



National Arts and Disability Strategy



Cultural Ministers Council
National Arts and Disability Strategy

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Web: www.cmc.gov.au

Email: arts.disability@environment.gov.au

Phone: 1800 185 693

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Front cover: Dana Nance and Andrew Pandos in *Vocabulary*, a co-production by Restless Dance Theatre and the Australian Dance Theatre, 2005. Photo: Chris Herzfeld

Foreword from CMC

Arts and culture enrich our lives by inspiring creativity, reflection and social debate. They strengthen our communities and encourage social inclusion and harmony. They reflect the diversity that shapes the distinctive features of Australia's culture and identity.

The artistic aspirations and achievements of people with a disability are an important and valued part of the Australian culture.

One in five people in Australia who have some form of disability may encounter barriers which prevent them from accessing cultural experiences and engaging in artistic expression.

These may be physical barriers which make it difficult for people with a disability to access and enjoy cultural facilities and activities. Or there may be financial barriers to engaging in the arts.

Audiences with a disability may have trouble finding information about arts and cultural events. Artists with a disability may find it difficult to get information about opportunities and what support is available to help with their arts practice.

People with a disability can also encounter attitudes which deter or prevent them from engaging in the arts—whether as practitioners, audiences or creative participants.

Through the Cultural Ministers Council, governments have agreed to work together to improve the opportunities and choices people with a disability have to engage with and participate in the arts.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy provides a framework to promote a more inclusive society and to highlight best practice.

Cultural Ministers Council would like to acknowledge that the National Arts and Disability Strategy has been developed with extensive input from the arts and disability sector and people with a disability.

Achieving the goals of the strategy will involve ensuring that people with a disability have a meaningful partnership with governments, communities and support agencies.

The strategy will help each government to identify and develop priority projects in line with the strategy's goals according to their capacity and circumstance.

Each government will be responsible for funding any initiatives undertaken in its jurisdiction and governments are encouraged to contribute to joint initiatives with other governments and agencies, and with the arts and cultural sectors.



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Opposite: Rita Halabarec and Nicki Holland, Food Court with The Necks, Back to Back Theatre, 2008. Photo: Jeff Busby

Introduction

The Cultural Ministers Council is a forum of Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for the arts and culture in Australia. The Cultural Ministers Council has committed to improve coordination and collaboration across governments on arts and disability issues through a National Arts and Disability Strategy.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy is a framework that the Australian Government and state and territory governments can use to assess their existing programs, consider new opportunities and directions, and identify new partnerships and initiatives.

The first part of the strategy sets out the Cultural Ministers Council's vision for supporting, encouraging and promoting access and participation in the arts by people with a disability, and for promoting social inclusion through the arts.

It identifies the principles around which the strategy is framed and governance arrangements for the strategy.

The second part outlines four key priority areas for governments, with clear goals and strategies.

The third part suggests some possible priority projects for the strategy.

Refer to the attachment at page 23 for a list of terms and definitions used in this strategy.

Vision



*Lorcan Hopper in The Heart of Another is a Dark Forest, a co-production by Restless Dance Theatre and Rawcus Theatre, Melbourne, 2008.
Photo: Paul Dunn*

People with disabilities participate fully in the arts and cultural life of Australia.

The artistic aspirations and achievements of people with a disability are a valued and visible part of Australian culture.

How the strategy came about

“

It is great to see our members making friends and developing their self confidence and self esteem.

It should never be underestimated the positive benefits that performance offers each individual and the community.

”

*Helen Walker and
Michelle Weaver,
A-Muse Theatre Group*

James de Blas, Guardians of Paradise (from the Blue Hairy Boy), acrylic on Stonehenge paper, 2003. Commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre, for Matthew and Others: Journeys with Schizophrenia. Image: Ian Hobbs

The National Arts and Disability Strategy operates within the legislative requirements of Australian Government and state and territory relevant laws including but not limited to the Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

It is guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by the Australian Government on 17 July 2008. While not creating any new rights, all tiers of Australian government now have a legal obligation to progressively implement the articles of the Convention. The Convention aims to enhance opportunities for people with disability to participate in all aspects of social and political life.

