



The Australia Council's Corporate Plan is the platform for all decisions and action the Council takes, including policy formulation, planning, research, funding and advocacy.

Some features of Council's activities in the year in review are provided below under the seven goals and related Key Result Areas of the plan. Details are also provided in Divisional and Fund/Board reports which follow.

1 TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In the year under review, the Council supported innovation and excellence in the Australian arts through direct grants to artists and arts organisations and a range of initiatives designed to underpin the creative work done by artists and arts organisations. These include assistance to artists to market their work in Australia and internationally; advocacy on behalf of artists in key areas that directly affect their livelihood; and an active research

program to inform arts initiatives across all areas of government and the private sector.

In the year under review, the Council received approximately 22,000 grant enquiries and 5,104 formal grant applications. 1,408 grants were made to artists and arts organisations through the Arts Funding Division, awarded on the basis of a competitive application process and assessment by panels of suitably qualified, highly skilled peers drawn from the arts community.

The Council extended triennial funding to a limited number of outstanding arts organisations during 1997-98. Triennial funding enabled these organisations to consolidate and extend their substantial artistic or arts service endeavours.

The Council also presents a number of annual awards to recognise artists and

organisations whose work represents outstanding achievement in their field.

WE HAVE PROMOTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS

The Australia Council provides a wide range of professional development opportunities for artists through its grants programs.

Australia Council Fellowships are awarded by each Fund/Board and 61 Fellowships were awarded in the year under review. Fellowships are awarded only once in an artist's lifetime and provide living expenses of \$40,000 per year for a two-year period to enable the recipients to undertake research, create new work or undertake professional development activities.

204 grants in the Development category were awarded for professional development activities for both individual artists and arts organisations.

The Council also introduced a number of professional development initiatives in the year under review. The Community Cultural Development Fund, for example, encouraged community cultural development workers to consider their professional development needs and supported 15 artists and artworkers to undertake secondments and mentorships to further their skills. An Indigenous Summer School which will focus on new media – technical skills development, intellectual property issues and curating new media work was funded by the New Media Arts Fund and will take place in 1999.

In addition, a range of service organisations across the country, including the Choreographic Centre, the Australian Music Centre and State-based writers' centres, have received assistance

to provide professional development opportunities for their members; while a long-term partnership brokered in 1997 between Asialink and the Australia Council's Audience Development and Advocacy Division offers more than 30 residencies annually for Australian artists in Asia, covering visual and performing arts, new media arts, literature and arts management.

Through its National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy (NATSIAAP), Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy and regional and youth arts initiatives, the Council has worked to ensure that all Australian artists have access to professional development opportunities.

WE HAVE ENSURED OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS INVOLVED A RANGE OF SUITABLY QUALIFIED PEERS

Assessment of grant applications by artists' peers is a fundamental operating principle of the Australia Council. Fund and Board members are appointed by the Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts for terms of up to three years and these individuals serve as peers in the grants assessment process. In addition, Council maintains a Register of Peers, a listing of 1,450 individuals who may be asked to attend Fund, Board meetings and other meetings as participating peers, providing expert advice but without voting rights.

In the year under review, 126 peers provided external assessment on applications, support material or performances. A further 40 peers participated in grants assessment meetings and seven peers have assisted at policy development meetings.

WE HAVE STIMULATED INFORMED CRITICAL DEBATE AMONG ARTISTS

In 1997 the Australia Council initiated a special series of national Arts in Focus forums on issues of critical importance to artists and arts organisations. The first of these forums, titled *Are we producing too many arts graduates?* was held as part of the Arts on the Edge conference in Perth in April, 1998. Over 110 people across Australia also participated in the discussion through the Council's first online forum.

A number of other major conferences have been supported in the year under review. These include the National Community Cultural Development Conference, DARE, a major initiative of the Community Cultural Development Fund; *Cultural Crossroads: Ownership, Access and Identity* in Sydney; the fifth and final Melbourne 'Green Mill' Festival of Choreography and Dance; a Movement and Performance Dance Symposium to be held in Melbourne in mid-1998; the first ARTEX National Conference for artworkers who work with young people; a meeting of 20 Indigenous theatre artists to seek input into a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy; and funding to Craft ACT, the Australian Textile Group, the Crafts Council of SA, Craft Victoria and Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia for a diversity of conferences, publications and public forums.

The Council has also stimulated informed critical debate among artists through a range of publications in the year under review, including a set of Disability Fact Packs exploring the importance of accessibility for arts and cultural organisations and published as part of Council's ongoing partnership with the national Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts (DADAA) network.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of plans to reform the Australian tax system, Council commissioned KPMG to prepare the *Taxation Reform and the Arts* report. Council provided copies of the report to Government and to all interested parties to support informed and constructive discussion of the issues.

