



Work Environment

IMAGE: A young student watches the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra brass players at a Meet the Orchestra concert at Hamer Hall in the Victorian Arts Centre, August 2004. The Orchestra is supported by the Major Performing Arts Board. Photo: Mark Wilson

Work Environment

The Council is strongly committed to providing a workplace that supports its people in working towards its mission, vision, goals and policies.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Australia Council recognises that the workplace environment impacts employee performance and satisfaction. The Council takes seriously the requirement to provide a safe and hazard-free workplace and to ensure that all employees are informed of and trained in their responsibilities and obligations under the relevant legislation.

The Council paid a lower premium rate to Comcare in the past year because the number and average cost of claims decreased.

The focus has been on encouraging individual engagement with working safely through a number of initiatives for proactively managing health and safety awareness.

All new employees attend health and safety awareness training and complete self-auditing checklists at their workstations to ensure ergonomic compliance.

Included in induction is a program known as Fit for Work which alerts employees using PC-based equipment to maximise preventative actions to reduce the development of occupational overuse injuries or incidents.

The timely and efficient reporting of incidents or injuries is expedited through the involvement of First Aid officers who are trained in the importance of proactive reporting.

Service Charter

The Australia Council is committed to providing high-quality services to clients and stakeholders. The Council's Client Services Charter explains how we deliver our services—it is included in the 2004 and 2005 editions of the *Support for the Arts Handbook*, and is available for staff on the Council's intranet. The Council collects data on client complaints and its responses to them. The Council did not review the Client Services Charter during the current review period and will undertake this review in 2005–06.

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy (CDS) provides a framework to assist Commonwealth organisations to meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Council is required to report on its performance in meeting the CDS under the designated core roles of policy adviser, purchaser, provider and employer.

Australia Council staff are committed to upholding organisational goals, one of which is to 'increase community engagement with the arts and to promote individual participation in them by increasing opportunities for all Australians to experience and participate in the arts and increasing access and reducing barriers to engagement with the arts'.

In the role of policy adviser, the Council seeks to support the needs of people with disabilities in the arts sector. It does so by offering triennial support to Arts Access Australia (AAA—formerly known as *Disability in the Arts Disadvantage in the Arts Australia*—DADAA), the peak body for arts and disability. 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 input of AAA and other representatives helps to shape Council policy and programs.

Since 2000 the Council's AMD Division has run a broad program of activities known as Access All Areas which focuses on audiences with disabilities. The publication after which the program is named enjoyed 3534 downloads in the past year and is to be followed by a compendium of case studies on how organisations improve access to the arts for people with disabilities. With AMD funding, AAA is developing the compendium and is also undertaking national research into access and audience development issues for people with disabilities.

AMD, in partnership with the NSW Ministry for the Arts, continues to fund an audience development specialist

based at Accessible Arts NSW. This position has been instrumental in developing resources and providing guidance to arts and cultural organisations on accessibility for people with disabilities. Activities have included trials of live captioning for theatre productions and specialised marketing strategies.

Public announcements by the Australia Council are delivered in accessible formats and made available in a timely manner. Apart from hard copies, announcements are made available via the website, in both HTML and PDF formats, which can be used by software screen readers or resized for reading on screen. The *Support for the Arts Handbook* is made available online and in audio and disk form as close as possible to the time of publication.

Grants application forms include a statistics gathering page. This provides applicants with the opportunity to self-identify as having a physical or intellectual disability.

Customer feedback and complaints are a feature of the Australia Council Service Charter. The Council encourages feedback as part of its continued focus on quality improvement, and it annually reviews compliance with the Charter and identifies areas for improvement. This includes analysis of feedback and complaints received, as well as a process for input by clients, staff and stakeholders. The results of the client service monitoring process are made publicly available.

The Australia Council is also an employer, with responsibility to ensure that recruitment, employment and professional development policies and procedures comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Accessible formats for potential job applicants are provided online and on request by mail and fax. Most job advertisements now appear on the Council's website.

Our human resources team has developed recruitment and selection guidelines that promote merit selection and non-discriminatory decisions. Induction training aims to provide new employees with an understanding of the Council's functions and policies, including discrimination and diversity. Statistics relating to diversity are also collected and reported on at least annually (see page 17).

The Council has internal and external grievance procedures, including review of actions under the *Public Service Act 1922* and appeals to the Australian Public Service Commission. Staff also have access to a professional counselling service through the Employee Assistance Program.

Freedom of Information

This statement provides required information under Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

Powers

Under Section 6 of the *Australia Council Act 1975*, the Council has the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done in connection with the performance of its functions and, in particular, has power:

- (a) to enter into contracts
- (b) to erect buildings
- (c) to occupy, use and control any land or building owned or held under lease by Australia and made available for the purposes of the Council
- (d) to acquire, hold and dispose of real or personal property
- (e) to accept gifts, devises and bequests made to the Council, whether on trust or otherwise, and to act as trustee of moneys or other property vested in the Council upon trust
- (f) to make grants or loans of money, and to provide scholarships or other benefits, on such conditions as it thinks fit
- (g) to cooperate with the states and local governing bodies and with other persons and organisations concerned with the arts, and
- (h) to do anything incidental to any of its powers.

Arrangements for membership of the Council, boards and committees

The chair of the Council is appointed by the Governor-General. All other councillors are appointed by the Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport. The Council consists of up to 14 part-time members, including the chair and deputy chair, chairs of each board, arts practitioners and community representatives. The CEO is a member of the Council *ex officio*. Members of the Council meet five to six times per year. Meetings are also held by teleconference as the need arises. The Act allows for the appointment of either a full-time or part-time chair.

