

Accessible Arts

Equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability



2024

Annual Report

Contents

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----|----------------------|
| 3. | Chairperson's Message | 9. | Career Advancement |
| 4. | CEO's Message | 10. | Audience Development |
| 5. | About Us | 11. | Community Engagement |
| 7. | Our Team | 12. | Testimonials |
| 8. | Key Statistics 2024 | | |



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 funding body, the NSW Government, through Create NSW.



Chairperson's Message

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2024, I continue to be encouraged by the dedication, expertise and passion of Liz and all the Accessible Arts team. It's remarkable to see their impact within the Disability Arts sector.

This past year has seen the delivery of 215 events supporting careers, enhancing knowledge, and increasing participation within the Arts for people with disability and our allies. Over 400 individual arts practitioners with disability have been employed, supported or mentored through these programs. In addition, delivery of 87 training sessions has increased knowledge and skills for over 1,700 participants. Our leadership programs are held in high regard within the Disability Arts sector and more broadly, supporting up and coming artists to pursue their individual passions.

We've been really heartened to see the continued growth of engagement with our programs. For me, this has been particularly visible by the number of people attending the Access Ideas and Insights quarterly panel discussions. The breadth of experience and passion the panelists bring to these discussions noticeably motivates the audiences. During 2024, a highlight for me was attending 'Frame Shift', a partnership between Accessible Arts and Sydney Opera House to present extraordinary, accessible and inclusive films and video artworks created, starring and produced by artists with disability.

We truly appreciate the support of Create NSW, City of Sydney and numerous others, and our strong partnership with Sydney Opera House, The Art Gallery of NSW and more. Accessible Arts could not offer the programs and services we do without these funding partners. The coming years look to be continually challenging financially for us all, however we remain committed to delivering as many high-level services and programs as possible for our community.

I thank all my fellow Directors for their commitment and expertise in guiding and supporting the work of Accessible Arts. I'm particularly grateful for the extraordinary contribution of our Deputy Chair, Kate Lidbetter. We look forward to continuing to build on the success of our programs and activities over the coming year and adding two new Directors.

Thanks again to all the team and our wonderful supporters for your drive, engagement and enthusiasm. I look forward the brilliant programs and activities planned for 2025.

Jaci Armstrong
Chairperson



CEO's Message

2024 was a dynamic year marked by meaningful collaborations across the arts, culture and screen sectors. Thanks to the strength of these partnerships and the ongoing support of our valued donors, allies and supporters, we continued to champion and elevate the diverse creative, cultural and social contributions of artists with disability across NSW.

We continued delivering our Access Ideas and Insights series in partnership with leading cultural institutions. To ensure these important conversations were as accessible as possible, they were livestreamed with 1800 people registering for this thought-provoking series.

We provided meaningful professional development opportunities including our Bundanon Residency Program, fostering the development of new creative work. Through our Next Level Creative Mentorship, five artists were matched with leading NSW theatre companies, gaining valuable experience and industry insight.

We toured an accessible comedy show across Australia, showcasing brilliant comedians with disability. The show reached over 1100 people and was supported by disability-led training for 14 venues to ensure inclusive experiences.

We presented a curated program of video artworks by artists with disability from around the country. These works were screened at the Sydney Opera House and streamed free online.

We launched Equip: Leadership Toolkit - a national initiative designed to build the skills, confidence and leadership potential of women with disability and a vital step in supporting the next generation of leaders.

Our impactful consultancy services included developing comprehensive Disability Inclusion Action Plans and Walk and Talk Access Audits. In collaboration with CPL QLD, we co-designed a Tourism Toolkit to support inclusive and accessible experiences. We worked with diverse arts and screen organisations to strengthen accessibility across their programs and processes, and our training continued to grow in response to sector demand.

We sincerely thank the partners who made these programs possible. Their collaboration is instrumental in bringing our work to life. Our thanks go to: Art Gallery of NSW, Artspace, Sydney Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre Company, Belvoir St Theatre, Merrigong Theatre Company, Sydney Opera House, Creative Plus Business, Arts on Tour, Crips and Creeps, Arts Law Centre of Australia, Sage Clinical Psychology, Bundanon Trust, Bangarra Dance Theatre, ABC, SBS, Lingo Pictures, Erth Visual & Physical Theatre, Performance Space, Tantrum Youth Arts and Outloud.

