

JANUARY
|
DECEMBER

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ANNUAL REPORT

THEATRE NETWORK AUSTRALIA [TNA]



ADVANCING THE
PERFORMING ARTS

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➤ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF **COUNTRY**

As a national organisation, TNA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the unceded lands on which we meet, gather and work, especially the people of the Kulin nation where our main office is based.

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



A group of people, mostly women, are seated at a long table in a community meeting. Many of them have their hands raised in the air, some pointing upwards. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue light source on the left creating a strong blue shadow over the participants. The background is dark and out of focus.

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Founded by the sector in 2009, TNA strengthens artists and arts organisations, influences cultural policy, facilitates critical debate and networking, and advocates for a safe, healthy and relevant sector.

TNA believes in the central role that creativity plays in a society.

- We work towards a more diverse and fairer performing arts sector that puts First Nations people first.
- We value independent artists, small to medium companies and large organisations, and we want greater interconnections between them.
- We believe in life-long learning. We support different models of working, and we value flexibility.
- We advocate for fair pay and conditions for our sector. We know that risk and experimentation are important.
- We foster ongoing, respectful and challenging conversations that connect us, open new ideas, and lead to a stronger sector.

In practical terms this means TNA:

- Runs industry forums
- Delivers workshops on current issues for the sector
- Drives advocacy campaigns in partnership with other service organisations and the sector
- Undertakes and promotes research and benchmarking
- Provides advice to industry, the education sector and government
- Provides information and resources through our popular e-news and the online resource library.

We design our work to address the gaps, and our approach is underpinned by a spirit of care, deep listening, and trust in the sector's capacity to make progress.

First
Nations
people first

We value
independent
artists and
small to medium
companies

Fair pay
and
conditions

Advocate,
influence,
facilitate and
connect

Diverse
and
fair



ABOUT TNA

Chapter 1

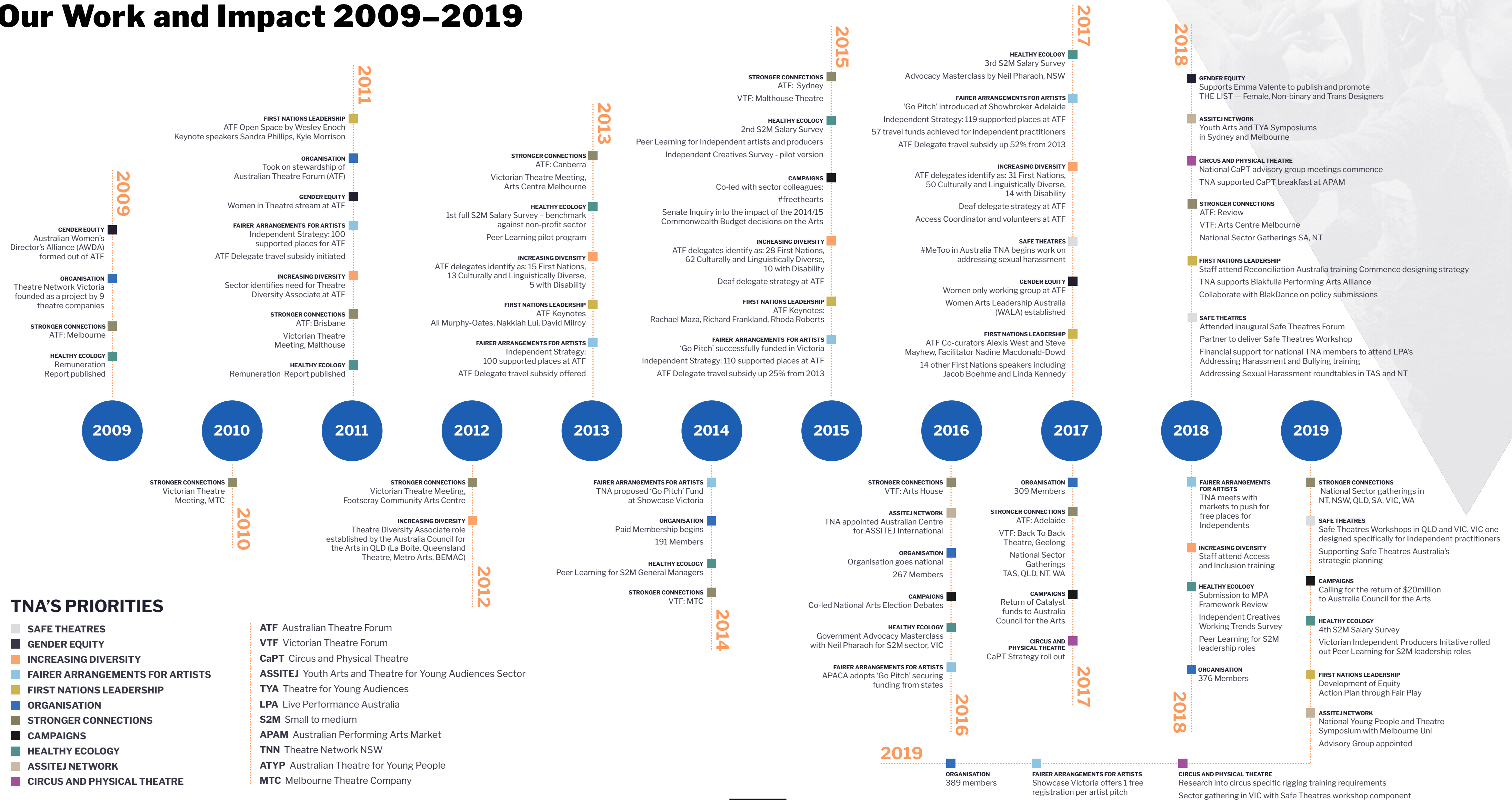
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Our Work and Impact 2009–2019





“TNA is always critical and incredibly effective, but never more so than throughout this year—you have been a driving force in supporting the performing arts sector, particularly the independent sector, through some extraordinarily challenging times.”

NEIGHBOURHOOD Gathering - February 2020 at Meat Market. **Photo: Sarah Walker.**

Chair's Report

Whilst many arts organisations may have ‘pandemic’ listed in their risk registers, it is unlikely to have commanded much attention as the likelihood ranking would have been low.

Well, 2020 has changed all of that, and the sector is to be congratulated for managing such a significant and debilitating upheaval—and more importantly, for identifying what long-lasting benefits can emerge from this disruption.

At TNA, rather than feeling powerless to help, the staff stepped up activity and support. Immediately, TNA staff took our lead from members who were asking for help, and provided analysis and clarification on the mass of information including restrictions, how to sign up for JobKeeper or JobSeeker, and how to access the different local, state and federal support funds.

The most significant new project was the launch of 1000 x 1000 Crisis Cash for Independents. Whilst the sector welcomed the emergency funding from federal, state and local governments, it was clear that many artists needed immediate cash support, as they were not eligible for these programs. We are delighted that with Creative Partnerships Australia matched funding, and the promotional support of 72 companies, at the time of writing the campaign has raised over \$330,000 from 357 donors.

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REPORTS

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Advocacy to government also increased, and TNA saw the need for strong collaboration with other peak bodies and service organisations, ensuring that the messaging was cohesive and clear. The Federal Government's welcome rescue package of \$250 million was in no small part due to a sustained effort by the whole performing arts sector, which showed the undeniable damage that COVID-19 had on the industry.

TNA has again shown sector leadership with the development of its Equity Action Plan (EQAP), which was undertaken as part of the organisation's participation in Diversity Arts Australia's Fair Play Program in 2019 and 2020. The plan is based on the knowledge that we must embed transformational change and pursue genuine equity within all areas of our work, including governance, staffing, programming, and engagement.

The EQAP is a living and publicly available document, which we will report against, and it ensures that we remain transparent and inclusive at every turn. We have and will continue to provide ongoing opportunities for feedback, evaluation and process change within the organisation, and to share our successes and challenges.

To the TNA staff—Jamie, Rani, Simone, Yuhui, Tessa, Bethany and Nicole, who are tireless in their dedication to the sector—congratulations on everything you achieved in 2020 against all odds.

We wish Jamie and Simone, who are moving on in early 2021, all the best in their new roles leading key sector companies.

I also thank the TNA Board for their fearless advocacy and support over the year. We now have Board members in Tasmania, Sydney, regional NSW/Victoria, and Darwin, who provide great insight into the differing needs and issues across the country.

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 managed emergency COVID-19 funding programs with unprecedented demand. Importantly, thank you to our most generous donors who supported the Crisis Cash campaign.

I would also like to thank our members for being the true heart and soul of our organisation. Membership has grown almost 25% in the past year, reaffirming the importance of TNA. Thank you for supporting our work in the most turbulent year we have ever experienced.

