



Australian Government

Australia  
Council  
for the Arts 

**Corporate Plan**  
2019-2023



# Creativity Connects US

Gerwyn Davies, Kyoto II  
(2018) archival inkjet print.  
Credit: Gerwyn Davies.



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Cover:

Side Pony Productions' interactive audioplay *The Turners*. It is now available through the Audioplay app. Credit: David Collins.

# Our vision

## Creativity Connects Us

Creativity is innate to humanity and is the wellspring of culture. We are all connected through arts and creativity.

Our arts are vital expressions of human experience. They embody individual and collective stories, histories, identities and help us understand what it means to be human. They connect us to our past and imagine our future.

Our First Nations cultures connect us to over 75,000 years of living culture and knowledge and the country on which we live.<sup>1</sup>

The shared stories of millions of diverse peoples who now call Australia home promote mutual understanding and respect and connect us to a global community.

The technologies of the fourth industrial revolution are transforming and disrupting industries, economies, and how we interact with our world and each other. In this digital world connectivity and creativity are more important than ever – to our wellbeing, our future growth and prosperity.

In a creatively connected nation, creative enterprise is entrenched across society, industry and government as the fuel that ignites our social, cultural and economic success.

# Our purpose

is to champion and invest in  
Australian arts and creativity.

<sup>1</sup> In this document, the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', 'First Nations' and 'Indigenous' are used interchangeably to refer with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their arts and cultures. We understand that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not comfortable with some of these words. The Australia Council means only respect when we use these words.





# Introduction

In 2014, the Australia Council for the Arts presented our five year strategic plan *A Culturally Ambitious Nation (2014–2019)*, to share our vision and priorities for Australian arts and creativity. This strategy was informed by significant bodies of consultation including the 2012 Australia Council Review. It also responded to the new Australia Council Act 2013 that led to major reform of the Council.

This Corporate Plan (2019–2023) introduces our new strategy *Creativity Connects Us (2020–2024)*.<sup>2</sup> Together with the Council's working expertise and knowledge derived from over 50 years of arts funding, development and research, our strategy draws on thousands of industry and public responses across a deep and rigorous body of evidence, consultation and analysis.<sup>3</sup>

Our strategic priorities for 2020–2024 respond to the rapidly changing landscape of Australian arts and creativity. They also build on the achievements of *A Culturally Ambitious Nation*.

We want everyone to regularly experience the inspiration, satisfaction and wellbeing that stems from living a creative life.

We want inspiring arts experiences to be welcoming and easily accessible, and reflective of our unique and special culture that is simultaneously ancient and contemporary.

We want to invest in artists and cultural organisations and support them to evolve to meet new challenges, fully realise their creative potential and thrive in the new world of creative engagement.


Everyone benefits from investment in arts and creativity, and we want the social, cultural and economic return on this investment to be well understood and recognised.

The Australia Council's Corporate Plan (2019–2023) is prepared as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act) and Section 45 of the *Australia Council Act 2013*.

<sup>2</sup> As required by the PGPA Act 2013, this Corporate Plan covers a four year period, financial years 2019–2023. The Council's five year strategy *Creativity Connects Us* covers calendar years 2020–2024

<sup>3</sup> This work includes, but is not limited to, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey (2017)*, *Making Art Work: a study of professional artists in Australia (2017)*, the *Australia Council Stakeholder Survey (2017)*, and consultation for the Major Performing Arts Framework, National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority and National Arts and Disability Strategy during 2018–2019.





All The Queen's Men,  
*Coming Back Out Ball.*  
Credit: Bryony Jackson.

We want inspiring arts experiences to be welcoming and easily accessible, and reflective of our unique and special culture that is simultaneously ancient and contemporary.

# About the Australia Council

The Australia Council (the Council) is the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body.

**We champion and invest in Australian arts and creativity through an integrated suite of activities:**

## **We invest**

in artists and organisations through peer assessed grants, fellowships and awards that enable art to be created and experienced

## **We advocate**

for the social, cultural and economic value of the arts and creativity

## **We provide**

advice to government on matters connected to the creative sector and industry

## **We manage**

Government-directed initiatives and frameworks in support of the arts

## **We deliver**

strategic activity that builds industry capacity, increases markets and audiences for Australian creative work and enables more people to be inspired by and benefit from their creative engagement

## **We conduct**

research and analysis that deepens understanding of the role and value of arts and creativity

## **We collaborate**

with state, territory and local governments

## **We partner**

with others to increase investment in and support for creativity.





## Our functions

The Australia Council has the following functions as set out in the *Australia Council Act 2013* Section 9:

- a. support Australian arts practice that is recognised for excellence
- b. foster excellence in Australian arts practice by supporting a diverse range of activities
  - b.a support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice
  - b.b support Australian arts practice that reflects the diversity of Australia
  - b.c uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts
  - b.d promote community participation in the arts
- c. recognise and reward significant contributions made by artists and other persons to the arts in Australia
- d. to promote the appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the arts
- e. support and promote the development of markets and audiences for the arts
- f. provide information and advice to the Commonwealth Government on matters connected with the arts or the performance of the Council's functions
- g. conduct and commission research into, and publish information about the arts
- h. evaluate and publish information about the impact of the support the Council provides
- i. to undertake any other function conferred on it by this Act or any other law of the Commonwealth
- j. to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the above functions.

# Achievements:

## *A Culturally Ambitious Nation*

### 2014–2019

Over the lifetime of *A Culturally Ambitious Nation* (2014–2019) the Council's investment and initiatives have grown the profile and reach of Australian arts experiences.

### **Australian arts are without borders**

We have supported Australian artists and arts organisations to increase their engagement across Australia through national development and support, and globally through our evidence-based International Arts Strategy and the establishment of our International Development team.

There has been increasing international recognition, opportunity and demand for Australian arts. Strategic partnerships and collaborations have increased nationally. The arts have strengthened our international reputation and fostered global connections and cultural exchange.

