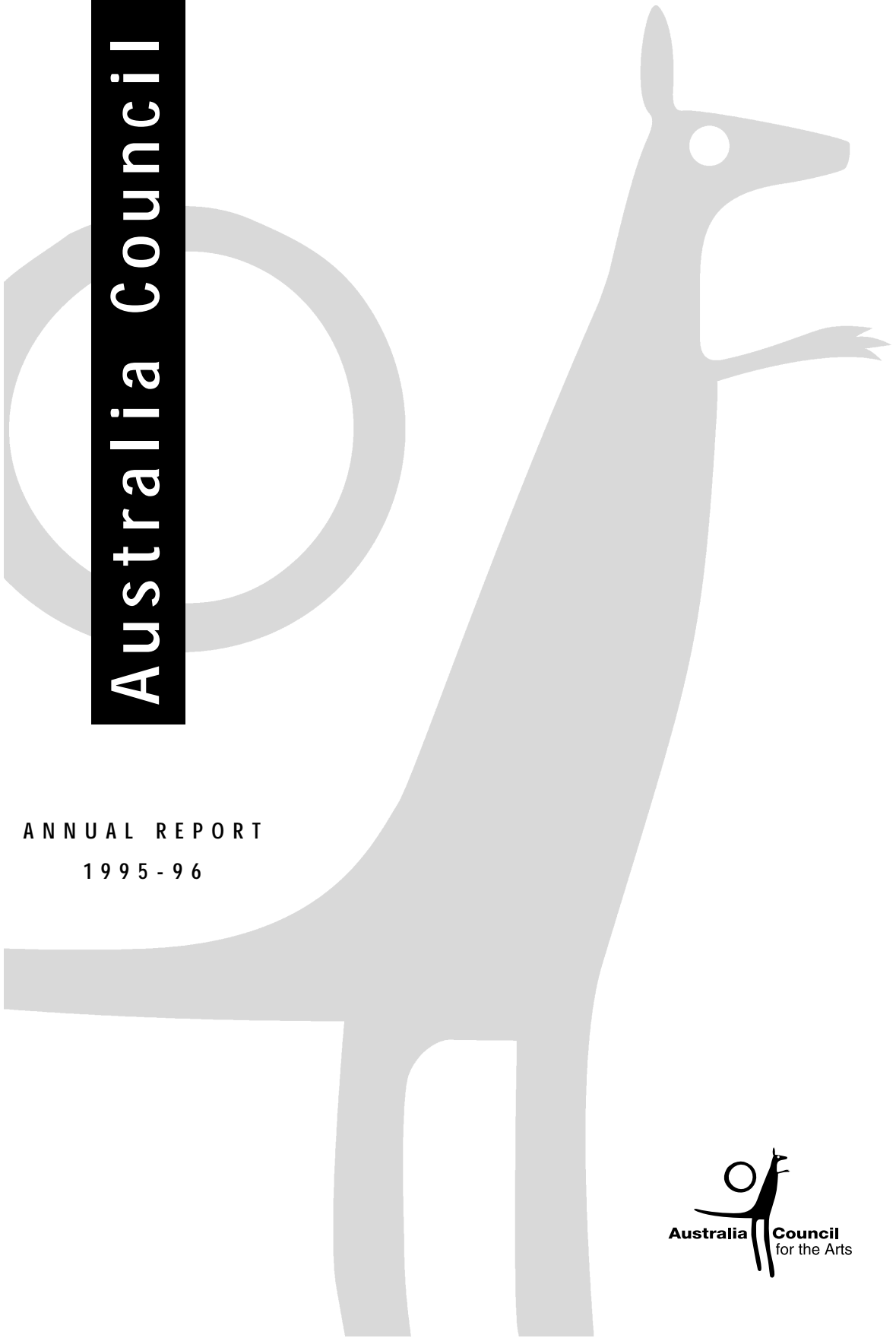


Australia Council

ANNUAL REPORT
1995 - 96





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23 September 1996

The Hon Richard Alston MP
Minister for Communications and the Arts
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you, under Section 38 of the *Australia Council Act 1975*, the Annual Report of the Council for 1995-96, the first year of our triennial funding agreement.

The Australia Council's charter encourages us to promote the arts and creative work in order to stimulate and enrich the cultural life of the nation.

Support for the arts is fundamental to this country's intellectual and cultural life. As we move into the next century, the most civilised and successful societies will be those which value their artists and place a premium on creativity.

By encouraging participation in the arts for all Australians, other tangible and beneficial results can be shown: in employment growth, in cultural export dollars, in international, national and intrastate tourism dollars, in domestic production of goods and services and in international goodwill.



Porch Hawkes

The Australia Council is proud to share in this challenge and this year has continued the work of reshaping itself for the future.

The changes to the way peers are involved in policy-making and grant assessment and the restructure of administration and governance were implemented during the year under review, coming into effect from 8 April 1996. The guiding principle of the review process was that the institution of any changes would be in the best interests of the arts community and the wider Australian community and of the organisation. We believe that principle has been honoured. With the continued

support of your government, the Council is now well positioned for its leading role in creating an environment which encourages creativity and provides employment and greater opportunities for artists to develop and market their talents.

