

Chair's Report
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2019 was bookended by the early year announcement of AICSA's survey results on the sector's view of the impact of the 2018 dismantling of Arts South Australia, and ended with joining our national colleagues in expressing dismay at the merger of Department of Communications and the Arts with Transport, Infrastructure and Regional and the removal of Arts totally from the name of the new department. Both downgrading acts, engendered growing alarm that the arts as an industry with significant economic, social and cultural impact was not well understood by current governments. This concern would be distressingly amplified by the federal government's failure to provide industry support and relief measures in light of the significant devastation wrought upon the arts under Covid-19 in 2020. However, the State Government under Premier Steve Marshall's rapid support with new grants and funding programs in response to Covid-19 has been very welcomed.

Providing the arts with the same accord in regard to policy and strategy as other industries has been at the heart of several years of activities by AICSA. As long-standing members would be aware, AICSA put many years of advocacy in calling for an Arts Plan to provide a pathway for growth and sustainability in the arts and creative industries. In fact, for several years AICSA initiated and ran a significant consultation process to produce its own plan, Creative South Australia: A Vision for the Arts released in 2017.

In 2019, like many other in the State, AICSA welcomed the announcement that an Arts Plan commissioned by the SA Government would be produced following a rapid but extensive state-wide consultation. AICSA was invited to meet with the consultants to advise on the framework for the research and consultation process. The response to the Arts Plan process was very positive with submissions from across the sector ranging from independent artists, audiences, small to medium organisations and major companies. AICSA's submission included a focus on ensuring greater opportunities for young people; that artists and cultural workers can work and live in South Australia; initiatives leading to the sustainability of the arts and mitigating the ebb and flow of the festival cycle and its impact on seasonal employment. On its release, AICSA responded with an appreciation that finally some level of roadmap was in place, but unclear how growth without new investment would come about.

Prior to this on 27 February 2019, on the same theme of making the arts sustainable for artists, AICSA partnered with the Adelaide Festival on the *Should I Stay or Should I Go* Forum which asked the question of whether an arts career could be sustained in South Australia. Chaired by Chris Drummond, speakers included Jascha Boyce, Jennifer Greer Holmes, Dan Thorsland, Ali Gumilya Baker and Paul Vasileff.

On 20 June, AICSA commented on the 2019-20 Budget welcoming new funding for screen, the Adelaide Festival, the design of the Aboriginal Art and Cultures Gallery and the upgrading of Aboriginal Cultural Collections Storage. Again, this was tempered by concern that the budget included no relief to the significant cuts announced in the previous budget (\$31.9m over four years).

In the last part of the year, AICSA completed its *Measuring Impact: Valuing the small to medium arts sector in SA* survey releasing the report in January 2020. The report provided data never previously collected data most notably that the sector quadrupled the government's investment (\$6.3m) with a total turn-over of \$25.5million prior to the application of any multiplier effect. The small to medium sector brings around \$13.9 million dollars to the state via trade and was also one of the biggest employers and funders of local artists outside artists themselves contributing \$5.92 in SA artist fees. It is hoped that this survey will be the basis for new policy and investment in the small to medium sector and SA artists.

AICSA acknowledges the significant work undertaken by Belinda MacQueen in developing the templates for reporting and thanks the contributors who provided their data. It is aimed that the Measuring Impact survey will be an ongoing report released every 2 or 3 years.

I would like to thank my fellow board members (Emma Webb (Deputy Chair), Vincent Ciccarello (Treasurer), Penny Griggs, Jessica Alice, Amber Cronin, Andrew Clarke (retired), David Sefton (retired), and the work of the EO, Julianne Pierce.