



Australian Government



Australia Council
for the Arts

Australia Council
Annual Report

07

08

www.australiacouncil.gov.au

This annual report and a full list of grants is available for download from www.australiacouncil.gov.au/annualreport0708/

The Australia Council respects Indigenous communities and cultures. Readers should be aware that this report may contain images or references to members of the Indigenous community who have passed away.

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The Australia Council is the Australian Government’s arts funding and advisory body. Our vision is to enrich our nation by supporting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

In 2007–08 the Australia Council adopted six strategic priorities to focus our efforts on critical areas for the arts in Australia—and our own capacity to support the sector—into the future.

The Australia Council placed the needs of the arts sector front and centre in a review of its business plans, commencing in April 2007. Following a series of consultations with arts sector representatives, the governing Council refocused the organisation on six strategic priorities that were formally adopted in October 2007. The six priorities will frame the Australia Council's activities over the next three years. You can read more about the six strategic priorities in the following pages. Selected Australia Council activities under each priority are highlighted in red throughout the 'year in review' section of this annual report.



- 1** Artists' income levels
- 2** Greater appreciation for the arts
- 3** Business and philanthropic involvement in the arts
- 4** Knowledge centre on the arts in Australia
- 5** Arts content for the digital era
- 6** National impact of the Australia Council



SHAUN PARKER'S INNOVATIVE *THIS SHOW IS ABOUT PEOPLE* WAS INCLUDED IN THE SYDNEY FESTIVAL'S MOVERS & SHAKERS PROGRAM. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PHOTO JOHN SONES.



1: Artists' income levels

In 2002, Australian practising professional artists earned an average of \$24,000 per year from their creative endeavours. Most supplement their artistic activity with other paid work.

The Australia Council is committed to developing the arts as a properly remunerated career path. Increasing income levels for artists is essential to attract and retain the best creative talent.

Our core business—grants and funding programs—provides a crucial income stream for artists. We are already finding internal efficiencies to maximise the funding dollars flowing to the sector, with \$1 million in savings passed on to artists through grants and funding programs in 2007.

Advocating for more government funding at all levels, and for government to explore the tax status of this money, is also on the agenda for improving artists' incomes.

You can read more examples of the Australia Council's support for increasing artists' income levels:

Support for Shaun Parker's *This Show Is About People* (page 29)

The work of PlayWriting Australia (page 33)

A maker to manufacturer to market grant for Caroline Casey (page 33)

The 2008 Red Ochre Award to Doris Pilkington Garimara (page 28)



2: Greater appreciation for the arts

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Australians love the arts, but not everyone knows it. Approximately 6 million adults attend a performing arts event, 3.6 million attend a visual arts event, and more than 3.5 million of us make creating art a major part of our lives each year. Yet many people think the arts are for a select few.

The Australia Council plays a leadership role in promoting Australians' engagement with our shared culture and fostering participation in the arts.

Our community partnerships programs support all Australians to create their own culture—wherever and wherever they are. Our market development initiatives increase audiences for the arts nationally and around the world.

The coming years will see the Australia Council reach out to more people, telling the stories of Australia's arts and advocating for the key role they play in our cultural life.

You can read more examples of the Australia Council's support for greater appreciation for the arts:

The Queensland Music Festival's regional program (page 40)

Sydney Festival's Movers & Shakers dance program (page 38)

Big hART's production *Ngapartji, Ngapartji* (page 36)

The Biennale of Sydney 2008 (page 41)

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MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN CHILDREN'S
CHOIR IN THE BLADENSBURG NATIONAL PARK
AS PART OF THE 2007 QUEENSLAND MUSIC
FESTIVAL. IMAGE COURTESY NEWSPIX.





3: Business and philanthropic involvement in the arts

Business and the arts work together. In 2006–07, cultural organisations earned more than \$171.1 million from private income sources. The arts gave back in incalculable ways—from creative skills for the workforce through marketing partnerships to the personal well-being of employees.

The Australia Council has facilitated links between business, philanthropy and the arts for many years. Artsupport Australia, our initiative to grow cultural philanthropy, has been leading the way in this area since 2003.

Over the past five years, Artsupport has facilitated approximately \$20 million in philanthropic donations to artists and arts organisations. It has linked up artists with income sources, mentored artists and organisations to fundraise themselves, and raised understanding of philanthropy throughout the sector.

You can read more examples of the Australia Council's support for business and philanthropic involvement in the arts:

Kurruru Indigenous Youth Performing Arts' *Second to None* (page 41)

Red Room Company's *Papercuts* poetry education program (page 39)

Feral Arts' website
www.placestories.com (page 37)

Wadeye Community Cultural Festival (page 37)

4: Knowledge centre on the arts in Australia

The Australia Council has a strong tradition of providing research and insights into the arts sector. Over the past decade, we have produced more than a hundred research reports, resources and other publications on the arts in Australia. This forms the bedrock of our policy and advocacy, and is a valuable resource for the arts sector and community.

The Australia Council is working to strengthen our capacity even further and to be universally recognised as the leading source of information on the arts in Australia.

Our research program has already had major impacts in 2007–08. Sector-leading reports into the digital downloading of music, future trends in the major performing arts and protocols for producing Indigenous arts were all important resources for the sector.

We have also launched an online research hub through www.australiacouncil.gov.au —a one-stop shop for information about the nation's arts and culture.