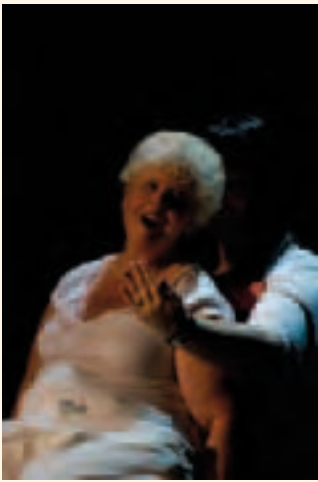
The strategy aims to encourage the universal accessibility of arts and cultural activities, recognising that improvements made to support the aspirations of people with a disability have a positive impact on the community as a whole.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy is one of several whole-of-government approaches currently being developed to support social inclusion and address the barriers to full and active citizenship and participation faced by people with a disability.

The strategy complements the National Disability Strategy being developed by the Australian Government in partnership with state and territory governments, the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy, the Fourth National Mental Health Plan and other government strategies in Australia.



Public consultation



*Top: Radiance Dance Project
(inclusive community dance),
Australian Capital Territory, 2008*

*Above: Dr Possum, 7 Golden
Rules film project, 2009.
Photo: Glenn Ryan*

A national public consultation process ensured that the development of the strategy was strongly informed by the arts and disability sector and people with a disability. There were more than 100 submissions. They gave valuable insight into important issues and put forward ideas for improving access and participation by people with a disability.

Some common themes and areas of concern in the submissions have helped to guide the development of this strategy:

- Access to information on services and opportunities by people with a disability
- Public awareness and attitudes towards arts by and for people with a disability
- The accessibility of arts organisations, funding bodies, facilities, venues and cultural programming
- The importance of consultation and representation of people with a disability in the development of arts policy, funding decisions and arts practice
- The need for flexible models of support for artists with a disability to support mainstream inclusion
- The importance of creative pathways into the arts for people with a disability from education and training through to enterprise, employment and governance
- The need for greater collaboration and partnerships at all levels of government across portfolios and between arts and disability sectors and non-government organisations
- More research and greater consistency in data collation on arts and disability issues.

Governance arrangements

The Cultural Ministers Council will monitor progress on the strategy each year. A communiqué which will provide information about progress on the strategy will be available on the Cultural Ministers Council website at www.cmc.gov.au.

The Cultural Ministers Council will review how effective the strategy has been every three years. The review will be in consultation with the arts and disability sector, to ensure that the strategy is meeting its objectives and supporting the future aspirations of people with a disability.

*Duncan Luke in Tom the Loneliest,
No Strings Attached Theatre
of Disability.
Photo: Rodney Magazinic*



Underlying principles

The Cultural Ministers Council has identified key principles which will guide the implementation of the strategy across all of the focus areas. These eight principles are consistent with the general obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

1. All Australians have the right to access and participate in high quality and professional arts and cultural activities, regardless of their abilities, age, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, and geographic location.
2. Professional and aspiring artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability have the same choices and opportunities to engage, practise and pursue a career in the arts as those without a disability.
3. Participation in and access to arts and cultural activity by people with a disability are integral to supporting and maintaining a society which fosters creativity, innovation and community enrichment.
4. The experiences and perspectives of people with a disability are diverse. Effective strategies for improving outcomes for people with a disability will need to be varied and flexible.
5. People with a disability will play an active and central role in decision-making processes that affect them.
6. Efforts made to improve access and participation to arts and cultural activity by people with a disability build on existing strengths and complement successful programs, partnerships and activities which are already taking place.
7. A range of partners need to be enlisted to support people with a disability to have increased opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities and enterprises. This includes families and supporters as well as health, disability and community service providers, arts and cultural organisations, training, education, and employment agencies, business and philanthropic sectors, and local government.
8. Through this strategy, Cultural Ministers Council commits to a collaborative national approach by governments to improve the quality of access, participation and experience by people with a disability in arts and cultural activities.

The strategy: Focus areas, goals and priority actions



Attitudes towards people with disabilities can only be challenged and changed if people without disabilities learn to recognise, appreciate and value difference as strength and an asset.



M. Jai-Morincome

People with a disability and their supporters are a significant proportion of the Australian population. As the population grows and ages this proportion is likely to increase.

There are a wide range of issues which prevent people with a disability and their supporters from fully engaging in arts and culture.

Governments are committed to better outcomes for people with a disability and their supporters and have been working to support participation in arts and cultural activities. Despite these efforts, arts and cultural participation rates for Australians with a disability are lower than for the general population.