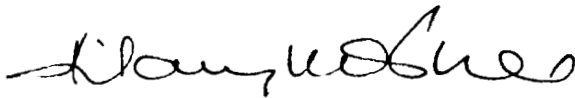
Our grants programs, assessment procedures and administration are now more streamlined, flexible and transparent. Overlaps between programs have been eliminated and artists and arts organisations are now able to better direct their application to the Fund which is most appropriate for their work. The effect of these changes is not fully apparent in this transitional year, as the old programs and structure operated for most of the period, but we are confident that the result will be a more effective and efficient administration of our arts funding responsibilities, and a greater ability to create more opportunities for all Australians to participate in and enjoy the arts.

Direct funding of artists and arts organisations remains the cornerstone of the Council's activities. The Australia Council wants to see an increase in Australian creativity in the world and to ensure that its creators are properly paid. But other opportunities will be opened by building audiences and increasing local and international exposure for Australian artists, by stimulating commissions and partnerships for employment of artists not only in new technology and multimedia but in a wide range of organisations, and by being an advocate for the arts to other public and private funding sources. To this end, the Council this year established a new division dedicated to audience development and advocacy. We believe that modest but strategic investments in such initiatives can have crucial multiplier effects, ultimately enabling more artists and arts organisations to be self-sustaining than single grants could ever achieve.

In the first full year of the Major Organisations Board (now Fund), funded companies were given the security of triennial funding, enabling the development of three-year business plans, forward targets and key performance indicators. The ability to focus on strategies to sustain artistic quality, develop audiences, improve access, and develop and sustain content is crucial for the health of these significant Australian arts organisations, and for their continued delivery of artistic excellence and development opportunities for Australian artists.

This country is fortunate indeed to have a resource such as the Australia Council. Your continued support for the work of the Council will enable us to go forward into the next century in good shape, to continue to nourish and celebrate our creative arts.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hilary McPhee', written in a cursive style.

Hilary McPhee
Chair of Council.

F U N C T I O N S

The Australia Council is a Commonwealth statutory authority created under the *Australia Council Act 1975*. Under the Act the Council has substantial independence from government in its policy-making and funding roles. It provides advice on cultural matters to the Commonwealth Government through the Minister for the Arts.

Section 5 of the Act defines the functions of the Council as:

- (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.

The Australia Council is the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body. It serves the Australian community by stimulating and enriching the cultural life of Australia.

The Australia Council was formed as an interim Council in 1973 and was given statutory authority by the *Australia Council Act 1975*. It replaced an earlier, non-statutory, body called the Australian Council for the Arts which was established in 1968 as a division of the Prime Minister's Department. The Council subsumed other arts-related government functions, such as the Commonwealth Literary Fund, which had supported needy writers since 1908, and the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board, which was set up in 1912 to develop a national art collection and, from 1927, to advise on matters relating to the visual arts. The Australia Council was granted considerably expanded functions and greater independence from government in its policy-making and funding roles than its predecessors. As with similar bodies in Canada and New Zealand, the Australia Council's structure and functions were based on those of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

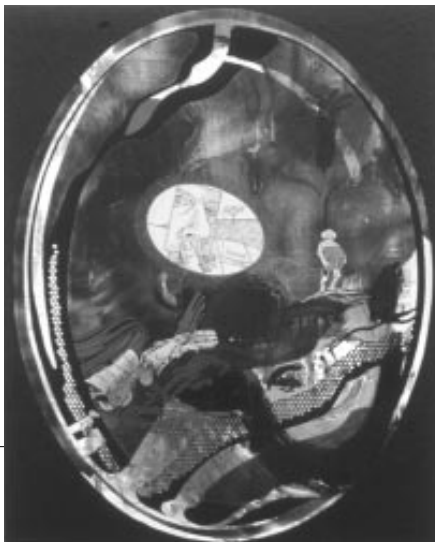
The Australia Council's primary responsibility is to help create an environment which encourages the creativity and development of Australian artists, and which provides greater access to arts and cultural activities for all Australians. It supports Australian artists and arts organisations to pursue artistic excellence

in creating and presenting their work, to take advantage of opportunities to improve and develop their skills, and to tour and promote their work to wider audiences. It directly supports young, emerging, developing and established artists through a range of grant programs offered across all artforms, and it encourages arts and non-arts organisations to support and present artists' work, thereby expanding employment opportunities for all artists.

As a national cultural agency, the Council has a unique responsibility to reflect Australia's evolving national identity to its citizens and to the world. The Council's national focus reflects the culture and creativity of both regional and urban communities, and it has a statutory obligation to ensure access to, and participation in, the arts by all Australians. The arts of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are valued and supported; and communities across Australia are enriched by opportunities to incorporate the arts in local cultural life. The Council also maintains and develops cooperative arrangements with State and Territory arts funding authorities, local governments, and key international agencies in all its activities.