Angelica Mesiti portrait at *ASSEMBLY*, 2019.  
Credit: Zan Wimberly.

### **Australia is known for its great art and artists**

We have cultivated creativity and innovation.

We have supported the development of more than 32,700 new Australian art works in an environment that supports freedom of expression and experimentation. We have remodelled our grants programs and diversified our pool of peer assessors and funding applicants – one in three applications are now from first-time applicants.

*Badu Gili*, Sydney Opera House.  
Artist Alick Tipoti. Credit Daniel Boud.



The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra welcoming young music students into the rehearsal studio as part of the popular *Big Rehearsal* program.  
Credit: Shane Reid.



## The arts enrich daily life for all

We have supported Australians' engagement with arts, culture and stories through supporting creation and distribution of great art.

98% of Australians engage with the arts and more of us now recognise their positive impacts on our lives and communities.<sup>4</sup> Online engagement with the arts is booming - technology has created greater access and attracted new audiences for the arts.



The 2019 National Indigenous Arts Awards.  
Back row, L-R: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Rhoda Roberts AO, Vicki van Hout, Aunty Lola Greeno, Rachael Maza, Uncle Jack Charles, Jacob Boehme, Jenna Lee, Vernon Ah Kee.  
Bottom row, L-R: Thomas E.S. Kelly, Lee-Ann Tjunypa Buckskin, Wesley Enoch.

## Australians cherish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

We have supported First Nations artists to be at the centre of Australian arts through funding support, strategic market and audience development and strategic initiatives.

We have built the evidence base about challenges and opportunities in the First Nations arts ecology from the creation of First Nations arts, through to programming and audience engagement. More Australians than ever are attending First Nations arts across art forms,<sup>5</sup> and there has been increasing international interest in First Nations arts and culture.

4 Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. The 98% includes those who listen to recorded music, read creative writing, attend the arts in person, engage online or creatively participate.

5 Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*.

# Environment

The environment in which art is created, distributed and experienced spans many facets of contemporary life and endeavour. Artists and their work are part of a layered, multi-directional and constantly shifting exchange with audiences, participants, and the national and international community.

More of us now engage with the arts online than in person, and this is additional engagement: technology is creating greater access and attracting new audiences rather than replacing existing ones.

The sharing of ideas, stories and perspectives through creative expression is innately human. We experience, celebrate, commemorate, commune, explore and imagine through storytelling. We do this to understand our histories, to practice and transmit our cultures, and to explore our possible futures. As such, creativity and culture are inextricably intertwined. For First Nations communities, arts practice is inseparable from the practice of culture. For diasporic communities, it is vital for maintaining connection to and expression of their distinct heritage.

This exchange between artists and the wider community supports personal, social, cultural and economic benefits. It facilitates points of connection which promote mutual understanding and social cohesion. It provides people with opportunities to see themselves and their worlds authentically represented in all their complexity, and to gain insights into the lives and worlds of neighbours near and far. It contributes to child development, health and wellbeing. It drives innovation, pushes boundaries, challenges assumptions, and helps us think differently. It also provides ways to navigate the new and the unfamiliar. It builds people to people links and cultural exchange and contributes to our international reputation. And it brings us together – physically or virtually – to celebrate the experience of great art. These benefits intersect with numerous priorities of people, government, industry and society as a whole, including individual wellbeing, health, education, community services, global affairs, tourism, defence and innovation.

**Creativity is a vital asset of our future workforce. Artists' skills and capabilities are among those least likely to be automated and increasingly sought after. Artists are well placed to respond to accelerated technological and social change while maintaining a crucial connection to what it means to be human. Artists often push the boundaries of technology and create new ways of working and communicating that translate to other industries.**



Ensuring the sustainability of artists' careers is vital to a creativity connected nation. Our cultural and creative sectors are facing significant forces of change and evolution and it is no longer possible to rely on traditional business models, modes of operation or engagement. Just some of these shifts include:

- growing awareness of the value and importance of First Nations cultures
- rapidly changing and diversifying communities
- new definitions of the marketplace and audience expectations
- universal on-demand access to digital content
- innovation required in the development of content and delivery to reach diverse national and international publics
- new economic realities.

To ensure the creative sector thrives in this evolving landscape, the Council must respond through supporting the sector to continually adapt to industry change; to realise the potential of diversity and to actively cultivate creativity and innovation. In practice, this means ensuring we support our sector to adjust and thrive in new contexts; enabling the broadest possible arts and cultural opportunities that are relevant to our communities; and continuing to provide essential support for high quality creative work and to emerging ideas of artistic expression.

This broad and dynamic operating environment is reflected in our vision and strategic objectives. The Council will seek to foster opportunities to work with partners across all areas of government, industry and society to harness the power of creativity to drive social, cultural and economic success. We will continue to lead thought, discussion and action around existing and emerging issues, challenges and opportunities.

In so doing, our work intersects with activities of artists; cultural and creative organisations and businesses; federal, state and local government bodies; and many other public, private and not-for-profit entities within and beyond the cultural and creative sectors.



Kim Williams and Lucas Ihlein, Seed & Song Community planting day – sugarcane and sunflowers, at 'The Beacon', Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, as part of the *Watershed Land Art Project*, 2018. Credit: Robert Bole.

