

ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA

The story of our year

Annual Report 2017

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Kate Niddrie in *Fortune* by Way Out West, 2017, photo by Daryl Gordon

I am
an artist
it is
who I am.

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Chairperson's report

This year, we committed to a challenge that the Board and Executive Team had been discussing for some time, which is how to manage a successful leadership transition, and recruit Arts Access Victoria's first Executive Director with disability.

I could have
painted that!
Yeah, but
you didn't.



Kristy Sweeney, [detail] watercolour, 2017

Leaders with disability

Although we have long had leaders with disability in our organisation, on the board, as managers and program directors, we all felt this was an optimal time to achieve one further goal, that of our key executive role being filled by a person with disability.

Leadership transition

With nine years of successful leadership under her belt, our Executive Director, Veronica Pardo, the executive team and the board began to imagine what this transition could be, if it had the support of the whole organisation, and the sector.

We hoped to create new benchmarks for leadership transition, and advocate through our actions as well as our words, the importance of people with disability having the opportunity to lead the organisations that serve our community.

We welcome Caroline Bowditch

I am delighted to say that Caroline Bowditch will join our team in 2018, and Veronica will stay on to work closely with Caroline over the next year to ensure our organisation goes from strength to strength. I thank everyone involved in this process, and indeed in all the activities of 2017, which are celebrated throughout this report. In particular, I would like to thank my fellow Board members, the staff of the organisation and the artists across our programs, who are the motivation for all our work.



Brad Sadler, Chairperson, photo by Breeana Dunbar

Executive Director's report

What is the point of art? Art is everything, it is the whole point.

2017 has been an action-packed year for Arts Access Victoria.

Creating resources

We have also invested heavily in the creation of resources and tools to assist others to make the NDIS work for them, and to place cultural participation on the NDIS map. With ARTfinder, Connecting the Dots and Art & You just to name a few, we have started a conversation about the importance of art in people's lives that will have significant impact on the scheme and on our community.

Paula Whiting, untitled, felt tip pen on paper, 2017



The arts and NDIS

Not only have we delivered a huge program of artistic, industry and sector development work, but we have also successfully begun to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This has been an incredible amount of extra work for everyone in the organisation, but we have been determined not only to succeed, but to thrive in this new environment.

Working with individual artists, whether through our amazing arts programs or in our mentoring and coaching programs, is our core expertise, so the individualised frameworks of the NDIS are very familiar to us.

Thank you

We thank all our supporters and funders for their contributions to these endeavours and we look forward to seeing the community and the arts transformed in the years to come. A huge thanks to our staff for their dedication to all the artists we've supported this year.



Veronica Pardo, Executive Director, photo by Breeana Dunbar

Art. For every body.

Arts Access Victoria
exceeded or met all
21 of our KPI's

We make art

Established in 1974, Arts Access Victoria (AAV) is the peak body for disability in the arts. As a not for profit organisation, AAV advocates for inclusion within the arts, valuing the lived experience of people living with disability.

We advocate: We shake things up, we call out discrimination, we expect inclusion.

We reflect: We provide training, to understand ourselves and others, to grow and ignite change around us.

We deliver: Inclusive and accessible programs to engage people with disability to pursue their individual arts practice and lead creative lives.

We connect people: To art, to resources, to each other.

We make art: Because we have to, we need to and then the world makes sense.

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme takes effect throughout Australia, Arts Access Victoria is committed to helping individuals include arts programs within their individual NDIS plans.

Arts Access Victoria is a registered NDIS provider.

Chelsea Fagan, untitled, oil pastel collage, 2016

1941

artists supported

17

new works and
creative developments

43

exhibitions and performances

240

strategic partnerships

4,355

subscribers to monthly eNews

890,815

audience members engaged

101,209

website page views

465

creative workshops for
people living with disability

11

research projects

7,471

followers on social media

13,751

information requests

We make art: Programs

We make art.
Because we have
to, we need to and
then the world
makes sense.



J. Steele, untitled (detail), screenprint on upcycled cloth bag, 2017

Art About

Art About is a visual arts program for people with disability who have an interest in visual art and local culture around the Mornington Peninsula.

Flags and bags

2017 has seen the Art About artists working on the *Flags and Bags* project which focuses on developing the group's local identity, skills development and interest in sustainability.

Thanks to a successful Mornington Peninsula Regional Shire (MPRS) Placemaking grant of \$5000, the group purchased screen printing equipment and held an open studio event in Nebula mobile art studio, to showcase the work and skills that had been developed during the year.

