Research Overview
Arts and Disability
In Australia
Meeting of Cultural Ministers | 2018
We have made every effort to make this PDF accessible. If this document is not accessible to you, please contact us on 1800 185 693 or at arts.disability@arts.gov.au

Disclaimer
The material in this report is of a general nature and should not be regarded as legal advice or relied on for assistance in any particular circumstance or emergency situation. In any important matter, you should seek appropriate independent professional advice in relation to your own circumstances.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility or liability for any damage, loss or expense incurred as a result of the reliance on information contained in this report.

This report has been prepared for information and reference purposes only and the Commonwealth makes no representations as to the accuracy of the content and it does not indicate the Commonwealth’s or any State or Territory government’s (including any Cultural Minister’s) commitment to a particular course of action. Additionally, any third party views included (either explicitly or by implication) in this report do not reflect the views of the Commonwealth, or state or territory government, or indicate its commitment to a particular course of action.

Copyright
© Commonwealth of Australia 2018

The material in this report is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution — 3.0 Australia licence, with the exception of:

- any third party material
- any material protected by a trademark, and
- any images and/or photographs.

More information on this CC BY license is set out at the creative commons website: www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/. Enquiries about this license and any use of this report can be sent to: Access and Participation Branch, Department of Communications and the Arts, GPO Box 2154, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

Attribution
Use of all or part of this report must include the following attribution:
© Commonwealth of Australia 2018

Front cover
Daniel Savage, Fluxability (Able, Disabled, Superabled), 2013. Photo: Daniel Savage.
Contents

Executive Summary 1
The National Arts and Disability Strategy 2
Practise – Creative Careers 3
Express – Creative Participation 4
Connect – Audiences 5

1 Introduction 7
1.1 Research question 7
1.2 Definition of disability 11
1.3 Definition of the arts 12
1.4 Disability in Australia 12

2 Practise: creative careers 14
Key points 14
Key Words 14
2.1 Australian artists with disability 15
Smartygrants and data opportunities, National 16
2.2 Barriers for artists with disability 17
2.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists with disability 18
Lisa Uhl, Fitzroy Crossing, WA 19
2.4 Employment and people with disability in Australia 20
2.5 Pathways to practice: education and training 20
Daniel Savage, Canberra, ACT 22
Studio A, Sydney, NSW 23
2.6 Pathways to practice: informal training and recreation 24
2.7 Pathways to practice: employment programs 24
2.7.1 Apprenticeships 24
2.7.2 Disability Employment Services 24
2.7.3 Employment Assistance Fund 25
2.7.4 Wage subsidy programs 25
2.7.5 Community Development Programme 25
2.7.6 jobactive and Transition to Work 26
2.7.7 New Business Assistance with NEIS* and Entrepreneurship 26
2.8 Professional relationships and negative attitudes in the arts sector  
   2.8.1 Employment discrimination  
   2.8.2 Mentoring and networks  
   Write-ability, Writers Victoria  
   Crossroad Arts, Queensland  
   Second Echo Ensemble, Tasmania  
   2.8.3 Low expectations  
2.9 Audience development  
   Restless Dance Theatre at the Adelaide Festival, South Australia  
   Desert Song Festival, Northern Territory  
2.10 Disability on screen and behind the camera  
   2.10.1 Representation on screen  
   2.10.2 Barriers to authentic casting  
   Screenability, NSW  
2.11 The creative case for inclusive arts  
Summary

3 Express: creative participation

Key points

Key words

3.1 Creative participation as a human right

3.2 Creative participation in the arts

3.3 Wellbeing  
   Tutti Kids and Youth, South Australia  
   Dance Unlimited, Queensland  
   NuunaRon Art Group, Queensland

3.5 Social inclusion  
   3.5.1 Social isolation  
   3.5.2 Challenging stigma in the community  
   Rebus Theatre – Open Doors Open Minds, Canberra, ACT  
   Music Feedback in the Wheatbelt, Western Australia

3.6 Age-related disability

Summary

Queensland Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s
4 Connect: audiences

   Key points 53
   Key words 53

   4.1 High attendance 54
      ARTfinder National 56

   4.1 High Attendance continued 57

   4.2 Attitudes to the arts and benefits of attendance 58
      Sensorium Theatre, Western Australia 59
      Art and Dementia at the National Gallery of Australia 60

   4.3 Barriers to attendance 61
      4.3.1 Accessible transport 63
      4.3.2 Accessible information 63
      4.3.3 Accessible design and digital access 63
      Belconnen Arts Centre and accessible design, ACT 64
      DADAA Fremantle and the Centre for Accessibility, Western Australia 65
      4.3.4 Ticket price 66

   4.4 The ‘purple pound’ 66
      Australian Chamber Orchestra box office, NSW 67

   4.5 Private giving and volunteering 68

   Summary 68

5 Conclusion 70

   5.1 Research gaps 70
   5.2 Forthcoming research 71

Appendix A: Glossary and acronyms 72

Appendix B: Legal and policy framework 73

   International obligations 73
   National law and policy 73
   State and territory law and policy 74
   The National Arts and Disability Strategy 74
      First evaluation — 2010–12 75
      Second evaluation — 2013–15 75
Tia Halabi in *Tip of my tongue*, written and directed by Samia Halabi. Screenability Film Festival, part of Sydney Film Festival 2018. Photo: courtesy Samia Halabi.
Executive Summary

The Research Overview brings together published and unpublished data and research about arts and disability in Australia, and case studies highlighting arts and disability practice around the country. The Research Overview is part of the evidence base for a renewed National Arts and Disability Strategy. The evidence gathered here will be complemented by submissions and a survey during a national consultation in 2018.

