

2.0 About the Australia Council

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

Section 2.0
The Australia
Council

The Australia Council enriches our nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

To help artists and arts organisations make excellent art and give Australians the opportunity to experience and enjoy it, the Australia Council:

- Supports artists and organisations through funding programs
- Invests in opportunities for all Australians to enjoy the arts
- Promotes the arts in all their diversity and builds new audiences in Australia and overseas
- Builds the capacity of the arts sector
- Facilitates partnerships between artists, governments, business and communities
- Researches the arts and culture
- Develops arts policy and provides advice
- Advocates for the arts with government and the community.

Formed as an interim Council in 1973, the Australia Council was given statutory authority status by the *Australia Council Act 1975*. It replaced an earlier non-statutory body called the Australian Council for the Arts, which had been established as a division of the Prime Minister's Department in 1968.

The Australia Council subsumed other arts-related government functions, such as the Commonwealth Literary Fund and the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board. It was granted considerably expanded functions and greater independence from government than its predecessors.

The work of the Australia Council is guided by two fundamental principles:

- The 'arm's length' principle, enshrined in the *Australia Council Act 1975*, which provides that Ministers may not direct the Council with respect to the provision of grants.
- The 'peer assessment' principle, whereby decisions on grants are made by artists, individuals closely associated with the arts, and community representatives who are peers of those being assessed. Grants are offered to artists and arts organisations whose proposals, in competition with those of other applicants, and within budgetary constraints, demonstrate the highest degree of artistic merit and innovation.

2.1 Corporate governance

The governing body of the Australia Council—the Council—is responsible for the overall corporate governance of the organisation.

The Council

The Council determines priorities, policies and the budgetary framework within which the Australia Council and its boards, committees and advisory bodies operate, and monitors its achievements.

In accordance with the terms of the *Australia Council Act 1975*, the Council has between 10 and 14 members, including the Australia Council chief executive officer who is a member of the Council *ex officio*. The Governor-General appoints the Council chairperson on advice of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts. The Minister appoints members of the Council. Terms of appointment for members of the Council are generally three years, up to a maximum of six. Members are appointed with a view to achieving a balance of relevant expertise in the arts, business, management, public policy, corporate governance and administration, appropriate for regional, gender, multicultural and Indigenous community participation in the arts.

All new members of the Council attend a formal induction program where they receive a copy of the *Australia Council Manual for Members* and the *General Guidance for Directors of Statutory Authorities*. They must abide by the *Code of Conduct for Holders of Public Office* (the Bowen Code) that is reproduced in the *Manual for Members*. The manual also contains a section that outlines appropriate ethical standards with regard to, among other things, confidentiality and disclosure of Council business, conflicts of interest, political activity, sponsored travel and acceptance of gifts.

If a Council member believes at any time that he or she requires legal advice on any matter, the chairperson advises the chief executive officer to consult the legal and compliance manager on the procedure for obtaining this advice.

The Council met five times during 2007–08:

Melbourne	4–5 September 2007
Sydney	29–30 November 2007
Sydney	6–7 February 2008
Alice Springs	14–15 April 2008
Canberra	14–15 May 2008

Members of the Council at 30 June 2008

James Strong AO—Chairman (NSW)

Appointed chairman of the Council for three years from 1 July 2006; member of the audit and finance committee and the nominations and governance committee. Chairman of Woolworths Ltd, Insurance Australia Group Ltd, and the Rip Curl Group Pty Ltd; non-executive director of Qantas Airways Ltd; director of Story Bridge Adventure Climb Pty Ltd and the Australian Grand Prix Corporation.

Joseph Gersh AM—Deputy chairman (Vic.)

Appointed deputy chairman of the Council for three years from 1 July 2006; chairman of the nominations and governance committee and appeals committee, and member of the audit and finance committee. Executive chairman of Gersh Investment Partners Ltd; chairman of the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation and Artbank; director of the Payments System Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia and The Sydney Institute; member of the Business-Government Advisory Group on National Security.

Kathy Keele—Chief executive officer (NSW)

Appointed chief executive officer and member of the Council *ex officio* for three years on 7 February 2007; chair of the decisions review, donations fund and reserves fund committees, member of the audit and finance and nominations and governance committees; *ex officio* member of the Australia International Cultural Council, Heads of Cultural Organisations, Playing Australia Committee and Festivals Australia Committee; observer status on the Cultural Ministers Council Standing Committee; director of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies.