The open studio event celebrated International Day of People with Disability and brought the local community together

with Art About artists. Artists produced a large collaborative group flag and developed individual designs which were printed on recycled cloth tote bags and given to members of the public on the day.

Members from the Mornington Peninsula Boomerang Bags group attended the event and expressed interest to work collaboratively with Art About artists. With the Boomerang Bags movement gaining considerable attention on the Peninsula, and with environmental issues and campaigns such as *ban the plastic bag* becoming more visible, the *Flags and Bags* project is expected to expand in 2018.

Case study

Art About artist, Erin (Ezza) Wooloughan has extended her illustration and storytelling skills by learning screen printing techniques. Ezza's final design for the *Flags and Bags* project shows the professional illustration skills she has developed and she is keen build her folio and demonstrate her new skills to others.



Screenprinting demonstration by Ezza, photo by Samm Menzies

Art Day South

Art Day South is one of AAV's flagship programs and a model of inclusive arts practice, where artists work collaboratively to explore, develop and produce new work. Projects in 2017 saw community engagement through public art making and explorations of technology such as sound and video.

The Nest

The Nest project invited the audience to make a wish and present it to a giant sculptural nest adorned with feathers and bead work made by the group. The Nest participatory art project was presented in two parts; firstly, in conjunction with Emerald Hill Arts Menu festival and secondly at Dingley Neighbourhood Centre.

For Emerald Hill Arts Menu, The Nest was held in Nebula mobile art studio outside the South Melbourne Town Hall. Multicultural Arts Victoria also participated on the day with spoken word performances.

Embracing technology

In the second half of 2017, Art Day South began to develop a new body of work through the introduction of a range of instruments and recording devices.

Participant artists explored their own interests in performance and the process resulted in an extensively recorded sound and video archive

of rehearsed and improvised performative events that had taken place throughout the year.

Much of this material was presented at the Arts Day South open studio in December where participant's families and friends enjoyed a mini cinema and a display of participant artist's drawings, paintings, sculptures, sets and costumes. A selection of works were also exhibited in the neighbouring Dingley Library throughout January 2018.

2018 partnerships

We are in negotiation with Kingston Arts Centre to present this material in 2018, which will potentially involve indoor and outdoor projections of the artist's work.

Connecting artists with community

AAV artists engage with various arts events and opportunities throughout the year to promote connection with the arts and culture in their local area.



Artlinks: Mornington Peninsula

Artlinks connects participants on the Mornington Peninsula with local arts and cultural events including seeing performances and enjoying a meal at the Frankston Arts Centre restaurant, visiting a professional artist's studio at Coolart Wetlands and Homestead and learning to prime canvases in preparation for painting at Seawinds Community Hub.

Seasonal Studios: Pakenham

Seasonal Studios are short term programs and events run throughout the year. In AAV's Summer Studios, artists engaged with art activities including pottery, weaving, puppetry and animation.

Autumn Studios visited the NGV to see the contemporary indigenous exhibition *Who's Afraid of Colour*, inspiring participants and expanding their knowledge of indigenous arts practice.

In *Winter Studios*, artists produced works on paper from which they created individual stop motion animations and made small artist books.

In *Spring Studios* the art making process showed its power to calm and hold participants in a safe space after a difficult session. We encourage respectful relationships and communication in our groups so that participants have opportunities to build strong and respectful relationships with others.

AAV in the community

AAV facilitated a themed art activity based on the idea of home, where participants built wearable architecture for the Kids Week event run by Park Towers management in South Melbourne. In November, AAV took part in the City of Dandenong's Arts Come and Try event, facilitating a drawing activity with our wheelie bin camera obscuras for International Day of People with Disability.

Edward Treloar, watercolour, 2017

Echo Collective

Winners of the MIRA Award for Best Inclusive Art Group, Echo Collective is a performance group which brings young people between the ages of 20 to 35 living with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds together who share a commitment and passion for inclusive theatre, film and music.



Amina Aden in Echo Collective's Voyage performance, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2017, photo by Margherita Coppolino

Voyage

In 2017, Echo Collective presented a short self devised show at the Arts Centre Melbourne to an audience of community, family, friends and industry. The participants created and shaped the show through a series of workshops, giving their own personal artistic feedback and ideas in positive and constructive ways. The participants developed their performance, improvisation, comedy, directing and workshop facilitation skills through a variety of group and solo tasks, leading to a growth in artistic autonomy, leadership, collaboration, maturity, confidence and self esteem.

