

## ADFAS Rebranding Working Party Information Paper #1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. UK – NADFAS

- In 2016 the UK National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) put out to tender a Consultancy Brief titled NADFAS – The Next 50 Years - BRAND STRATEGY BRIEF. The primary aim of the exercise was to *help raise awareness and strengthen its brand value and use the opportunity of the 50th anniversary in 2018, to look ahead to the next 50 years, ensuring that NADFAS will be positioned as an internationally renowned organisation and is building the next generation of NADFAS membership*. The **drivers** included: loss of membership; overall demographic concerns; long-term positioning with new audiences; appeal of brand to wider audience, and an instantly recognisable brand vs opaque acronym (NADFAS).
- Considerable research work followed, with the momentous decision in 2017 for the organisation to be renamed as **The Arts Society** (abbreviated as **TAS**), The Arts Society is the operating name of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS).
- A modern visual identity was adopted (colour scheme, fonts, logo etc). See example right:



- Tagline: ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH THE ARTS
- The Internet WWW domain is: theartsociety.org

- Subsequently, over 350 Societies have changed branding using this generic form: **The Arts Society <Town/City>** (see Epsom example right). Fewer than ten NADFAS Societies have yet to change.



- Materials produced for use by the Societies included the TAS Brand Toolkit, which *inter alia* made the point that: *"Each Society has a unique personality, programme, venue and Membership, but the overall experience of The Arts Society should be consistent and coherent by expressing a set of beliefs and a purpose to enrich people's lives."*

#### B. Australia – ADFAS Branding

- Examples of current ADFAS branding: right and **Exhibit 1 attached**,
- ADFAS Societies aim to foster interest in the decorative and fine arts, cultivate their application and study, and encourage the preservation of our cultural and artistic heritage.
- Society membership badges can carry this wording:  
**Member of the Association of ADFAS**  
A Group Associate Member of The Arts Society  
(formerly NADFAS)



#### C. The Move for Change

- Decline in national membership of existing Societies (i.e., excluding several new Societies) over the seven years 2013-2020, potentially indicating a public awareness/public appeal problem facing ADFAS.
- The Association of Australian Decorative & Fine Arts Societies Inc. (ADFAS) Strategic Plan 2020 – 2026, picked up on a groundswell of concern about the 'visibility' of ADFAS and a resultant sub-optimal position with regard to getting our key messages across to a wider audience. For example, in Section 6 INTERNAL APPRAISAL, in the SWOT analysis table, the very first

Weakness listed is quite simply “Lack of ADFAS brand awareness”. Then the Opportunities component lists “Improve brand awareness.” along with “Increase target audience and society numbers. - esp. Target younger potential membership groups.... staying “in-tune” with the Facebook/Instagram generations...”.

- Table 8. Priority Actions, Success Indicators, Strategies, Resources and Time Frame lists a specific objective as: “To undertake ADFAS rebranding exercise (for the Association and Societies) with a view to improving public recognition and marketing.” with this accompanying strategy: “Establish Rebranding Working Party to investigate rebranding options, pros and cons, legal/administrative/social media and Domain implications, costs, etc. Liaise with NADFAS (UK) so as to benefit from its learnings with respect to changing to its new (trading) name as **The Arts Society**.”
- 2020 saw ADFAS go into a digital or hybrid communication/delivery model, signaling that delivery to members required much more flexibility.
- In the Social Media Marketing Workshop conducted via Zoom for Chairmen and Observers in Sept. 2020, there was brief but animated discussion about the perceived limitations of the name ADFAS and the need for change.
- Prior to the C2020-2 Council meeting in October 2020, one Society intended to foreshadow a resolution that the ADFAS name be changed (to The Arts Society or similar), but instead chose to make the Executive Committee aware that it considered this to be an issue warranting investigation, including Constitutional/Legal and Cost issues.

### GETTING STARTED AND PROGRESS TO DEC. 2020

- Given the above background, the Executive Committee decided that the sensible way to proceed was to establish a representational **Rebranding Working Party** to examine the issues and the options.
- The **Rebranding Working Party** was formed in October 2020 and comprises Jane Smith (Newcastle and National Vice Chairman), Trish Oliver (Chairman, Riverina, and ADFAS Councillor); Sally Petherbridge (Chairman, Canberra, and ADFAS Councillor) and Peter Farr (Treasurer, Perth).
- The Rebranding Working Party is constituted under the Association's constitution Rule 20.1(a) which states that:

*The Executive Committee may at any time –*

*(a) Establish such committees as it deems necessary to assist in the efficient management of the affairs of the Association or the advancement of its objects and purposes;*

- The rebranding project was a brief agenda topic presented by National Vice Chairman Jane Smith during the C2020-2 Council meeting in October 2020.
- The Rebranding Working Party has to date (Dec. 2020) met four times via Zoom, with one of those meetings including Dr Florian Schweizer CEO of The Arts Society. Florian has kindly shared several highly useful documents relating to the process that NADFAS followed and the resulting TAS Brand Toolkit. A preliminary meeting was also held with Mr Philip Jackson SC to discuss any significant legal issues that might arise should a change of name be favoured. The National Chairman, Sue Drummond has attended one meeting as an Observer.
- The first step will be to attempt to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the ADFAS brand by understanding how ADFAS is currently perceived internally and externally by the Council, Societies, members, partners, stakeholders and opinion formers. The Working Party is therefore setting up Inclusive processes - including giving consideration to such matters as:
  - 1) Communication with Societies about the project;
  - 2) Repositioning (e.g., to target younger/more diverse potential members);
  - 3) Talking widely to people who care – starting by seeking input/views of Societies and Members via surveys of Chairmen. For this purpose, a short set of “Coat hanger” questions have been developed for pilot testing;
  - 4) Obtaining stakeholder input via Focus groups;

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- 5) Legal/administrative ramifications that a name change would entail for (a) the Association, and (b) individual states and the ACT;
- 6) The relevance/value in the modern age of the somewhat limiting adjectives Decorative and Fine Arts, given the wider span of ADFAS activities which embrace *inter alia* the Visual and Performing Arts, Literature, Performance, Music, Photography, Gardens, etcetera;
- 7) Competitor analysis; and
- 8) Prospective advocacy and lobbying role for ADFAS (the Association and Societies).

### FUTURE WORK AND REPORTING

Happy to have your suggestions/comments – please feel free to communicate with any member of the Rebranding Working Party:

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Early in 2021 the members of the Rebranding Working Party will be pilot testing the “Coat hanger” questions on a number of stakeholders - internal and external – for the purposes of ensuring we are asking the right questions and can foresee how the answers can be usefully applied to the task in hand.

The Rebranding Working Party has undertaken to report regularly.

Timetable – Key Findings and possibly a Discussion Paper by mid-2021.

Any draft proposal by the date of C2021-2

**NOTE: The Rebranding Working Party members do not have a personal, or group position, on rebranding and repositioning at this stage.**

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### Exhibit 1: An example of current ADFAS branding



unlock  
the arts ›

Australian Decorative & Fine Arts Societies are all about the arts. Together they form part of a global network of over 90,000 members connected by a shared interest in fine art, design, music and travel.

Join one of 37 welcoming ADFAS societies to enjoy customized access to the arts at home and abroad.

Open the website for an invitation to the program of events.



[adf.org.au](http://adf.org.au)