussion between the funding bodies and care should be taken to ensure that representative organisations with a

good track record but not previously funded to provide infrastructure support are not excluded from consideration merely on grounds of historical patterns of subsidy

- It is conceivable that this process could lead now or later to a single organisation being funded to provide a wide range of services on a national basis, but the consultants believe it is more appropriate for the foreseeable future to have a range of organisations providing services on a State/Territory or regional basis and possibly in relation to specific disabilities or specific artforms.⁴⁰

The consultants' advice on this matter is therefore that:

- The funding of organisations to provide information, advocacy, training and research resources should be considered as part of the Arts and Disability Program recommended in this report;
- The Australia Council should initiate discussions with the State and Territory arts agencies to establish a basis on which such funding could be most effectively utilised, for example on a dollar for dollar basis with a State or Territory agency;
- Organisations with relevant experience and demonstrated qualifications, including the active participation in management by people with disabilities, should be invited to tender for projects to be managed over a three to five year period;
- Organisations receiving funding under this program should be expected to market their expertise to the broader arts industry and other agencies, on a cost-plus-margin basis, to enable them to invest in the service in the longer term;
- Normal procedures for monitoring and evaluating funded projects will provide a framework for fine-tuning the process;
- Within this approach, it would be possible for one or other organisation to be supported to provide some specific nationwide services, for example the development of a national framework for a computer database or the establishment and maintenance of a computer bulletin board service, or for services relating to a specific type of disability or specific artform, on a regional or national basis.

■ Funding of other organisations

The Council and its Boards should initiate discussions, in the first instance with the organisations they fund on a recurrent basis or which receive substantial project funding, to identify ways in which access for people with disabilities could be improved in specific art form areas.

In the longer term, part of the recommended action plan of the Council should be to ensure that funded organisations and their boards are made fully aware of their legal responsibilities in terms of disability discrimination and of the need to have policies and programs in place to

meet those responsibilities. Progress reporting on these matters should become part of the normal reporting to the Council which is required from funded organisations and forms and guidelines should be amended to accommodate this procedure.

The consultants' considered view is that the imposition of 'stringent conditions' is not appropriate at this stage, given that the DDA already provides 'guidelines' with the potential of severe penalties for non-compliance. Also, compliance with the requirements of the DDA will require a serious commitment of time, energy and some money by arts managers and their boards of directors. For the time being, the Council should focus on providing information and encouragement and requiring brief annual reports from its main client organisations.

However, the situation should be reviewed formally at two year intervals, and if there is little evidence of proper access being provided, the Council will have to consider its own responsibilities under the DDA. This may lead to a decision that more stringent guidelines have to be imposed.

5.3 State and Territory Arts Authorities

General

All directors of State and Territory arts authorities were contacted in writing about this study and most were followed up by telephone.

Arrangements were made for the consultants to speak with nominated members of staff. In Western Australia we were able to speak directly with the Director of the Department for the Arts. The Deputy Secretary (Culture, the Arts and Youth Affairs), Tasmanian Department of Education and the Arts, who is the senior arts official of the Tasmanian Government, provided written comments. This, and a memorandum from the Deputy Director of Arts Victoria, were the only written responses or comments received from State arts authorities by the time this study was completed.

In those States and one Territory visited in the course of the study (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory) consultations were held with representatives of the respective authority in each State and the ACT.

All of the State and Territory officials were very receptive to discussion about the issues, but there was no State or Territory where we were provided with a comprehensive, articulated policy statement. Awareness of the issues was generally focused on the challenge of providing physical access for audiences to the cultural facilities for which the authorities have some policy oversight responsibilities.

We did not feel that there was generally a high level of awareness of the issues, or the potential power of new legislation to create extensive policy and fiscal challenges for the departments and agencies responsible for support for the arts.

The policy frameworks vary from State to State, so that for example in one State the question of access for people with disabilities is looked at as a social justice issue and in another it is looked at in terms of market economics.

Most States and Territories provide financial support to arts and disability organisations, though these organisations indicate that State funding is often dependent on Australia Council funding. We were not provided with any lists of grants in the category of the arts and disability.

State/Territory legislation regarding arts organisations depends on each State/Territory's interpretation of the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement (CSDA).

In the view of the consultants, the variations in political and policy contexts across the country indicate that a successful strategy for development will be one which can be supported by all States and Territories, as well as the Commonwealth. We were advised by several very experienced arts administrators that, given the different political and policy contexts, a strategy which required arts organisations to be penalised by arts funding bodies if they did not provide good access would be doomed to failure. A better course of action, they suggested, and one more likely to succeed, would be to ask the various funding and advisory bodies to support a program of information dissemination, promotion of best practice, and training.

It was suggested also that the subject should be brought to the attention of the Cultural Ministers' Council, with a strategy for cooperative action.

Our consultations with State and Territory arts authorities were generally in the nature of a one or two hour discussion and, as mentioned, only Victoria and Tasmania, (which was not visited) provided any written responses to our invitation to contribute to the study. Accordingly, the following notes on particular State views and activities are provided by way of illustration of some points of view. They are not intended to be in any way comprehensive or conclusive.⁴¹

New South Wales

In NSW, as part of the State Disability Services Act passed in 1993, action plans to address inequalities faced by people with disabilities are required from all government departments. This is likely to be primarily employment-related.

Moreover, State cultural institutions have also been asked to draw up action plans. These were due to be completed in June 1994.

Consultations with the NSW Ministry for the Arts indicated that responsibility for access often lies with local governments, which pass building plans and often lease space to arts organisations. However, there is a recognition that the State can play a role in raising awareness, perhaps rewarding models of good practice.

In terms of funding for arts organisations, there is a perception that the primary focus should be access by customers, rather than by participants.

In terms of funding for projects involving people with disabilities, either as consumers or as artists, NSW Ministry staff indicated that they had not received many requests for funding.

Areas where staff believe there was potential for growth included co-operative projects featuring artists in residence, either employing a disabled artist or having an artist going into a community of people with disabilities.

Ministry officials indicated that they could envisage a situation where there could be a requirement in grant application forms for information to be provided on what organisations are doing to address the needs of people with disabilities.

No detailed figures were available on grants in relation to arts and disability other than for regular grants to Accessible Arts.

Accessible Arts is well regarded by Ministry officials, as a source of advice and facilitator of worthwhile projects.

Victoria

Face-to-face consultation for this project with senior officers of Arts Victoria, a Division of the Department of Arts Sport and Tourism, was valuable for providing information and advice based on the lengthy combined experience of the group, both in active development of the arts and disability field and in the development and management of arts policy and grants programs. Those discussions have been particularly valuable in the exercise of endeavouring to shape practical strategic advice in this report.

Subsequently, Arts Victoria provided the following notes on the ministry's policies and activities in this area.

Arts Victoria is committed to increasing access to the arts for all individuals and groups within the community. As a Division of the Victorian Department for Arts Sport and Tourism (DAST), Arts Victoria shares a:

common commitment to promoting greater opportunities for Victorians to experience and participate in arts, sport, recreation, racing and gaming activities as well as a planned co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services

and more particularly the identified priority outcome:

improved delivery of cultural and recreation programs in areas of community priority with particular emphasis on people with disabilities, older people and Kooris.

For more than ten years Arts Victoria has responded positively to initiatives in the area of disability and the arts. Arts Access has received financial support through an annual grant since the mid-1980s, and other arts organisations working with people with disabilities such as Arts Project Australia and Back-to-Back Theatre have regularly received project funding for specific events and activities.

Arts Victoria will examine the findings and recommendations of the national study with interest, in the expectation that opportunities may be identified for a constructive response through this Division.

Queensland

Interpretation of the Disability Services Act in Queensland has led to the placement of disability officers in all government departments.

Within the State agency responsible for arts funding and advice, Arts Queensland, there is an officer with responsibility for, among a number of other things, disability. There are also officers with designated responsibilities for other groups identified as requiring special consideration in terms of social justice, such as youth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Disability is specifically mentioned in grant guidelines as a social justice priority area. All applicants are asked to identify how their application relates to these priority areas in terms of participants and target audiences.

Arts Queensland has an unequivocal, publicly stated policy position that arts funding must meet social justice criteria as well as other criteria such as artistic excellence. Disability is included specifically in the social justice categories. There is similarly a very clear position regarding the operation of State cultural institutions, that social justice objectives must be incorporated into strategic planning and operations. The policies are well recognised by arts organisations and arts and disability bodies.

Arts Queensland supports Access Arts and looks to that organisation for cooperative activity and advice.

Western Australia

Equal opportunity legislation relating to people with disabilities has been in force in Western Australia since 1988. The later Federal Disability Discrimination Act is very similar to the Western Australian legislation.

There is a perception within the WA Department for the Arts that most venues are accessible to people with disabilities because the State Disability Services Act requires this. However, several heritage-listed buildings housing arts organisations are not fully accessible and there would be substantial cost implications in remedying this situation. This was evident particularly in the historic precinct of Fremantle.

The policy framework for State funding of the arts in Western Australia emphasises market demand rather than being framed in the terminology of

social justice. The task of the Department for the Arts is seen as being to service the people of Western Australia through the arts, as distinct from supporting arts organisations or artists. The Department is not considered to have a social welfare role.

Ministry staff thus speak of disability access in terms of broadening the base of support among consumers. Access for people with disabilities is framed in terms of addressing a market niche and providing services for taxpayers who have a disability, because they are taxpayers and therefore entitled to such 'return on their investment'.

As for representation of people with disabilities on grant allocation committees, there have been efforts made in the past to have people with disabilities represented. However, as has been mentioned in some other States, there are few applications made by organisations representing people with disabilities or individuals with a disability seeking grants.

There is a recognition that this may be because people with disabilities do not even get to the application stage. The Department does not rely solely on written application forms and would be flexible about applications which were made in different ways, such as signed, or on tape.

In terms of the Department's broader portfolio responsibilities, there is a good awareness of the Disability Services Act and evidence of good consultation with other departments and agencies within the portfolio on access issues. The point is made in this regard that a lot of arts venues in WA are owned by local government.

South Australia

South Australia was not originally included in the list of States to be visited for the project, although time was taken for one of the consultants on the way through to Perth to have a brief discussion with officials of the South Australian Department for the Arts and Cultural Development. Written comments had not been received by the time this study was completed.

Tasmania

As indicated above, the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Arts has provided a detailed response to the request for input to the project, incorporating both policy considerations and detail about specific activity, especially through Arts Tasmania and the State Library.

The documentation includes the following interesting observations:

Arts Tasmania has a commitment to equitable access as part of its general policy. In practice, projects targeting people with disability have a high success rate. These usually occur through community based projects where artists are funded to work with groups with disability than grants to artists with a disability.

Arts grants are responsive and ability to address policy is dependent on an application process. Recurrent grants are tied to numerous policy

objectives that place considerable pressure on organisations to deliver quality arts product across an already wide range of social objectives.

Most projects in Tasmania occurred though the interaction between regionally based CAOs (Community Arts Officers) and community groups. Funding to these regional CAOs from Australia Council and Arts Tasmania was withdrawn in 1993. It is now left largely to the CAOs and CDOs (Community Development Officers) within Local Government to meet the role. It is questionable as to whether the skills, training or interest exists there to generate quality activity.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory's policies and programs in cultural development operate within the framework of the ACT Cultural Council's document *Sharing the Vision: a framework for cultural development*, published in December 1992. Applications for assistance under grant programs are considered in the light of seven principles: access and equity; consultation, participation and negotiation; co-operation and co-ordination; cultural diversity; inspiration, innovation and imagination; quality of experience; and resourcefulness.

The Cultural Council has also nominated priorities and target groups, 'which may change from year to year'. The current list includes Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, but no other specific 'demographic' target group. Secretariat staff indicated that the Cultural Council would be able to consider nominating arts and disability or artists with a disability as a priority/target group in a future year.

As has been mentioned, no arts and disability organisation is currently funded to provide Territory-wide resources.

5.4 Local Government

There have not been the resources or time to examine in depth the role of local government in the area of the arts and disability.

Local councils have an important role to play. They have often been criticised for passing building plans which do not meet the standards set for access for people who use a wheelchair.