Richard Allert AO—Chair, major performing arts board (SA)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the major performing arts board for three years from 1 February 2006; chair of the audit and finance committee. Chairman of AXA Asia Pacific Holdings Ltd, Tourism Australia and the Aboriginal Foundation of South Australia; deputy chairman of Cavill Power Products Pty Ltd Group; director of the Australia Business Arts Foundation and Genesee & Wyoming Australia Pty Ltd; member of the Forces Advisory Council on Entertainment.

Barbara Black—Community interest representative (WA)

Appointed to the Council as a community interest representative for three years from 3 April 2006; member of the audit and finance and decisions review committees. Director of the University of Western Australia (UWA) Albany Centre.

Rosalba Clemente—Chair, theatre board (SA)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the theatre board for three years from 26 March 2008. Member of the artistic directorate for Hot House Theatre Company; freelance playwright involving Vitalstatistix Theatre Company, Windmill Theatre Company and the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Nicola Downer AM—Community interest representative (SA)

Appointed to the Council as a community interest representative for three years from 18 December 2003, and re-appointed for an additional three years from 18 December 2006; member of the decisions review committee. Governor of the State Theatre Company of South Australia; chair of the Helpmann Academy Foundation and Fleurieu Peninsula Biennale; patron of the Hahndorf Academy; vice patron of Regional Arts Australia; president of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in South Australia, member of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival Advisory Board, Botanic Gardens 150 Committee, Australian Garden History Society, Prostate Cancer Board SA, Sydney Opera House Advocacy Group and Helpmann Academy Board.

Dominique Fisher—Chair, dance board (Vic.)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the dance board for three years from 24 August 2006. Principal of EC Strategies Pty Ltd; managing director of WebAlive Pty Ltd, chair of Circadian Technologies Ltd and Sky Technologies Pty Ltd; non-executive director of Leakes Rd Rockbank Pty Ltd (Mirvac) and Pacific Brands Ltd; director of the Prostate Cancer Foundation (Vic).

Professor Brad Haseman—Community interest representative (Qld)

Appointed to the Council as community interest representative for three years from 26 March 2008; chair of the community partnerships committee. Assistant dean (research), creative industries faculty at the Queensland University of Technology; chair of SPARK.

Dr Graeme Koehne—Chair, music board (SA)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the music board for three years from 19 December 2002, re-appointed for an additional 12 months from 20 December 2005 and re-appointed for an additional two years from 19 December 2006. Professor of composition at the University of Adelaide.

Dr Imre Salusinszky—Chair, literature board (NSW)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the literature board for three years from 24 June 2006. NSW political reporter and columnist for *The Australian* newspaper.

Dr Chris Sarra—Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board (Qld)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board for three years from 9 March 2005, re-appointed for an additional twelve months from 9 March 2008. Director of the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute; council member of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School; member of the Social Inclusion Board.

Professor Edgar Snell AM, Cit WA—Chair, visual arts board (WA)

Appointed to the Council as chair of the visual arts board for three years from 27 December 2006. Professor of contemporary art and dean of art at the John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University of Technology, Perth; Perth art reviewer for *The Australian* newspaper; member of the Fulbright Scholarship Western Australian State Selection Committee.

Staff representative

Australia Council staff elect a representative as an observer on the Council. Kerri McIlvenny, senior policy officer, ATSI/A, held this position from December 2006 to January 2008; Peter Keogh from February to April 2008; Chris Bonney was elected staff representative in April 2008.

Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts representative

The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has observer status on the Council. Lynn Bean, first assistant secretary, arts division, and Mark Taylor, then assistant secretary of arts policy and access, filled this position in 2007–08.

Changes to Council membership in 2007–08

- Tim O’Loughlin, community interest representative, resigned from the Council effective 30 September 2007.
- Ian McRae, chair of the theatre board, completed his term on 23 January 2008.
- Professor Brad Haseman, community interest representative, was appointed for a three-year term from 26 March 2008.
- Rosalba Clemente, chair of the theatre board, was appointed for a three-year term from 26 March 2008.

Figure 11: Schedule of attendance at Council meetings 2007–08

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
James Strong AO	5	5
Joseph Gersh AM	5	4
Kathy Keele	5	5
Richard Allert AO	5	4*
Barbara Black	5	5
Nicola Downer AM	5	3
Dominique Fisher	5	5
Dr Graeme Koehne	5	4
Ian McRae	2	2
Tim O’Loughlin	1	1
Dr Imre Salusinszky	5	4
Chris Sarra	5	5
Prof Edgar Snell	5	5
Kerri McIlvenny	3	3
Peter Keogh	1	0
Chris Bonney	1	1

*One meeting attended in part.

