

Accessible Arts

Equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability.



2021

Annual Report

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Image above: Walk and Talk Audit at the National Institute of Dramatic Art

Cover images: Artist Matt Elliot, image from interdisciplinary work 'Break Out My Pelvic Sorcery' by Eugenie Lee, self portrait by Texta Queen and artist S.J. Norman.

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

I have always believed you must examine the positives in any challenging situation. Indeed, our small dedicated and talented team at Accessible Arts adopted this recipe during the past twelve months with the ongoing COVID pandemic. Flexibility was employed and as an organisation we approached the impossible and adjusted to providing services to the disability and arts communities.

My congratulations to the Accessible Arts team for their energy, creativity and optimism during this challenging period. I note with pleasure that the company achieved a small surplus for the year, reflecting the hard work of all involved.

We are grateful to Morwenna Collett, who stepped into the role of Interim CEO in 2021. Her advice and wise counsel was valued during a key transition period. In October, the Board was unanimous in the decision to appoint long term and talented arts contributor, Liz Martin, as our new CEO.

For nearly ten years, our organisation was Chaired by Emeritus Professor Sharman Pretty AM, who stepped down in October 2021. It was Sharman who shaped, nurtured and strategically developed Accessible Arts into an impactful organisation that the disability and arts sector can take pride in. I am pleased take on the role of Chair and thank Sharman for her leadership.

With changing trends in the broader political arena it is imperative for Accessible Arts to develop and create partnerships with a diverse group of organisations, with the aim of philanthropic success in mind.

In closing may I thank you for your support and encouragement to Accessible Arts. I also recognise our talented team and our Board for their energy, passion and commitment to the organisation. I am mindful and pleased that for the first time Accessible Arts is led by a CEO and Chair with a disability.

Andrew Buchanan
Chairperson



CEO's Message

I am deeply grateful to be appointed as Accessible Arts CEO. Having worked with this incredible organisation for a number of years, I've had the pleasure of learning from exceptional leaders before me. Kerry Comerford and Morwenna Collett are exemplars of the skill, adaptability and dedication required to lead our shared vision, and I am honoured to continue their tremendous work.

I would like to thank Emeritus Professor Sharman Pretty AM, whose tenure as Chairperson is testament to the lasting impacts her leadership and insights have brought to the organisation.

I'm delighted with the appointment of Andrew Buchanan as our new Chairperson. For years he's helped shape the organisation and this marks the first time the organisation has been disability-led by a CEO and Chairperson with disability. I look forward to continuing to work together.

The passion and commitment of our skilled core team is amplified by the many expert trainers, consultants and advisors we have the pleasure of working with. We all share an eagerness and enthusiasm for the sector to develop deeper, authentic engagement with arts practitioners and audiences, and our entire team helps to bring authentic voices and experiences of people with disability or who are d/Deaf to all that we do.

It's encouraging to see the continued growth of our training and fee for service activities. We know this education and

advocacy work supports significant and much-needed changes within the industry.

The programs and partnerships we deliver are no small feat. As always, we are thankful to our funders, donors and supporters for their important contributions to helping accelerate and celebrate the diverse and profound impacts of arts and disability in NSW.

From an inaugural professional residency and a prestigious MCA screening, to the record-breaking Arts Activated Conference delivered seamlessly despite a last-minute pivot to an entirely online platform, 2021 has been a year of many successes during challenging times. It is through the support of many that we have been able to achieve so much. I look forward to 2022 and the opportunities it will bring Accessible Arts to continue to advance equitable access to arts and culture across NSW.

Liz Martin
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.



