

6 corporate overview



The Australia Council is a Commonwealth statutory authority created under the *Australia Council Act 1975*. Section 5 of the Act defines the functions of the Council as:

FUNCTIONS

- (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.**

PROFILE

The Australia Council is the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body. Its vision is to enrich the life of the nation by supporting and promoting the arts.

Australia is a culturally rich nation and the work of our artists is central to contributing to our sense of national identity and the way we are perceived by the world. The Australia Council fulfils a crucial role in supporting Australian artists, arts organisations and communities to pursue artistic excellence, to create and present 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. The Council also plays a vital role in encouraging new audiences for the arts both here and overseas and promotes the greater appreciation of the value and role of the arts in the community.

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 all sections of the community are valued and supported; and communities across Australia are enriched by opportunities to incorporate the arts into 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 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 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.

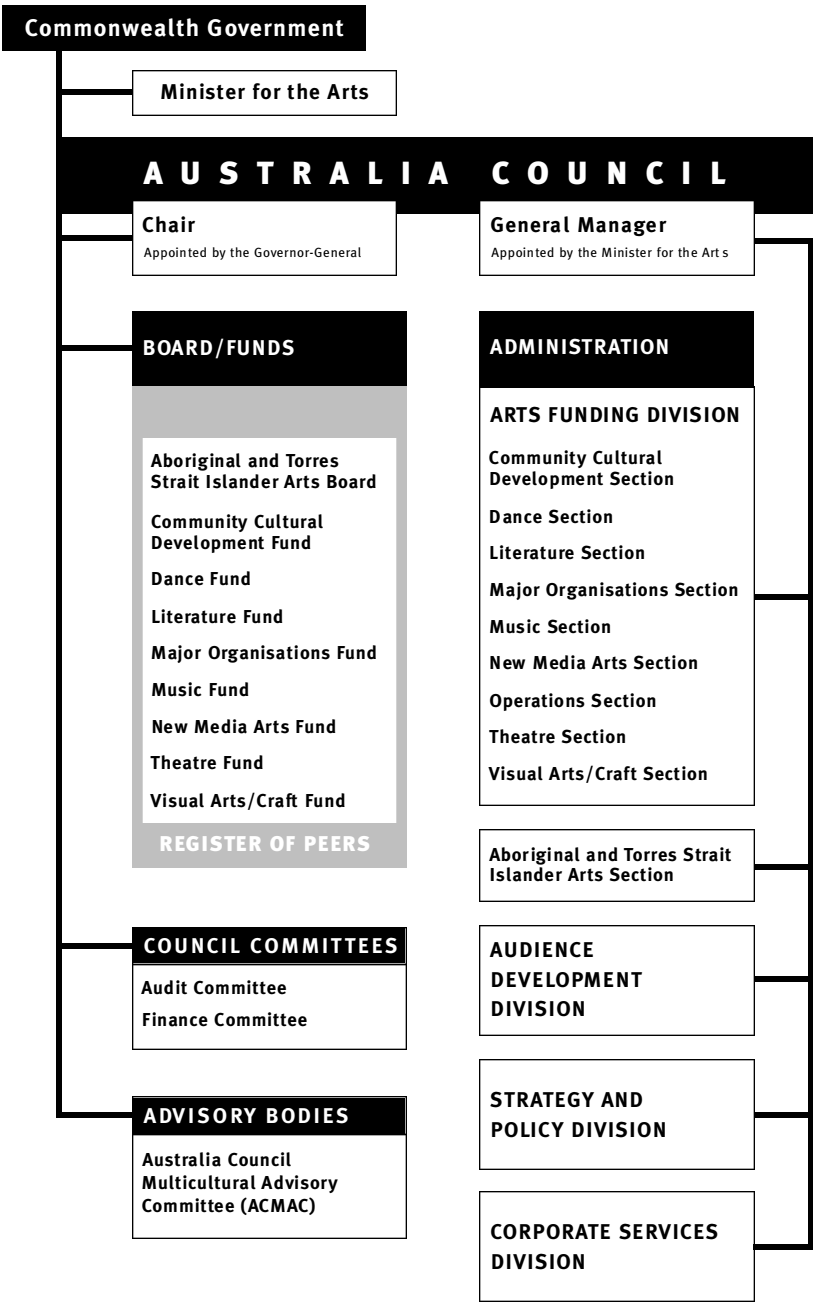
The work of the Australia Council has always been guided by two fundamental principles. The 'arm's length' principle, which is enshrined in the *Australia Council Act*, ensures that decisions about specific grants are made at a distance from political processes.