A cooperative national approach across all jurisdictions and agencies is needed to establish and maintain flexible programs which support inclusion in the arts of people with disabilities. It will help governments to share information and make better informed decisions. It will also help governments to progress priority projects based on available resources in a targeted and focused manner.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy identifies four focus areas:

1. Access and participation

Strategies to address the barriers which prevent people with a disability from accessing and participating in the arts and cultural activities, both as audiences and participants.

2. Arts and cultural practice

Strategies to address the barriers which prevent emerging and professional artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability from realising their ambitions.

3. Audience development

Strategies for developing and growing audiences for work created by artists with a disability and disability arts organisations.

4. Strategic development

Strategies at a broader policy level to improve coordination and collaboration across all levels of government, empower people with a disability to have a stronger voice in policy development and planning, and support informed decision making.

Through the Cultural Ministers Council governments agree to work towards the following goals.



Focus area 1: Access and participation



Full access requires the arts community to view disabled artists, arts administrators or co-workers as participants rather than as a population to be serviced. By ensuring access, the arts community would demonstrate full inclusion.



Arts Access Australia

*Opposite: Andrew Pandos
in Rebel Rebel, Restless Dance
Theatre, 2007.
Photographer: David Wilson*

People with a disability face a range of barriers which can prevent them from exercising their right to access facilities, services and resources, both as audiences and as participants.

While individual experiences may differ, common barriers to access include:

- physical access to venues and facilities, such as parking and drop-off points, building location and design, seating arrangements and limited access to backstage areas;
- a lack of information in accessible formats about the availability and accessibility of events and venues, a lack of established information sharing networks, and inaccessible booking and ticketing options;
- diminished quality of artistic and cultural experiences due to issues such as inadequate signage, sign language interpreting and assistive technologies such as audio induction loops/FM systems, captioning or audio-description services;
- a lack of awareness and barriers caused by attitudes amongst the community, arts and cultural organisations, venues, presenters and ticketing agencies; and
- financial barriers such as ticket costs and additional costs for carers or support workers, specialised equipment and transport.

Government-supported arts organisations and government-owned cultural facilities have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in the provision of facilities, services and resources to people of all abilities.

Improving the accessibility of arts organisations and cultural facilities, programming and activities is a priority for all jurisdictions. The following goals and strategies will focus efforts to address these barriers.

Goal 1: Improve physical access to arts organisations and cultural facilities for people with a disability

Strategies

- Identify levels of accessibility in government supported and owned arts organisations and cultural facilities and address the needs and aspirations of people with a disability in facility management plans.
- Promote best practice in inclusive programming and universal design for all government supported and owned arts organisations and cultural facilities and give priority to accessibility considerations in future programs and capital projects including upgrades.

“

I find it extremely difficult to attend an arts event on my own, and cannot always find someone wishing to attend and accompany me. Likewise I cannot afford to buy a ticket for someone else to accompany me and possibly also pay them as a support worker. If there were support mechanisms in place for me to attend on my own, I would probably double or triple my arts attendance .

”

*J. Colquhoun,
Salubrious Productions*

- Encourage arts and cultural organisations and producers to support venues which meet best practice accessibility requirements for people with a disability.
- Investigate opportunities for partnerships with local governments to incorporate best practice in accessibility into cultural planning processes.

Goal 2: Information on access to arts and cultural facilities is widely available and in a variety of accessible formats

Strategies

- Encourage all arts organisations and cultural facilities nationally to use the United Nations standardised access symbols including symbols which identify the levels of accessibility for different disability types. This could be included in advertising, publicity and promotional material and displayed in appropriate areas.
- Promote the web accessibility standards developed by the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) and encourage all arts organisations and cultural facilities to review the accessibility of their online information in relation to these standards and to adopt the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
- Encourage all arts organisations and cultural facilities to collaborate with relevant peak bodies and disability service providers to ensure the dissemination of venue accessibility information is appropriately targeted for people with a disability.



*Luke Toohey in The GO Show,
Footscray Community Arts Centre,
as part of the Melbourne
International Arts Festival, 2008.
Photo: Matt Murphy*



The Democratic Set, *Back to Back Theatre – Theatre of Speed*, 2008. Photo: Jeff Busby

Goal 3: *People with a disability have access to quality arts and cultural experiences*

Strategies

- Encourage and assist arts organisations and cultural facilities to review policies and programs to improve the experiences of people with a disability and provide more equal access.
- Support programs which reduce financial barriers for people with a disability to participate in creative activities, and encourage widespread participation to these programs by service providers, and arts and cultural venues.
- Encourage government-supported arts and cultural organisations and venues to implement disability awareness training for staff and boards.
- Develop resources for arts and cultural organisations and venues which raise awareness and offer guidance on best practices standards for the provision of audio-description, captioning, sign-interpreting and other access services.

