



# Annual Report 2021-2022



# **Access Arts Annual Report 2021-2022**

## **Our Story**

**Access Arts is Queensland's acknowledged leader for arts and disability. We build opportunities for community and professional artists who experience disability or disadvantage to create work of excellence, and then to showcase, document and sell it.**

**We create career pathways to paid work in the arts, and advocate at every opportunity for our artists to chase their artistic dream.**

**Through art, Access Arts transforms lives.**

**We were established in 1983. In 2019 we joined CPL – Choice, Passion, Life as a wholly owned subsidiary. This partnership has opened up new opportunities for Access Arts, our artists and our sector.**

*Front cover: Artists wait to speak about their artworks at the private view of their exhibition Visitors at Brisbane Powerhouse, November 2021*



## From the Chair

We are proud of the relationships Access Arts has built with communities and organisations across our 39 years. Arts Queensland has been an enduring partner, providing sustained support for the work of artists with disability. The Brisbane City Council, through Councillor Vicki Howard, and the Lady Mayoress Nina Schrinner, continue to be supporters and promoters of our work. Our work with First Nations groups and communities continued with the support of the National Indigenous Australian Agency through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Australia Council for the Arts joined with the British Council to fund the first *Sync Leadership Australia Online Program*, a partnership between Access Arts and Sync Leadership (UK).

In the visual arts, KPMG and St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital generously hosted exhibitions of artists' work, creating opportunities to be seen and recognised by thousands of visitors and find patrons and buyers. The Undercover Artist Festival returned in September, strengthening its place within the Brisbane Festival, and showcasing the work of extraordinary artists and ensembles.

The support of CPL – Choice Passion Life has been fundamental to our work since 2019, providing a secure home, management resources, and State-wide community connections. I would like to thank Bruce Cowley and Dermot Lindsay, who joined our board from CPL at the beginning of this collaboration, and who retired from that role during the year. I welcome Simon Crane to the board, as successor to Bruce. Thank you to all our volunteer board members: Prof Bree Hadley, Rhys Kennedy, Nigel Lavender, Wendy Lavelle, Kenneth MacDonald, and Julie Blyth. I thank our terrific staff for the commitment, talent and experience they bring to this important work. Thank you to our donors, funders, and supporters.

Congratulations to the winners of awards and grants, the arts leaders selected by Sync, the stars of the Festival, the workshops, the showcases, the exhibitions, and the studios. You are the reason Access Arts continues to exist. Through your creative, challenging, and inspiring work, you transform so many lives, including your own.

**The Honourable Justice Thomas Bradley**



## From the Chief Executive Officer

Our artists have pushed the boundaries this year, created art of exceptional quality, and seized amazing new opportunities to showcase and sell their art.

In September Undercover Artist Festival broke all records as Australia's premier disability-led performing arts festival. October saw our Theatre and Dance Ensemble's first collaboration with Queensland Youth Orchestra. In November we ran the first national *Sync Leadership Australia Online Program*, a partnership with Sync Leadership (UK), with funding from Australia Council for the Arts and the British Council. November also saw the opening of our visual artists' first group exhibition at Brisbane Powerhouse, sponsored by KPMG. In December Karen Lee Roberts won our \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award to develop her new cabaret *Sex and Other Philosophies*. In April we launched *Earn From Your Art*, a new two-year leadership pilot program funded by Australia Council for the Arts. April also saw 22 of our visual artists exhibiting at the Association of Superannuation Funds' national conference on the Gold Coast at the invitation of Tal Insurance: all 22 artworks sold. In May, Brisbane Outsider Artist Tanya Darl completed her first large-scale public artwork on a street hoarding as part of our first collaboration with Brisbane Street Art Festival. During May and June photographer Colleen Stevenson created 'My Life Story' as seen through her camera lens, a book made possible by the Alliance of Forgotten Australians. In June our artists' exhibition *Dancing Colours* opened at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, artwork sales broke all our records. June saw our first partnership with Cootharinga as we led *Merry-Go Round*, a circus and dance residency with Dancenorth, Casus Creations and Circus Pandemonium for young Townsville adults with disability. During 2020-2021 we partnered with Blakdance, Red Ridge, the Central West Aboriginal Corporation and Casus Circus to deliver an exciting portfolio of First Nations arts projects.

It was an extraordinary action-packed year. Our artists excelled.

