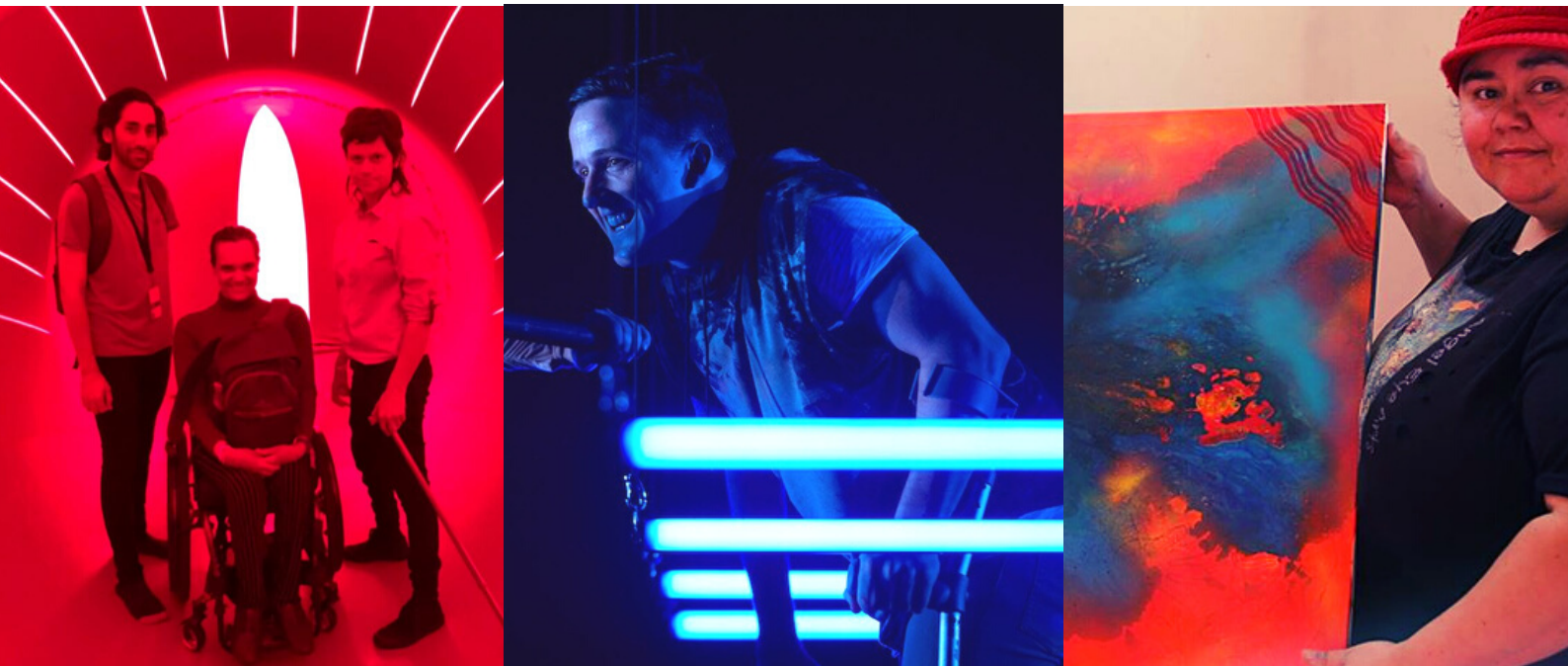


# Accessible Arts

Equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability.



## 2019

# Annual Report

# Contents

- |    |                       |     |                      |
|----|-----------------------|-----|----------------------|
| 3. | Chairperson's Message | 10. | Arts Activated 2019  |
| 4. | CEO's Message         | 11. | Career Advancement   |
| 5. | About Us              | 12. | Audience Development |
| 7. | Our Team              | 13. | Community Engagement |
| 8. | Key Stats 2019        | 14. | Regional NSW         |
| 9. | Testimonials          | 15. | Credits              |



Visual artist Guy Morgan at Bundanon Estate

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work across NSW and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



We acknowledge the support of our principal funder the NSW Government through Create NSW.



We acknowledge the support of the National Disability Insurance Agency.



## Chairperson's Message

As NSW's peak arts and disability organisation, Accessible Arts is driven by our vision of equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability.