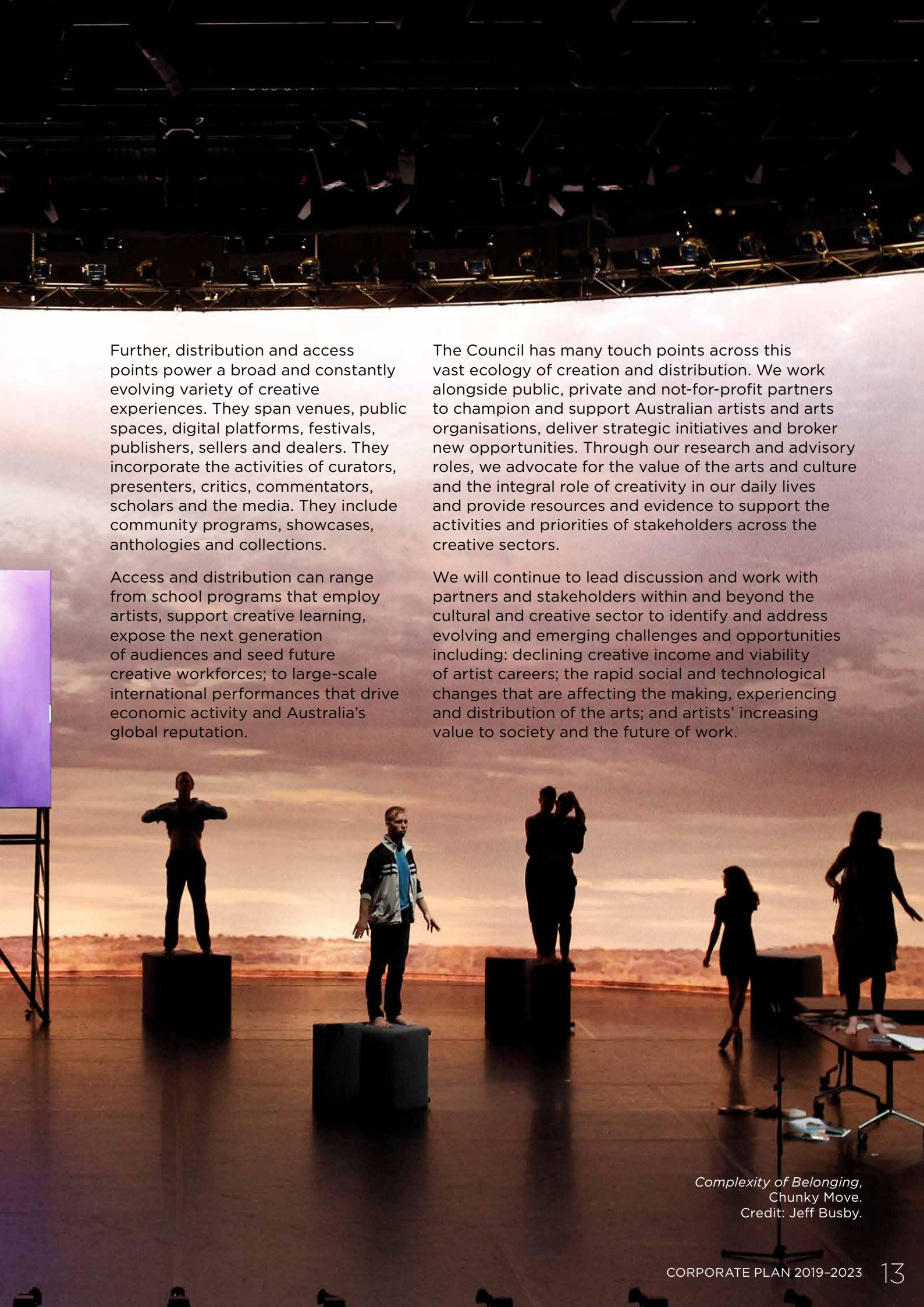
# The creative landscape

A complex suite of people, organisations and structures facilitate artistic and cultural creation.

The Council operates within this complex and dynamic ecology of support, infrastructure and critical foundations which includes:

- individual creative practitioners who operate as social enterprises, sole traders or small businesses
- arts organisations
- programs and initiatives delivered by all spheres of government – national, state, territory and local
- private funding and investment, including commercial and philanthropic
- arts-related policies and legislation
- codes of practice and protocols
- peak bodies
- agents and other artist representatives
- service organisations
- arts education and training
- space for making art
- professional and peer networks
- collaborators and partners across sectors, including community and commercial.





Further, distribution and access points power a broad and constantly evolving variety of creative experiences. They span venues, public spaces, digital platforms, festivals, publishers, sellers and dealers. They incorporate the activities of curators, presenters, critics, commentators, scholars and the media. They include community programs, showcases, anthologies and collections.

Access and distribution can range from school programs that employ artists, support creative learning, expose the next generation of audiences and seed future creative workforces; to large-scale international performances that drive economic activity and Australia's global reputation.

The Council has many touch points across this vast ecology of creation and distribution. We work alongside public, private and not-for-profit partners to champion and support Australian artists and arts organisations, deliver strategic initiatives and broker new opportunities. Through our research and advisory roles, we advocate for the value of the arts and culture and the integral role of creativity in our daily lives and provide resources and evidence to support the activities and priorities of stakeholders across the creative sectors.

We will continue to lead discussion and work with partners and stakeholders within and beyond the cultural and creative sector to identify and address evolving and emerging challenges and opportunities including: declining creative income and viability of artist careers; the rapid social and technological changes that are affecting the making, experiencing and distribution of the arts; and artists' increasing value to society and the future of work.

*Complexity of Belonging,  
Chunky Move.  
Credit: Jeff Busby.*

# Strategic objectives

The Council's performance aligns to five strategic objectives:




Australians are transformed by arts and creativity



Our arts reflect us

The activities and measures outlined on pages 16–25 set the 2019–2023 performance framework, with performance reviewed annually.





Arts and  
creativity  
are thriving

First Nations  
arts and  
culture are  
cherished

Arts and  
creativity  
are valued

# Australians are transformed by arts and creativity

We will enable more opportunities for Australians to be captivated by, and inspired through, experiencing the arts.

All Australians are welcome to engage in arts and creativity, to participate and enjoy the benefits of Australia's rich cultural life.<sup>6</sup> All Australians, regardless of social, physical, geographic or personal circumstances, should feel invited to connect and immerse themselves in exceptional cultural experiences.

The arts are vital expressions of being human that connect us with one another, as well as with our past and present, and help us to imagine our future. Experiencing the arts connects us with ideas, emotions and stories, and sparks pleasure, meaning, imagination and empathy and in doing so, it builds social cohesion.