2 TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF NEW WORK

WE HAVE PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS TO PRACTISE THEIR ART

The Australia Council supports the creation of new work through designated grant categories, as well as programs and initiatives designed to provide support for artists engaged in developing new work.

353 grants were made under the New Work category in the year under review. The number of new work project grants approved by the Theatre Fund was almost double that of the previous year, while the Literature Fund provided grants to a total of 71 writers to support the creation of new work in all genres. The Music Fund assisted the commission of a new work by Victorian composer Mark Pollard by leading international ensemble Duo Contemporain, while Zurich-based ensemble Aequator received funding to commission David Young to compose a new chamber work. The Dance Fund assisted Perth artist Rakini to work in collaboration with composers, musicians, video artists and a photographer.

The New Media Arts Fund assisted the development of *Recollections*, a cross generational interactive performance project involving sixty performers, by Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre.

The Visual Arts/Craft Fund awarded New Work grants to 63 visual artists and craftpersons, including Gilbert Riedelbauch to create objects generated and manipulated by computer software and Rebecca Cummins to design and construct a rainbow-making machine.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board (ATSIAB) supported a range of projects that fostered the creation of new work, including assistance to the Kara Kasil Torres Strait Islander dance group to conduct a series of performances and workshops in Sydney titled *Journey for Reconciliation*. The Community Cultural Development Fund assisted Pasmenco Smelter in Tasmania to commission a sculptor to work on-site with Pasmenco workers and local communities to create a site-specific sculpture.

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED DIVERSITY OF FORM AND CONTENT

The Council has encouraged the development of new artistic forms and content in the year under review, including assistance to innovative collaborations between artists and non-arts sectors, and the application of new technologies to the arts.

Projects supported include the development of an interactive collaborative piece between 10 Anangu Pitjantjatjara performers and chamber music ensemble Aurora; *The Divine Kiss*, a multilingual, multi-artform operatic work to be developed and performed by Access Arts Queensland, Constantine Kokias of IHOS Opera and people with disabilities; and Garry Stewart's *Thwack*, a multimedia dance work.

The Visual Arts/Craft Fund assisted a wide range of collaborative experimental projects exploring innovative design values, including a grant to artist Lung

Chan to project designs and images reflecting a variety of local cultural concerns onto the pavement and facades of buildings in Geraldton, WA.

The application of new technologies to the arts was assisted through a wide range of projects. The Literature Fund assisted the e-journal *Australian Humanities Review* and *Aurora Australis*, a website promoting Australian writers, while the New Media Arts Fund funded a provocative exploration by Oron Catts of the links between biotechnology and design, the creation of a CD-ROM focussing on the traditions surrounding the history of Macassan Islander contact and trade with the north Australian coast, and to Arena Theatre company to commission digital animators and a composer for the performance project *Panacea*, which will include revolutionary projection design and robotic technology.

Music Theatre Sydney's presentation of Chamber Made Opera's *Fresh Ghosts* was subtitled for Chinese-speaking audiences and featured performers of predominantly Chinese origin; playwright Chi Vu received assistance to write a bilingual play in English and Vietnamese; and Andrea Litras was funded to develop and perform a bilingual solo theatre piece, *Odyssey*, in Hobart. Another project highlighting Australian artistic and cultural diversity was the World Music Concert series presented by Kulcha.

WE HAVE ENSURED THAT YOUNG AND EMERGING ARTISTS, ARTISTS IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AREAS, AND ARTISTS OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS CAN DEVELOP THEIR ART

The Council works to ensure that all artists have opportunities to develop their art. Programs that are specifically targeted to the needs and situations of

young and emerging artists, artists of diverse backgrounds and those in remote areas have been complemented by a number of special initiatives in the year under review.

The Emerging Artists Initiative, a three-year Government initiative administered by the Australia Council, has funded a range of specific programs to assist emerging artists in all artforms. Examples include the Emerging Writers Initiative, a mentorship program which linked eight emerging writers with experienced writers; the Emerging Choreographer's Initiative which funded eight such choreographers to develop new works; and residency programs for emerging new media artists in Perth and Adelaide. In Perth a partnership between the Film and Television Institute and IMAGO Cooperative Multimedia Centre resulted in a Digital Access Studio being established and enabled a range of emerging artists to access this studio space.

LOUD, a Federal Government initiative managed by the Audience Development and Advocacy Division, profiled Australian youth arts to an enormous audience through television, radio, online and print media throughout January 1998, showcasing the work of young artists to a national audience.

The Ngarinyin Aboriginal Corporation received a grant from ATSIAB for the production and performance of Djunba traditional dance and songs. The project aims to assist in the process of strengthening knowledge and attachments to Ngarinyin Country by elders to the younger generation.

The Community Cultural Development Fund continued to encourage ongoing development in regional and remote communities. Several earlier projects

produced continuing activity in isolated areas. One of these, Barkly Regional Arts, provides a program of community cultural development activities across a huge region reaching from Tennant Creek to Borroloola in the Northern Territory.