People with disability and/or who are Deaf make dynamic, distinctive and diverse contributions to arts and culture in NSW and we're committed to ensuring that their opportunities to create and participate match their extraordinary potential as both practitioners and audiences.

Following several years of organisational instability, 2019 represented a much welcome period of consolidation for Accessible Arts, with the appointment of a new CEO, the delivery of our flagship national biennial conference Arts Activated, vital engagement with community, industry and government, and the development of valuable new partnerships which will help to grow the capacity and influence of Accessible Arts.

Importantly, 2019 also saw the development of a new Strategic Plan which will guide the activities and operations of Accessible Arts through to the end of 2024. Our new plan clearly sets out what we hope to achieve over the next five years and how we propose to do it, and we look forward to working with all our relevant stakeholders to accomplish what is an ambitious but achievable agenda.

Despite being a very small organisation with limited resources, Accessible Arts continues to make important strides in relation to accelerating the diverse professional, cultural and social impacts of arts and disability in NSW.

This is testament to the skill and dedication of our staff, board members, advisers, trainers and supporters. I thank them for their service and wish them all the best for what will be a challenging year ahead given the impact of the COVID-19 virus, the devastating bushfires and other environmental concerns.

However, resilience and adaptability are defining features of living with disability and so in these difficult times for everyone in our community, it's more important than ever that the voices, experiences and creativity of people with disability come to the fore to help us move ahead with confidence and optimism.

**Emeritus Professor Sharman Pretty AM**  
Chairperson

## CEO's Message

After 40 years of working in the arts, the last 18 months have been extremely illuminating, for a variety of reasons. I have been thrilled, provoked and entertained by an extraordinary community of arts practitioners with disability, and the work they create. And I have a much greater understanding of the discrimination and lack of access and opportunity that artists, arts workers and audiences with disability experience on so many levels.

It's been a lot to process but the crash course has given me enormous respect for the mission, values, and impact of Accessible Arts, and has fired my enthusiasm for delivering programs, services and partnerships which advance arts and disability here in NSW. I'm so grateful for the opportunity.

I particularly wish to thank our team of advisers who have generously supported me in the development of our program. Their advocacy, passion and drive have kept me focused through this busy year.

In terms of our operational focus, 2019 was all about strengthening and streamlining Accessible Arts. With the help of a small and committed team and wonderful supporters, we've managed to create a solid base for moving ahead.

Our major activity for the year was the Arts Activated 2019 conference, Australia's leading arts and disability forum. We received lots of great feedback about the content, speakers and production and it's clear why this is such an important event for so

many members of our community. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to making it such a great success. The conference also provided a wonderful opportunity for us to form many new partnerships and we are looking forward to building on those partnerships in the years ahead.

Our other activities across the year – our production initiatives and professional development programs, our training, education and consulting services, and our community engagement activities – provided a vital range of pathways and prospects for people with and without disability to make arts and culture in NSW more accessible and inclusive.

In 2020 and the years ahead, I am excited about the action Accessible Arts will take for the change we want to make. Our new Strategic Plan 2020-24 sets our course for the next five years and I am full of hope and optimism about the outcomes we are planning to achieve.

Many thanks to my team - who have worked so hard and with such good humour - as well as the Accessible Arts board, and all our trainers, advisers and supporters for their hard work and enthusiasm during 2019. I'm looking forward to working with all of them and all our stakeholders over the next 12 months and beyond as we work to invigorate the wonderfully diverse impact that people with disability have on the creative and cultural life of NSW.

**Kerry Comerford**  
CEO

# About Us

We are NSW's peak organisation for arts, culture and disability.

## Our Mission

We advance the rights of, and opportunities for, people with disability and/or who are Deaf to develop and sustain professional careers in the arts and have equitable access to arts and culture across NSW.

## Our Vision

Equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability.



## Our Values

Equity



Excellence



Partnership



Diversity



Creativity



# About Us

## Our Stakeholders



### People

- Arts practitioners with disability
- Audiences with disability
- Families and friends of people with disability



### Arts & Culture

- Arts companies
- Cultural organisations and venues
- Festival and event producers



### Disability

- Disability organisations
- NDIS
- Carers and support workers



### Government

- NSW Government
- Local governments
- Government agencies and policymakers



### Education

- Universities
- Vocational and training organisations
- Researchers

## Our Programs & Services



### Career Advancement

- Development and production initiatives
- Internships/mentorships
- Artist residencies
- Professional development workshops
- Leadership development programs
- Industry advocacy
- Networking events
- Advisory services