Ministerial directions

The Australia Council received no ministerial directions during the year. Two general policies from previous financial years continue to be noted, namely those on foreign exchange and cost recovery.

Council directions

The *Australia Council Act 1975* requires that the text of all directions to its committees during the year be included in the Australia Council’s annual report. The delegations to the appeals committee, community partnerships committee, decisions review committee, donations fund committee, reserves fund committee, the generic artform boards, major performing arts board and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board are available on the Australia Council’s website at www.australiacouncil.gov.au/annualreport0708/directions

Committees and advisory bodies

In addition to policy input from its boards, the Council relies from time to time on the advice of specialist committees and panels.

Australia Council multicultural advisory committee

The Australia Council multicultural advisory committee (ACMAC) developed strategies for and monitored the implementation of the arts in a multicultural Australia policy. The committee comprised experts in the area of multiculturalism and the arts in Australia and internationally. ACMAC met once and held a national symposium in 2007–08. In April 2008, the Council adopted a cultural engagement framework,

of which the arts in a multicultural Australia policy is a part. As part of the framework, the Council agreed to convene advisory groups to assist in the development of initiatives and strategies as required.

Figure 12: Attendance at ACMAC meetings

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Nicola Downer AM (chair)	2	2
Teresa Crea	2	1
Prof Amareswar Galla	2	0
Walter Gomes	2	2
Kon Gouriotis	2	1
Prof Andrew Jakubowicz	2	2
Fotis Kapetopoulos	2	2
Tiffany Lee-Shoy	2	2
Tim O'Loughlin	2	0

Appeals committee

The Council has delegated powers to the appeals committee to consider and determine any appeal from a board, committee or senior officer of the Australia Council regarding a decision by the Council chairperson and chief executive officer to rescind a previously approved grant. Membership of the committee comprises any two of the non-board chair members of the Council, the deputy chairperson of the Council (or chairperson, if the deputy chairperson has participated in the decision to rescind subject to an appeal), and a board chair member of the Council not involved in the decision previously. No appeals were received during the year and the appeals committee did not meet.

Audit and finance committee

The audit and finance committee's objective is to oversee and review the Australia Council's corporate governance obligations in relation to external accountability, financial reporting, internal controls, risk management, internal and external audit activities, and legal and financial compliance. In addition the committee monitors the Australia Council's compliance with the terms and conditions of the triennial funding agreement with the Australian Government, the Australia Council's overall financial position, budget preparation and any other significant financial issues as they arise. The committee is authorised to request information it requires from employees of the Australia Council, including internal auditors; to discuss matters with external auditors; and to seek independent professional advice, as it considers necessary. Minutes of the committee meetings are included in Council papers and the chair of the committee reports on relevant matters at Council meetings. The committee has an advisory role and is not delegated to act on the Council's behalf. The committee is chaired by a member of the Council and includes the chairperson of the Council, the deputy chairperson, one other Council member and the chief executive officer. The audit and finance committee met five times in 2007–08.

Figure 13: Attendance at audit and finance committee meetings

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Rick Allert AO (chair)	5	5
James Strong AO	5	5
Joseph Gersh AM	5	4
Kathy Keele	5	4
Ian McRae	2	2
Barbara Black	1	1

Community partnerships committee

The community partnerships committee provides strategic, advisory and policy leadership to the Australia Council's community partnerships section. The committee's key responsibilities are to oversee and deliver funding support and grants programs for community partnerships initiatives and community cultural development activities. The committee is also responsible for overseeing the Council's strategic engagement with: arts in the community; youth and the arts; education and the arts; arts in a multicultural Australia; regional arts; and arts and health. The community partnerships committee met four times during 2007–08.

Figure 14: Attendance at community partnerships committee meetings

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Prof Brad Haseman (chair)	4	4
Mia Christophersen	1	0
Tiffany Lee-Shoy	4	3
Caroline O'Neill	1	0
Jan Warzynczak	1	0
Tim O'Loughlin	1	1
Scott Rankin	3	0
Norm Horton	0	0
June Moorhouse	3	2
Jack Ritchie	3	1
Titiana Varkopoulos	3	2

Decisions review committee

The role of this committee is to determine requests for review of decisions from grant applicants who have grounds to claim that correct decision procedures were not followed in relation to their applications. The committee does not assess the artistic merit of applications. Its purpose, under the Council's direction to the committee, is only to ensure that the boards, committees and senior officers have followed correct decision-making procedures. The membership comprises the chief executive officer and Council members, none of whom may be board chairs.