Experiencing the arts is not a pastime of the elite. 98% of Australians already are engaging in the arts in many ways.<sup>7</sup> However, our research tells us that many Australians have a narrow interpretation of what constitutes 'the arts' and that there is a growing sense of the arts as elitist.

With new ways of making, sharing and experiencing arts and creativity emerging all the time, technological and social change has meant creative expression is more plentiful and accessible than ever before. Our engagement with arts and creativity is a fundamental attribute of who we are.

Everyone derives value from experiencing art, whether through our own creative expression or through experiencing the creative work of others. The emotional, mental and social benefits of arts experience are countless and well documented - from increased understanding of each other, stronger critical thinking skills, mental wellbeing and decreased stress levels, to significant public benefits such as driving social connection, expression of self and community identity, healthy childhood development and healthy aging.

## Operationally

The Council invests in the public's engagement with arts and creativity through our grants program, multi-year support for organisations, government initiatives such as the national regional touring programs, and our strategic investment. In 2018-19, our investment in Australian artists and organisations enabled more than 19 million experiences of art and creativity nationally, from individual art works to nation-wide touring, as well as through our support of major regional, national, and international festivals.

We leverage our funding and expertise through co-investment and strategic partnerships and by brokering new opportunities for audiences to experience Australian arts. Through our research, including our National Arts Participation Survey and Electorate Profiles, we provide a comprehensive picture of Australians' evolving relationship with the arts in their daily lives.

*Crowd at *The Space In Between*, a conversation on the space between art, technology, the present and the future, hosted by Australia Council for VIVID Sydney.*



## STRATEGIES

### Support engaging arts experiences

1. Support and incentivise arts organisations to provide rewarding experiences that expand and connect with their audiences.
2. Deliver targeted funding to support presentation of creative works in regional areas through government initiatives and frameworks.<sup>8</sup>
3. Invest in diverse, high quality creative activities that provide a point of focus of creative celebration for their communities.

### Expand access to arts experiences

1. Invest in activities exploring emerging mediums and technology to engage new audiences.
2. Build audience development capacity of regularly funded organisations.
3. Continue to build the evidence base on Australian arts engagement<sup>9</sup> in relation to audience access and development.

### Support the digital mobility of Australian arts and creativity

1. Build the knowledge and evidence base of new developments in creating, distributing and experiencing art.<sup>10</sup>
2. Enable and support work that is accessible through digital formats.
3. Explore opportunities for collaboration and co-development of art forms that employ new technologies including virtual, augmented and mixed realities.
4. Facilitate stronger relationships between film, radio and broadcast organisations and the cultural sector.

### Promote arts experiences in everyday life

1. Promote and support the inclusion of creative experiences in unexpected places, events and communities.
2. Support activities that provide a public opportunity to gather and celebrate creative experience.<sup>11</sup>
3. Build the evidence base and resources on non-traditional audiences and non-traditional venues.

## Key performance indicators

We will measure this by:

- Supporting at least 15 million attendances at Australia Council arts activities in Australia per year\*
- Supporting at least 4,500 new Australian artistic works with a public outcome (performed, exhibited, published or recorded) per year\*
- Moving the perception of the arts over a five year period ('arts are not for me') as captured in the National Arts Participation Survey

(\* indicates a Portfolio Budget Statement metric)

6 Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.' Cultural rights are, therefore, inseparable from human rights, as recognised in Article 5 of the 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity and can be defined as the right of access to, participation in and enjoyment of culture. This includes the right of individuals and communities to know, understand, visit, make use of, maintain, exchange and develop cultural heritage and cultural expressions, as well as to benefit from the cultural heritage and cultural expressions of others. Other human rights, such as the rights to freedom of expression, the right to information and the right to education, are key to the realisation of cultural rights. There are also cultural rights for specific groups enshrined in a range of international conventions, including in relation to racial discrimination, children, discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

7 Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. The 98% includes those who listen to recorded music, read creative writing, attend the arts in person, engage online or creatively participate.

8 Includes national regional touring programs, Visual Arts and Craft Strategy and the Major Performing Arts Framework.

9 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/news/media-centre/media-releases/connecting-australians-the-national-arts-participation-survey/>

10 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts-futures/>

11 For example, workshops/masterclasses; visual arts exhibitions; theatre, dance and music performances; literature events and festivals; emerging and experimental arts experiences; and community arts and cultural development processes.

# Our arts reflect us

We will support equity of opportunity and access in our creative expression, workforce, leaders and audiences.

Australia is rich in artistic, cultural and creative resources. The source of this wealth is the tapestry of our people. One in three Australians were born overseas, more than 300 languages are spoken in Australian homes and almost one in five Australians live with disability.<sup>12</sup> Yet Australia's diversity is not yet fully reflected in our arts. Artists with disability and artists of non-English speaking background continue to be underrepresented compared to the Australian population, despite growing audience appetite for work from diverse perspectives, and an increasing willingness to program diverse work. There is a continuing need to actively foster equality in the arts – including in leadership and arts practice – to ensure our arts truly reflect, and benefit from, the breadth of our people and culture.

Fully realised, there is potential to fuel the experimentation, artistry, connectivity and collaboration we need to confront some of our modern societal challenges. These challenges include how we live together, how we express our diversity, how we live and love ourselves, how we want to work together and what type of future we want to create. It brings opportunities to expand our wealth of talent, leaders, collaborators, partners, investors, audiences, and markets.



*Beep*, A Windmill Theatre coproduction. Credit: Luke Cardew.

Multiple perspectives fuel experimentation, creativity, artistry and connection. Seeing, feeling, hearing one's own experience expressed and reflected in creative expression is inherently powerful. Equally, there is power in seeing, hearing and feeling this experience reflected and valued in our cultural landscape. It creates empathy so that we are all more able to walk in the shoes of others.

The arts have a unique capacity to connect all of us irrespective of our life circumstances and experiences. It is through our stories that we have the opportunity to see our world represented in all its complexity and gain insights into the lives and world of others. Australians believe the arts help us get different perspectives, express our identity and understand the people and cultures of this country.<sup>13</sup> We recognise there is work to be done to unleash this potential to connect us all through creativity.