The work of the Australia Council has always been guided by two fundamental principles. The 'arms length' principle, which is enshrined in the Australia Council Act, determines that the Council is free to act autonomously and be independent of government. This ensures that decisions about specific grants are made at a distance from political processes.

The second principle is 'peer assessment' whereby decisions on policy, priorities and grant selections are made by artists and community representatives who are the peers of those being assessed. Grants are offered to artists and arts organisations whose proposals, in competition with those of other applicants and within the budgetary constraints, demonstrate the highest degree of artistic merit and innovation. The Council remains independent from the day-to-day business of the artists and arts organisations it assists.



Gordon Bennett,
Mirror (Interior/Exterior)
Volkgeist, 1995

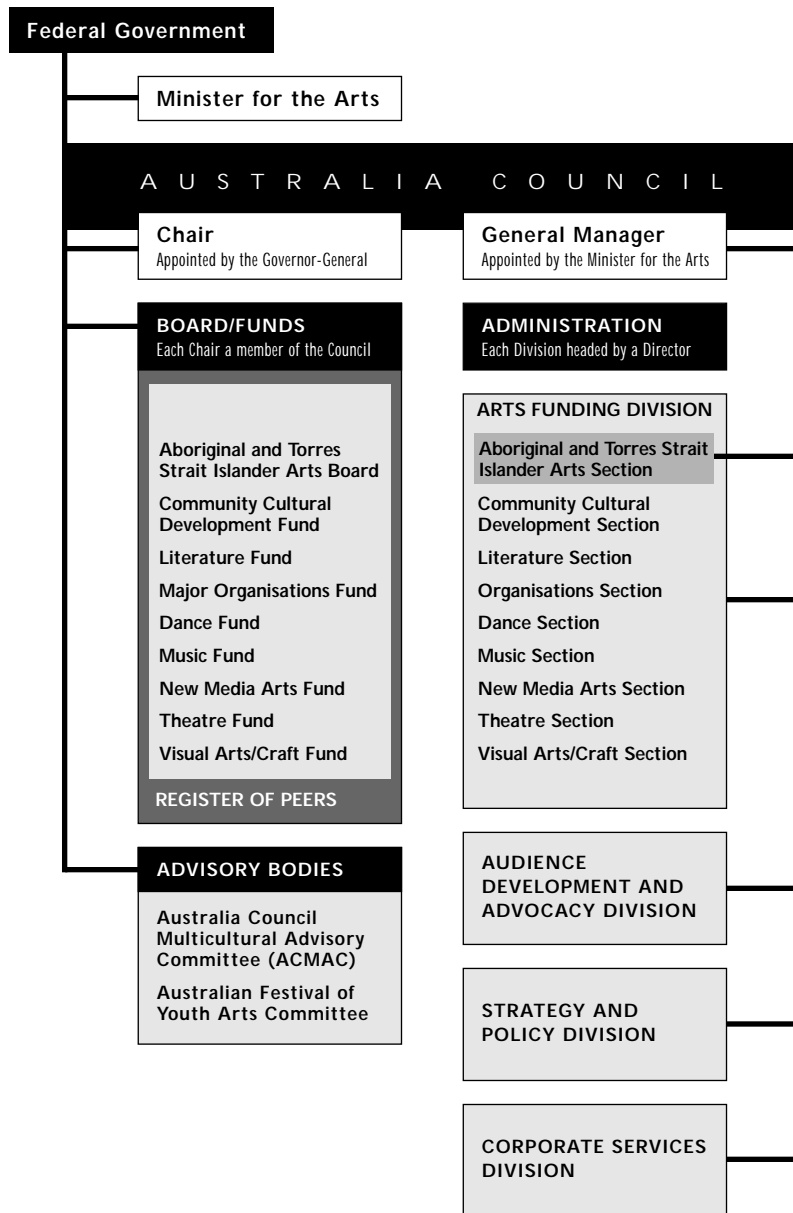
Both principles have ensured the maximum integrity in decision-making in what can be controversial areas of arts development. A review of the peer assessment process undertaken last year affirmed the Council's commitment to the principle, although the structure and administration of the process was improved and streamlined. This is reported on in The Year in Review.

The Australia Council is committed to providing the best possible system of peer-assessed funding of creative work, and will continue to ensure that creativity and excellence in the arts flourish and that all Australians have access to the arts and to the stimulation and enjoyment the arts can bring.



ORGANISATION CHART

as at 30 June 1996



The Australia Council

The Council is the governing body of the Australia Council, responsible for determining priorities and providing a policy and budgetary framework within which the Council and its Board, Funds and advisory bodies operate. In accordance with the terms of the *Australia Council Act 1975*, the Council has between 10 and 14 members including the Chair. The Chair is appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Minister for the Arts. Members, with the exception of the General Manager who is a member of Council *ex officio*, are part-time statutory appointments made by the Minister. Terms of appointment are generally three years. Members are selected to ensure relevant expertise in the arts and regional, gender, ethnic and Indigenous community representation.

