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Arts Industry Council (SA) Inc

# Chair's annual report

for the year ending December 2004

Presented at the 2005 annual general meeting

30 May 2005

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I am pleased to report on another active year for the Arts Industry Council (SA) Inc. As the state's only independent, sector wide representative arts body in the state, the AIC is extremely valuable to the South Australian arts sector. It is one of only two such industry councils in Australia, the other being in Victoria, where once there was an arts industry council organisation in most states. This indicates the difficulty in sustaining an organisation independent of any government funding and reliant on member subscriptions from its sector. It is to our credit, the South Australian arts sector, that our collective commitment to maintaining our member subscriptions in order to have an independent voice, allows this tradition to continue here today. With a volunteer executive committee, supported by an Executive Officer one day per week, the AIC continues to deliver excellent results on behalf of the South Australian arts sector.

#### **budget overviews and submissions**

Each year, the AIC prepares a submission for the state arts budget. This is one of our most significant publications and shapes much of our other lobby and advocacy work. Once it is lodged, the submission is also circulated to other relevant members of Parliament, to all AIC members, and to the media. It is the only non-government whole of sector submission feeding into the annual South Australian Government arts budgeting processes, and as such is an important voice to government from the sector.

When the budget is announced, the AIC analyses the state arts budget and provides its members with a summary of the major features. Our submissions and analyses often prompt good discussion from our members, and are widely used by the arts media.

In a pre-election year, our budget analysis and submission is particularly important, and we have begun work on our approach to the 2006-2007 submission.

#### **2% more for art - lobby and awareness raising campaign**

The AIC has been concerned at the past losses to arts industry development allocations; the erosion of commissioning funds within small to medium arts organisations; and the lack of opportunities for individual artists to create vibrant new work in our state. In the lead-up to the 2004-2005 budget, we took a clear message to the Premier, asking that the government allocate \$2 million more to support work driven by project grants and for the commissioning of

new work by South Australian artists.

We were able to meet with the Premier in November 2003, and raise the issue before lodging our 2004-2005 budget submission. We then ran a campaign in support of our submission.

The campaign was well-supported by our members and we received good media coverage and analysis. While the Premier was sympathetic to this area of need, we did not see any significant increase in the 2004 – 2005 budget. However, there was increased support for youth arts with an extra \$700,000 going to the youth performing arts companies over the next four years. This was received with much gratitude by these organisations, whose annual operating grant fund has increased after nearly a decade of no growth. While there were no long-term additional allocations made to other small-to-medium companies, a number of performing arts organisations were (extremely) surprised to find cheques in the mail as the government distributed \$265,000 to the state's small to medium performing arts companies, including a number of amateur groups, through a series of one-off payments.

We maintain our position that a relatively small injection of funds in these areas can have a big impact on our capacity to develop and refine new work in our state and on South Australia's reputation as a creative state where artists can choose to work and live. The AIC has been continuing its work in this area in 2005. Working with AIC member and independent artist, Geoff Crowhurst, we recently supported a meeting of independent artists to discuss future strategies, with particular thought to the pre-election climate.

#### **arts and education: the *ARTSsmart* strategy**

In the 2005-2006 budget submission, we wrote 'it is clear that the ARTSsmart strategy could generate immense benefits for the arts sector. This includes increasing levels of appreciation and engagement in the arts among future generations, improving realistic understandings of career path options, and increasing employment options for artists to work in education contexts or to work with/for young audiences'.

We are concerned, however, that the potential outcomes of this strategy will not come to fruition without appropriate funding to implement the strategy that is identified in the government's own Strategy as a key action for Objective 4.

In keeping with our belief that the arts sector must take up leadership in the implementation of aspects of the strategy, we circulated our budget submission to the Minister for Education and

Children's Services, Jane Lomax-Smith, highlighting the case for extra funding to implement the ArtsSmart Strategy. AIC Chair, Deidre Williams and Treasurer, Carmel Dundon then met with Minister Lomax-Smith to further discuss our concerns. The AIC has played a central role, through its participation in the original steering committee that developed the ArtsSmart Strategy, and ongoing participation on the ArtsSmart steering group overseeing its implementation. Our thanks to Carmel Dundon who is the current AIC representative on this group.

