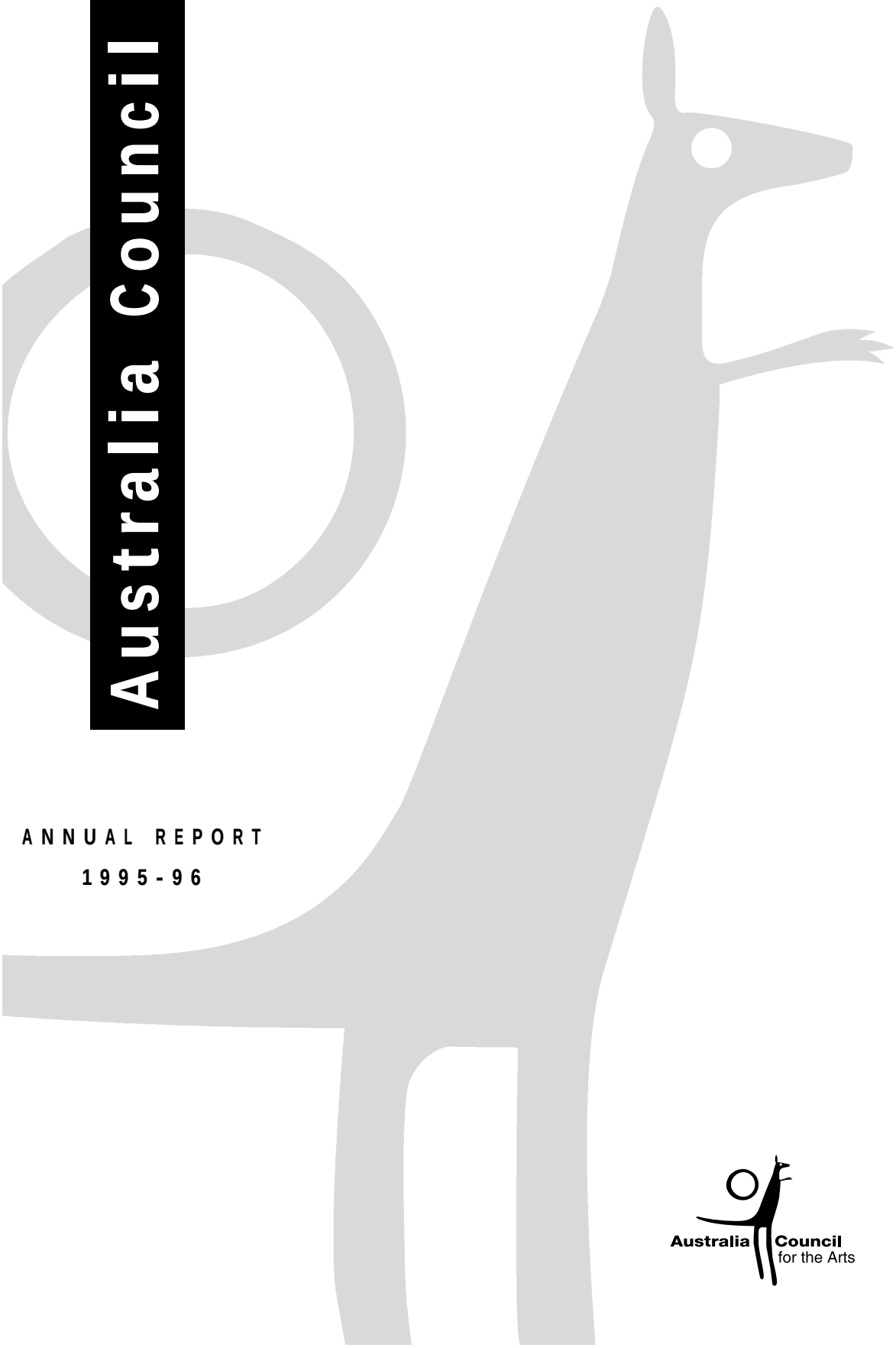
Australia Council

ANNUAL REPORT

1995-96



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National focus, international perspective.

The objectives of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division are to support and develop strategies to increase participation in and appreciation of the arts and to increase opportunities for Australian artists to promote their work, nationally and internationally. These initiatives complement the support already available for marketing and advocacy activities in the grants programs offered by the Funds and Board.