## Operationally

The importance of inclusivity in decision-making is reflected in our peer assessment panels; the principle of 'nothing about us without us' is reflected in our stakeholder engagement; and 'leading by doing' is reflected in the commitments of our action plans, and accountability through public reporting.

We invest in diverse artists, creators and organisations to tell their stories and present this work to broad audiences.

The Australia Council's commitment to equality is embedded in all aspects of our work and guided by our Cultural Engagement Framework. The current priority areas under the framework are First Nations peoples, children and young people, cultural diversity, older people, people with disability and regional and remote Australia, recognising the intersections between these groups.

## STRATEGIES

### Enable activity that connects communities

1. Continue to support projects and activities that enhance and strengthen social connections.
2. Advocate and highlight how increased diversity across creative and cultural industries will further strengthen community cohesion.
3. Celebrate the achievements of artists and arts activities that enhance social cohesion.

### Support creative work that reflects contemporary Australia

1. Continue to support culturally and linguistically diverse work.
2. Support artists and arts workers with disabilities to extend their arts practice, networks and skills.<sup>14</sup>
3. Continue to address barriers that arise to accessing our programs and resources.

### Support increased diversity in our creative workforce

1. Increase intake of diverse leadership in capacity building programs.<sup>15</sup>
2. Promote the intrinsic and public value of diversity in Australian arts.
3. Collaborate with other jurisdictions on the coordination of diversity metrics and reporting.

### Promote diversity across all Australia Council activities

1. Ensure our vision, priorities and processes recognise and reflect diversity.
2. Celebrate diverse cultures in our workplace.
3. Publicly demonstrate the Council's commitment to diversity.

## Key performance indicators

We will measure this by:

- Supporting at least 200 culturally diverse applications with total funding of \$13 million provided per year\*
- Collecting and reporting on diversity data of multi-year funded organisations<sup>16</sup>
- Monitoring and reporting on Australia Council's staff and leadership diversity per year
- Conducting and publishing research on the diversity of audiences, creative work and the creative workforce
- Monitoring and reporting publicly on Australia Council's diversity performance, including diversity of recipients of support from grants and strategic programs

(\* indicates a Portfolio Budget Statement metric)

12 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, *Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia, Stories from the Census 2016* (cat. no. 2071.0).

13 Australia Council 2017, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*.

14 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/playing-australia-regional-performing-arts-touring-fund-faqs/arts-and-disability-mentoring-initiative-2019-21/>

15 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/programs-and-resources/leadership-program/>

16 This includes working with states and territories to harmonise data collection and reporting.

# First Nations arts and culture are cherished

We will build on our long term commitment to First Nations arts and culture, recognising the importance of First Nations peoples' self-determination, cultural authority and leadership to our collective prosperity.

Our First Nations arts are diverse expressions of the world's oldest continuing living culture. They are a source of great pride to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and a reflection of cultural strength, resilience, innovation and artistic excellence.

More than ever, Australians are engaging with First Nations arts for their beauty, strength and power, and to understand who we are as a nation. Understanding and respecting First Nations cultures is essential to Australia's social wellbeing and benefits both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. First Nations knowledge is increasingly recognised as providing valuable insights and perspectives to traditional western modes of thinking.

Outside of Australia, First Nations arts and culture are already recognised for their uniquely Australian creativity. Our First Nations artists enjoy significant international acclaim and are in high demand with international audiences. Similarly, visitors to Australia want to experience First Nations culture first and foremost, as an expression of Australian identity.

With decades of investment, we have seen a flourishing of First Nations artists and organisations across all areas of practice. New organisations are coming into being, existing ones are going from strength to strength. First Nations leaders are increasingly helping organisations and excelling in their practice which is being recognised in awards and critical acclaim.

## Operationally

The Council undertakes a broad range of activity to support First Nations arts and cultural expression, including investment through our competitive grants and organisational funding and through targeted strategic investment. Our strategic investment includes the Signature Works program which supports artists to develop concepts from production to distribution; and the Chosen program which supports intergenerational artistic and cultural transmission through community-led cultural apprenticeships and residencies.

Our investment in First Nations arts is underpinned by First Nations decision-making. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy Panel comprising senior arts leaders provides expert advice; and our dedicated funding to First Nations people, groups and organisations through our grants program is assessed wholly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peer assessors.

The Council is providing interim secretariat support to the First Nations cultural sector for the development of a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority, including the facilitation of a national consultation process since October 2018 which will culminate in a national gathering in 2019.<sup>17</sup>



Tracks Dance Company. 2019 Milpirri Jurntu. Youth dancers. Credit: Peter Eve.

## STRATEGIES

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### Strengthen and embed First Nations arts and culture

1. Continue/expand investment in First Nations arts and celebrate First Nations artistic and cultural leadership.
2. Build new and strengthen existing relationships with state and national arts and cultural organisations that engage First Nations cultural communities.
3. Continue to support the First Nations arts and culture sector and industry to protect, promote and increase First Nations arts and cultural participation in the creative industries.
4. Advocate on matters relating to First Nations arts and culture.

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### Grow experiences of First Nations arts and culture

1. Continue to support opportunities for First Nations arts and cultural practitioners to build global networks.
2. Continue to support First Nations artists, groups and arts organisations to create and present work both locally and internationally.
3. Promote greater access and participation in First Nations arts experiences.
4. Continue to build an evidence base to support the First Nations arts sector to grow audiences and markets.

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### Support First Nations young people's artistic and cultural expression

1. Continue to support artistic and cultural mentoring to facilitate intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer.
2. Continue to support young First Nations artists and cultural practitioners to create major bodies of work.<sup>18</sup>
3. Advocate through cross-portfolio engagement for greater investment. In initiatives that engage First Nations young people in the arts and support intergenerational cultural transmission.<sup>19</sup>
4. Increase artistic opportunities for First Nations young people.

