

Foreword

Department of Family and Community Services

The Howard Government is pleased to endorse activities celebrating the ability of people with disability and which remove barriers to their full participation in the community.

The publication *Making the Journey* highlights the abilities and creativity of highly talented and committed artists and performers with disability.

This includes opportunities, as demonstrated in this book, to be creative and communicate through different media.

The Howard Government places emphasis on what people can do rather than what they cannot do, and support for people to maximise their ability to participate.

We remain committed to supporting people with disability and we do this through a network of payments, services and information.

Support is delivered by several Australian Government Departments, as well as state and territory services receiving Howard Government funding to provide a range of services.

I commend this publication and congratulate all involved.

Senator The Hon Kay Patterson

MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES



Foreword

Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Welcome to *Making the Journey*, an important new resource from Arts Access Australia.

Making the Journey acts as both as an inspirational showcase and a call to action. It profiles twelve Australian arts organisations who are ‘making the journey’ towards including people with disabilities across all aspects of their programs and activities – and, most importantly, it encourages other organisations to do the same.

Research conducted by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Government’s principle arts funding and advisory body, shows that people with a disability contribute to all aspects of our arts industry – as artists and arts workers, in professional and community contexts and as audience members.

The stories in this publication are practical and real; they tell of the challenges and triumphs of working to remove social and physical barriers that prohibit full participation in the arts by people with disabilities.

This publication will not only help organisations to understand their responsibilities and their potential to initiate much-needed change, but will act as a tool for people with disabilities to advocate for improvement.

I encourage you to ‘make the journey’ with Arts Access Australia, and I commend them on this great resource.

Senator The Hon Rod Kemp

MINISTER FOR THE ARTS AND SPORT



Acknowledgments

The process of writing a book is never simple. *Making the Journey* has had many hands shape it and they all deserve thanks.

Central to this process are the organisations, people and artists featured in the book who provided interviews, images and clarified endless queries about what they do and why.

The people who worked on the publication and deserve much credit for its final shape are Mary Hutchison (writer), Emma Driver (editing and production management), Suzanne Boccalatte and David Balletti Collins of Boccalatte Design, Brian Baker at Lamb printing, Melinda Collie-Holmes (project coordination), Stella Young (proofreading) and Jan Teagle Kapetas (co-writing the Northern Exposure case study).