A heartfelt thanks to the Accessible Arts team and skilled trainers, consultants, advisors and board members. Your passion, insight and unwavering commitment are driving real change and helping to shape a more inclusive and vibrant cultural landscape.

Liz Martin
CEO



About Us

Proudly disability-led, Accessible Arts is the peak organisation for arts, culture and disability in NSW.

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 through a multitude of disability-led programs, services and partnerships.

Our Vision

Equity and excellence in arts, culture and disability.

Our Values

Equity



Excellence



Diversity



Creativity



Partnership



Our Stakeholders



We provide a range of programs and services focusing on sector development and engagement, career advancement and authentic sector leadership.

- Creative Initiatives
- Internships & Mentorships
- Artist Residencies
- Professional Development Workshops
- Leadership Development Programs
- Industry Education & Advocacy
- Community & Industry Forums
- Networking Events
- Advisory Services

Our Team

Management

Liz Martin	Chief Executive Officer
Libby Forsythe	Operations Manager (May - Dec)
Amy Claire Mills	Arts Development Manager
Rachel Musgrove	Marketing & Communications Manager
Daniel Jaramillo	Office Administrator
Dale Hollingsworth	Financial Consultant
Michelle Teear	Training & Project Coordinator
Liv Hutley	Project Coordinator - Equip: Leadership Toolkit (Jan - May)
Bedelia Lowrenčev	Project Coordinator - Equip: Leadership Toolkit (May - Dec)

Board

Jaci Armstrong	Chairperson
Kate Lidbetter	Deputy Chairperson
Vishwas Singh CA	Treasurer
Alex Jones	Director
David Kay	Director
Emily Dash	Director
Fiona Winning	Director
Alice Anderson	Director (Aug - Dec)
Ursula King	Director (Aug - Dec)

Trainers

Morwenna Collett, Bec Hogan, Sarah Korte, Eugenie Lee, Bedelia Lowrenčev, Bridie McKim, Amy Claire Mills, Cobie Moore, Madeleine Stewart, Michelle Teear, Nat Thomas and Anthea Williams.

Advisors

Faye Chamberlain, Alex Craig, Emily Dash, Maree Jenner, Christine Johnson, Jessica Kejun Xu, Kate Matairavula, Rebecca McCormack, Cobie Moore, Laura Osweiler, Karen Peacock, Allison Reynolds, Keith Rutherford, Natalia Stawyskyi, Casey Grey, Randa Magdi, M (Sunny) Sunflower, Aaron Matheson, Rebecca Scrioli, Narelle Whitham, Kyle Goldfinch, Erica Chiandotto, Elizabeth Page, Shelley Clarke, Lindy Hou and Georgia Chalmers.

Key Statistics 2024

406

individual arts practitioners
with disability employed,
supported or mentored



6075

event participants



215

events produced
or supported



20

arts organisations
provided with consulting
services



35K

website visitors



87

training sessions
delivered



20.5K

social media followers



1700

training participants



404.5K

social media reach



4.2

Accessible Arts Core Staff
(Full-time equivalent)



Career Advancement

Accessible Arts empowers the creativity and careers of arts practitioners with disability right across NSW. We do this by providing a range of professional development programs and opportunities for both artists and arts workers.

Artist Residencies

In partnership with Bundanon Trust Estate, we supported 5 artists, musicians and writers with disability through valuable week-long residencies. The Bundanon Artist-in-Residence program is the largest of its kind in Australia, and our annual residency initiative is an incredibly valuable creative and career development opportunity for artists with disability.

Equip Leadership Program

We delivered a national program to build confidence and capacity for 16 women and non-binary people with disability to develop skills and connect with mentors and experienced leaders as they work towards becoming influential leaders in the arts. We worked in partnership with Creative Plus Business, Arts Law Centre of Australia and Sage Clinical Psychology to deliver this unparalleled program.

Next Level Creative Mentorships

Five talented artists received valuable one-to-one support with leading arts organisations to help take their project ideas to the Next Level. We partnered with Bangarra Dance Theatre, Griffin Theatre Company, Belvoir St Theatre, Merrigong Theatre Company and the Sydney Opera House to deliver this unique program.