Goal 4: *Promote the value of participation in creative activities and encourage the involvement of people with a disability in arts and culture*

Strategies

- Encourage and facilitate collaborative partnerships to increase creative opportunities by people with a disability as audiences and as performers and creators of art.
- Increase awareness of significant creative spaces (such as venues, studios and workshops) and organisations that support the cultural participation of people with a disability.
- Encourage arts and cultural organisations and venues to program work that specifically engages with, and is relevant to people with a disability.
- Encourage key organisations in receipt of government funding to plan for and report on how they actively engage with people with disabilities as audiences, participants, artists and arts/cultural workers.
- Provide appropriate arts experiences for children and young people with a disability relevant to their context. This may be through increased support for youth arts and cultural organisations or greater collaboration with education, health and disability portfolios to create more opportunities for quality arts education and experiences for students with a disability.



Focus area 2: Arts and cultural practice



All artists should have the same choices regardless of disability. Artists who have a disability may choose to locate themselves and their work in a mainstream cultural context, they may identify as an outsider artist or they may identify with disability arts. The freedom of choice is the obvious issue.



*A. Hunter,
Neami Splash Art Studio*

Artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability share the same needs and aspirations as any other artist or arts/cultural worker for suitable creative spaces, support to develop artistically, opportunities to present their work, training, mentoring and career pathways.

The barriers to access and participation in arts and cultural activities can also hinder professional or aspiring/emerging artists and arts/cultural workers in their practice.

People with a disability engaging in arts and cultural practice may be on low incomes and face additional costs for specialised equipment, travel or support workers. They may find it difficult to access training and professional development opportunities which support their particular aspirations and may find it more difficult to seek and gain employment.

Artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability may experience isolation from or limited access to the arts and cultural community. Information barriers, such as inaccessible information on opportunities for funding or accessible programs, can be major disincentives for artists with a disability.

Attitudes in the community, or a lack of awareness in the community, arts and culture sector, and employment, community services and disability service organisations may discourage or prevent artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability from realising their artistic aspirations.

There is a range of government programs and initiatives across portfolios to help people with a disability in their arts and cultural practice, training and employment. A more coordinated approach will help to ensure a greater equality of access to funding, training, professional development opportunities, mentoring and employment through the course of their careers.

The strategies outlined below are designed to align with the principles and action areas identified in the Australian Government's National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy – Setting the Directions paper.

*Opposite: Francis Cachia and
Barnaby Norris, western Sydney
photography workshops,
Accessible Arts, 2007.
Photo: Accessible Arts*

Goal 1: *Improve access to arts and cultural funding programs and processes for people with a disability*

Strategies

- Review existing arts and cultural funding policies, programs and processes to ensure they are appropriately accessible, inclusive and flexible to support the diverse needs and aspirations of artists and arts/cultural workers with different types of disability through the course of their careers.
- Examine opportunities for arts and cultural funding bodies to improve support for artists with a disability to help to improve inclusion and access to general funding currently available.
- In consultation with relevant peak bodies and disability service providers, promote funding programs in accessible formats and in appropriate ways to ensure that people with a disability are informed of funding opportunities.
- Provide disability awareness training for employees of arts and cultural funding agencies, peer assessment panels and boards.
- Strengthen links between funding programs across portfolios by identifying potential funding opportunities and promoting them to disability arts and cultural networks.

Below: White Noise (installation detail), Jane Trengove, oil on canvas, Sutton Gallery, Victoria, 2008. Photo: Sutton Gallery

Bottom: Radiance Dance Project (inclusive community dance), Australian Capital Territory, 2008



Goal 2: *Increase opportunities for the presentation of work by artists with a disability*

Strategies

- Consider opportunities to assist in the commission and presentation of works by artists with a disability.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a national touring circuit for art produced by people with a disability.
- Encourage and support arts organisations, arts agents and venues to consider work by artists with disability as part of their programming.

“

I believe if more people with disabilities had access to arts education they would feel, like me, better equipped to communicate our world through painting, sculpture, print making, theatre, and thus contribute to greater understanding of what it's like to be slightly different but oh so fortunate to be involved with the arts.

