



JFA Purple Orange

Submission to the Meeting of Cultural Ministers (MCM) about the development of a renewed National Arts and Disability Strategy for 2019

12 November 2018

About the Submitter

JFA Purple Orange is an independent, social-profit organisation that undertakes systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people living with disability and their families.

Our work is characterised by co-design and co-production, and includes hosting a number of user-led initiatives.

Much of our work involves connecting people living with disability to good information and to each other. We also work extensively in multi-stakeholder consultation and collaboration, especially around policy and practice that helps ensure people living with disability are welcomed as valued members of the mainstream community.

Our work is informed by a model called *Citizenhood*.

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1. Summary and recommendations

This review of the National Arts and Disability Strategy provides a valuable opportunity to explore ways for people living with disability to become more involved in the artistic and cultural life of their communities, including as artists, performers, audience members, volunteers and employees. A more inclusive arts sector has the potential to bring about social, health and economic benefits for individuals, their families and their wider communities. Better enabling participation in the arts also gives people living with disability the opportunity to showcase their talents and tell their stories, thereby breaking down misconceptions and stereotypes and paving the way for even greater inclusion.

We make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Ensure that the National Arts and Disability Strategy is consistent with the National Disability Strategy. In particular, ensure that the National Arts and Disability Strategy reaffirms the responsibility of governments at all levels to ensure that mainstream arts and cultural services, facilities, programs and events are available, inclusive and fully accessible for people living with disability.

Recommendation 2

Encourage and support linkages between arts and cultural organisations and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) partner organisations that provide local area coordination services, to increase awareness in the disability community of available opportunities to engage in the arts.

Recommendation 3

Encourage and support linkages between arts and cultural organisations and Information, Linkages and Capacity-Building (ILC) grant recipients, to increase awareness in the disability community of available opportunities to engage in the arts.

Recommendation 4

Encourage and support arts and cultural organisations to showcase positive stories about people living with disability who have undertaken volunteering and employment opportunities, focusing on the benefits for both the individual and the organisation.

Recommendation 5

Secure greater investment from state and territory and/or Commonwealth governments in individual and systemic advocacy services for people living with disability, to support them to actively participate in – and help to shape – the mainstream artistic and cultural life of their communities.

2. Introduction

JFA Purple Orange welcomes the opportunity to provide input to this review of the National Arts and Disability Strategy.

JFA Purple Orange is an independent, social-profit organisation that undertakes systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people living with disability and their families. JFA Purple Orange is not a service provider and does not work directly in the arts, though in the past we have invested in arts initiatives of relevance to Australians living with disability.

A particular focus of our current research and policy work is social participation for people living with disability, including the nature of inclusive neighbourhoods and communities. This is directly relevant to the objectives of the National Arts and Disability Strategy.

The national disability landscape has changed markedly since the 2009 National Arts and Disability Strategy was developed. Of particular significance is the adoption of a ten-year National Disability Strategy in 2010 and the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2013. A consistent message in the various policy and legislative

instruments adopted by state, territory and national governments in recent years is the need for greater social and economic inclusion for people living with disability¹.

This submission draws on our broader research and policy work with respect to inclusive communities, as well as advocacy and employment. It focuses on aspects of the national disability policy framework that ought to be reflected in the revised National Arts and Disability Strategy, as well as opportunities that the NDIS presents for greater involvement by people living with disability in the arts and cultural life of mainstream communities.

3. Background

The Meeting of Cultural Ministers – comprising Australian Government and state and territory government cultural ministers – is seeking input to inform the development of a renewed National Arts and Disability Strategy for 2019. The current strategy was released in 2009.

4. The Model of Citizenship Support

The work of JFA Purple Orange is anchored on the principles of Personhood and Citizenship. As set out in our Model of Citizenship Support,² a good life is characterised by the assumption of valued roles in one's community (termed Citizenship) and the ability to exercise control over key decisions in one's life (termed personhood). Unlike formal citizenship of a country, Citizenship is a dynamic experience: it can rise and fall depending on a person's circumstances. The extent to which any person can naturally take up Personhood and Citizenship is influenced by the presence of circumstances that can

¹ See, for example, COAG (Council of Australian Governments) (2009), *National Disability Agreement; National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*; NDIS, *A Framework for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building; Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)*.

² Williams, R. (2013), *Model of Citizenship Support: 2nd edition*, Julia Farr Association Inc, Adelaide.

adversely impact on the person's capacity to build authorship of their own lives and assume valued roles in community life and the economy.