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### Uphold First Nations arts and cultural practitioners' cultural rights

1. Continue to engage senior First Nations arts leaders to provide expert advice on arts, creativity and cultural matters.<sup>20</sup>
  2. Continue to ensure First Nations artists and cultural practitioners are engaged in our decision-making.
  3. Continue to support First Nations people, groups and organisations to create, produce and distribute artistic and creative works and increase their participation in the creative and cultural industries.
  4. Continue to advocate for greater recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.
- 

## Key performance indicators

We will measure this by:

- Supporting new works created per year by First Nations artists and organisations
- Supporting attendances for works by First Nations artists supported per year by the Australia Council both domestically and internationally
- Supporting First Nations artists, arts organisations and projects supported to present overseas per year
- Evaluating the Australia Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (and associated metrics) and developing/enacting the plan for 2021-24

(\* indicates a Portfolio Budget Statement metric)

17 See: <https://niaca.com.au/>

18 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/funding-index/young-and-emerging-dreaming-award/>

19 See: Research findings highlighting the need for this: <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/living-culture/> and previous advocacy: <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/research/closing-the-gap-submission/>

20 See: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about/our-strategy-panels/>

# Arts and creativity are thriving

We will support the best circumstances for a thriving arts sector.

As new technologies transform and disrupt industries, economies, as well as how we interact with our world and each other, creativity is more important than ever – to understanding who we are as humans, to our wellbeing, future growth and prosperity. Arts practices are many and varied and are constantly evolving, with new forms continuously emerging.

Our research shows the increasing personal value Australians place on the arts and their significant social and cultural impacts. The dynamic growth and massive economic contribution of the creative industries is inextricably linked with the deep talent pool of the publicly funded arts.

Yet it is increasingly difficult for artists to make a living from their creative work. Rapid social and technological changes are putting pressure on traditional business structures, and affecting the making, experiencing and distribution of the arts. Unsupportive environments place artists at increased risk of mental health issues, and many artists suffer from financial instability.

With complex and rapidly changing forces impacting artists' livelihoods, the challenges and opportunities of disruption must be identified, understood and harnessed. The underlying value of creative work needs to be recognised, protected and championed. In order to realise the enormous potential of our cultural and creative industries, we must address how we develop our creative workforce through appropriate investment, support structures, protections and remuneration.

## Operationally

We invest in Australian artists and arts organisations at various stages of their careers through our grants program, fellowships and awards, multi-year funded organisations through Four Year Funding and Major Performing Arts companies, and government initiatives such as the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy and national regional touring programs.



The Australia Council has a leadership role in fostering a vibrant arts sector and promoting artistic freedom of expression.

Through our capacity building programs we develop people, grow networks and broker opportunities for Australian arts and artists, contributing to the long term resilience of the Australian arts community. We create new opportunities through strategic partnerships, and we grow the funds available for the arts through co-investment. Our International Arts Strategy maximises opportunities for meaningful and effective international engagement in identified priority markets in North and South East Asia, Europe and North America. Australian artists are experiencing increasing international recognition, demand and success across art forms, providing a vital source of income. Our strategic international investment, working alongside our grant programs, helped Australian artists and organisations reach an international audience of 3.5 million in 2018-19.



Alin Bastin performing,  
Incite Arts, *UNBROKEN LAND* 2016.  
Credit: Oliver Eclipse, Red Hot Arts  
Central Australia.

## STRATEGIES

### Support viable creative careers and business models

1. Ensure supported projects and organisations have sustainable approaches.
2. Invest in technological experimentation with content, format, delivery and business models.
3. Develop and share our understanding of opportunities presented by emerging technologies.
4. Enable opportunities for mobility of Australian artists, arts workers and organisations to present work internationally.

### Enable risk taking and experimentation in the realisation of new works

1. Support creation, experimentation and freedom of expression.
2. Champion the development of, and access to, a diverse range of new arts practices.
3. Support multi-year funded organisations to collaborate across sector, community groups and industries.

### Develop partnerships to strengthen our cultural and creative industries

1. Cultivate cross-portfolio connections at local, state and national levels.
2. Connect the publicly funded arts and commercial sector.
3. Promote global connections between Australian and international influencers and leaders.

### Promote wellbeing and a safe environment for people working in the arts

1. Advocate for viable artists' careers.
2. Promote safe work environments and artistic and creative sector.
3. Advocate for the wellbeing of artists and people working in the creative sector.

## Key performance indicators

We will measure this by:

- Supporting at least 5,700 new Australian artworks supported per year\*
- Supporting at least \$7.5 million provided in support of projects creating new Australian art work per year\*
- Supporting at least 3 million international attendances at Australia Council supported activity per year

(\* indicates a Portfolio Budget Statement metric)

# Arts and creativity are valued

We will increase awareness of the value of public investment in arts and creativity.

In addition to enabling important intrinsic value, public investment in Australia's arts and creativity unlocks social, reputational and economic value throughout the cultural and creative industries and beyond. The Council has a crucial role to play in informing the policies that impact arts and creativity, raising broader awareness of the value of arts investment, and highlighting the ways arts and creativity enrich the lives of all Australians. Through evidence, analysis and advice, we will advocate for the public value of the arts, as well as value of public investment in creativity to the many beneficiaries.

Australia's arts and creativity are among our most powerful assets, playing essential roles in our health, wellbeing, education, innovation, identity, advancement, economy and international reputation. Investment in arts and creativity has cultivated new ideas, technologies, and cutting edge innovation; fuelled our talent pipeline and job growth; and has great potential to leverage private and inward investment to significant economic benefit. Arts and creativity offer great value and unlock potential across many government portfolios and there is a need for greater recognition and understanding of the public value of the arts, to ensure a well-supported creative sector which in turn delivers social, cultural and economic returns. Our research and advocacy agenda will focus on developing the evidence base to increase investment in the growing creative economy and to support greater cross-portfolio investment in creativity.