Members of the committee at 30 June 2008 were:

- Kathy Keele (chair)
- Barbara Black
- Nicola Downer AM.

No requests for review were received during the year and the decisions review committee did not meet.

Donations fund committee

This committee accepts and administers gifts made to the Australia Council donations fund in accordance with the requirements of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* and the Register of Cultural Organisations. The committee and the chief executive officer, who is the committee chair, have delegated powers from the Council to accept and administer such gifts. The majority of committee members are independent of the current operations of the Australia Council. The donations fund committee met once in 2007–08.

Figure 15: Attendance at donations fund committee meeting

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Kathy Keele	1	1
Louise Walsh	1	1
Dr Helen Nugent AO	1	1
Leon Paroissien AM	1	1
Phillip Rolfe	1	1

Nominations and governance committee

The nominations and governance committee facilitates and oversees a streamlined nominations process, through which the Council recommends members for the Council and its boards to the Minister, as required under the *Australia Council Act*. The committee also advocates the Council's nominations to the Minister and assists the Council on governance matters, as required. It has an advisory role and is not delegated to act on the Council's behalf. The nominations and governance committee met six times in 2007–08.

Figure 16: Attendance at nominations and governance committee meetings

	MEETINGS HELD WHILE A MEMBER	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Joseph Gersh AM (chair)	6	5
James Strong AO	6	6
Kathy Keele (CEO)	6	5

In addition, board chairs attended meetings as required to address membership issues regarding their boards.

Reserves fund committee

The reserves fund committee was established in 2005 to oversee and manage an allocation of funds reserved for triennially funded companies that are experiencing financial difficulty. The committee is responsible for assessing applications from companies for loans, ensures compliance with relevant legislation and regulations, and reports to the audit and finance committee on the operations of the fund. The reserves fund committee met once in 2007–08.

Members of the committee at 30 June 2008 were:

Kathy Keele (chair)
Tony Grybowski
Robin Cowdery
Ben Strout.

Artform boards

The seven artform boards are the principal administrators of the Australia Council's arts funding role.

They are the Australia Council's major source of advice on the development of arts policy and grant programs.

The Minister establishes the boards under the *Australia Council Act 1975*. They function within the framework of the Australia Council's *Corporate Plan 2006–2010* and related policies and budget allocations. Most boards have seven members and all have a chairperson. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board has nine members, including a chairperson. The major performing arts, music and visual arts boards have eight members.

Artform boards must include people who practise or have practised the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts, as well as a number of community interest representatives, as the Minister thinks fit. Members may initially be appointed for four years but, in general, appointments are for three years (renewable for up to a continuous period not exceeding six years). Board chairs, under the *Australia Council Act 1975*, are members of the Council.

In addition to their role in providing advice to the Council, the artform boards develop their own policies within the framework of policies and priorities determined by the Council.

Peers

The Council has delegated the power to allocate grants principally to the boards. In assessing grant applications, the boards may seek additional guidance in their decisions from experts listed in the Australia Council's register of peers. Peers may be invited once per year by each board to assist at grant assessment meetings.

Peers also provide 'in-the-field' assessments and general policy advice to the boards, as commissioned. Under the Council's Conflict of Interest Code, board members and peers may not assess or advise on their own grant applications, or on grant applications through which they would be major beneficiaries through a third party. In the current year, 54 peers participated in board and committee grants assessment meetings.

Funding decisions by senior officers

Certain senior officers of the Australia Council are delegated the power to make grants and pursue particular purposes already approved by the Council or its boards. When doing so, the senior officers concerned may consider assessment reports by peer experts, or panels of peer experts. In the current year, 36 peers made recommendations to senior officers regarding funding decisions.