Open workshop

The Echo Collective participants presented a very successful open workshop with a group of guest students with disabilities from our partner organisation, Western Futures from the Victoria University Footscray campus.

The Echo Collective participants were so confident with their facilitation skills that they did not require any outside assistance from the lead artists present.

Song writing project

Singer, actor and writer, Sarah Ward led three songwriting Masterclass workshops during Echo Collective's weekly workshops. Through these workshops, Echo Collective created three group songs and five individual songs. A song by participant Kenny Lam was then chosen to be professionally recorded and produced along with a band of jazz musicians and Sarah Ward as the lead vocalist. An animation is being created to accompany the song's release.

Get Out!

Get Out! began the year with the *Homage To...* exhibition at Cube 37, Frankston Arts Centre.

Toby Matheson

Get Out! participant artist, Toby Matheson, held a solo exhibition at G3 Kingston Arts Centre in December 2017. *Shades Within Melbourne Pt 2* showcased Toby's paintings, which explored ideas around disability and sexuality. The opening had a high attendance resulting in the sale of one of the paintings on the night.



Toby Matheson, No 9 (detail), acrylic on canvas, 2017

Exploring identity

Working with text, drawing, assemblage and utilising chalkboards and found objects, the artists embarked on a year-long journey, expressing their identities through self-portraits, sculptural poetry and the mark making process. The exhibition was a homage to the 'self' and invited the viewer into the creative minds of the Get Out! artists.

More than twenty participant artists were present for the install day where the installation process became an extension of the artwork itself. A video was shown at the opening night featuring artist interviews, the art making process and a soundtrack made by several participant artists.

Individual practice

For the second half of the year the Get Out! participant artists focused on their individual practices. In their individual studio spaces, the artists explored their work in their own time and without the constraints of a curatorial theme and exhibition timeline.

The open day on the last session of the year saw families and friends visit to engage with the artists as they shared insights into their art and processes. Maddy Beratis's drawings depicted the emotions she was feeling on the day using pencils and pastels to create colourful abstract forms. Tess McDonald created artworks from bound objects which were suspended from the ceiling allowing them to spin and swing when people walked by.

Nebula mobile art studio

Nebula is Australia's first fully-accessible mobile art studio. Devised by AAV participants, Nebula travels across Victoria offering creative opportunities for artists with disability and can be transformed into a gallery, workshop space or performing arts venue.

Nebula at The Other Film Festival

Nebula hosted screenings and panel discussions for The Other Film Festival in partnership with Amaze as part of the 2017 Melbourne Fringe Festival program at Federation Square in September. Nebula also hosted two evenings of spoken word, musical performance and wheelie bin camera obscura workshops as part of the festival. The events drew a large and supportive crowd with many audience members stopping to watch from the street.

Nebula at Werribee Mansion

Nebula took part in the City of Wyndham's family day event at Werribee Mansion in October where thousands of people attended to see bands and participate in a range of activities. We trialled a new creative technique with our wheelie bin camera obscuras, combining

individual drawings into large scale panoramas, a method which we will develop and work on as a major project in 2018.

Nimbus Studio at Bundoora Homestead

In 2017, Nimbus visual art studio began its residency on the grounds of Bundoora Homestead. Four artists have been attending regularly with more artists attending on a drop in basis.

The artists have largely been self-directed, working across a range of media including drawing and painting. To showcase the Nimbus artist's work, a selection of art greeting cards will be made and sold at Bundoora Homestead's gallery shop, providing the artists with income from the sales.



The Other Film Festival audience at Melbourne Fringe, 2017, photo by Rhian Hinkley

SRS Studios

AAV's SRS Studios provide arts programs to over seventy residents living with mental health issues, disability or drug and alcohol dependency in Supported Residential Services (SRS). SRS Studios run in various locations in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs where residents can engage in visual arts, creative writing and performing arts.



Larissa MacFarlane, Anything is possible with just a breath, monoprint, 2009

Murals

Residents of Queens Lodge SRS created a mural which has been proudly installed in the carpark area while residents of Royal Avenue and Sydenham Grace were commissioned by Moonee Valley Council to create a thirty metre mural for Ascot Vale Neighborhood House.