And many arts organisations are housed within inaccessible buildings which are leased to them, often at minimal rates, by local councils. There is a real problem here which needs a more detailed examination: it would be a backward step to discourage councils from supporting the arts, but the issues of access need to be addressed.

Some local councils have been active supporters of the involvement of people with disabilities in the arts and have devoted funding to developing this area.

5.5 Peak Arts Bodies and Arts Venues

Awareness of Disability Issues

As is the case with many people not working in the area of disability, initial perceptions of people with disabilities are of those who use wheelchairs.

There may be a perception that the term 'disability' also extends to include people with an intellectual disability, people with sensory disabilities, such as hearing or visual impairments, and people with other types of physical disability besides those that require the use of a wheelchair.

Very few understand that disability includes mental illness, and that HIV/AIDS is also covered by the Disability Discrimination Act.

When discussing access by people with disabilities, once again the perception tends to be limited to their role as audience members. Arts managers sometimes have to be prompted to consider the barriers that exist for people with disabilities as artists or employees within the arts.⁴²

We believe that arts organisations do not discriminate intentionally against people with disabilities but we believe that there is a lack of awareness about their needs. As media and public reactions to incidents at the last Commonwealth Games indicates, the time for lack of awareness being an excuse is over.

On the other hand, the process of this study demonstrated again and again that among the arts organisations there is a willingness to listen to informed comment on issues of access for people with disabilities. And, during the course of consultations, many arts organisations became more enthused about the possibility of involving people with disabilities than they had been when first approached.

Arts organisations do not generally have stated policies on access by people with disabilities, other than where disability might be mentioned as one area of consideration for equal opportunity.

However, as State and Territory governments proceed with meeting their commitments under disability services legislation, it is evident that in some States the government supported cultural institutions are being required to develop action plans to ensure access for people with disabilities.

Most of the larger arts organisations contacted have made some provision for access by audience members who use wheelchairs. Only a small number of venues are able to offer a choice of seating arrangement and ticket price to people who use a wheelchair.

A few of the larger theatre companies offer regular sign language interpreted performances. Some performing arts venues have introduced audio description.

Providing access for people with disabilities as artists, in whatever art form, does not get much attention from arts organisations, even where there is a serious commitment to providing access for audiences.

It was surprising and disturbing to find that there are also some major national and State organisations, some fairly recently fitted out, where the office accommodation is not accessible for a person who has to use a wheelchair or is otherwise unable to climb stairs. This could create a severe blockage to the sort of career path to which non-disabled arts administrators would have access.

It was generally acknowledged that not much attention had been paid in the past to designing accessible performance spaces and backstage areas.

A notable exception to the general lack of awareness is to be found in the libraries field. The National Library of Australia has a well established program of information and advice on the provision of services for people with disabilities and produces a number of publications such as *Link-up*, full of useful information and reports on developments of relevance for the provision of services for people with disabilities. State and Territory libraries and regional or local libraries could also be accessed for resource material.

The consultants were concerned to discover that the legal requirements of the DDA and State or Territory disability legislation did not seem to have been discussed formally by the boards of arts organisations. Given that the penalties for a successful complaint could have a very direct negative effect on the financial situation of a company, it would be prudent of all boards of arts organisations to be advised to consider these issues as a matter of priority. Prudence would also suggest that the Australia Council should communicate to this effect to the organisations it funds.

Awareness of the Australia Council's Code of Practice

As indicated earlier, few arts managers are aware of the Australia Council's Code of Practice relating to people with disabilities.

On seeing a copy of the code, arts managers sometimes showed an interest, but few took it very seriously. With no incentive to follow the codes or punishment for not following them, they are little more than a set of optional guidelines.

Some interest was expressed by the peak museums body, Museums Australia, in the possibility of developing a code of professional practice regarding disability, for use in museums. Such a move would in our view be very worthwhile and is deserving of attention as to how it might be funded to happen promptly.

Similarly, the National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA) expressed interested in developing some projects to focus on issues of disability in the arts.

Awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act and other Legislation

There is very low awareness among arts organisations of the existence of Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. There is often a surprised, and sometimes concerned, response when the legislation is explained.

Awareness of State legislation relating to disability tends to be a little higher in arts organisations.

Awareness of issues associated with anti-discrimination legislation appeared to us to be highest in Western Australia, where research with arts organisations was recently conducted⁴³ and where the legislation has been in force for some time.

Policy

Arts organisations do not generally seem to have stated policies on access by people with disabilities, other than where disability might be mentioned as one area of consideration for equal opportunity.

In Western Australia, where these matters have only recently been put formally to many arts organisations, there was a positive response generally to the idea of setting policy on these matters.

We asked in many places but it seems to be the exception rather than the rule that the matter is discussed as a policy issue at board level. It would seem that access issues tend to be dealt with as they arise, rather than in a formalised manner.

We found examples of organisations which have a clear and articulated management commitment to providing good access. For example, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre has a long standing program of support for access by people with disabilities and the Queensland Art Gallery has a detailed program for involvement, managed by a staff member with appropriate expertise. The Sydney Opera House, where the construction of the building leaves much to be desired in terms of access, places a lot of emphasis on its front of house staff having proper training in supporting the needs of audience members with a disability.

Most of the larger arts organisations contacted have made some provision for access by audience members who use wheelchairs. Only a small number of venues are able to offer a choice of seating arrangement and ticket price to people who use a wheelchair.

A few of the larger theatre companies offer regular sign language interpreted performances. The Victorian Arts Centre and Queensland Performing Arts Centre have introduced audio description.

A Note on Access for Performers/Artists

Exhibitions of work by people with disabilities have almost always been coordinated by arts and disability organisations. Few art galleries have initiated such programs of their own accord.

Our impression is that performing arts centres and other theatre venues have generally not been designed to accommodate the needs of performers using wheelchairs.

Employment of People with Disabilities

There are a small number of notable examples of people with disabilities working within the arts.

However, in general, it seems that there are very few people with disabilities who work in the administration of the arts. We believe that, as in other areas of disadvantage and discrimination, there will be more attention paid to access issues when there are more people with disabilities in key administrative and policy-making positions.

As has been indicated, arts organisations often operate from inaccessible buildings, making it difficult or impossible for anyone with a mobility impairment to work there. More than one senior arts manager acknowledged that the locations of various organisations mean that people who can't use stairs can't work there.

Staff Training

As indicated earlier, attitudes towards people with disabilities are considered to be as critical as physical provision, if not more so. Therefore it is important that staff be provided with some training on the requirements of people with disabilities.

However, in conducting this study only two arts organisations were found that included disability awareness training as a formal part of their general staff training program.

The Sydney Opera House provides disability awareness training to all front-of-house staff. This training includes travelling around the venue in a wheelchair.

The Museum of Contemporary Arts in Sydney includes a module of disability training in its volunteer training scheme. However, only one type of disability is addressed and this varies from year to year.

In one city it was stated that the people who are most likely to be dealing with the needs of people with disabilities, front-of-house staff, are often employed on a casual basis, for short periods of time, making the provision of training very difficult.

5.6 The Need for Gatekeepers with Disabilities

Throughout this study, many arts managers were willing to be informed about the issues and some were already quite well informed. The consultants observed that the few senior arts managers with disabilities who were consulted had a ready understanding of the issues and an evident interest in supporting action to improve access. However, it seems that

there are relatively few people with disabilities who work in middle and senior management in the arts.

We believe that, as in other areas of disadvantage and discrimination, there will be more attention paid to access issues when there are more people with disabilities in key administrative and policy positions.

As indicated earlier, improving attitudes towards people with disabilities are considered to be as critical as improving physical access. Therefore it is essential that staff be provided with structured training on the requirements of people with disabilities.

6 International Experience

6.1 General

The study included a detailed examination of information and materials from other countries, especially the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and New Zealand.

The material obtained during the project is now part of the Australia Council library's collection of publications on the arts and disability. It includes information and ideas which would be useful for arts organisations in Australia, for instance a quite recent publication of the Arts Council of England on marketing the arts to people with disabilities.

The legislative situation in each country is different, so there are no clear parallels with the Australian situation. However, there are a number of lessons and interesting models of practice, available from overseas experience, especially from the United Kingdom and the USA.

6.2 United Kingdom

A wealth of material concerning the arts and disability has been produced in the United Kingdom, where there has been particular focus on 'disability arts'. Reports have been commissioned on a range of issues, books have been written and magazines published. There are even television and radio shows which have as their focus the arts and disability.

There is a wide network of organisations operating in this area. In keeping with the wider debate in the United Kingdom on the existence of a disability culture, many of the arts and disability organisations there have adopted a more segregated, or perhaps 'separatist', approach.

The Carnegie (UK) Trust started the ball rolling in the early 1980s, with the establishment of a committee of inquiry into the arts and disability, chaired by Sir Richard Attenborough. Since then, the Carnegie (UK) Trust has commissioned further reports in the area and provided substantial funding to the ADAPT scheme, which provides subsidies to adapt buildings, making them accessible for people with disabilities.

The Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) has also played an important role in the promotion of the cause of people with disabilities since the 1980s. Within the Arts Council (now the Arts Council of England) there is an Arts and Disability Unit and an Arts and Disability Monitoring Committee.

The ACGB has taken an increasingly hard line on arts organisations which continue to deny access to people with disabilities. This may be related to the fact that there is no anti-discrimination legislation in the United Kingdom.

The following summary of developments in the arts and disability movement in the United Kingdom provides a number of possible reference points for consideration of the issues in an Australian context.

Carnegie (UK) Trust

Arts and Disabled People: the Attenborough Report

In 1982 the Carnegie (UK) Trust set up a committee of inquiry, chaired by Sir Richard Attenborough. *Arts and Disabled People: the Attenborough Report* provided a 'review of facilities in the United Kingdom which enable disabled people to involve themselves in the arts'.⁴⁴

As well as listing the facilities available, areas were identified where more work was required. Recommendations were made concerning access and availability, education and training, and employment opportunities.

The report stressed the need to provide funding to meet basic overhead costs of arts and disability organisations in order to ensure the health and stability of the movement as a whole.

Funding issues relating to disability raised in the Attenborough Report included an emphasis on the provision of information in the most straightforward way possible and also that 'disabled individuals and artists alike may not be used to explaining their work or ideas in writing. It is, therefore, important to look out for the germ of a good idea which may not be well explained or fully developed in the initial application'.⁴⁵

The report also points out that projects involving people with disabilities may have higher costs. Factors contributing to extra expense might include the need for extra time, because certain disabilities result in skills being absorbed more slowly; the need for more individual attention; longer preparation time; and time spent finding venues which are accessible and suitable.

In his preface to the report, Sir Richard Attenborough reports that 'what is needed now is a vision and a plan'.

On completion of the report, the Carnegie Council for Arts and Disabled People was established in order to see that the recommendations of the inquiry were carried out.

After Attenborough

After Attenborough: Arts and Disabled People,⁴⁶ published in 1988, provided a follow up to the recommendations made in the Attenborough Report. It indicated that few arts organisations had responded to the recommendations. Alternative courses of action were recommended.

Access for Disabled People to Arts Premises (ADAPT)

ADAPT was set up in 1990 and evolved out of the Attenborough Committee and Carnegie Council recommendations for achieving maximum

accessibility by encouraging the involvement of government, trusts, corporate and community organisations.

The key objective of ADAPT is to challenge venue owners and managers to think about essential improvement, to plan for these within their resources and to ensure that such improvements are models of good practice.

The Carnegie (UK) Trust provided initial funding of £250,000 and the Minister for the Arts added another £150,000.

The Carnegie (UK) Trust continues to fund the administration of the ADAPT advisory committee, so that all other funds raised are used solely for grants.

ADAPT provides grants of up to 50% of the total cost of the adaptation of buildings and provision of facilities for people with disabilities. The minimum provided is £2,000, the maximum is £25,000. Grants are not given to new buildings, since provision of access is already mandatory under building regulations.

In 1991, more than £1 million was spent on 60 arts venues to improve access, nearly half of which came from ADAPT.

In association with ADAPT, British Gas runs a series of annual awards for venues providing the best facilities for people with disabilities.