The Model of Citizenship Support can be used to consider how best to shape an investment in a person's life chances, and what types of return on that investment one might then look for. It asserts that our life chances are shaped by four different, but interrelated, types of assets: Personal Capital, Knowledge Capital, Material Capital and Social Capital.

Personal Capital refers to a person's characteristics, strengths and outlook. Knowledge Capital refers to the presence of information that can assist a person to make informed choices towards a good life. Material Capital describes the presence of tangible material resources that are demonstrably helpful to a person. Social Capital relates to the connections that deliver natural supports and a sense of belonging to a person.

Increasing people's access to mainstream programs and services, opening up employment opportunities, linking people into the arts and cultural life of their communities and increasing the availability of advocacy services all contribute to building one or more of these 'Capitals' and ensuring that people living with disability are able to pursue good lives.

5. The National Disability Strategy and mainstream services

Through the ten-year National Disability Strategy (NDS), all levels of government in Australia have committed to a national approach to supporting people living with disability. The NDS guides government activity across mainstream and disability-specific areas of public policy, and seeks to create a more cohesive approach across governments at all levels. The National Arts and Disability Strategy should align with the policy directions contained in the NDS.

One of the central outcomes of the NDS is to ensure that people living with disability live in accessible and well-designed communities with opportunities for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life. The strategy emphasises that the mainstream services and facilities that are part of ordinary Australian life must be available and fully accessible for people living with disability. Indeed, one of the overall objectives of the NDS is to drive

the improved performance of mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people living with disability.

It is therefore essential that the National Arts and Disability Strategy recognises the responsibility of governments at all levels to ensure that mainstream arts and cultural services, programs and events are fully accessible and inclusive for people living with disability. It does not suffice for disability-specific arts services, programs, events and other opportunities to be made available, as these can reinforce a culture of separation and run contrary to Australia's commitments in relation to inclusion. Australia's national policy dictates that a truly inclusive society is one in which a wide range of opportunities are available to everyone.

As part of our submission, JFA Purple Orange has made a short video about Hannah, who lives with Down Syndrome, and some of her friends who take acting classes at Prospect Theatre for Young People in South Australia. The video highlights the importance of mainstream arts opportunities being available, inclusive and accessible to everyone. It is available through this link, and has also been submitted separately:

<https://vimeo.com/299583718>.

Recommendation 1

Ensure that the National Arts and Disability Strategy is consistent with the National Disability Strategy. In particular, ensure that the National Arts and Disability Strategy reaffirms the responsibility of governments at all levels to ensure that mainstream arts and cultural services, facilities, programs and events are available, inclusive and fully accessible for people living with disability.

6. The National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is changing the way services are delivered to people living with disability. A key principle of the NDIS is that people living with disability have the same fundamental rights as all members of Australian society to participate in the social and economic life of the community and to make their own choices and decisions.

Through the scheme, NDIS participants are empowered to set their goals in life, choose which supports they need to achieve these goals, and decide who will provide these supports.

People's goals could relate to involvement in the arts. For example, a person might aspire to become an actor, dancer, film-maker or musician. They then determine which supports they need to make this happen, and choose who can provide these supports. The NDIS does not fund the regular costs associated with people's involvement in activities (such as membership fees, the cost of lessons, costumes and equipment) as these expenses are incurred by everyone who wishes to participate. Rather, the NDIS funds the specific reasonable and necessary supports required by people living with disability, without which they would not otherwise be able to take part.

Some people have been excluded from their communities for such a long time that it can be difficult for them to define their goals and dreams when developing their NDIS plans. The remedy is to assist such people to discover what is possible, including which opportunities exist in their communities. If someone was aware that there was an accessible and inclusive theatre company nearby, for example, then perhaps that would spike their interest and they might set a goal to become involved. It is therefore important that people living with disability are made aware of opportunities to engage in the arts, both directly and through the people working alongside them.

Most NDIS participants are linked with one of the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) partner organisations that provide Local Area Coordination services. Individuals are allocated an individual Local Area Coordinator ('LAC') who works with them to define their goals and to develop and implement their NDIS plan.

The role of these partner agencies extends beyond NDIS participants: they dedicate twenty per cent of their resources to working with local communities and identifying opportunities for all people living with disability to become more involved in mainstream community life. We recommend that the Meeting of Cultural Ministers encourage arts and cultural organisations to connect with these NDIA partner organisations that provide local area

coordination services³ to increase awareness within the disability community of available opportunities in arts and cultural activities. This should not be limited to disability-specific programs: it is imperative that mainstream programs and activities are also available to all.