”

F. Henke

Goal Three: *Artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability have greater access to mentoring and professional development opportunities*

Strategies

- Work to enable existing arts and cultural programs to incorporate mentoring and professional development opportunities for people with a disability.
- Create opportunities for artists and arts/cultural workers with disabilities in programs offering mentorships, internships, exchanges and placements for new and emerging artists, and promote professional development opportunities through arts and cultural organisations and training, employment, health, disability and community services networks.
- Explore opportunities to increase the availability of residency programs for artists with a disability.

Goal 4: *Strengthen pathways into the creative sector and employment opportunities for artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability*

Strategies

- Work with education and training sectors on opportunities for structured arts training and certification for people with a disability.
- Work to ensure that the needs and artistic aspirations of students with a disability are effectively addressed through initiatives arising from the National Education and the Arts Statement.
- Encourage and support arts and cultural organisations to review recruitment guidelines to encourage employment by people with a disability as artists or arts workers, including engaging volunteers.
- Encourage and support arts and cultural organisations to provide people with a disability opportunities for traineeships and to participate in leadership and management programs.
- Identify and promote best practice models in the employment of artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability including the provision of reasonable adjustment.
- Enhance representation of people with a disability as employees in arts and cultural agencies and as expert advisors on peer assessment panels and boards.



Focus area 3: Audience development



Audiences should be exposed to how the world looks and is interpreted, by people with a disability, even if the end product makes able-bodied people squirm with discomfort. After all, no-one really minds too much if we are challenged by able-bodied artists, and indeed, we expect to be challenged.



ADEC, Advocacy, Disability, Ethnicity, Community

Opposite: Geraldine Page, Denis Bosnjak, pencil on paper, Connected 08 Exhibition, State Trustees in Partnership with Arts Access Victoria, Melbourne, 2008. Photo: Adam Rozsa

Artists with a disability can bring unique perspectives and explore new artistic landscapes which can engage audiences in innovative and often challenging ways.

There are successful flagship disability arts companies and individual artists with a disability making a significant impact and increasing the public profile of artists with disabilities.

While there is increasing audience demand for work produced by artists with disabilities, it can be difficult for artists with a disability to reach wider audiences.

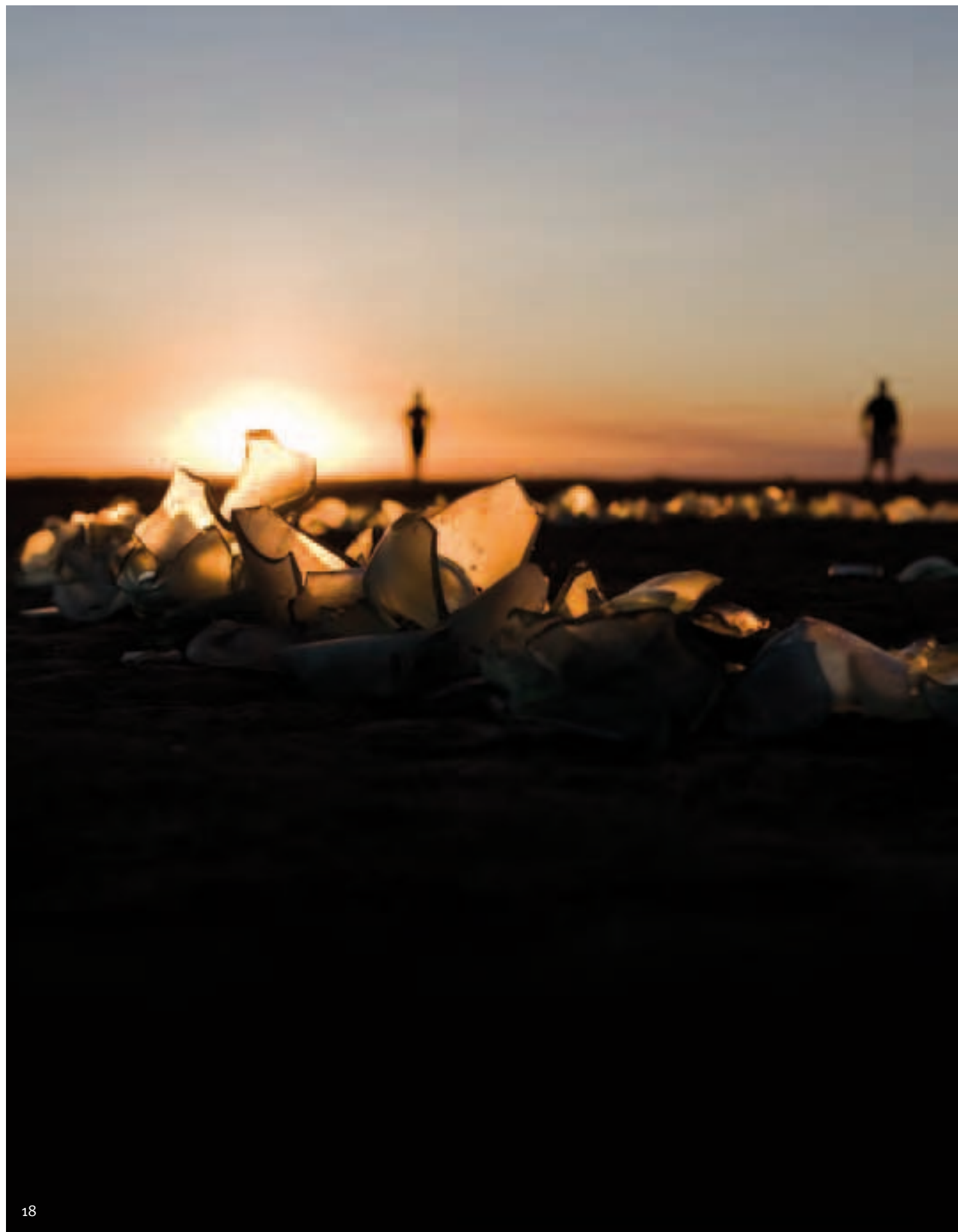
Artists with a disability require opportunities to present and market their work and gain recognition to advance their career. So too audiences need better access to information about what is available and more opportunities to experience and celebrate the talents and achievements of artists with disability.