Arts Council of Great Britain

The Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) has had a commitment to increasing access to the arts for people with disabilities since the mid-1980s.

Code of Practice on Arts and Disability

As a response to the Attenborough Report, the Arts Council of Great Britain produced a *Code of Practice on Arts and Disability*, which was circulated in 1985 to all arts companies subsidised on a yearly basis.

Issues addressed in the code include employment policies, programming, outreach work, ticket pricing policies, information and publicity, improving physical access and changing attitudes.

By October 1986 client organisations were expected to have prepared Action Plans indicating how they proposed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. By 1988, implementation should have started, and organisations were asked to report back after that period.

It became clear that actual improvement in access was slow in coming. Monitoring indicated that many of the ACGB's clients were still trying to come to grips with many of the problems outlined in the *Attenborough Report* and in *After Attenborough*. By 1988 it appeared that most clients had not implemented most aspects of the code, and only one regional arts authority had an Action Plan on Disability.

Arts and Disability Action Plan and the Arts and Disability Check List

To stimulate some activity, in 1989 the Arts Council produced an Arts and Disability Action Plan that required all clients, and the Council itself, to follow specified guidelines, with slightly differing requirements for those in receipt of short-term, or project, funding.

The Plan comprises two sections. The first contains measures to be undertaken by the Arts Council, regional arts authorities and all Arts Council clients, in furtherance of the code of practice; the second contained measures to be undertaken by the Arts Council as a pledge of commitment to this area of provision, and as an example to other arts providers.

The measures to be taken by arts organisations included:

- practical steps to be achieved by October 1990, including consultation and regular contact with people with disabilities and their recruitment onto management structures, committees or staff;
- for those clients in receipt of revenue funding,⁴⁷ access facilities to be planned in any new building, publicity materials to include access information and to be sent to local disability organisations, ticket concessions to be offered, facilities for guide dogs to be made available, awareness training for staff to be offered;
- practical steps which may be more costly in time, money, or expertise, such as an access survey, coherent interpretation services, outreach work;
- attitudinal and policy issues, such as employment of people with disabilities, programming policies to reflect the proportion of people with disabilities in the community, promotion of disability arts forums.

Measures to be undertaken by the Arts Council included:

- offering commissions and bursaries to artists addressing arts and disability issues;
- establishment of new awards for artists and organisations who have achieved excellence in provision for people with disabilities, or raised awareness of disability issues;
- access surveys to be conducted in a manner compatible with the Arts Council's own survey, and information to be held centrally;
- development of training opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities;
- providing advice to government departments on amending inappropriate legislation.

As an accompaniment to the Arts and Disability Action Plan, the Access Unit of the Arts Council produced the *Arts and Disability Check List: a Quick Reference Guide for Arts Officers on Arts and Disability Issues* (1989).

This short publication provided pointers on ways to encourage increased opportunities for disabled people to participate as an audience, practitioners and managers in the arts, including a summary of key issues together with questions to ask clients and to use on appraisal visits.

Main areas addressed in the Check List are:

- access – physical/special arrangements;
- performance interpretation;
- publicity and marketing;
- employment;
- disabled peoples' art;
- terminology;
- disability awareness training;
- outreach work.

The Employment Initiative

Monitoring of the Arts and Disability Action Plan in 1991 indicated that while there had been substantial improvements in certain areas (particularly in terms of access for people with disabilities as part of the arts audience) few arts organisations had demonstrated increased employment of people with disabilities.⁴⁸

In order to start to rectify this situation, the Arts Council developed an Employment Initiative.⁴⁹

As well as arts organisations failing to employ people with disabilities, the problem was also seen to be partly the failure of the disability sector to recognise the arts as a viable area of employment.

Equally, there was considered to have been limited analysis of the types of work available within the arts, and the skills required to undertake this work.

Moreover, even when an arts employer wished to recruit people with disabilities, they were unaware of the means to reach potential employees with a disability.

A panel of experts, including people with expertise in the areas of employment, the arts, training, and an understanding of issues relating to disability, was convened. This panel conducted seminars in three locations, and came up with recommendations for a range of Government ministers, the Arts Council and arts employers.

Fundamental problems were identified as:

- a discriminatory and segregatory education and training infrastructure;
- access barriers in the built environment, in transport, in communications, and attitude;
- a major gap between arts employers and the employment services in terms of awareness of each other's potential and needs.

People with disabilities who were working in the arts tended to be ten years older than their non-disabled counterparts. They were often treated 'as an on-site teacher or mobile information bureau on deafness or disability, which hindered their ability to get on with the job for which they were being paid'.⁵⁰

As for education and training, the Employment Initiative noted that 'environmental access problems, transport, and attitudes were barriers in the training areas as in employment'.

Some key outcomes include recommendations to:

- channel funding from those organisations that do not meet the agreed quota to arts organisations supporting the employment of people with disabilities by meeting their quota;
- ensure that public funding is dependent upon full access being part of the plans in all adaptations, rebuilding and new building within the arts, including includes access to work areas as well as to public areas;
- appoint people with disabilities to take part in recruitment processes where there is no appropriate person with a disability in an arts organisation.

National Arts and Media Strategy

In 1990, the British Minister for the Arts asked the arts and media funding bodies to prepare a national strategy, the National Arts and Media Strategy (NAMS) in order to provide a basic framework for this work, and to consider how to best spend public money on the arts and media.

A series of discussion documents were produced, including one addressing the arts and disability. The discussion document comprises three papers addressing issues associated with arts and disability and a number of presentations.⁵¹

Papers were presented by the Arts Council of Great Britain's Arts and Disability Monitoring Committee, by the National Disability Arts Forum and by a range of disability organisations.

Key points proposed by the Arts and Disability Monitoring Committee are that disability awareness training and physical accessibility of a building should be a condition of grant aid to a venue and/or event and that people with disabilities should have some control of where resources go, that is they should be consulted on all matters, not just physical access.

The final NAMS strategy document, *A Creative Future*, presents the following recommendations relating to the arts and disability.⁵²

- Grant-aided organisations should undertake an audit of their provision, in consultation with disabled people. This should address physical access, employment, training, programming and marketing.

- The funding system should provide support for disabled and other new artists to construct new, positive and unpatronising ways of depicting disabled people. It should ensure systems for assessing disability art on its own terms; support projects and organisations arising out of disability cultures, with disabled people fully involved in that assessment; encourage the development of disability art forms through participation and public performance; and in appropriate cases provide revenue support for companies of disabled artists.

However, the National Disability Arts Forum has expressed its 'disappointment at the lost opportunity it presented. Although the document does make reference to disability issues, such as access and equality of opportunity it does so sparingly, without sufficient strength of purpose and without vision'.⁵³

It is also remarkable that, while NAMS proposes the establishment of an Arts Council Architecture Unit, it makes no explicit links with the role of architecture in the construction of a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

Current Situation

■ Change in structures

The Arts Council of Great Britain is no more. In April 1994, the Scottish and the Welsh Arts Councils became independent bodies, and most of the work previously carried out by the ACOB has now become the responsibility of the Arts Council of England.

The Arts Council funds both disabled artists and disability arts through its various art form budgets. In some instances, art forms have allocated specific monies for funding within arts and disability.

The Arts Council has an Arts and Disability Unit which has a strategic role. The Unit focuses on specific issues within Arts and Disability (e.g. increasing the employment of people with disabilities in the arts), provides information, monitors the Arts and Disability Action Plan and produces a directory providing information about organisations working in the field, sources of funding, covers some key issues and provides a bibliography for further reading.

The Arts and Disability Unit was due to close at the end of March 1995 and its work integrated within the art form departments.

The Arts Council has two disability-led clients, *Disability Arts Magazine* and the National Disability Arts Forum, the UK representative organisation on EUCREA (European Committee for Creativity by and with Disabled People).

The head of the Arts and Disability Unit has argued that the Unit should be situated with Policy and Planning in the Arts Council. 'It should be there, in a position to influence everything at the policy and planning stages.'⁵⁴

Also within the Arts Council is an Arts and Disability Monitoring Committee, which encompasses people with disabilities and the non-disabled.

It is not clear whether the Arts Council penalises organisations that do not provide appropriate access. However, the 1994-95 Arts and Disability Budget at the Arts Council has grown to be over seven and a half times the budget for 1990-91 (£249,000 compared to £33,000).

■ Anti-discrimination legislation

There is currently no anti-discrimination legislation regarding disability in the United Kingdom. There have been 11 attempts to introduce a civil rights bill on this issue and the latest attempt has reached the committee stage.

However, a quota of 3% has been set for the proportion of people with disabilities who make up the workforce. The Arts Council used to seek annual exemption from this quota, but no longer does.

In 1991 the Arts and Disability Monitoring Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain produced a document endorsing the need for anti-discrimination legislation and made a number of recommendations, including the following:

- that it be made a condition of funding that arts organisations provide premises and services which are fully accessible for participation and viewing by people with different disabilities;
- that arts facilities should be encouraged to develop pricing policies reflecting that people with disabilities often have lower incomes;
- that access to training in arts activities be provided to people with disabilities;
- that accessibility should become a condition when licensing buildings for entertainment use.⁵⁵

■ Arts Council publications

The involvement of the Arts Council has led to a constant flow of publications concerning arts and disability, addressing areas such as models of good practice, disability and specific artforms and marketing to audiences with a disability.

The following contain a great deal of valuable information, much of it relevant to the Australian situation. They are all available for loan in the Australia Council library. The library also has a full Arts Council Library arts and disability reading list.

Guidelines for Marketing to Disabled Audiences⁵⁶

This is a valuable publication, with many suggestions as to ways to increase the number of people with disability attending arts events, most of which are readily transferable to the Australian situation.

Some of the data provided may have relevance to the Australian situation. For example, the document indicates that attendance by people with disabilities at arts events is lower than by the non-disabled. UK figures indicate that only 58 per cent of people with disabilities ever attended any arts event or venue, compared with 83 per cent of non-disabled people. The disparity is reflected across most art forms, with only opera and orchestral arts having roughly equal attendance.

The report of a questionnaire distributed to marketing managers of arts organisations stated that 'all respondents had made positive attempts to attract disabled people'.

In Through the Front Door⁵⁷

This 1993 publication from the Arts Council of Great Britain provides examples of good practice relating to people with disabilities in the visual arts, as well as listings of some of the key organisations working in the area.

In Through the Front Door provides interesting examples of exhibitions which have challenged the 'overriding supremacy of sight over the other senses'. Exhibits that respond to touch, sound, even to breath are detailed.

According to the publication, 'sighted people gain as much as 95 per cent of their sensory experience through their eyes'. The needs of the visually impaired need to be taken into account at all stages of the art process.

Some examples of exhibitions and means of presentation documented include:

- For publicity, large print and braille invitations to one exhibition were packed in boxes of tissues and doused with perfume;
- Audio labels have been used for museum exhibits. They are short tapes which run continually, providing information and historical anecdotes;
- The Living Paintings Trust, a non-profit making charity, produces thermoforms, raised plastic relief representation of paintings, accompanied by instructions in braille and large print aid exploration of the works by touch. Audio cassettes can also provide information;

- Innovative approaches to catalogues have included the use of large-print with black and white linocut illustrations and acetate sheets with braille print overlaying very large print text.

***Theatre and Disability Conference Report*⁵⁸**

Another Arts Council of Great Britain document, commissioned by the Drama Department.

The report's findings are based on a series of regional seminars and a weekend conference held in Manchester.

Key recommendations of relevance to the Australian situation include:

- the need for a cohesive national training strategy for artists with a disability;
- the need for policy on assessment of funding applications, and involvement of people with disabilities on grant committees;
- the need to distinguish between grants to improve access (e.g. ramps, sign language interpreters) and money for people with disabilities to carry out theatre practice.

***All Clear*⁵⁹**

The ACOB commissioned All Clear Designs 'to examine the current practice of assessing venues for their access for disabled people, storing and manipulating the data gathered and disseminating the data to the target audience'.

Key findings were that there was little consistency in questionnaires used and the way data was analysed. Moreover, there was no communication between organisations on these matters, which might enable them to learn from one another's mistakes. Instead, there was much 'reinventing of the wheel', which often turned out to be misshapen.

