



Annual Report 2011

It is heartening to report that 2011 has been another year of growth and consolidation for Accessible Arts. As 2012 sees the beginning of a new three year strategic plan, review of the organisation's performance over 2011, the concluding year of the previous plan, revealed that strategic goals and initiatives were overwhelmingly met. The coming year promises to be an exciting yet challenging one. Notable events will be the hosting of the Walsh Bay Arts Table dinner and the second Arts Activated Conference later in the year.

This year sees the end of my 10 year tenure as Chairperson of Accessible Arts. It has been extremely pleasing to reflect on the changes and growth in the organisation that has occurred over that time. From a re-structure and review of the organisation eight years ago, Accessible Arts has consolidated its role as the peak arts and disability organisation within NSW, continuing to provide a valued source of advocacy, information and training for the Arts and Disability sectors. The success of the organisation during that time can be largely ascribed to Accessible Arts staff, and also volunteers. Over that last eight years the changing roll call of staff have been very capably lead by the CEO Sancha Donald.



Thanks and recognition too must go to Board members both past and present for the success of the organisation over that time. Accessible Arts has always been extremely fortunate to have attracted high quality Directors from a range of fields who have unstintingly given of their time to provide the essential strategic input for the organisation, and the current Directors are no exception.

Obviously too, essential to the achievements of Accessible Arts, is the ongoing funding provided by the Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care, and Arts NSW and most recently the funding provided by the Department of Family and Community Services allowing an exciting new position of Regional Arts and Disability Officer to be established on the North Coast. Philanthropic donors are also greatly important to the financial security of the organisation and notable amongst them are the Lucy Giumelli Saini

Trust, Johnson Family Foundation and the mentorship being provided by the Pratt Foundation.

As outgoing Chair it is my privilege to introduce Professor Sharman Pretty as the new Chairperson for Accessible Arts. Professor Pretty originally a professional musician has gone on to have an extensive career in higher education and the arts and creative industries. Over the last two decades Professor Pretty has served as Professor and Dean of the Universities of Sydney, Auckland and Melbourne. In the arts management sector Professor Pretty has also held positions at the Australian Council of Arts and General Managership of the Arts Youth Orchestra. Professor Pretty also brings extensive governance experience having held numerous Directorships, many as Chair. I have no doubt that Professor Pretty will bring great expertise to the Board as the organisation continues on it's trajectory into the future.

Finally it has been a great privilege to be involved with Accessible Arts, I have enjoyed it and hope to continue my association with the organisation in other ways, and I close by wishing the organisation continued growth and success.

Maryanne Ireland
Chairperson Accessible Arts

Accessible Arts expanded and strengthened its capacity in 2011 to engage the Arts sector and support and foster inclusive practices in the Arts in NSW.

With funding from the Community Services division of the Department of Family and Community Services it was very exciting to establish the first regional Arts and Disability Officer in NSW on the North Coast. The new position will enable us to connect the arts and disability communities in the area and also enhance our understanding of the issues facing all rural and regional areas when delivering arts and disability programs.

Changes in our human resources provided an opportunity to reshape the contribution made by Accessible Arts to the development of arts and disability policy through an increased presence at relevant sector meetings and conferences, while still contributing to a range of policy debates. Fundraising was broadened to include development resulting in support from new avenues, including the Ian Potter Foundation and the St George Foundation; a mentorship by the Pratt Foundation; increased online donations; and, greater engagement with the individuals and organisations supporting our work. Accessible Arts is grateful for the continued support from the Lucy Giumelli Saini Trust.

The past year afforded opportunities to partner with the sector on projects that resulted from our earlier strategic work. Eight musicians with disability from across Australia attended *Rewriting the Score*, an inclusive music residency. Hosted by Orange Regional Conservatorium and supported by Accessible Arts, the residency emanated from the *Music Pathways Forum* conducted in 2010.

In partnership with Museums and Galleries NSW, Accessible Arts presented the seminar *Platform to Heritage: Accessible Arts in Heritage Sites*. The seminar was a follow on from the *Removing the Obstacles* report produced by Accessible Arts in 2010.

Additionally, the *Festivals Forum* and the presentation of the *2010 Survey of Arts Programs/Projects for people with disability in NSW* research were as a result of previous work with the sector.

The strength of our ongoing projects continues to grow. AART.BOXX included the award of a scholarship funded by Arts NSW; the coverage of the Accessibility Award for the 2010 LG&SA Cultural Awards was greatly enhanced; access tours of *Sculpture by the Sea* included tours for school groups while the arts program for *Don't Dis my Ability* was rebranded as *Delineate* and expanded to include a professional development component.



Fostering the professional development, networking opportunities and stakeholder engagement remains a strong focus and was bolstered by the launch of the online Artist Resource (funded by Perpetual).

Accessing the Arts Group (ATAG); the Audience Reference Group; Supported Studio working party; and the Creative Programs Network met regularly throughout the year providing a conduit for the exchange of information and the advancement of innovative inclusive practices across creative and receptive endeavours.

We have delivered Disability Awareness and Access Training and Disability Action Planning consultation to a diverse group of arts organisations and individuals, while our Access and Arts Development services have offered ongoing support to the sector leading to heightened access to the arts for people with disability in NSW.

Our suite of information services reached the broader community and is viewed by an ever-increasing number of followers through traditional and progressive modes of communication. Broader access has been provided at our events while our information has been produced in a greater range of formats including Auslan, YouTube and captioning.

The staff development program led to a placement at Arts Access Aotearoa while others attended relevant conferences and seminars. The financial position of Accessible Arts remains stable with a surplus of \$25,879 returned for 2011.

New areas of involvement including a *Dance symposium* and masterclass; the *ConnectED* secondary schools program; and support for the inclusive mentorship, *Acceptance* provided fresh opportunities for advocacy, and the growth of inclusive practices in different art forms and for different age groups.

After another busy year, our thanks to Arts NSW and Ageing, Disability and Home Care, for their continued support. Our achievements in 2011 were made possible by the dedication of the outgoing and incoming staff and volunteers and the commitment of Directors who give their valuable time and expertise in guiding the organisation.

New directions for Accessible Arts in 2012 include the implementation of the 2012-2014 strategic plan; the strategic engagement of the Deaf community; expansion of accessible dance practice; and the development of Walsh Bay as an exemplar accessible arts precinct. These activities, coupled with hosting the established Arts Activated Conference in October and the high profile Walsh Bay Arts Table dinner, contribute to a very busy year ahead.

Finally, on behalf of past and present staff and board members I would like to thank and pay tribute to our out-going Chairperson, Maryanne Ireland. Maryanne led the organisation through a review and restructure that has ensured that after ten years at the helm she leaves Accessible Arts able to fulfil its role as the peak arts and disability organisation of NSW.

Sancha Donald
CEO Accessible Arts

“We are proud recipients of a *Delineate* grant and I can see how much we have grown. The grant helped us because every one of our members were able to take the time to develop further, there are no words to explain the feeling you have, when you have the chance to do what you’re not ordinarily able to do. Then you grow. *Delineate* uncovers the hidden talent.”

Renata Halusek,
Beyond Vision

“I just wanted to offer my congratulations to you and your staff on such a successful opening night for *Framing Gravity*. I was especially encouraged by the audio description of Georgia Cranko's performance, the numerous video pieces, and Carla Wherby's *War and Women* series. I know that the staff put a lot of time and energy into ensuring that the audio description was available, and it certainly helped to make the evening an inclusive and worthwhile experience for me.”

Bruce Maguire
Policy Officer, Vision Australia

This report is a supplement to the online digital Annual Report and Audited Financial Accounts at www.aarts.net.au