The WA State Literature Officer was responsible for coordinating the Literature Fund's very successful pilot mentorship program under the emerging artists' initiative. The Fund also approved grants to cover the commission fees of writers to *Voiceworks*, a youth literature magazine for 14 to 24 year olds. In a strategic initiative, publishers in Alice Springs, Broome and Perth received funding for individual tailored courses for editors working with Indigenous writers.

The Music Fund supported a younger generation of composers to create new works through grants, such as those to Mary Finsterer for a multimedia composition, and Kirsty Beilharz to compose a new work for performance by young musicians. A strategic initiative, supported by the Music Fund in support of the Council's NATSIAP initiative, was funding to Daki Budtcha Pty Ltd for the release and distribution of a CD showcasing the work of Indigenous artists. Artists featured included Native Ryme Syndicate, Lionel Fogarty and Serenity.

The Theatre Fund addressed some of the barriers facing the development of theatre in regional areas by introducing new selection criteria in two grant categories, resulting in an increase in funding going to regional or rural areas.

The Visual Arts/Craft Fund worked with 25 organisations around Australia to present, promote and provide direct professional opportunities to hundreds of emerging visual artists and craft people.

The Strategy and Policy Division coordinated the development of a framework in relation to the Youth and the Arts for Council's consideration in 1998–99.

3 TO FOSTER PARTICIPATION IN AND APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS BY ALL AUSTRALIANS

WE HAVE INCREASED AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS IN THE BROAD COMMUNITY

The Council's website is an important tool in providing up-to-date information on a wide range of contemporary arts events supported by Council, and is linked to related sites which, increasingly, include online art, as well as information on artists and events. In April 1998, an online forum was established on the Council's website as part of the first forum in the *Arts in Focus* series, enabling people from all over Australia to participate in the discussion on arts education.

Several publications that promote awareness of the Council's role and of contemporary arts practice have also been produced. A 16-page brochure highlighting the central importance of the arts to contemporary Australian society and the role of the Australia Council, was produced and widely distributed in the year under review, as well as brochures outlining the Council's Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy, the work of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division, and a booklet profiling the work of Australia's leading new media artists.

Distribution of these publications and the Council's quarterly magazine, *Artforce*, has been extended to all Australian overseas diplomatic and

Austrade posts to provide Australia's overseas representatives and their contacts with up-to-date information on Australian contemporary arts.

The Council's Audience Development and Advocacy Division has funded a large number of projects designed to increase public awareness of, and participation in, contemporary arts. Examples include support for a series of 12 short profiles of Australian books published in French translation, broadcast to 4.5 million viewers on French national television and an online, promotional database of Australian authors aimed at students, researchers, book buyers and publishers within Australia and overseas.

In January 1998 the LOUD event reached up to one million people through more than 100 projects. The breadth of media involved in the project enabled it to break many of the usual geographic boundaries that limit access to Australian art.

Papers from a number of conferences and events supported by the artform Funds, including the 5th Melbourne 'Green Mill' Festival of Choreography and Dance and the National Community Cultural Development Conference (DARE) have been published and widely disseminated to inform a wider audience of the key issues, priorities and innovations within these artforms.

WE HAVE IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE ARTS IRRESPECTIVE OF WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

The Australia Council works to ensure that its funding programs and special initiatives take account of special needs of artists and communities, including needs created by disability, linguistic background and geographic location.

As a matter of policy, many of the publications produced by the Council over the past year have been translated either into community languages or onto audio tapes for use by people with visual impairment.

Council has also supported a number of projects encouraging artistic development in regional and remote communities. To address some of the barriers facing the development of theatre in regional areas, the Fund introduced a new selection criterion in two grants categories, resulting in a large increase in funding to regional or rural areas. Other examples include funding for Barkly Regional Arts to provide a program of community cultural development activities and services across a huge region reaching from Tennant Creek to Borrooloola in the Northern Territory and support for a workshop series for the growing a cappella community in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

In addition, the Northern Exposure initiative will see six visual arts and craft organisations in northern Australia undertake, many for the first time, a program of community cultural development activities.

A nationwide series of marketing workshops for arts organisations has specifically targeted major regional centres throughout the country in the year under review, and financial support enabled representatives from remote areas of Australia to attend the *Imagining the Market* arts marketing conference in Sydney.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board has provided funding to service incarcerated Indigenous artists in Queensland prisons and funded the University of South Australia's Faculty of

Aboriginal Studies to work in partnership with Tandanya National Cultural Institute to conduct a series of arts and cultural programs within prisons in South Australia.

WE HAVE INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITIES TO EXPRESS THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH THE ARTS

The Australia Council actively supports the artistic expression of cultural identity through its Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy, its National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy and a wide range of special initiatives across all Divisions of Council.