The second principle is 'peer assessment' whereby decisions on grants 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 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.

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.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Australia Council is a statutory authority established under the *Australia Council Act* 1975. The Council is subject to the terms of its own Act as well as to the *Financial Management Accountability Act* 1997 and the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act* 1997. The latter two pieces of legislation were the result, with the *Auditor-General's Act* 1997, of the first revamp of the Commonwealth's audit framework since the original legislation in 1902.

COMPOSITION OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

The governing body of the Australia Council is responsible for the overall corporate governance of the organisation, including the determination of priorities and the policy and budgetary framework within which the Council and its Board, Funds and advisory bodies operate, and for monitoring its achievements.

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 1998–99, the Council met seven times, one of which was by teleconference. 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.

The Funds and Board are established by the Minister under the Act and function within the framework of Council's strategic plan, *Directions* 999–2001, and related policies and budget allocations. Under the Act, the Funds/Board must consist of a Chair and not fewer than four, nor more than eight, other members. The Funds each have seven members, including a Chair, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board has nine members, including a Chair, as well as a nine-member Grants Committee (four of whom are Board members). Members may be appointed for four years, but, in general, appointments are for no more than three years. Fund and Board Chairs, under the Act, are members of Council.

As with Council, the Act specifies that the Funds/Board must comprise such number of persons who practise or have practised the arts or are otherwise associated with the arts and such number of community interest representatives, as the Minister thinks fit. The power to allocate grants has been delegated by the Council to the Funds/Board, assisted by expert advice of peers drawn from the Register of Peers. Grant assessment meetings are held at least twice yearly.

In addition to their role in providing advice to the Council, the Funds and Board 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 addition to policy input from peers on the Funds and Board, peers are involved in Council's decision-making processes through the Register of Peers. 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.

There are now over 1,584 peers on the Register. Over the year, 99 peers have provided external assessment on applications, support material or performances. A further 38 peers have participated in grants assessment meetings and seven peers have assisted at policy development meetings.

The Council's Conflict of Interest Code states that no applications are eligible for assessment where a member of the peer body making that grant decision is also the applicant, or is the sole or major beneficiary through a third party.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In addition to policy input from 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. The Council establishes committees from time to time according to perceived needs.

To assist in the execution of its responsibilities, the Council is supported by an Audit Committee and a Finance Committee, as well as working parties convened to deal with particular issues (such as the development of strategic directions, research, promoting the value of the arts, youth and the arts, and taxation reform).

THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Committee is to assist the Council and Council members to comply with their corporate governance obligations, in particular in relation to the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*. The Committee was established in February 1998 and comprises three non-executive members of Council one of whom was appointed as Chair, the General Manager ex-officio and an experienced financial adviser external to Council.

Persons invited to attend the meetings included the Director Corporate Services, Finance Manager, and the Council internal auditors KPMG. The Australian National Audit Office as Council's external auditors is also invited to attend periodically.

The Audit Committee's objectives are:

- to improve credibility and objectivity of the Australia Council's accountability process and financial reporting;
- to assist the Council and Council Members to comply with their corporate governance obligations, in particular in relation to
 - the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*
 - accounting policies and financial reporting
 - external accountability requirements
 - internal control structure
 - risk management
 - other legislative and ethical obligations.

The Audit Committee reviews and makes appropriate recommendations to Council on external accountability/financial reporting, Council's internal control structure, its risk management system and audit issues. Meetings are held before every Council meeting and the Chair

reports to Council on relevant issues. Over the year, the Committee met on five occasions: July 1998, September 1998, November 1998, April 1999 and June 1999.

Members of the Audit Committee as at 30 June 1999 were:

Nathan Waks (Chair)
 Nicholas Hasluck
 Deborah Klika
 David Hey-Cunningham,
 Accountant (external)
 Jennifer Bott

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is charged with a broad oversight of the Council's budget preparation and financial management and reports to Council on budget matters on a quarterly basis.

Members of the Finance Committee as at 30 June 1999 were:

Margaret Seares (Chair)
 John Rimmer
 Geoffrey Street
 Jennifer Bott

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTS GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Grants Committee is responsible for the assessment of grants applications solely, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board then responsible for the analysis, development, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy issues arising out of grants rounds.

Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Grants Committee are listed in the grants lists on page 130.

COUNCIL ADVISORY BODIES

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACMAC)

The Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee's function is to advise Council on matters relating to the Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy. It meets and reports to Council as required.

