

THEATRE NETWORK AUSTRALIA [TNA]

ADVANCING THE AUSTRALIAN
PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR

ANNUAL REPORT
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019

TNA.ORG.AU





Twenty-five delegates sit on black chairs in a circle. They are listening to the facilitator who is also seated in the circle, using hand gestures. The room has a concrete floor, exposed brick and peeling green paint on the walls. Photo by Alexander Francis of Converge at Abbotsford Convent.



Nineteen people sit scattered across a room. They are listening to a speaker who is standing at the back of the room using hand gestures. The room is bright with wooden floors. The wall on the left is painted red, and there are red and blue curtains on the right. Hanging from the ceiling are bicycle tires and chairs. Photo by Danni Rodriguez of CaPT Gathering at Circus Oz.

Theatre Network Australia acknowledges the traditional lands on which we meet, gather, and work.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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ABOUT US

Theatre Network Australia (TNA) is the leading national industry development organisation for contemporary, small to medium, and independent performing arts. With a membership of over 400 organisations and independents, and an active network of thousands of artists and arts workers, TNA works to achieve a safe, healthy and relevant performing arts sector. Guided by the objectives of First Nations First, Justice and Diversity, Safe Workplaces, Access and Inclusion, Gender Equity, Growing Arts Funding, Strong Ecology, Artists Central, and Effective Networks, TNA makes a targeted contribution to systemic change.

THEATRE NETWORK AUSTRALIA'S PRINCIPAL GOALS

STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES:

Theatre Network Australia strengthens, supports and connects independent performing artists and producers, small to medium organisations and larger performing arts organisations.

STRONGER ARTS SECTOR:

Theatre Network Australia achieves progressive change in the arts industry and impels evidence-based, values driven cultural policy.

STRONGER ORGANISATION:

Theatre Network Australia is recognised for its effective leadership in the performing arts and galvanises an extensive, broad and diverse membership in Victoria and across Australia.

CHAIR'S REPORT

At our last AGM, TNA was celebrating its tenth year – a key milestone and an extraordinary achievement for an arts advocacy body. But as we all know this could not have happened without the incredible work of the present and past staff and Board members, and the support of the sector despite the challenge of unprecedented change.

Throughout that time TNA has remained optimistic – not only for the fact that we made it to ten – but most importantly because our work has clearly been having an impact as our increased membership attests. The program of activity in 2019 was significant: greater attention and a national gathering for the Theatre for Young Audiences and Youth Theatre sector; a research focus with the circus sector; a new partnership with Safe Theatres Australia; our new home with APAM; and the Victorian Independent Producers Initiative rolling out. And of course our ongoing advocacy was central to all of our work.

Despite our successes as an organisation, we are well aware that the sector faces more debilitating change. TNA modelling predicted that the next Australia Council's four-year funding round would see 31 fewer companies funded, in addition to the 23 lost four years ago. In addition, Australia Council grant rounds have seen a 70% fall in project grants from 1340 to 405 between 2013 and 2016 – and this situation will get worse without urgent intervention.

Understandably, our advocacy in 2019 focused on this issue and the funding needed to ensure at least the same number of companies are supported over the next

four years. This advocacy was embraced by State and Territory Arts Ministers who added their voice in conversations with the Federal Minister.

It is challenging to keep arguing our case when faced with the resources needed to rebuild our communities after the devastating fires. However, we need to remind ourselves of the crucial role the arts play in giving resilience to and rebuilding communities. Lack of leadership shown by some governments should not deter us – we know the intrinsic value of the arts, why artists underpin our sense of national pride, the crucial role the arts play across the economy from social cohesion and wellbeing, to tourism, education and trade.

Look at the response to the bushfires. Artists have been at the forefront. They have been incredibly generous in their support for bushfire fundraising – including significant personal donations, organising online fundraisers and concerts.

It is important to remember most started their careers in the small to medium sector and without that start would not be able to galvanise the broader community who have also given so generously.

So there is much work to be done. In this context I thank the TNA staff – Jamie, Bethany, Rani, Simone and Nicole who are tireless in their dedication to the sector. I also thank the TNA Board for their fearless advocacy and for their commitment to the performing arts. In early 2020, we welcomed Andrea James and Sue Giles to the Board, along with Rose de Jong who joins us for the year as an Observer with the Observership Program.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As we settle into our new office, I would like to thank Arts Access Victoria for providing us with a home for so many years. By working so closely with them, we have learnt so much about the urgent need for genuine inclusion for people with disabilities and will carry this through all of our advocacy and programs ahead.

Thank you to our two major funding partners, Creative Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts, and in particular all of the dedicated people in those agencies who also do their bit to advocate for greater support for the arts.

I would also like to thank our members for being the true heart and soul of our organisation. As you all know it is an open door at TNA, as we want to hear from you about the key issues affecting you, to further develop our plans for increased support for this important sector.

Jill Smith, Chair

I am pleased to report that Theatre Network Au Inc. (ABN: 34 431 743 893) has returned a profit of \$42,434 for 2019. With total reserves now in the order of almost \$94k, the Board has committed \$40k of this to TNA's future work, specifically in the areas of Safe Theatres and Creative Facilitation which has been supported by the Sidney Myer Fund.

I congratulate the executive team for management of expenses totalling \$523,449 and income totalling \$565,883 to retain this financially sustainable result, particularly as this is a 49% increase in turnover. Our significant expenses in 2019 included a new office fit-out and the beginning of the Victorian Independent Producers Initiative which continues for the next 3 years.

Finally, we are sincerely grateful to all our partners, including our core recurring funding partners the Australia Council for the Arts who allow us to service the national agenda, and Creative Victoria, for our home state programs and support of Victorian artists and Independent Producers. The 2019 audit was undertaken by Sean Denham and Associates and a full copy of the audited statements is available on request.