These policies and initiatives are detailed in this section of the Annual Report under Goals 4 and 5 below.

4 TO PROMOTE THE UNIQUE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES AS INTEGRAL TO AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY

WE HAVE WORKED TO INCREASE ACCEPTANCE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUTHORITY IN CULTURAL DETERMINATION

In 1997 Council adopted and commenced implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy as part of its ongoing commitment to Indigenous arts and cultural expression. The policy aims to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to claim, control and enhance their cultural inheritance. These rights are supported through Council's grants programs and strategic initiatives. The principles of the policy are *Respect, Authority, Rights and Responsibilities, and Diversity*.

Council provided financial resources for the Board and each of the Funds to pursue one or more strategic initiatives in response to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy in the year under review.

In line with Council's Corporate Plan and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy goals, all divisions of Council have increased their activities in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture.

Consultations initiated with the Board, peers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have resulted in an outstanding range of projects that reflect the artistic and cultural diversity of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The prestigious international event, the 47th Venice Biennale opened in June 1997 and was supported by the Audience Development and Advocacy Division. Developed by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the *fluent* exhibition comprised works by three Indigenous women artists: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Yvonne Koolmatrie and Judy Watson. It exemplified the diversity within Aboriginal cultures, lifestyles and forms of artistic expression and toured nationally in the year in review.

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR CULTURAL IDENTITIES

The Australia Council recognises the fundamental role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board as the leading authority in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, and actively promotes the unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as integral to Australia's identity.

In 1997 the Board supported the first of four Sydney Olympic Arts festivals, *The Festival of the Dreaming*. The festival attracted

worldwide interest, and provided a rare opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities to present their arts and culture to the world in a program designed and managed by Indigenous people.

Other successful festival projects funded by Council included the Marrugeku Company's spectacular outdoor production *Mimi* and a lively debut performance by Mathew Doyle of a local Tharawal story, *Wirid-Jiribin the Lyrebird*.

Authority in determining presentation of cultural matters is a major priority of the Board and Council. Acknowledgment and empowerment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the cultural custodians in exercising this right is a fundamental premise of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy and guides Council's operations.

An example of this is the collaborative interactive composition and performance, *Dreaming in the Desert*. The work involves Aboriginal elders and ritual leaders from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands, composer Quentin Grant and the six-member Aurora chamber music ensemble and draws on structures of Pitjantjatjara songs. The composition will be performed at selected sites of cultural significance on traditional lands, and the nature of the collaboration necessitates observing cultural protocols including gaining permission from the owners of particular country, songs and stories.

The Strategy and Policy Division has commissioned an Indigenous writers study. This project is the first stage of the Council's survey work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists which will cover artists working in all art forms.

The Strategy and Policy Division also produced the *International Visitors and Aboriginal Arts* report, which found that almost a third of all international visitors to Australia undertake some activity related to Aboriginal art or culture. Purchases of Aboriginal arts and souvenirs by international visitors were estimated to be about \$67 million in 1996, compared with \$46 million in 1993.

WE HAVE ASSISTED ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS TO CLAIM, CONTROL AND ENHANCE THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY

As further evidence of Council's commitment to increasing acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authority in cultural determination, the Arts Funding Division has introduced a stipulation that all grant applications with components relating to Indigenous artists or communities are required to provide letters of support from the relevant artists or communities.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board takes an active role in national coordination of policy and strategies relating to Indigenous arts, achieved through various mechanisms, including the grants programs, research and strategic initiatives. The Board has provided funding support to help establish the National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Alliance, which consists of key Indigenous artists, organisations and artists. The Alliance provides advice, advocates for the creation of networking opportunities and linkages between service organisations in order to improve the resources and opportunities available to Indigenous artists and arts organisations.

5 TO RECOGNISE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS

WE HAVE PROMOTED AWARENESS OF THE PLURALITY OF AUSTRALIAN ARTS PRACTICE

Australia's cultural diversity is well-recognised internationally, and work that reflects this diversity has proved attractive to overseas audiences. Many international presenters attending the Australia Council's Third Australian Performing Arts Markets in Adelaide in February 1998 selected works which showcase Australia's cultural diversity for international tours.

The Boite (Vic) has been supported to place artists of non-English speaking background in four of the Overseas Services Bureau's briefing courses, conducted for prospective overseas development workers, in order to strengthen cross-cultural understanding through the performing arts. The Overseas Service Bureau will also sponsor five of The Boite's World Music Cafe concerts.

Translations of Australian writers, such as the publication in Czech of Antigone Kefala's poems, and the attendance of writers of diverse cultural backgrounds at a large number of international writers' conferences and festivals were supported this year.

Theatro Oneiron from Adelaide toured their bilingual work, *Cafe Cavafy*, to the Thessaloniki Festival in Greece.