Section 2.1
Corporate
governance

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander arts board**

Dr Chris Sarra (chair)
Rosie Barkus
Brenda Croft
Richard Frankland
Jeanette James
Djambawa Marawili
Lynette Narkle
(from February 2008)
Gina Rings
Tara June Winch

**Community partnerships
committee**

Tim O'Loughlin
(chair to September 2007)
Prof Brad Haseman
(chair from October 2007)
Tiffany Lee-Shoy
June Moorhouse
Jack Ritchie
Titiana Varkopolous
Jan Wawrzynczak

Dance board

Dominique Fisher (chair)
Claudia Alessi
Julie-Anne Long
(from May 2008)
Jeff Meiners
Steven Richardson
(to July 2007)
Frances Rings
Elizabeth Walsh
(from April 2008)
Suzan Williams
(to May 2008)

Literature board

Dr Imre Salusinszky (chair)
Dr Ann Galbally
Dr Jack Hibberd
Dr Peter Holbrook
Nicholas Jose
(from September 2007)
Bronwyn Lea
Sophie Masson
Glyn Parry (to July 2007)
Fay Zwicky
(from April 2008)

**Major performing
arts board**

Rick Allert AO (chair)
Frank Cooper
Brian Jamieson
Mary-Ellen King
(from April 2008)
Martin Kriewaldt
(from August 2007)
Katie Lahey
Jonathan Mills
(to December 2007)
Jillian Segal AM
Judith Stewart

Music board

Prof Graeme Koehne (chair)
Prof Andy Arthurs
Father Arthur Bridge AM
Carol Day OAM
Graeme Lyall AM
(from September 2007)
Kim Mooney
(from October 2007)
Paul Petran
Neil Thompson
(from August 2007)

Theatre board

Ian McRae
(chair to January 2008)
Rosalba Clemente
(chair from March 2008)
Elizabeth Butcher AM
Pamela Creed
Annette Downs
Kate Fell (to February 2008)
Matthew Lutton
(from April 2008)
Sarah Miller (to April 2008)
Chris Puplick

Visual arts board

Prof Ted Snell AM (chair)
Seven Alderton
(from October 2007)
Robin Best
Peter Bowles
(to February 2008)
Lyndal Jones
(from April 2008)
Janet Laurence
Daniel McOwan
Karen Mills
(to October 2007)
Robyn Stacey
Michael Zavros
(from October 2007)

2.2 Organisation

The Australia Council's vision is to enrich our nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

Corporate plan

Figure 17: Australia Council corporate plan 2006–2010

OUTCOME 1		OUTCOME 2		
That Australian artists create and present a body of distinctive cultural works characterised by the pursuit of excellence		That Australian citizens and civic institutions appreciate, understand, participate in, enjoy and celebrate the arts		
Output 1.1 Investments in artistic production and development of artistic practice	Output 1.2 Presentation of distinctive Australian culture works nationally and internationally	Output 2.1 Promoting the understanding, enjoyment, participation and appreciation of the arts by Australians	Output 2.2 Infrastructure development for Australia's creative arts	Output 2.3 Provision of policy development, research, promotional and advisory services

The Australia Council's vision is to enrich our nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

Our mission is to:

- Enable Australia's arts and its artists to pursue excellence
- Preserve, maintain and develop the distinctive features of Australia's culture
- Ensure all Australians have the opportunity to engage with the arts and to enjoy a rich cultural life
- Shape a future Australia in which the arts play a meaningful and vital role in everyday life.

Our six strategic priorities are:

- Artists' income levels
- Greater appreciation for the arts
- Business and philanthropic involvement in the arts
- Knowledge centre on the arts in Australia
- Arts content for the digital era
- National impact of the Australia Council.

Organisational structure

On 30 June 2008, the Australia Council organisation comprised the office of the chief executive and seven divisions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts; arts development; Artsupport Australia; community partnerships and market development; corporate resources; governance and public affairs; and major performing arts.

The chief executive officer (CEO) is responsible to the Council for the conduct of its affairs and, in conjunction with the Council chairperson, liaises with the Minister concerning government arts policies and the Australia Council's budget, statutory powers and functions. The CEO also liaises with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts concerning government arts policies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts supports the development and promotion of traditional arts practices and new forms of artistic expression among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban and regional areas, and in all artforms.

Arts development supports the excellence and diversity of arts practice through its grant categories, strategic initiatives and multi-arts projects. The division comprises six arts sections plus the key organisations and operations sections. Senior officers manage grant assessment processes and artform development for the dance, literature, music, theatre and visual arts boards, and for the inter-arts office. The key organisations section is responsible for managing relationships with triennially funded arts organisations. The operations section provides support to the division, and other areas of the Australia Council.

Artsupport Australia is an Australia Council initiative to grow cultural philanthropy. It manages a range of programs designed to grow philanthropic support for the arts and culture in Australia.

