# Illustration of six red boomerangs next to black text. Text reads: Arts Access Australia.

#  Annual Report

# 2019

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**Arts Access Australia**

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 **Instagram: instagram.com/artsaccessaust**

 **YouTube: youtube.com/artsaccessaust**

 **Linked In: https://www.linkedin.com/company/arts-access-australia**

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### Acknowledgment of Country

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and culture.

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###

### About Arts Access Australia

Arts Access Australia (AAA) is the national peak body for arts and disability in Australia. We work to increase national and international opportunities and access to the arts for people with disability as artists, arts-workers, participants and audiences.

Established in 1992, AAA is a disability-led company limited by guarantee. Our CEO and at least 50% of our board members identify as a person with disability.

AAA provides three main services:

* Information and Advice
* Research and Development
* Leadership and Advocacy

AAA adopts an inclusive approach and works across all disability types, all age groups, all art forms and across all states and territories of Australia.

AAA is a membership-based organisation. Our members include state-based arts and disability organisations, individual artists, arts-workers and arts leaders with disability, and others within the broader arts and cultural sector who share our vision of full and equal opportunity for cultural participation and contribution by all Australians.

**Our Vision**

Full and equal opportunity for cultural and creative participation and contribution for all Australians.

**Our Mission**

Advance equality for Australians with disability as artists, arts workers, participants and audiences through the provision of information, resources, research, advocacy and development opportunities.

### Chairperson’s Report

2019 was an extremely busy and successful year for AAA, and it is with pleasure we present the annual report detailing our achievements over the past twelve months to increase opportunities and access to the arts for people with disability.

Highlights included convening our signature event Meeting Place in the national capital on the International Day of Disability in December, co-presenting our inaugural National Leadership Award in conjunction with the Australia Council for the Arts, and funding seven Travel Grant recipients to join us for these outstanding events.

On behalf of my fellow Board members, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Australia Council for the Arts for their continued support, and to all of the organisations and individuals whose support has allowed us to deliver a year of successful initiatives.

Finally, a huge thank you to the staff of AAA for delivering these activities. And special acknowledgement to former CEO Meagan Shand whose hard work and commitment in 2019 was a major contributor to the success of the year.

**Belinda Locke**

Chairperson, Arts Access Australia

###

### Treasurer’s Report

In 2019 Arts Access Australia had a significant agenda to deliver advocacy and activities supporting the sector. At the end of the year it recorded a loss of $54,653 for the full year compared to a surplus of $41,388 for the full year in 2018. In 2019 revenue was $332,424 (2018: $284,383) and expenditure was $387,077 (2018: $243,045).

Revenue was higher in 2019 than in 2018 due to an increase in grant funding and sponsorship and donations, however staffing costs were also higher to deliver the increased activity arising from the grants and sponsorships. The full year loss arose primarily from funding expected for the December 2019 Meeting Place not being received.

The organisation retains suitable equity on its balance sheet and cash at hand even after adjusting for the loss in 2019.

**Peter Kearney**

Treasurer, Arts Access Australia

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### Arts Access Australia in 2019 – An Overview

2019 was a huge year for Arts Access Australia. We held our largest Meeting Place event yet, with a massive three-day conference in Canberra, bringing together artists and industry leaders in some of Australia’s most iconic arts spaces. We successfully ran our Create Change fundraising campaign, raising revenue to support advocacy, Travel Grants for artists to attend Meeting Place, and our inaugural National Leadership Award. We developed a detailed Strategic Plan to direct the Board and staff of AAA to where we aim to be in five years’ time, prepared with the assistance of national consultants Diversewerks, and we ran our *Real Money, Real Jobs* campaign in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election.

### Meeting Place

### About Meeting Place

Meeting Place, Arts Access Australia’s signature event is a national disability-led forum which brings artists with disability and industry leaders together in an accessible and supported space.

Participants present, perform, discuss and debate the latest in arts and disability, building stronger linkages and collaborations at local, national and international levels.