During 1995-96, the Council met nine times, three of which were by teleconference.

As a result of the review of peer assessment undertaken in 1994-95 and an organisational review by management consultants Cordiner King Hever (see *The Year in Review*), the Australia Council underwent a major structural change during the year, replacing its three-tiered decision-making structure with a two-tiered system. The three levels of Council, Boards and Committees had served it well in the past, but it had become clear that in order to respond to changes in the Australian arts scene, and to take on new responsibilities and new challenges – primarily in stimulating audiences for the arts in Australia and internationally and in adapting to new technologies – the Council needed to be more streamlined and efficient.

The two-tiered structure was introduced to enable Council to achieve:

- ▮ an increase in the number of peers participating in Council's decision-making process;
- ▮ a greater diversity of peers involved in policy-making and grant assessment;

- ▮ better integration between various artform divisions of the Council;
- ▮ an improved capacity to focus on audience development while maintaining a clear priority on supporting artists' creation of new work;
- ▮ a simpler, more transparent and more flexible approach to the grant application and assessment process.

The new look Council was formally established on 8 April 1996.

Of the former six Boards, only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board remains, pending the development and outcomes of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy for the Australia Council, due at the end of 1996. The Community Cultural Development, Literature, Major Organisations and Visual Arts/Craft Boards were reconstituted as Funds of the same names. The Performing Arts Board was divided into separate Dance, Music and Theatre Funds. A new Fund, the New Media Arts Fund, was established as a Committee of Council. Each Fund will have seven members including a Chair who will be a member of Council.

The various Funds and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board administer the Council's arts funding role and are the Council's main source of advice with regard to the development of arts policy and grant programs. Members may be appointed to the Board and Funds for up to four years, but in general appointments are for no more than three years. The Fund and Board Chairs, being also members of the Council, are appointed by the Minister. Following the change of government in March 1996, the Council's delegation from the Minister to appoint Board/Fund members was rescinded. Appointments to the new Funds were being finalised at the close of the year under review.

In addition to their role in providing advice to the Council, the Board and Funds develop their own policies – within the framework of policies and priorities determined by the Council – to assist the assessment of grant programs in their artform areas. The power to make grant decisions is delegated from the Council to the Board and Funds.

In a significant change to the way peers are involved in Council's decision-making processes, a Register of Peers was established. The Funds and Board select peers from the Register to assist them in assessing grant applications and making artform policy. Peers are listed on the Register for up to three years and may be invited once by each Fund to assist in grant assessment meetings. There is no limit to the number of times they may be invited to provide 'in-the-field' assessments and general policy advice. The Council's Conflict of Interest Code precludes any peer who is engaged in the assessment of applications in a given grants round from submitting a grant application to that same round, or being a sole or major beneficiary of a grant in that round.

As assessment of the 1995-96 grant rounds were effectively completed in March 1996 under the old Board and Committee structure, involvement of peers from the Register will fully commence in the 1996-97 year.

In addition to policy input from peers on the Funds and Board, the Council relies on the expert advice of peers in several specialist committees or forums established by it to examine particular issues which may affect more than one artform. Committees and advisory bodies currently operating include the Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee, the Australian Festival of Youth Arts Committee, and the Visual Arts Export Group. Establishment of a Performing Arts Forum in order to maintain and encourage policy interaction across dance, music and theatre is under consideration.

The Melbourne-based **Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities** was incorporated as an independent Commonwealth-owned company on 16 January 1996. The Minister signed a formal revocation disestablishing the Foundation as a Board of the Australia Council on 16 June 1996 to take effect on 30 June, although in practice the Foundation had been operating independently of the Australia Council since its incorporation. The Board of the Foundation, and its Chair's membership of the Australia Council, was formally dissolved at the same time.

Members of the Australia Council at 30 June 1996

Hilary McPhee (Vic), was appointed Chair of the Australia Council for three years from 21 March 1994. Ms McPhee was until recently Publishing Director of Pan Macmillan Australia, responsible for developing the Macmillan and Picador imprints. Prior to that she co-founded in 1975 McPhee Gribble Publishers, an independent publishing company with a reputation for developing new authors, quality fiction, non-fiction and children's books. Ms McPhee is a director of the Australian Multimedia Enterprise (AME) Limited, a member of the Board of the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities Limited, and of the Asia-Australia Institute Advisory Council. As Chair of the Australia Council, Ms McPhee also chairs the Major Organisations Fund.

Hugh Mackay (NSW) was appointed Deputy Chair of the Australia Council in place of **Carl Vine**, whose term expired on 21 July 1995. A distinguished social psychologist, researcher and commentator on Australian contemporary life, Mr Mackay is the author of the acclaimed *Reinventing Australia* (1993), *Why Don't People Listen?* (1994) and *Little Lies* (1996), his first novel. He also broadcasts regularly on ABC Radio and writes a weekly newspaper column on social issues. He is a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society. Mr Mackay has been a member of the Australia Council since 22 July 1994.