Exhibitions

Queens Lodge artists were selected to exhibit work at the City of Whittlesea *New Beginnings* 2017 art exhibition. Artists at Stewart Lodge and Fusion art studio at Chippendale Lodge SRS held in-house exhibitions to celebrate their achievements for the year.

Gallery visits

Inspired by his visit to the NGV House of Dior exhibition in November, Artstop artist Theo Psathas published a full colour zine of paintings and writing on the iconic women of Hollywood.

Theo is currently working on a second edition which will be published in 2018. Artists from the Melton Willows and Meadowbrook SRS Studios visited the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, documenting the day with photographs and sketches.

One Night In Footscray

An initiative of Maribyrnong Council and Victoria University featuring roving performers, live music, and exhibitions, One Night In Footscray (ONIF) supported local studio artists from the Footscray and Greenhaven SRS to exhibit their visual art. AAV Pathways artist Larissa MacFarlane also brought the local community together with disability activists for a collaborative paste up activity.

AAV's SRS Studios plan to be involved with the annual event in the future.

Way Out West

Way Out West's *Fortune* production is an interactive performance where artists exchange gifts with their audience in the form of artwork, music or creative experience.

Fortune

In the development and production of *Fortune* the participant artists learned skills in puppetry performance, making props, set design and construction, developing their performance skills and engaging with audiences.

Since relocating to St Albans Community Centre (STACC), STACC has offered Way Out West the opportunity to be their company in residence pilot group.

This opportunity gives access to the use of the Bowery Theatre and STACC resources at no charge.

Dragan Mickov

For the second showing of *Fortune*, artist Dragan Mickov produced a participatory work inspired by his family and their busy home. Dragan invited the audience to add features and clothes to soft calico figures with coloured marker pens. Many audience members wrote text on the figures in multiple languages, extending the context of the work into personal stories about family and home.



Dragan Mickov, *What's your story?*, as part of *Fortune* performance, STACC, 2017, photo by Geoff Robinson

We connect people: Mentorship
and professional development

We connect
people to art,
to resources,
to each other.

AAV's Pathways program supports individual artists with lived experience of disability to pursue their creative practice and meet their artistic goals. In 2017, the Pathways program expanded in response to increased demand and the new NDIS environment.



Matthew Clarke with his Art Tram, *Lost in Melbourne*, 2017

Individual artists

In 2017, Pathways artist, Matthew Clarke, had his painting *Lost in Melbourne* selected for Melbourne Art Trams – the second year a Pathways artist was chosen. Heidi Everett produced projects including The Mojo Film Night.

Alex Litsoudis performed his theatre work about his Greek heritage and disability. Larissa MacFarlane's handstand paste up artwork was chosen as the feature image for *The Kiln* at Arts Centre Melbourne and she produced her *Disability Pride* event at One Night in Footscray.

Kath Duncan coproduced *On the Money* with AAV and the City of Yarra for International Day of People with a Disability.

Anna Seymour was selected for the Omi dance residency in New York and performed in San Francisco and Berlin and will lead the Delta Project as director in 2018.

ACTIVATE professional development

ACTIVATE, AAV's new professional development series saw emerging artists participate in workshops that have resulted in meaningful connections and opportunities. ACTIVATE's strength is in its tailored approach, where artists workshop their artistic goals with an AAV mentor, developing skills around funding, budgeting, marketing, producing, networking and time management. Many artists took part in 2017 including Selwyn Hoffmann, Graci Lynch, Heidi Everett, Kath Duncan, Michael Uniacke, Larissa MacFarlane, Carly Findlay, Simon Green, Jax Jacki- Brown, Jaycob Campbell, Lily Amorous and Andy Butler.

Public recognition

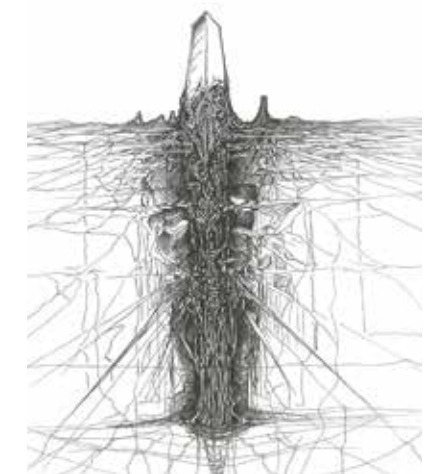
We are pleased to see artists receive recognition for their work. John Puli was awarded the Citizen of the Year award in his local council. Visual artists Karen McGlynn and Toby Matheson were nominated for the Supreme Court of Australia Inspire Award in the Arts.