Community partnerships and market development is responsible for the Australia Council's work in the areas of community arts, audience and market development, arts marketing skills development, and international marketing and promotion. The community partnerships section drives the Australia Council's work in social inclusion, notably community cultural development, youth, education, disability and regional development.

Corporate resources provides the Australia Council's human resources, financial services, legal compliance, information technology and office services functions. This includes supporting the organisation in its business planning and budgeting activities.

Governance and public affairs is responsible for managing the Australia Council's external relations. It manages a broad range of programs and activities covering marketing and communication, government relations, governance, research and the secretariat.

Major performing arts aims to ensure Australia has an artistically vibrant, financially viable and broadly accessible major performing arts sector. The major performing arts board is responsible for oversight of the operations of performing arts companies throughout Australia, as joint partners with state government funding agencies.

A full-time staff of 129, located in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Darwin supports the work of the Australia Council. Employees are appointed under the *Australia Council Act 1975*, on terms and conditions set out in individual employment agreements, which incorporate the Australia Council's *Determination No.1 of 2006* and the Australia Council's *Certified Agreement 2006–09*.

The Australia Council organisation changed its structure from 1 July 2008 to comprise the office of the chief executive and five divisions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, arts development; arts funding, arts organisations and corporate resources (see page 22).

Staff profile

The Australia Council's staff profile reflects the diversity, flexibility and skills required to meet the changing needs of the dynamic arts sector. The Australia Council's staff level at 30 June 2008 was 129 employees, compared to 150 employees at 30 June 2007 (see figure 18). The representation of employees in the targeted equal employment opportunity groups at 30 June 2008 is shown as a percentage of total employees in Figure 19 below. The Australia Council continues to focus on its employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people with a disability.

Figure 18: Number of staff by division 2007–08

DIVISION	2006–07	2007–08
Arts development	58	51
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts	11	14
Community partnerships and market development	32	30
Corporate resources	21	12
Office of the CEO and Artsupport Australia	8	8
Governance and public affairs	14	7
Major performing arts	6	7
Total	150	129

Figure 19: Representation of employees in equal employment opportunity groups at 30 June 2008

GROUP	%
Women	73.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	3.8%
Disability	2.3%
Non-English speaking background	13.5%

Executive team at 30 June 2008

Kathy Keele—Chief executive officer

Appointed February 2007. Previously chief executive, Australia Business Arts Foundation; extensive experience in business development and marketing.

Karilyn Brown—Executive director, community partnerships and market development

Appointed January 2001. Previously senior program manager cultural programs, SOCOG; more than 20-year career at the Australia Council.

Robin Cowdery—Executive director, corporate resources

Appointed October 2007. Previously general manager, business and finance, Cotton Research and Development Corporation; extensive experience in finance and business administration.

Tony Grybowski—Executive director, major performing arts

Appointed September 2007. Previously general manager, programming and innovation at Arts Victoria; extensive experience in arts management.

Lydia Miller—Executive director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts

Appointed June 2005. Previously executive officer, Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council; extensive experience in the arts, health and community sectors.

Ben Strout—Executive director, arts development

Appointed December 2000. Previously manager, theatre and dance funds; More than 20-year career at the Australia Council.

2.3 Accountability

The Australia Council encourages feedback on its performance. It reviews compliance with the service charter annually and identifies areas for improvement.

Service charter

The Australia Council's service charter reflects its commitment to quality client service. It describes the service standards, which clients and other stakeholders can expect from the Australia Council. Visit www.australiacouncil.gov.au/servicecharter to view the service charter.

Handling customer feedback and complaints

The Australia Council encourages feedback on its performance. It reviews compliance with the service charter annually and identifies areas for improvement. In 2007–08, there were four written complaints. The Australia Council resolved all but one of the complaints within the charter's service standards. The most common complaints were about unsuccessful grant applications.

Commonwealth disability strategy

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy (CDS) is the legislative framework for Commonwealth organisations to meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Australia Council is required to report on its performance in meeting the CDS under the designated core roles of policy adviser, purchaser, provider and employer. In the role of policy adviser, the Australia Council aims to support the needs of people with disabilities in the arts sector. It does so through triennial funding support to Arts Access Australia (AAA), the peak body for arts and disability in Australia. AAA works to promote the rights of people with disabilities to participate in and determine their cultural life. The Australia Council is committed to making its programs accessible to people with disabilities. The Australia Council seeks input from AAA and other representatives to shape its policy and programs.