Createability Internship Program

We partnered with Create NSW to support this program designed to upskill screen practitioners with disability and provide support to develop strong career pathways. This was delivered in partnership with ABC, SBS, Sydney Theatre Company, Lingo Pictures, Erth Visual & Physical Theatre, Performance Space, Tantrum Youth Arts and Outloud.

National Comedy Show Tour

We partnered with Arts on Tour and Crips & Creeps to produce a national tour of the accessible comedy show, *'Are You Pulling My Leg?'* showcasing 13 talented comedians with disability. This show toured to 10 leading venues across 5 states and all venues were upskilled through disability-led training, upskilling the sector to better understand how to implement access and more confidently employ artists with disability.



Audience Development

In 2024, we expanded our engaging offering of live events while continuing to support critical, equitable online access which champions best-practise digital accessibility. This hybrid approach enabled us to reach diverse and far-reaching audiences, including those from regional areas, who would otherwise be unable to engage with our programs. We also continued to facilitate both in-person and online training in response to sector demand.

Access Ideas and Insights - Quarterly Panel Discussions

This series was supported by the City of Sydney, Create NSW and Women NSW.

- **Wellbeing Through Art** - Presented in partnership with Art Gallery of NSW
We explored the myriad benefits of art in an engaging exploration of health, wellbeing and diverse creative expression. Through engaging a celebrity keynote speaker, Celia Pacquola, we reached new and broader audiences.
- **Accessible Curation** - Presented in partnership with Artspace
We platformed innovative curatorial practices that are shaping new standards of artistic excellence through commitment to accessibility, diversity and inclusion.
- **The Future of Disability Storytelling** - Presented in partnership with Sydney Theatre Co
We explored exciting possibilities for disability storytelling across a diverse range of arts practices and genres, delving into narrative, agency, identity, technologies and more.
- **Creative Partnerships and Pathways** - Presented in partnership with Art Gallery of NSW
In celebration of International Day of People with Disability, we connected community to discover the latest programs and pathways supporting creative and career development opportunities for artists with disability or who are d/Deaf.

Frame Shift

Accessible Arts and Sydney Opera House presented a curated selection of ground-breaking films and video artworks by artists with disability. This included a new commissioned work by Amanda Bennetts as well as 10 other featured works which explored themes of intersectional identity, creative expression and social connectedness. Frame Shift amplified the collaboration of filmmakers and artists with and without disability to disrupt narrative and forge new creative futures. The works were screened at the Sydney Opera House and streamed free online for a month on their digital platform, Stream.



Community Engagement

Accessible Arts is proud to provide a vital focal point for community to collaborate, communicate and advocate for advancing arts and disability in NSW. In particular, our free Advance Your Career series explores practical topics and provide insights for artists and arts workers with disability to develop professional knowledge, skills and networks.

Creative Access Workshop

We engaged with community in developing this new workshop, working with artists to obtain feedback during the course development. This disability-led workshop was designed to help think beyond traditional models where access is added-on to existing work, and consider how to creatively engage diverse audiences in a meaningful way.

Access Rider Workshop

This fully booked workshop provided a practical overview of what an Access Rider is, how to write one, what to ask for and the kind of language to use. The session covered the models of disability, the rights of people with disability or who are d/Deaf, self-advocacy and reasonable adjustments.

Bundanon Residency Information Session

This online information session provided insight into this competitive residency program and the application process, outlining how to prepare a strong application and what people can expect from this unique and accessible opportunity.

Advance Your Career: Creative Leadership Program

We partnered with Creative Australia to present an information session about their exciting Creative Leadership Program 2024-25, designed for participants to develop skills, knowledge and capacity to practice leadership in the arts and culture sector.

Comedy & Storytelling Workshop

We partnered with Sydney Theatre Company and Crips and Creeps to present an engaging workshop teaching the basics of storytelling, comedic skills and improvisation.



Testimonials

Access Ideas and Insights

"Accessible Arts deepened our understanding of access and readiness to engage people through diverse methods of communication. (Access Ideas and Insights) showed us how meaningful changes could be seamlessly integrated into daily operations, inspiring our team to create an inclusive space for audiences both onsite and online."