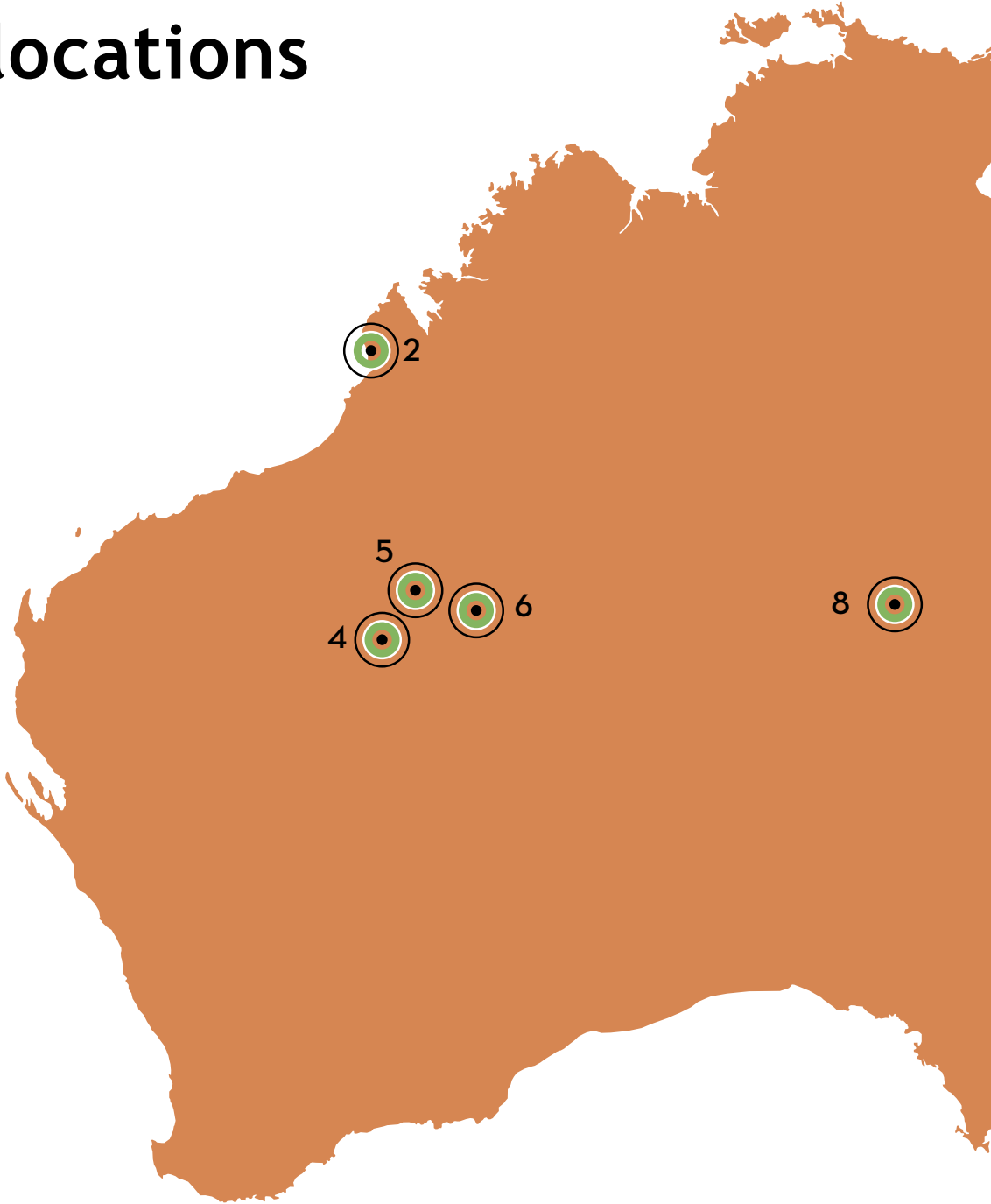
In addition, the Board of Arts Access Australia, in particular the Chairs Jayne Boase, Nicole Beyer, David Doyle and Val Shiel, and previous staff Carey Lai and Claire Havey, all played a part in bringing the book from an idea to publication and launch.