Works by people with a disability can have a strong influence on changing public opinion. It can help to break down the attitudinal barriers that contribute to social exclusion. Increasing opportunities for audiences to experience innovative and outstanding work by artists with a disability will help to change community perceptions and attitudes about people with a disability and support an environment where people of all abilities have the opportunity to participate in every aspect of cultural life on an equal basis.

Goal 1: *Raise the profile of artists with a disability and disability arts in the community to increase opportunities for audiences to experience work by artists with a disability*

Strategies

- Increase exposure of artists with a disability through promotional and marketing strategies.
- Recognise outstanding artistic achievement through supporting events and activities which showcase work by artists with a disability.
- Support initiatives which encourage and promote potential sponsorships and business partners for artists with a disability and disability arts and cultural organisations.
- Explore opportunities for further research on attitudes, motivations and behaviours of audiences for work by artists with a disability and disability arts and cultural organisations.



Focus area 4: Strategic development



Overall, I think it takes dedicated individuals within disability services and arts organisations, patience, connections and networking, education and awareness raising to boost the profile of and provide opportunities for people with a disability within the arts scene.



*Alison Richardson,
Creative Programs
Coordinator,
Western Sydney
Accessible Arts, NSW*

This section has strategies for governments to improve policy development and planning for arts and disability issues.

They aim to improve arts and cultural service delivery to people with a disability; increase awareness of the benefits of the integration of people with a disability into cultural life; foster strategic partnerships to improve policy development, planning and outcomes for people with a disability in relation to the arts; and increase representation of people with a disability in policy formulation.

Goal 1: *The needs and aspirations of people with a disability are addressed in arts and cultural policy and program development and the impact of policies and programs on people with a disability is measured*

Strategies

- Facilitate greater linkages and collaboration between the Australian Government and state, territory and local governments and peak bodies representing people with a disability to promote consistent policy and planning approaches and share information and resources.
- Seek engagement by other relevant ministerial councils on arts and disability issues including the National Arts and Disability Strategy and explore collaborative partnerships to deliver against the goals of the strategy.
- Encourage, support and promote participation by people with a disability in arts and cultural policy formulation and planning.
- Standardise approaches to data collection at government and organisational level where possible.
- Identify gaps in research and data collection and undertake research on arts and disability issues including audience development, arts practice and engagement by people with a disability in arts and cultural activities.
- Develop performance measures on access and participation by people with a disability in the arts for jurisdictions to include in their reporting on progress against the National Arts and Disability Strategy to Cultural Ministers Council.