JILL SMITH AM.

Chair



Executive Director's Report

For organisations whose role is to support the sector, 2020 became a year where our relevance and role was tested. In TNA's case, it also highlighted some of the existing vulnerabilities and fault lines within the sector, pointing us to where service organisations need to direct more attention. TNA's strategic plan held up well—pursuing a safe, healthy and relevant sector, within a framework of justice and equity, has never been more apt. We also managed to keep all staff on, and to change the type of work we had planned, shifting to immediate support and guidance.

Early on in 2020, TNA undertook 20 long-form consultation sessions with independent and company members from across Australia. We wanted to get an idea of how the sector was faring with the COVID-19 impact, and to inform our advocacy going forward. The resulting report provided a trove of rich insight, and this quote sums up the situation well:

Overall, these consultations highlighted that this is a time of extreme change—personally and professionally—and it has brought about some deep thinking and realisation. Whilst there has been a significant increase in a sense of connectivity for many, it has also brought to the surface some age-old tensions about funding structures, presenter and producer relationships, and artist and company negotiations.

We knew that in advocating for emergency Government support we needed facts relating to the impact on the sector. With others undertaking

extensive valuable macro research, TNA focused on the independent sector and launched a survey amongst members—283 valid responses were received. Independent creatives were some of the hardest hit - losing artistic projects and over 80% of their other work. The performing arts sector is deeply interconnected—our company members large and small reported massive box-office and contract fee losses, but they still worked as hard as possible to keep artists paid through online programs, workshops, and creative developments.

Like most, some of TNA's programs also had to be put online. Our Safe Theatres workshops in New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia went ahead, with a new model of in-person satellite rooms joining each other virtually, along with our guest speakers and the TNA team online. These workshops completed our national rollout of the scenario-based peer-learning, a commitment made at the first 2018 Safe Theatres Forum.

Safety in our workplaces continues to be a key goal for the sector—not just to provide workplaces free from sexual harassment and bullying, but also free from racism, disability discrimination, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, and free from physical and mental ill-health risks of COVID-19 and its impact.

Along with the advocacy we undertook with our colleagues to call for a rescue package, we also worked with members and colleagues to ensure

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that the Federal Inquiry into Creative Industries and Institutions heard loudly and clearly what was needed. We were pleased that 10% of the submissions were by TNA members, and a further 12% from colleague organisations. TNA also helped to brief people appearing as witnesses, and strongly supported A New Approach's goal of an Arts and Culture Plan. At time of writing, this idea looks set to be recommended by the Committee.

TNA's dedicated Victorian program also proved vital in 2020. Being based in the hardest hit state, TNA was able to provide vital advocacy, information and guidance for our Victorian members about the COVID-19 impact and the ever-changing Restricted Activity Directions. Despite the restrictions, our Victorian Independent Producers Initiative (VIPI) ramped up, with the roll-out of two cohorts of the mentorship program and two rounds of Unlocking Capacity grants, along with several online salons, and some refreshing in-person events towards the end of the year. We also ran a brand new paid leadership program (Power Play) for ten independents.

My deep thanks to the TNA Board, led by the Executive Jill Smith, Erica McCalman, Caroline Bowditch and Lou Oppenheim. The Board has been the most incredibly supportive and committed bunch of people at a time when we really needed that combination of strength and support, along with flexibility and a willingness to try new things.

I also give enormous thanks to the TNA team. Saying farewell to Bethany in March with a celebration that included a dinner and Karaoke now seems outrageous—who would sing into a mic that someone else has just sung into!

I thank Bethany for her five years of strategic work and for giving TNA its deep focus on independent artists. Jamie left TNA at the end of the year to take up the CEO role at Next Wave. Jamie provided not just her communications prowess and care for the circus sector, but also a wise and caring approach in the office—cooked lunches included!

Welcoming Tessa Leong to the team in April was also very COVID-19 specific—her first interview in person and her second online, moving to Sydney in July when we realised the great opportunities afforded to us by a more online world. Tessa, along with Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez, Rani Pramesti, Jamie Lewis, Simone Schinkel and Bethany Simons are the best colleagues I could imagine working alongside, and I thank them for their excellent work, their warm support for the sector and members, and for the great rapport we managed despite working from home for nine months of the year.

And of course, the biggest thanks to the rest of the sector for getting through 2020—our members, participants and attendees, our excellent flat-mates at APAM, our contractors, our funders, our media colleagues, the politicians and advisers we work alongside, and all of the amazing donors to our Crisis Cash campaign.

NICOLE BEYER

Executive Director



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that TNA (Theatre Network Au Inc.) has returned a surplus of \$79,557 for 2020, on a turnover of \$1,176,231. This now means that the organisation has total reserves of \$173,000 of which \$87,000 is committed to TNA's future work, specifically in the area of Safe Theatres and Events, supported by the Sidney Myer Fund, and 2021 programming deferred from 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 shutdowns. Given the broader challenges faced by our community as a result of the pandemic, and likely reductions in earned income sources in the immediate future, the Board is anticipating deficit budgets for 2021 and possibly 2022. Therefore, our reserves will continue to enable TNA to successfully deliver its broad range of Victorian and national activities, supporting the sector to regain its voice and vitality.

Revenue and expenses both grew by over \$450,000, primarily due the flow-through impacts of a full year of the Creative Victoria VIPI program and the 1000 x 1000 Crisis Cash campaign, both managed by TNA to support and develop the sector. TNA was also able to maintain its staffing levels during this time through the support of the Federal Government JobKeeper program. Savings in areas such as travel were reinvested in

professional development, supporting staff to work-from-home and the TNA website and sector communication tools, including Auslan interpreters for online events.

I congratulate the executive team for their strategic and financially sustainable management during a challenging year, and for providing the organisation a strong foundation on which to continue its contribution to the sector as it rejuvenates.

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 companies and independent artists and producers. The 2020 audit was undertaken by Sean Denham and Associates and a full copy of the audited statements is available on request.

LOU OPPENHEIM

Treasurer



“ TNA has been a phenomenal advocacy body and your dedication and commitment to supporting our industry during this pandemic has really been so appreciated.”



NEIGHBOURHOOD at Meat Market. Photo: Sarah Walker.

Advocacy in the Time of COVID-19

In 2020 our advocacy activities included pre-budget submissions, working with nine other performing arts peak bodies to align our key messages, meeting with the arts Minister, adviser and other federal MPs, and responding to media requests for sector insight and data. In addition, as the sector closed down, we also spoke up for and represented companies and independents in many forums, highlighting the huge devastation that occurred.

TNA has a dedicated Victorian program, and in Victoria we take on an additional advocacy role. This includes a responsibility in the development and implementation of the Victorian Government’s Creative Industries policy specifically through the Creative Industries Advisory Group and our co-convenor role with the Arts Industry Council of Victoria (AICV). In 2020, we also provided specific guidance for the Victorian sector amidst the long lockdowns.



COVID-19 Impact Sector Insight

TNA staff were called on throughout the year to advise a wide range of agencies and organisations on the impact that COVID-19 shutdowns were having on the performing arts sector. These included:

- Fortnightly Industry Roundtable convened by Australia Council for the Arts and the Federal Office for the Arts
- COVID-19 impact roundtables with Minister Paul Fletcher; with Labor's Tony Burke and Josh Burns; and with Greens' Sarah Hanson-Young
- Meetings with philanthropic organisations including The Myer Foundation, Besen Family Foundation, and Ian Potter Foundation
- Several roundtables with Creative Victoria and Events Victoria
- Meetings and roundtables with Australia Council for the Arts executive staff
- Gender Victoria's COVID and Women consultation
- Multiple media representatives and journalists
- Fellow peak bodies in the performing arts peak group, along with Support Act and NAVA
- Government Inquiries: Victorian and NSW Public Accounts Committee (PAC) inquiries into COVID-19 Impact; Federal Inquiry into Creative Industries and Institutions (submission and public hearing briefing for TNA colleagues and members).

Advocacy for Four-Year Funded Organisations

TNA's advocacy for four-year funded organisations continued into 2020, as the Australia Council for the Arts began assessing 162 short-listed organisations. TNA prepared modelling to show that without injection of further funds, there would be approximately 30 fewer organisations receiving funding than the existing cohort of 124.

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TNA also provided advice to the Federal Minister for the Arts and the Office of the Arts that an investment of \$16million p/a to the Australia Council for the Arts' Four-Year Funding program would secure at least 652 current jobs and create 200 new jobs. Despite the devastating outcome that we predicted—95 organisations funded, down from 124—companies were grateful for the modelling as a tool for ensuring boards undertook planning for a worst-case outcome.