Michael Lynch (NSW), was appointed General Manager of the Australia Council on 15 August 1994 for a five-year term. Mr Lynch has had a long career in arts administration and film and television. He was General Manager of the Sydney Theatre Company from 1989 until his appointment to the Australia Council. Prior to that he was a casting director with his own agency, Forcast, and an actors' and directors' agent, as well as being involved with the Nimrod Theatre and the Australian National Playwrights Conference. Mr Lynch is a member of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) Cultural Committee, and in 1995 was a member of the Prime Minister's National Information Services Council.

Lucette Aldous (WA), Senior Lecturer in Dance at the WA Academy of Performing Arts, is one of Australia's best known prima ballerinas. She has danced with the Australian Ballet, the Royal Ballet, Ballet Rambert, the London Festival Ballet and in Rudolf Nureyev's film of Don Quixote. Ms Aldous was appointed a member of the Australia Council for three years from 9 December 1995.

Edmund Campion (NSW), Associate Professor of History at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, was appointed Chair of the Literature Board (now Fund) and a member of Council for three years from 4 December 1995, in place of **Marion Halligan**, the acclaimed author, whose term expired on 3 December 1995. Father Campion is the author



Members of the Australia Council at the Council's offices in Sydney for their June 1996 meeting.
 Left to right (back row):
 Lex Marinos, Richard Walley, Edmund Campion, Terry Lane, Hugh Mackay;
 (front row):
 Michael Lynch, Lucette Aldous, Richard Mills, Hilary McPhee, Ron Layne (staff representative);
 insets:
 Dominica Whelan, Doug Hall.

Branco Galica

of several works including *Rockchoppers* and *A Place in the City*, and is a member of the Australian Society of Authors. He is also the Sydney editor of *Eureka Street*, and a reviewer for *The Bulletin*.

Doug Hall (Qld), director of the Queensland Art Gallery, was appointed Chair of the Visual Arts/Craft Board (now Fund) and member of the Australia Council from 12 December 1994 for three years. Mr Hall is also on the Board of Art Exhibitions Australia, a member of the Queensland College of Art Council, and Deputy Chair of Visions of Australia, the Federal Government's exhibitions touring scheme.

Terry Lane (Vic), radio broadcaster and presenter of *The National Interest* on ABC Radio National, was appointed as a member of the Australia Council for a three year term from 12 December 1994. He is the author of several books, including *Tit for Tat*, has written articles for leading newspapers, and has a wide knowledge of classical music and performance.

Lex Marinos OAM (NSW), actor, director and broadcaster, was appointed Chair of the Community Cultural Development Board (now Fund) and a member of the Australia Council for three years from 1 July 1995. Mr Marinos has worked with most major subsidised theatre companies in a wide range of classical and modern plays as well as in film and television. He is also a broadcaster for ABC radio and is currently the Director of the New South Wales Carnivale.

Richard Mills (Qld), composer and conductor, is Artistic Advisor to the Brisbane Biennial Festival, Artistic Director of the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra and has been Artistic Consultant to the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. He has also been Artist in Residence at the ABC and the Australian Ballet, and a member of the Australia Council's Performing Arts Board. Dr Mills is one of the country's most frequently commissioned and performed composers and a regular guest conductor of all of Australia's leading orchestras. He was appointed to the Australia Council for a three year term on 9 December 1995.

Richard Walley OAM (WA) is one of Australia's leading Aboriginal performers and writers. He has been Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and a member of the Council since 17 September 1992. As executive officer of the New Era Aboriginal Fellowship, he became aware of the potential of Aboriginal culture to give pride and identity to his Nyoongah people in Western Australia as well as to demonstrate the integrity of that culture to the broader community. With four others he formed the Middar Aboriginal Theatre in 1987.

Dominica Whelan (Vic) is a Commissioner of the Industrial Relations Commission. She was formerly a Senior Industrial Officer with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). She joined the ACTU after a career in law, as a barrister, tutor and running her own practice. Ms Whelan is a member of a number of boards and committees including the Australia-China Council, Melbourne Festival Fringe and the Faculty of Business Advisory Committee at the Victoria University of Technology. She was appointed to the Australia Council on 22 February 1994 for three years, and was the Council's representative on the Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD) Committee.

Ron Layne, now a Program Officer with the Audience Development and Advocacy Division, was elected for his second term as Staff Representative on Council for the 1995-96 year.

Several members of Council completed their terms of appointment during the year under review:

Carl Vine, Marion Halligan, Lorraine Jenyns and **Fazal Rizvi. Richard Pratt** was a member by virtue of his chairmanship of the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities, which was formally disestablished as a Board of the Australia Council on 30 June 1996. **Julie Warn** was Chair of the Performing Arts Board and member of the Council from September 1993 until 7 April 1996 when the Board was disbanded.

Australia Council Staff

Supporting the work of the Council, its Board, Funds and advisory bodies, is a full-time staff of 116 located in Sydney. Staff are appointed

under the *Australia Council Act 1975*, on terms and conditions similar to those of the Australian Public Service.