Lou Oppenheim, Treasurer

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2019 was a tough year for the performing arts in Australia. Advocacy from TNA and many other peak bodies managed to get arts onto the agenda at the federal election, with both major parties and the Greens making announcements about arts promises. However, we were disappointed that the new Coalition government didn't commit to a reinvestment of funding for the Australia Council. The impact of successive cuts, and not all of the Catalyst funding being returned, meant that 2019 project success rates plummeted, and the outlook for the next cycle of Four-Year Funding for organisations was dire.

TNA's advocacy role continued to be vital – we hear from our members that they value our work on their behalf, and they also deeply appreciate the way we support the sector to do its own advocacy. Our modelling work showing the likely impact of cuts on the Four-Year Funded organisations was used throughout the second half of the year by media, politicians, peak bodies and by the sector itself. We heard from members that our even-tempered analysis of the situation helped in planning, in having the 'what if' conversations with their staff and boards, and helped them start to imagine new pathways.

Some of the highlights of the year included:

- Our membership growing considerably in terms of both numbers and diversity, indicating that the work we are doing is vital to the sector;
- Stability of funding has enabled us to build our national work and networks and strengthen our connections with other peak bodies building a united arts advocacy alliance;
- The Safe Theatres initiative - working in partnership with Safe Theatres Australia's Eryn Jean Norville and Sophie Ross - using equitable ways to open the conversation and work on a structured and safe way forward. This work is now travelling across the nation and supported by the Sidney Myer Fund for a further three years;
- Our new home, co-designed and co-managed with APAM and, generously supported by Creative Victoria, has quickly become a gathering place for the sector;
- The Victorian Independent Producers Initiative, managed by TNA, but co-designed with the sector and Creative Victoria, is a landmark project that is already setting a benchmark for other states;
- Our work as the National Centre member of ASSITEJ international has grown, helping to strengthen and connect the Theatre for Young Audiences and Youth Arts Sector;
- Our involvement in a research project with Melbourne University on the impact of theatre on young people, culminated in a TNA produced national symposium Converge where great discussion gave the sector optimism and showed respect for their work;
- Our Circus and Physical Theatre advisory group lead a year of research into the issue of circus specific rigging training, culminating in a report which will be released to the sector in 2020. As the group's second year comes to an end, we thank them for their work with TNA in supporting and connecting the

circus sector around Australia, and we look forward to announcing the new advisory committee soon;

- TNA was selected as one of ten organisations to be part of Creative Victoria's Fair Play - a program that seeks to address barriers to participation by underrepresented groups, with a focus on developing organisation's skills and capacity in and working with three groups: First Nations people, people with disability, people from underrepresented cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Of course we also continued the ongoing work that the sector values – the e-news is one of the most popular services we provide, with feedback expressing gratitude for the concise, relevant, targeted opportunities and updates on the urgent issues.

None of our work is possible without our many deep and long-standing partnerships – we are proud of our approach in working in a supportive, collegiate and consultative way in everything we do. Thanks to all of our partner organisations – more than 60 of them!

My deep thanks to the Board, especially Chair Jill Smith and Treasurer Lou Oppenheim, who provide constant support for me and the team, and a special thank you to Annette Vieuxseux who stepped down as Co-Chair during 2019, and is having a well-earned sabbatical from the Board until May 2020. From 2020 we will welcome Caroline Bowditch and Erica McCalman as Co-Deputy Chairs.

The TNA team are the absolute best. The culture we have of sharing workload, sharing lunches, being flexible and always keeping an eye on wellbeing is a key contributor to

how we can get through so much work with a pretty small team. We all bring different skills and working styles and we learn from each other. My sincere thanks to Simone, Bethany, Jamie, and our newest team member Rani. I would also like to thank our contractors Yuhui, Callista, Sam, Melinda, Sophie, Eryn Jean and Kate.

As we head towards 2020, Bethany Simons has decided to take a leap into a full-time career as a teaching artist, freelance writer and performer. In her six years at TNA she has worked on: five Victorian Theatre Forums; two ATFs; growing our membership; and initiatives such as the Indie Survey, mentorships, and the monthly radio spot on Vision Australia Radio. Her recent focus on work for young people and youth theatre culminated in our most successful gathering to date, Converge, in October at Abbotsford Convent. She is probably best known for her 6 years of editing and publishing the e-news, still the jewel in the crown of our work, now being handed over to a new part-time staff member, Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez. We thank Bethany for her excellent, caring work at TNA, and we send her off with our warmest wishes for a satisfying, creative and sustainable career as an artist.

Finally, thanks on behalf of the TNA Board and staff to all our members and the wider sector. We feel honoured to work on behalf of such a resilient and creative sector, we value your feedback and your support throughout the year at our events and in response to our communications, and we hope for a safe, healthy and relevant performing arts sector as we kick off this next decade.

Nicole Beyer, Executive Director

WE ADVOCATE

2019 FEDERAL ELECTION

As we headed to the 2019 federal election, TNA joined with the other performing arts peak organisations including Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG), AusDance National, BlakDance, Live Performance Australia, Music Australia, Performing Arts Connections Australia, Regional Arts Australia and Symphony Services Australia, to call for a more secure creative vision for Australia.

Alongside a grass-roots campaign of meetings with Members of Parliament and Candidates, we called for all sides of politics:

- To support the development of NIACA – a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority;
- To return funding to the Australia Council – TNA urged both sides of politics to implement the Recommendations of the Senate Inquiry into Arts Funding decisions, including that “government restore to the Australia Council the full amount of funds diverted from it in the 2014 MYEFO and 2015 Budget”;
- To Secure the Arts – specifically calling for an additional uplift in funding to invest in national touring, grants, organisations and strategic initiatives, and a new fund for the development of new major Australian works;
- To advance interconnections between the arts and other portfolios for better public policy outcomes.