Federal Inquiry into the Creative Industries and Institutions

TNA's submission to the Inquiry, which closed October 21st, included:

- Support for the call for a National Arts and Culture Plan, similar to Sport 2030, to be implemented across the Australian Government
- An emphasis on the importance of the arms-length Australia Council for the Arts, to avoid a skew away from supporting project grants for independents and the subsidised performing arts companies
- Proposal for an investment in a Guarantee Against Loss program so that large and small presenters feel confident in programming many months ahead
- A summary of the impact of COVID-19 on the independent sector, using data from our report.

TNA's Circus and Physical Theatre Advisory Group prepared its own submission, quoting research showing that for every dollar invested for a child in a circus training program, seven dollars are potentially saved in their future mental health costs.

After the Inquiry was announced, TNA prepared a template of the Inquiry survey, to assist members in writing a submission: 35 (10%) of the final 348 submissions were TNA members. A further 45 (12%) engage regularly with TNA.

TNA worked with colleagues in other peak bodies to encourage witnesses at the hearings, in order to back a unified call for an Arts and Culture Plan. TNA also met with and spoke to Committee members from the Labor, National and Liberal parties. The final Committee report is due in 2021.



Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Handling of NSW Government's Approach to COVID-19

TNA co-presented at the PAC Inquiry into the handling of the NSW Government's approach to COVID-19 in September, alongside our sister organisation Theatre Network NSW. We prepared a detailed submission of the sector's insight, drawing on TNA's independent artist report *THIS IS HOW WE DO IT 2020* (48 NSW responses), TNN's *2020 NSW Government Grant Survey Outcomes* (86 responses), and additional company member insight from 18 NSW company members.

We showed the severe impact of COVID-19 on the NSW sector—55% of NSW respondents are financially worse off now due to the impacts of COVID-19, compared to 49% of Victorian respondents and 50% of the overall respondents.

We revealed that only 5.56% of respondents are satisfied with the NSW Government's communications to the arts sector. 66.67% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Tellingly, no respondents were satisfied with the NSW Arts Minister's advocacy for the arts sector. 94% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

“ There will be a real need for Create NSW to engage with the other State funding agencies because with the new COVID world there will not be much international touring for a very long time. There will be an opportunity for quite a lot of national touring and exchange of work across the country but what that is going to require again is consistency across State boundaries. So building a tour across several different State borders will mean that you will want to have the same COVID-safe definitions across the country. My members are saying that that will be needed before people feel confident enough to build a national tour.”

Nicole Beyer

Transcript, Hearing into the NSW Government's Handling of COVID-19



NEIGHBOURHOOD at Meat Market. **Photo: Sarah Walker.**

Australia Council for the Arts' Re-imagine Consultation

TNA submitted a formal response to Australia Council for the Arts' Re-imagine consultation, and encouraged members to complete the survey or attend a consultation session. We called for a funded Youth Arts and Culture plan or strategy as an urgent priority.

We also proposed a formal sector engagement strategy by the Australia Council for the Arts, which is actionable and measurable.

The proposal included:

- Council staff participation in sector forums
- a formal meeting plan with peak bodies
- a better communications strategy (which empowers different people within Council to communicate regularly with their constituents)
- brokering dialogue with other portfolios
- a suggestion about the role Council could play in unifying national advocacy through strategic small meetings and supporting independents on a paid advisory board.

TNA has regular meetings with the Australia Council for the Arts staff to progress these ideas.

Champions for Arts and Culture

Throughout June–October 2020, TNA Program Producer, Rani Pramesti, was a participant in Democracy in Colour’s Create Change Fellowship program. As a result, TNA used the strategic advocacy frameworks from that program in a new advocacy project led by TNA members. This became a pilot program for what we hope will become a national initiative in future years.

As part of this project, in October 2020, TNA recruited 15 of our members living in strategic federal electorates. Across two briefings, TNA outlined our Theory of Change (our approach to adopting more of an organising model) and our long-term and short-term campaign goals. We helped members understand the best ways to engage their local Members of Parliament. Attendees were energised and felt supported by TNA to do this work, and went on to contact their local MPs. Those who were initially reluctant were pleasantly surprised by the genuine rapport that they were able to build with their MP.

“ We [the MP and I] spent 30 minutes talking and it felt like we made a genuine connection. Thanks so much for getting this action organised, happy to play my part!”



TNA's office launch at Studio 6, The Guild. Photo: Danni Rodriguez.



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 sectors.

In 2020, TNA staff facilitated, presented at or spoke at the following meetings and panels:

- Contemporary Asian Australian Performance Longhouse
—*The Longhouse Gathers*
- Arts Industry Council of Victoria (Co-Convenor)
- VicHealth Partnership Grants consultation
- Australia Council for the Arts
Re-imagine: What next? consultation sessions
- Victorian College of the Arts Bachelor of Fine Arts (Theatre)
Third Year guest presentation
- *Transforming Arts Centre Melbourne* roundtables
- Dancehouse's *Independent Dance Forum*
- NIDA cultural leadership student interviews
- Creative Victoria's *Reopening Strategy Working Group*
- Youth Arts Sector Meeting
- Green Room Awards Association strategic advice
- Asialink's *Public Displays of Affection* seminar
- ASSITEJ International General Assembly meetings and
Regional Coffee Sessions
- City of Melbourne—consultation regarding grant funding
guidelines for 2021.



It is a great credit to TNA that the issues resulting from the pandemic are now better understood and more overtly being addressed on government agendas.”



TNA Member Consultation—COVID-19 Pandemic

From April to June 2020, TNA conducted twenty long-form discussions with artists, producers and managers who work in theatre, youth arts, community and cultural development, dance, circus and festivals to gain insight into the impact of COVID-19 on the sector.

Consultations foregrounded the interdependency of physical, financial and mental health of the individuals we spoke to; as artists, managers of staff, collaborators with artists, and as part of a greater community. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on participants varied from relatively minor to devastating. The most obvious losses were the closing down of office spaces, rehearsals, theatres and venues, and the cancellation of shows, tours, community events and workshops. Many experienced major losses of income, some up to 70% of decreased income in the first month of the shutdown.

“Ours is an industry inscribed by poor mental health at the best of times—and this is the worst of times.”

As usual, it was independent artists who felt the most precarious at a time with no other safety nets. Artists across the board applied for the barrage of small, quick response grants. Many were not eligible for JobSeeker or JobKeeper due to contract or part-time work, or freelance peaks and troughs. Across the arts there was fear about the end of the subsidies.

Member companies underwent their own crises as venues and larger organisations attempted to navigate the government packages trying to find the best way forward, knowing that micro-ecologies of artists, crew and staff relied on them.

Overall, these consultations highlighted a time of extreme change, personally and professionally, which has brought about some deep thinking and realisations. Whilst there has been a significant increase in a sense of connectivity for many, it has also brought to the surface some age-old tensions about funding structures, presenter and producer relationships, artist and company negotiations, and transparency.

TNA used the findings of this research to inform our ongoing advocacy throughout the year with media, other peak bodies, government agencies, and politicians. It was incredibly useful to have rich, deep descriptions of the daily and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on individuals and companies. We also heard from the interviewees from companies that they were able to send the deidentified report to their boards to give them a broad illustration of how others were faring too.

“We were on a trajectory that is no longer there—we need to build another one and engage people’s interest in that—which will be another challenge.”



THIS IS HOW WE DO IT 2020: Indie Survey Report

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT 2020: TNA's Report on the Working Trends of Independent Artists and Creatives in the Performing Arts in Australia analyses results from 283 valid responses from independent artists and creatives to an online survey conducted in July–August 2020. Surveyed independent artists were paid for their participation. This second survey provides some comparison to the results from the first report in 2018. The report was released via an online 'speed briefing' on 8 December with 33 attendees.

The 2020 report outlines

- Independent artists are increasingly working across different artforms, in multiple roles across projects, and with varied working arrangements
- Surveyed artists worked on more creative projects in 2019 compared to 2017 to make ends meet, working an average of about 12 projects per year
- Almost 70% of respondents maintain some form of employment outside of their creative practice, with some engaged in more than one job
- The majority of independent artists set rates on a case-by-case basis and many do not have a standard amount that they charge (see full report for details on current rates)
- Worryingly, 8% of respondents either did not know if they had any, or had no superannuation, which has grown from the 3% reported in 2017.



I have never lived in a more stressful time (mentally, emotionally, physically and financially)."



JobKeeper has allowed me the first stable income I've ever had."