From the national perspective, the Audience Development and Advocacy Division assisted Northern Rivers Performing Arts Association (NORPA) to employ four sales representatives from non-English speaking backgrounds to market subscriptions to the region's Italian, Chinese, Filipino and Punjabi

(from left)

Pino Migliorino from Cultural Perspectives; Lex Marinos, retiring Deputy Chair of the Australia Council; and Michael Lynch, General Manager of the Australia Council at the launch of new Arts for a Multicultural Australia resources. Photo: Hamish Ta-Mé



communities. This project was developed by the Multicultural Audience Development Officer at NORPA, whose one-year position was one of four funded by the Division as an Arts for a Multicultural Australia initiative in 1996-97.

Nexus Multicultural Arts Centre Inc (SA) will establish a residency for arts worker Norhayati Yusoff to develop a cross-cultural community music performance program and to develop outreach strategies for non-English speaking communities.

Under the banner name of *Parallelo*, Doppio Teatro is addressing issues of global citizenship, innovations in new technology and interrogation of the 'borders' between artforms. The first production under this new banner, *Tracking Time*, premiered at the 1998 Telstra Adelaide Festival.

Strategies to encourage a wider range of applications and grants reflecting Australia's cultural diversity continue. This year the Theatre Fund convened

public forums targeted at non-English speaking communities in four cities. Nine special grants for initiatives to assist artists of non-English speaking background to commission new work and develop relationships with existing theatre companies, were supported.

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF AND USE OF AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Arts for a Multicultural Australia (AMA) Policy was focussed this year to reflect the approach to cultural diversity as one which recognises 'the contribution of non-English speaking background artists to excellence across the arts and the national identity.' The aim is to create an environment in Australia where our cultural diversity informs and creates arts of excellence for the national and international markets.

Council provided financial resources for the Board and each of the Funds to develop and implement a strategic initiative addressing the AMA policy this year.

Several initiatives which were developed and implemented this year focussed on the increased participation of audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds so as to encourage a greater understanding of and use of Australia's cultural diversity.

The report *The World is Your Audience* was produced for Council by Pino Migliorino and Cultural Perspectives. *The World is Your Audience* provides theoretical and practical approaches to developing audiences and is designed to address the fact that people of non-English speaking background are 50 per cent less likely to attend mainstream cultural venues and arts activities than those born in Australia.

Fellowships were awarded this year to artists of culturally diverse background, including Mahmoud Yekta, a video maker from Iran who has worked extensively with communities using this medium, Mary Finsterer who will develop an opera as one of three interactive multimedia music pieces, and visual artist Elsje van Keppel.

Divisions of Council worked together on strategic initiatives to encourage increased participation of artists and communities in exchanges that will inform the development of innovative cultural practice whilst strengthening Australia's regional, ethnic and artistic identities.

Music Theatre Sydney presented of a Sydney season of Chamber Made Opera's Melbourne production of *Fresh Ghosts*, by Julian Yu (composer) and Glen Perry (librettist). The production was subtitled for Chinese-speaking audiences, and cast, for the first time in Australia, performers in an opera who were predominantly Chinese of Chinese background. Rakini, a Perth-based solo dance performer, will work in consultation with composers,

musicians, a photographer and video artist to develop a text and movement repertoire.

Kai Tai Chan was part of the choreographic team working with Darwin-based Tracks Dance's new work, *The Land, the Cross and the Lotus*. Scotia Mobkevitch, Arun Munozz, Paulina Quinteros, Sun Ping and Rebecca Youdell were able to develop new choreographic works.

Grants were awarded to Chi Vu to write a full-length play in Vietnamese and English, and to Tony Ayres to develop a non-fiction autobiography about a family's first ten years in Australia after immigrating from Hong Kong. Support was provided to University of Queensland Press for Melissa Lucashenko's *Steam Pigs*, Brandl & Schlesinger for *The Gatekeeper's Wife* by Fay Zwicky, and to Random House for *No* by George Papaellinas.

In Hobart, Andreas Litras developed and performed a bilingual solo theatre piece, *Odyssey*. Homer's original text, family histories and the experiences of post-war Greeks combined to tell a powerful tale of migrants caught between two geographies.

Brisbane-based Matrix Theatre was funded to present *A Beautiful Life*, a new play based upon the experiences of a Persian political refugee and his family.

The Australia Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee consisting of cultural diversity advocates from each Fund continues to advise Council on specific areas of attention for the AMA Policy. To assist the staff of the Australia Council in the implementation of this policy, training in issues surrounding cultural diversity was delivered to all staff.

6 TO INCREASE RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES AND AUDIENCES FOR AUSTRALIAN ARTS

WE HAVE BUILT PARTNERSHIPS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

The Australia Council encourages and assists public and private sector organisations to form partnerships with artists and arts organisations, as a means of providing new opportunities and increased resources for Australian artists.