### Audience Development

- Industry engagement
- Industry education
- Industry advocacy
- Training workshops
- Consulting services
- Program evaluation
- Program innovation



### Community Engagement

- Arts Activated conference
- Artist Q&As
- Community education
- Community liaison
- Community representation
- Networking events
- Media and comms

# Our Team

## Management

Kerry Comerford	CEO
Liz Martin	Arts Development & Training Mngr
Michael Badorrek	Marketing & Communications Mngr
Daniel Jaramillo	Trainee Administrator
Kay Richardson	Operations Mngr (until Jun 30)
Ann-Marie Rundle	Admin & Project Officer (until Jun 30)

## Trainers & Advisers

Athena Pavlis-Goard
Cobie Moore
Dan Graham
Daniel Savage
Emily Dash
Erika Gelzinnis
Faye Chamberlain



## NDIS ILC Projects

Riona Tindal	Hunter Project Officer
Daniel Savage	ACT Project Officer
Ruth O'Brien	ACT Project Officer (until Sept 18)

## Board

Sharman Pretty AM	Chairperson
Andrew Buchanan	Vice-Chairperson
William Thorne	Treasurer
Kate Lidbetter	Secretary
Michael Dagistino	Director
Alex Jones	Director
David Kay	Director

Georgie Zuzak
Glenn McKenzie
Holly Craig
Jack Dowdell
Jeff Wood
Karen Peacock
Keith Rutherford
Madeleine Lidbetter
Maree Jenner
Michelle Brown
Rebecca McCormack
Riana Head-Toussaint
Winston Stearn
Young-Hoo Byun