The Overview takes a person-centred approach to looking at how people with disability engage with the arts. People with disability:

- **Practise** as creative and cultural professionals.
- **Express** themselves through participation in creative activities.
- **Connect** with creative and cultural experiences as audience members.

The flow of people between these groups is ongoing. People may be in more than one group at a time and some people will constantly move between the groups.

This person-centred approach also recognises that these activities occur within a wider arts and cultural ecology made up of organisations and platforms that operate to support and facilitate arts practice and expression, and bring these to wider audiences.

**Practise: creative careers** gathers data and research about the creative and cultural careers of people with disability. In general, artists with disability are underrepresented in creative and cultural occupations. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists with disability are as likely as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists without disability to earn an income from their art. Mentoring and networking are key to creative careers, and education and training can be one avenue for artists to find mentors and build networks. Recreational participation in the arts can also build networks and be a bridge to professional practice. One of the most significant barriers for people with disability in the work force, including in the arts sector, is negative attitudes and low expectations about people with disability. There are gaps in available information about artists with disability, particularly about patterns of education and training, and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists with disability.

**Express: creative participation** is about creative expression by people with disability. People with disability have a fundamental right to participate in the cultural life of the community, and choose the recreational activities they participate in. Creative participation in the arts has a number of benefits, including for health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Connecting with culture through art can have positive wellbeing effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Further information is needed to understand how this finding applies specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. There may also be some barriers to participating in culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and further investigation is required to know what these are.

**Connect: audiences** highlights the high rates of arts attendance by Australians with disability, and that Australians with disability have more positive attitudes to the arts than people without disability. People with disability also give more money to the arts and volunteer more in the arts than people without disability. While there are high attendance rates, there are ongoing barriers to arts attendance, including cost, physical access to venues and transport and accessible information about events. These barriers are more acute for people in regional areas. Further research is needed to understand the particular barriers posed by different art forms and types of cultural events.
Technology and thoughtful design of the built environment and cultural experiences can increase access to the arts from this highly engaged cohort of Australians.

The Research Overview identifies a number of gaps in the available data and research. Forthcoming research from the Australia Council for the Arts, Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and recently published research from First People’s Disability Network may address some of these gaps. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and research is needed to understand how the creative and cultural sectors are adapting to the changing funding and policy landscape following the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The National Arts and Disability Strategy

In 2009, the then Cultural Ministers Council (now the Meeting of Cultural Ministers) released the National Arts and Disability Strategy. The Strategy was released the year after Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Strategy includes 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 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.

In September 2017 ministers agreed to the recommendations of the second evaluation of the Strategy. The evaluation recommended that ministers revisit and renew the Strategy for 2019, acknowledging the significant changes in the sector since the Strategy was introduced, including the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The evaluation recommended that a new Strategy should consider collecting quality statistical data to measure the impact of the Strategy and broader arts and cultural policies affecting people with disability. This Research Overview of Arts and Disability in Australia identifies data that is already available and where there are gaps in the data and research.

As part of the process to renew the Strategy, ministers launched a national consultation, running from 24 September to 3 December 2018. People can respond to a Discussion Paper, an online survey, and attend face-to-face meetings in locations around Australia. This Research Overview has been released to inform responses to the consultation.
Practise Creative Careers

9% of the 569,400 people in creative and cultural occupations in Australia have disability.1

90% of artists with disability say that disability affects their practice.3

Diversity and inclusion are essential drivers of creativity and quality artistic outputs.

Recreational participation in the arts can be a pathway to professional practice.

Negative attitudes and low expectations about people with disability as artists are barriers to professional practice.

There are barriers within the screen industry to authentic casting of people with disability, and people with disability are underrepresented on Australian TV. With the rise of online content, there are opportunities for greater employment of people with disability.4

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability economically participate in the arts at the same rate as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without disability.2

Formal education and continuing training can help creative and cultural professionals to consolidate the skills they need for professional practice, and open opportunities for mentoring and networking.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Catalogue number 4430.0 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia, 2015. The definition of creative and cultural occupation used for this analysis is based on based on Appendix 2 in ABS, Cat no. 5271.0 Australian National Accounts: Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, Experimental, 2008–09.
2 ABS, Cat. no. 4714.0 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) 2014–15.
3 Throsby and Petetskaya, Making Art Work.
4 Seeing ourselves: Reflections on diversity in Australian TV drama, (Sydney: Screen Australia, 2016).
Express Creative Participation

Australians with disability creatively participate in the arts at higher rates than people without disability.¹

Recreational participation in the arts has positive wellbeing effects, and can help to address social isolation.

Connecting to culture through art is associated with positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.


² ‘Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.’
Connect Audiences

Attendance at arts events by Australians with disability is growing.1

- 58% in 2009
- 73% in 2016

Australians with disability have more positive attitudes to the arts than people without disability. 77% of Australians with disability agree that ‘the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life’ compared with 75% of Australians without disability.2

24% of people with disability and 14% of Australians without disability have done volunteer or unpaid work for the arts, or helped out artists or community groups with arts activities.5

There are ongoing barriers to connecting with the arts as an audience member, including cost, physical access to venues and transport, and accessible information about events.

People in regional areas report greater barriers to access.

While 49% of people with disability are in the lowest two income quintiles3, they are more likely to give money to the arts.4

- 21% of Australians with disability donated to the arts
- 9% of Australians without disability donated to the arts

---

3 ABS, Cat. no. 4430.0 Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2015.
4 | 5 ‘Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.’
Research Overview
Arts and Disability in Australia

arts.gov.au/mcm