Performance Poet Alison Paradoxx, Artist Digby Webster and CEO of Attitude is Everything Suzanne Bull MBE

Our Values

Equity



Excellence



Diversity



Creativity



Partnership



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

Morwenna Collett
Liz Martin

Marika Perrow
Michael Badorrek
Rachel Musgrove
Daniel Jaramillo
Dale Hollingsworth
Nat Thomas
Elizabeth West
Jo Simpson
Brahmami Kumarasamy
Eugenie Lee
Hannah Cormick

Interim CEO (Jan - Sept)
Interim CEO (Sept - Dec)
Arts Development & Training Manager (Jan - Sept)
Arts Development Manager (Oct - Dec)
Marketing & Communications Manager (Jan - Aug)
Marketing & Communications Manager (Aug - Dec)
Office Administrator
Financial Consultant
Training & Project Coordinator (Sept - Dec)
Project Manager ArtScreen (Jan - Mar)
Project Manager ArtScreen (Apr - Dec)
Project Manager CALD Internships (Sept - Nov)
Project Manager - CALD Internships (Nov - Dec)
Event Programmer Arts Activated (March – June)

Board

Sharman Pretty AM
Andrew Buchanan

Kate Lidbetter

William Thorne
Hasan Godhrawala
Michael Dagistino
Alex Jones
David Kay
Emily Dash
Jaci Armstrong

Chairperson (Jan - Oct)
Vice-Chairperson (Jan - Oct)
Chairperson (Oct - Dec)
Secretary
Vice-Chairperson (Oct - Dec)
Treasurer (Jan - April)
Treasurer (April - Dec)
Director
Director
Director
Director
Director

Trainers & Advisors

Holly Craig, Michelle Peat, Emily Dash, Glen Churchmouse, Dan Graham, Maree Jenner, Madeleine Lidbetter, Cobie Moore, Anthenna Goard, Karen Peacock, Jeff Wood, Rebecca McCormack, Faye Chamberlain, Allison Reynolds, Marion Conrow, Sigrid MacDonald, Natasha Stawyski, Sally Waterford, Antoinette Barbouttis, Keith Rutherford, Shelley Clarke, Ben Harris, Casey Heffernan, Lindy Hou, Al Azmi, Bec Hogan, Nat Thomas, Morwenna Collett and Kerri Shying.



Walk and Talk Access Audit at Museum of Australian Democracy, Pictured: Al Azmi, Natalee Thomas, Casey Heffernan, Lindy Hou and Ben Harris.

Key Stats 2021

284

individual arts practitioners
with disability employed,
supported or mentored



2345

event participants



33

events produced
or supported



630

training participants



ArtScreen 2021 Q&A featuring Debra Keenahan, Sarah Houbolt, Robert Sherwood Duffield and Sue Jo Wright.
Image credit Robert Brindley

25K

website visitors



44

training sessions
delivered



14.5K

social media followers



44

arts organisations
provided with consulting
services



520K

social media reach



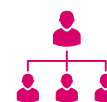
61.1K

social media engagements



3.8

Accessible Arts Staff
(Full-time equivalent)



Arts Activated Conference 2021

Themed Building Back For Everyone, the conference focused on how the post-COVID response of creative industries can help advance access and inclusion for arts practitioners and audiences with disability or who are d/Deaf. The pandemic has demonstrated that rapid change is possible and the response has improved our society's understanding of, and commitment to, the values of diversity, access and inclusion. This was reflected in the success of the conference, which pivoted to a 2 day online event.

The conference also included an Online Exhibition showcasing 22 artworks by ten artists with disability. The exhibition received over 1400 page views and led to artwork sales.



Collage of 21 headshots featuring speakers from the Arts Activated Conference 2021.

70

Expert speakers with 70% identifying as people with disability

320

Delegates and Participants

16

Sessions, Workshops and Events

97.3%

Delegates rated the content as Excellent, Very Good or Good

Conference Feedback

"I am a conference producer myself and throughout my Arts Activated experience I was constantly impressed by the attention to detail and how streamlined the entire virtual process was."

"Soul resonating content"

"Congratulations the whole Arts Activated team for an amazing, energising, creative event – the panels, conversations, questions, and topics were engaging and I'm still hearing feedback from colleagues who attended!"

Career Advancement

Artist Residency Program

The Sydney Olympic Park Authority residency program has hosted 300 artists from 19 countries, however this was the first residency specifically for an artist with disability. Selected artist Rhiannon Pegler explored new ways to create visual interpretations of her world and this valuable residency provided a unique opportunity to continue her development and create new work.