## Key Stats 2019

**105**

individual arts practitioners with disability employed, supported or mentored



**1000**

event participants



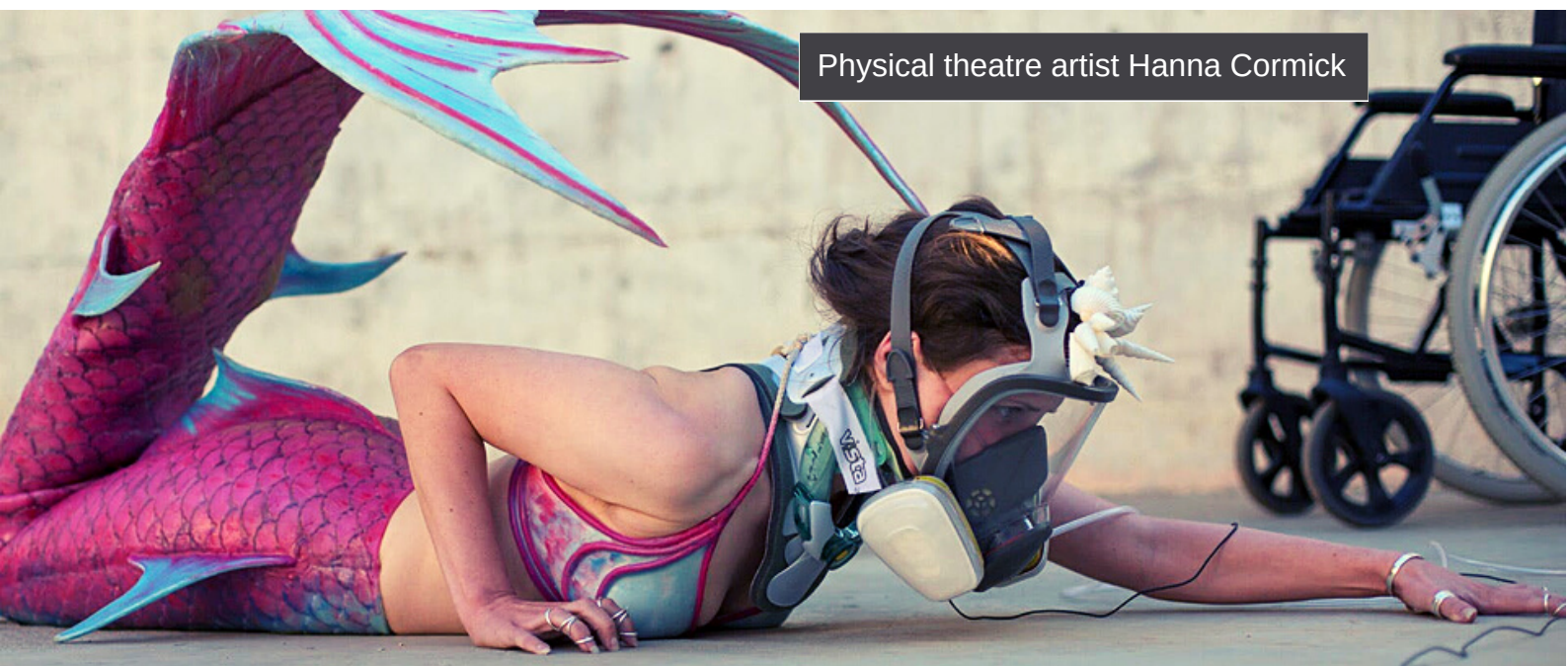
**20**

events produced or supported



**700**

training participants



Physical theatre artist Hanna Cormick

**17K**

website visitors



**27**

training sessions delivered



**13K**

social media followers



**15**

arts organisations provided with consulting services



**42K**

social media engagements



**3.8**

staff (FT equivalent)



# Testimonials

## Stakeholder Survey

*"Really excellent team! Leading by example is very effective. I've seen a real improvement in consultation with regional communities, and issues that face creatives with disability living in regional/remote NSW."*

*"Keep prioritising disability led practice, leadership and collaboration. Along with disability-led, make space for integrated initiatives as well, and the nurturing of informed connected allies."*



Training workshop in Lismore

## Disability Confidence Training

*"It was open, honest and created a safe environment to ask questions. Terrific to get information in easy to digest and supportive way."*

*"Very safe space for questions. Felt comfortable to be vulnerable and make mistakes. Very easy to engage with."*

## Bundanon Residency Program

*"It's been really incredible to focus on my work in the company of such other amazing artists. Thanks Accessible Arts."*

# Arts Activated 2019

Chief among many highlights this year was the delivery of our biennial national arts and disability conference, Arts Activated.

Taking place at Sydney Olympic Park's Waterview centre over August 22 and 23, Arts Activated 2019 proved to be a hugely successful event in terms of informing, connecting and activating artists, arts workers, disability advocates,

researchers, policymakers and other experts from across the arts, cultural and disability sectors.

We received lots of positive feedback from many participants about the quality of the speakers and content, the valuable networking opportunities, and both the professional and personal development that the conference provided.



## Key Stats

**250** participants from across NSW, interstate and overseas

**22** sessions, events and activities

**75** speakers and presenters (70% with a lived experience of disability)

**8** different content formats.

**94%** of delegates rated the conference as excellent, very good or good

## Delegate Feedback

*"I loved seeing so many people in our community. It was eye opening that there are so many of us out there."*

*"It's incredible just to be in a room full of people who have similarities to you, when you are so used to feeling alone."*

*"Every session with practitioners with disability was a masterclass in creative practice, inclusion and activism."*

*"I learned about embracing diversity and inclusivity in the arts."*

## Career Advancement

Throughout 2019 we maintained a sharp focus on professional development for artists and arts workers with disability by providing a range of programs and initiatives. These included our prestigious artist residency program with the Bundanon Trust, relevant skills building workshops with organisations such as Arts Law and the National Association for the Visual Arts, and our Hickson Road Artists Group which provides a regular

Programming Initiative for the 2020 festival to increase opportunities for artists with disability to have their work included in the festival program. Hanna Cormick's physical theatre show *The Mermaid* plus Ryan Smedley and Sophie Smyth's musical theatre show *The Aspie Hour* were both included in the festival lineup.

With funding from the NSW Government's Investing In Women Grant Program, we

Performers from Sydney Festival show *The Aspie Hour*



forum for building connections and collaboration among artists with disability. In addition, our team delivered assistance and advice to individuals and groups with funding applications as well as identifying opportunities for showcasing their work.

We also continued to work with industry and government to provide new professional opportunities and career pathways for artists and arts workers with disability. We partnered with Sydney Festival to deliver a Disability

delivered Front & Centre, a ground-breaking professional development initiative aimed at shifting the balance of representation of women with disability in arts leadership roles.

We also developed an innovative video art project called ArtScreen – a trial of which has been funded by the City of Sydney for 2020 – and we developed a Survival Skills For Freelancers training program in partnership with the National Institute of Dramatic Art for which we hope to secure funding over the next 12 – 18 months.