Along with the changes to the Council's Board and Committee structure, and following recommendations of the management review by Cordiner King Hever, the administration of the Australia Council underwent major structural changes this year, with effect from 8 April 1996. A more streamlined structure comprising four Divisions, each headed by a Director, replaced the former seven administrative units.

Prior to the changes, administration of policy development and grant application procedures for each of the artform Boards was handled by five corresponding staff units, each headed by an Executive Officer. With the restructure, the work of the units was consolidated into one Arts Funding Division. Sections within the Division, each headed by a Manager, service the Funds. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board administration is headed by a Director.

The Strategy and Policy Division (formerly Strategy and Communications Unit) comprises Public Affairs, Policy and Planning, the Secretariat and the Library, each headed by a Manager. Corporate Services Division includes Finance and Services, Human Resources, and Information Systems, each headed by a Manager. Audience Development and Advocacy Division is a new division of Council. Its organisational structure was being finalised at the close of the financial year.

Senior Management

The Australia Council's senior management team is headed by the General Manager and includes the Directors of the four Divisions – Arts Funding, Audience Development and Advocacy, Strategy and Policy, and Corporate Services – the Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Section, and the Finance and Services Manager.

For much of the year in review, until April 1996, the senior management team included the Executive Officers of each of the five funding

Units. Three of these, Christine Sammers, Sue-Anne Wallace and Lydia Miller, are in the senior positions recorded below. **Sandra Forbes**, Executive Officer of the Literature Unit since 1990, left the Council in December 1995 at the completion of her term of appointment and is now working as a consultant. **Jane Westbrook**, the Performing Arts Unit's Executive Officer since 1992, left in December 1995 to take up a position as Project Director of New Images at the British Council.

Christine Sammers was appointed Director of the Arts Funding Division on its establishment on 8 April 1996. Executive Officer of the Community Cultural Development Unit since 1992, Ms Sammers was formerly a freelance director, writer, administrator and designer in the performing arts and film. She co-founded the Sydney community theatre company, Death Defying Theatre, in 1981. She has made a number of films and when with ABC Television in Sydney, produced and directed *One Australia*, a documentary about cultural diversity in Australia.

Dr Sue-Anne Wallace, formerly Executive Officer of the Visual Arts/Craft Unit, was appointed Director of the new Audience Development and Advocacy Division in April 1996. Prior to joining the Australia Council, Dr Wallace was head of Education and Cultural Action (Public Access) at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. She has a distinguished academic background in fine arts, with first class honours and a doctorate from the Australian National University, and a graduate degree in management from Monash University.

Sarah Gardner was appointed Director of the Strategy and Policy Division in February 1996. Ms Gardner had acted in the position since May 1995. She has been with the Australia Council since 1990, as Public Affairs Manager and as the Operations and Communications Manager with the Performing Arts Unit. Prior to joining the Council she had been a senior consultant with Issues Australia and National Media Coordinator for the Australian Bicentennial Authority.

Catherine Watts, Director of Corporate Services Division, joined the Australia Council in April 1996. Ms Watts was formerly Secretary of the Australian Law Reform Commission. She has degrees in arts and law and an extensive background in corporate and legal administration. The former Director of Corporate Services, **Diana Temby**, left the Council in August 1995 to take up a position as Executive Director of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Lydia Miller, Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Section, is a performing artist, director and producer, and is currently a member of the Sydney Olympics Cultural Committee. She established the Aboriginal National Theatre Trust, convened the Second National Black Playwright's Conference and has produced works at the Victorian Arts Centre and the Belvoir Street

Theatre. She was artistic director of Nambundah Festival of Indigenous Arts 1994. Ms Miller is of Kukulandji, Kokopera and Waanji lineage.

Gabriel Chan, Finance and Services Manager, was Acting Director of Corporate Services from August 1995 to April 1996. Prior to joining the Australia Council in June 1989, Mr Chan was College Accountant with the Sydney College of Advanced Education. Mr Chan is a member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, and numerous other professional bodies.

Contact Officer

Public Affairs Manager

Tel: (02) 9950 9000 Fax: (02) 9950 9111

Senior management,
left to right (back row):
Lydia Miller,
Christine Sammers,
Sarah Gardner,
Gabriel Chan;
(front row):
Catherine Watts,
Michael Lynch,
Sue-Anne Wallace.



Branco Galca

In carrying out its statutory responsibilities during 1995-96, the Australia Council and its Boards/Funds:

- received approximately 24,000 inquiries resulting in 4,705 formal applications seeking \$181.5 million in funding;
- considered applications from 2,520 individual artists and 2,185 organisations;
- financially supported 673 individual artists with an average grant of \$14,538;
- provided 1,432 organisations with average grants of \$37,640 to support artistic pursuits and arts development;
- increased their support to artists, arts organisations and arts programs to the value of \$10.6 million, made possible by an increase in parliamentary appropriations;
- assisted 261 projects with an international component, enabling artists, writers, exhibitors, performing arts groups and individuals to develop overseas markets or to travel overseas for residencies, festivals, performances or promotional events;
- produced 21 publications, including 4 research reports;
- involved 198 artists and other peers in 67 policy and grant assessment meetings or teleconferences of Council, its Boards/Funds and Committees;
- implemented a new two-tiered system of peer assessment, concurrently with the old three-tiered system;
- organised 15 public information and discussion forums throughout the country.