RESEARCH AND **RESOURCES**

Chapter 4

THEATRE NETWORK AUSTRALIA

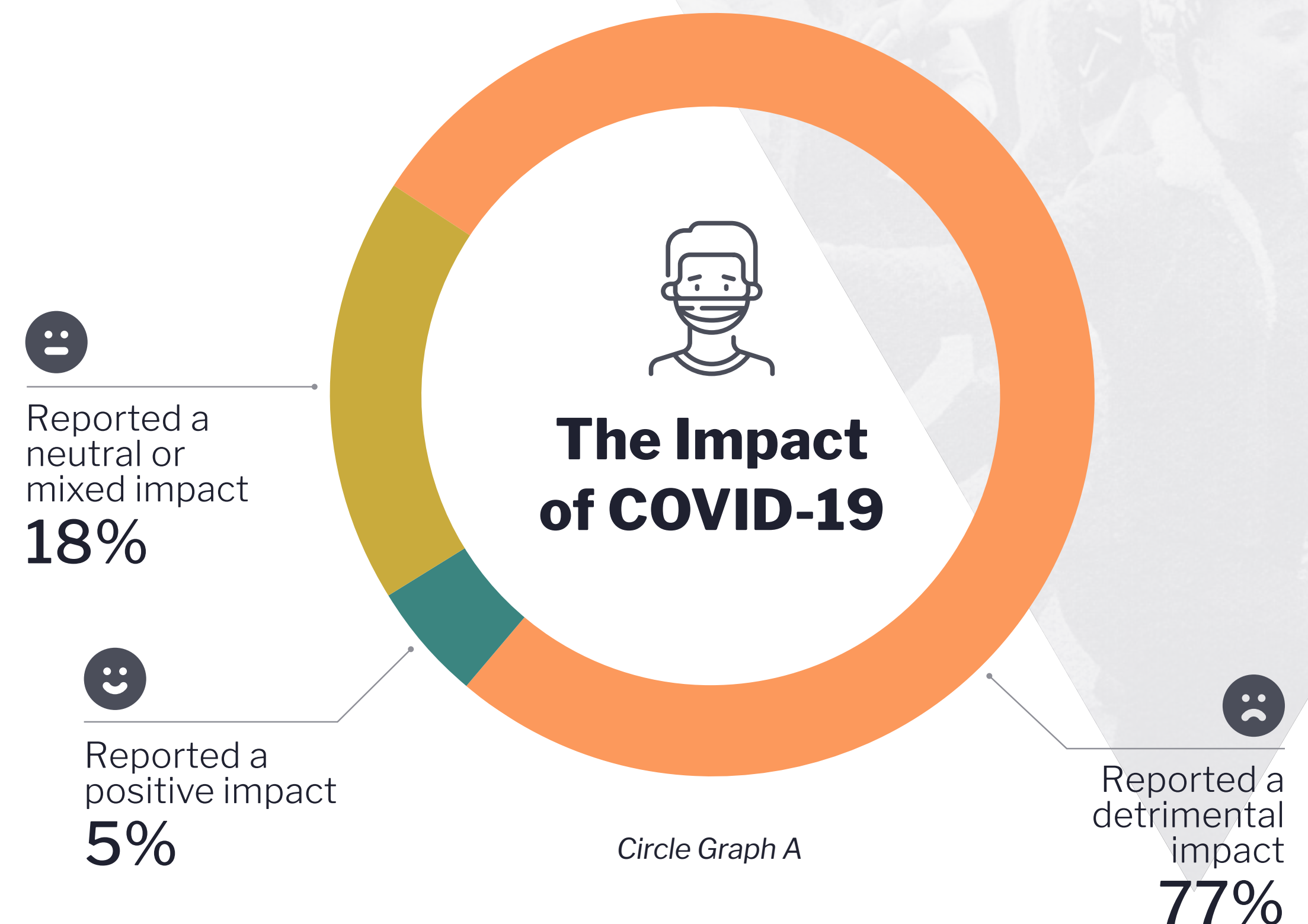
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COVID-19 impacts:

- 77% of respondents reported a detrimental impact; 5% reported a positive impact (*Circle Graph A*)
- There was an average of 5 creative projects planned for respondents in 2020 before the impact of COVID-19; this decreased to an average of 1.5 for these same respondents because of the impact of the pandemic
- Fewer emerging artists reported being impacted than mid-career artists, with the highest financial impact felt by established artists, as more are relying solely on their practice for income
- 83% of independent artists who have other employment lost work due to COVID-19
- 12% of respondents relocated due to COVID-19; of those that relocated, 45% said it was to be with family or friends
- 11% of respondents accessed their superannuation due to COVID-19 (this was on par with the Australian population)
- 61% of respondents accessed JobKeeper or JobSeeker support
- 1 in 3 respondents accessed mental health services due to the impact of COVID-19.



The report has led to greater understanding, appreciation and valuing of independent artists' working realities across the sector. TNA has used it as evidence in government inquiries and sector consultation processes to demonstrate the severe impact of COVID-19 on independent artists.



RESEARCH AND **RESOURCES**

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2020 REPORT

➤ **THIS IS HOW WE DO IT**

TNA's Report on the Working Trends of Independent Artists and Creatives in the Performing Arts in Australia

theatre
network
australia

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“If the general public knew how little most artists, even well-known and popular ones, had to live on, they would be shocked beyond belief!”
- Independent Artist, 2020

tna.org.au



If the general public knew how little most artists, even well-known and popular ones, had to live on, they would be shocked beyond belief!”



A sobering read, but so important.”



Thank you and the team for your ongoing diligence and effectiveness in the fight for recognition for the Independent theatre sector.”

 [Read the full Report](#)



TNA Circus/Entertainment Rigging Report 2019/20

TNA in collaboration with the 2018-2019 CaPT Advisory Group, conducted a survey in 2019, publishing the *Circus & Entertainment Rigging Survey Report* in 2020. It gauged the need for Circus-specific rigging accreditation, and received responses from riggers, circus artists, programmers, presenters and venue managers. TNA also consulted with organisations including Showtech and the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA).

Findings include:

- There is a clear demand for a CaPT-specific, defined, industry standard for rigging and safety
- 88.98% of respondents feel that there is currently a lack of trained circus-specific riggers
- 94% of respondents think there is a need for a circus industry-based certificate to demonstrate that a rigger has circus-based competency
- Establishing industry-specific standard certification and industry standards would require establishing specific training standards, acknowledging that Circus rigging is a creative, as well as technical, endeavour. However, there are concerns as to who would be the provider of such a certification, and how the monitoring of this industry standard would happen
- Survey responses indicate that some presenters and venues lack an understanding or awareness of the role of riggers, and more broadly of what Circus works require where rigging is concerned. In parallel to this, 82% respondents stated they would be more inclined to program or present work involving rigging if they had easy access to circus-specific riggers.

As a result, TNA has committed to advocate for the inclusion of circus-specific training in current rigger accreditation through a number of direct actions outlined in the report.

 [Read the full Report](#)



TNA's Equity Action Plan

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, beginning in 2019. The focus of the program was on developing organisations' skills and capacity in working with three groups: First Nations people, Deaf/Disabled people, and people from underrepresented cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

We engaged in Equity and Inclusion planning sessions with trainers engaged by Diversity Arts Australia, including Dr Paula Abood, Genevieve Grieves, Hoa Pham, Eleanor Jackson and Nur Shkembi.

Through our participation in Fair Play, we created TNA's Equity Action Plan, with the following four targets:

- Developing a key reading list and associated policy for core staff and Board inductions, with a focus on anti-racist, anti-ableist and anti-discrimination resources
- Creating a Succession Plan for governance and executive leadership within TNA
- Formalising our relationship with Arts Access Victoria to design and deliver programs, events and activities
- Creating paid positions across all levels of TNA for the three target demographics of CaLD, Deaf/Disabled, First Nations people.

 [Read the full EQAP](#)

“FANTASTIC work on this recent bulletin. Very encouraging to see anti-racist resources here, and the promotion of First Nations opportunities.”

“Thank you for all the care and attention to my access needs in the organising of the day, and during the session. It all added up.”



VIPI session at Malthouse. **Photo: Wild Hardt.**

VIPI Consultation and Re-design

TNA continued to deliver the Victorian Independent Producers Initiative (VIPI) in 2020. Due to COVID-19, throughout May, TNA led a consultation with 32 Victorian independent producers to inform the redesign of Round Two of the VIPI Producers Mentorship Program and Unlocking Capacity. All four target groups for engagement were consulted: First Peoples, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse peoples, Deaf/Disabled people and people based regionally.

The Producers Mentorship Program was redesigned into an independent producers' lab model and the Unlocking Capacity grants' selection criteria were revised to allow for work that was relationships-focused, with room to remodel independent producing practices. This was in response to COVID-19 but it also encouraged applicants to consider their sustainability holistically as a practitioner.

“ The opportunity and willingness to consult and listen and take all things into consideration is really commendable.”