Four member advocacy bulletins regarding the election were prepared for members including one which summarised the three major parties’ arts platforms referencing the Australian Greens’ “A Creative Australia”, Labor’s “Renewing Creative Australia” and the Liberal party’s 2019-20 budget announcements.

“I appreciate your invaluable research and thought- provoking compilations of vital information. THANK YOU.”

FEDERAL BUDGETS

In April, when the 2019 Budget was announced, the Arts Industry Council of Victoria (of which TNA's General Manager Simone is Co-Convenor), noted the lack of an overarching vision for the sector.

'In the current climate, AICV is relieved to see investment in arts and cultural tourism, infrastructure and the music industry - especially the initiatives to address gender imbalance and support for First Nations voices. However, another opportunity to support artists in Australia has been missed by not returning funding to the Australia Council.'

In response, for the 2020-21 Federal Budget, the Arts Industry Council of Victoria facilitated a joint submission with other State Chamber and Industry bodies calling for an Immediate Request (from 2020-21) of \$15million per annum investment in current programs that target our innovative small-medium organisations and individual artists; and a Long-term Request (to 2030) of an increase in the total investment in arts and culture to 1.11% of GDP by 2030.

FOUR-YEAR FUNDING FOR ORGANISATIONS

As we approached the mid-July notification of the Australia Council's EOI stage for Four-Year Funding for Organisations, TNA offered support and advice for those for whom the outcome is a definite no, and those who will be successful at this stage but be in a state of flux until the next full application stage in November.

"An excellent email to the sector, kind leadership at its best."

Then, in advance of the second stage announcements, TNA modelled that at least \$7million p/a of additional funding would be needed for the same number of organisations to be funded (124) in the next four-year cycle. If not, the likely loss of organisations would be at least 25%, with between 1 and 8 organisations likely to lose funding per state/territory; and between 1 and 6 organisations per artform area.

Both these pieces of work were covered extensively in the media and deeply appreciated by our members.

"Just a quick word of thanks for your strategic and timely advocacy and for the rigour of the data and research you're compiling. It's being heard loud and clear out there in the mediascape and I for one am grateful for it!"

OTHER FEDERAL ADVOCACY

TNA introduced the New Arts Minister, Paul Fletcher, to our membership, and advocated around changes to the Department of Communications and the Arts, which was merged into a bigger department called Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. TNA also shared communications regarding the Meeting of Cultural Ministers and our submission in response to the Australia Council's new Strategic plan.

“Getting an email like this always gives me a push of hope. I’m in awe of the advocacy work that you and TNA have done and are doing for the sector. And the regular attention to communication back to the sector is incredible. Thank you.”

LEADERSHIP

TNA's success as a service organisation is achieved through myriad conversations, meetings and a commitment to raising issues in every room, foyer and table we find ourselves at, emphasising the needs and public value of the small to medium and independent sector.

In addition, TNA staff worked with or spoke at the following meetings and panels:

- Are We Safe? as part of the Dance Massive Conversation Series;
- OIP funded Metropolitan Festivals Group;
- Arts Industry Council Victoria Strategic Planning;
- Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) Collaboration;
- Chookas and Chats with SA Circus Centre at Adelaide Fringe;
- Circus & Beyond: Arts Workers Forum;
- City of Melbourne Arts Strategy Consultation;
- Confederation of Australian State Theatres;
- Creative Victoria Respectful Workplaces Advisory Group;
- Deakin University's Arts and Cultural Management Board;
- Foundry 658 Accelerator Steering Group;
- Green Room Awards Association;
- National Youth Arts Summit at Carclew;
- Regional Touring Review Meetings;
- Safe Theatres Australia Strategic Planning;
- Showcase Victoria Small Stages Program (MC);
- The University of Melbourne – ARC 'Creative Convergence' Partner Meetings;
- The University of Melbourne – VCA Tutorials;
- Tip of the Iceberg – PACA 2019 Conference Session.

TNA was also represented at key sector events including: Creative State Summit; Fair Play Masterclass; Fair Play Symposium; Liveworks; Not In My Workplace Summit (VIC and NSW).

VICTORIAN ADVOCACY

TNA's advocacy provides a voice for the performing arts, prioritising independents and small to medium companies. TNA has an additional role to play for our Victorian Members who pay full membership fees, to deliver a deep program of activity in our home state. As a result, in Victoria, we take on responsibility in the development and implementation of the Victorian Government's Creative Industries policy specifically through the Creative Industries Advisory Group, as well as our role with the Arts Industry Council of Victoria (AICV). We always put our members' best interests at the centre of this work, including in our response to the 2019 Victorian State Budget:

"The budget for 2019-20 consists largely of election commitments and/or announcements already made by the State Government for the creative sector, as might have been expected given the current public narrative about the budget. These are welcome investments."
– ArtsHub article (28 May 2019)

CREATIVE STATE 2020-2024

Throughout 2019, Creative Victoria consulted with the Victorian arts industry towards a new creative industries policy, Creative State 2. TNA took part in the broad consultation, feeding in issues around priorities for independent artists and producers, and the Organisational Investment Program.

TNA completed a submission on behalf of members, which in summary, called on Creative Victoria to:

- Refine and resource the First People's Action Plan for the Creative Industries;
- Continue the successful approach of co-design and deep sector engagement that it has adopted these past few years;
- Release the key principles and values that emerged from the regional review;
- Articulate specific commitments to increasing access and inclusion within Creative Victoria's programs for under-represented Victorians, including First Nations people, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse people, as well as women in artistic leadership roles;
- Contribute an additional investment of at least 25% to allow a modest increase to individual organisations, and to allow up to 12 new organisations to enter the OIP cohort.