The New Australia Council

The most significant event of the year in review was the launch on 8 April 1996 of a new-look Australia Council, the culmination of a process which began in August 1994 with the establishment of a wide-ranging review of the Australia Council's method of assessing grant applications. The immediate outcomes of the peer assessment review, in particular the decision announced in May 1995 to move from a three-tiered to a two-tiered system, were recorded in the 1994-95 Annual Report.

The concept of peer assessment as a fundamental tenet of the Australia Council's structure and decision-making processes was overwhelmingly endorsed by the review, and the Council affirmed its commitment to overcoming the identified shortcomings of the system. A Council Working Party of Board Chairs met in July and August 1995 to discuss the changes needed to more clearly identify Council priorities and targets, and resolved to ensure that program criteria and methods of assessment were clarified, and that the strategies, policies and criteria of the different Board programs were streamlined.

Specifically, the outcomes targeted by Council were:

- a more flexible, transparent and accountable assessment process;
- better access to a larger number and wider range of peers, the majority being practising artists;
- increased funding of individual artists;
- increased audiences, demand and sponsorship for Australian creative work;
- improved internal management practices within the Australia Council.

As a first step in this process, in September 1995 Council announced three new funding categories to apply across all artforms – Fellowships, Partnerships, and Commissions – representing a shift in funding philosophy for the Council in encouraging the professional employment of artists by indirect means as well as by directly supporting artists.



Australia Council Grants Handbook 1996

Further work on achieving the targeted outcomes proceeded through the end of 1995. At the same time, Cordiner King Hever, the management consultants contracted by the Australia Council to advise on its organisation, structure and management, completed the second stage of their review. Their 76 recommendations, the bulk of which were accepted by Council and senior management, were aimed at making the organisation more cohesive, with better communication internally and externally, and a stronger focus on strategy and policy development.

The guiding principle of the review process was that the institution of any changes would be in the best interests of the organisation, the arts community and the wider Australian community. The consultants noted that the high level of staff

cooperation in the review was a function of their dedication and commitment to that principle.

Simultaneous implementation of the recommendations from the Cordiner King Hever review with the commitments of the Council Working Party, in parallel with the production and streamlining of the grants structure and production of the Grants Handbook, resulted in an extraordinary refinement of programs, criteria and processes. In addition to the three across-Council categories, grants offered in each artform were structured under three categories of Projects – New Work, Presentation and Promotion, and Development – and a Program category to cover applicants seeking support for a series of projects or program of activities.

Public Forums

General Manager, Michael Lynch, and Chair, Hilary McPhee, joined Council members and staff in hosting public forums around the country to brief artists, invite feedback and answer questions on the proposed changes. The first round of forums were held in December 1995 in Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide. A series of forums planned for February was postponed due to the impending Federal election, and held instead in April and May in all capital cities and Cairns.

The changes and new directions were generally well received by members of the arts community and provided an excellent opportunity for community input into the change process. Over 2000 people attended the forums.

New Handbook

The achievements of the major goals of the restructuring process are represented in the Australia Council Grants Handbook 1996, which was launched on 3 April 1996. For the first time, all the artforms and grants programs are integrated in one publication instead of five separate Programs of Assistance booklets; and the grant program structure is simple and coherent, with seven generic programs operating in each of the nine Board/Fund areas in place of the 159 different programs operating formerly.

The availability of the Handbook was widely advertised and by the end of June 1996, some 25,000 copies had been distributed.

Register of Peers

Advertisements were placed in the national press from December 1995 calling for nominations for registration as peers, defined by Council as 'anyone who, by virtue of their knowledge or experience, is equipped to make a fair and informed assessment of artistic work and grant applications'.



Jenny Coopes, reprinted from *Artforce* 90, December 1995, with permission.

Nominations were received from peers from all the artform areas covered by the Council. In addition to a range of artform expertise, the Register contains peers working in a variety of areas, from artists to arts administrators, from publishers to curators.

Peers from the Register are used in a variety of capacities. They participate in Fund or Board meetings by providing expert advice on the assessment of grant applications and the development of artform policy. In this capacity peers augment the expertise of Fund and Board members so as to provide a more informed base from which to make decisions.

Peers may also be called on to provide assessments of performances, scripts and required support material for applications submitted to grant programs. In addition, peers from the Register are used to provide assessments of applications with support material in languages other than English.

Over 1050 names were recorded on the Register of Peers database by 30 June 1996. As evidence of the considerable support for the Register among the arts community, nominations continue to be received although no further formal advertising has been done. In the first five weeks of use of the Register, 40 contracts had been issued. These contracts cover attendances at Fund meetings as well as external assessments of applications, support material and performances.

Corporate Plan

Work proceeded during the first half of 1996 on a new Australia Council Corporate Plan for 1996-99 to take account of the expansion of Council's functions and the restructure of its operations.