The aims of Meeting Place are to:

**Inform:** Present the latest information and research, and facilitate discussion and debate around best practice standards for access to the arts.

**Empower:** Develop skills and knowledge in access and inclusion, through practical skill building workshops.

**Influence:** Showcase leading artists with disability and examples of best practice in access to the arts to influence policy and practice.

**Create:** Create opportunities to connect to others, build new pathways, collaborations and alliances to create access to the arts.

### Meeting Place 2019

**Disability Leadership, Identity and Pride**

***“So affirming to our creative practice and community to be at the peak arts spaces in Australia … It was so amazing to return to Australia and be included in such a gathering. I am feeling incredible momentum for all of us ... Thank you so very much.”***

* ***Jeremy Hawkes, Visual Artist, Meeting Place Panellist***

Meeting Place has a tradition of being held in different locations across Australia, and in 2019, AAA took the forum to Canberra. We partnered with a diverse range of local and national arts organisations including Belconnen Arts Centre (now known as Belco Arts), the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery of Australia, Rebus Theatre, Arts Access Victoria, Access2Arts, the Australian National University and Australia Council for the Arts.

The forum took place from 1-3 December, culminating with an Awards Night on International Day of People with Disability. The theme was *“Disability Leadership, Identity and Pride”.*

The program was developed in consultation with a local Canberra Reference Group, who were able to advise on the local arts scene and disability access.

The conference had 133 registered participants, 2 keynote speakers, 33 presenters, 21 sessions (workshops, tours, panel discussions, screenings, etc). It was opened by the ACT Minister for Disability Susanne Orr, MLA.

Panel discussions included; “*Disability Identity, Leadership and Pride*”; “*Culture is Inclusion*”; a disability led Q&A session: “*Shaping our future: What will it take?”;* and *“Journeys to Meeting Place”* in which the recipients of AAA’s travel grants shared their stories.

Delegates participated in workshops and breakout sessions including; *“The Last Dance with The Last Avant Garde”,* a dance up session focussed on artists’ aspirations, interests, pride and solidarity; *“Open Doors Open Minds”,* an interactive theatre performance created by Rebus Theatre; *“Bounce Back Exhibition and Workshop”,* collaboration, learning new skills and reflecting on meaning through material process; a Digital Drawing Workshop presented by the National Gallery of Australia; and *“Crip the Stage: Performance and Disability”,* a mini-workshop degustation led by theatre and dance artists.

A series of accessible tours and exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery and the first public art tour with Arts ACT were also made available to attendees over the course of the conference

AAA utilised a dedicated Meeting Place website to support and promote the Meeting Place in 2019: [www.meetingplaceforum.org](http://www.meetingplaceforum.org).

### Participant Feedback

***“I have had fantastic feedback from my staff and the artists we work with who attend the event. They have all walked away from Meeting Place feeling empowered and proud of what they are doing in the world with their art.”***

* ***Tilly Davey, Hands On Studio Manager, Meeting Place Panellist***

### Leadership and Awards

### National Leadership Award

 ***“The Arts Access Australia National Leadership Award will amplify my voice to pursue greater opportunities, resources, advocacy and recognition for all d/Deaf and disabled artists and arts workers in Australia.”***

* ***Madeleine Little, Recipient of the Inaugural AAA National Leadership Award***

The AAA National Leadership Award was established to improve employment and enterprise outcomes for established and emerging artists and arts workers with disability, and to celebrate their work, achievements and contribution. The award comes with a $10,000 grant to be invested into the professional development of the recipient.

In 2019, we were delighted to present the inaugural National Leadership Award to Madeleine Little, an actor, performer, theatre maker and emerging leader from Queensland, selected for her dedication to a disability-led future.

The Awards Ceremony was held at the National Portrait Gallery where distinguished guests and Meeting Place participants celebrated the presentation of both the AAA National Leadership Award and the Australia Council National Arts and Disability Awards.

Awards were presented by Adrian Colette, CEO of the Australia Council, and Paul Fletcher, Federal Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts.