In addition, TNA's Executive Director Nicole Beyer was invited by the Creative Industries Minister to be Co-Deputy Chair of the Creative Industries Advisory Group, working alongside himself as Chair, Katrina Sedgwick as Co-Deputy Chair, colleagues at Creative Victoria and industry representatives. The CIAG met monthly to workshop outcomes of the consultation and build the framework, key principles and key action areas towards a new Creative State Strategy. The Strategy is expected to be released in late 2020.

FAIRER ARRANGEMENTS FOR ARTISTS

Throughout 2019 TNA continued to pursue its Go Pitch campaign, for fairer support for independents at markets. TNA argues that while independent work makes up the majority of work presented at markets, festivals and in presenters' programs, our industry is falsely predicated on funded producing companies being in the majority, bringing their own infrastructure and resources to the presentation model. As this is not the case for independents, our industry should subsidise the work that independents do outside of their presentation seasons. Since 2014 TNA has pushed for markets such as PAX, APAM and state Showcases to provide free places for independent productions chosen to pitch work.

TNA congratulates Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) and Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) – for providing, for the first time, a free registration for pitching independent artists and producers at the 2019 Showcase Victoria. As MC of Showcase Victoria's Small Stages day of presentations, Executive Director Nicole Beyer was able to publicly thank VAPAC and RAV, and to use the platform to call for further change.



Image of TNA and APAM's signage abovehead from the corridor of the TNA office. Off-focus in the background, are people listening standing around listening to a speech. Photo by Danni Rodriguez of TNA and APAM Office Launch at The Guild.

WE GATHER

NATIONAL GATHERING:

Our core priority for our national gathering in 2019 was to connect and develop the performing arts sector, while remaining responsive to our objectives of:

- First Nations;
- Justice and Diversity;
- Safe Theatres;
- Access and Inclusion;
- Gender Equity;
- Growing Arts Funding;
- Strong Ecology;
- Artists Central;
- Effective Networks.



Image of people mingling in small groups of two to three, next to a long table of fruit and snacks. They are smiling and engaged in conversation. Photo by Alexander Francis of Converge at Abbotsford Convent.

CONVERGE: NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THEATRE AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Presented in partnership with University of Melbourne, Melbourne Theatre Company and Abbotsford Convent, the 139 attendees (from every state/territory except ACT) engaged in a day of compelling keynotes, informative and robust discussions and extensive networking with a focus on practice, research, technology, and engaging young people.

The symposium included outcomes from the third year of an Australian Research Council funded project – Creative Convergence – lead by Melbourne University’s Faculty of Arts, in which TNA is an industry partner.

The symposium included the following Keynotes and Reflections:

- Rachel Fensham and Paul Rae, University of Melbourne – Creative Convergence Overview and Circuit Mapping Tool;
- Sarah Austin, Theatre Maker – A rights-based approach to working with children and young people in performance;
- Joanna Erskine, Head of Education, Bell Shakespeare – What We May Be: Bell Shakespeare’s Juvenile Justice program;
- Sonya Soares, Actor/ Theatre Maker/ Activist #justnotthatmany – Reframing Australian stories and storytelling.

Thirty-eight other breakout sessions, firecrackers, spotlights, and panels gave delegates a choose your own adventure style buffet of conversations to dive into.

Auxiliary events at Melbourne Festival and ArtPlay extended the networking into the evening and the following day.

Extensive documentation such as videos, recordings and transcripts are available to view on TNA’s website.

“Congrats on a great gathering. A highlight was the diverse range of practitioners in the room and the positivity that was cultivated and the tone set..”

“Absolutely fantastic day - we left buzzing! A very classy event with a real focus on maintaining and building a positive community.”

VICTORIAN ROUNDTABLES:

In 2019 TNA broke from the traditional model of the Victoria Theatre Forum and instead implemented five different styles of sessions across the state, providing the opportunity for 100s of participants from various different target groups to delve deeper into current sector issues and access important information. As with all of our work, TNA documented these sessions, and followed up with participants with further reading and resources.

STRENGTHENING A DIVERSE ECOLOGY

SOUTH MELBOURNE, 10 APRIL

Limited to 30 participants to allow for deep and strategic discussion, this session looked at the First People's Action Plan; revisited the Major Performing Arts review; and explored the work TNA is doing around Safe Theatres, Gender Equity and initiatives for Independents.

IN THE REGION

BALLARAT, 26 AUGUST

This session provided a great opportunity to hear from artists, creatives, arts workers and members in the Goldfields area, as well as an opportunity for them to connect to each other. The group shared their current challenges, possible solutions and avenues for support, as well as resources.

INDIE PRACTICE EXCHANGE

SOUTHBANK, 25 JUNE

Presented in partnership with Arts Centre Melbourne as part of The Kiln program, and facilitated by Theatre Network Australia, this session explored the 'juggle' metaphor known all too well by independent creatives. *We are at once artists, producers, managers, advocates and community and cultural leaders; as well as children, parents, siblings, friends and lovers. How do these roles intertwine? How can they inform the way we embody our values, identity and politics?*

We invited independent artists and producers to join special guests, Tariro Mavondo, Gareth Hart and Emma Hall, as they reflected on the intersections of their own varied arts practices.

PEER LEARNING

SOUTH MELBOURNE, 6 MARCH, 3 APRIL, 1 MAY, 3 JULY, 16 OCTOBER.