Less than 10% of arts organisations interviewed in the course of the study had conducted any access audit work and the majority of these were audits conducted by organisations associated with the Arts Council of Great Britain. Less than 20% of questionnaires included questions on performance areas, less than half considered staff attitudes as an important issue and only one asked about access for employees with a disability.

Key recommendations include the need to design and disseminate a standardised national questionnaire to address access to public access and specialist areas. It is also proposed that completion of the questionnaire be part of the monitoring process used by the Arts Council in the administration of funding.

Arts and Disability Directory ⁶⁰

The third edition of this publication, available in standard, tape, large print and Braille, published in 1994, provides information about organisations working in the area of arts and disability, structured on a geographic basis.

Within the geographical regions, listings are organised according to whether they are:

- information services and umbrella organisations;
- producers and providers;
- access;
- general disability.

There are also articles on topics such as the European arts scene, terminology, access audits and disability equality training. A bibliography is provided.

The *Arts and Disability Directory* is sponsored by UNUM, an insurance company specialising in disability insurance.

■ **Other publications**

Periodicals which address arts and disability issues include:

Disability Arts in London (DAIL), a monthly 'what's on' of disability arts, predominantly that taking place in London.

Disability Arts Magazine (DAM), a quarterly magazine which focuses on disability arts in the north of England.

Disability Now, a monthly publication, has a regular arts section.

Mailout, a national arts magazine of community arts includes information on disability arts.

Other Organisations

There are many organisations in the United Kingdom working in the arts and disability.

Some of the key ones are listed below.

The **Shape Network** is a national federation of professional arts organisations working in the field of art and disability.

Member organisations work with people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. They arrange placements and performances by professional artists and companies in settings where people live or spend much time.

Shape also arranges reduced price tickets to theatre events, exhibitions and concerts for people with disabilities and older people. The service also ensures that suitable seating is available and organises volunteer drivers and escorts.

The **National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF)** is the UK's national representative on the European Committee for Creativity by and with disabled people (EUCREA). NDAF represents the disability arts movement in the UK and liaises between regional and local disability arts forums and agencies.

The **Museums and Galleries Disability Association (MAGDA)** aims to integrate visitors and staff with a disability into museum services throughout the UK.

The **Museums and Galleries Commission** has devised its own code of practice in response to the recommendations of the Attenborough Report. Each venue adopting the code will have to draw up an action plan and a disability policy statement.

Other Activities

There are a number of television and radio shows devoted to disability matters, most of them emanating from the BBC.

They include the long-running weekly radio program, *Does He Take Sugar*, addressing all disabilities, and *In Touch*, which concentrates on people with visual impairments.

As for television, the BBC has produced *Into the Arena*, an arts program focussing on people with disabilities, due to broadcast during the (northern) summer and *From the Edge*, a more generalist disability program. *Link* is another television program produced by and for people with disabilities.

There is also record company, Stream Records, devoted to the distribution of music by people with disabilities.

Relevance to Australia

The absence of anti-discrimination legislation in the United Kingdom seems to indicate the requirement for more stringent measures in order to ensure the involvement of people with disabilities.

For example, while it would seem that a person with a disability, say a person who uses a wheelchair, and who was unable to enter a building could make a complaint to the Disability Discrimination Commissioner in Australia or in most States to the relevant State Commission, there is no such provision in the United Kingdom. Without the backing of the law, the Arts Council has had to look at making disability access a condition of funding.

The possibility of such conditions being imposed should not be excluded in Australia. As the body of DDA complaints that are resolved grows, there may be precedents that require that government funding only be granted to organisations operating from a fully accessible environment, or that are implementing a plan to increase access.

It is interesting to note the similar responses to the introduction of a code of practice relating to arts and disability the United Kingdom and Australia. In both countries, the code appears to have had little effect.

In the UK, the ineffectiveness of the code indicated the need for action plans. This introduction of action plans has proved to be effective in improving access for audience members with a disability, but not for employees in the arts.

Moreover, the 3% quota for employees with a disability has rarely been met in most arts organisations.

The approach of the employment initiative, to involve people with disabilities in recruitment procedures, would be worth considering for the Australian situation.

There is a marked difference between the British situation and that of Australia in terms of the development of the concept of a 'disability culture'. In Britain, there is a disability lobby, that often identifies strongly as separate from the non-disabled community.

While it is not the brief of this project to examine the reasons for the development of such a strong 'disabled culture', it needs to be recognised that the growth of the disabled (as they prefer to be referred to in the United Kingdom) has had a marked impact on the development of disability arts, and vice versa. Indeed, disability arts have provided a forum within which people with disabilities in the UK have been able to examine their cultural differences, and, to a degree, celebrate them.

In Australia, by contrast, there seems to have been little discussion of such matters so far, and people with disabilities tend to pursue integrated options. As discussed earlier, the main grouping where this is not the case is the deaf community.

The lack of a clearly defined disability culture has meant that the involvement of people with disabilities in the arts in Australia has not always had the focus of disability arts in the United Kingdom.

The emphasis in Australia tends to have been more on integrating people with disabilities into mainstream options.

While this may have been the preference of people with disabilities, it could be argued that it has resulted in a weaker lobby group than might have otherwise been the case.

As in other fields of activity, the federal system in Australia has to be taken into account in considering the application of any models from the United Kingdom, which has quite a different system of government.

6.3 Scotland

Scottish Arts Council

As noted above, the Arts Council of Great Britain recently split into three divisions – the Arts Councils of England, Scotland and Wales.

The arts and disability scene in Scotland is different from that in England, and the Scottish Arts Council has a different approach to the area.

According to SAC correspondence, while there is a strong lobby in England which argues for disability arts as discrete artform, and against integrated activity, arts and disability organisations in Scotland tend to be run and staffed by people with a range of abilities, and are not exclusively disability led.

Rather than have a separate fund for arts and disability, the SAC 'considers it a part of the work of each department and Committee of SAC to address the needs of people with disabilities within its work.'⁶¹

The SAC monitors all applications and all grants to identify those which are entirely or primarily for projects undertaken for, with or by people with disabilities.

Organisations and projects funded include two working exclusively in the area: Artlink and Projectability. Both receive contributions towards their core costs (£20,000 each) plus project funds (£15,000 each).

There are other organisations and projects funded in a variety of artforms, including Drama (a company working with people with disabilities and a company of mixed ability), Combined Arts (a festival of work by people with disabilities), Music (Drake Research Project to develop opportunities for people with disabilities in electronic music), Dance (research project in wheelchair dancing), Literature (Talking Books).

More generally, there is recognition that there needs to be development in the operation of arts organisations, particularly in terms of accessibility for those who work in the arts, in the representation of people with disabilities in arts events, either in content or management, and also in terms of monitoring.

As part of the assessment process, the SAC requires information on attendance and participation of people with disabilities at every level. Funded arts organisations are asked to provide an Equal Opportunities Policy and evidence of its implementation. Training initiatives are supported, and there are funds specifically earmarked for supporting training in equal opportunities and customer care.

Within the SAC, there is a positive approach to employment of people with disabilities. The building is wheelchair accessible and all publications are available in either large print or on tape. Recruitment is monitored, and procedures have recently been revised to ensure that more people with disabilities apply and are interviewed.

Relevance to Australia

The Scottish approach to arts and disability seems to be more in keeping with what would be possible in Australia. Arts and disability organisations are more likely to have a mix of employees with a disability and the non-disabled.

However, a critical difference is that the Scottish Arts Council does have a set policy on people with disabilities, which provides a base from which all activity, whether it be integrated or segregated, can take place.

6.4 European Community (EC)

The European Committee on Creativity by and with Disabled People (Eucrea) exists to promote the networking of disabled artists and their organisations throughout the European Community. The Committee allocates one off grants, normally up to half the cost, to arts projects involving people with disabilities in four or more EC member countries.

6.5 United States of America

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990. Much of the impetus for disability legislation in the US arose from the veterans returning from the Vietnam War, at a time when the civil rights movement in the US was already in full swing.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act had already outlawed discrimination against minorities and women, but had little effect on the segregation of and discrimination against people with disabilities.

Section 540 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act stated that any facility that received federal funding had to be accessible to people with disabilities. However, Section 504 was not completely effective in promoting the equality of people with disabilities. There was acknowledgment that further legislation would be required to achieve this situation. Thus the ADA was drafted.

In developing the ADA, meetings were held in every US State to canvass the bill. These meetings – in total 63 took place – raised the level of awareness of the barriers faced by people with disabilities, leading to widespread community support for the ADA. The grass roots support was complemented by active support from the then President, George Bush.

What the Act covers

Areas covered by the ADA include employment, public services (including transport), public accommodation and services operated by the private sector and telecommunications.

The ADA is structured into sections or Titles. Each Title focuses on a specific area and includes provision for Regulations. These are intended to facilitate the implementation of the ADA and include provision for effective dates by which requirements should be met.

Thus service providers are not required to make immediate changes, meaning that economic costs can be spread over a number of years. While this means that barriers to people with disabilities are not being removed immediately, they have the assurance that problems will be fixed within a set timeframe. Also, service providers have been less hostile to the ADA than if compliance had been required immediately.

Impact of the ADA

While many arts administrators were initially concerned at the introduction of the ADA, many of their fears have proved to be unnecessary.

Before Titles have become effective, there have been flurries of complaints under the ADA. However, the arts have not been targeted particularly. As in Australia, most complaints have related to employment.

Examples of complaints against arts organisations have included a person who is deaf suing a theatre to provide sign language interpretation and a person using a wheelchair objecting to being seated behind a pillar.

While many of the larger performing arts centres in the US had already taken some account of the needs of people with disabilities before the introduction of the ADA, standards have changed. Whereas it may have been acceptable in the past to have people who use wheelchairs entering through a separate entrance, it is no longer allowed.

Smaller theatres and galleries are often housed in inaccessible spaces and exist on shoestring budgets. In order to cater for people with disabilities, they have made programmatic changes. Companies have performed in shopping malls, hospitals. Museums and galleries have provided videos of inaccessible parts of their collections.

Under the ADA, new accommodations must be fully accessible, and not just the areas used by members of the general public. The ADA requires a choice of seating options, in terms of position and price, and with the opportunity to sit beside a companion.

The ADA requires that premises be 'readily accessible', which means that access through back doors or loading docks is unacceptable. And while there are alternative minimum requirements for historic structures, one accessible route through the publicly used sections of the premises is still required.

Many arts organisations have used the ADA to their advantage, and instead of viewing people with disabilities as a problem, have recognised them as potential customers.

Organisations have access advisers and ADA committees established to exchange ideas and discuss problems. In New York, for example, seven large museums have formed the Museums Access Consortium.

It has recently been ruled that 5% of all extras employed in the United States are to be people with disabilities.

National Endowment for the Arts

Within the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Office for Special Constituencies aims to make the arts accessible to people who are older, disabled, or living in institutions.

This Office works with Endowment staff, grantees as well as other federal agencies and organisations serving people with disabilities. Cooperative projects have been initiated in order to educate administrators and professionals serving people with disabilities concerning the value and benefits of arts programming for their constituents.

In order to take account of the ADA, the NEA has updated its information on disability and lists ten steps that organisations should take, including the formation of an advisory council of people with disabilities, an evaluation of the facility's barriers, physical and otherwise, and the preparation of a plan to overcome those barriers.

Even since the passing of the ADA, inaccessible performing arts centres have been built. The NEA has identified that most architects are unaware of what 'full access' entails. As a result, the NEA has been developing curriculum projects in 'universal design', creating buildings and tools that are accessible to all populations.

The NEA provides technical assistance and information for organisations working to comply with the ADA and there is funding available to remove architectural barriers. The NEA and State arts councils expect to see accessibility issues built into grant applications, for example staff time to coordinate changes.

Recent activity has focussed more on the needs of older people than people with disabilities, though the Disability Access Symbols Project has produced a set of standardised access symbols available on computer disk. The aim is to help 'grantees better advertise their access services ... in programs, press releases, and other advertisements.'⁶²

The NEA has also produced a book entitled *Profiles in the Arts*, the result of a collaboration with the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, presenting biographical sketches of twenty contemporary American artists with a disability.