### Travel Grant Program

To continue to support artists and arts workers with disability to attend and participate in the Meeting Place program, AAA ran a Travel Grants Program in 2019. The grants provided flights, accommodation, conference registration and incidentals to 7 emerging and professional artists with disability from across Australia to attend the conference.

In total, 33 applications were received and assessed by a selection panel. Panellists reviewed artists’ career trajectories, capacity to engage with the Meeting Place program, personal benefits they would gain by attending, and how they might apply their learnings into the future.

Evaluation of the 2019 program and feedback from recipients has established that:

* recipients experienced increased motivation and confidence,
* recipients established new connections and networks, and
* recipients leveraged the opportunity to attend Meeting Place to start new artistic projects, performances and enterprises.

### ****Travel Grant Recipients:****

The 2019 Travel Grant recipients were:

**Emiko Artemis (SA)**

Emiko Artemis has been a professional artist since 2012 and has a PhD for her research exploring the medicalisation of women’s bodies and minds. Emiko has investigated this concept further in her practice, particularly how body and mind are connected and disconnected by the experience of modern life. Emiko now lives in South Australia, where she regularly exhibits her work and is focussed on building her community arts practice.

**Joshua Campton (SA)**
Joshua Campton is an Aboriginal artist, originally from Darwin. He is a dancer, poet, actor and D.J. He studies visual arts, film making and acting at Tutti Arts in Adelaide. He has performed throughout Australia, currently working with Kurruru Performing Arts, No Strings Attached Theatre and Tutti. His film, ‘Landscape Diaries’ featuring his poetry and dance, screened at the ‘Sit Down and Shut Up Film Festival’ in 2018.

**Michael Chan (VIC)**
Michael Chan is an ensemble artist who works for Geelong-based theatre company, Back to Back Theatre. Michael travelled to Hong Kong to work on the Democratic Set project after making an appearance as an extra on the short film Oddlands on ABC TV. Michael was awarded with the 2017 Geelong Awards for People with a Disability in the Arts category for his performance in Geelong Society of Operatic and Dramatic Arts musical production of Chess.

**Debbie Chilton (QLD)**
Debbie Chilton has been active in the creative arts since 2000, first as a published poet and author and most recently as a visual artist. In 2019 she had a solo exhibition in Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, and took part in a major art exhibition with Arts from the Margins. In addition to her personal arts practice, Debbie has delivered several community arts programs under the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) including working with people with disability.

**Anna Molnar (VIC)**

Anna Molnar is completing her Masters in Directing for Performance at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), and previously studied Drama at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Anna’s production credits include Director of CROSSROADS (La Mama Explorations); Co-Director of The Light Ensemble, presenting shows at the 2high Festival (Backbone Youth Arts); and Producer of EVE by Margi Brown Ash (Metro Arts and the nest ensemble).

**Andi Snelling (VIC)**

Andi Snelling is an award-winning actor and theatre-maker with dancing roots who trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in London. Her career highlights include working for the BBC, performing on the West End, and a recurring role on Neighbours. Her solo works include #DearDiary, Déjà Vu (And Other Forms of Knowing) and her sell-out hit Happy-Go-Wrong (Winner: Melbourne Fringe SA Tour Ready Award 2019) which explores her experience of living with Lyme disease.

**Rachel Woodward (WA)**
Rachael Woodward is a theatre maker, performer, puppeteer, and an arts worker who identifies as neuro-diverse. Rachael has a Bachelor in Performance Making from WAAPA and has worked with companies such as Sensorium Theatre, The Last Great Hunt, and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. She has presented her own work as part of the AWESOME International Arts Festival, ASSITEJ Next Generation Asia, Melbourne Puppetry Festival, ATYP’s Fresh Ink Program.

***“Being on the Meeting Place panel was a really positive experience for me. I felt like I got seen. Sometimes, because I have an invisible disability, I feel invisible in the disability community … so it was really nice to be celebrated and recognised … [A]s someone who can occasionally feel a bit out of place, it gave me great confidence to go up to talk to the people I wanted to network with … Meeting Place actually really helped me identify my skills and what I am really good at.”***

* ***Rachel Woodward, Travel Grant recipient.***

###

### CEO Leadership Group

Arts Access Australia continues to facilitate the CEO Leadership Group, where leaders from state-based arts access organisations meet to share information and insights and collaborate around key issues and advocacy.