A member only opportunity, specifically for Executive Producers and General Managers of small to medium companies to discuss topics including the Federal Election, Funding, Reporting and Strategic Planning in a 'cone of silence' environment.

VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS INITIATIVE

SOUTHBANK, 20 NOVEMBER

NARRE WARREN, 26 NOVEMBER

BRUNSWICK, 27 NOVEMBER

ST ALBANS, 3 DECEMBER

CASTLEMAINE, 11 DECEMBER

As part of the roll out of the new Victorian Independent Producers Initiative, TNA hosted five information sessions featuring independent producers: Erin Milne, Bo Svoronos, Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Laura Milke-Garner and Naomi Velaphi. The information sessions were held in different locations in order to reach a diverse demographic of ninety-seven people in total (Malthouse Theatre, Castlemaine, Bunjil Place, Brunswick Mechanics Institute and St Albans Community Centre). We also created an introductory video to VIPI in Auslan, which you can see on TNA's website.



Six people seated, huddled around listening to a person speaking with hand gestures. Photo by Wild Hardt of VIPI Meet and Greet at Malthouse Theatre.

SAFE THEATRES WORKSHOPS:

In 2019 the Safe Theatres program included designing and implementing new workshops targeted at the independent sector and Circus and Physical Theatre (Victoria) and the first interstate workshop. The goal was to continue to further equip the performing arts sector with practical understanding of the issues, the resources available, the legislative environment, and what their role is, in addressing sexual harassment and bullying in our industry.

FOR INDEPENDENTS

MELBOURNE, 20 JUNE

Produced by Arts Centre Melbourne's Kiln Program, in partnership with TNA and Creative Victoria, this workshop was specifically designed in response to sector need. It focused on how independents and smaller companies might deal with potential scenarios involving workplace bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment, especially in the absence of formal workplace policies and resources. Hosted by theatre-maker and facilitator Kate Sulan, speakers include Kim Tran (Live Performance Australia), Eryn Jean Norvill (Safe Theatres), Tracy Margieson (Arts Wellbeing Collective) and Juanita Pope (Justice Connect).

"Thanks for welcoming me in as an independent freelancer, and for the thorough, practical and generous offering of resources."

FOR QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE, 23 SEPTEMBER

Delivered in partnership with Safe Theatres Australia, Live Performance Australia, Queensland Theatre, La Boite, Brisbane Powerhouse, and Cluster Arts, the day included an overview by Sophie Ross, Safe Theatres Australia; a presentation on LPA's Code of Practice by Kim Tran; and an overview of the new CAST policies, by Amanda Jolly, Queensland Theatre. The 60+ delegates then worked on a selection of hypothetical case-studies. Regional artists and organisations who were unable to attend in person were invited to participate online, supported by Feral Arts as part of the Arts Front project using the Zoom platform.

"Thanks for organizing – it's very heartening to know that there are many people working together on this."

FOR CIRCUS AND PHYSICAL THEATRE (CaPT)

MELBOURNE, 14 NOVEMBER

In addition to the Safe Theatres Workshop Program with CaPT specific scenarios, TNA shared updates on our Rigging Survey, VIPI program and ASSITEJ network to the delegates in attendance. The CaPT sector themselves also presented updates regarding Springboard – the Melbourne Fringe partnership with Circus Oz for mentoring and development, announced that it would be the final Bathurst Catapult in 2020, and explored Women*s Circus's Inclusive process/practice and participation in the ADAPT Program.

“Sincerely appreciated the scenario discussions - putting the theory into real life situations.”



Nine people sit scattered across a room looking at different directions. They are laughing. Photo by Danni Rodriguez of CaPT Gathering at Circus Oz.

WE CONNECT

MEMBERSHIP

In 2019, TNA serviced 220 Independent members, and 169 Company Members, for a total of 389 members, which is a modest 3% increase on 2018.

We continued to operate under a T model and our membership model reflects this. The bar of the T is the national advocacy, policy input, national research, national gatherings, e-news and the state/territory gatherings – and the stem of the T is the deep program of work in Victoria funded by Creative Victoria. It is an honest, effective and well respected model.

2019 was the first year in which TNA had a full year of memberships being recorded on anniversary date rather than on a calendar year. This change in accounting policy, resulted in a decrease in membership income in 2019, offset by an increase in membership in advance.

ASSITEJ NETWORK

Australian TYA and Youth Arts is recognised and critically acclaimed internationally. TNA connects this sector internationally through its role as the National Centre for ASSITEJ. This sector makes work by, with and for young people – embracing a different paradigm that places children and young people at the centre of change. We support Sue Giles in her role as Australian Representative and Vice President of ASSITEJ global, and work in collaboration with Sue and the wider sector on key advocacy priorities and activities.

In 2019, we began the search for advocacy champions to allow us to establish a National ASSITEJ Advisory Group with representatives from across the country – from Early Years right through to Youth Arts and Youth-Led Initiatives.

Following a national call out and assessment process we were pleased to announce the selected artists for the 2020 Visoni Festival delegation to Bologna, Italy were: Sally Chance (SA) and Kirsty Grierson (TAS) for the Open Window program, and Emily McKnight (NSW) for the Artists Meet Early Years program.

We also started working towards The ASSITEJ World Congress 2020 which was scheduled to take place in Tokyo, Japan from 14 – 24 May 2020. This included securing funding for an Australian Spotlight from the Australia Council.

Finally, we collated those TNA member companies making work with, by and for young people, and began work on a booklet, which would be used promotional tool for international delegations. Independent practitioners in this sector are listed online on the TNA website, with a link included in the booklet.