This is an issue of on-going significance to the South Australian arts sector, with the lack of our Government's commitment to funding the full implementation of the Strategy a key concern. Again, our work in this area is continuing.

#### **rewind, reload, reactivate - AIC discussion night**

The AIC hosts regular discussion nights with the aim of fostering fertile and productive discussion on current arts issues. Our discussion night this year took another look at the development of the arts strategy, providing members with an update on its progress and an opportunity to contribute to the AIC's continuing input to the government's arts strategy. With a wide-ranging discussion, two particular issues were identified: leadership in a future arts and education partnership; and creating a more supportive environment where artists can more readily sustain their practice. The notes of the discussion were collated and distributed to all AIC members and information gathered at the night was provided to Arts SA to inform their development of the coming 10 year arts strategy promised by the Premier as an outcome from the 2003 Arts Summit. It is our understanding that there is no further opportunity for input from the sector to the final strategy which will be announced by the Premier some time before the next election.

#### **Arts SA**

The AIC has maintained a regular meeting cycle with the Arts SA Executive Director and other key Arts SA staff. The meetings play an important role in maintaining an effective communication flow between the arts sector and Arts SA through the AIC. As well as the formal schedule of meetings, Arts SA staff and AIC executive committee members maintain contact as required. Issues raised at these meetings include: our points for the budget submission process; the restructure of Arts SA; and the impact of the legislation for criminal negligence on small to

medium arts organisations, particularly in the area of definitions for employer and workplaces.

### **other issues and activities**

In 2003, the AIC was invited to have a representative on the Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group (VMAG). Ruth Smiles continues to represent the AIC on the VMAG, supported by Tracy Crisp. We are very grateful to Ruth for her ongoing work on behalf of the Council and the arts sector.

The AIC remains a key contact for arts journalists. We are regularly asked for background information on arts issues, and were cited by outlets such as *The Advertiser* and *ArtsHub*. In addition, we contacted the editors of a number of newspapers to discuss the on-going development of 'what's on' columns and other issues.

In the wake of proposals to restructure the Australia Council, the AIC made a number of submissions to the Australia Council and relevant politicians, voicing our concerns on the potential impact this would have for many of our member organisations.

### **fundraising**

The AIC does not seek or accept government funding in order to ensure its capacity to maintain an independent voice on behalf of the South Australian arts sector. The organisation is reliant on its member subscriptions and some fundraising to operate. The AIC was once again fortunate to receive sponsorship for an annual raffle from a range of arts organisations, including the State Theatre Company of South Australia, Vitalstatistix, WOMADelaide, Adelaide Film Festival and Adelaide Cabaret Festival. Their generous support of the AIC has enabled us to once again run the 4 Seasons Raffle as our key fundraising activity, and we thank them warmly. The raffle is an excellent opportunity for the AIC to promote the arts to the wider community while keeping the AIC afloat each year.

### **thank you**

The AIC benefits from the generosity and goodwill of many people and organisations. Adelaide Centre for the Arts, Craftsouth and the Adelaide Fringe have provided welcoming meeting venues for the committee. In addition, the Adelaide Centre for the Arts and the SA Writers'

Centre have provided excellent facilities to host our public functions.

As described above, our raffle sponsors – State Theatre Company of South Australia, Vitalstatistix, WOMADelaide, Adelaide Film Festival and Adelaide Cabaret Festival – made a significant contribution to the success of our raffle. Thanks must go as well to the many people who sold books of tickets on our behalf.

Members of the AIC executive committee provide a wide range of skills and expertise as well as donating a significant amount of time and energy. Thank you to all the members of the committee: Jodi Glass, Carmel Dundon, Jane Andrew, Phil Callaghan, Jim Giles, Karen Hadfield, Anne Levy, Steve Mayhew as well as to outgoing committee member, Murray Bramwell.

The AIC remains an important and valuable part of the South Australian arts sector. In a pre-election year, I look forward to a busy and productive year as we continue to advocate for a thriving local creative arts sector.

Deidre Williams

Chair

#### **AIC Executive Committee Members 2004**

Chair, Deidre Williams

Deputy Chair, Jodi Glass

Treasurer, Carmel Dundon

Jane Andrew

Murray Bramwell

Phil Callaghan

Jim Giles

Karen Hadfield

Anne Levy

Steve Mayhew

#### **Executive Officer**

Tracy Crisp