Arts and Disability Organisations in the United States

There are numerous examples of arts and disability organisations in the United States. Some of them are listed below.

The Mad Hatters

The Mad Hatters is a theatre company based in Kalamazoo, Michigan which uses drama to provide education about the needs of people with disabilities and people with other special needs.

The company performs educational theatre to civic groups, institutions, corporations and other organisations. There is a mix of actors with a disability and non-disabled actors.

The Mad Hatters have developed programs on the ADA, which aim to foster successful employment of people with disabilities. The shows give employers a clearer understanding of the employment process mandated by the ADA as well as highlighting the benefits of employing a person with a disability.

Funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, private foundations, corporations, individuals and from performance fees.

Very Special Arts

Very Special Arts is an international organisation, based in Washington, DC, which seeks to promote worldwide awareness of the educational and cultural benefits of the arts for all people.

Integrated Arts Australia are the representatives of Very Special Arts in Australia.

Association for Theatre and Disability

The Association for Theatre and Disability is a membership organisation for individuals, professionals, students, teachers and artists working in the broad field of accessible performing arts in the USA.

The Association holds an annual conference and produces a bi-monthly newsletter.

Relevance for Australia

While the DDA bears much resemblance to the ADA, there are some important distinctions that must be drawn between the two.

Michael White, in his discussion paper on the disability standards of the DDA, points out that the 'American experience is a model for achieving a multi-partisan approach to legislative change for people with disabilities. It brought together the key stakeholders – people with disabilities, families, carers and advocates – working in partnership with the community, the private sector and government (both Federal and State) to achieve and implement change.'⁶³

But the DDA has not taken this route. Instead, the legislation was an initiative of the Federal Government and has not had the grass roots support which the ADA has had.

Much of the success of the ADA has been in the drafting of Titles that were acceptable to all parties. In Australia, without support from all sectors of the community, there is the possibility that in the development of disability standards there will be effective lobbying by the groups that stand to lose if stringent conditions are applied. This might include the private sector and local and State governments.

It is also worth noting that the ADA was not the first attempt at anti-discrimination legislation pertaining to disability. It was actually the culmination of over 20 years of activity.

If Australia was to follow a similar pattern, it might well take a number of pieces of legislation to reach the position that has been achieved in the United States with the ADA.

6.6 New Zealand

The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand has an Arts Access program whose 'focus is on providing access to the arts for some people who have had restricted arts access or have been denied access to the arts'.⁶⁴

The Arts Access program has worked with public sector agencies, including those responsible for health and justice, with the aim of demonstrating how the arts can help them achieve their objectives. These programs have been conducted with both non-disabled and disabled artists. Documentation of work with these agencies has been produced and is available for use in designing models for partnerships.

The Arts Access program has funded a number of projects involving people with psychiatric disabilities after they leave hospital and reintegrate into the community. Three paper makers with an intellectual disability have been working at a paper making workshop and are now returning to work as tutors to other people with disabilities.

There has been debate over issues of segregation and integration, with wheelchair users most likely to call for integration, while people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities and the hearing and visually impaired advocate both integrated and segregated activities.

Access to theatres and arts venues for people using wheelchairs is limited and there are few examples of theatres using induction loops or sign language interpretation.

There is funding available from the Welfare Services Committee of the Lottery Board for adapting facilities. More generally, there has been some dispute as to whether welfare or arts funding bodies should bear the responsibility of funding projects for people with disabilities.

6.7 Canada

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was introduced in the early 1980s and prohibits discrimination on the basis of mental and physical

disability. This legislative base has not yet been used in argument for access to the arts for people with disabilities. .

There are also federal and provincial laws relating to employment equity. The Canada Council has held training sessions for its staff about how to remove barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

The Canada Council is in the process of developing a 'voluntary identification form' to be completed by grant applicants in order to monitor the results of cultural diversity access policies.

There are a small number of arts organisations which have created work with or for people with disabilities, including Theater Terrific in Vancouver.

Relevance to Australia

It is often helpful for Australians to examine Canadian practice and experience in matters of public policy, given the similarities in historical and cultural background and the shared experience of a federal system of government. However, at the time of this report we feel that there is insufficient information available to us on activities in Canada to warrant any detailed observations about relevance to the Australian situation.

7 Strategy for Change

7.1 General

There are issues of awareness and issues of access. Both must be worked on and improvement in one area will have a beneficial effect in the other.

The overriding objective should be to make disability access and involvement an integral part of mainstream arts activity and arts support, not an add-on: the objective is access and equity as provided by law, and suggestions that what is expected is some sort of 'political correctness' or diminution of the pursuit of excellence should be refuted strongly by the Australia Council. So should any suggestion that the issues can be dealt with adequately simply by referral to the Community Cultural Development Unit or the new Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities.

Some practical steps are identified:

- Examine the practices of the Australia Council and other arts organisations – e.g. eliminate inconsistencies in policies and practices re access and equity, make the grant application process more accessible, engage people with disabilities in the policy formulation and grants assessment processes, etc;
- Nominate a senior officer of the Australia Council (and similarly in other arts organisations) to receive appropriate briefing and training in disability issues and to be 'product champion'⁶⁵ for initiatives to promote access and equitable treatment for people with disabilities;
- Promote the appointment of people with disabilities to the decision-making bodies of the Council and make representations to the Government for such appointments to the Council itself;
- Resolve the current perceived inconsistency in omitting people with disabilities from the list of priority areas for access and equity – either remove the list or include people with disabilities;
- Support and promote models of good practice;
- Establish or help establish a high level advocacy group;
- Provide disability awareness training for Council members and staff, Board members and staff of client organisations;
- Lift the level of debate beyond the provision of wheelchair access (although even that would be a start for a lot of arts organisations);
- Get the subject on the agenda for Cultural Ministers' Council and other forums;

- Work harder at making disability access and involvement an integral, normal part of the way of managing an arts organisation, not a matter for an occasional study or report;
- Raise awareness of the role and potential of the arts within the disability sector;
- Provide and promote incentives and rewards, commission more research in specific areas, and improve the database and information dissemination.

It is recommended that the Australia Council should focus on some key issues:

- a communications strategy – awareness raising and information dissemination;
- an incentive program – highlighting and rewarding models of good practice;
- training;
- research.

We are proposing a more proactive leadership role for the Australia Council. If that is to be taken aboard and implemented, we believe a 'product champion' is needed at the Council – not necessarily for ever, but for a few years. Thus we recommend a senior appointment of a disability adviser, with appropriate support systems.

The research project has identified a pressing need for improved access to the arts for people with disabilities, whatever their disability or level of support needs and however they choose to be involved, whether as consumers, participants, artists/ artworkers, employees or freelance workers or consultants in the arts industry.

Achieving such improved access will require greater dissemination of information, increased awareness of the issues, structured training programs, and the establishment and implementation of action plans. Action must also be taken to overcome the serious lack of research data.

The Australia Council has a leadership role to play, which will require a continuing review and amendment of its own policies and practices, as well as the initiation and coordination of programs involving other organisations.

To achieve substantial change, substantial resources will be needed. But for funding to be used effectively, there needs to be some serious self-examination and planning by all arts organisations, not just the Australia Council.

As has already been indicated, the consultants feel strongly that a change in attitude is necessary to ensure full access to the arts for all people with disabilities, whatever their disability or level of support needs and however

they choose to be involved, whether as consumers, participants, artists or employees.

Changes in attitudes are not something that can be legislated, though legislation may play a part in changing behaviour.

However, it is not sufficient for people to change because they have been impelled to change. If that is all that happens, access to the arts for people with disabilities will be offered only grudgingly and sparingly. As pointed out previously, people with disabilities find it doubly challenging to participate in the arts when they experience indifferent or unsympathetic attitudes.

On the basis of the responses of arts managers during the course of the study, the consultants have concluded that there is no evidence of intentional discrimination against people with disabilities. On the contrary, there is generally a willingness to know more about the issues and to contribute to the development of more appropriate and effective policies and programs.

If one thing above all is clear from this study, it is that a key problem is a lack of awareness within the arts community about the diversity of disabilities, the particular needs of people with disabilities and ways in which these needs can be met. On the other hand, it is also clear that people are willing to learn and to be convinced of the need for change.

In order to bring about a change in attitudes towards people with disabilities, **a national program of awareness raising and education** is proposed as a matter of high priority.

This program should be facilitated, but not necessarily run, by the Australia Council. An appropriate approach could be to invite proposals from individuals and organisations to manage this as a national program for a fixed period of time. The brief should ensure that the program will be seen as appropriate by:

- arts and disability organisations;
- disability organisations;
- national non-government arts organisations such as NAVA, Craft Australia, the Australian Institute of Arts Administration, the Australasian Performing Arts Centres Association, Museums Australia Arts Training Australia and so on.

The program could include:

- a newsletter addressing some of key issues;
- the development of a computerised database, easily accessible through library services, the Internet/AARNet;
- annual seminars, in different parts of Australia;

- advice on how to obtain suitably qualified consultancy and training services.

The brief could indicate that funding would be phased out progressively and that the project should therefore be designed from the beginning so as to be self-supporting by the end of the fifth year.

This project would build on and re-inforce the work already done by the arts and disability organisations and might well be taken over by one of them in due course, on a fee-for-service basis.

7.2 Face the Problem of Buildings and other Physical Barriers

While people who use wheelchairs are not the largest group of people with disabilities, they often face the greatest physical barriers to access to the arts. And there are many other people with mobility difficulties who face barriers when accessing buildings where they are required to climb flights of stairs.⁶⁶

There needs to be a recognition that removing barriers to the built environment benefits everyone, not just those with a disability. For example, it is far easier to transport and hang works in exhibition spaces that have ramps and lifts than in those that have staircases. The same can be said for erecting sets on stages.

Despite the existence of building codes which require that new and renovated buildings should provide access for wheelchair users, accommodation is still built that is not accessible in the way which is clearly required by legislation. There are steps at entrances and no ramps, and internal access above ground floor may only be possible via stairs.

Even when there is access to buildings, or within buildings, it may be through a separate entrance from that used by others, perhaps around the side or through a loading bay, using goods lifts.

There is a need to start challenging the construction of such buildings and to adapt buildings that are currently inaccessible.

Access by people who use wheelchairs and people who have other mobility-limiting disabilities is often a consideration when first designing buildings or renovations, but as budgets get tight, it is among the first items to be dropped.

Access by people with mobility-related disabilities must become an intrinsic part of all building design, not an afterthought, add on or disposable extra.

When it is included from the very start, as part of a brief, on average the extra cost of making provision for people who use wheelchairs is approximately 1 per cent of the total cost. Wait until a building is finished, and the 'retrofit' can rise to at least 4 per cent of the total cost.⁶⁷

Making amendments to heritage buildings is considered by some to be completely inappropriate. Others would argue that changes to a building to

allow access by people who use wheelchairs will, in the future, be perceived as part of the heritage of the late twentieth century, a time when access for people with disabilities was finally addressed.⁶⁸

Other physical barriers preventing full access to the arts by people with disabilities include provision for people with sensory impairments.

Hearing assistance, either an audio loop or infra red system, should be provided in all auditoria. There should be the opportunity to attend sign language interpreted performances and guided tours of galleries and museums.

The needs of the visually impaired must also be considered. Large print labelling of exhibits should be provided as a matter of course. The availability of large print programs would greatly enhance the appreciation of performances, as would the provision of audio description. Galleries and museums should investigate the opportunities for tactile exhibits.

And it is not just audience for the arts who need to be considered. Artists or would be artists are hampered in the training process; people seeking employment in the arts, either as artists or as employees meet with a range of barriers.

Any consideration of the removal of these barriers must extend to all those who are involved in the arts.

7.3 The Challenge to the Australia Council to show Leadership

There are a number of areas where the Australia Council could contribute to increased access by people with disabilities.

Information

Firstly, in terms of Australia Council practice, it should be a goal to provide all information in a variety of formats, including large print and audio cassette.

The provision of TTY facilities (and staff who are aware of how to use the machine) would increase accessibility to the hearing impaired and the deaf.

The Australia Council also has a role to play in the compilation of statistics on the arts. The Research Unit of the Council should be asked to advise on initiatives to be taken in order to develop a better research database for study of the issues in this report.