You can read more examples of the Australia Council's work as a knowledge centre on the arts in Australia:

Research into digital downloads of music (page 31)

The Anticipating Change in the Major Performing Arts report (page 32)

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BACK TO BACK THEATRE'S *SMALL METAL OBJECTS* TOURED THE WORLD AND WON AWARDS IN THE USA AND SWITZERLAND. IMAGE COURTESY BACK TO BACK THEATRE. PHOTO: PRUDENCE UPTON.



THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET'S SWAN LAKE WAS BEAMED INTO CINEMAS, OUTDOOR THEATRES AND LIVING ROOMS ACROSS THE NATION. IMAGE COURTESY THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET.



5: Arts content for the digital era

Digital technologies are changing the way Australians work and play. Online, mobile, gaming, broadcast and interactive industries already contribute more than \$21 billion to the economy each year. Creativity is critical, with artists and animators making up nearly one-third of the workforce producing digital games.

The Australia Council recognises that artists must be supported to push their creativity into new domains. Digital technologies help connect with new audiences and provide an important source of income.

We have supported cutting-edge artists working in media arts and inter-disciplinary arts through grant programs and initiatives for many years.

Initiatives in 2007–08 have enabled writers to develop narratives for new media platforms, major performing arts companies to beam hit productions across the country, and artists to create and commercialise content for mobile platforms, to name just three examples.

You can read more examples of the Australia Council's support for arts content for the digital era:

Major performing arts companies' digital broadcasts (page 38)

The Second Life residency that created *Babelswarm* (page 29)

The story of the future digital writing initiative (page 30)

The Australian Network of Art and Technology's *Portable Worlds* (page 38)

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6: National impact of the Australia Council

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The Australia Council's reach must extend across the nation to properly support and sustain the entire arts sector. With offices based in Sydney, our challenge is to use technology and travel to reach further into all of Australia's metropolitan centres and regional areas.

The Australia Council is committed to improving our communication with, support for and presence in all the nation's arts communities.

A program to employ staff in other states and territories has already begun. Artsupport Australia has appointed managers in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia in partnership with the relevant state and territory agencies. The market development section now has staff in Victoria and Queensland working on major projects.

In 2008, the governing Council has held meetings in Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra and Alice Springs, enabling Council members to talk with local artists and industry representatives.

A large, bold, red number '6' is positioned at the bottom of the page. The background of the page is a black and white photograph of a vast, flat, open landscape under a clear sky, with a dark shadow cast on the ground in the lower right corner.



SHAUN GLADWELL'S VIDEO WORK *APOLOGY TO ROADKILL* WILL FEATURE AT THE VENICE BIENNALE IN 2009. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY. PHOTO: JOSH RAYMOND.

\$16.9b

size of the arts and related industries

284,793

Australians employed in a cultural occupation

3.5m

Australians who do paid or unpaid work in the arts and culture

6m

adult Australians attend the performing arts each year

3.6m

adult Australians attend visual art galleries each year

\$146.9m

total grant and project funding to artists and arts organisations

1736

Australia Council grants and projects

5215

new artistic works created with Australia Council support

5394

new artistic works presented with Australia Council support

9.5m

attendances at Australia Council-supported events

The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2006

1 September 2008

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Dear Minister

I present you with the annual report of the Australia Council for 2007–08.

Under Section 9 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, the members of the Council are responsible for the preparation and content of a report of operations in accordance with orders issued by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.

The following report of operations was adopted by resolution of the Council on 12 August 2008.

We have used this annual report to introduce the key pillars of our business plan for the coming years. Our focus on six strategic priorities will support the arts sector to build towards a more secure future.

Four of these priorities—artists' income levels, greater appreciation for the arts, business and philanthropic involvement in the arts and arts content for the digital era—aim to build the sustainability of the arts and help artists take on future challenges.

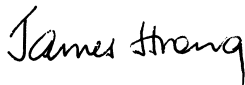
At their heart, each of these priorities has a commitment to forging stronger connections between the arts and the wider community. This interweaving of the arts into the lives of all Australians can only have positive benefits for both the artistic and the wider community.

The other two priorities—knowledge centre on the arts in Australia and national impact of the Australia Council—will strengthen the Australia Council's capacity to deliver efficient and effective programs for the arts sector.

2007–08 has continued to see the Australia Council provide critical financial and operational support for artists and arts organisations across the country. Our investment of more than \$146.9 million enabled Australia's artists to create 5215 new works and to present, perform, publish or exhibit 5394 new works throughout the financial year. This support enabled more than 9.5 million arts attendances during the year.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the Government's support for the arts in its first Budget. The announcement of new arts initiatives commencing in 2008–09 worth \$21.8 million will go a long way to supporting community arts and young artists across the country.

Yours faithfully



James Strong AO
Chairman

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1.0 Year in review 2007–08 **20**
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Functions of the Australia Council

The functions of the Australia Council are defined in Section 5 of the *Australia Council Act 1975*:

- a) to formulate and carry out policies designed:
- i) to promote excellence in the arts
 - ii) to provide, and encourage provision of, opportunities for persons to practise the arts
 - iii) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts
 - iv) to promote the general application of the arts in the community
 - v) to foster the expression of a national identity by means of the arts
 - vi) to uphold and promote the rights of persons to freedom in the practice of the arts
 - vii) to promote the knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries
 - viii) to promote incentives for, and recognition of, achievement in the practice of the arts
 - ix) to encourage the support of the arts by the states, local governing bodies and other persons and organisations
- b) to furnish advice to the Government of the Commonwealth either of its own motion or upon request made to it by the Minister, on matters connected with the promotion of the arts or otherwise related to the performance of its functions; and
- c) to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the foregoing functions.

Australia Council

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