Sound On

This initiative supported ten musicians with disability to get back on track following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the music industry. Projects included music created using eye-controlled music software, a new EP from a punk rock band of musicians with intellectual disabilities, and songs co-created by hospitalised kids and musicians with chronic illness.

ArtScreen 2021

This innovative video art project enabled artists Sue Jo Wright, Robert Sherwood Duffield and Sarah Houbolt to develop new works which explored the idea of creative access. The video artworks were screened at the Museum of Contemporary Art with captioning, Auslan interpretation and audio description. ArtScreen broadens engagement with, and appreciation of, the distinctive insights and skills of artists with disability through unique and compelling works which make an important contribution to the diversity of cultural expression in Sydney.

Varuna Writers' Space Fellowships

Twelve writers with disability were supported with two-week residencies. The program included Q&A sessions with best-selling writers as well as funds to support mentorships and professional development activities in the lead up to their residencies.

Creative Visions Workshop Series

This unique series provided insights into how eight artists with disability develop their ideas, the various mediums and techniques they use and how they sustain professional careers.



Sound On participants: Martha Marlow, Library Siesta, Jessica Irwin and Steve Balbi.

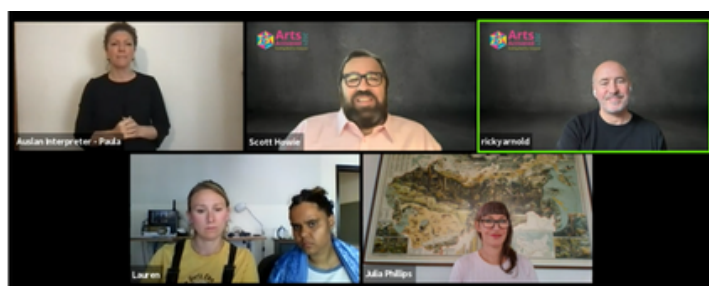
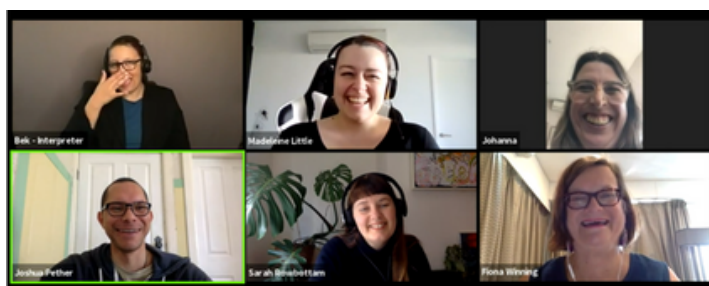
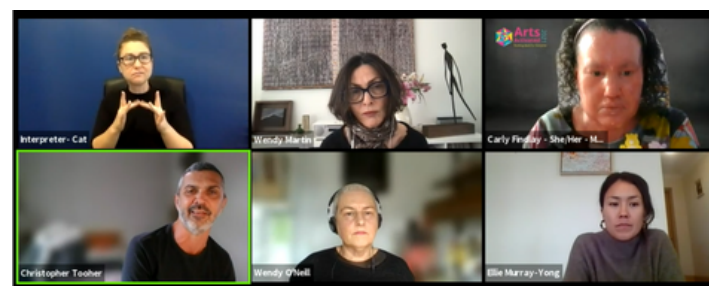
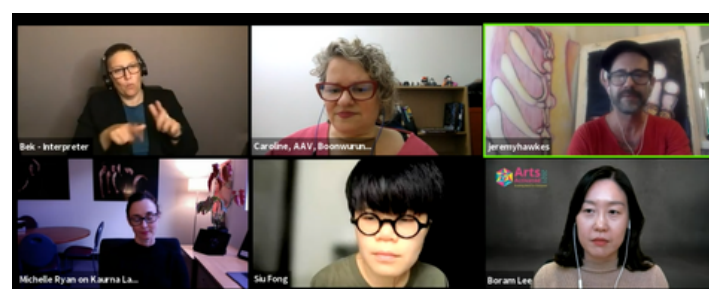
Audience Development

Audience Development during such unpredictable times required a flexible and innovative approach to programming in terms of both content and delivery. We were acutely aware of the need to connect with people as best we could, especially those in remote areas across New South Wales. Facilitating online training and events allowed us to continue to reach diverse audiences during extended periods of lockdown.