Jess Moody's work with Deaferent Theatre won the Melbourne Fringe Access Award in 2017, Heidi Everett was nominated for an award in her local council and Greg Muir was successful with his grant submission in the City of Melbourne Indigenous Artists category.

We are proud that AAV's *Our Rightful Place* event was nominated for the Melbourne Fringe Festival Spoken Word and Ideas Award.

Artist opportunities

The new *Ignite* program gives AAV artists the opportunity to receive income by leasing their artwork to the office of the Minister for the Arts. As a result of AAV initiatives, artist Matthew Jelleff was invited by Brimbank Council to exhibit his work in 2018 and the Delta Project's new media work was selected for an exhibition at the Counihan Gallery.



Matthew Jelleff, *The growth in the chasm*, felt tip pen on paper, 2017

"The Pathways program has had tremendous impact for me. It has put me in contact with the right people/professionals in the industry and provided me with networking opportunities and support.

The program has also provided important exposure for my art."

– Pathways artist

Youth Projects

The Pathways youth program supports three students a year to undertake work experience with Arts Access Victoria. This has offered a productive step for young people whose pathways from school need to be specifically tailored due to their disability or mental health.

NDIS

In early August the role of NDIS Coordinator was established. With the NDIS roll out across Victoria, AAV has adapted to the changing funding structures by providing information and advice to artists with disability, their families and carers, to help advocate for the arts in NDIS plans.

Youth arts opportunities

AAV utilized our Engage funding for this vital work. We consulted with numerous youth organisations and met with young people to gauge their interests, barriers and aspirations regarding the arts.

AAV was successful in obtaining funding from the Office for Youth for three more years of funding for youth projects. The focus will be on transitions for young people from school, providing alternative pathways to learning and developing their career aspirations by engaging with mainstream youth arts opportunities.

With the roll out of the NDIS, we will reflect on our work with young people to ensure their future needs are met by our programs and services.

Work experience

With an interest in community work and the arts, Lucy undertook a placement at AAV in 2017 as her school was unable to provide effective career support on their own.

Living with learning difficulties and with responsibilities to assist her mother to care for her siblings at home, the work placement was an opportunity for Lucy to explore her career interests and gain confidence.

Since her placement at AAV, Lucy has decided to take up a community services course locally and begin part time volunteering leading to employment.

Options for young people

AAV is proud to see a young person acknowledge their strengths and take the next step in their chosen direction. We look forward to providing more options for school leavers in partnership with arts organisations.

“Thanks so much for the vote of confidence.” – Lucy

Art, NDIS and You

The Art, NDIS & You information session was developed and has been delivered to the general public, four AAV arts programs and to a small not for profit arts organisation. We responded to over 350 requests for information about the arts and NDIS from people with disability, families and carers, organisations and NDIS professionals.

“I thought the session was pitched perfectly for our participants and provided spaces for them to engage with their own questions and comments. We all left the session with a much clearer idea of what we needed to do to prepare for the NDIS.”

– Jo Raphael, Fusion Theatre

Case study

Kaye (name changed for privacy) approached AAV seeking support to prepare for her upcoming NDIS planning meeting. With an established career in the arts, Kaye had not previously received any disability support and was unsure of how the NDIS might be able to support her. With support from AAV’s NDIS Coordinator, including preparation, attendance and advice around her NDIS planning meeting, Kaye’s NDIS plan will now fund many hours per week of specialised disability and personal support towards her arts practice.

The Lesley Hall Arts and Disability Advocacy Scholarship

The Lesley Hall Scholarship empowers artists to lead their project with advocacy at its centre. Honouring the life and activism of the late Lesley Hall, a tireless advocate for the human rights of people with disability, this scholarship offers \$5000 and a twelve month mentorship.

For the second year in a row The Lesley Hall Scholarship was awarded to an artist for an arts project that highlights advocacy.

Prue Stevenson

In 2017, the first recipient of the award, Prue Stevenson began to develop her project *Stim Your Heart Out*. Prue brought her wealth of creative skills and vision to this work with her drive for change.

Prue has been provided support through AAV's Pathways program to bring her proposal to fruition. The project brings together a group of women artists living with Autism, to work with Prue and a choreographer to create a stimming movement piece that will later be developed into a public flash mob.