NATIONAL ROADSHOW WITH APAM AND AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

MELBOURNE, 22 JULY

DARWIN, 24 JULY

SYDNEY, 29 JULY

BRISBANE, 30 JULY

PERTH, 1 AUGUST

ADELAIDE, 2 AUGUST

ONLINE, 6 AUGUST

TNA went on the road with colleagues at Australia Council for the Arts and APAM, to give an overview of their upcoming activities and provide answers to questions about the new APAM model. TNA emceed the events in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

Directly following these presentations, TNA facilitated a workshop about sector need with regard to market intelligence. We investigated what tools and information artists and companies need now to maximise opportunities for touring and exchange nationally and internationally. The outcomes will feed into TNA's ongoing advocacy work and will directly impact APAM's Market Intelligence strategy. Thirty case studies were collected in total.

It is clear from the case studies that there is a significant reliance on soft tools, when building a tour or a residency or exchange. Unsurprisingly, relationships are key – previous relationships with presenters, introductions from other producers or artists, doing research and development and site visits before trying to sell work, being a great host or a great guest.

Workshop participants expressed keen interest in getting support to navigate the complex environment of touring and exchange, especially internationally, where cultural, language and legal differences exacerbate complexity. The solutions they want are not so much technological, but insight, contacts, networks, as well as help to advocate for the needs of Australian companies and artists – advocacy here in Australia with funding bodies, but also with the host presenter, country or government. The practical support they want is cheat sheets, webinars, info sessions, database access.

WE INVESTIGATE

SALARY SURVEY REPORT: 6TH EDITION

In 2019, TNA's produced the 6th edition of the Salary Survey Report for Not for Profit Small to Medium Arts Organisations, undertaking it biennially since 2009. Findings included:

- Artistic Director average salary overtook General Manager/Executive Producer salary, for the first time, although only by a small amount;
- Compared to 2017 figures, most roles have seen an increase in 2019 – with the biggest increases in Producers and Associate Directors, at 10% and 11% increases respectively. Only Finance and Admin roles have reduced, both down by 1%;
- Remuneration within Dance organisations (nine respondents) continues to be the highest for key roles, but only slightly above Theatre. Circus continues to pay the lowest salaries;
- Circus Trainers salaries were included for the first time.

“It’s so good to know how the sector is faring nationally but also per State/Territory and city/regionally.”

“As a data nerd I really love all this info. Thank you for all the work you do – I am inspired by your ‘aspiration budget’ line.”



Five people sit in a diagonal row. They are smiling and laughing. Photo by Alexander Francis of Converge at Abbotsford Convent.

VIPI: PROGRAM DESIGN

Before finalising the VIPI Program Design, VIPI Program Producer, Rani Pramesti, consulted with independent producers across Victoria who are in the four target groups for priority engagement (First Peoples, CaLD / people of colour, people living with disability and people based regionally). Their feedback was sought in order to ensure the accessibility and relevance of the VIPI program design for these four target demographics.

VIPI is made up of three core components:

- **The Producers Mentorship Program**
- **The Unlocking Capacity Grant**
- **The Salon Series**

Through supporting independent producers, this initiative aims to:

- Improve career and development opportunities for independent producers to increase their numbers and capacities, and the sustainability of independent producing practices;
- Increase the number of Victorian-based independent artists and companies who are working with independent producers;
- Improve the sustainable practice of Victorian-based independent artists and companies, locally and globally;
- Build the diversity of independent producers working in Victoria, both the diversity of representation (e.g. First Peoples, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people, People of Colour, people living with a disability and people based regionally) and the diversity of practice / curation;
- Increase the reputation of Victoria and Victorian producers – internationally and nationally; and;
- Increase the amount of work represented by Victorian producers through market development opportunities.

“[VIPI] is an absolute game changer. It’s amazing. Well done TNA team!”

THE LIST: FEMALE, NON-BINARY AND TRANS TECHNICAL ARTISTS

Initiated by Emma Valente (THE RABBLE) in 2017, TNA has continued to update this directory of designers for live performance prioritising gender equity and encouraging theatre makers to hire more diversely in the areas of Lighting Design, Sound Design and Composition, and Video Design and Animation, then extending to Set and Costume Design.

“As a female artist working in Lighting Design, you can feel relatively isolated within a male dominated field. [THE LIST] helped create a sense of community and camaraderie between myself and other female artists working in technical fields. It is an amazing initiative.”

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

We continued our role as an Industry Partner Investigator on the multi-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant project, led by Melbourne University, titled Creative Convergence: Enhancing Impact in Regional Theatre for Young People. The project examines the work of six Australian theatre companies and performing arts venues – Arena Theatre Company, Arthur, Bell Shakespeare, Geelong Arts Centre, HotHouse and Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) – and their interaction and engagement with young people in regional Victoria. Other industry partners are Regional Arts Victoria and Creative Victoria. Researching both the creative processes of theatre-making and audience participation, this Linkage project asks how theatrical impact can be enriched through relationships and activities that extend beyond the immediacy of the event.

For more on this project head to <https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/creative-convergence/>

TNA's role in 2019 – Year 3 of the project, was to present the national symposium 'Converge'.

“As a national body located at the centre of the performing arts industry, TNA has proved an absolutely crucial part of this research project. The industry events that they host provide us with a key mechanism for communicating our observations and insights to theatre-makers, and for inviting and responding to feedback.”

WE COMMUNICATE

TNA'S E-NEWS

We are very proud of our average open rate of 47.6%, and an average click-through rate of 11%. Especially when compared to the Industry Benchmark where the average open rate is 17.9% (-29%) and the average click-through rate is 3% (-7%).

At the end of 2019 we had 3522 subscribers to TNA's monthly e-news.

"Bloody great e-news as per usual. Bravo all!"