**Pat Swell**

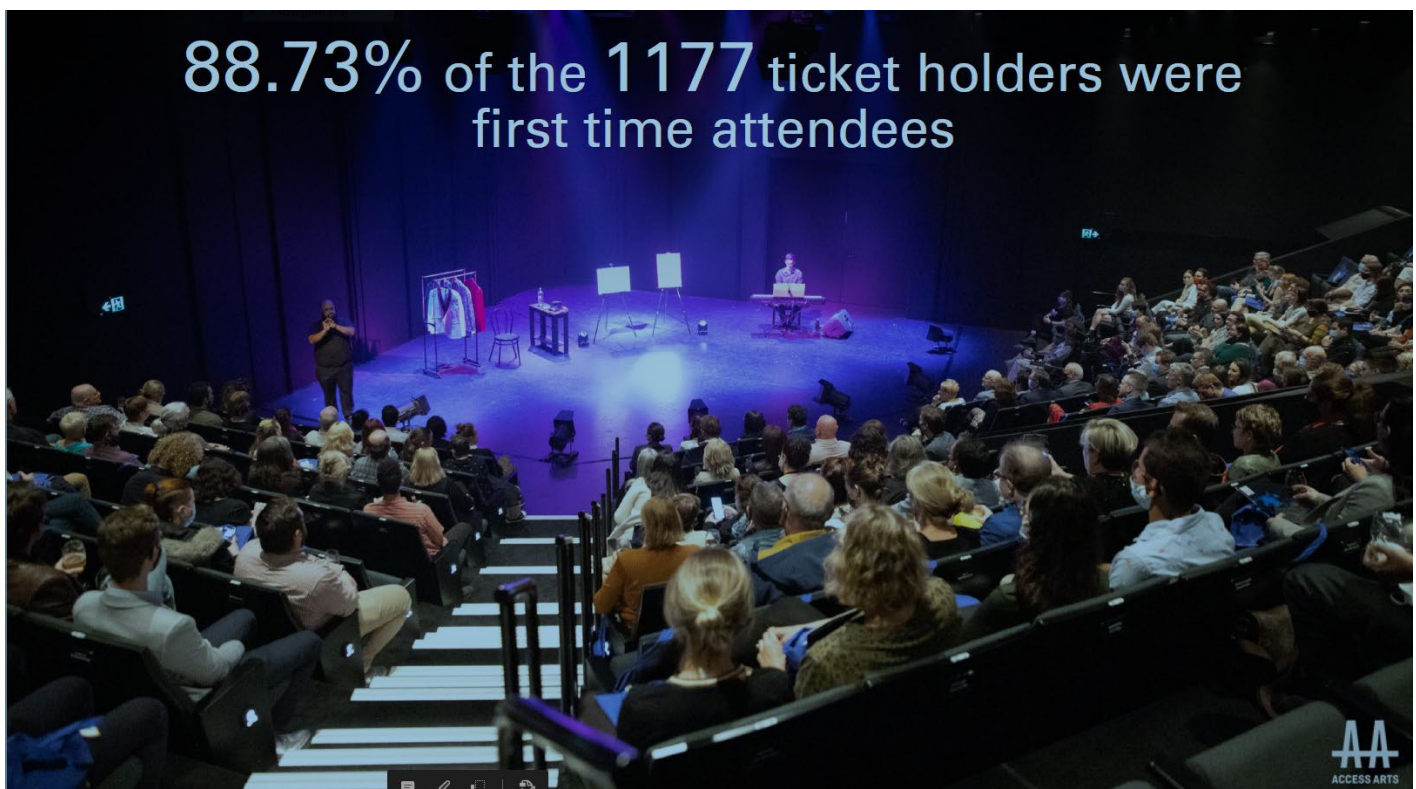
## Artistic Program

### Undercover Artist Festival

Undoubtedly the signature occasion of the year was Undercover Artist Festival, which took place at Queensland Theatre from 16 to 18 September 2021. While COVID-19 lockdown prevented performers and audience members from outside Queensland attending, nevertheless the Festival featured 19 events, 7 world premieres, 3 sell-out shows, 4 workshops, 3 community performances and 1 participatory exhibition. The Festival also hosted Arts Access Australia's national conference for the arts and disability sector called Meeting Place.

Undercover Artist Festival provided paid work to 176 artists. 81% of the artists believed the Festival strengthened their career and boosted their confidence as artists. They felt sense of community and connection at the Festival, and agreed it showcased excellence in disability arts.