The Audience Development and Advocacy Division was established on 8 April 1996 as part of the restructure of the Australia Council. The Division occupies a unique position within the organisation, working directly with both Council and the Funds and Board. While the Council itself is the body approving the strategic directions which will be supported through Audience Development and Advocacy, the Board and Fund Chairs will contribute directly to the decision-making processes, particularly in the development and implementation of the Arts Export Strategy. In addition, the artform expertise of members of the Funds and Board, and Peers drawn from the Register, will be incorporated into the development of policies and the decision-making processes of the Division as appropriate.

National Access

The national focus of the Audience Development and Advocacy Division is directed towards partnerships with local, State and Federal levels of government. The Division is also undertaking advocacy initiatives in areas such as regional arts, arts for a multicultural Australia, arts and disability and youth arts.

A new partnership agreement between the Australia Council and the Australian Local Government Association was negotiated for the 1996-98 period. Known as the Local Government Cultural Development Strategy, the agreement involves both parties working together to advocate the value of the arts and cultural development as an integrated component of local government planning. The new partnership is consistent with the 1992-95 agreement, which was brokered by the Community Cultural Development Board.

Under the aegis of this agreement, work is progressing on developing an urban design policy and an accompanying set of guidelines for local councils. These resources will promote the integration of cultural planning, and define potential roles for artists within urban design practice.

Since 1993, the Australia Council has been working in partnership with the Australian Heritage Commission and the Australian Conservation Foundation to promote the integration of cultural and environmental issues within the design and management of urban coastal areas. The project, entitled *Coastwise*, was initially supported through Council's Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD) program.

The Australia Council is also collaborating with the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy to support community-based arts projects which are undertaken as an integrated aspect of broadly focused regional development strategies.

National Festival of Youth Arts

Australia's first national festival of youth culture, media and the arts is a Commonwealth Government initiative managed by the Australia Council. The goal is to create, through corporate sponsorship, a festival which will harness the extraordinary and diverse creativity and artistic talents of young Australians, aged between 12 and 25, and showcase them through a range of media integral to Australian youth culture.

Innovative and groundbreaking use of mass media and new media and technology form the foundation for this 'virtual' festival in reaching and involving young Australians across the nation.

During the year under review, one of several initiatives encouraging the involvement of young people in regional Australia was initiated. This places artists in rural communities to work with young people to produce artistic work across a

range of artforms, especially using new technologies, for possible incorporation into the larger festival program. Six fellowships, each valued at $20,000, with matching funds from the host communities, were awarded to the following combinations of arts organisations, artists and artsworkers:

Branco Gaica

The National Youth Arts Festival Committee in January 1996 when the appointment of Brandon Saul as Executive Producer was announced. Back row, left to right: Natalie Jenkins, Zane Trow, Brandon Saul, Lesa-Belle Furhagen, Karen Bryant; front row: David Branson, Sophie Cunningham, Liza Lim. Absent: Deborah Mailman.

- Accessible Arts Inc for two artists to work in various NSW regional communities with disabled and non-disabled young people;
- South Australian Country Arts Trust, Renmark, for artists Phillip Banningan and Sue Harris of @rtsnet to develop multimedia and arts activities which reflect the cultural diversity of youth in the Riverland and Mallee regions;
- Chris Caines and Casula Powerhouse, NSW, to develop and present exhibitions of work by young artists on a special Internet site;
- Mount Isa Skill Share for Rosemary Wright to work with young Aboriginal people in Mount Isa and the surrounding north-west Queensland region;
- John Cheeseman and Streetlevel, Blacktown, to work with youth involved in hip hop cultures in western Sydney;
- Salamanca Theatre Company, Tasmania, for artist Rachel Dudgeon to produce a series of festival-style events in two interlinked locations.

Marketing Initiatives

In the first three months of its operations, the Audience Development and Advocacy Division considered a number of projects with outcomes directed towards audience development.

Seventeen projects to a value of approximately $1.7m were supported including:

- a consortium of South Australian agencies (including the SA Cooperative Multimedia Centre, the SA Writers' Centre and the State Departments of Education and the Arts) to develop a 'virtual' writer-in-residence pilot project;
- the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women for the coordination of arts programs and related skills development activity in eight regional centres, highlighting and developing the leadership role of women in rural communities;
- Metro TV (NSW) to develop a business plan which will assist in the establishment of a community cultural and educational cable television channel; and
- the contemporary music export program, *Big Backyard*, to support production and distribution of fortnightly programs of contemporary Australian music to approximately 750 radio stations in North America, Europe and Asia.