The aim of the work is to destigmatise stimming and to invite others into the world of people who use stimming as a self calming strategy. Prue is building her profile as a visual and installation artist whose work stems directly from her experience and perspective as a person with Autism. She is passionate about advocacy for her community and to break down barriers and misconceptions that too often see people isolated from society. We are proud to have been able to support Prue in her vision and to see her lead with others in her work.



(Above) Prue Stevenson, *Expend*, film showing in Nebula at Melbourne Fringe, 2017, photo by Eva Sifis. (Left) Jeremy Lindhe, *What's your gift?*, as part of *Fortune* performance, STACC, 2017, photo by Daryl Gordon

We reflect: Training and development

We reflect
to understand
ourselves and
others, to grow
and ignite change
around us.



Kristy Sweeney, untitled, watercolour and pen on paper, 2017

Open Your Mind

Open Your Mind is AAV's new mental health awareness and accessibility training package, specifically aimed at arts and cultural organisations. *Open Your Mind* (OYM) is currently in development by a small team of artists with lived experience of mental health issues.

A new model of empathy

The new package will take an empathic, environmental and trauma-informed view of mental health issues, and will complement AAV's existing *Open Your Eyes* disability awareness training.

Positive impacts

Even in its developmental phase, team members have reported a positive personal impact on their well-being through their involvement in the project's research and design. The interactions in the productive debates and conversations during weekly development meetings have been particularly meaningful.

Informed by lived experience

Utilising a lived experience method to develop the OYM package aligns with AAV's core values where people living with mental health issues are viewed as experts in their own lives. With an innovative and creative perspective, we hope that the enthusiasm and passion of the co-designers of OYM will be reflected in its implementation when the training package is rolled out in 2018.

We are proud of the original and ground breaking approach that OYM will take in reflecting the complex and sensitive nature of mental health issues.

A model for mental health training

We expect to create a truly innovative, motivational and transformational mental health awareness training package that can stand as a model of best practice nationally and internationally.

Edward Treloar, watercolour, 2017



Open Your Eyes Training

Open Your Eyes disability awareness training workshops provide an opportunity for individuals and organisations to build skills and confidence to make access a priority in the workplace. Our facilitators are artists with disability with professional expertise in program delivery and a commitment to issues relating to access, inclusion and equality.

“The shared stories and experiences of the workshops impacted profoundly on our staff, and changed their understanding of what it is to live with disability. It has motivated a number of them to seek out better access solutions under their own steam... that shift in thinking is what our Access Ambassadors team will keep championing.”

– Sarah Ernst, Library Development & Projects Office, Yarra Libraries

Open Your Eyes

In 2017 we delivered our three and half hour *Open Your Eyes* (OYE) training program to many organisations including Yarra Libraries, Women's Circus, Arts Centre Melbourne, State Library of Victoria, Museums Victoria, Bandmates Victoria, City of Stonnington, Melbourne University, JobAccess and Chunky Move. We also provided training for AAV employees, demonstrating our commitment to ongoing organisational training and development.

Developing tools for best practice

In 2017, we further developed existing disability awareness training materials and programs with Yarra Libraries to create new skills development tools specific to the work of library staff. These new tools have been adopted as a pilot program for libraries across Victoria to use as best practice customer service training.

Investing in our facilitators

As we grow the AAV training program, we have focused on providing ongoing coaching and mentoring to our key facilitators. We have seen their presentation, facilitation skills, confidence and level of professionalism increase. In 2018, we will design and implement a professional development training plan for our team.

A responsive and reflective approach

We are proud to see our program grow in response to increased audience engagement and demand. Designed to be responsive and reflective in its approach, we are currently working to expand the program. In 2017 we conducted a review of our OYE training workshop to ensure accurate and considered perspectives of disability. The review reinforced the program's strengths and offered insight into areas requiring clarity, providing direction for the future.

We advocate: Access and inclusion

We advocate,
we shake things
up, we call out
discrimination,
we expect inclusion.



David Yun, Get Out! portraits, marker and paint on canvas, 2017

Advocacy and advice to the arts industry

Arts Access Victoria works to make the creative industries in Victoria more inclusive for people with disability. In addition to our training program, we offer access audits carried out by our Lived Experience Consultants.

Lived experience consultants

We engaged Lived Experience Consultants (LEC's) who are arts patrons and artists with disability to examine access and inclusion. Using a 'mystery shopper' model, LEC's attend events, providing feedback regarding customer service, physical access, booking, website, and location to inform access improvements.