To this end, each of the Funds and the Board offers Partnerships and Commissions grants, with selection criteria that emphasise the creation of new resources, opportunities and benefits for Australian artists, as well as artistic merit. During the year in review, 63 grants were made under the Partnership category and 38 grants were made under the Commissions category.

Partnerships developed through these grants programs in the year under review include a partnership between Landcare Vision Inc and artist David Carson to investigate and artistically represent changing patterns of land use in Western Australia; the establishment of artist-in-residence programs at the Queensland Science Centre and Questacon; and a partnership between two Hobart-based theatre companies and a local graphic design/advertising agency to develop a television-based marketing strategy for theatre.

The Australia Council itself has also entered into a number of strategic partnerships with public and private sector organisations to increase opportunities and resources for artists. Examples include a partnership with Creative NZ (Toi Aotearoa) to stage the 1998 Australia New Zealand

Choreographic Course in Wellington; a partnership with the Association of Local Government Organisations (ALGA) to integrate arts and cultural development into the work of local councils and shires across Australia, and an ongoing partnership with Asialink to run artist-in-residence and exhibitions programs in Asia.

The Audience Development and Advocacy Division operates partnerships with a range of peak arts bodies, including Craft Australia, the Australian Commercial Galleries' Association and the Australian Publishers' Association, to plan and deliver national and international market development initiatives, marketing skills training programs and resources and audience development initiatives.

WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Australia Council has implemented a wide range of initiatives designed to increase resources, opportunities and audiences for Australian arts.

These include the Major Festivals Initiative and the Contemporary Music Export Development Initiative announced by the Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts in the 1996–97 Federal Budget (see pages 33, 35), as well as a range of other initiatives developed within Council.

The Australian Performing Arts Market is a Council initiative designed to increase national and touring opportunities for Australian performing artists. The 3rd Market was held in Adelaide in February 1998, in partnership with Arts SA and with the support of the SA Department of Industry and Trade and the SA Tourism Commission. A number of major international and national tours

have already been secured, with early indications that the economic returns for participating artists will greatly exceed those of the 1st and 2nd Markets held in 1994 and 1996.

The Pacific Artists' Exchange is an initiative designed to develop artistic and audience development links between Pacific-based artists and arts organisations, Pacific Islander communities resident in Australia and Australian arts institutions. The major objectives of the Exchange are the greater involvement of Pacific Islander communities and artists in exhibitions and performance projects mounted by Australian arts institutions and the development of culturally relevant community development and audience development strategies. Residencies by four Pacific Island-based artists have been funded in 1998, with reciprocal residencies for Australian artists in the Pacific planned for 1999.

WE HAVE SUPPORTED ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The development of marketing and management skills in the arts sector is a particular focus of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division. The Division's Marketing Skills Development initiatives are informed by audience and market research produced and commissioned by both the Strategy and Policy Division, including the seminal 1997 study, *Marketing the Arts*, and the Audience Development and Advocacy Division.

A range of practical arts marketing resources for artists and arts organisations has been produced in the year under review. The Audience Development and Advocacy Division has produced print and audio cassette

versions of an introductory guide, *Arts Marketing: The Pocket Guide*, and a practical, self-guided workbook, *Marketing Strategies for Arts Organisations*, supplemented by a series of training workshops in all States and Territories. The Strategy and Policy Division has produced and distributed a guide to marketing to culturally diverse audiences, entitled *The World is Your Audience*.

The Audience Development and Advocacy Division has supported the development of grouped marketing initiatives, such as the Best in Sydney craft consortium and the New Music Network, to allow arts organisations to market their artistic products and services more effectively. The Division has also provided funding for arts organisations to employ marketing professionals on specific projects which include an initiative to increase subscription rates among non-English speaking background communities in northern New South Wales.

WE HAVE ADVOCATED FOR REFORM ON KEY AREAS WHICH AFFECT ARTISTS' INCOMES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Australia Council advocates for reform in a number of key areas and also provides infrastructure support to a number of peak bodies with a strong advocacy role, including the Australian Copyright Council and the Arts Law Centre.

In the year under review, the Council has made a number of submissions to the Federal Government on artists' rights and intellectual property issues, including submissions on moral rights, public lending rights and copyright law reform.

A number of other submissions are listed in the Strategy and Policy Division's report.

The Australia Council has promoted the aims and objectives of its Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy in the year under review through the publication of an explanatory brochure, an illustrative slide kit and a practical guide to audience development among non-English speaking background communities.

Council has maintained its partnership with the Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts national network, producing a set of Disability Fact Packs exploring the importance of accessibility for arts and cultural organisations.

7 TO ENSURE THE HIGHEST STANDARDS IN ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICE

WE HAVE PROVIDED APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY ADVICE AND INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENT, THE ARTS COMMUNITY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The Council made submissions to the Government on a range of matters during the year in review, including:

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Parliamentary Inquiry into Indigenous Businesses
- The Office of National Tourism discussion paper, *Towards a National Tourism Plan*
- The Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts References Committee Inquiry regarding access to Australia's national and cultural heritage.
- The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry regarding Australia's relationship with ASEAN.