We developed two online training sessions in response to the pandemic: 'Being Accessible Online' and 'Delivering Accessible Online Events'. These workshops were very well received and the online platform enabled participants from all across New South Wales to benefit from this time-critical training.

With so many performances, exhibitions, screenings and other cultural events pivoting online, a key focus for was advocating for audiences with disability and educating industry about accessible and inclusive online spaces and events.

As part of our ATAG industry education and engagement program, we presented 'Open With Better Access'. Diverse organisations shared their learnings and expertise, reflecting on what organisations have learnt from 2021 and discussing how to broaden audiences and strengthen impact in 2022. We also presented 'Programming Chronic Illness' with leading artists from across Australia who live with chronic health conditions. They unpacked what access and inclusion means for people with chronic illness and how the cultural sector can respond more effectively to their needs as artists.



Various screenshots featuring online participants and audiences.

Community Engagement

Providing opportunities to share information and ideas that will help advance arts and disability in NSW was the final key focus for Accessible Arts in 2021. In addition to the considerable success of our Arts Activated 2021 Conference and extended training offerings, we presented a range of innovative events profiling the work of artists with disability. These activities comprised online events, in-person events and a uniquely accessible hybrid event. Highlights included:

Artists Rights Workshop

Together with Arts Law, we explored artist rights and explained how artists can protect their work and discussed where and how artists can seek help with regards to their rights.

In-Conversation: Deb Roach, Katia Schwartz and Danni Wright

These unique aerial dance, circus and burlesque artists are trailblazing their own performance path, fusing sensuality and athleticism as well as d/Deaf and disability pride.

Innovating Art Through Disability

Four leading voices in arts and disability explored how people with disability are changing the culture of creativity, discussing the latest research around creative accessibility.

In Conversation with Studio A: Collectives, Creativity and Collaboration

Featured artists discussed the role that Australia's flagship art and disability studio plays in the development of their work and careers.

Sydney Olympic Park - Live Music

In celebration of International Day of People with Disability, we partnered with Sydney Olympic Park to present a concert of diverse live music featuring musicians with disability.

Inclusive Film Festival

In partnership with the Inner West Council, we delivered a hybrid event showcasing live performances and a screening of professional short films by filmmakers with disability.



Stills from screened short films: Not A Wallflower, Groundhog Night and Comican't.

Testimonials

"Our DIAP has been incredibly useful in terms of building our capacity to provide accessible and inclusive programs, services and infrastructure for people with disability. Accessible Arts was a great partner right throughout the DIAP development process."

"...we have learned a great deal and feel more confident about steps we can take – short-term and longer-term – to increase participation in our programs, events and workplace. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with Accessible Arts."

"Thank you for the amazing educational service that you provide the Arts sector we couldn't be more grateful for your leadership, advice and training."

"Thanks so much. I found it really insightful, and it will assist me in being better at accommodating and support people with disability."

"This was a great session with some great resources for me to go back to. I'm grateful to Accessible Arts for organising this session."

"... amazing to have everything presented in such a straightforward way to make it easy to understand where and how to make changes to my own arts practice. I will definitely be taking part in future Accessible Arts events."

"Thank you so much for the workshop!! It was incredibly useful both for work and everyday life."

"Accessible Arts events and resources are so great. You're such a great asset to the disability and accessible arts communities."

"Thanks for creating such a safe space to learn. It's often confronting to consider your own unconscious bias and I felt that this training eased them out in a really gentle way, simultaneously offering easy ways to counter that behaviour so I can ensure I'm offering an inclusive and equitable experiences to all users of the gallery in the future."

"...the team at Accessible Arts were friendly, aware and easy to deal with from planning to delivery. Our Arts Centre team got so much out of the training."

"So generous and helpful! Will recommend this training to everyone."

"AARTS training is exceptional value for money as you always have someone from AARTS you can call and ask for assistance, outside of the resources you are given and what you learn on the day."

"Thank you for doing what you do!"



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