The Australia Council is committed to making timely public announcements in accessible formats for people with disabilities. Its media announcements are available on the website in html format. General information is provided in print and online formats. Audio access to the Australia Council's *Arts funding guide* is available on request. A TTY facility is available for information about Australia Council programs and services. Grant application forms include a statistics-gathering page, which allows applicants to self-identify as having a disability.

The Australia Council also ensures that its recruitment, employment and professional development policies and procedures comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Job applicants with special needs can receive information in a variety of accessible formats. Job ads are available on the Australia Council website.

The Australia Council has recruitment and selection guidelines that promote merit selection and non-discriminatory decisions. A comprehensive induction program provides new employees with an understanding of the Australia Council's functions and policies, which include anti-discrimination and diversity principles. The Australia Council collects data relating to diversity and reports on it at least annually.

The Australia Council has internal and external grievance procedures, including a review of actions procedure, which is modelled on provisions in the *Public Service Act 1999*. The review of actions procedure provides for appeals to the merit protection commissioner. Staff members have access to a professional counselling service through the Employee Assistance Program.

Freedom of information

This statement is provided in accordance with section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). Section 8 of the FOI Act requires each agency to publish detailed information about the way it is organised; its powers; the kinds of decisions made; arrangements for public involvement in work of the agency; documents held by the agency; and how members of the public can access these documents.

Access to records under the FOI Act

Members of the public may apply for access to documents under the FOI Act. In many cases, the information being sought is freely available at the Australia Council website.

Requests for access to information under the FOI Act must be in writing, include a \$30 application fee and be addressed to.

Chief executive officer
Attention: Manager, legal and compliance
Australia Council
PO Box 788,
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

To request access to documents, visit the Australia Council's offices at 372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW, or call 02 9215 9000 or 1800 226 912 toll-free during normal business hours. The offices are wheelchair accessible.

Freedom of Information requests

There was one request for information under the FOI Act in 2007–08.

Categories of documents

The Australia Council has extensive documentary holdings in hard copy and electronic form. These include:

- documents relating to policy development and program administration, including reports, briefings, correspondence, minutes, submissions, statistics and other documents
- reference material used by staff including guidelines and manuals
- audio and visual records held as part of its cultural development activities
- relevant Commonwealth legislation
- Australia Council Corporate Plan 2006–2010
- Australia Council policies (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Arts in a Multicultural Australia, Regional Arts Development, Young People and the Arts).

Facilities for access

If it approves access, and after full payment of any charges is received, the Australia Council will provide copies of the documents concerned. Alternatively, applicants may arrange to inspect certain documents at the Australia Council offices at the above address. For applicants living outside NSW, documents can be viewed at the nearest regional office of the National Archives of Australia (Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth or Townsville). The application fees and charges for FOI requests are determined in Schedules to the FOI (*Fees and Charges*) *Regulations*. Charges may be remitted on request if their imposition would cause undue financial hardship or release of the documents is in the general public interest. A decision not to remit the charges must be made within 30 days of a request being made.

Decision-making and other powers

The Australia Council makes decisions under its enabling legislation the *Australia Council Act 1975*.

Arrangements for involving stakeholders

The Australia Council's legislation and policies provide for consultation with the arts sector, other stakeholders and the general community. The consultation process includes a consideration of views from:

- management advisory committees
- community arts organisations and individuals
- state/territory and local government agencies responsible for assisting the arts communities
- public meetings in metropolitan and regional centres, generally in conjunction with meetings of the Council and artform boards
- public meetings with artform directors and other senior members of staff, either independently or in association with other arts organisations
- discussion groups or seminars with invited members of the public
- draft discussion papers circulated for comment
- 'open interviews' at which staff are present to meet current and prospective clients.

The Australia Council invites the views of the public on submissions about topics of arts sector interest.

Risk management

The effectiveness of the Australia Council's compliance programs stems from critically reviewing where the highest risks to optimal compliance occur, and then implementing appropriate processes to minimise such risks. The risk management process involves collecting relevant risk data to assess the identified risks against the current compliance control measures.

Staff training and education

The Australia Council delivered a series of internal training programs during 2007–08. These programs covered:

- contract management
- risk assessments in consultancy and grant agreements
- good decision-making and administrative law principles
- delegations.

Additional seminars are planned for the 2008–09 financial year.