The long-held principles of the Council are reaffirmed in the new Corporate Plan and incorporated into seven goals. They are:

- ▶ Promote excellence in the arts;
- ▶ Support the creation of new work;
- ▶ Foster participation in and appreciation of the arts by all Australians;
- ▶ Promote the unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as integral to Australia's national identity;
- ▶ Recognise cultural diversity in the arts;
- ▶ Increase resources, opportunities and audiences for Australian arts;
- ▶ Ensure the highest standards in public accountability and service.

Action plans for the key result areas defined for each of the goals are being developed. The new Corporate Plan will be published in the second half of 1996.

New Media and Technology

Addressing the implications of digital technology for the Australia Council and the arts community was given priority during the year. The Council sought advice from new media specialists in forming a strategic policy framework for Council, in acquiring skills and standards 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.

Most workstations in the Australia Council were linked to the Internet by the end of the year under review, with the aim of improving electronic communications both within the Council and between the Council and other organisations and artists, at the same time as enabling staff to develop expertise in accessing and using the information resources of the Internet.

publications and collaborative projects, is being addressed as resources allow.

Audience Development and Advocacy

In accordance with a recommendation in the management review to draw together the Australia Council's initiatives to strengthen and expand audiences for the arts, both within Australia and overseas, and to improve marketing and advocacy skills in the arts community, the Audience Development and Advocacy Division was established on 8 April 1996.

While the bulk of the Council's funding to artists and arts organisations is distributed through its grants programs, the new Division has been established to focus on the demand, rather than the supply, needs of the arts.

Expanding resources, opportunities and audiences is being addressed through building partnerships in the public and private sectors, developing market initiatives and advocating Australian arts nationally and internationally through export, touring and promotion.

Australia Council Awards and Australian Artists Creative Fellowships

The Australia Council presents a number of annual awards to recognise artists and organisations whose work represents outstanding achievement in their field. Recipients of the Australia Council Awards for 1995-96 are:

- ▶ Red Ochre Award for outstanding contribution to the recognition of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art and culture – The Mills Sisters, singers from Thursday Island;
- ▶ Ros Bower Memorial Award for high achievement in community arts – cultural planner Marla Guppy;
- ▶ Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD) Award for outstanding achievement in innovative approaches to environmental design – Shallowcliffe Schools in North Adelaide;

Playbox Theatre Company's production of *The Head of Mary* was critically acclaimed at the Tokyo International Festival in September 1995. Playbox toured to Japan with the assistance of the Australia Council.



Bushby

The Council launched its own home page on the World Wide Web on 3 April 1996 (<http://www.ozco.gov.au>). It 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, answers to frequently asked questions, links with 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, mailing lists,

- ▶ Literature Board's Emeritus Awards – author Michael Cannon; poet Bruce Beaver;
- ▶ Don Banks Music Fellowship – composer and conductor Richard Mills;
- ▶ Performing Arts Awards – Playbox Theatre Company general manager Jill Smith; The Performance Space, Sydney;
- ▶ Visual Arts/Craft Board's Emeritus Awards – artist Eric Smith; glass engraver Anna Dybka;
- ▶ Visual Arts/Craft Emeritus Medals – craft curator Marj Richie; painter and ceramic artist John Perceval.

The Australian Artists Creative Fellowships program was administered by the Australia Council on behalf of the Federal Government and funded under a separate budget allocation. The program

was established to honour eminent artists and to enable them to devote themselves fully to their work for periods of one to five years. Fifty-seven senior Fellowships were awarded between 1989 and 1994. In 1995, the Fellowships were offered to younger artists, under the age of 30. Ten Young Australian Creative Fellowships were granted, each valued at \$33,000 for one year. Selection of the Fellows was made by an independent advisory panel appointed by the Minister for the Arts.

The Young Australian Creative Fellows for 1996 are: jazz saxophonist and composer Sandy Evans; dancer and acrobat Scott Grayland; pianist and composer Michael Kieran Harvey; writer and director Douglas Horton; visual artist Narelle Jubelin; poet John Kinsella; composer Liza Lim; film-maker Tracey Moffatt; dancer and choreographer Gideon Obarzanek; and choreographer and director Stephen Page.



James Periclis

Creative Australians were honoured at the Australia Council Awards and Young Australian Creative Fellowships ceremony in Melbourne on 2 November 1995.

Left to right (back row): Hilary McPhee, Scott Grayland, Ken McGregor, Eric Smith, Michael Cannon, Marla Guppy, Anne Dybka, Marj Richey, Paul Keating, Gideon Obarzanek, Kathy Cotter, John Kinsella, Jill Lee, Dennis Harrison, Margaret Worth, Cessa Mills, Jill Smith, Ina Mills, Rita Mills, Michael Lee, Jane Kennedy; (front row): Tracey Moffatt, John Perceval, Angharad Wynne-Jones, Richard Mills, Sandy Evans, Stephen Page, Michael Kieran Harvey, Michael Lynch.