Elevating the value and broader relevance of arts and creativity in Australian public life and policy-making is critical to a creatively connected nation. With creativity essential to the health and prosperity of our nation, the Council has an increasingly urgent role to raise awareness of the value of arts investment across industry, the public and government,

## Operationally

The Council leverages robust, relevant research and analysis to advocate on key issues through public discussion and forums, advice and submissions to government and appearances at parliamentary inquiry hearings. Recent submissions include the Closing the Gap Refresh, 'fake art' inquiry, Australian music inquiry, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Soft Power review, Austrade's tourism strategy, Australia's digital strategy, and the future of work and workers.

Our research and analysis provides a strong evidence base for advocacy for the arts.

The Australia Council amplifies our advocacy messages through a consistent, clear and reasoned voice. We engage with issues and debates relevant to the sector through strategic public and sector engagement.

We maintain strong relationships with other Australian Government bodies and across all jurisdictions to promote the value of arts and creativity.

Contact Zone workshop four.  
Credit: Nazar Jabur.



## STRATEGIES

### Advocate for the public value of arts and creativity

1. Draw together research and evidence to advance a compelling case which demonstrates the artistic, cultural, social and economic impact of arts and creativity.
2. Convene and participate in advocacy forums to explore and share research, insights and best practices.
3. Collaborate with national and international strategic partners to advance a public value agenda and make more visible the wide-reaching impact of the arts.
4. Develop a network of ambassadors and alumni to advocate for investment in Australian arts and creativity.

### Advise on arts matters to inform government policy development

1. Provide advice to government on arts related matters.
2. Leverage robust, relevant research and analysis on key issues.
3. Increase public investment through building greater government understanding of the value of arts and creativity to achieving their portfolio outcomes.

### Lead public discussion about matters relating to arts and creativity

1. Lead a series of public discussions that advocate for the public value of arts and creativity.
2. Lead discussion on issues related to the cultural and creative sectors through media and other public channels.
3. Empower the arts sector to advocate on its own behalf.

### Develop evidence that increases understanding of the cultural and creative industries

1. Monitor and report on trends in public attitudes to and participation in the arts.
2. Contribute to the evidence base on the creative workforce and its impact on the creative economy.
3. Develop a strong body of research exploring the impact of new innovations and technology on the future of creating and experiencing art.
4. Provide an evidence-based understanding of how arts and creativity can address social, cultural and economic development issues.

## Key performance indicators

We will measure this by:

- Analysing stakeholder perceptions of how the Australia Council is working alongside them to deliver value<sup>21</sup>
- Convening forums/public events led/produced by the Council
- Delivering impactful and relevant research projects

<sup>21</sup> Stakeholder survey not delivered annually.



# Review of performance

As required under paragraph 45(1)(d) of the *Australia Council Act 2013*, the table below reviews the Council's performance for the period 2018–2019 as set out in our Corporate Plan 2018–2022.<sup>22</sup> A complete review of the Council's performance is presented in the Australia Council Annual Report 2018–19.

YEAR	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	TARGET	ACTUAL	% TO TARGET
2018-19	<b>Engage, educate and inspire</b> – continue to increase engagement with national and international visitors through innovative exhibitions and programs that are accessed in a variety of ways	13 million attendances at Australia Council supported arts activities	22.6 million attendances at Australia Council supported arts activities	174%
		150 culturally diverse applications with total funding of \$10 million provided	364 culturally diverse applications with total funding of \$17.9 million provided	243%
				179%
	<b>Lead and collaborate</b> – continue being leaders in the sector and fostering long-term relationships through partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholder and similar organisations/ institutions nationally and internationally	5,700 new Australian artworks supported	9,568 new Australian artworks supported	168%
		\$7.5 million provided in support of projects creating new Australian art work	\$9.7 million provided in support of projects creating new Australian art work	129%
		4,500 new Australian artistic works with a public outcome (performed, exhibited, published or recorded)	7,632 new Australian artistic works with a public outcome (performed, exhibited, published or recorded)	170%
		30 initiatives that strengthen ties with other countries	42 initiatives that strengthen ties with other countries	140%
		50 countries where Australia Council supported arts activities were delivered	55 countries where Australia Council supported arts activities were delivered	110%

<sup>22</sup> See Australia Council Annual Report 2018–2022: <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/australia-council-corporate-pl-5b90cae755631.pdf>



Public programs by Red Room Poetry reached an estimated audience of 3.8 million in 2018.

YEAR	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	TARGET
2019-20	<p><b>Engage, educate and inspire</b> — continue to increase engagement with national and international visitors through innovative exhibitions and programs that are accessed in a variety of ways</p>	<p>15 million attendances at Australia Council supported arts activities</p> <p>200 culturally diverse applications with total funding of \$13 million provided</p>
	<p><b>Lead and collaborate</b> — continue being leaders in the sector and fostering long-term relationships through partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholder and similar organisations/ institutions nationally and internationally</p>	<p>15 million attendances at Australia Council supported arts activities</p> <p>200 culturally diverse applications with total funding of \$13 million provided</p> <p>5,700 new Australian artworks supported</p> <p>\$7.5 million provided in support of projects creating new Australian art work</p> <p>4,500 new Australian artistic works with a public outcome (performed, exhibited, published or recorded)</p> <p>30 initiatives that strengthen ties with other countries</p> <p>50 countries where Australia Council supported arts activities were delivered</p>
2020-21 and beyond	As per 2019-20	As per 2019-20

# Financial performance

Comprehensive income statement (showing net cost of services) for the period ended 30 June 2019 as reported in the April 2019 Portfolio Budget Statements.