The committee is comprised of members from each artform Fund and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant Committee. This year the committee met three times.

Members of ACMAC as at 30 June 1999 were:

Deborah Klika (Chair)
 Janis Balodis
 Alessio Cavallaro
 Lindy Lee
 Patrick Morgan
 Karin Puels
 Helen Rusak
 Tarcisio Teatini-Climaco
 Noel Tovey
 Cheryl Yin-Lo

MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL AT 30 JUNE 1999

Margaret Seares (WA) was appointed Chair of the Australia Council for three years from 7 July 1997. Dr Seares filled the position of Executive Chair of Council from August 1998 to February 1999 when the new General Manager, Jennifer Bott, took up the position. Formerly on secondment to the Western Australian Government as Executive Director of the Department for the Arts, Dr Seares' substantive appointment is with the University of Western Australia, where she was Associate Professor of Music and, from 1991 to 1995 the Dean of the School of Music. Dr Seares has returned to the University of Western Australia as



Members of the Australia Council.
Left to right.

Top: Christopher Pearson, Nicholas Hasluck, Geoffrey Street. *Middle:*

John Rimmer, Deborah Klika, Joseph Skrzynski, Ron Radford, Susan Street, Nathan Waks.

Front: Margaret Seares.

Inset: Jennifer Bott, Helen Nugent, Li Cunxin, John Moriarty, Geoffrey Taylor (staff representative).

Photo: Id

Photographics

Executive Director of Community Relations. Her background and training is as a musicologist, and her special areas of research interest are in the harpsichord music of the early 18th century, and into Australian music of the post-Colonial period. Dr Seares is an ex-officio Board member of the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities and a member of the Foreign Minister's Australia International Cultural Council.

John Rimmer (Vic) has been appointed as Deputy Chair of Council until 30 September 1999 (in place of Helen Nugent). He is Director of Acuity Consulting Pty Ltd, a consultant to Multimedia Victoria, a member of the Library Board of Victoria and is also a part-time member of the Australian Broadcasting Authority. Mr Rimmer was appointed as a member of the Australia Council from 27 March 1997, and was subsequently appointed as Chair of the New Media Arts Fund from 1 July 1998, thus extending his term on Council to 30 June 2000. He has been a senior executive in the Victorian Government with positions as Executive Director of

Multimedia Victoria, Deputy Secretary in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Director of Health Policy and Planning. He is a former recording pianist for the ABC.

Helen Nugent (NSW) was appointed as Chair of the Major Organisations Fund and a member of the Australia Council for a three-year term from 1 July 1997, and subsequently appointed as Deputy Chair of Council from 14 August 1998.

Dr Nugent is currently absent from duty from Council from 15 December 1998 until 30 September 1999 while serving as Chair of the Federal Government's Inquiry Into the Major Performing Arts Sector. Dr Nugent's most recent position was Director of Strategy, Westpac Banking Corporation. She was formerly a Director of the Bank of New South Wales, Director of Mercantile Mutual, Professor of Management and Director of the MBA Program at the Australian Graduate School of Management, a partner with McKinsey & Company, as well as a member of the Commonwealth Government's Administrative Review

Council, Deputy Chairman, Opera Australia and Director of Playbox Theatre.

Jennifer Bott (NSW) was appointed General Manager of the Australia Council for a five-year term from 8 February 1999. Ms Bott's most recent position was General Manager of Musica Viva Australia, and she has previously held senior positions with the international educational organisation AFS International Exchanges, the Australian Opera, the Australian Bicentennial Authority, and with the Arts Council of Australia.

Nicholas Hasluck AM (WA) a writer, Barrister and part-time President of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal in Western Australia, was appointed as Chair of the Literature Fund and a member of Council for a three-year term from 4 December 1998. Mr Hasluck won *The Age* Book of the Year Award in 1984, and the Premier's Literary Prize (WA) in 1991. His works of fiction and essays include *Quarantine*, *The Light That Time Has Made* and *The Chance for Politics*. He has been Deputy Chair of the WA Academy of Performing Arts, a member of the Copyright Law Review Committee Experts Group and the WA Arts Council and has previously served on the Australia Council as Deputy Chair from 1978 to 1982.

Deborah Klika (NSW) is a film and television producer, and script editor, who operates her own consulting firm Comedy Script Services and is co-founder of The Comedy Workshop. She was appointed as a member of the Australia Council for a three-year term from 27 March 1997, and subsequently appointed Chair of the Community Cultural Development Fund from 13 August 1998. Ms Klika previously sat on the NSW Government Women's Consultative Committee and currently sits on the NSW Government's Legal Services Tribunal. She is a member of the

Australian Film Institute, the Australian Writers Guild, Women in Film and Television, the Australian Screen Directors' Association and the Screen Producers' Association.