Two meetings were held in 2019. The first during the Arts Activated Conference in Sydney in August, the second at Meeting Place on 4 December in Canberra, hosted by the Belconnen Arts Centre (now known as Belco Arts). The key focus of discussion was the development of National Access Standards for the Arts.

Many of the state-based arts access organisations represented at the CEO Leadership group meetings are the original members of Arts Access Australia.

Organisations represented at the meetings in 2019 were:

* DADAA (WA)
* Incite Arts (NT)
* Access2Arts (SA)
* Arts Access Victoria
* Accessible Arts (NSW)
* Access Arts (QLD)
* Darwin Community Arts (NT)
* Belco Arts (ACT)

### Real Money, Real Jobs

Through discussions held at Meeting Place in 2018, AAA established the increased employment and representation of artists with disability as priority issues for ongoing advocacy.

Research has found that artists with disability earn 42% less than artists without disability in Australia, a massive increase from the 8% gap in 2008 (*Making Art Work, 2017*). Labour force participation rates for people with disability have remained relatively unchanged for 20 years, ranking Australia 21st out of 29 OECD nations. An estimated 60% of arts organisations do not have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in place, and while 9% of professional artists identify as having disability, the proportion of the general population with disability is almost double that figure.

In 2019, AAA ran the *Real Money, Real Jobs* campaign asking Australian politicians to prioritise:

* Real money: more funding to support artists with disability; and
* Real jobs: increased employment rates for people with disability in all government-funded arts and cultural organisations.

The campaign was launched on 26 February at a Pre-election Forum, held ahead of the 2019 May Federal Election. The forum was hosted by DADAA in Fremantle, Western Australia and livestreamed across Australia.

Representatives of the Coalition, Labor Party, Greens and Arts Party accepted invitations to speak at the event and answer questions from attendees regarding their policies. Representatives were also given a scorecard to rate their commitment to increasing real money and real jobs for artists with disability.

Following the Pre-Election Forum, AAA kept the conversation going with a social media campaign, utilising the hashtag #RealMoneyRealJobs, and a letter writing campaign facilitating our community to contact their local Senators and MPs on the key issues.

Key speakers at the Pre-Election Forum included:

* Senator for Western Australia, the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC
* Federal Member for Burt, Matt Keogh MP
* Greens Senator, Jordan Steele-John
* Arts Party Candidate, Carol-Anne Croker

There were 39 attendees at the forum, and a major achievement from the campaign was that Arts & Disability was written into the Labor Party’s Arts Policy for the first time.

### Create Change Fundraising Campaign

AAA continues to work towards diversifying income and increasing income from non-government sources. In 2019, AAA was successful in its application for a Plus1 grant from Creative Partnerships Australia. Plus1 is a dollar-for-dollar matched fundraising program, designed to boost the fundraising efforts of small to medium not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations.

AAA set a target of $20,000 to be matched by Creative Partnerships Australia (CPA), effectively doubling each donation made. Funds raised were earmarked for advocacy and change programs, AAA’s Travel Grants Program, and to support the inaugural National Leadership Award.

AAA launched the *Create Change* fundraising campaign with a movie night fundraiser in April. The campaign was promoted across social media and AAA's national networks. The campaign video "It's time to create change" featured Jeremy Hawkes, Madeleine Little, Belinda Locke and Mallika McLeod and attracted over 5,500 combined views. The key message delivered was that: "Representation is the first step to inclusiveness and equality, to achieve greater representation, we need to invest in great leaders".

AAA was successful in raising $21,051, resulting in a total of $41,051 with the matched funds from CPA. A sincere thank you to the 90+ donors who helped AAA reach its target.