Local area coordination is one component of the broader NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity-Building ('ILC') program,⁴ which aims to create connections between people living with disability and the communities they live in. This is not limited to NDIS participants. The overall objectives of the ILC program are that people living with disability are able to achieve their goals and are included in all aspects of community life. A number of the programs funded through ILC focus on increasing people's social participation, and the organisations that have received funding are well-connected with the disability community throughout the country. It would therefore be highly useful for arts and cultural organisations to connect with these organisations and let them know about any relevant opportunities.⁵

Recommendation 2

Encourage and support linkages between arts and cultural organisations and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) partner organisations that provide local area coordination services, to increase awareness in the disability community of available opportunities to engage in the arts.

Recommendation 3

Encourage and support linkages between arts and cultural organisations and Information, Linkages and Capacity-Building (ILC) grant recipients, to increase awareness in the disability community of available opportunities to engage in the arts.

³ The contact details for Local Area Coordination service providers around Australia are available here: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/locations>.

⁴ Information about this

⁵ Lists of grant recipients are available here: <https://ilctoolkit.ndis.gov.au/grants/grant-opportunities>.

7. Employment

One of the key priorities of the NDS is for people living with disability to achieve economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives. Employment is essential not only for financial security; it also contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and one's sense of identity and worth.

A significant barrier to securing and retaining employment for people living with disability remains the attitudes of employers. The arts and culture sector could take the lead in demonstrating the benefits of having a diverse workforce that includes people living with disability. The new Arts and Disability Strategy could encourage arts and cultural organisations to ensure that training, residencies, volunteering and employment opportunities are available and accessible for people living with disability. In addition, such employers could creatively showcase positive employment stories. This would help to raise awareness of the benefits of working with a diverse range of people, and could also challenge myths about the perceived costs of doing so. By harnessing its creative energy, the arts sector could lead the way in encouraging employers across a range of sectors to proactively pursue volunteering and employment opportunities for people living with disability.

Recommendation 4

Encourage and support arts and cultural organisations to showcase positive stories about people living with disability who have undertaken volunteering and employment opportunities, focusing on the benefits for both the individual and the organisation.

8. Advocacy

People living with disability have the right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. A focus area of the previous National Arts and Disability Strategy was strategic development, which included supporting informed decision making and empowering people living with disability to have a stronger voice in policy development and planning.

An effective way to empower people to participate in policy formulation and planning is to invest in advocacy services. Advocacy support can also increase people's capacity to participate in the arts and cultural life of their communities in various ways, including as artists, employees and audience members.

There are two main types of advocacy: individual and systemic. Individual advocacy supports people to understand and exercise their rights, whereas systemic advocacy seeks to influence positive changes to systems, laws and practices to ensure that these rights are upheld.

Individual advocacy can support a person to become aware of their rights and entitlements, access and understand relevant information, connect with opportunities, build personal skills and capacity, have a voice in decision making, and raise their concerns and complaints. The overarching goal of individual advocacy is to build people's capacity to self-advocate and make decisions for themselves, which is essential for their full and effective participation in the artistic and cultural life of their communities.

There is also a need for systemic advocacy to ensure that the arts industry takes into account the needs and perspectives of people living with disability in all decision making, planning and policy formulation. Successful advocacy in this space could lead, for example, to organisations inviting people living with disability to sit on decision-making bodies such as boards, councils or working groups.

JFA Purple Orange is concerned that at present, individual and systemic advocacy services are not sufficiently funded. There is an even greater need for these services since the introduction of the NDIS. We encourage the Meeting of Cultural Ministers to explore how funding could be boosted at state and territory and/or Commonwealth levels to ensure that people living with disability receive the advocacy support they need to actively participate in the mainstream artistic and cultural life of their communities.

Recommendation 5

Explore how to secure greater investment from state and territory and/or Commonwealth governments in individual and systemic advocacy services for people living with disability, to support them to actively participate in – and help to shape – the mainstream artistic and cultural life of their communities.

9. Conclusion

We thank the Meeting of Cultural Ministers for considering our submission.

Social and economic participation go to the core of national disability policy in Australia. Yet many people living with disability continue to experience exclusion and isolation, despite being equipped with a diverse range of skills and talents. It is imperative that the renewed National Arts and Disability Strategy embraces the full potential of the arts industry to build the Personal, Knowledge, Material and Social Capital of people living with disability, so that they can pursue an active and meaningful life.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet and explore the issues raised in this submission in more detail.