Li Cunxin (Vic) is Manager of the Asian Desk of Johnson Taylor Stockbrokers, and was appointed as a member of the Australia Council for a three-year term from 22 June 1999. He recently retired from The Australian Ballet where he was Principal Artist from 1995 to 1999. Mr Li was accepted for the Beijing Dance Academy at the age of 11. He was soloist, and then principal dancer, with the Houston Ballet from 1979 to 1995, and has danced leading roles in major classical and contemporary ballets. He has received numerous awards at international competitions held in the USA, Japan and the former USSR.

John Moriarty (NSW) is a co-owner and a director of Jumbana Pty Ltd, and runs a development consultancy firm in Sydney. Mr Moriarty was appointed Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and a member of the Australia Council from 27 March 1997 for a three-year term. He is a Board member of the University of South Australia Foundation and the Commercial Development Corporation; a member of the Visions of Australia Committee; and a member of the St Peters Council Art and Cultural Committee. Mr Moriarty has won the Advance Australia Award for Contribution in Industry and Commerce, the SA Aboriginal Business Man of the Year award from the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee, and the Citizen Award from the St Peters Council.

Christopher Pearson (SA) is an essayist, reviewer and journalist and was appointed as a community interest representative member of the Australia Council for a three-year term from 27 March 1997.

He is the editor of *The Adelaide Review* a columnist for *The Courier Mail* and for *The Australian Financial Review*, and the winner of a National Trust Award. He was a founding editor of *The Sydney Review*, and has been publisher of Wakefield Press.

Ron Radford (SA) Director of the Art Gallery of South Australia since 1991, has been appointed Chair of the Visual Arts/Craft Fund and a member of the Australia Council for three years to 9 June 2000. Mr Radford has worked in the art museum profession in Victoria and South Australia for 25 years and has been responsible for the acquisition of over 4,000 works of heritage and contemporary art and curated over 80 exhibitions. Previously, he was Senior Curator at the Art Gallery of South Australia, and before that Director of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. He is currently a member of the inaugural National Portrait Gallery Board. Ron Radford has served on a great number of arts committees, most recently as Chairman of the Council of Australian Art Museum Directors and as a member of the Commonwealth Heritage Collections Committee, and also formerly sat on the Board of the Centre for British Studies, University of Adelaide.

Joseph Skrzynski AM (NSW) has been appointed as Chair of the Major Organisations Fund and a member of Council to 30 September 1999 (whilst Helen Nugent is serving on the Inquiry into the Major Performing Arts Sector). He is Managing Director of Australian Mezzanine Investments Pty Ltd., Chairman of the Sydney Opera House Trust, and a member of the National Investment Council. Mr Skrzynski has been Chairman of the National Capital Planning Authority, the Broadcasting Council and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School; Chief Executive of the Australian Film Commission; Deputy Chairman of the

Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd; and a Director of Belvoir Street Theatre, the Seymour Performing Arts Centre and Sydney Dance Company.

Geoffrey Street (Vic) has a very wide range of experience in the performing arts and was appointed Chair of the Theatre Fund and a member of the Australia Council for three years from 24 July 1996. His experience includes programming of major events and festivals. Mr Street is currently based in Melbourne as the Programming Manager of the Victorian Arts Centre Trust. Previously he was General Manager of the Brisbane Biennial International Festival of Music. He has also worked for the Queensland Arts Council.

Susan Street (Qld), Head of Dance, Academy of the Arts, Queensland University of Technology, has been appointed as Chair of the Dance Fund and Councillor for three years from 1 January 1998. Professor Street has extensive and distinguished experience as a dancer, teacher and academic, including nearly ten years in her current position. She is also President of Ausdance Queensland, and a member of the Artistic Committee of the Australian Ballet School. Her other positions include Special Advisor on the Arts, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation, and Chairperson, Education Committee of the Asia Pacific Region of the World Dance Alliance.

Nathan Waks (NSW) is Principal Cellist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and a Board Member of the Australian National Academy of Music, and was formerly Managing Director of Symphony Australia. Mr Waks has been appointed as Chair of the Music Fund and a member of Council from 4 December 1998 to 30 September 2001. Formerly a Director of Music at the ABC, founding

Director and Artistic Adviser of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, founding Director of the Australian Music Centre, Mr Waks has also performed with a number of prestigious orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He has won the Paris Conservatoire Premier Prix and Honours in the ABC Instrumental Competition and his compositions include scores for the films *Hunter Kangaroo For Love Alone* and *My Brilliant Career*.