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### Key Statistics

In 2019, AAA sought to increase membership engagement and public profile through social media, mailing lists, website traffic, opportunities for artists and arts workers, and an increase in Meeting Place registrations. The below data indicates growing momentum and support for the work of AAA during the year.

**Free Members**

**2018:** 1,989 **2019:** 2,178 **Increase:** 9%

**Professional/Financial Members (including organisations)**

**2018:** 39 **2019:** 89 **Increase:** 128%

**Mailing List Subscriptions**

**2018:** 1,989 **2019:** 2,272 **Increase:** 14%

**Social Media Followers/Subscribers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn**

**2018:** 14,333 **2019:** 15,505 **Increase:** 8%

**Combined Website Traffic on the AAA and dedicated Meeting Place websites**

**2018:** 16,238 users **2019:** 21,185 users **Increase:** 30%

### The Board

Arts Access Australia is a disability-led organisation governed by a Board of Directors, at least 50% of whom identify as a person with disability.

In 2019, the board members were:

**Belinda Locke**

*Chairperson and Ordinary member from Victoria.*

Belinda is the Philanthropy Coordinator at Malthouse Theatre, and an Australian theatre director, performer, and disability advocate. She has been acknowledged for her work as a young artist and emerging leader by her award of the Rose Byrne Scholarship and her selection for Australia Council for the Arts’ Sync Leadership program. Belinda has curated and produced a number of national independent arts festivals in Australia. Her artistic practice brings to light hidden stories and experiences through performance.

**Leah Maund**

*Deputy Chairperson and Co-opted Member from WA.*

Leah is the General Manager of Sensorium Theatre, Australia’s only theatre company providing

multisensory theatre experiences to young children with disability. Leah is an anthropology-trained Arts-Disability Best Practice and Organisational Cultural Change Manager. With lived experience of intergenerational trauma, and nearly 20 years of experience in disability/arts-disability governance and advisory positions, Leah has championed the use of the arts as a powerful platform for expression, healing, engagement and inclusion.

**Peter Kearney**

*Treasurer and Ordinary Member from NSW.*

Peter is the Consulting Director at Exceleris Consulting, empowering organisations to do great things with the support of cloud-based technologies. He is a registered accountant with a background in business systems and general management and has worked with the Bauer Media Group, Nine Entertainment (formerly PBL Media) and FinancialForce.com.

**Coralie Bishop**

*Company Secretary and Co-opted Member from WA.*

Coralie is a marketing, communications and business development professional with 20 years’ experience working in the arts and not-for-profit sector. She is currently Development Manager at West Australian Opera and has previously worked at Leadership WA, WAAPA and Perth Festival. A Fellow of Leadership WA, Coralie is Chair of the Centre for Stories, board member of Arts Access Australia and a committee member of the Leadership WA Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee.

**Guy Morgan**

*Ordinary member from NSW.*

Guy Morgan is a visual artist who trained in England at St Martins School of Art and the London College of Printing. He has lived in Australia since 1981 and returned to oil painting in 2003 after an absence of nearly 30 years. He completed a Master of Studio Arts (Painting) course at Sydney College of the Arts in 2010, where he also served on the Academic Board.

**Christine Johnson**

*Ordinary member from NSW.*

Christine is a writer who has worked extensively in Arts Leadership. Christine has directed many theatre productions, touring nationally and internationally. Christine’s short stories have won prizes and been published in Australia and the US, and she was recently commissioned to write and direct an 8-part drama podcast on the theme of Inclusivity, Diversity and Bias in Business, launched in 2019, aimed at professional development for senior managers.

**Carol Taylor**

*Co-opted Member from QLD.*

Carol is a Legal Practice Director and Principal Solicitor at Taylor Law & Conveyancing. She is also a businesswoman, award winning artist, and advocate. Carol is now bringing her entrepreneurial flair to the world of fashion as the World’s first quadriplegic designer. Carol has previously been the honorary Solicitor for the Irish Australian Welfare Bureau and is a long-time supporter of the Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation.