*Opposite: DADAA Inc. presents
MarshART 2009 in Derby, WA
Installation by Justine Walsh.
Photo: Matt Scurfield*

We are alive, we are uplifted
살아있어, 우리의 심장은 타올라



Priority projects



Well I think people with disabilities need to know that these activities and services are available.

My personal view is that I know there is activities and help out there, but where do I go? Or who do I speak to? I think it is hard to find the service you really need or want as it is tied up in so many organisations and practices.



B. Rowe, WA visual artist and musician

Opposite: The Enable Lifestyle Support Spiritus, Roma perform their song We Are Alive at the Asia-Pacific Wataboshi Music Festival in Suwon, Korea, 31st August – 3rd September 2009. Photo: Access Arts Queensland

The broad framework of the National Arts and Disability Strategy will assist each jurisdiction to identify and develop, either individually or jointly as appropriate, priority projects suitable for its own needs and situation over the next three years.

Priority projects could include:

1. National network

Facilitate greater linkages and collaboration between Australian Government and state and territory and local governments, peak bodies representing people with a disability and people with a disability including artists, to promote consistent policy and planning approaches and share information and resources. Potential areas of focus might include:

- initiatives that highlight the impact of the arts in strengthening communities and facilitating social inclusion;
- initiatives that encourage critical debate in arts and disability;
- initiatives recognise and support leadership by people with a disability;
- innovative partnerships;
- reviewing and evaluating the impact of arts and cultural activities on health, education and economic development; and
- improving evaluation of arts activities and cultural development programs for people with a disability.

2. Disability Action Plans

Support arts and cultural organisations and venues to develop disability action plans (DAPs) tailored to each organisation's operating environment.

Develop and promote a suite of streamlined resources to assist in the development and implementation of DAPs which could include templates, checklists, and case studies and information providing examples of best practice on access, audience development and inclusive practices. Resources would be developed to assist in minimising the administrative workload of organisations and venues in meeting Commonwealth and state and territory legislation.

3. Information

Within the context of the National Disability Strategy consider the development of a centralised National Disability Portal which includes, among other things, accessibility information for arts and cultural activities and venues, information on funding opportunities, education, training, professional development and employment opportunities, and policy formulation processes.

“

Community education about disabilities [is] important. As one artist said “It is a lifetime struggle. If you have a disability people invariably yell. They often compensate for you. Sometimes I feel patronised.

”

*Liz Edmunds,
Local Support Coordinator
Cowra, Forbes and
Weddin Shires,
New South Wales*

4. National research and data

Through the Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group, work with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to identify gaps in research and data collection and undertake research on arts and disability issues including audience development, arts practice and engagement by people with a disability in arts and cultural activities. Broad consultation with people with a disability will be undertaken as part of any priority setting in arts and disability data collection and research.

5. National touring circuit

Investigate the feasibility of establishing a national touring circuit, including regional and remote locations, for art produced by people with a disability.

6. Private sector support

Work closely with the Australia Business Arts Foundation and ArtSupport Australia to ensure information and opportunities for philanthropic and business support are available to support artists and arts/cultural workers with a disability and disability arts and cultural organisations.

7. Raising awareness

Showcase outstanding artistic achievement by artists with a disability through supporting events and activities including but not limited to events associated with the International Day of People with Disability.

8. Arts and cultural education and experiences

Explore options to increase the provision of arts and cultural education and experiences for children and young people with a disability relevant to their context, such as in schools or through community or youth arts programs.

9. Film, television and broadcast industry

Explore opportunities to enhance accessibility and inclusive practices in the film, television and broadcast industry. This may include programs in Auslan and efforts to increase captioning and audio-description services, particularly for government-funded films, and promoting international best practice models which support casting artists with a disability.



*Capsule, Weave Movement
Theatre, 2007. Photo: Paul Dunn*

Terms and definitions

Terms and definitions

Artist

Creative practitioners including, but not limited to, performers, visual artists, writers, multimedia artists, directors and designers.

Arts/cultural worker

Workers in all parts of the arts and cultural community including, but not limited to, administrators, producers, technicians, museums and gallery curators and librarians.

Arts and cultural activity

Includes arts and cultural events, institutions or services such as performances, exhibitions, theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas and other cultural places. In this context, it does not include other recreation, leisure and sporting activities.

Cultural Ministers Council

The Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) brings together government ministers from Australia and New Zealand to develop Australia's arts and cultural sector. The Australian Local Government Association, Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island have observer status, attending meetings without contributing to decisions. For further information refer to www.cmc.gov.au.