Improving inclusion

In 2017, the focus of consultation with the arts industry has been on improving inclusion, working in partnership with a number of arts organisations, such as North Melbourne Arts House, Circus Oz, the Melbourne Fringe, Malthouse Theatre, Lucy Guerin Dance Company, Shakespeare Pop-up Theatre and the Wheeler Centre.

Advice, training and best practice

At North Melbourne Arts House we were able to consult with the marketing team to ensure best practice for promotion of their accessible shows as well as provide

expert advice to producers and train volunteers. We provided training and advice to the Malthouse Theatre and consulted with The Lucy Guerin Dance Company regarding a major upgrade to their new premises. Through advocacy we achieved equity of choice in ticket prices for wheelchair users at the Shakespeare Pop-up Theatre.

At the Wheeler Centre, we consulted on organisation access including website management, marketing and programming and assisted Circus Oz with their relaxed performance.

AAV is particularly proud of the comprehensive audit for Melbourne Fringe Festival which will contribute to a more inclusive future for the organisation, acting as a benchmark for other arts organisations and providing a clear direction for their new Access Officer.

Universal access

AAV looks forward to working closely with a wide range of arts organisations, to achieve genuine change beyond tokenism and to achieve widespread acceptance of universal access.

We innovate: Projects

These are our stories and only we can represent ourselves in the storytelling.

Connecting the Dots: Strategic Project

The *Connecting the Dots* project has resulted in a range of resources that promote health and well-being outcomes for young people living with mental health issues. Co-designed with the Youth Advisory Group and the Arts and Mental Health Network, the project aims to strengthen the capacity of local communities to develop and support inclusive arts initiatives.

“I can’t imagine my world without art because that’s how you express yourself.” - Phoenix



Eloise Grills, untitled, watercolour on paper, 2017

Youth mental health and the NDIS

The introduction of the NDIS presents an opportunity for eligible young people with mental health issues to choose arts activities as part of their individualised funding packages. *Connecting the Dots* positions AAV as a NDIS provider for youth mental health. The project also informs AAV’s advocacy for a more sophisticated approach to resourcing arts programs and participation, both of which are critical to building more inclusive communities and promoting happiness, resilience and meaning in the lives of young people living with mental health issues.

Outcomes

The project has resulted in the production of: *Art and You: A planning guide*, (shortlisted for the VicHealth Awards 2017), *Art Form* booklet (launched in February 2018) and two videos *Art and You* and *Alexi’s Story* which help young people to advocate for the arts in their NDIS plans. The project also provides stimulus for new arts and cultural programs in three pilot sites and the development of a model for Mental Health Awareness Training for cultural organisations and Inclusive Arts Training for mental health organisations.

Two participating community artists with mental health issues have been employed to develop the new Arts and Mental Health training package. The project was received warmly when presented at the 12th International Conference on the Arts in Society in Paris and emerging partnerships have been identified between local government and mental health organisations.

For young people

With the support of Arts Access Victoria, the Arts and Mental Health Network continues to build capacity for peer to peer support and advocacy, by providing opportunities for collaboration, representation and social connection.

Bandmates Victoria

Bandmates Victoria matches people with disability and volunteers to see live music in Melbourne venues.

“Bandmates will fulfill my dreams. I’ve always wanted to see The Darkness because they are one of my favourite bands. I’d like to see them at least once because they are on my bucket list.”
– Victoria

“Bandmates is so great, I love it. It gets me out of the house and meeting new people, which would never otherwise happen.”
– Peter



Bandmates at Loop Bar, 2017

Co-design

Bandmates Victoria in the pilot phase developed in two distinct strands: Co-design and partnership. AAV co-designed the program with people with disability and volunteers utilising strength based frameworks to build a safe, well managed, contemporary program to support individuals to achieve community and cultural participation.

Partnership

Bandmates Victoria is developed by lead partners Maribyrnong City Council and Arts Access Victoria, supported by Vic Health, Music Victoria and Darebin, Moreland, Port Phillip, Yarra and Melbourne City Councils. It is a unique cultural capacity building program focusing on individuals, venue staff, music industry stakeholders, musicians and performers underpinned by universal access.

We worked with the music industry to build awareness around disability and mental health issues in order to increase the capacity of venues to connect with this audience and deliver accessible and inclusive experiences.

Achievements

Since the introduction of Bandmates Victoria, the music industry has embraced AAV’s *Open Your Eyes* training, with the Loop Bar and the Corner Hotel vying to be the most accessible venue.