Arts Export

The Australia Council has in the past undertaken various initiatives in arts export on an artform basis. Since 1991, the Council has worked with Austrade in developing a partnership to promote the Visual Arts Export Strategy as a major international program of the Visual Arts/Craft Board. Export in performing arts has been undertaken by the Performing Arts Board and has included Australia's participation in the Performing Arts Market at the Tokyo International Festival of the Performing Arts, at CINARS in Montreal, Canada, and the Australian Performing

Arts Market, an initiative of the Board, first held in 1994. Export of literature, managed by the Literature Board, has included activities such as assistance to overseas book and magazine publishers and the production of overseas editions of works by or on living Australian writers, assistance to overseas publishers for the promotion of the work of living Australian writers, and grants to Australian translators.

Under the restructure of the Council, arts export is now managed through Audience Development and Advocacy Division and its capacity expanded to account for export in all artforms.

An Arts Export Group, chaired by Professor David Throsby, provides advice to the Council on the development of arts export strategies. Membership of the group includes representatives of Austrade, the Cultural Olympiad of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, commercial galleries and arts publishers, as well as members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and other appropriate Indigenous representatives. Membership will be revised in the forthcoming year to reflect performing arts and literature in addition to visual arts experience. Advisory and reporting mechanisms to the Board, Funds and Council will be established.

Over the past year, the Visual Arts Export Strategy has enabled 27 commercial visual arts and craft galleries to attend five international fairs throughout North America, Asia and Europe. The strategy has encouraged over $500,000 in export income, with considerable flow-on benefits expected. Key markets targeted included Singapore, Hong Kong, Cologne, Basel, Chicago, San Francisco and Madrid.

Planning is well advanced for the second Performing Arts Market to be held at the Australian National University Arts Centre in October, and for a strong Australian presence at CINARS in December 1996, where Australia has been invited to be a focus country. These events are opportunities to present a wide range of contemporary Australian dance, theatre and music to representatives of the major touring circuits, arts festivals and venues from most parts of the world.

International Promotion

Within this section of the Division, Audience Development and Advocacy undertakes partnerships and projects which demonstrate strategic outcomes within an international context. This includes management of Australian government trade and cultural promotions, particularly those organised in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and key international arts events, such as the Venice Biennale and the Triennale India, major arts festivals, including international festivals such as those located in Australian capital cities, and, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, the forthcoming Festival of Pacific Arts, scheduled for September 1996 in Western Samoa.

Briefings with Heads of Australian Missions and Cultural Counsellors occur regularly and in the past year have included the Ambassadors to Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, the High Commissioner to the UK, the Director of Cultural Affairs to the USA, and the Public Affairs Counsellor to the Philippines. The Division coordinates the arts briefings to international guests who visit the Australia Council and endeavours through such briefings to strengthen partnership opportunities for international arts development.

The Australia Council is taking a leadership role and has funded four components of the Australia-India New Horizons cultural program – a visual arts exchange, the performing arts program; a publishing initiative; and an arts symposium. New Horizons, which opens in October 1996, is the fourth in a series of integrated country promotions organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through its International Cultural Relations Branch.

Australian participation at the prestigious Venice Biennale continues to provide significant international promotion and export opportunities for Australian visual arts and artists. At the 1995 Biennale, 123,649 people attended the exhibition of the work of Victorian photographer Bill Henson, curated by Isobel Crombie, during the four and a half months it was displayed at the Australian Pavilion. This breaks the previous record set in 1993 when 101,000 people visited the Pavilion. The Australian Commissioner for this event was Ann Lewis, AM. The Bill Henson exhibition then returned to Australia for an extremely successful national tour, opening in Perth at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, before touring to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and a forthcoming exhibition at the Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart. Australian representation at the 1995 Venice Biennale and part of the subsequent national tour was managed by the Australian Exhibitions Touring Agency. From Darwin on, the exhibition has been managed by the National Gallery of Australia.

With the restructure of the Council, support for Asialink is now administered by the Audience Development and Advocacy Division. Asialink has managed visual arts/craft residencies and exhibitions since 1991, and performing artists and arts managers residencies were successfully launched in 1995. During the 1995-96 financial year, there were eight visual arts/craft residencies in eight Asian countries, including India, China and Korea; and throughout 1996, ten performing artists and four arts managers residencies in nine countries, including Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines. A literature residency program and a domestic marketing and promotion program are currently being developed for implementation in 1996-97.

From *Images from the Edge*, a *Coastwise* project concerned with landscape and lifestyle in the Northern Rivers Region of New South Wales.

Peter Derrett