Disability

The 'social model' of disability has influenced contemporary disability policy in recent years. It focuses on disability not as an attribute of individual circumstances, but rather a complex set of environmental conditions, many of which are created by our social environment. It refers to disability as a consequence of attitudinal, social and environmental barriers. The social model targets opportunities to address these by suggesting that it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary to enable the social inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities.

In this paper, 'persons with a disability' refers to people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, combined with other barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (as in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).¹

The Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is the main legislation that protects all Australians against discrimination based on disability.² The definition of disability under the DDA is principally based on a model of 'disability' that includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory

and neurological impairments, learning difficulties, physical disfigurement and the presence of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Commonwealth's anti-discrimination law, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. It encourages everyone to be involved in implementing the Act and to share in the overall benefits to the community and the economy that flow from participation by the widest range of people.

The DDA sets out as its objectives:

- a. to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability;
- b. to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
- c. to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The DDA covers a wide range of areas including employment, education, sport and recreation, the provision of goods, services and facilities, accommodation and access to premises. All levels of government, businesses, trade unions, non-government organisations and individuals have responsibilities under the DDA.

The DDA is a part of the package of Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws, which also includes the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* and *Age Discrimination Act 2004*.

Further information on the DDA can be found at the Australian Human Rights Commission website: http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/.

National Disability Agreement

The National Disability Agreement (NDA) provides the national framework and key areas of reform for the provision of government support to services for people with disabilities. The overarching objective of the NDA is that people with disability and their carers have an enhanced quality of life and participate as valued members of the community. The NDA also aims to achieve progress towards the following outcomes:

- People with disability achieve economic participation and social inclusion;
- People with disability enjoy choice, wellbeing and the opportunity to live as independently as possible; and
- Families and carers are well supported.

National Disability Strategy

A National Disability Strategy was one of the key recommendations of the 2007 Senate Inquiry into the Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA). It was also a 2007 election commitment of the Rudd Labor Government.

The strategy will provide direction and focus at a national level for the development of disability legislation, policy and standards which deliver a whole-of-government, whole-of-life approach to disability planning.

The Government's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2008, reflects the Government's commitment to the rights of people with disability. The National Disability Strategy will be an important mechanism to ensure that the principles underpinning the Convention are incorporated into policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers. The Strategy is being developed by the Commonwealth Government in partnership with state and territory governments.

Additional information on the National Disability Strategy can be found at the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website: www.fahcsia.gov.au.

National Education and the Arts Statement

The National Education and the Arts Statement is the result of a joint resolve by both the Cultural Ministers Council and Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs in 2005 to set down a vision for the future of education and the arts in Australia.

To develop the vision the two councils, comprising federal and state and territory ministers, established a joint working group of the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee and the CMC Standing Committee.

The resulting National Education and the Arts Statement recognises that schools that value creativity and innovation lead the way in cultivating the well-informed and active citizens Australia's future demands.

The statement highlights the importance of the arts in giving students opportunities to both appreciate and be active participants in Australia's vibrant cultural life, which encourages the growth of flexible individuals who can communicate effectively and cope with change. It also notes the importance of the arts in engendering cultural understanding and social harmony, and outlines key principles for collaborative action to improve and increase student access to arts programs.

Social inclusion

All Australians are entitled to participate fully in Australian society free from discrimination. To be fully included in society, all Australians should have the opportunity to:

- secure a job;
- access services;
- connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community;
- deal with personal crisis; and
- have their voices heard.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit social development dimension, it adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities, clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities, identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities, and identifies where protection of rights must be reinforced.

Article 30 of the Convention is specifically on participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport and states that:

1. Governments recognise the right of person with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with other in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:
 - a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;
 - b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats; and
 - c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

Australia ratified the Convention on 17 July 2008. It is available on the United Nations website: www.un.org/disabilities

Endnotes

- 1 Preamble and Article 1: Purpose, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A copy of the Convention is available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>. The Convention was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Australian Government signed the Convention on 30 March 2007 and Australia ratified the Convention on 17 July 2008.
- 2 Australian Government, 1992, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, viewed 11 May 2009 [http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/888C8C3474DCEA99CA25714000071CE0/\\$file/DisabilityDiscrimination1992_WDo2.doc](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/888C8C3474DCEA99CA25714000071CE0/$file/DisabilityDiscrimination1992_WDo2.doc)