AAV presented at the *Leaps and Bounds Festival* to all Yarra venues to promote accessible programming and we took part in the *Sound as Ever* podcast in the Australian Music Vault new permanent exhibition at Arts Centre Melbourne.

ARTfinder

Launched in February 2017, AAV’s ARTfinder is a community capacity building project aiming to improve planning, sourcing and delivery of inclusive and accessible arts programs across Victoria.

A new inclusive arts database

Developed in partnership with Today Design, the online ARTfinder database aims to facilitate participation in the arts across Victoria for people with disability, mental health issues and who are Deaf. ARTfinder is searchable by location, cost, art form, access needs and frequency.

The project has been informed by a series of art and disability community planning forums, *Art Matters*, held in partnership with eleven local government areas. In 2017, ARTfinder listed over seventy organisations who provide accessible arts programs, meeting the needs of more than 8,000 people who contact AAV every year looking for arts programs.

ARTfinder National

AAV plans to extend ARTfinder nationally and to include self-assessment and upload capacity for organisations. The national model will also include accessible arts events, festivals and services.

The second phase will align ARTfinder further to support people looking for programs to include in their NDIS package. Promotion of ARTfinder continues to be met with positive feedback with keen interest in the database from organisations in previously underserved regions.

First of its kind

ARTfinder is the first database that has the capacity to reach and connect thousands of people with disability and mental health issues to the arts and their local communities nationally.



Communications and marketing

In 2017, the aim of AAV’s communications and marketing was to look outwards to strengthen AAV’s profile as the peak body for disability arts in Victoria.

Branding, design and identity

AAV’s marketing focus has been on maintaining an authentic voice across multi-channel communications, reflecting AAV’s values and building on the strong branding which was developed with our design partners Today Design. We have aligned all communications with the new website, utilising branded fonts, colours and style elements.

Building profile

AAV communications and marketing includes communications for social media, website, eNews, printed collateral and promotional items. An A5 pack is being produced on 100% recycled paper with all of AAV’s programs presented in a consistent style, strengthening the new brand. Building relationships with media organisations resulted in an ArtsHub article about AAV which saw an increase in traffic to our website in November. AAV’s website now has a media centre where all media releases, program flyers and eNews are available for download.

Digital communications

In 2017, AAV’s website had 101,209 page views and 4,355 people now subscribe to our monthly eNews. Our Twitter following has grown by 31.2%, Facebook has 13.7% more followers and a 309% growth in engagement. Setting up an Instagram account has resulted in 426 organic followers over three months. Currently, AAV has a total of 7,471 followers on social media.

Accessible design

AAV leads by example, utilising accessible design, producing documents featuring high contrast, in plain English and on matt paper at no smaller than 12pt font. We aim to improve website accessibility from AA to AAA standard.

Looking to the future

We will build the AAV brand, clearly defined by AAV’s marketing strategy and measured against the strategic plan to ensure values are aligned and projects have clear purpose and outcome.

Our supporters

We thank you.
Together we make things happen.



Brimbank City Council	Darebin City Council	Reservoir East Primary School
Brunswick Uniting Church	DHHS Home and Community Care (HACC) Program	St Albans Community Centre (The Bowery Theatre)
Cardinia Shire	DHHS Engage! Program	Seawinds Community Hub
City of Ballarat	Frankston Arts Centre	Screen Australia
City of Banyule	Hobson’s Bay City Council	State Trustees
City of Boroondara	Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation	The Olive Way
City of Greater Dandenong	Melbourne Fringe Festival	VicHealth
City of Kingston	Melton City Council	Victoria University
City of Maribyrnong	Merri Community Health Services	WorkFocus Australia
City of Melbourne	Moonee Valley Council	Yarra Libraries
City of Port Philip	Moreland City Council	
City of Whittlesea	Mornington Peninsula Shire	
City of Yarra		
Creative Victoria		

Financials

For the full financial report please contact Arts Access Victoria direct
info@artsaccess.com.au or (03) 9699 8299

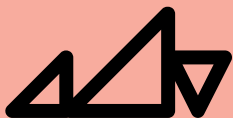
We work hard.
We use our resources
to spark creative lives.

We look forward.
Artists are never
finished, there is
always the next
project and the
next one...



Get Out! Crew, 2015



We invite you
to advocate
for artists with
disability to
be included in
your creative
project.





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