Ticket sales increased by 262% on the previous Undercover Artist Festival. 96% of attendees rated the Festival as 'great' or 'excellent': *"Beautiful, deep, entertaining, emotional roller coaster"*.



*Undercover Artist Festival 2021*



## Visual arts highlights

Our visual arts studio at Yeronga buzzes with activity. Mixed Media is our community-based workshop for beginners and people who enjoy socialising through art. Our Brisbane Outsider Artists workshop program targets emerging visual artists to develop their artistic practice and create artworks they can exhibit and sell. We also facilitate individual mentoring programs. As Brisbane Outsider Artist Andrea said: *“Participating in the mentoring program with [our teaching artist] Clare Stephens and more recently again in the group program has made a difference to the quality of my life, this has been especially important during these Covid times. I want to thank you again and everyone involved.”*



*Foreground Brisbane Outsider Artist Peter Hughes in Access Arts' studio*

We mount two major annual exhibitions each year, thanks to our partnerships with KPMG and with St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital.

**'Visitors'**, our artists' exhibition at Brisbane Powerhouse, opened on 30 November and hung until 12 December 2021. 16 artists exhibited 24 artworks, and 14 artworks were sold. This was the ninth year that KPMG had sponsored our artists' exhibition. The exhibition was also supported by Brisbane City Council. This private view, featured on the front cover, was different from any of our previous private views. Held on the Turbine Platform, individual artists spoke in turn about the artwork they had created. Summarising briefly their thoughts and then speaking publically about their own artwork took great courage. This was a new skill-set for our participants. As one artist said: *“Thank you sooo much for your support towards the lead-up to, and tonight. It means a lot. I feel there was a real unification between the artists and staff.”* Later in December several artists also had the opportunity to showcase their artwork and creative journey to our former Prime Minister, The Hon Scott Morrison MP, during his visit to Brisbane Powerhouse.

*Private view of Visitors exhibition, Brisbane Powerhouse*



Our artists chose the title **'Dancing Colours'** for their fourth exhibition at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, which was opened on 14 June 2022 by the Lady Mayoress, Nina Schrinner. As in previous years, this was sponsored by MinterEllison. Our artists' exhibitions make a significant impact on the hospital environment: *"I heard an orderly taking a patient to x-ray explaining about the exhibition and the artists so it is certainly a talking point. It is interesting when you walk through with different people, everybody has a different opinion on which one is their favourite"*. Over the course of the exhibition our artists sold 20 artworks.



*Dancing Colours private view, St Andrew's Hospital*



*Artist Dion Halse created the hero image*



When ‘**Earth Footprint**’, our artists’ previous exhibition at St Andrew’s, bumped out on 30 September 2021, exhibition footfall was estimated at 4,000 and our digital campaign had reached 30,755 people.

As Covid-19 has restricted footfall, in addition to the physical locations of these exhibitions we created **virtual exhibitions** to showcase the artworks. This extended our reach and resulted in artworks being purchased by buyers in SA, NSW and ACT.

We broker further opportunities for our artists to exhibit. March 2022 saw Brisbane Outsider Artist Belinda Peel exhibiting her artwork ‘Vibrant Stream’ at **The Brisbane Club**.

**TAL Insurance** invited Access Arts’ artists to exhibit 22 artworks in April 2022 at the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia national conference held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. All 22 artworks sold. TAL Community Foundation matched the income from artwork sales as a donation to Access Arts. Several artists also received licencing payments for images that TAL used on the murals featured below, and on gift cards.





Another ‘first’ was our partnership with **Brisbane Street Art Festival** in May 2022. Brisbane Outsider Artist Tanya Darl was invited to create her first large-scale public artwork on a construction hoarding in Northshore. To help Tanya transition from creating small-scale artworks to the large-scale for the very first time, Tanya was mentored by experienced visual artist David Don and the Access Arts’ team. *“I feel very lucky and fortunate for this opportunity.”*



*Tanya Darl’s public art at the exterior of 175 MacArthur Avenue, Northshore.*

**Life Stories Project with Colleen Stevenson** took place in May and June 2022. The Alliance of Forgotten Australians commissioned Access Arts to mentor photographer Colleen Stevenson, which resulted in a beautiful book in which Colleen told her life-story, shaped around her photography.