Geoffrey Taylor, a Program Officer with the New Media Arts Fund, was elected staff representative on Council for 1998–99.

In other changes to the membership of Council during the year under review, Lucette Aldous, completed her three-year term on Council in December 1998; Edmund Campion completed his term as Chair of the Literature Fund and a member of Council in December 1998; Richard Mills AM resigned from his position as Chair of the Music Fund and a member of Council in November 1998; and Michael Lynch resigned from his position as General Manager of Council in August 1998 to take up the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Opera House.

STAFF STRUCTURE

Supporting the work of the Council, its Board, Funds and advisory bodies, is a full-time staff of 118 located in Sydney. Staff are appointed under the *Australia Council Act 1975*, on terms and conditions similar to those of the Australian Public Service.

The organisation consists of four Divisions: Arts Funding, Audience Development, Strategy and Policy,

and Corporate Services, each headed by a Director.

The Arts Funding Division comprises nine sections, including the Operations Section, which is responsible for the processing and registration of grant applications and other routine aspects of the administration of Council's funding responsibilities. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Section administration is headed by a Director, and the nine sections within Arts Funding are headed by a Manager. These senior officers manage the grant assessment process and artform development for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and each of the Funds: Community Cultural Development, Dance, Literature, Major Organisations, Music, New Media Arts, Theatre and Visual Arts/Craft.

The Strategy and Policy Division comprises Public Affairs, Policy and Planning, and the Library, each headed by a Manager, and the Secretariat. The Corporate Services Division includes Finance and Services, Human Resources, and Information Technology, each headed by a Manager. The Audience Development Division comprises sections responsible for Council's work in the areas of national audience and market development, arts marketing skills development, and international marketing and promotions.

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, Strategy and Policy, and Corporate Services), the Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Section, and the Finance and Services Manager.

Don Baxter commenced as Director, Arts Funding Division, on 1 July 1997. A librarian by training, Mr Baxter had spent the previous thirteen years leading the community response to HIV/AIDS at a national and State level, the last six years as Executive Director of the AIDS Council of New South Wales, Australia's largest HIV/AIDS organisation. He is a member of the board of the South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service and a range of community organisations.

Philip Rolfe joined the Australia Council's Theatre Board in 1989 after a diverse arts career in Australia and overseas. He was Deputy Director, Arts and Entertainment for the Australian Bicentennial Authority for four years till 1988, has administered theatre companies and projects in Britain and Australia and toured performing arts throughout Europe and Japan. For the Australia Council, he was instrumental in developing 'hybrid arts' (now New Media Arts) and various international programs, including the successful Australian Performing Arts Markets. He was Acting Executive Officer, Performing Arts in 1996–97 and was Acting Director, Audience Development from June 1997 and appointed Director in July 1998.

Sarah Gardner was appointed Director of the Strategy and Policy Division in February 1996 having been the Acting Director since May 1995. Ms Gardner has been with the Australia Council since 1990, first as Public Affairs Manager and then as 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. Prior to joining the Council, Ms Watts had been Secretary of the Australian Law Reform Commission and Regional Director and Assistant Commissioner of the then Trade Practices Commission (now the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission). She has degrees in arts and law and an extensive background in corporate and legal administration.

Fay Nelson was appointed Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board in March 1998. Mrs Nelson joined the Australia Council in 1996 as Program Manager Policy and Communications. Mrs Nelson was formerly the Information



Senior Management.
Left to right: Don Baxter, Fay Nelson, John Wicks, Jennifer Bott, Philip Rolfe, Sarah Gardner.
Inset: Catherine Watts.
Photo: Branco Gaica

Officer with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. She is widely recognised for her in-depth knowledge of Aboriginal art and cultures.

John Wicks, Acting Finance and Services Manager, has been with the Council since October 1989, first as Accountant, Finance Division and then as Senior Finance Officer, Arts Funding Division. Mr Wicks has been in his current position since March 1999. Prior to joining the Council, Mr Wicks spent eleven years in the Banking and Finance sector in Australia and overseas. His last appointment was with Lloyd's Bank in Sydney as Assistant Management Accountant. He has a Bachelor of Business degree, with a major in accounting and a Diploma in Business Accounting. Mr Wicks is an associate member of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants.

Contact Officer

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