**Liz Martin**

*Original member from NSW.*

As a disabled artist and advocate, Liz Martin believes in the importance of an Australian arts sector that is authentically representative, diverse, and inclusive, for all. Liz has worked for over twenty years across the arts, disability and community sector as a musician, collaborator, and advocate. Through her current role as Arts Development & Training Manager at Accessible Arts NSW, Liz actively aims to enhance opportunities for artists, arts workers and audiences with disability.

### AAA Staff

AAA is run as a virtual organisation. All staff are part-time and work together to coordinate the daily running of AAA from locations across Australia.

**Meagan Shand, CEO**

Meagan Shand is an Executive Manager with over 20 years of experience working in the NGO sector. Meagan received a Centenary Medal of Australia in 2001 for her vision and commitment to creating a disability-led advocacy group. She is passionate about promoting the benefits of Arts, and recently completed a Masters of Social Science, exploring how participation in art contributes to individual and community resilience. Meagan commenced as CEO of AAA in February 2017.

**Harmonie Downes, Business Development Manager**

Harmonie has spent many years developing her craft as a practising artist, from teaching ceramics, facilitating ensembles to playing in bands. She has also worked in arts administration for various organisations and recently directed large-scale complex festivals and events. Harmonie is passionate about the arts and the benefits the arts contribute to a rich cultural fabric, which everyone can enjoy.

**Yvette Tulloch, Communications Manager**

Yvette Tulloch has extensive experience in writing, editing and publishing, previously working in both corporate communications and university marketing in the tertiary education sector. In 2014, Yvette spent a year volunteering in Fiji as the communications advisor for a women’s health clinic where she was subsequently honoured to be contracted as the communications advisor on a major health campaign. Yvette holds a Master of Strategic Communication from the University of Western Australia.

**Maxxi May, Program Manager**

Maxxi has worked as an artist for over 15 years, exhibiting in Australia and overseas and presenting on radio as a broadcaster/DJ. She is a self-employed contractor, tutoring at universities/TAFEs, and working with arts companies, galleries, and city councils. Maxxi holds a BA in Visual Arts, an MA in Art Therapy, and a PhD in Arts. She has been the recipient of residencies in regional/remote WA, Sydney, Switzerland and Finland.

**Sarah Briggs, Finance Officer**

Sarah has been the bookkeeper for Arts Access Australia since Nov 2015. For most of her working life she has worked for community based organisations, enjoying being able to contribute something towards the interesting and essential work they do. Originally from BC in Canada, Sarah now lives in Hobart, Tasmania, and has three sons and three grandsons. Sarah is passionate about ocean conservation.

###

### Our Supporters

Arts Access Australia would like to acknowledge the following supporters who helped us to create change with generous donations to the organisation in 2019.

* Creative Partnerships Australia
* The Minderoo Foundation
* Feilman Foundation
* Grill’d
* Sydney Pole
* The Maund Family
* VCA Theatre School Students Body & Discord 879 Student Festival Committee 2019
* Rebecca and Nick Cuschieri
* Rachael Missingham
* N.W. Spanbroek
* Mallika MacLeod
* Meagan Shand
* Lisa
* Liesbeth Goedhart
* Kerry Comerford
* Creative Access Interpreting
* Coralie and Peter Bishop
* Caine Chennatt
* Belinda Locke
* The Taylor Family
* Ann Cunningham
* Allison Reynolds of Creatives Collective

**Support for Infrastructure**

AAA would also like to thank Gandel Philanthropy for their support to purchase IT equipment critical to the successful operations of the organisation in 2019.

**Meeting Place 2019 and National Leadership Awards Supporters**

Sincere thanks to the following sponsors and partners who contributed substantial in-kind and financial support:

* The Office for Disability Inclusion and Participation (ACT)
* The Mindaroo Foundation
* Feilman Foundation
* The National Portrait Gallery
* The National Gallery of Australia
* Belco Arts (formerly Belconnen Arts Centre)
* Australian National University
* Rebus Theatre
* Arts Access Victoria / The Last Avant Garde
* Street Theatre
* Capital Group
* Bentspoke
* AI Media
* Access2Arts
* ArtsHub

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