

# Letter from the Chairman

23 September 2003

Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp  
Minister for the Arts and Sport  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I present to you, under Section 9 of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, the Australia Council Annual Report for 2002–03.

The councillors of the Australia Council are responsible under Section 9 of the Act for the preparation and content of a Report of Operations in accordance with Orders issued by the Minister for Finance. The following Report of Operations was adopted by resolution of the Council on 23 September 2003.

On behalf of the Australia Council, I would like to thank retiring Council members, Sally Chance, Christopher Pearson and Nathan Waks, and welcome new members Shane Carroll, Graeme Koehne, Ian McRae, Christine Pulvirenti, Christopher Tassell and Mel Ward. I would also like to thank our CEO Jennifer Bott, the Senior Executive Team and our excellent staff for their efforts in 2002–03.

The Council's grants administration and decision-making processes are dependent on having a full complement of peers, and a key initiative this year was the establishment of a Nominations and Governance Committee to help streamline the nominations process for appointing members to the Council, its boards and various committees. The committee has been working with the artform boards to facilitate and monitor the effectiveness of the nominations process, while advising the Council on general governance issues. In addition, conflict of interest rules were revisited this year to strengthen the Council's various decision-making processes.

In 2002–03, the Council managed to achieve reductions in its administration and running costs. It also developed a long-term budget strategy to expand its revenue base and to address the significant challenges it faces in maintaining and increasing current levels of support for Australian arts and artists.

*'The Council has worked this year  
to broaden the appeal of the arts'*

Now that the business–arts partnership approach is well established in Australia, cultural philanthropy is an increasingly important source of private sector support for the arts and a priority for the Australia Council, the Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) and the Australian Government. To this end, I am delighted to report that the Council, working with AbaF, this year developed 'artsupport Australia', an innovative philanthropy scheme aimed at facilitating giving by individuals and organisations and building private sector support for the arts. artsupport Australia was officially announced by the Prime Minister in August 2003.

Looking to the future, the Council has worked this year to broaden the appeal of the arts through a widening engagement with the Australian community. Specifically, it sees cultural activity assisting Australia's regional and remote communities to overcome long-term social and economic problems, as well as empowering Indigenous communities and enriching the value of services provided by other arms of government. These are national goals that will call heavily in the year ahead on the dedication and expertise of Council staff.

I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Senator Richard Alston and yourself, and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, as well as those individuals who have served with dedication and distinction on the Council, its boards, committees and panels. All have helped Australians to see and hear and appreciate, and to tell, their unique stories. The result has been not only widespread enthusiasm for the arts within Australia but also a high degree of international acclaim.

Yours faithfully



David Gonski AO  
Chairman

