

The Strategy and Policy Division provides support to Council in its daily operations and coordinates the various functions and responsibilities granted to the Council under the Australia Council Act.

Policy, planning and research, public affairs, library, arts infrastructure support and the Council's Secretariat are all part of this Division.



Jenny Coopes' cartoon for the cover of *To Sell Art, Know Your Market*.

POLICY AND PLANNING

One of the Division's main achievements has been the development of the 1996-1999 Corporate Plan and detailed action planning. The Division has also managed Council's response to the new policies identified in the 1996-97 Budget for regional arts, emerging artists, major festivals and contemporary music export.

The Division coordinated Council submissions to a number of government inquiries/reviews, including:

- Mansfield (ABC);
- Gonski (film);
- Establishment of a sixth television channel;
- Australian content on-line and on pay TV;
- Department of Communications and the Arts (DoCA) forum about Indigenous intellectual property issues;
- ArtBank scoping study and review;
- Higher education financing and policy;
- Role and future of Australia Television and Radio Australia;
- Reform of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act;
- Copyright Law Review Committee: simplification of the Fair Dealing provisions of the Copyright Act.

The Division administers a range of projects for Council, including infrastructure support for the Australian Copyright Council and the Arts Law Centre and cross-artform projects related to artform development. The Division also maintains liaison with CREATE (Culture Research Education and Training Enterprise Australia) which is the training advisory board for cultural industries, and the Australian Institute of Arts Administration which is the peak national body representing arts managers in Australia.

Strategic research which produces information that is directly useful – for example, in assisting artists and arts organisations to better understand existing and potential audiences – is a critical contribution the Australia Council makes to the arts. Projects conducted during 1996-97 include:

- the fifth edition of the Council's compendium of arts statistics, *The Arts: Some Australian Data*, prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS);
- a joint study with the Powerhouse Museum on ways to promote greater access to museums and art museums by people of non-

English speaking background, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, published as *Open Up! Guidelines for Cultural Diversity Visitors Studies*;

- a research project, in collaboration with the National Culture/Recreation Statistics Unit of the ABS, on Indigenous artists in Australia;
- research for a paper on international visitors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts;
- an analysis of data on career paths, training, employment and income of Australian visual artists and craftspeople, published as *Similarity and Difference: Craftspeople and Visual Artists in Australia*;
- *Corporate Support for the Arts 1996*, a study of corporate sector support for the arts which builds on three previous surveys, allowing comparisons to be made back to 1986;
- a major study of consumers and potential consumers of visual arts and fine crafts, published as *To Sell Art, Know Your Market*;
- a study of marketing and audience development by Australian arts organisations, titled *Marketing the Arts*;
- the final in the series co-published with Allen & Unwin, *The Art of Self-Promotion: Musicians*;
- a review by the ABS on arts employment and unemployment in Australia, published as *Artwork: A Report on Australians Working in the Arts*;
- a study of audiences and potential audiences for music, theatre and dance;
- a survey of the type and frequency of arts festivals in Australia, their attendances, artist engagements, staffing, income and expenditure.

Other areas of policy activity included:

- **New Media and Technology**

The Council continued to address the implications of digital technology for the Australia Council and the arts community. It sought advice in acquiring skills and stan-



dards for the assessment of digital work, in developing on-line services, and in building an appreciation of new media and new technologies in relation to the arts.

Council's advocacy about Australian content regulation, broadcasting and industry development have highlighted the impact of new technologies.

The Council's site on the World Wide Web (<http://www.ozco.gov.au>) incorporates details of all the Council's grants programs and information for potential applicants, as well as other information about the Council and its staff, frequently asked questions, links to other arts organisations, press releases and articles from the Council's newsletter *Artforce*. The site's potential to enable the Council to better serve its constituents, for example through on-line application forms, publications and collaborative projects, is being addressed as resources allow.

Through its Strategy and Policy Division, Council has continued to build relationships with other agencies and organisations in the new technologies field, especially with a number of the Cooperative Multimedia Centres.

- **Arts and Taxation**

Throughout the year in review, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) scrutinised

Collaborations with the Australian Bureau of Statistics are vital for informed research on the arts in Australia.