	2018-19 ESTIMATED ACTUAL \$'000	2019-20 BUDGET \$'000	2020-21 FORWARD ESTIMATE \$'000	2021-22 FORWARD ESTIMATE \$'000	2022-23 FORWARD ESTIMATE \$'000
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Employee benefits	13,067	<b>13,565</b>	13,822	14,085	14,338
Suppliers	12,900	<b>12,017</b>	11,567	11,426	11,738
Grants	185,394	<b>186,994</b>	191,009	193,519	197,282
Depreciation and amortisation	979	<b>1,426</b>	1,415	1,415	993
<b>Total expenses</b>	212,340	<b>214,002</b>	217,813	220,445	224,351
<b>LESS:</b>					
<b>OWN-SOURCE INCOME</b>					
Own-source revenue					
Interest	1,300	<b>1,300</b>	1,300	1,300	1,300
Rental income	748	<b>180</b>	-	-	-
Other	2,106	<b>400</b>	1,000	400	1,000
<b>Total own-source revenue</b>	4,154	<b>1,880</b>	2,300	1,700	2,300
<b>Total own-source income</b>	4,154	<b>1,880</b>	2,300	1,700	2,300
<b>Net (cost of)/ contribution by services</b>	(208,186)	<b>(212,122)</b>	(215,513)	(218,745)	(222,051)
Revenue from Government	208,186	<b>212,122</b>	215,513	218,745	222,051
<b>Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Australian Government</b>	-	<b>-</b>	-	-	-
<b>PURCHASE OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS</b>					
Funded internally from departmental resources	2,639	<b>2,586</b>	100	100	500
Average staffing level	108	<b>108</b>	108	108	108



SOFT CENTRE Festival, 2018.  
Credit: Charl Anfield.

# Capabilities

The Council's capability to deliver on our strategic objectives is dependent on our people and culture, ongoing sustainability and efficiency, including technology and communication. Our performance management framework aligns with our strategy and corporate priorities.

## People and culture

Our culture underpins how we work. In 2018 the Council undertook a review of our culture and developed a culture statement, *Why it Matters*, to ensure all our people are aligned and clear about our organisational culture, and the expected behaviours through which we will realise deeper engagement and more effective organisational performance.

*Why it Matters* affirms the end result of what we are all working towards and provides a roadmap for our unified contributions to make a difference. It defines our cause, our priorities and our values and informs our behaviours, decisions and beliefs.

## *Why it Matters*

### **Our cause:**

Enriching lives

### **Our commitment:**

Communicate with clarity

### **Our cultural pillars:**

- People: growth through value and inspiration
- Relevance: Social, cultural and public
- Community: Inclusive and engaged
- The Arts: Supporting impact, vibrancy and sustainability

### **Our foundations:**

- Cultural Engagement Framework
- Freedom of expression
- Care and commitment
- First Nations focus

### **Our values:**

- Leadership: advocate and empower
- Diversity: embracing difference
- Collaboration: cooperation with a common purpose
- Integrity: ethical and accountable
- Resilience: flexible, adaptable and responsive
- Service: professional and engaged



Sue Healey, *On View: Japan*  
(Nobuyoshi Asai).  
Photo: Pippa Samaya.

We empower and develop our people to make a difference for arts and creativity in Australia. Our people are one of four pillars in *Why it Matters*, alongside relevance, community and the arts. Our people have a strong attachment to, and pride in, the Council's work and the work of the creative sector. We are committed to optimising our shared knowledge and we value different perspectives while cooperating as one organisation.

To ensure continued alignment of our workforce with organisational priorities, the Council is committed to equipping staff with resources to achieve success in their areas of responsibility. We invest holistically in our staff through skills development that builds strength, capability and adaptability, as well as support structures for wellbeing and workplace safety.

Our success is built on diversity, empowerment, support and culture and these foundations will always be a part of us. First Nations leadership is integral in our daily work practice and our Cultural Engagement Framework anchors our commitment to diversity which is at the centre of our values, goals, systems and actions for all people.



## Operational efficiency and effectiveness

The Council continues to seek improvements in our operational efficiency while maintaining our effectiveness across of our programs and activities. We conduct a regular survey of our stakeholders and seek out international agency collaborations to establish meaningful comparisons and inform best practice.

A comprehensive needs analysis of our business systems was conducted in 2017, which allowed the Council to objectively scope its organisation-wide business systems transformation program. The program comprises a wholesale replacement of the Council's business systems with up to date technology and a move to cloud-based infrastructure and applications. The program will provide new and improved capabilities, enhanced productivity, better security and IT resilience. Improved engagement with external stakeholders over the medium and longer term will be facilitated through the sharing of valuable information in an increasingly interactive and accessible format. The program is in its final implementation stage and this will be completed by the end of 2019.

# Risk management and oversight

We are committed to a strategic, consistent and structured organisational-wide approach to risk management to promote a well-informed decision making process which achieves an appropriate balance between realising opportunities for gains and minimising losses.

The Risk Management Policy and Framework embodies the key principles for managing risk as outlined under the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Framework. It defines the organisation's risk appetite and sets out key processes and responsibilities. These documents are reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee on an annual basis. Specifically, these risk management and oversight functions review, manage and respond to financial risk (including risks associated with investment and financing programs) in addition to other risk factors which may have a material impact for the Commonwealth. Other risk factors include those related to business planning, development of new policies and programs, operations, and contract and project management of the Council.

Management regularly review the Council's risk profiles and risk register to identify the key risks facing the organisation and the actions required to ensure that risks are managed to an acceptable level over time. The risk profiles and risk register are reviewed and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee on a six-monthly basis and then presented to the full Board for its consideration.

Risk management functions are further realised through a range of structures and processes including, but not limited to: the Nominations and Appointments Committee of the Board; business continuity planning; fraud control policy and associated actions plans. Independent internal audits of key business functions are performed throughout the year and the findings reported to the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board.

The significant risks facing the Council change over time as existing risks are managed and new ones emerge. The Council faces ongoing challenges to manage the expectations of its many and varied external stakeholders in an environment where demand is increasing, in both quantum and diversity, and resources are limited. Internally, the most significant risk centres on the final execution of the Council's ambitious business systems transformation program and the move to new premises in 2019.



Alon Ilisar at *The Space In Between*,  
a conversation on the space between art,  
technology, the present and the future,  
hosted by Australia Council for VIVID Sydney.