*Detail of photograph on cover of ‘My Life Story’ by Colleen Stevenson*

## Performing arts highlights

Our Ashgrove-based workshops are highly popular opportunities to socialise and develop different skills. Our performers enjoyed two performative outcomes during the financial year.

In September 2021 they performed at the prestigious Queensland Theatre on the Bille Brown stage. All three workshop disciplines – theatre and dance, Rhythm Circle and Access Arts Singers – worked together to create a new piece they called **‘3 Worlds’** for Undercover Artist Festival 2021.



*Access Arts' performing arts participants perform Three Worlds at Queensland Theatre*





October 2021 saw our first collaboration with **Queensland Youth Orchestra**. Young composer John Rotar created a new score that the Junior Strings Orchestra performed at the Old Museum Concert Hall conducted by Chen Yang, while our Access Arts' Theatre and Dance Ensemble performed.



Our Theatre and Dance workshops and Access Arts Singers are a highlight that our participants look forward to each Tuesday. When our Rhythm Circle workshop had to cease in December due to Covid-19, we created a new highly popular workshop for participants to extend their theatre and dance skills.

June 2022 marked Access Arts' first partnership with Cootharinga. We instigated **Merry-Go-Round**, a five-day circus and dance intensive for young people in Townsville. Led by Queensland artists from Casus Creations, Dancenorth and local company Circus Pandemonium under the guidance of Access Arts' Arts Manager Tim Brown, five participants with disability created a showpiece. Three of the participants plucked up courage to perform on Friday 1 July 2022 as part of the prestigious North Australian Festival of Arts.



*Merry-Go-Round, Townsville*



## Economic participation in the arts

Access Arts not only develops our participants' artistic practice, we also look to grow their pathways to economic participation, for example through selling their visual artworks.

November 2021 saw Access Arts present the first national **Sync Leadership Australia Online Program**, a partnership with Sync Leadership (UK), disability-led by co-founders of Sync Leadership Sarah Pickthall and Jo Verrent. Eight arts professionals from across Australia took part in this intensive modular leadership and coaching programme for d/Deaf and disabled leadership that combined leadership theory with one-on-one coaching and provided support for participants to progress their leadership ability. *"The program enabled us to not only move forward on our professional journeys, but to explore our emotional, mental, and psychological selves within the realms of our work, and our peers. I learnt so much about myself, as a human, in the arts in disability world from this program - especially from the 1:1 coaching sessions. I could not recommend the journey more for future arts leaders in the disability sector!" "Facilitators were absolutely exceptional. Encouraging, motivating, and engaging in all aspects!"*

The Sync Leadership Program was supported by Australia Council for the Arts and the British Council, and formed part of the British Council UK/AU Season 2021-22. The British Council then created a case study around our Sync Leadership Program, this was one of only eight projects the British Council selected for a case study from the whole international season.



### *Sync Leadership Cohort 2021*

April 2022 saw the start of a two-year pilot program, **Earn From Your Art**. This new leadership and coaching program is being designed to support emerging leaders with disability or who are d/Deaf to build their arts practice into a career. This is aimed at participants from Access Arts and Screech Arts workshops who are at the beginning of their leadership journey or who may not even have considered themselves leaders yet. Disability-led by QUT's Professor Bree Hadley, with leadership development from Pro Performance Managing Director Liz Crawford, support from Milestones Employment, with funding from Australia Council for the Arts, the program coaches participants to gain skills and qualifications required to begin a career as a professional arts worker.

## Arts grants and awards

Accomplished Brisbane-based cabaret artist **Karen Lee Roberts** won the coveted 2021 **\$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award** to produce a new collaborative work, *Sex and Other Philosophies*, in collaboration with performing artists Lucinda Shaw and James Halloran.



Visual artist **Sue Yule** was awarded a **\$1,000 Access Arts SAFE Grant** towards her first solo exhibition *A Year in My Suburb* which took place at Art from the Margins Gallery, September 2021. The artworks she created reflected her time in Lockdown and a meditation on the changing plant life in Sue's suburb, Forest Lake. Sue says this grant has given her experience in all the logistical operations that go into preparing a solo art exhibition, built her confidence and knowledge to approach other galleries, developed her social media and online presence, grown skills around presenting herself as a professional artist, developed her understanding of budgets for grant proposals, and helped her networking ability in the arts community.