In research conducted for Greater London Arts, disability was included as one of the main demographic characteristics.⁶⁹

People with disabilities were shown to be less likely to attend art events. They felt that they might not be welcomed by the management or other members of the audience. The cost was more likely to put people with disabilities off going to an event than the general population. However, leisure time was not an issue.

Inclusion of people with disabilities should be included as a standard demographic in surveys commissioned by, or with the involvement of, the Australia Council.

Grant application process

Grant applicants should be allowed to submit their applications in other formats besides the written one.

It is recommended that the Council consult with the National Library of Australia Disability Access Unit on ways in which the application process can be made more accessible and then implement procedures to ensure that accessibility is improved. For example, people with visual impairment should be able to make application by utilising a Kurtswell machine in a library or elsewhere to read the application form and guidelines and then reading their application into a dictaphone or onto a voice-activated computer, for submission to the Council in electronic format.

The availability of voice mail and e-mail opens up many options.

As for peer assessment of grant applicants, while it may not be possible to ensure that there is a person with a disability on each Board, there needs to be increased understanding of the situation of people with disabilities and a commitment to consulting people with disabilities and their organisations for expert advice on programs and projects.

Consideration of the needs of access for people with disabilities should inform the process of selecting advisory bodies and there should be a commitment by the Council to ensuring a greater representation of people with disabilities on advisory bodies across all program areas.

Whose Responsibility?

While we recognise that the Australia Council has many responsibilities and a limited number of staff to help fulfil them, we think it is fair to say that disability issues are not given sufficient priority by the Council or its Boards, other than some degree of attention historically by the CCDB. And as has been pointed out, disability has been 'written out' of target lists for access and equity in grant program guidelines. What statements of policy exist are out of date and generally inadequate. We believe this puts the Council in a vulnerable position should there be any complaints brought under the DDA.

Also, the lack of a well-articulated, up-to-date policy and the lack of any sign of positive change in grants administration practice mean that the Council is not seen by people with disabilities or their organisations as having any real interest in developing better awareness and better access to government-funded provisions for arts participation.

The general attitude within the Council seems to be that disability is a responsibility for the CCDB. People outside the Council also perceive this to be the prevailing attitude within the Council. For its part, the CCDB seems

to have the attitude that it is time the rest of the Council took responsibility. Overall, disability seems to be seen as a problem that has little to do with support for the arts, rather than as a important and timely challenge which the Council and its staff are obliged to meet.

Disability should no longer be seen as solely a CCDB issue. Instead, all Boards need to start taking their own appropriate responsibility for this ensuring equitable access for people with disabilities.

One way of stimulating a more concentrated and sustained approach to the issues of access for people with disabilities would be **for a position of senior adviser on arts and disability issues to be created**. This need not be a permanent position, but could be established for a minimum period of three years. The position should be on a level at least equivalent to those held by the Executive Officers of the various Board Units and should report directly to the General Manager. Appropriate support should be provided and the Council should endeavour to appoint a person with a disability to the position.

Pending the creation of such a position and appointment of a suitable person, a detailed study of practice relating to disability should be commissioned in each of the art forms, with each Board being responsible for commissioning the studies, in collaboration with the Communications and Research Unit.

The Australia Council to establish Models of Good Practice

The Australia Council should establish in its own operation models of good practice. This is particularly important if it is proposed to encourage other organisations to strive to increase access for people with disabilities.

As has been pointed out earlier in this report, there is a pressing need for the Council to review its policies and practices across all program areas and implement, where appropriate, changes designed to ensure more equitable access for people with disabilities.

To start with, there should be an audit of facilities and services for people with disabilities. Next, an action plan should be drawn up and lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. This action plan should be implemented and the resulting changes made public. (See below for more on action plans.)

Funding for Arts and Disability Organisations

Given the geographical spread of Australia, the varying Commonwealth, State and Territory political and administrative arrangements, and the current state of play in terms of awareness of the needs of people with disabilities among arts organisations, it is unrealistic to expect all the issues of arts and disability to be addressed nationally by any one organisation.

Existing State-based and other organisations play a number of roles, including:

- provision of arts programs for people with disabilities;
- providing information on the arts to people with disabilities;
- providing information about disability to arts organisations;
- organisation of projects and festivals.

However, it may be the case that as the issue of disability rises on the arts agenda, the role of these organisations will change.

Certainly, these organisations will need to continue in their lobbying role for some time.

We would anticipate that as 'mainstream' arts organisations begin to adapt to be able to include and involve more people with disabilities, there will be a greater need for information, and perhaps a reduced need for special programs.

Perhaps these programs will be taken over by disability and/or arts organisations.

Ultimately, the fate of these organisations is dependent upon what people with disabilities demand. If they wish for segregated services which allow them to develop their skills in a 'safe' environment, then these services should be available. If, as has happened in the UK, there are demands for disability-only arts organisations, then there should be provision for such services.

Encourage Arts Organisations to Change

As has already been indicated, it is not the consultants' belief that the Australia Council should implement a program of sanctions in order to increase access to the arts for people with disabilities. This is the role of the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislation.

On the other hand, our evaluation of the impact of the Code of Practice, our review of developments overseas and consultation with arts organisations indicate that it is not sufficient to leave matters to the organisations.

Therefore it is **proposed that the Australia Council adopt an incentive-based program to encourage arts organisations to develop good practice in the area of disability.**

This might include:

- making disability a priority area for a set period of time;
- earmarking a set budget for projects that address disability;
- introduction of other types of incentive schemes, including awards for good practice, for most accessible building and so on.

There is no doubt that it is inappropriate for arts funders to prescribe the content of work produced by arts organisations. However, there could be an incentive or priority program for any work which presented disability in a positive light or which addressed the misrepresentation of people with disabilities.

While there is Federal, and often State legislation, making it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities, awareness of this legislation is very low. Therefore, the Australia Council should provide information to clients about the existence and potential impact of the DDA, just as the Council has for many years now provided advice, encouragement, warnings and guidance booklets, to organisations on such matters as the fiduciary responsibilities of directors of boards.

Collaboration with Other Bodies

In the course of the study, we have come across a range of bodies keen to embark on some kind of collaborative project with the Australia Council, to address one or other aspect of the subject of the arts and disability.

The Australia Council should examine such possibilities. Obviously, Council is not expected to take full responsibility for the area.

Among the disability sector, awareness of the value of the arts is often limited. There are many opportunities for increased activity in this area, but they are not always identified.

To date, the process of integration has placed great emphasis on employment, often to the detriment of other areas of life.

Moreover, as is often the case more generally, the arts are often not considered to be a viable area for employment for people with disabilities.

The Australia Council can play a role in raising awareness of the value of the arts and its viability as an employment option.

One of the key organisations with which the Council should collaborate on disability issues as soon as possible is the national arts industry training body, Arts Training Australia. Together, the Council and Arts Training Australia should develop some guidelines and priorities for joint action in the training field.

7.4 Education and Training

As mentioned previously in this report, there is a lack of opportunity for people with disabilities to obtain education and training in the arts.

This opens up a very extensive field and it is not possible within the scope of this report to identify all the ways in which access to education and training in the arts can be improved

There are two broad areas for immediate consideration:

- education and training for people with disabilities;

- education and training for management and staff of arts organisations, on key issues of disability and how to provide appropriate access.

Education and Training for People with Disabilities

The Australia Council, should initiate consultations with Arts Training Australia and with the Schools and Curriculum, Higher Education, and Vocational Education and Training Divisions of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), to identify more closely the key issues in the provision of access for people with disabilities, in schools, in higher education institutions and in vocational and education and training institutions and to take appropriate action to improve access.

Two key areas – attitudes and physical access – will need to be addressed.

There also needs to be a recognition that much arts training happens on the job, and that people with disabilities should be entitled to these opportunities as well as training opportunities within courses.

Moreover, the lack of role models for people with disabilities in the training establishments is likely to have a negative effect.

Arts Training Australia (ATA) is the national Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB) for the arts, heritage, entertainment and media industries. ATA's primary purpose is to promote and enhance the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training (VET) by providing a forum through which industry can express its education and training needs.

ATA has advised that it 'incorporates basic principles of equity and access for target groups into all its research, planning and consultative activities'.⁷⁰ ATA points out that it has supported the Arts Training Network of State and Territory bodies in conducting research relating to access and equity and mentions specifically the work done in 1993 and 1994 by Arts Training Western Australia.

However, in the consultants' view, it is a matter of concern that, apart from the WA project, no significant projects relating to the arts and disability seem to have been developed through the national vocational education and training reform agenda.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) lists among its Priorities for 1994 the matter of 'Participation by the Disadvantaged' as 'a group in the training system whose participation needs must be addressed': people with disabilities are not mentioned, although women, the unemployed and 'those who have been out of the workforce for a long time', and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are mentioned specifically.

The National Vocational Education and Training Plan for the Arts and Cultural Industries, produced by Arts Training Australia in March 1994, is the key current document for understanding the current situation and projected priorities for vocational education and training in the arts. People

with disabilities do get a specific mention under Directions for Vocational Education and Training, which lists developments 'that should be undertaken to ensure relevant vocational education and training': in the sub-section Access and Equity, people with disabilities are listed as one of the groups for which strategies are said to be required to facilitate and enhance the vocational education and training opportunities.

On the other hand, key research staff at Arts Training Australia (ATA) have said that they would welcome an opportunity to discuss with the Australia Council ways in which these aspirations could be turned into reality through some joint projects.

We urge the Council to pursue this invitation.⁷¹

Training for Management and Staff of Arts Organisations

The first priority for training of management and staff of arts organisations should be to ensure that they have a practical, working knowledge of and competency in applying, the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and any relevant State legislation.

This training should where possible be provided by trained people with disabilities.

Most organisations of any size will by now have established a training strategy for the purposes of the Federal Training Guarantee Scheme⁷² or generally as part of their human resources strategy. These strategies should be examined to ensure that they include provision for structured training in matters to do with disability, such as in the area of customer service.

Some organisations, specifically some performing arts centres and some public art museums, have some form of training program to make staff aware of disability issues, but we believe the relevant managers would welcome well-informed advice and support on how to plan and implement more effective, sustained programs.

7.5 Arts Organisations

One of the first areas that arts organisations could look at is an audit of current access by people with disabilities.

This should be addressed from all perspectives – for consumers, artists and employees.

An appraisal could be conducted with the assistance of local disability groups or an arts and disability organisation.

Issues to be addressed could include wheelchair access, access for people who have difficulty climbing stairs, signage, lighting, alarm systems for the deaf, provision of toilets with wheelchair access, ticket pricing policies, policies regarding carers, and the range of other issues mentioned in this report and other reference material.

As well as physical access, attitudinal barriers should also be addressed. Staff training, particularly for staff dealing with the public, should include disability awareness training as a matter of course.

A staff member could be nominated to take responsibility for disability access, checking that all walkways are clear from obstructions, that disabled toilets are not being used as a broom cupboard, that hearing assistance systems are working.

Employment practices should be examined too. Human resources managers, or their equivalents, should investigate the recruitment mechanism to ensure that it does not discriminate against people with disabilities.

Many of the changes recommended in the Arts Council of Great Britain's *Employment Initiative* are relevant here.

For example, it is recommended that people with disabilities should be included in staff selection processes, even if they need to be brought in from outside.

Also, jobs should not be ruled out as being unsuitable for people with disabilities simply because they have traditionally been done by non-disabled people.

An action plan could be drawn up to address all the above points. As indicated, even organisations with very poor access may be less liable to have findings made against them under the DDA if they can show themselves to be implementing appropriate action plans.

Other areas could include looking at ways of examining the issues of disability through the arts, e.g. commissioning plays, or coordinating exhibitions with this focus.

7.6 Action Plans

In a number of States, legislation introduced as a complement to the CSDA requires government departments and State-funded institutions, including cultural institutions, to produce action plans to address access for people with disabilities.

The indications we have received from the HREOC are that any organisation that has drawn up such a plan and registered it with HREOC and that can demonstrate that they are taking steps to implement the plan may be partially protected against complaints under the Disability Discrimination Act.