“ Thanks so much for including me in the process, what an amazing group that was, it was so nice to hear from producers during this time and of course, your facilitation was so generous and open—thank you.”



RESEARCH AND **RESOURCES**

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'Collision' directed by SMASH Bursary winner, Natano Fa'anana, Casus Circus. **Photo: Aaron Walker.**

COVID-19 Reopening and Rebuilding

TNA prepared information to support artists and companies in relation to re-opening our industry safely, and re-building it to be better and fairer than it was before COVID-19. Delivered via online peer learning sessions, the e-news, and the TNA website, these timely and practical resources covered state vs federal guidelines, audience sentiment, presenter intentions (by PAC Australia), protocols for reopening spaces, risk assessments, and Work Health and Safety. We also developed resources supporting independent performing arts workers and Access for Deaf/Disabled people and others with different needs.



University Partnerships

Creating Out Loud: Developing sustainable peer-mentoring to rebuild the arts post COVID-19—University Of Queensland

TNA joined UQ researcher Dr Kate Power and 3 Lead Industry Partners (LIPs)—Queensland Ballet, La Boite Theatre, and ArtsNexus, and National Association of Visual Arts—in an Industry Reference group for this new project. This Fellowship will evaluate the use of “Working Out Loud” (WOL) Circles within the Queensland arts sector, with a view to the following outcomes:

- 1** A structured Arts and Culture Peer-mentoring Program (ACPP) tailored to the Queensland arts sector
- 2** An Industry Report on research findings, supported by industry-facing workshops, seminars, and social media releases promoting uptake of the ACPP
- 3** Scholarly publications reporting on research findings.

Arts and Cultural Management Program—Deakin University

Playing an active role on the Advisory Board of the Arts and Cultural Management (ACM) program in the Faculty of Business and Law at Deakin University, TNA provides advice to the Faculty in areas of opportunity and improvement for the courses or disciplines offered. In 2020 we participated in the Major Course Review, bringing deep insight into how COVID-19 will affect future education and training needs of the sector.

Creative Convergence—University of Melbourne

TNA continued our role as an Industry Partner Investigator on the multi-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant project, led by University of Melbourne, titled *Creative Convergence: Enhancing Impact in Regional Theatre for Young People*. The project examines the work of 6 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.



“ I was really interested in a culturally specific scenario and how a production handles the nuances of varying views within a cultural context.”

TNA's Jamie Lewis facilitating at NEIGHBOURHOOD. Photo: Sarah Walker.

Safe Theatres Workshops

In 2020 TNA delivered our Safe Theatres program in three states—WA, SA and NSW—for over 60 artists working across Theatre, Circus and Physical Theatre. This continued the rollout of our national workshops delivered over two years, a commitment made by TNA after the inaugural Safe Theatres Forum run by Safe Theatres Australia's Eryn Jean Norvill and Sophie Ross in 2018. The goal was to further equip the performing arts sector with a practical understanding of the issues, resources available, legislative environment, and what their role is in addressing sexual harassment and bullying in our industry.

The model for the workshops was a series of in-person 'satellite rooms' joining other 'breakout rooms' online, along with the presenters from Live Performance Australia, Safe Theatres Australia and TNA facilitator, Jamie Lewis.

“ It's so exciting to have these resources available and that these conversations are becoming more normalised.”



VIPI session at Studio 6, The Guild. Photo: Wild Hardt.

The Victorian Independent Producers Initiative (VIPI)

VIPI is a major new sector development program that TNA began in mid-2019 and continued to deliver successfully throughout 2020. 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 was established to support independent producers, and through them, independent artists and companies in the performing arts. VIPI is an initiative of the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, delivered in partnership with TNA.

From over 300 enquiries received about VIPI, 21 producers were funded through VIPI's Unlocking Capacity and Producers Mentorship Program, including 90% from TNA's target groups.



This initiative isn't just about fostering more indie producers, it's also about bringing new perspectives and voices into our performing arts sector."

Mr Danny Pearson, (Minister for Creative Industries)



CAPACITY BUILDING

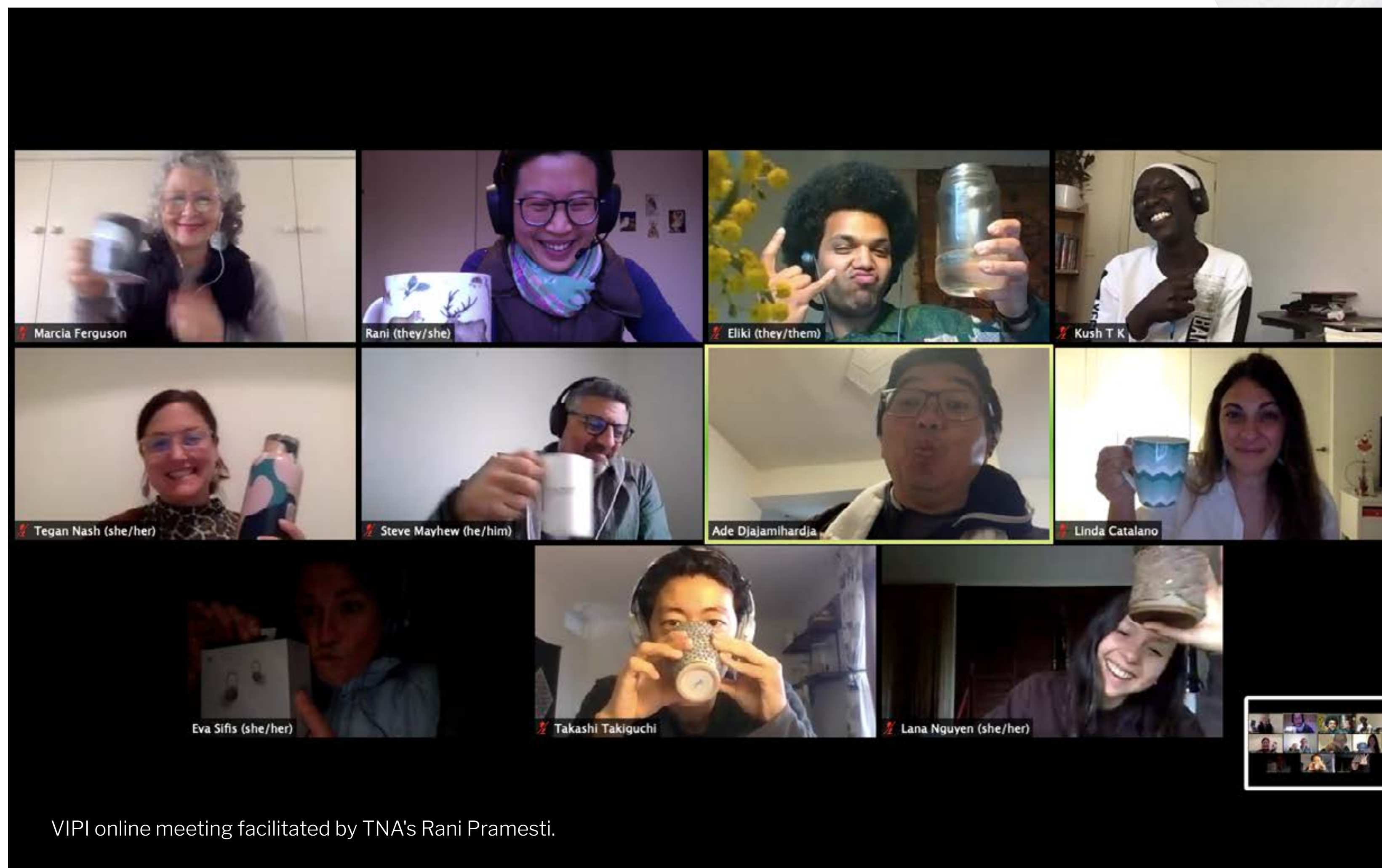
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Highlights from the 2020 VIPI Program

► *Producers Mentorship Program*

(Cohort 1): Marcia Ferguson, Josh Francis, Nilgün Güven-Bouras, Erin Milne, Efren Pamilacan, Natasha Phillips, Naomi Velaphi, Freya Waterson.

(Cohort 2): Ade Djajamihardja, Kuichiang “Kush” Tut Kuiy, Steve Mayhew, Tegan Nash, Lana Nguyen, Eliko (Alec) Reade, Eva Sifis, Takashi Takiguchi.

► *Unlocking Capacity Grants*

(Round 1): Linda Catalano, Heidi Everett, Erin Milne.

(Round 2): Kath Papas, Sonya Soares, Malia Walsh and Freya Waterson.