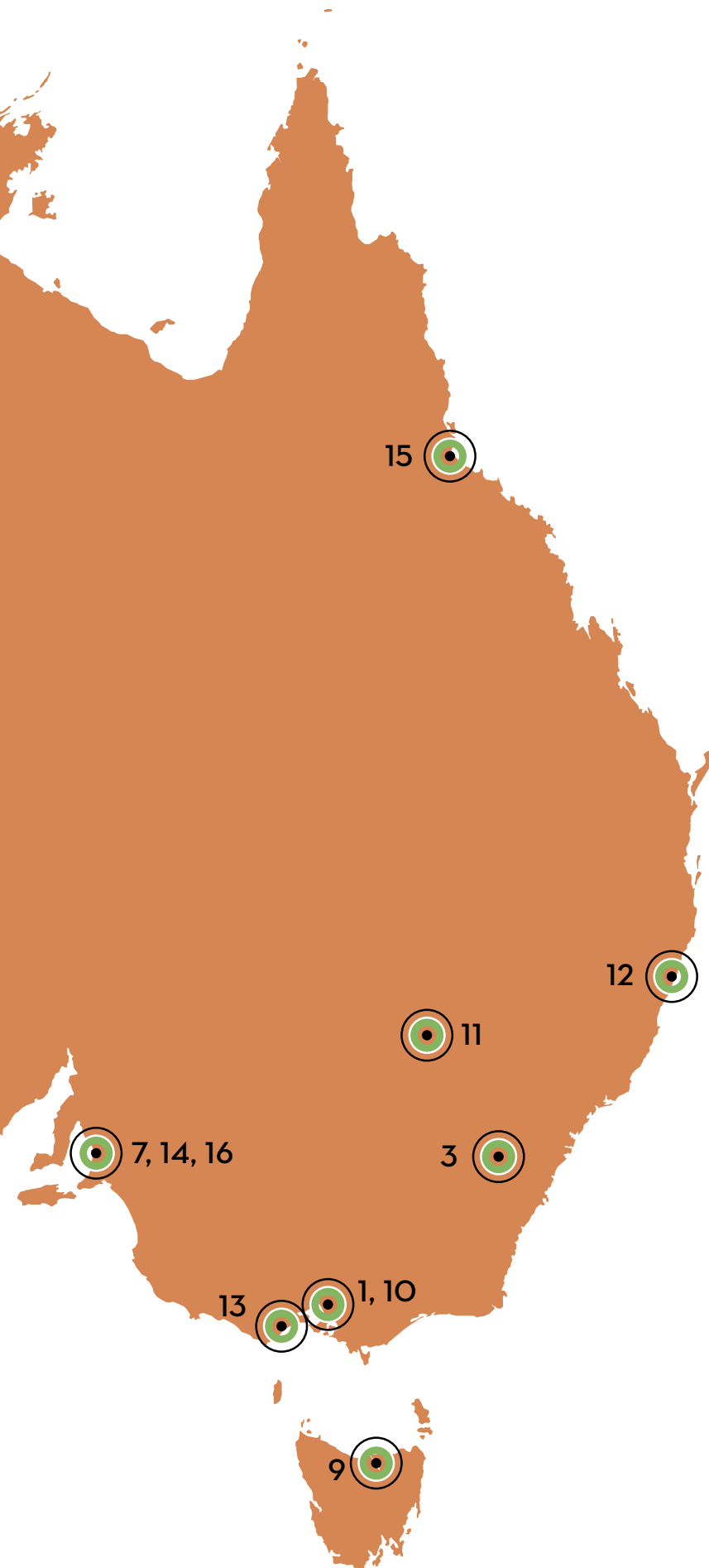
Lastly, thank you to the funding bodies – the Australia Council for the Arts and the Department of Family and Community Services who have supported our work and brought this book to you.

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- 2 Broome**
Display Workshop (p. 12)
- 3 Canberra**
Open Art ACT (p. 19)
- 4 Parngurr**
Northern Exposure (p. 25)
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- 7 Adelaide**
Adelaide Festival Centre (p. 33)
- 8 Alice Springs**
Mwerre Anthurre (p. 40)
- 9 Launceston**
Arts Roar (p. 47)
- 10 Melbourne**
EASE Ticketing (p. 53)
- 11 Nymagee**
Nymagee Outback Festival (p. 59)
- 12 Coffs Harbour**
Bunker Cartoon Gallery (p. 59)
- 13 Geelong**
Back to Back Theatre (p. 66)
- 14 Adelaide**
Restless Dance Company (p.73)
- 15 Thuringowa**
Pinnacles Gallery (p. 79)
- 16 Adelaide**
Tutti Ensemble (p. 85)

Introduction

Making the Journey is about arts activities and people with disabilities. It offers 12 case studies as examples of approaches, issues and achievements in the Australian field of art and disability in recent years.

Access to the arts and other aspects of society are human rights for people with disabilities. Direct participation in and increased access to the arts also contributes to the wellbeing of people with a disability, their carers, families, friends and communities.

The case studies in this book show initiatives from the arts, health and education sectors and responses by cultural organisations that remove barriers to participation. A theme across all of the examples is the leadership of artists, audience members and advocates with a disability.

We hope these examples will stimulate discussion amongst a general readership as well as practitioners. We also hope that they will provide inspiration for change as well as practical suggestions for it.