It would thus seem reasonable and responsible of the Australia Council if it were to encourage its clients to draw up action plans as part of sound contemporary management. This would require that organisations undertake some kind of access audit.

It is important that the audit be conducted thoroughly and professionally. The Australia Council could assist in developing standardised audit or assessment forms.

Information will be made available about ways to increase access for people with disabilities. Organisations will be requested to draw up a timetable indicating when necessary changes will be made. Some will be able to take place immediately. Others will require more planning, and will perhaps have financial implications, and will take longer.

This approach has a number of benefits for all parties involved:

- it may reduce the chances of having a complaint upheld by the HREOC;
- it will raise awareness of disability issues among arts organisations;
- it will provide a clearer picture of the current situation regarding disability access;
- it will identify areas where change is required;
- it will alert people to specific needs in planning for the future;
- it will ensure that there is standardisation of information;
- it will help to provide a reasonable timeframe within which changes should take place.

7.7 Marketing

Arts organisations should recognise that people with disabilities are an untapped market, and marketing plans should be developed accordingly.

There will need to be recognition that the information sources of people with disabilities may be quite different from those for the non-disabled community.

8 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Australia Council initiate a program of active support for improved access to the arts at all levels, entitled the **Arts and Disability Program**, to incorporate:

- Arts and Disability Best Practice Scheme;
- National Arts and Disability Forum;
- Arts and Disability Information and Advocacy Program;
- Arts and Disability Research Project.

■ **Arts and Disability Best Practice Scheme** to identify and promote awareness of models of good practice, including:

- Ongoing review of the Council's own policies and practice, including grants application guidelines and processes, and development and implementation of an Action Plan;
- Program of matching grants with State and Territory arts agencies and other organisations, for innovative projects to improve access and participation, emphasising:
 - Integration of people with disabilities in 'mainstream' arts activities,
 - Showcasing and development of exemplary projects,
 - Training and skills development, for people with disabilities and for employees of arts organisations;
- Commissioning program for stories of best practice for inclusion in various journals, newsletters etc.

■ **National Arts and Disability Forum**, to be convened by the Minister for Communications and the Arts and with high level patronage (Chair of the Australia Council, Disability Discrimination Commissioner, etc), to promote meetings between key arts people and people with disabilities and their organisations, together with the exchange of information and seeking of expert advice by arts organisations from disability organisations, and vice-versa, with an annual gathering, to report to the Minister on progress in achieving improved access.

■ **Arts and Disability Information and Advocacy Program** which could include:

- Arts and Disability Network Resources Fund, to be proposed to the State and Territory arts funding agencies as a dollar for dollar cooperative funding for suitable agencies to maintain and supply resource services for the promotion of access to the arts for people with disabilities;

- Arts and Disability Newsletter, to receive two or three years start-up subsidy from the Australia Council;
- Advocacy for the subject of access for people with disabilities to be listed as a priority topic for the Cultural Ministers Council;
- Development of active collaboration on arts and disability issues between the Australia Council, the Department of Employment, Education and Training, the Department of Human Services & Health and other agencies such as DADAA and its members, Arts Training Australia, Museums Australia, the National Association for the Visual Arts, Craft Australia and so on.

■ **Further Arts and Disability Research and Evaluation**, to include:

- Australia Council's Strategy and Communications Unit to review and report on means of improving the currently very limited data on disability and the arts;
- Australia Council to institute a requirement for grant recipients to report on their achievements and difficulties experienced in providing access to people with disabilities;
- Consideration of a program of commissioned research, with published reports, on specific disability types and in specific art forms.

Endnotes

- 1 Specifically Recommendation 5.13 Culture:
 - 5.13.1 *People with disabilities should be able to participate in cultural activities on an equal basis. They should have the opportunity to utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of the community, be they in urban or rural areas. Examples of such activities are dance, music, literature, theatre, painting, sculpture, museum practice, oral history and exhibition development.*
 - 5.13.2 *In the context of developing its equal opportunity plan under section 4 of this Strategy, the Australia Council will pay particular attention to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to cultural and artistic facilities and opportunities through organisations funded by the Council and through the grants activities of the Council.*
 - 5.13.3 *By July 1995, HREOC, in consultation with the Australian Cultural Development Office of DAS (note – now part of Communications and the Arts), will develop a strategy to inform individuals and organisations within the arts and cultural sector of their obligations under the DDA.*
- 2 For a discussion of the terminology, see the *Commonwealth Disability Strategy*, February 1994, pp.5-7.
- 3 As in Des Power, 'Deafness in Australia: A policy statement for the Australian Association of the Deaf', *Australian Disability Review*, 4-92, p.43.
- 4 See ACGB Guidelines for Marketing to Disabled Audiences (p.19):

Many now contend that people become disabled by their environment and the society they live in, and it's commonly accepted that the 'medical model', using names of conditions, is inappropriate and uninformative.
- 5 World Health Organisation, *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*, Geneva, 1980.
- 6 *Commonwealth Disability Strategy*, p.6.
- 7 The definition of handicap in the survey follows WHO-ICIDH guidelines as one that 'results from a disability which limits a person's ability to perform certain tasks associated with daily living. The limitation must be in relation to one or more of the tasks of: self-care, mobility, verbal communication, schooling or employment.'
- 8 For the remainder, the severity of handicap has not been determined.
- 9 Attenborough Report, *Arts and Disabled People*, Carnegie (UK) Trust, London 1985, p.1.
- 10 *op.cit.* p.2.
- 11 National Arts and Media Strategy Unit, Arts Council of Great Britain, *Arts and Disability Discussion Document*, 1990, p.23.
- 12 *op.cit.* p.23.
- 13 Some stimulating approaches to a related set of issues are to be found in the January 1994 report *Access to Excellence: A Review of Issues Affecting Artists and Arts from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds* (see Overview Report,

Stephen Castles and Mary Kalantzis, with the support of Bill Cope, AGPS – the study was commissioned by the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet).

The report argues that ‘the concept of excellence that guides practical decisions in the arts can work in three ways:

- A Discriminating Excellence – discriminating art from non-art, the worthy from the non-worthy;
- Excellence as Discrimination – which can ‘involve subtle and not-so-subtle forms of discrimination in the negative sense – mechanisms for exclusion’;
- Discriminating Excellence Without Discrimination – a reconstituted notion of excellence, which can ‘discriminate in the positive sense without discrimination in the negative sense’.

These distinctions offer a useful starting point for examination of issues of discrimination with regard to artists with a disability and their work.

14 Power, *op.cit.*, 1992, p.44.

15 *ibid*, p.45.

16 Note the following comment, which shows that terminology is not always a clear-cut matter of being right or wrong: ‘Many members of the deaf community do not regard themselves as “impaired” or “disabled” and resent being so labelled, even though the hearing community’s attitudes and practices may make life in an essentially speaking-hearing community very difficult for them at times, often preventing them from achieving their full potential or obtaining their rights as Australian citizens. They usually prefer to be called “deaf” rather than hearing impaired; they do not believe themselves to be “impaired”.’ A Policy Statement for the Australian Association of the Deaf (AAD), prepared by Des Power, *Australian Disability Review*, 4-92, p.43.

17 Letter from DADAA to the Australia Council, commenting on the draft of the report on the Arts and Disability, 14 October 1994. The letter also states that ‘it may be more useful to approach this matter not so much as quantity but as a philosophy and use existing written materials that describe the position of “difference” and its application in artforms, from those who experience this position.’

18 The ABS survey uses the WHO-ICHD classification of disability and handicap, where ‘disability’ is the restriction or lack of ability and ‘handicap’ is the limitation in performing certain tasks associated with daily living.

19 Comment at the conference of the Australasian Performing Arts Centres Association, 25 August 1994, Wollongong.

20 Comment at same conference.

21 Actor in Brisbane, who uses a wheelchair.

22 Normalisation aims to utilise ‘culturally valued means in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviours, experiences and characteristics that are culturally normative or valued’ (Wolfensberger, 1972).

23 Trowbridge, 1991.

24 Daye, 1993.

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- 25 This is 'social roles valorisation', a later clarification of the concept of normalisation.
- 26 Disability is defined formally in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, pp.4-5, as:
- (a) *total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or*
 - (b) *total or partial loss of a part of the body; or*
 - (c) *the presence in the body or organisms causing disease or illness; or*
 - (d) *the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness;*
or
 - (e) *the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or*
 - (f) *the disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or*
 - (g) *a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgements or that results in disturbed behaviour;*
and includes disability that:
 - (h) *presently exists; or*
 - (i) *previously existed but no longer exists; or*
 - (j) *may exist in the future; or*
 - (k) *is imputed to a person.*
- 27 This explanation is taken from the fact sheet 'What's it all about?' in the HREOC DDA Information Kit.
- 28 The Agreement is designed to carry through to a federal context the objects of the *Commonwealth Disability Services Act 1986*, namely to:
- Replace provisions of earlier legislation with more flexible and responsive provisions;
 - Ensure that persons with disabilities receive the services necessary to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as members of the community;
 - Ensure that services provided
 - further integrate and complement services available generally to persons in the community
 - help persons with disabilities achieve positive outcomes such as increased independence, employment and integration in the community
 - are provided in ways that promote in the community a positive image of persons with disabilities and enhance their self-esteem;
 - Ensure that the outcomes achieved by persons with disabilities by the provision of services are taken into account in the granting of financial assistance for the provision of such services;
 - Encourage innovation in the provision of services;
 - Achieve positive outcomes – e.g. increased independence, employment and integration, by the provision of comprehensive rehabilitation services.
- 29 The organisations in this sub-section are listed by State and Territory, according to the accepted Commonwealth/State convention for order of precedence.
- 30 *ACE magazine*, Issue 9, June 1994, p.10.

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- 31 A note from the Australia Council's CCDB describes this work as 'an entertaining and moving piece of first rate expressionist cabaret written and performed by performers with a disability.'
- 32 Quote from notes supplied by the CCDB.
- 33 See the reference above on the Castles and Kalantzis study, *Access to Excellence: A Review of Issues Affecting Artists and Arts from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*.
- 34 We spoke directly with Lesley Fogarty, then Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Unit: in other program units we spoke with officers other than the Executive Officers. After the project was fairly well under way, we met with the new Chair of the Council, Hilary McPhee, to outline the issues which were emerging. We had been able to speak in the previous week with the General Manager of the Council, Michael Lynch, but that had been in his then capacity as General Manager of the Sydney Theatre Company. We met again with Michael Lynch in his new capacity, when the draft report was being considered by the Council – Sandra Forbes, Acting Director Communication and Research, also attended that meeting. Christine Sammers, Executive Officer of the CCDU, also met with us after the draft report had been submitted. Several program areas of the Council provided written comments on the draft and some supplementary information, much of which could not easily be incorporated in the final report due to lack of time.
- 35 Memo of 21 October 1994 from Jane Westbrook, Executive Officer, Performing Arts.
- 36 We do not have any statistics on the proportion of Council, Board or assessment committee/panel members who are people with disabilities. As far as we know, such figures are not kept or even sought, although as indicated there is an attempt to identify the proportion of staff with a disability.
- 37 Our understanding is that applications are in at least some programs still required to be submitted by using a typewriter on a pre-printed form.
- 38 The Council is not alone in this lack of evident representation of people with disabilities. Among the hundreds of people and organisations listed as focus group participants in various artforms for the development of the National Vocational Education and Training Plan for the Arts and Cultural Industries and the list of membership of the national Arts Training Network, there is no disability-related organisation to be found. See appendices to the National Vocational Education and Training Plan, Arts Training Australia, March 1994.
- 39 We are of course aware that certain appointments are not within the Council's power to determine, but even for these it is surely possible for the Council to draw to the Minister's attention the need for certain areas of representation.
- 40 For the Australia Council, the funding of organisations to provide resources in specific artforms would need to involve the relevant artform Boards.
- 41 As at 26 October 1994 it has not been possible to obtain from the Northern Territory arts ministry any statement about their programs or intentions in the arts and disability area.
- 42 At the Australasian Performing Arts Centres Association conference at Wollongong in August 1994, a speaker said that prior to the invitation to one of the consultants to address the conference, he had thought a lot about access for