## Audience Development

Increasing access for people with disability to performances, exhibitions, screenings and other cultural events and activities was another key focus for 2019.

Our ATAG industry education and engagement program continued to be delivered across NSW as a mechanism for providing information and networking for industry personnel who are interested in being more inclusive of people with

And we continued to provide revenue generating consulting services to help organisations in the arts, culture and events sectors make their programming, policies, services, and infrastructure more accessible. Clients in 2019 included Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Sydney Biennale and Sculpture By The Sea.

A highlight of this work involved evaluating the Eastern Riverina Arts



AAarts team members presenting at Aus. Ticketing Professionals Conference

disability in their professional practice. We delivered nine ATAG events in Sydney, Canberra, Lismore and the Hunter with over 400 people registering to participate.

Our popular revenue-generating Disability Awareness and Equity Training workshops – which are tailored for the arts and cultural sector – were delivered to over 700 participants from organisations such as Sydney Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of NSW, Powerhouse Museum and Sydney Film Festival.

PLATFORM project, an innovative, purpose-built, portable and accessible 'space' adapted from a shipping container that travels around to community festivals and can be configured as a sensory space, chill out area, exhibition space or small stage.

We also developed a Creating Accessible Art program which aims to deliver ground breaking creative accessibility training and consulting services for arts organisations across NSW and the ACT. We hope to secure funding for the program over the next 12 – 18 months.

## Community Engagement

Providing opportunities to share information and ideas that will help advance arts and disability in NSW was the final key focus for us in 2019.

In addition to the considerable success of our Arts Activated 2019 conference, we presented a range of events for profiling the work of artists with disability. These included two well-attended In-Conversation events, one with artist

We also presented access and inclusion content at various key industry conferences including the Australian Ticketing Professionals Conference in November.

Through our communication and digital platforms, we promoted information on the wide range of artists and arts networks for audiences with disability and we connected artists with disability not

Still from Screenability 2019 short film *Deluge*



and designer Duncan Meerding in March and a second with actor, writer and director Daniel Monks in July.

In partnership with the Inner West Council we delivered a weekend of films, music and live performance about and by people with disability in December to mark the International Day of People With Disability. This included screenings of three short films produced by disability-led creative teams through the 2019 Screenability program.

only to each other, but to opportunities to generate income from their professional arts practice. We saw considerable growth in our online engagement in 2019 and expanded our reach across multiple channels.

We also developed a range of new government corporate, community and philanthropic relationships to support our work. These included partnerships with Destination NSW, UNSW's Disability Innovation Institute, Cerebral Palsy Alliance, British Council, icare, Media Super and several municipal and regional councils.

## Regional NSW & ACT

Our current ILC-funded programs in the Hunter and ACT allowed us to provide much needed programs and services for individuals and organisations in Canberra and regional NSW.

We expanded our regional arts networks and delivered training workshops, ATAG events and information sessions in selected centres in the Central Coast, Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers regions.

This involved the delivery of training workshops and ATAG events as well as consulting services to help develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans for a range of organisations.

The work undertaken through our ACT project also provided us with valuable connections to arts organisations in nearby locations such as Tumut and Wagga Wagga.



In the ACT we worked with large institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia as well as small-to-medium organisations such as Craft ACT and several resident organisations at Ainslie & Gorman to improve access for both audiences and artists with disability in the ACT.

# Credits

## Front Cover (L-R)

- AArts staff and advisers conducting access audit at Sydney Festival's Dodecalis Luminarium | Image: Liz Martin
- Daniel Monks performs in STC's production of *Lord Of The Flies* | Image: STC | Zan Wimberley
- Visual artist Sri Thulin at Bundanon Estate | Image: Sri Thulin

## Back Cover

*FluxAbility #2* by Canberra visual artist Daniel Savage | Image: Daniel Savage



*Chairs and Stools* (development photo)  
by choreographer Riana Head-Toussaint

- 2 Image: Guy Morgan
- 5 Image: Eugenie Lee
- 7 Image: Daniel Jaramillo
- 8 Image: Daniel Boud
- 9 Image: Riona Tindal
- 10 Image: Liz Martin

- 11 Image: Daniel Boud
- 12 Image: Liz Martin
- 13 Image: Giovanni C. Lorusso
- 14 Image: Liz Martin
- 15 Image: Riana Head-Toussaint

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