“ This cohort are reimagining the contribution that independent producers can make in addressing the multiple crises of colonialism, climate change and capitalism and how they manifest in the performing arts.” Rani Pramesti (VIPI Program Producer)

► *Salon: Independent Intercultural Producing — ‘Best’ Practice, ‘Failed’ Practice (June)*

Featuring: Bo Svoronos from 3kps and Ejan Tan from Toccata Studio (Malaysia).

► *Salon: What is producing? (August)*

Featuring: Alison Halit, Freya Waterson, Ade Djajamihardja, Kuan Cien Hoo from Producers SG.

► *VIPI Coaching Sessions for Independent Artists (September–December):*

1-hour coaching sessions involving a Victorian-based independent artist and an independent producer. Both were paid for the session.

“ Thank you TNA for the opportunity to have a one-hour mentorship session... It was a great hour and the independent producer was kind, generous and provided not only advice but life experience.”



Producers Funded Through VIPI's Unlocking Capacity and Producers Mentorship Program

Total number of
funded Producers

21

Producers funded who
are based regionally

2

Producers funded who
identify as Deaf/Disabled

4

Producers funded who identify as Culturally and
Linguistically Diverse and/or People of Colour

12



VIPI session at Malthouse.
Photo: Wild Hardt.



CAPACITY BUILDING

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Webinar: Planning for a Future We Can't Imagine

In response to requests from TNA company members for skills and resources for new forms of planning within the context of COVID-19, TNA, in partnership with Creative Victoria, designed a one-hour session to give insight from two planning experts, David Sharpe (Business Advisor, Sharpe Advisory) and Jackie Bailey (Principal and Founder, BYP Group). The webinar included an introduction by Jane Crawley (Executive Director Creative Industries, Creative Victoria), and the 46 registered delegates, all TNA members, received tools and further reading as virtual 'handouts' following the session.

“Of all the webinars I've attended over the last few months, this was one of the best.”

Power Play—Stage 1

The inaugural Power Play program, supported by Creative Victoria, was a paid strategic leadership program with the aim to develop and support 10 independents in the performing arts by providing them with broader arts sector understanding, access to decision makers, specialised training and experience, community insight, and advice from leaders.

The program began in October 2020 and will run until March 2021. Participants are Ching Ching Ho, Bron Batten, Jack Sheppard, Deanne Butterworth, Lana Nguyen, Steph Cox, Harley Mann, Tiara S, Eliko Reade and Desiree Tan.



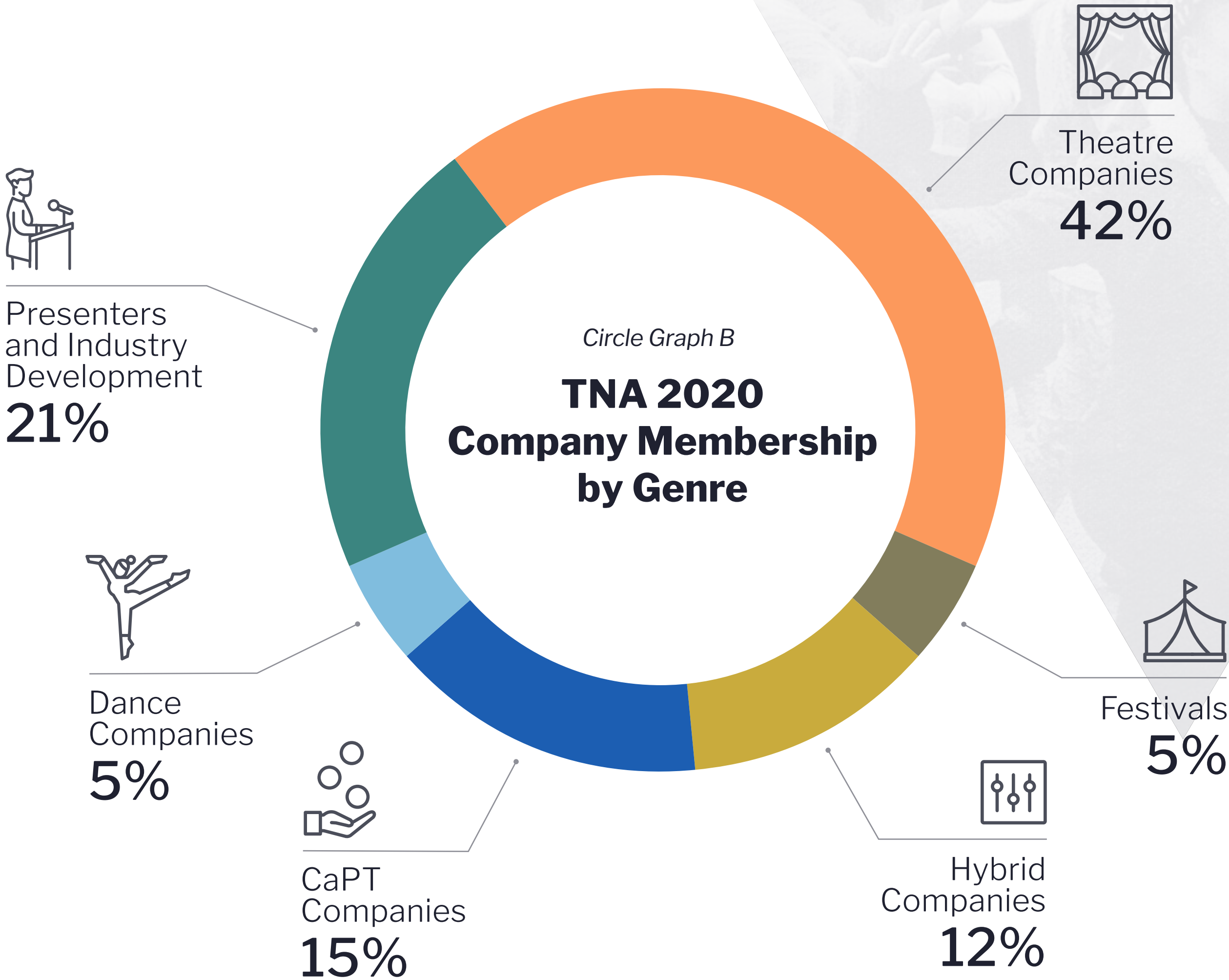
Power Play session at Studio 6, The Guild. **Photo: Rani Pramesti.**

Membership

Despite the financial hardship that befell TNA members in 2020, our membership sign-ups increased nearly 25%, as people felt the need to be part of a network and to be supported by TNA’s advocacy and development work. Total membership reached 515—up from 389 in 2019.

In 2020, 66% of TNA’s membership were individuals, representing our strong subscriber base within the independent sector.

Of the 177 organisational members, Theatre Companies represented the largest group at 42%, followed by Presenters/Industry Development 21% and Circus and Physical Theatre (CaPT) 15% (*Circle Graph B*).





NETWORKS AND CONNECTIONS

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Reach

MEMBERSHIP 515		PARTICIPANTS 1438		CRISIS CASH CONTRIBUTORS 429	
Individuals	338	Indie Survey (valid responses)	283	Crisis Cash donors	357
Companies	177	NEIGHBOURHOOD Gathering	342	Champion Companies	72
		Safe Theatres workshops (WA, NSW, SA)	61		
		VIPI Salons	262		
		One-on-One VIPI Independent Producer coaching sessions	40		
		VIPI Producers Mentorship Program	16		
		COVID-19 Member Consultation interviews	20		
		Powerplay Fellows (continues in 2021)	10		
		THIS IS HOW WE DO IT Speed briefing	33		
		Victorian Restrictions Roundtable	42		
		Future Planning webinar	44		
		TNA Member of the Month, Behind the Scenes Vision Australia Radio	8		
		Artist listings (Independent Producers/Designers Directory)	223		
		ASSITEJ Video featured artists/companies	54		
ACTIVITIES 57		RECIPIENTS: AWARDS, GRANTS & BURSARIES 283			
Salons	7			Crisis Cash (continues in 2021)	270
Safe Theatres workshops	3			Unlocking Capacity grants	7
Local Government member meetings	2			TNA sponsored awards	5
Webinars	2			SMASH Bursary	1
NEIGHBOURHOOD Gathering (TNA, APAM, Australia Council)	1				
Speed briefing	1				
Presentations by staff at sector events	15				
Meetings to advise on COVID-19 impact on sector	9				
Submissions	5				
Media coverage	12				



NEIGHBOURHOOD Co-Curators and MCs Eugyeene Teh and Mish Grigor. **Photo: Sarah Walker.**

TNA in Partnership with APAM— *NEIGHBOURHOOD: How Might We Weather This Storm?*

NEIGHBOURHOOD: How Might We Weather This Storm? was a full day of fast-response programming on Friday 28 February 2020 as a part of the APAM (Australian Performing Arts Market) Gathering at Asia TOPA. A partnership between TNA and APAM in association with the Australia Council for the Arts, *NEIGHBOURHOOD* was a day of exchange, exploring local and global connections in our creative neighbourhood. Co-curated by artists Eugyeene Teh and Mish Grigor, *NEIGHBOURHOOD* invited the 400 participants of the APAM Gathering, including over 140 international visitors, to pull out of the business and into the big picture ideas and solutions of artists.

With a new CEO at the Australia Council, TNA encouraged Council to use the day as a way for key staff to engage deeply with the performing arts sector. Over a dozen Australia Council staff members participated fully in the day, mingling with the Australian and international delegates, attending the breakouts, and participating in the roundtables as hosts or speakers.

Artist provocations were given by Rachael Maza, Adena Jacobs and Mallika Sarabhai. 17 breakout sessions and deep dives were offered in various spaces around the Meat Market. An afternoon plenary included three presentations by key leaders outside the arts, including Professor Tony Birch, Professor Lisa Gibbs, and Professor David Karoly.



NEIGHBOURHOOD. (Clockwise from top left: Roundtable, Rani Pramesti (facilitating), Tony Birch, Adena Jacobs, Mallika Sarabhai, Rachael Maza.)
Photos: Sarah Walker.





Network Resources

TNA continued to maintain and promote three databases of performing artists and companies:

→ **TNA’s Current Member Listing:** 500+ listings; includes preferred url links for members.

▶ [Find here](#)

→ **Designers Directory:** Initiated by Emma Valente (THE RABBLE) in 2017, as *The List: Female, Non-Binary and Trans Technical Artists*. TNA continues to update this directory featuring 169 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, Video Design and Animation, and Set and Costume Design.

▶ [Find here](#)

→ **Independent Producers’ Database:** New in 2020; featuring 54 independent performing arts producers who support independent artists, independent collectives and independent companies, nationally. Includes 50% producers from target groups: First Peoples, CaLD and/or People of Colour, Deaf/Disabled, based regionally.

▶ [Find here](#)



Just wanted to say that we found someone to help us out from your producers’ database. What a handy resource!”



Kush Kuiy

COMPANY NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

Nostalgic Event Mgmt

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

Dandenong, VIC

WEBSITE



Lana Nguyen

COMPANY NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

Naarm/Birraranga (Melbourne, Vi...

WEBSITE



Joshua Francis

COMPANY NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

Kulin Nations, Melbourne, Victoria

WEBSITE



Tegan Nash

COMPANY NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

NA

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

Benalla, Victoria

WEBSITE



Takashi Takiguchi

COMPANY NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

Preston, Victoria

WEBSITE

National Network

Reflecting our growing membership, TNA now has physical representation across Australia. In addition to our Melbourne offices, we have staff members based in regional Victoria and in Sydney. TNA's current board membership spans Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney and regional Victoria/New South Wales, supported by the CaPT and ASSITEJ advisory committees located nationally. Independent creatives on our Advisory Committees are paid for each meeting attended.

Circus and Physical Theatre (CaPT) Advisory Committee

Facilitated in 2020 by Jamie Lewis, TNA's CaPT Advisory Committee was established in 2017 to maintain strong engagement and information exchange between TNA and the Circus and Physical Theatre industry nationally. The eight members are on a two-year tenure:

- **Jascha Boyce**, Gravity & Other Myths (SA)
- **Alice Cadwell**, Spaghetti Circus/Mullumbimby Circus Festival (NSW)
- **Steph Cox**, Independent (VIC)
- **Natano Fa'anana**, Casus Circus (QLD)
- **Harley Mann**, Na Djinang Circus (VIC)
- **Lisa McCready**, Circa (QLD)
- **Jo Smith**, CircusWA (WA)
- **Devon Taylor**, Women's Circus (VIC)

ASSITEJ Advisory Committee

In 2020, TNA established our first ASSITEJ Advisory Committee. Facilitated by TNA's Tessa Leong and ASSITEJ Australia Representative, Sue Giles, this group of Theatre for Young Audiences and Youth Arts representatives from across the country provides sector insight and leadership for TNA and the ASSITEJ Australia Network:

- **Jay Emmanuel**, Independent (WA)
- **Helen Hristofski**, Barking Gecko Theatre Company (WA)
- **Robert Kronk**, Flipside Youth Circus (QLD)
- **Romi Kupfer**, Independent (VIC)
- **Christian Leavesley**, Arena Theatre Company (VIC)
- **Tariro Mavondo**, Western Edge Youth Arts (VIC)
- **Sarah Parsons**, Outback Theatre for Young People (NSW)
- **Luke Rogers**, Canberra Youth Theatre (ACT)
- **Rhen Soggee**, ActNow Theatre (SA)
- **Susannah Sweeney**, DreamBig Festival (SA)
- **Kyle Walmsley**, Corrugated Iron Youth Arts (NT)
- **Amanda Wright**, Australian Theatre for Young People (NSW)



Awards Supported by TNA in 2020

Melbourne Fringe Awards 2020

Best Adaptation from Stage to Screen award

Marcus McKenzie—*The Crying Room*

Best Emerging Performance Ensemble

Grace Dance Company—*Sincerely Survivor*

Greenroom Awards: 37th GRA for 2019 work

Dance Award for Production

Plenty Serious—*TALK TALK*

Contemporary & Experimental Performance Award for Circus

Party Ghost—*Poached Eggs & Asparagus*

Independent Theatre Award for Direction

Nadja Kostich—*Balit Liwurruk: Strong Girl*

“It came at a time when I was really not expecting much assistance, and feeling quite hopeless about my situation.”

Crisis Cash

1000 x 1000: Crisis Cash For Artists was initiated as a response to the financial hardship faced by independent artists as a result of COVID-19 impacts. It provided one-off emergency payments of \$1,000 to independent artists, producers and production crew in the performing arts who were significantly affected by COVID-19 in Australia, and who did not have access to a financial safety net. We sought to ensure independents were able to continue their practice while dealing with the day-to-day impacts of COVID-19 on their lives.

With the help of 72 Champion Companies and 357 donors, TNA raised \$330,000 to support 270 independent artists and arts workers. Requests continue to come in and we are likely to extend the campaign beyond the initial end-date of March 2021.

A consortium of organisations in the performing arts, led by TNA in partnership with Creative Partnerships Australia through the Australian Cultural Fund, provided invaluable support for 1000 x 1000: Crisis Cash For Artists fundraising campaign by promoting it to their networks. The shared purpose of uniting to support independent artists as a sector was a powerful and unexpected outcome of this fundraising campaign.

“The 1000 x 1000 is such a great initiative and am so happy to support in a small way.”



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Champion Companies included

- Abbotsford Convent
- ActNow Theatre
- Adelaide Festival
- APHIDS
- Arts Access Victoria
- Arts Centre Melbourne
- Arts Wellbeing Collective
- Arts West Alliance
- Ausdance National
- Ausdance VIC
- Ausdance NSW
- Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG)
- Australian Plays
- Back To Back Theatre
- Barking Spider Visual Theatre
- Bell Shakespeare
- Belvoir
- Black Hole Theatre
- BlakDance
- Casus
- Chamber Made
- Chunky Move
- Circa
- Circus Oz
- Circus WA
- Critical Stages Touring
- Crossroad Arts
- Dancehouse
- Diversity Arts Australia
- Finucane and Smith
- Flying Fruit Fly Circus
- Footscray Community Arts Centre
- Force Majeure
- Fusion Theatre
- Geelong Arts Centre
- Gravity and Other Myths
- Hothouse Theatre
- ILBIJERRI
- Intimate Spectacle
- J9 Consulting
- La Mama
- Live Performance Australia
- Lucy Guerin Inc
- Malthouse Theatre
- Melbourne Fringe
- Metro Arts
- Multicultural Arts Victoria
- NORPA (Northern Rivers Performing Arts)
- Open Space Contemporary Arts
- Opera Queensland
- Outloud
- PACT
- Patch Theatre
- Performing Arts Connections Australia
- Phillip Adams BalletLab/ Temperance Hall
- Polyglot Theatre
- PYT Fairfield
- Regional Arts Australia
- Regional Arts Victoria
- South Australian Circus Centre—Home of Cirkidz
- Sydney Opera House
- Sydney Theatre Company
- Symphony Services Australia
- Terrapin Puppet Theatre
- The Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies (ADSA)
- Theatre Network Australia
- Theatre Network NSW
- Theatre Works
- Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC)
- Vitalstatistix
- Windmill Theatre
- Women's Circus



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ASSITEJ Video

With Australia Council for the Arts funds originally intended to support artists to attend the *20th ASSITEJ World Congress & International Performing Arts Festival for Children and Young People* in Japan, TNA commissioned Amelia Ducker to create a video to celebrate and encapsulate the vast array of practice and practitioners within the ASSITEJ sector in Australia. After a national callout to artists creating work with and for young people across Australia, participants were paid for their submissions. Amelia worked intensively with young people and four companies to create a unique and inspiring work featuring 54 artists and companies from across the country. Highlighting the unique work being made in Australia, the resulting 15-minute video will feature as part of the *ASSITEJ World Congress* in March 2021, with a virtual ‘watch party’ for artists.