The Council also responded to enquiries from the Minister on a range of topics and provided a total of 120 responses to Ministerial enquiries and 24 questions-on-notice during the year.

Council also provides a wealth of information to the arts community and the general public, including the research report on employment in the arts, called *Artswork*, launched at the meeting of Council in July 1997. The report, a compendium of statistics about employment, unemployment and training in the arts sector, received extensive coverage in the national press and media.

In 1997–98 two editions of *Arts Research in Progress* were prepared and circulated nationally and internationally. Part of the Australia Council's contribution to arts research around Australia and the world is to coordinate a national update of the arts research under way. This is collected from organisations and individuals across Australia. The list is confined to research dealing with the arts industry and artists, arts funding policy and issues concerned with current arts practice, employment, training, production and consumption.

WE HAVE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED OUR HUMAN, PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Australia Council is responsible for its own administration, subject to the *Australia Council Act 1975* and requirements applying generally to statutory authorities. The Council seeks to administer an efficient system of financial planning and control, with a fair and effective management of human resources, information technology, records and physical resources of the Australia Council.

Council strives for sound financial management and for a more cost-effective

use of its finances and resources. Financial control systems are regularly reviewed and performance monitored and the financial aspects of the grants management system is constantly reviewed. Council and staff are informed regularly of current legislation affecting financial management.

WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO ACHIEVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR SERVICES

In the year under review, the Council completed a Service Charter which informs the Council's customers about its services and the standards to which the services will be provided. It also invites the Council's customers to contribute to the contents of the Charter and the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Charter.

This development is part of the Commonwealth Government's plan to improve the service provided to the community by the Commonwealth Public Service.

As part of the Council's dedication to continuous improvement a number of strategies were pursued:

- Laura Tricker of Interactivity was contracted by the Australia Council to undertake an evaluation of new media arts funding within the Australia Council. The report and its recommendations were accepted by the Australia Council in November 1997.
- During 1997–98 the Council undertook a comprehensive review of its procedures and controls in relation to technology and communications. This extension of Council's internal audit process was conducted by KPMG. Comments and recommendations were discussed with staff and a Risk Management Plan developed.

- A disaster recovery test was conducted in conjunction with Council's internal auditors KPMG, during May 1998. The test was conducted to ascertain the readiness of the Australia Council to recover and restore its operation in case of a disaster.

Council has already initiated action on the Year 2000 compliance. DMR Consulting Group (Australia) Pty Ltd have been appointed to conduct a review of the Year 2000 program for Council. The consultant has been requested to assess and evaluate Council's approach and readiness. Council is confident that all its systems will be Year 2000 compliant.

Applicants for grants are now able to complete their application forms online using the freely available software Acrobat Reader. Whilst this improved service does not at present allow online submission of the application, the ability to directly type onto the online form has been welcomed by many applicants.

An important improvement in the internal management practices within the organisation was the planning for introduction of a more transparent and accountable grants management process. The Australia Council's current grants management system was installed in 1985. To meet future needs, a more integrated, user-friendly and functionally appropriate system is required.

Work has been initiated to identify the Council's current business requirements for a grants management system. Support for the administration of grants through their life cycle was identified as a core component. The administration of internal and external contacts and their relationship with the Council and records management were also identified as major components.

BUDGET

The Council's appropriation in the 1997–98 Budget, the last year of its first triennial funding period 1995–98, was \$69.8 million, compared to \$63.8 million in 1996–97. The increase was due principally to funding totalling \$6.4 million for the four Government policy initiatives, namely: Regional Arts Development, Emerging Artists, Major Festivals, and Contemporary Music Export Development. Each of these is outlined below.

A review of Council's triennial funding was undertaken between October and January with a steering committee comprising the General Manager, Australia Council; the First Assistant Secretary Arts and Heritage Division, Department of Communications and the Arts; and the First Assistant Secretary Employment, Transport and Review Division, Department of Finance and Administration.

The Review Committee's report to the Minister for the Arts, Senator Alston, signed off in February 1998, found that the concept of triennial funding, supported by the elements contained in the standard budgetary framework, provides the Australia Council with greater funding certainty to provide secure, longer-term commitments to a greater number of organisations, giving them the operational security to enhance their forward planning and management processes.

On that basis, the Committee recommended that triennial funding for the Council continue and that a further review of the terms of the agreement be undertaken in time for the 2001–02 budget.

The Minister announced on 12 May, in the context of the 1998–99 Budget, that Government would enter into a new triennial funding arrangement with the Council.

