

ARTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*an independent
voice for the arts*

Annual Report 2015

Presented at AICSA AGM, 16 May 2016

By Gail Kovatseff (Chair) & Michelle Wigg (Executive Officer)

During a year of uncertainty for the arts in 2015, AICSA's activities included advocating for sustainable funding for the sector, along with continuing its work on two key projects that had commenced in 2014: an industry-generated '40 Year Vision for the Arts in SA' and the 'Creative Boom' report, commissioned to explore the economic benefits of a sample of the arts sector. More details of these projects follow below.

AICSA would like to offer special thanks to each member of the committee for their contribution during the year: Gail Kovatseff (Chair), Rob Brookman (Treasurer), Andy Packer, Chris Drummond, Christie Anthony, David Grice, Liz Hawkins (from April 2015), Louise Dunn, Penny Griggs and Sandy Verschoor. It is the time and expertise voluntarily provided by all of the committee members that ensures an independent voice for the arts exists in South Australia.

AICSA also continued to be supported by Michelle Wigg as Executive Officer throughout 2015, providing administration services on a part-time basis.

During 2015:

- AICSA continued its work on the creation of a '40 Year Vision for the Arts in SA', following on from the two-day open-space forum of 170 attendees, facilitated by Nick Sweeting in November 2014. In early 2015, the collated notes from over 60 discussion sessions were broken down to identify common themes and key ideas. Two facilitated planning sessions were held within the committee during the year, to progress the vision to an articulate and representative document. A draft version of 'Adelaide 2055' was released for online consultation in November 2015, in advance of a final sector consultation meeting planned for the new year. Feedback from these consultations will be incorporated into the final release of the 'Adelaide 2055' vision in mid-2016, to help inform arts decision-making in SA.
- The 'Creative Boom' report was released on 28 November 2015, focusing in on the economic impacts of four arts areas: Festivals, Theatre for Young People, Film, and Crafts. AICSA engaged Brecknock Consulting in late 2014 to research and compile a report, with funding support from DMITRE. The Creative Boom review aimed to identify the strengths and opportunities for economic and workforce development across the four specialisations within South Australia's creative industries. The report's release was accompanied by an editorial piece in The Advertiser, and presentation to industry representatives in attendance at an Arts SA meeting on 1 December. AICSA thanks the Creative Boom steering committee, Brecknock Consulting and DMITRE for their work on this project.
- Under the banner 'Supporting the Creative Ecology in SA', AICSA invited artists, arts workers and arts lovers to gather on the steps of Parliament House on Friday 22 May 2015. This gathering of over 300 attendees celebrated the integral role that small to medium arts organisations and independent artists play in the vitality of Australia's arts ecosystem. The event featured a mass dance action, held as part of a national call to action in response to Minister Brandis' plan to take \$104.8 million from the Australia Council and transfer it to the proposed National Program for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA). Speakers were Geordie Brookman (State Theatre Company of SA), Emma Webb (Vitalstatistix) and Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Greens).
- Immediately following the 2015 AGM on 26 May, AICSA held a general meeting to discuss a response to proposed federal arts funding changes. The meeting was attended by 30 arts industry members at Mercury Cinema, with discussions including concerns around lack of transparency of the NPEA, a lack of funding availability for small to medium & independent artists, the reduction in Australia Council's capacity as an effective funding body, and the ramifications of a loss of federal funding on state-level arts grant decisions for companies.

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- A #FreeTheArts forum was held with AICSA's support on 17 September at the Adelaide Festival Centre's Banquet Room. The meeting was in advance of the Adelaide public hearing for the Senate Inquiry into the NPEA the following day, 18 September. In addition to determining action that could be taken at a local level, the 100 arts industry members in attendance heard from members of the #FreeTheArts movement, including Anne Dunn and Norm Horton of Feral Arts. A small gathering for those invited to speak at the Senate Inquiry public hearing was held immediately before the forum.
- AICSA's advocacy activities included:
 - Conducting a campaign in the lead-up to the Davenport by-election, asking arts lovers in the electorate to write to candidates asking what their vision is for arts and culture in South Australia. Renowned actress Miriam Margolyes OBE also encouraged constituents to consider the arts when voting, with a letter distributed to relevant State Theatre Company of SA subscribers. (January)
 - Writing to Senator Brandis after the announcement of the NPEA, to request clarity on changes and express concerns on the vulnerability of the SA arts ecology. (May)
 - Signing a statement by ArtsPeak requesting a senate inquiry into the federal funding changes. (May)
 - Writing to Arts SA for statistics on the SA arts landscape, to assist in campaigning for federal funding. (June)
 - Making a submission to the NPEA during the program's request for feedback on funding guidelines, raising concerns including the ineligibility of individuals to apply. (July)
 - Writing to the Prime Minister to request the recall of the NPEA, providing AICSA's senate inquiry submission information. (September)
 - Also, writing to the Premier requesting a meeting with AICSA to brief him on the impacts of federal and state arts funding changes on the sector. (Early 2016)
- AICSA committee members met with contacts including:
 - Adelaide City Council Lord Mayor, Martin Haese, and Vibrant City Program Manager, Penny McAuley, to introduce AICSA's work and the key themes of the 40 Year Vision for the Arts to the newly appointed Lord Mayor. (March)
 - Tamara Winikoff, Executive Officer of the National Association for the Visual Arts, to discuss current funding issues, challenges for peak bodies and service organisations, and priorities of the visual arts sector (March)
- Office space was utilised at State Theatre Company of SA, Slingsby Theatre, Nexus Arts and Mercury Cinema for committee meetings. Special thanks to these generous organisations for providing their spaces free of charge.
- AICSA received financial support through the generosity of its 92 paid members in 2015, being 40 organisational members and 52 individual members.

AICSA continues to express the views of its members to the government, arts funding agencies and political parties, through a variety of means such as forums, newsletters, submissions, reports, and consultations. An active membership combined with the efforts of the committee give significance to the role of the AICSA as an independent voice for the arts.

Gail Kovasteff (Chair)
Rob Brookman (Treasurer)
Andy Packer
Chris Drummond
Christie Anthonyey
Liz Hawkins (from Apr 2015)
Louise Dunn
David Grice
Penny Griggs
Sandy Verschoor
Michelle Wigg (Executive Officer)