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- audience, but not for performers or employees; another person commented from the floor that he had not thought about access for performers until the Cabaret Erratica production had been booked for his venue.
- 43 Maggie Baxter's report for DADAA WA.
- 44 *Committee of Inquiry into the Arts and Disabled People*, 1986, back sleeve.
- 45 *ibid.*
- 46 Carnegie (UK) Trust, London, National Council for Voluntary Organisations.
- 47 'Revenue funding' is the term used by the ACGB to indicate what in Australia would be described as 'recurrent funding' or 'general funding'.
- 48 In the UK, there is a statutory quota of 3% employment of people with disabilities. Many of the major organisations had not reached this quota. The Arts Council had itself applied each year for an exemption certificate.
- 49 *Report on the Initiative to Increase the Employment of Disabled People in the Arts*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993.
- 50 *ibid.*, p.18.
- 51 *Arts and Disability: Discussion Document*, National Arts and Media Strategy Unit, Arts Council of Great Britain: London, 1991.
- 52 *A Creative Future: The Way Forward for the Arts, Crafts and Media in England*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993.
- 53 *Disability Arts Magazine*, Autumn 1992, Vol.2, No.3, p.1.
- 54 Wendy Harpe, interviewed in *Disability Arts Magazine*, Vol.4, No.1, Spring 1994, p.13.
- 55 *Disabled People, the Arts and Government*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1991.
- 56 *Guidelines for Marketing to Disabled Audiences*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993.
- 57 *In Through the Front Door: Disabled People and the Visual Arts – Examples of Good Practice*, Jane Earncliffe, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1992.
- 58 *Theatre and Disability Conference Report*, E. Morrison, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1992.
- 59 All Clear Designs, *All Clear*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993.
- 60 *Arts and Disability Directory: Off the Shelf and into Action*, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1994.
- 61 Correspondence from Scottish Arts Council, 7 September 1994.
- 62 Correspondence from the NEA, 24 May 1994.
- 63 *Woe or Go*, Michael White, National Coalition for the Development of the DDA Standards, 1994, p.4.
- 64 Correspondence from the Arts Council of New Zealand, 11 March 1994.
- 65 The 'product champion' concept is commonly used in industry, especially for the introduction of a new product, or new technology or new workplace processes. The concept is a handy one, especially wherever the diversity of an operation or the need for enterprise-wide change suggests that the adage 'everyone's responsibility is no one's responsibility' might apply. In manufacturing industry, especially where innovation is required, it is usually

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- expected that the product champion will be an existing member of staff, at whatever level, will be appointed to the role of product champion by, or with the concurrence of, the chief executive and will have backing at that level for the implementation of the product development or change program.
- 66 One could add to these groups parents with children in pushchairs.
- 67 Anecdotal evidence, Robert Jones, Access Consultant.
- 68 The work being done on the renovations for the old police and justice building in Perth, to be a new wing for the WA Art Gallery, shows that what is possible with good planning and some budgetary provision. Interestingly, the WA government officials advised the consultants that the commitment to providing access for people with disabilities was the key factor in gaining a grant of \$1.1 million in Australian Heritage Commission funding for the restoration.
- 69 Pinot, C. & Reid, S. 'Using research to develop a strategic plan for the arts in London' in *Research and Marketing for the Arts*, Symposium held in Florence, May, ESOMAR: Amsterdam, 1990, pp. 211-228.
- 70 Letter of 22 September 1994 from Tina Jackson, Chief Executive of ATA, to the Australia Council, commenting on a draft of the arts and disability research project report.
- 71 At that time, the Council could discuss with ATA the proposals in the ATA Chief Executive's letter of 22 September for specific areas of potential initiative. It was not possible in the time available to test these suggestions with a view to being able to incorporate them specifically but seamlessly into the strategic approach recommended in the report. See also the section on Education and Training in the Commonwealth Cultural Policy Statement, *Creative Nation*, October 1994, pp 85-88.
- 72 The operation of the Training Guarantee Scheme has been suspended for two years, but organisations will in many or most cases have established appropriate programs and documentation and will have to maintain the recording process even through the suspension period.

ARTS AND DISABILITY AUSTRALIA COUNCIL POLICY AND RESEARCH PROJECT

Background

In 1989 the Australia Council, following substantial consultation, produced and distributed to its clients and other arts providers a code of practice on arts and people with disabilities. There has been no evaluation of the current appropriateness or the effectiveness of the code. In addition there has been little research, either descriptive or evaluative, on arts and disability in Australia. In contrast, there has been a great deal of research on and consideration given to the subject by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the National Endowment for the Arts in the USA.

In July 1991 the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA) was adopted. The CSDA is a five year agreement between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to rationalise the administration of services for people with disabilities. The Agreement has had a varying impact; in some instances the impact is still unclear. The arts and disability sector consider that the CSDA has highlighted the need for the broad cross-section of Federal and State funding bodies to have policy on disability in a cultural context.

In October 1992 a major conference was conducted in Brisbane by DADAA (Disability and the Arts, Disadvantage and the Arts, Australia) a national network for disability and disadvantage in the arts. The conference produced numerous recommendations. Of particular note are those calling for government assistance in creating greater access to the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists; the production of a more detailed code of practice on arts and people with disabilities; the securing of private sponsorship for arts organisations working with people with disabilities, including disabled artists; the facilitation of interdepartmental dialogue to secure more public support for arts and disability and 'disability arts'; and the involvement of people with disabilities, including disabled artists, in public policy development relating to 'disability arts' and arts and disability.

In November 1992 the Federal Government's Disability Discrimination Act 1992 came into effect. The objects of the Act are:

- (a) to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
 - (i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
 - (ii) the provision of goods, facilities and services and land; and
 - (iii) existing laws; and
 - (iv) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
- (b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and

- (c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

Consideration needs to be given to the implications which recent government disability discrimination legislation and the CSDA have or might have for arts providers and funders. In particular, close consideration needs to be given to the implications of any contract of compliance under recent legislation.

At its December 1992 meeting the Community Cultural Development Board reviewed its policy on assistance to organisations; as a consequence, the Board withdrew general support for some arts and disability organisations. This in turn raised the issue of Australia Council policy on arts and disability and the most effective means of addressing this subject across Council's Boards and Committees.

Arguments of the arts and disability sector for government support are made on the basis that people with disabilities:

- form a substantial proportion of the population (approximately 16 per cent);
- have the same right as all Australians to participate in Australia's artistic and cultural life, but often face great obstacles in gaining access to venues, resources, employment, training and programs;
- can and do contribute to Australia's artistic and cultural life and should have the opportunity to develop their own cultural activities for the enrichment and enjoyment of all Australians;
- should have the opportunity to choose to participate in or attend segregated or integrated arts activities;
- can develop skills and confidence through an involvement in arts and other cultural activities; and
- that it is important and efficient for arts funding agencies to support a national network of arts and disability organisations to maximise opportunities and resources and act as advocates on behalf of this sector; and finally,
- that public arts funding is the necessary base from which funding from other sources can be negotiated and strategic partnerships developed.

Given this background it is proposed that:

- the current appropriateness and the effectiveness of the Australia Council's code of practice be evaluated;
- barriers to access to the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists be evaluated;
- government arts and cultural policy and provision for people with disabilities, including disabled artists, be reviewed;
- the implications for arts providers and funders of recent disability discrimination legislation and disability agreements be analysed, especially the implications of any contract of compliance under recent legislation; and
- a framework for policy on arts and disability be developed.

Definitions and Use of Terms

Terminology is vitally important. It is through language that prejudice is expressed and sustained. Within the field of disability a range of terminology based on social and medical definitions is used.

Attached is a copy of the section of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 specifying what 'disability' means under the Act.

The Australia Council's Code of Practice defines certain terms, a copy is attached.

In general, it may be considered that disabled people are:

- people with physical, sensory, intellectual or psychiatric impairments who are prevented from fully participating in every day life by barriers created by able-bodied society.

People with disabilities include people with impaired sight, hearing or speech; impaired physical or intellectual capacities; hidden disabilities such as epilepsy and age-related disabilities. The definition also encompasses people with debilitating conditions or illnesses which impair their capacity to participate fully in social and cultural activities.

Project Issues and Focus

The issues to be addressed by this study include or relate to:

- government policies which have an impact on access to the arts for people with disabilities and on opportunities for disabled artists;
- resources, including public and private sector support;
- policies of integration versus segregation;
- the emergence of 'disability arts' as a discrete area of arts practice;
- employment and training in the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists;
- intellectual and physical access to the arts for people with disabilities as participants and artists as well as audience members and facility users;
- the appropriateness of the existing arts and disability infrastructure including key players and support networks involved in providing services through, or developing access to, the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists;
- the ways in which people with disabilities are reflected in or represented through the arts;
- the impact of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement and the impact of recent government disability discrimination legislation on arts providers and funders;
- a perceived need for arts funders to provide stringent guidelines on arts and disability.

Project Tasks

The assignment's tasks are to:

1. Consider overseas research on and practices relating to arts and disability and 'disability arts' and analyse their relevance to the Australian situation.
2. Consult people with disabilities, including disabled artists (participants/ consumers and non-participants/non-consumers) as well as arts and disability organisations, selected arts providers and peak disability agencies.
3. Evaluate the current appropriateness and the effectiveness of the Australia Council's code of practice.
4. Evaluate barriers to access to the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists.
5. Evaluate, over the last three years, government arts funding, policy and provision, at all levels, for people with disabilities, including disabled artists, and any private sector support for arts and disability.
6. Evaluate the impact, on arts providers and funders, of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement and recent government disability discrimination legislation.
7. Develop an overview, across the last three years, of the key organisations and support networks involved in providing services through, or developing access to, the arts for people with disabilities, including disabled artists.
8. Examine the costs and benefits of strategic and project support for arts and disability organisations.
9. Provide advice to the Australia Council and to other arts funders on arts policy and provision for people with disabilities, including disabled artists, and to arts providers on creating greater access to the arts for people with disabilities.
10. Prepare a discussion paper, using information collected above, on arts and disability in Australia.

Attachment B: People Consulted

Here we list with thanks the people who provided input into the arts and disability study, many putting in hours of time and helping us to make contact with other people who could contribute. There were many others, especially all those the people with disabilities who responded to advertisements in newsletters, gathered for forums and discussions, and gave to the project the benefit of their personal insights and experiences. To all, our appreciation and thanks.

Andrew Abbott, Australian Exhibitions Touring Agency
Pam Abbotts, Recreation Network
David Abella, Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training
John Ahearn, Disability Council of NSW
Barbara Allen, Acting Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts
Sandy Allen Black, Disability Services Program
Arts in Action forum participants, Port Adelaide, May 1994
Arts workers, Golden North Centre
Arts workers, Peter Harcourt Centre
John Baas, Manager Human Resources, Art Gallery of Western Australia
Lesley Band, Acting Head, Arts Branch, Australian Cultural Development Office
Simarjeet Bansi, Townsville Intellectual Disability Service, Queensland
Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs
Joanna Barkman, Browns Mart Community Arts, Darwin
Trish Barnett, Ipswich City Council
Jenni Barron, CRS Bankstown
Jo Barry, Special Education
Tracey Bastick, Backstares Theatre Company
Susan Bates, ACROD WA
Maggie Baxter, Consultant, Western Australia
Cynthia Beck
Lynne Bell, Footscray Community Arts
Robert Bell, Art Gallery of Western Australia
John Best, Operations Officer, Taxi Subsidy Scheme, Queensland Transport
Andrew Bold, Manager, Perth Concert Hall
Jose Borghino, Literature Unit, Australia Council
Helen Bowman, Arts Access, Victoria
Faye Boyd, Executive Officer, Library Information Services of Western Australia
Jenny Brigg, Arts & Special Events, ACT Government
Karilyn Brown, Visual Arts/Crafts Board, Australia Council
Susanne Bruhn, Branch Head, Outreach, National Library of Australia
Katrina Bull, Integrated Arts Australia
Tanya Butler, Aboriginal and Islander childcare worker
Cathy Byrnes, Senior Policy Officer, Hearing Impaired Student Disability Unit,
Queensland Department of Education
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