External scrutiny

Legal review

A person who is aggrieved by an Australia Council funding decision may apply directly to the Federal Court for a review of the decision under the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977*. For the period to June 2008, there have been no such reviews undertaken. The *Australia Council Act 1975* does not provide for a right of review on the merits of a decision.

Australian National Audit Office

There were no Australian National Audit Office audits or reviews of the Australia Council during 2007–08, other than the usual certification of its financial statements.

Insurance

The Australia Council's insurance policies for 2007–08 included cover for directors' and officers' liability. The premium paid for this insurance cover was approximately \$8000.

Fraud control

The Australia Council has a comprehensive fraud control plan, which it reviews every two years in accordance with the *Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines 2002*. The fraud control plan and associated fraud risk assessments were reviewed in June 2007 and meet the agency's needs and comply with guidelines. Fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting procedures are in place. The Australia Council has collected and reported annual fraud data. It manages its risks in accordance with best practice.

2.4 Workplace

The Australia Council maximises its capability to manage its people and resources.

Section 2.4
Workplace

Certified agreement

The Australia Council introduced a performance management framework, which links pay to performance, in line with its *Certified Agreement 2006–2009*.

The key features of the performance management framework are:

- performance management framework guidelines
- definition of assessment standards
- definition of organisational behaviours that contribute to work performance
- establishment of performance coaching as a way of managing and enhancing performance.

All employees received specific training and regular information updates on how they could make the framework work for them and the organisation. Following staff consultation, a policy for managing performance and conduct challenges is in place.

Recruitment

There were 41 employee commencements and 66 exits during the year. Recruitment activity focused on hiring fixed-term project management expertise, and filling divisional administration roles, and some senior management and executive vacancies.

Professional development

The Australia Council conducted several in-house learning and development programs, including a series of performance management and performance coaching workshops. An online compliance program for workplace policies complemented these workshops. It covered such topics as ethics and conduct, occupational health and safety, privacy, equal employment opportunity, sexual harassment prevention and bullying prevention.

Health, safety and wellbeing

This information is provided in accordance with section 74 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*.

The Australia Council acknowledges that the workplace environment can affect employee performance and satisfaction. It takes seriously the requirements for a safe and hazard-free workplace and for all employees to be informed and trained in their responsibilities and obligations under the relevant legislation.

The Australia Council significantly revamped its occupational health and safety committee. Each floor of the building now has a list of designated occupational health and safety committee members. All new employees attend a compulsory 'Fit for Work' session, which is about preventing injuries or incidents associated with PC use. Staff members complete self-auditing checklists to ensure the ergonomic compliance of their own workstations. A team of trained first aid support persons assist with the proactive management of incidents or injuries and timely and efficient reporting.

The Australia Council continues to have rigorous emergency evacuation procedures and regularly conducts fire drills and fire warden training. Fire wardens are replaced promptly when vacancies occur in their ranks.

Pro bono legal services

The Australia Council is pleased to have pro bono legal services partnerships with Baker & McKenzie and Clayton Utz.

Baker & McKenzie provides advice on commercial agreements and contracts, information technology, intellectual property and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts.

Clayton Utz provides advice on administrative law, employment law and industrial relations, dispute resolution, privacy, freedom of information and testamentary matters.

The Australia Council benefits significantly from the committed work of both these providers and acknowledges their important contribution.

Advertising and market research

The Australia Council uses print advertising for a range of purposes: to recruit staff; to publicise initiatives and grant program closing dates; to invite clients to public information sessions; and to call for tenders. The total cost of staff recruitment advertising was \$226,000 in 2007–08, compared to \$70,458 in 2006–07. The cost of advertising for all other purposes was \$100,506 in 2007–08, a small decrease from \$109,305 in 2006–07. The cost of market research in 2007–08 was \$69,801.

Ecologically sustainable development

This information is provided in accordance with section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Australia Council's Ecologically Sustainable Development Policy includes strategies for energy, paper and waste reduction. The policy affirms the Australia Council's commitment to minimising its environmental impact. The Australia Council commenced secure destruction and recycling of support materials (CDs, DVDs, audio tapes, video tapes) in May 2007.

Figure 20:

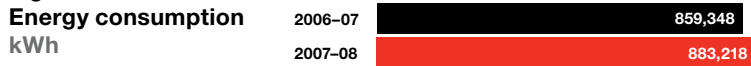


Figure 21:



Figure 22:



Figure 23:

