

Introduction

In July 2006 the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA), in partnership with the Disability Services Commission (DSC) began working on the Disability and the Arts Inclusion Initiative (DAII). The project saw arts and cultural organisations in Western Australia embark on a journey to provide opportunities to people with disabilities and their families and carers, to participate in everyday arts and cultural activities.

In December 2006, 14 arts and cultural organisations signed up to become DAII partners, and completed Stage 1 and 2 of the DAII Model (see diagram below).

Seven of these organisations went on to create an inclusive project with a disability organisation or artists with disabilities.

Four stages of the DAII Model for WA arts and cultural groups.

1. Reflect
on current programs and undertake self-assessment audits

2. Connect
with disability groups/
undertake professional development



4. Celebrate
publish case studies and showcase partnerships at events

3. Create
pilot projects with disability partners and artists with disabilities

Reflect

In March 2007 participating arts organisations reviewed their services and programs to evaluate how accessible they were to people with disabilities.

Connect

In April 2007 these organisations undertook disability awareness training and a 'get to know you' session with disability organisations.

Create

Between April 2007 and December 2009 pilot projects were planned and implemented by arts organisations in partnership with disability organisations and DCA. Each project had to highlight 'inclusion', which is essentially the practice of ensuring that people feel they belong, are engaged, and connected to a group or community. The projects developed by each of the organisations were not separate to their core business and were based on committed mutual learning.

Celebrate

The final stage of the DAII Model is to 'celebrate', which leads us to this publication. **Open Arts** highlights the successful projects carried out by each of the funded arts organisations involved, as well as the work of two other arts organisations who have been successfully partnering with disability service organisations to achieve inclusive arts practice in the community.

As you read the personal accounts of the experiences of each of the arts organisations and their partners, you will find examples of what achieving inclusion actually means to the people involved in each of the projects. The stories of each project also highlight some of the challenges faced along the way.

It is hoped that these stories inspire other arts and community organisations to 'open' their arts project and embrace inclusion.

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• **21% of the**
• **Western Australian**
• **population has**
• **some form of**
• **disability¹. The**
• **DAII Pilot Program**
• **highlights that one**
• **of the greatest**
• **assets of our**
• **community is its**
• **diversity. As we**
• **begin to open**
• **our minds to the**
• **possibilities, we**
• **start to truly benefit**
• **from that diversity**
• **in unexpected**
• **ways.**
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• ¹ ABS 2003 Disability,
• Ageing and Carers,
• Australia: Summary of
• Findings – State Tables
• for Western Australia.
• Cat.No. 4430.0.
• Canberra.
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