

**To: Creative Australia, Arts Projects for Organisations**  
**From: Alissar Chidiac**  
**Re: Arts & Cultural Exchange (ACE) application March 2024**

4 March 2024

Dear CACD Panel,

I am happy to write in support of the application from Arts & Cultural Exchange (ACE) to fund Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) professional training for emerging producers from Western Sydney. I share the urgency of ACE's rationale as it is vitally important to seek and identify next generation, ethical and critically aware CACD workers in our region.

I value ACE's layered program plan and partnerships and believe that investing in 16 emerging producers is an investment in whole sector professional development. With almost 45 years of my own work across sectors of community cultural engagement, I want to be part of this program that facilitates fresh participatory learning and collaborative networks for and with others in the future.

I live and work on Dharug Land (in Greater Western Sydney) where I have extensive experience in developing innovative CACD programs. I am a recipient of the Australia Council's Ros Bower Award (2010) and I received a Community Cultural Development Fellowship (2005). I have had an ongoing focus on Arab cultures since 1991, through contemporary production, cultural heritage and performance work. I initiated Arab Theatre Studio in 2014 and since 2016 I have been a joint Creative Producer.

I have a long term relationship with ACE spanning generations of its evolution, through collaborating in projects as well as attending their local events and programs. I look forward to participating as a CACD program trainer to share my experience of models of CACD work, as well as supporting ACE in any other capacity. I have a long term commitment to greater Western Sydney which has grown in demographic complexity and public infrastructure, although still not matched with an equitable share of public resources. Sectors of community and arts workers have also grown, and I have witnessed the shift to individualism that leans to so-called social engagement which is often extractive and product oriented.

I have remained connected to local community arts practice on a grass roots level. Since 2017 I have been contracted annually by Fairfield City Council to develop and facilitate grant writing workshops, and mentoring with community members, for Council's small grant with a specific focus on CACD. The relevance here to my support of ACE's program is that in every annual evaluation report I repeatedly recommend to Council - *"Consider future programs where participants are mentored within real life CACD projects in Western Sydney"*. The proposed ACE program will bring to life this immersive learning experience with the paid internships.

I do look forward to a positive outcome of this application - it will support collective contribution to our living archive of practice and it will build intergenerational knowledge of working in collaboration with communities to make inclusive arts and culture, grounded in respect and self-determination.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss further,  
regards  
Alissar Chidiac

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**ALISSAR CHIDIAC - CV Brief**

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**EDUCATION**

Graduate Diploma in Adult Education (TESOL Specialism), UTS, 1989/90

Bachelor of Arts, University of Sydney, 1976/77 and 1985/86

**AWARDS**

2010 - 'Ros Bower Award', Australia Council for the Arts

2005 - Community Cultural Development Fellowship, Australia Council for the Arts

2001 - Inaugural Solidarity Award, Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA

2000 - Arts Category, Australian Arabic Women's Awards, Arab Council Australia

**CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYMENT**Arab Theatre Studio

2023 - Creative Producer 'Open Dar', 3 unique productions in 3 sites guided by First Nations Elders with a creative team of 16

2020 - ongoing: Creative Producer, Administrator, Management Committee Member

2017 - 2019 - 'Making Spaces', various projects, Creative Hub at Granville Town Hall

2016 - 'Coffee, Tea & 25 Cigarettes', Utp & Bankstown Arts Centre

2014 - 'Remote Control', Bankstown Arts Centre, Utp Space Residency

Fairfield City Council

Jan-April 2020-2024; Dec 2018-June 2019; Jan-June 2018; Feb-July 2017

'Creative Communities' (previously 'Social Change Through Creativity')

Grant Training Workshops and Mentorship Program

Arts and Cultural Exchange

March 2017 - March 2018

Creative Producer, 'ParraMa', Family Creative Hub project

Cumberland Council

April - May 2017

Mentor, Artistic Director, Auburn Poets and Writers Group

Sirens: Women in Harmony Music Workshops

August - December 2016

Workshop Co-Facilitator with refugee women in Fairfield.

Auburn Cartographies of Diversity

August 2015 - June 2017

Creative Producer, 'Map As Art' and 'Calendars of Memory'.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

August 2015 - July 2016

Community Cultural Development Producer, Emerging Artist Development Initiative.

Australia Council for the Arts

Oct 2013 - June 2015

Peer Services Officer and Program Officer with Community Partnerships.

Multicultural Health Service and Cancer Institute NSW

January - May 2013

Artistic director, production manager, co-creative developer of bilingual Cancer Theatre Project 'Burra Wa Ba'eed'

Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

Feb 2011 - Aug 2012

Creative Producer, 'No Added Sugar', Australian Muslim Women's Arts Project, national initiative.

Auburn Community Development Network

May 2009 - Oct 2010

Creative Producer and Curator 'Auburn Poets and Writers Group' and the 'Moving Calligraphy' Project.

Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fellowship

2007 - 2009

*Jarabi: mapping arab australian contemporary cultural production.*

Partner: UTS Shopfront

Auburn Community Development Network

March 2005 - July 2007

Auburn Arts Officer.

Various freelance work

Oct 2004 - May 2006

Dramaturg, Trainer, Consultant, Speaker, Facilitator.

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

June - Dec 1998 / Aug 1999 - Aug 2004

'wattan project' Project Officer.

Critical cultural projects in partnership with Arab Australian communities and organisations.

Taga Theatre

1998 - 1999

Creative development artist and performer in 'Gibran Khalil Gibran', Parramatta.

Popular Art Centre

June - July 1997

Manager of the festival office, Palestine International Festival, El Bireh, West Bank.

MA'AN Development Centre

May 1995 - May 1997

Associate volunteer development worker, Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine.

Death Defying Theatre Ltd (now Utp)

June 1991 - Dec 1994

Workshop facilitator, artist-performer, researcher, administration assistant.

Granville TAFE Outreach Programme

Feb - July 1991: Outreach trainer.

The Deli Women and Children's Centre

1990: Project officer.

Auburn Youth Resource Centre

1987 - 1989: Generalist Youth Worker.

Pipi Storm Ltd

1980 - 1985: Community arts worker and team member.