INITIATIVES

On behalf of the Federal Government, the Australia Council administered the following initiatives:

LOUD

LOUD profiled Australian youth arts to an enormous audience through television, radio, online and print media throughout January 1998. The event reached up to a million people at a time through more than 100 projects and the groundbreaking way LOUD was delivered made it possible to break the usual geographic boundaries and showcase the work of young artists to a truly national audience.

LOUD attracted around \$2 million in cash or in-kind support from over 100 media partners, sponsors and support organisations. A number of young artists have been offered commercial opportunities on the basis of their contributions and the LOUD model has attracted international interest, with the New Zealand Ministry of Youth Affairs and the New Zealand Health Sponsorship Council expressing strong interest in participating in future LOUD events.

Once the formal evaluation process is completed, further discussions will be held with the Department of Communications and the Arts and the Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts regarding the future support and development of LOUD.

REGIONAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT

The Government allocated \$7.5 million over three years for regional arts development. The overall objective of the Regional Arts Fund is to make a significant and sustainable contribution to regional arts development. The development of the Fund recognises the particular needs of artists and communities in regional, rural and remote Australia.

At the Cultural Ministers' Council meeting in December 1996, a decision was made to devolve the majority of the funding available for 1997–98 (\$2.5 million) and 1998–99 (\$3.5 million) to States and Territories on an agreed basis. Proposals were submitted through the Australia Council and endorsed by the Minister.

Negotiations for the devolution of funding under the Commonwealth Regional Arts Fund to all States and Territories began in December 1996 and were completed in late 1997.

Under the devolution arrangements, the following allocations were made to the States over two years: Western Australia, \$800,000; Australian Capital Territory, \$100,000; New South Wales, \$900,000; Northern Territory, \$500,000; Queensland, \$800,000; South Australia, \$750,000; Tasmania, \$400,000; and Victoria, \$900,000.

Broadly, two approaches were taken by Governments:

1. To deliver the Fund through existing programs, matching the contribution from the Commonwealth with State or Territory arts funding and in some instances attracting local government funding (Victoria; Tasmania; Northern Territory)
2. To develop new funding arrangements, usually in partnership with one or

more arts service providers (South Australia; Western Australia; Queensland; Australian Capital Territory; New South Wales)

An amount of \$650,000 was retained by the Australia Council for multi-state initiatives which are nationally significant and which:

- demonstrate a sustainable contribution to regional arts development;
- provide support for the creation of new work by regionally located artists, artworkers and communities;
- provide support for artists and communities which are particularly isolated and poorly resourced; and
- are consistent with Federal Government priorities for regional arts development.

The devolution process and the multi-state initiatives have been managed by the Strategy and Policy Division as part of its Local and Regional arts policy activities (see page 89).

EMERGING ARTISTS INITIATIVE

The Emerging Artists Initiative was allocated \$1 million in 1997–98 and \$1.5 million in 1998–99.

In 1997–98 the Emerging Artists Initiative provided 61 grants to organisations and individuals across the country. The Minister announced the initiative's progress on 21 October 1997.

In 1997–98 separate initiatives across all artforms were implemented. These were tailored to meet the professional development and presentation needs of emerging artists in the areas of writing, new media arts, visual arts and craft, dance, music, and theatre. In addition, initiatives were developed for emerging Indigenous artists and to allow emerging artists to work with some of the major performing arts organisations.

Full details of the initiatives appear in the grant lists of this report.

MAJOR FESTIVALS INITIATIVE

The 1996–97 Federal Budget provided funding of \$1.5 million over three years to enable Australia's major international festivals to develop and present large-scale commissioned works. Prior to this initiative, limited resources made it impossible for Australian artists to spend sufficient time developing and refining properly new productions, resulting in local performances at major Australian festivals that did not match the impressive standards set by many of the imported overseas productions. The availability of this new pool of funding has meant that productions such as *Cloudstreet*, produced by Company B (NSW) and Black Swan (WA) has found immediate success with Australian audiences and secured a major international tour.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In the 1996–97 Federal Budget, an amount of \$2 million was allocated over three years for the support of international promotion of Australian popular music. The program has been administered by the Audience Development and Advocacy Division, which undertook extensive consultation with most sectors and peak bodies of the music industry to determine the best approach in developing an effective program. It was agreed that the program ought to provide opportunities for Australian independent record labels and bands to pursue international market development plans and that the program should incorporate a guaranteed processing turnaround of no more than six weeks.

The Division devised two streams of assistance: the provision of fully

repayable Export Marketing Advances and funding for cooperative marketing strategies or events. Advances have been awarded to independent record labels and managers who have demonstrated significant research and groundwork in target overseas markets on behalf of bands and artists with proven export potential. To date, two key projects have been supported through the Marketing Strategies and Events stream: the 1998 Pacific Circle Music Convention and a major promotion by the Association of Independent Record labels at Popkomm in Europe. Full details of Advances offered appear in the grants list of this report.