The various boards and divisions administer the Council's arts funding role and are a major source of advice to the Council on the development of arts policy and grant programs.

Under Section 7 of the Australia Council Act, the Council has delegated to the relevant boards and senior officers the power to make grants, within the framework of the Council's priorities, policies and budget allocations. The majority of board members and senior officers are people who practise the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts. They bring to the boards first-hand knowledge of the particular requirements of the artform or the specific discipline, as well as a collective national overview. They participate in board meetings by providing expert advice on the assessment of grant applications and the development of artform policy. The expertise of board members is augmented by advisers drawn from the Register of Peers. The concept of peer group assessment within the boards is a principle of the Council.

Decisions by the Major Performing Arts Board are made in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between DCITA and the Australia Council. Decisions are made at formally constituted meetings.

In specific circumstances, duly delegated senior officers may commit expenditure in relation to decisions on activities and strategic initiatives made at formally constituted Council, board or committee meetings. Such actions are taken in compliance with the Council's Financial and Administrative Delegation, the Decision-Making Framework for the Audience and Market Development and the Policy Communication Research Divisions, and the Arts Development Managers Decision Matrix.

Procedures for public consultation are used at different times by the boards, the divisions and the Council. For example:

- public meetings held in various centres, both metropolitan and regional, generally in conjunction with Council and board meetings
- public meetings held by board managers and other senior members of staff, either independently or in association with other arts organisations
- discussion groups or seminars held with invited members of the public
- draft discussion papers circulated for comment
- 'open interviews' held when board staff are interstate and available to meet current and prospective clients
- regular meetings held between senior Australia Council officers and officers of state/territory arts authorities
- continuing liaison between government departments and authorities (Commonwealth, state/territory and local), as well as overseas agencies

- views from the public invited when submissions are being prepared on topics of particular interest to the arts community.

Categories of documents

The Council uses the following documents and manuals in making decisions and recommendations:

- Australia Council Act 1975
- Relevant Commonwealth legislation
- Australia Council Corporate Plan 2001–05
- Australia Council policies (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Arts in a Multicultural Australia, Regional Arts Development, Young People and the Arts)
- Procedures and protocols for management of grants and projects
- Manual for Members of the Australia Council
- Register of Peers Protocols
- Support for the Arts Handbook 2004 and 2005
- Grant and initiative application forms
- Research papers
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Minutes and agendas (Council and boards)
- Program reviews
- Program guidelines (Audience and Market Development)
- Financial and Administrative Delegations
- Decision-Making Framework for the Audience and Market Development and Policy Communication Research Divisions
- Australia Council Service Charter.

Freedom of Information procedures

Applicants seeking access under the FOI Act to documents in the possession of the Council should forward a \$30 application fee and apply in writing to:

Chief Executive Officer
Attention: FOI Coordinator
Australia Council for the Arts
PO Box 788 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

The FOI Coordinator is available at the Council offices, located at 372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW, or by telephone on 02 9215 9000 or 1800 226 912 toll-free during normal business hours. The offices are wheelchair accessible.

In accordance with Section 54 of the FOI Act, an applicant may, within 30 days of receiving notification of a decision to refuse a request under the Act, apply to the CEO seeking an internal review of that decision. This application should be accompanied by a \$40 application fee as provided for in the FOI Act. An officer of the Council, who is at least one level above that of the initial decision-maker, will conduct the review.

Facilities for access

If it approves access, and after it has received payment of any charges that apply, the Council will provide copies of the documents concerned.

Alternatively, applicants may arrange to inspect documents at the 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 (Melbourne, Brisbane, Townsville, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin or Canberra).

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.

Freedom of Information 2004–05

There were two requests for information under the FOI Act during 2004–05.

Ecologically Sustainable Development

In December 2004, the Australia Council adopted an Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) policy, which encompasses strategies for energy, paper and waste reduction. The ESD policy confirms the Council's commitment to minimising the impact our day-to-day operations have on the environment.

In the review year, the Council:

- installed commingled recycling bins (glass, plastic bottles and aluminium cans) on every floor of the Council
- provided every member of staff with paper recycling bins made from recycled paper
- continued to take into consideration 'green procurement principles' in major purchasing decisions
- increased the use of electronic communication in order to reduce the use of paper

- raised awareness of ESD principles and encouraged staff to switch off computers and lights when not in use.

Energy consumption

Year	Energy (kWh)
2004–05	835,500
2003–04	771,606

(A4 80gsm copy paper)

Year	Reams
2004–05	5,200
2003–04	5,700

Recycled paper

Year	Weight (kg)
2004–05	22,646
2003–04	19,162

Commingled recycling

Year	Weight (kg)
2004–05*	800
2003–04	n/a

*Commingled recycling figures are from January to June 2005 only.

Advertising

The Council uses print advertising to recruit new staff, announce new programs and initiatives, notify grant program closing dates, invite potential and existing clients to meet with Council staff, and to call for tenders.

The total cost of staff recruitment advertising for 2004–05 was \$39,997, an increase of \$21,056 on last year's figure. This increase can be explained by the need to reach a targeted audience through print media and the use of recruitment agencies for specialised roles in the areas of ATSI, HR and Communication.

Advertising to invite clients to meet with staff, notify closing dates (via English language and non-English language publications) and calls for tender totalled \$64,017, down from \$88,970 in 2003–04. Advertising costs in AMD were \$10,870 for calls to tender, up from \$1,636 last year.

The Council's ability to keep costs down is due to extensive use of online advertising, judicious use of print, and limited use of recruitment agencies.