*Bill Thomas launches his limited edition*



*Sue Yule addresses 100 people at her exhibition's private view*

Poet **Bill Thomas** was also awarded a **\$1,000 SAFE Grant**. The grant enabled Bill to be mentored by artists Nabil Sabio Azadi and Peter Vance to compile and publish a limited edition of his poems and short stories in 2022 entitled *Me, Myself and I: A look back and forward of poems and short stories written at Annerley*.

CPL – Choice, Passion, Life, one of Queensland's largest disability providers, generously sponsors our grants and awards program.

## First Nations arts

Funded by Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet through the National Indigenous Australians Agency to deliver on Closing the Gap, our Therapeutic Arts Workshop Program has had a marked local impact within Queensland communities.

**Unknown**, a partnership with Blakdance in November 2021, was a week-long residency at Brisbane Powerhouse for three young LGBTIQ First Nation dancers to explore their identity in the safe environment, exchange choreographic ideas and create a shared vision for this three-way 'Unknown' collaboration.

**Culture, Family and Connection** in Barcaldine, a series of community arts workshops engaging 15 First Australians over autumn and winter, culminated in a Reconciliation Gala Ball on 17 June 2022 attended by 180 people. This partnership with Red Ridge Interior and the Central West Aboriginal Corporation Barcaldine enabled First Nations artists along with the wider community to learn the process of print and design and create artwork to form prints for fabric. They then explored the concept of couture, and shared stories of culture, family and connection, as they created garments of 'wearable art' to dress in and model at a Gala Ball.



*Barcaldine: Leather craft workshops brought together the men to learn bush craft skills*

**Charcoal**, a partnership with Blakdance in February 2022, enabled choreographer Keia McGrady (Githabul, Migunberri – Yugumbeh) to be mentored by D Harding and spend time on Migunberri Country addressing barriers to wellbeing, connecting with family and story, collecting wood and making Charcoal. She spent the second week at Brisbane Powerhouse developing her movement and visual art responses to this immersion, which culminated in a public showing to invited professionals.





*Charcoal, photo Jade Ellis*



*Belong, Acacia Ridge children*

**Belong** engaged traumatised children in Acacia Ridge between February and June 2022. Many came from families with a history of domestic violence and drug abuse. Natano Fa'anana and Casus Creations led a series of circus workshops. The fun and physicality of this program produced marked improvement in the children's physical stamina over the program, the children's families became increasingly invested as the project continued, and one youngster so traumatised she had become non-verbal was heard to say 'hello'.

**Birth of Mother**, in partnership with Blakdance in June 2022, this dance residency explored First Nations' traditional birthing practices alongside clinical intervention, peri and postnatal depression – and the healing of birthing trauma and intergenerational birthing traumas for mother and for family. Lead artist Githabul, Migunberri-Yugumbeh woman Alinta McGrady developed 'Birth of Mother' across a four-week Residency. Her collaborators included Yuwi Burra and south Sea Islander musician Waveney Yasso, choreographic mentor Kate Harman (The Farm), and Girrimay midwife Marianne Wobcke. A lively Q&A followed the final showing. *"Birth of Mother' was a powerful, emotional journey reflecting this young woman's courageous and vulnerable journey to heal and transform her personal and families' transgenerational, pre, peri, postnatal depression and the trauma that defined the birth of her daughter. This is particularly relevant, considering the escalation in diagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, peri and postnatal depression and the impact of unwarranted clinical interventions. Many marginalised mothers too often face challenges related to traumatic birthing experiences in institutions alienated from traditional birthing practices."* Marianne Wobcke RN/RM, BaCAIA (hons),GGRS

# Organisation

## New strategic plan

This was the first implementation year of Access Arts' new five-year Strategic Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26. Shaped around 10 key elements, the year's progress is as follows:

1. **Skill Development Programs** – we delivered skill development programs both extending the arts practice and economic participation of our artists
2. **Extending our State-wide Footprint** – in partnership with Cootharinga we delivered Merry-Go-Round in Townsville
3. **Undercover Artist Festival** – our 2021 Festival was acclaimed by the sector
4. **Producing House** – we convened a Working Group and developed a consultancy brief
5. **Visual Arts Incubator** – we are identifying possible partners
6. **Grants and Awards** – our \$10,000 Access Arts Achievement Award and two \$1,000 SAFE grants assisted artists' career development
7. **First Nations Arts Programs** – through partnerships we delivered 5 projects in Queensland from Barcaldine down to Acacia Ridge
8. **Accessing the Arts** – we delivered Disability Awareness Training to Queensland Theatre. In June, Cairns Regional Council reported progress in implementing the Arts and Disability Strategy they commissioned from Access Arts.
9. **Building Audiences and Markets** – our strategy includes performative outcomes, on-line and on-site exhibitions, and Undercover Artist Festival.
10. **Interconnectivity of Offers** – as Strategic Plan implementation continues, these different workstrands will create an interconnected synergy.