Here Barry Haydon, Director of the Bureau's National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics in Adelaide, and George Sarossy, First Assistant Statistician, ABS, talk with new Australia Council Chair, Margaret Seares at the launch of *Artwork: A Report on Australians Working in the Arts*, an important research project undertaken by the ABS for the Australia Council during the year. Photo: Peter Kelly

artists and their ability to claim deductions as part of carrying on a business. The Division arranged a series of meetings to discuss the ATO's draft ruling on the issue and made a submission on the *Sales Tax Draft Bulletin: Works of Art* which sought to inform the ATO about contemporary art practices. It worked with the Arts Law Centre to make a submission based on the authoritative Australian judgment for the definition of a work of art.

- **Local and Regional Arts Development**

Since 1 July 1996 the Division has coordinated the development of a Council-wide regional arts action plan and a related regional arts policy statement. The Division has negotiated with State and Territories on the implementation of the Regional Arts Budget initiative, and developed multi-State projects worth a total of \$6 million for implementation in 1997-98 and 1998-99.

A number of strategic initiatives are also being undertaken through partnerships with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and the Department of Primary Industries and Energy (DPIE). These include research and consultation to develop a practical guide to evaluation and benchmarking for local government cultural development practice; and development of a resource kit to assist local councils in outsourcing the management of performing arts centres.

The partnership with DPIE is linked to the Rural Partnership Program, which builds arts and cultural development strategies into holistic and multifaceted regional development strategies. SunRISE 21 – Sunraysia Regional Initiative for a Sustainable Economy, 21st century – has been funded through this initiative to develop an artist-in-rural-industry project. The project examines land and water management issues through placing artists with rural industries in the Sun-

raysia region on the NSW-Victorian border. The Division also liaises with the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women which received funding to pilot regional arts and skills development projects with rural women in East Gippsland in Victoria and the Atherton Tableland in North Queensland.

- **Community, Environment, Art & Design (CEAD)**

The Division monitored activity for Council and coordinated advocacy and strategic initiatives, such as the development by a Western Australian consortium of a Web site to promote critical debate around CEAD-related issues; the commissioning and distribution by the Melbourne-based Key Centre for Design at RMIT of critical papers on environmentally sustainable design; and, in partnership with the ALGA, the development of urban design guidelines for local government (see page 25).

- **Arts for a Multicultural Australia (AMA)**

The promotion of cultural diversity is recognised by Council as integral to all policy and program initiatives. A quarterly reporting process for the implementation of the AMA Action Plan was put in train following the May 1996 Council meeting, which required the Director of each Division to provide specific information relative to performance indicators.



Cultural Perspectives Pty Ltd was commissioned to develop a 'best practice models' publication and a pilot project to provide a guide for organisations to respond effectively to Australia's cultural diversity and

in accordance with Council's goals and policy principles.

- **Arts and Disability**

As part of the Australia Council's Disability Action Plan and its partnership with the Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia Network (DADAA), the Division developed a draft Fact Package on the impact of Federal disability legislation on arts organisations.

- **Arts and Education**

The Division actively liaised with key players in the arts and education field to address issues facing support for Australian arts. A substantial submission to the Department of Employment Education and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) about the operation of the funding formula known as the 'research quantum', and the inclusion of Australia Council funding in the composite index of funding which can affect that quantum, is one example from the year under review.

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat provides support services to the Council, its Chair and General Manager, and generally acts as a point of contact regarding Council's legislative functions.

Its services include scheduling and coordinating all Council meetings and agendas, and liaison with the Minister and his office and with DoCA regarding these functions. One of the main events organised by the Secretariat this year was the national induction day for Council and new Board/Fund members, held on 13 August 1996.

Responses to over 100 ministerials and 27 questions-on-notice (including some from the Senate Estimates Hearings) were coordinated during 1996-97.

Management of the Register of Peers was moved from Secretariat to the new Operations Section of Arts Funding Division during the year, as was responsibility for coordinating requests for information and reviews of decisions under both the Commonwealth Government's administrative law provisions and Council's own internal review mechanisms.

Details of information requested under Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act are provided at the end of this report, together with the Council's Freedom of Information statistics (see page 129).

LIBRARY

The role of the Library is to develop and maintain a high standard of arts industry publications and current awareness services for Australia Council staff and the arts community. These resources now consist of books, reports, journals, videos, CDs, databases and the Internet.