CAPT BULLETINS

- 443 subscribers to CAPT Bulletins
- 51% open rate
- 16.34% click-through

ASSITEJ BULLETINS

- 788 subscribers to ASSITEJ Bulletins
- 51.1% open rate
- 9.2% click-through

Amazing!!! Thanks so much for this... love it (and have just applied to something because of it)."

MEDIA COVERAGE

TNA has been featured in various media outlets across radio, national press and online media including Fairfax Media (The Age and Sydney Morning Herald), The Australian, RRR, ABC Radio, ABC Online, The Guardian, Arts Hub, and other industry specific journals. TNA's position and comments are often sought in response to sector events and issues.

Over social media, we have 4078 twitter followers, 2039 facebook followers and 1231 instagram followers.

RADIO SEGMENT

TNA curated a monthly segment on Vision Australia's Behind The Scenes with Chris Thompson. The segment allowed us to feature our members and their work, and share conversations about practice and the sector with the wider general public. Members featured in 2019: Sarah Austin, Xanthe Beesley, Susie Dee, Mish Grigor, Romi Kupfer, Natasha Phillips, Tamara Searle, Joe Toohey, The Very Good Looking Initiative, and Steph Urruty.

WE FACILITATE

ARTIST AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Established in recognition of founding members Simon Abrahams and Alice Nash, TNA's SMASH Independent Bursary of \$500 recognises existing and potential contribution to the sector. The 2019 Bursary was awarded at CONVERGE to Alex Desebrock, in part to acknowledge the many unpaid hours she spends, not only in her own artistic work, but in the pursuit of a fairer sector for independent artists, the most vulnerable part of the sector.

“I really can’t explain what this has done for my brain and heart this last 24 hrs... It’s made the invisible visible and it’s amazing to feel acknowledged. So heart-warmed to have a national high-five!”

We embarked on a mentoring relationship with Georgia Deguara – YUCK Circus as part of her Melbourne Fringe Best Emerging Circus Performer award, and with Cassandra Fumi and Simone French as part of their Melbourne Fringe Best Emerging Performance Ensemble award, both supported by TNA. We also supported two Greenroom Awards for shows presented in 2018, and Thom Browning’s nomination as the Australian Representative for Directors in TYA – Berlin 2019, which ended up being successful and secured funding support.

“Thanks... for putting forward my nomination to attend the Berlin Director’s seminar in 2019. It’s both humbling and exciting to have been chosen, and it will be a real honour to represent our sector. Thanks again to TNA and ASSITEJ Australia for the support.”

VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS INITIATIVE

VIPI was a major new sector development program that TNA began in mid-2019. This initiative was designed in consultation with the Victorian independent performing arts sector, specifically independent producers, with input from other key stakeholders across the Victorian creative industries. It has been established to support independent producers, and through them, independent artists and companies in the performing arts, based in Victoria. TNA delivers this initiative in partnership with the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

FAIR PLAY

TNA was selected as one of the inaugural ten participants in Diversity Arts Australia's Fair Play project - an equity and inclusion capacity building program. Through a human-rights-based approach, the program seeks to address barriers to participation by underrepresented groups in Victoria's creative industries, with a focus on developing organisation's skills and capacity in working with First Nations people, people with disability, people from underrepresented cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Closely aligned with TNA's objectives, we are enjoying the process which continues in 2020. We look forward to sharing our learnings and leading us to a more just, fair, and equitable sector.

ADAPT

TNA also undertook Arts Access Victoria's innovative model of Arts Disability Action Plan Training (ADAPT) in 2019 - a leadership program of support and practical resources that enables organisations to plan for access, make long-term change and provide equality for people with disability. For TNA, an organisation who believes in equality and want to be part of bringing this paradigm into reality, ADAPT has provided the blueprint to get us there.

NEW HOME AND HUB

In the second half of 2019, TNA embarked on a major new project fitting out Studio 6 at the Guild. We are delighted to have created an accessible, dynamic shared working space, with a dedicated workshop/meeting room, making it a busy, highly effective hub for the small-to-medium performing arts sector within the Melbourne Arts Precinct in Southbank. Co-locating the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM), Theatre Network Australia (TNA), and the Victorian Independent Producers' Initiative (VIPI) has created a focal point of activity within the precinct and enabled resource-sharing for these complementary organisations/strategic initiatives. Creative Industries Minister Martin Foley formally launched the space on 15 November 2019.

OUR PEOPLE

STAFF

NICOLE BEYER - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nicole leads the organisation's advocacy work, builds and maintains partnerships, drives the strategic directions and is the main spokesperson for TNA. She been with TNA since its establishment in 2009.

SIMONE SCHINKEL – GENERAL MANAGER

Simone can now add interior design to her list of skills, thanks to her management and realisation of the fit-out for our new office at the Guild. She implements new systems, improves workflow, is the main funding liaison and keeps the team's workplans on track. She joined TNA in 2016.

BETHANY SIMONS – PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Bethany continues to co-design and direct the programs of work as well as looking after the work on ASSITEJ – Theatre for Young People and Youth Theatre. She also edits the e-news. She has been with TNA since 2015. When she's not at TNA, Beth is a writer, performer, and a teaching artist across Australia, and loves to travel.

JAMIE LEWIS – COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Jamie drives our communications and our profile and is the lead on our Circus and Physical Theatre work. She has been with TNA since 2017. Outside of her TNA work she is an independent artist, facilitator, and dramaturg. She loves to cook Singaporean feasts for friends and is the resident chef at TNA.

RANI PRAMESTI – PROGRAM PRODUCER (VIPI)

Rani was appointed in 2019 to lead our major new project, the Victorian Indendent Producers Initiative. Rani is responsible for curating the Salon Series, administering and running the Mentorship Program and liaising with the sector and respond to enquiries about the Unlocking Capacity grants program, which is administered by Creative Victoria.