## **Funders, Sponsors, Foundations, Donors**

Access Arts would like to thank the immense generosity of our funders, sponsors and donors.

### **Grants**

Australia Council for the Arts, Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Brisbane City Council Central Ward, Arts Queensland

### **Sponsors**

Brisbane City Council, CPL – Choice Passion Life, KPMG, MinterEllison, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

### **Foundations**

Banksii Foundation, Shepherd Family Foundation, TAL Community Foundation

### **Donors**

ADFAS Brisbane River, Blue Roo Theatre Company, Weston Bruner, Liz Crawford, Alexandra Donald, Kate Eltham, Marcia Gardner, Lady Barbara Hickey, Hughes and Lewis Legal Pty Ltd, Kelly-Marie Herbst Liu, Sam Nicolosi, Patrick Nolan, Southside Sport & Community Club Inc, Anne Wallace, De-Anne Waters



*Brown Church, Undercover Artist Festival, photo Cinnamon Smith*

**Undercover Artist Festival** was supported by CPL – Choice Passion Life, Australia Council for the Arts, Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Festival, Queensland Theatre, British Council, Truis, Novotel Hotels, Clovely Estate, Brisbane Airport Corporation.



## Our Patron

As 2021 drew to a close, the term of office of His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC as Governor of Queensland came to a close. During his time in office His Excellency had been an outstanding supporter of Access Arts and regular visitor to our visual art exhibitions. We thank him for his patronage.

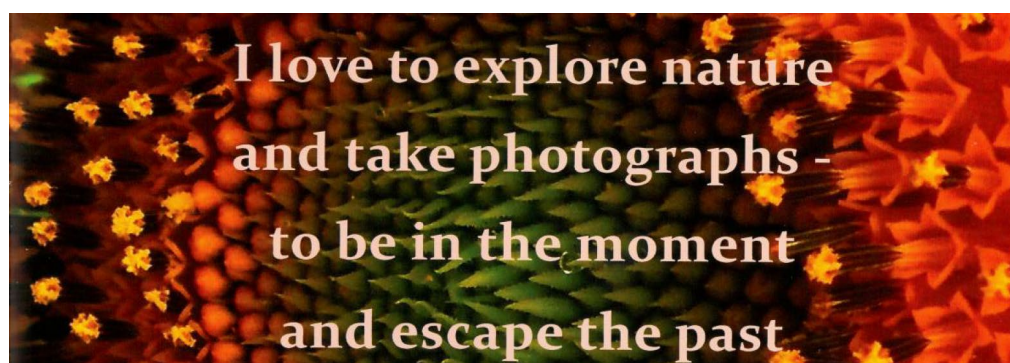
Before 2021 ended, Access Arts was delighted to welcome our new Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, who has kindly agreed to be Patron of Access Arts for the duration of her term in office.

## Board members at 30 June 2022

The Hon Justice Thomas Bradley, Chair  
Ms Julie Byth, Secretary  
Mr Simon Crane  
Professor Bree Hadley, Director  
Mr Rhys Kennedy, Director  
Ms Wendy Lavelle, Director  
Mr Nigel Lavender, Director  
Mr Kenneth MacDonald, Director

## Staff members at 30 June 2022

Mathew Bing, Tim Brown, Jasmin Coleman, Rebecca Dostal, Harmonie Downes, Rachel Gaffney-Dawson, Alice Gittins, Matthew Johnson, Ivan Levant, Madeleine Little, Symone Male, Karandeep Ratti, Savannah Roberts, Fiona Roediger, Ann Russell, Carla Sanzone, Mary Schneider, Samantha St Clair, Walter Stahl, Clare Stephens, Pat Swell, Natalie Symonds, Hana Tow, David Truong and Karina White.



*Image and words from 'My Life Story' by Colleen Stevenson*