The Library engaged in many reference and circulation activities in order to meet the information requirements of its clients: 3,430 inquiries were satisfied directly by the Library and its resources, while a further 164 items were borrowed through the Inter Library Loan (ILL) system. The Library made its resources available to other institutions throughout Australia by lending 130 items on ILL. Over the last year the Library purchased, catalogued and processed 1,582 new titles for the collection, and subscribed to approximately 350 journals.

In its first full year of operation, the automated library system Horizon has not only enabled the Library to vastly improve the level of service to its clients, it has also allowed it to maintain that level of service despite the reduction in staffing the Library received as a result of budget cuts. Australia Council staff are now

able to search the library catalogue as well as a number of Australian databases (AUSTROM) from their desktop.



Australia Council Chair Hilary McPhee, Minister for Communications and the Arts Senator Richard Alston, and Council General Manager Michael Lynch at the launch of the Performing Arts Market in Canberra in October 1996. The promotion and launch of the Market, which showcased sixteen leading Australian companies to over 400 local and international industry delegates, was a major and successful project for the Council. Photo: Brendan Read

The Library played a key role in Council's Internet presence by coordinating the Internet Reference Group, by managing staff Internet training sessions delivered by CADRE of the University of Western Sydney, and by compiling and maintaining a list of over 170 relevant Internet sites. The Library also researched national and international Internet developments as they relate to the arts sector, and advised on strategies to benefit the arts community.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The role of the Council's Public Affairs Section is to enhance awareness and appreciation of the role of the Australia Council in arts development. The section maintains close liaison with the rest of Council, the arts community, the government and the media to identify, advise and act on promotional and information needs and opportunities. It also monitors and responds to relevant issues raised in the media.

A total of 75 press releases announcing grants and other Council initiatives were distributed

during 1996-97 and Public Affairs responded daily to media requests for information and interviews on a range of issues.

A major Public Affairs achievement in this period was the finalisation of a new 'look' for Council publications, created by newly appointed graphic designers, Antart. The 1997 Closing Dates poster, Grants Handbook, Corporate Plan and print advertising are in the new format, with the Council's World Wide Web site and other print publications to follow.

A successful strategy was introduced to expand coverage of Council support for the arts in regional Australia through regular information packages and releases provided to Federal Parliamentarians for distribution.

Since July 1996, there has been a sustained period of positive coverage of the Council's activities on the following topics: the new Budget initiatives, the Performing Arts Market, grant round announcements (particularly the Literature grants), the Australia-India New Horizons program, and the Venice Biennale. The Council also gained widespread coverage of its major research publications released, including *The Arts: Some Australian Data* (fifth edition), *Marketing the Arts* and *Corporate Support for the Arts*.

There was mixed media coverage to Council's announcement of a \$176,000 grant to assist *The Australian* newspaper with commissioning material by Australian writers in its new literary magazine.

The Public Affairs Section considerably expanded its media contacts list to include a wider variety of mainstream media and has been successful in introducing the activities of the Council to outlets such as mainstream non-arts media such as commercial radio as well as multimedia publications and overseas correspondents.

A total of 26 publications were released during the year, including three editions of the Council's newsletter, *Artforce*. See pages 132-133 for the full list of publications issued in 1996-97.

Public Affairs also manages the information design and compiles all the content for the Council's Web site. The site has information for grant applicants (including in 1997, for the first time, application forms), Council policies, media releases, publications, and links to other arts-related sites.

Advertising and Market Research

The Council uses print advertising for the notification of closing dates, the introduction of new programs, and invitations to potential applicants to meet with Council/Board/Fund members and staff at forums and briefings.

During 1996-97, advertisements announcing the 1997 grant closing dates were run in nine major metropolitan daily newspapers, as well as two Indigenous and ten non-English speaking community newspapers. National coverage was given to announce the availability of the new Grants Handbook. Expenditure on such advertising totalled \$158,603 for the year. No creative or campaign advertising was undertaken.

The use of mailing houses is limited to the distribution to applicants, the media and the public of newsletters, the Grants Handbook, research reports and other information on Council activities. Expenditure on these services, excluding postage, was \$11,801 for the year under review.