Arts Access Australia is a national body that brings together a network of arts and disability organisations around Australia. Together they work to increase access to the arts for the one in five Australians with a disability. One way in which they do this is to assist cultural organisations meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Act requires businesses and organisations to make their goods, services and premises accessible for people with a

disability. In the process a diverse range of inclusive arts projects have found support and been encouraged to expand.

In *Making the Journey*, we wanted to celebrate these achievements and use these examples to encourage ideas for including people with disabilities in arts activities, while also encouraging people with disabilities to develop and run their own arts activities. *Making the Journey* was specifically prompted by a desire to promote success stories and the many developments that have taken place in the lives of people with disabilities in the last 25 years. While recognising what is good we also wanted to point the way forward for further change.

The organisations discussed here represent just a sample of the projects and people who are ‘making the journey’ to widen perceptions of art and open it out to people who have traditionally been excluded from its practice.

Structure of the book

The case studies have been drawn from both large and small organisations, and cover metropolitan and regional areas in all Australian states and territories. The map on pages 6 and 7 highlights the diversity of these locations throughout Australia.

The case studies are divided into three sections. Each section highlights a different aspect of the work being done by these organisations.

• Section 1: Opening Doors

The organisations in this section open the door to arts activities in a variety of ways. They have been active in creating accessible venues (Adelaide Festival Centre), encouraging local authorities' support for integrated arts initiatives (Open Art ACT), developing arts programs in a community health context (Northern Exposure) and providing training for employment in the arts (Ignition Theatre Training and Display Workshop).

• Section 2: Making a Difference

This section looks at some specific initiatives which make a practical and obvious difference to the lives of people with a disability and to the understanding of the general population. These programs – the Mwerre Anthurre art studio, Launceston's Arts Roar, the EASE ticketing service, and the 'International Day' activities in Nymagee and at the Bunker Cartoon Gallery – bring the artistic skills of people with a disability to public attention, generate income, take creative and practical approaches to participation, and build community and business relationships.

• Section 3: Make it New

This section's case studies offer examples of artwork created by – and for – people with a disability. One of the key elements in these works is the way the worlds of people with a disability stretch traditional understandings of art by creating new and specific forms. Back to Back Theatre,

the Restless Dance Company and the Tutti Ensemble all take an integrated approach to performing a range of artistic works, while the Pinnacles Gallery has facilitated exhibitions by and for people with a disability, particularly opening out the experience to people with a vision impairment.

Further information on all the subject areas covered in the case studies can be found in the contacts and resources listed at the back. This section also includes local and international disability resources, plus information about approaches to disability action plans and legal definitions.

Making the book

This book has offered us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the passion people with disability have for the arts, and it was great to uncover so many strong stories – including the many that didn't make the final book. The strength and innovation found in work happening in regional and remote Australia away from the glare of capital cities made a particularly strong impression.

If the book has a strength, it is in these stories. We both hope you enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed bringing them to you.

Gareth Wreford

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ARTS ACCESS AUSTRALIA

Mary Hutchison

WRITER

The aims of Arts Access Australia

There are many emerging trends and areas that Arts Access Australia is committed to developing. In particular we are responding to a strong desire for arts development by people with disabilities, and the creation of disability-led arts organisations where the Board, paid staff and participants are people with disabilities. A greater critical mass of art being produced by people with disabilities will be in a stronger position to gain exposure through touring and mainstream presentation. The other significant trend affecting the arts generally is the ageing population, which will drive up demand for the provision of access services.

Our main goals as an organisation over the five years to 2010 are to:

- promote arts development and leadership by people with disabilities
- promote achievement and exchange in the arts, both nationally and internationally
- develop a 'one-stop shop' website for all aspects of arts and disability
- develop practical resources to support arts workers and organisations to work with people with disabilities
- support initiatives involving older Australians and the arts, as disability and age are closely linked
- support initiatives involving Indigenous Australians and the arts to include Indigenous understandings of disability and wellbeing
- increase the low rates of social participation, vocational education and employment for people with disabilities in cultural activities.

Please note: Throughout the book we have used inclusive and 'people first' language, including 'person with a disability', as this is generally the preferred term in Australia.