All staff have taken on outreach work, speaking opportunities and facilitation of meetings, ensuring that TNA's impact is expanding and is not invested in one person.

CONTRACTORS

We are grateful to the following people for their work with TNA as contractors or casuals during 2019:

- Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez – E-News Editing and Administration;
- Sam Ryan of SAYSO – Financial Management;
- Callista Reed – Event Management for Converge;
- Melinda Hetzel – Office Management and Board Administration;
- Sophie Ross – Safe Theatres;
- Eryn Jean Norville – Safe Theatres;
- Kate Sulan – Creative Facilitation.

CIRCUS AND PHYSICAL THEATRE (CAPT) ADVISORY GROUP

TNA's CaPT Advisory Group was established at the end of 2017 to maintain strong engagement and information exchange between TNA and the circus and physical theatre industry locally, nationally and internationally. In 2019, the five members met quarterly to advise TNA's work for the sector in research, networking, insurance, professional development, advocacy, business advice, international engagement, and resources. The five members are:

- Kate Fryer – Artistic Director, Dislocate (VIC);
- Joshua Hoare – Artistic Director, South Australian Circus Centre, the home of Cirkidz (SA);
- Felicia Lannan – Performer, Madhouse Circus (VIC);
- Deb Wilks – Cluster Arts (QLD);
- Rockie Stone – Performer, Company Here and Now (VIC).

BOARD

JILL SMITH (CHAIR)

Jill is the immediate past General Manager at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre. She was the former General Manager of the Playbox Theatre.

LOU OPPENHEIM (TREASURER)

Lou Oppenheim is currently Director, Production and Events at Sydney Opera House. From 2013-2019 Lou was the General Manager of Circus Oz.

CAROLINE BOWDITCH

Caroline is currently CEO at Arts Access Victoria, previously based in the UK for 16 years. She is also an artist, teacher and speaker, regularly consulting on accessibility and inclusivity.

BEN GRAETZ

Ben Graetz is a descendant of the Muran and Malak Malak Clans in the Northern Territory and of Badu Island on the Torres Strait Islands of Australia. Ben was the first Indigenous Creative Producer in Darwin NT, and created and directed The Garrmalang Festival.

CATHERINE JONES

Catherine is currently Director of the Australian Performing Arts Market. She was previously the General Manager of ArtsHouse, North Melbourne.

ERICA MCCALMAN

Erica is a producer, project and production manager with Ballardong (Noongar), Irish convict, Scottish, and Cornish heritage. She is currently Special Events Producer at Darwin Festival, and a Consulting Producer. She was previously Creative Producer at Next Wave.

CASSIE MCGANNON

Cassie McGannon is an experienced policy and advocacy adviser. Cassie was placed with the TNA Board as part of The Observership Program in 2018 and has since joined.

SAM ROUTLEDGE

Sam Routledge is a director and producer of contemporary puppetry, and has been the Artistic Director of Terrapin Puppet Theatre in Hobart since 2012.

BRAD SPOLDING

Brad is currently the Director of The Substation. His previous roles include executive positions at ILBIJERRI Theatre Company and Snuff Puppets.

ANNETTE VIEUSSEUX

Annette is a Producer at Performing Lines. She was previously Executive Producer of Lucy Guerin Inc.

LYN WALLIS

Lyn is the immediate past Artistic Director of Hothouse Theatre. Lyn was previously Director of Theatre for the Australia Council for the Arts.

LIFE MEMBERS

TNA acknowledges lifetime members Simon Abrahams, Sarah Austin, and Alice Nash for their incredible contribution as co-founders and Board members.

PARTNERS

TNA's work is fundamentally built upon strong and collegiate partnerships:

Arts Access Victoria	La Boite Theatre Company
Abbotsford Convent	Live Performance Australia
APAM (Australian Performing Arts Market)	Malthouse Theatre
Arena Theatre Company	Melbourne Festival
ArtPlay	Melbourne Fringe
Arts Centre Melbourne	Melbourne Theatre Company
Arts Front Feral Arts	Multicultural Arts Victoria
Arts Industry Council of South Australia	Museums Australia (Victoria)
Arts Industry Council of Victoria	Music Australia
Arts Wellbeing Collective	Music Victoria
ASSITEJ International	Northern Territory Arts and Cultural Network
Ausdance National	Observership Program
Ausdance VIC	OIP funded Metropolitan Festivals Group
Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG)	Performing Arts Connections Australia
Bell Shakespeare	Public Galleries Association Victoria (PGAV)
BlakDance	Queensland Chamber of Arts and Culture
Brisbane Powerhouse	Queensland Theatre
Brunswick Mechanics Institute	Regional Arts Australia
Buniil Place	Regional Arts Victoria
Carclew	South Australian Circus Centre – Home of Cirkidz Inc
Chamber of Arts and Culture WA (CACWA)	Safe Theatres Australia
Circus Oz	School of Culture and Communication, The University of Melbourne
Cluster Arts	Showcase Victoria
Confederation of Australian State Theatres	St Albans Community Centre
Creative Industries Advisory Board (Victoria)	Sydney Arts Management Advisory Group (SAMAG)
Creative Victoria Respectful Workplaces Advisory Group	Symphony Services Australia
Dance Massive	Tasmania Performs (Performing Lines)
Deakin University's Arts and Cultural Management Program	The Childers Group
Diversity Arts Australia	Theatre Network NSW
Foundry 658 Accelerator	Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC)
Green Room Awards Association	Vision Australia Radio 'Behind the Scenes'
Justice Connect	Writers Victoria



CREATIVE VICTORIA



SIDNEY MYER FUND

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