- Michelle Newton, *Interim Executive Director, Artspace*

Hybrid Event Audience Statistics:

97% of audiences improved knowledge about access and inclusion

97% of audiences rated the events as excellent or very good

Training feedback:

Creative Access offered invaluable insights into how we consider access from an audience perspective. The discussion on embedded access was eye-opening, highlighting potential to transform how we develop work. This workshop has undoubtedly shaped the way we approach access in our practices moving forward.

Janhavi Salvi, You Are Here Canberra

Next Level Creative Mentorship Feedback:

"(This) opportunity to work with Accessible Arts gave our company the chance to share our creative and organisational practices with young artists with disability, as well as support our own aims for a more equitable and inclusive organisation."

- Shane Carroll, *Education and Accessibility, Bangarra Dance Theatre*

"The Mentorship was critical for connecting me to a contemporary arts organisation. The opportunity to be more rigorous in upskilling has meant my work has more propulsion..."

- Bedelia Lowrenčev, *Next Level Creative Mentorship participant*

Bundanon Residencies:

"Life changing experience. I had some incredible outcomes on so many levels while I was there. It was everything I wanted and needed it to be and so much more."

- Carly Marchment, *Artist in Residence*

Are You Pulling My Leg?

"The impact of a show like this for regional communities is huge, and it wouldn't have happened without Accessible Arts stepping into a producing role."

- Antonia Seymour, *Executive Director, Arts on Tour*

"The show helped to shift perceptions and advocate for greater inclusivity in comedy and beyond, making a tangible difference in the lives of disabled performers and audiences."

- Capitol Theatre Tamworth

Image descriptions and credits:

Cover: Image 1: Artist Daniel McDonald facilitating Welcome to Country. Photo by David Wimble. Image 2: Audience photo taken from the back of the auditorium during Wellbeing Through Art. Screens on either side of the stage feature works by Emma Rani Hodges. Photo by David Wimble. Image 3: Comedian Madeleine Stewart performing in the comedy show 'Are You Pulling My Leg?'. Photo by Rob Studdert.

Page 2: Photo of artist Negin Chahoud creating an artwork during her Bundanon Trust Artist Residency. Photo by Paul Jones.

Page 3: Headshot of Accessible Arts Chairperson, Jaci Armstrong.

Page 4: Headshot of Accessible Arts CEO, Liz Martin. Photo by Megan O'Brien.

Page 5: Collage of artist photos, from top left to bottom right: Daniel McDonald facilitating Welcome to Country in Auslan (photo by Dieter Knierim), Olivia Hamilton (photo by Paul Foley), Negin Chahoud, Loz Booth, Tom Elphick (photo by Rob Studdert), Oliver Hunter, Steph Young and Edward Barnes (photo by Paul Jones).

Page 8: A photo taken from the back of a room, featuring an audience watching an Auslan interpreted panel discussion. Photo by Dieter Knierim.

Page 9: Image 1: Group photo of artists Edward Barnes, Tereza Crvenkovic, Negin Chahoud, Gemma Hudson and Carly Marchment. Photo by Paul Jones. Image 2: Comedian Sam Wade performing in the comedy show 'Are You Pulling My Leg?'. Photo by Rob Studdert. Image 3: Group photo taken at Equip Leadership Toolkit Graduation Ceremony. Photo by Rob Studdert.

Page 10: Image 1: Audience photo taken from the back of the auditorium during Wellbeing Through Art. Photo by David Wimble. Image 2: Production Still from Frame Shift commissioned work 'Carve Crevice from Grace' by Amanda Bennetts. Image credit: Amanda Bennetts. Image 3: A photo from The Future of Disability Storytelling, featuring MC Ryan Enniss and panellists Fiona Murphy, Michelle Cheng and Dan Daw. Photo by Dieter Knierim.

Page 11: Image 1: Photo of artist Carly Marchment creating an artwork during her Bundanon Trust Artist Residency. Photo by Paul Jones. Image 2: A group of 20 people standing and smiling at the camera at Bundanon on-site staff training.

Level 3, The Arts Exchange
10 Hickson Road, The Rocks, NSW, 2000

Phone: (02) 9251 6499
Email: info@aarts.net.au

www.aarts.net.au