

were trained as job analysts and/or evaluators using the Mercer OCR system.

The Workplace Diversity Committee comprises representatives from management, the union, a multicultural representative and a representative from amongst our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

In 1999-2000 Council again had strong representation of staff from EEO targeted groups across all levels.

- women comprise 74 per cent of staff;
- 50 per cent of executive staff are women;
- 26 per cent of staff identify as having a non-English speaking background;
- seven per cent of staff identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders;
- seven per cent of staff identify as having a disability.

Council has a commitment to family-friendly practices and provides for conditions that cater to the needs of our diverse workforce and places strong emphasis on flexible work practices, including part-time work and a purchased leave scheme that assist staff to balance their home, family and work commitments.

#### **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)**

Council's Occupational Health and Safety commitment is evident in its proactive approach which includes providing eyesight testing, ergonomic assessments of workstations, safety audits and training. Council also engages the services of an independent, confidential counselling service to assist staff in dealing with both personal and professional issues.

Council's Occupational Health and Safety Committee comprises staff and management representatives, and meets on a quarterly basis.

#### **Performance Development**

Performance pay was paid for Senior Executive staff during the year for the financial cycle 1998-99. A total of four staff were eligible for performance pay and an aggregate amount of \$31,381.20 was paid.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SECTION 8 STATEMENT**

#### **Particulars of Organisation**

Information required to be published in the annual report by Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act* 1982 (the FOI Act) is contained in the body of this report as well as in this appendix.

#### **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, devise 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 outside membership of Council, Funds/Board and Committees**

The Chair of Council is appointed by the Governor-General on recommendation of the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. All other Councillors are appointed by the Minister. The Council consists of up to 14 part-time members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair, Chairs of each Board/Fund, arts practitioners and community representatives. The General Manager is a member of the Council *ex officio*. Members of the Council meet four to five 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.

There are eight seven-member Funds – Community Cultural Development, Dance, Literature, Major Organisations, Music, New Media Arts, Theatre and Visual Arts/Craft – and a nine-member Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board. Board/Fund members are appointed for periods of between one and four years – generally three. Board/Funds usually meet between two and four times per year.

Under Section 7 of the *Australia Council Act*, the Council has delegated the power to make grants to the relevant Board/Funds, within the framework of Council's priorities, policies and budget allocations. The majority of Board/Fund members are practising artists or have practised in the arts. They bring to the Board/Funds first-hand knowledge of the particular requirements of the artform or the specific discipline, as well as a collective national overview. They participate in Fund or Board meetings by providing expert advice on the assessment of grant applications and the development of artform policy. The expertise of Board/Fund members is augmented by advisers drawn from the Register of Peers. The concept of peer group assessment within the Board/Funds is a principle of Council.

Other procedures for public consultation are used at different times by the Board/Funds and Council. For example:

- public meetings held in various centres, both metropolitan and regional, generally in conjunction with Council and Board/Fund meetings;
- public meetings held by Board/Fund 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 where Board/Fund 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;
- inviting views from the public when submissions are being prepared on topics of particular interest to the arts community.

#### Categories of Documents

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

- *Australia Council Act 1975*;
- relevant Commonwealth legislation;
- Australia Council policies:
  - *Directions 1999–2001*
  - *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts policy*
  - *Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy*
  - *Staff Operations Manual*
  - *Manual for Members of the Australia Council*
  - *Register of Peers Manual*;
- *Support for the Arts Handbook 1999* and *Support for the Arts Handbook 2000*;
- grant application forms;

- research papers;
- terms and conditions of employment;
- minutes and agendas (Council and Funds/Board);
- program reviews;
- program guidelines (Audience and Marketing Development).

#### Freedom of Information Procedures

Applicants seeking access under the *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act* to documents in the possession of the Council should forward a \$30 application fee and apply in writing to: The General Manager  
Attention: FOI Coordinator  
Australia Council  
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 General Manager 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 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 which 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 of New South Wales, arrangements may be made to view the documents at the nearest regional office of the Australian Archives (in Melbourne, Brisbane,

Townsville, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin or Canberra).

The application fees and charges applying to FOI are as determined in Schedules to the FOI (Fees and Charges) Regulations. The General Manager may remit the charges upon request. A decision not to remit the charges needs to be made within 30 days of a request being made.

#### Freedom of Information 1999-2000

There was one request for information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* during 1999–2000. This request was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.

#### SERVICE CHARTER

The Australia Council's Client Service Charter, released 1 July 1998, outlines how the organisation will deliver its services. The Charter continued to be provided to our constituents through the *Support for the Arts Handbook 2000*, our web site, our public newsletter, *Artforce*, and other interaction with the field.

The Council conducted a full internal review of the Charter's implementation in the 1999–2000 year. A number of improvements to the Charter were enacted as a result. These include: simplifying and clarifying information provided in our Charter; streamlining some processes for providing feedback to clients; and ensuring that key performance parameters are technically achievable.

Future data collection on service delivery will be improved by the implementation of the Nugget Knowledge Management System which was designed and tested this year.

#### PUBLICATIONS 1999-2000

The Australia Council produces a number of publications and audiovisual resources each year to meet the increasing demand for information on the arts industry from researchers, students, artswriters, politicians, the media and members of the public.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Reports, research papers, newsletters, handbooks, brochures and special interest titles on the arts generated by Council are generally available from its Library.

Several Council publications are distributed commercially by DW Thorpe Pty Ltd, telephone (03) 9245 7370, while others, including older titles now out of print, can be borrowed on inter-library loan. A series of books on *The Art of Self-Promotion*, commissioned by the Australia Council, are published by Allen & Unwin.

A bibliography of all Australia Council publications is held in the Council's Library, and a list of publications in print is available on request, telephone (02) 9215 9000 or toll-free 1800 226 912; and is available on Council's web site.

Publications issued by the Australia Council during 1999–2000 include:

*Australia Council Annual Report 1998-99*, Redfern: Australia Council, October 1999

*Australia Council Support for the Arts Handbook 2000*, Surry Hills: Australia Council, January 2000

*Australians and the Arts: What do the arts mean to Australians? A report to the Australia Council from Saatchi & Saatchi Australia*, Surry Hills: Australia Council, June 2000

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