► [Find participating artist list here](#)



It has been such a terrible time for our industry and artists hit hardest, so thank you to TNA for caring and for doing such a great job in supporting the sector.”



The role TNA plays is so important, especially at this time.”



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'Collision' directed by SMASH Bursary winner,
Natano Fa'anana, Casus Circus.
Photo: Aaron Walker.



SMASH Bursary—Natano Fa'anana

Awarded annually to one recipient per year from 2018 to 2022, the bursary recognises both the existing and potential contribution of an outstanding Australian-based Independent Artist or Producer to the performing arts sector. It is a small gesture to acknowledge that these vital contributions are often a result of many unpaid hours.

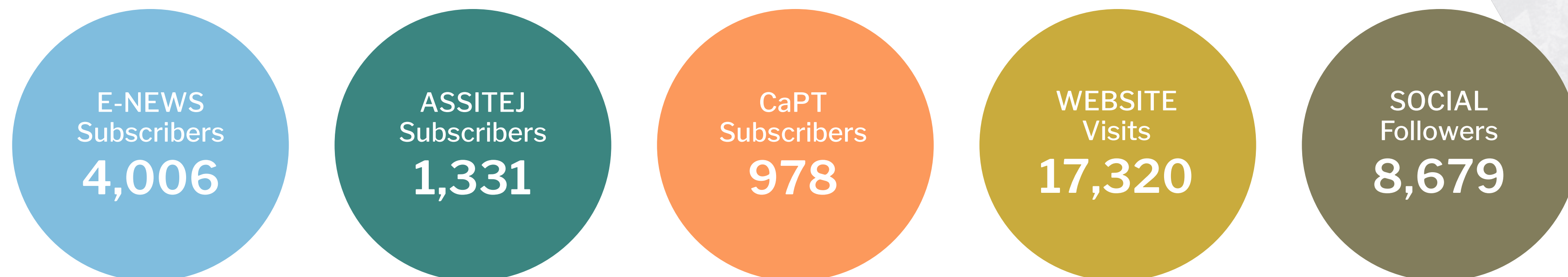
The winner of the 2020 TNA SMASH Bursary was Natano Fa'anana. Natano is Co-Founder and Creative Director of Casus Circus. Natano's unique style of performance draws inspiration from his Samoan roots, creating artistry unique to his values: accessibility, culture, quality and diversity. His commitment to campaign for greater diversity on the contemporary circus stage is a driving force and well reflected in his works to date.



Keeping the Sector Connected

In 2020 TNA's role in delivering targeted and timely resources to our subscriber base became more important than ever. With the outbreak of COVID-19, we moved away from in-person events to a focus on collating and sharing key information with artists and companies via email and digital platforms. We maintain a healthy 50% open rate on most of our e-communications.

Audience



“A very challenging time indeed but great to read through this bulletin, TNA has been doing an extraordinary job supporting the sector, keeping everyone informed and advocating powerfully.”

“Many thanks for good, clear, strong sympathetic messaging. Much appreciated by the whole sector.”

“[A] bumper newsletter. Such a warm, supportive and real update, thanks.”



COMMUNICATIONS

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Communications

In addition, TNA sent out countless member-only or special bulletins to specific segments of our database, including state-specific COVID-19 updates, reminders to members regarding Crisis Cash EOLs, and member updates on JobKeeper and the Creative Economy Package.

Number
of
E-news
11

Number
of ASSITEJ
Bulletins
4

Number
of CaPT
Bulletins
3

New Website and Brand Refresh

During 2020 we did all the ground-work for a new website to better house the wealth of information it contains, with the aim of to make it more user friendly and accessible. In recognition of our broad membership, we also prepared to refresh our logo and brand to be inclusive of our role across the performing arts. We will launch both in 2021.

Behind the Scenes—Vision Australia Radio



Nicole Beyer and Chris Thompson recording 'Behind the Scenes.'

TNA continued to update the sector and champion independent artists via our monthly radio spot on Vision Australia's Behind the Scenes program, hosted by Chris Thompson. Our 'Member of the Month' guests in 2020 included Edwin Kemp Attrill, Bron Batten, Josh Wright, Joel Bray, Alex Walker, Aseel Tayah, Ching Ching Ho, and special guest, Mr Danny Pearson (Victorian Minister for Creative Industries).



Board Review and Development

During the year, TNA's board undertook an in-depth process of annual self-review and identified the following areas for improvement: formalised strategic planning processes to foster more active board member participation; evaluation process for board and individual board directors' performance against goals; long-term strategy for improving board performance over time and; CEO succession planning and support.

Board development in the coming year will also seek to strengthen the identified areas of representation, with new members being recruited from gaps in identified target areas.

Staff Professional Development

TNA's staff attended a total of 18 different professional development programs throughout the year with a focus on equity, inclusion, COVID-19 response, and new models for the future.

Future Form

Rani Pramesti (Program Producer for VIPI and Strategic Visioning) and Erica McCalman (Co-Deputy Chair) participated in Future Form, a business innovation program facilitated by the Australia Council for the Arts and Australian Film Television Radio School (AFTRS).

Future Form is an opportunity for small to medium arts organisations to transform and innovate their core business model. Led by industry experts, 24 participants from 12 organisations were guided through a four-phase process to discover, ideate, experiment and evolve. During the 'discover' phase, Erica and Rani conducted 10 in-depth interviews with a diverse group of independent artists as well as workers in funded performing arts companies, philanthropic bodies and independent think tanks.

Generate

TNA staff along with our 10 Power Play participants attended *Generate 2020: Working in First Nations Cultural Contexts* with Footscray Community Arts Centre. This program was designed to build the capacity and effectiveness of non-Indigenous workers to better support sovereignty and self-determined outcomes in First Nations' arts, culture, education and community engaged practice.



A Test for our Strategic Plan 2020-2024

COVID-19 gave TNA's first year of our new strategic plan a stress test—how would it bear up given the changed advocacy needs of the sector, the shut-down of borders, and the massive level of information to be analysed and passed on? Our ten-year vision of a safe, relevant and healthy performing arts sector couldn't be more apt, and our justice and equity objectives remained vital. In a time of crisis, it was even more relevant to ensure that the under-represented and more vulnerable parts of the sector had someone at their back. Our flexible activity plan allowed us to change our program quickly, go online, raise money for independents, and advocate for support.

Finances

TNA's total revenue in 2020 was \$1,176,231—the first time that TNA has hit the million dollar mark. This compares to \$565,883 in 2019. Approximately one quarter of that revenue was our Crisis Cash campaign income, every dollar of which goes directly to artists and creatives as \$1000 bursaries. A further quarter of our revenue is Creative Victoria's investment in the Victorian Independent Producers Initiative—as the first full-year of the project, we managed two cohorts of the Mentorship Program, and a full year of salons despite COVID-19 impact.

With a deep understanding of how devastated independent creatives were, TNA resolved to get as much financial support out the door as

possible. This included paying a small fee for independents who filled in the survey (\$50 each), sourcing a grant from Creative Victoria for 10 independents to be paid a part-time wage for leadership development through Power Play; paying independents to attend mentoring sessions; paying for consultation; and paying out 272 of the Crisis Cash bursaries (with more to be paid in 2021).

Office Activation

TNA has celebrated the first year in our new home in Studio 6 at the Guild, Southbank. We are delighted to have created an accessible, dynamic, shared working space, with all the resources needed to deliver programs both online and in person. The co-location of APAM with TNA and the Victorian Independent Producers' Initiative (VIPI) has created a hub for activity within the precinct, and enabled resource-sharing for these complementary organisations/initiatives.

Securing 4-Year funding

2020 was the fourth year of our four-year funding from the Australia Council for the Arts. In April, it was a bittersweet moment to be successful in securing funding for 2021–2025, when dozens of small to medium companies around the country missed out. However, for TNA's work ahead, four-year funding provides welcome financial security.



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TNA Staff online meeting. Clockwise from top left: Jamie, Simone, Rani, Nicole, Yuhui, Tessa. Following Bethany's departure in March.



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STAFF	CONTRACTORS	BOARD	LIFE MEMBERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Nicole Beyer Executive Director→ Simone Schinkel General Manager→ Bethany Simons Program Director (to March)→ Jamie Lewis Program Manager (Safe Theatres, CaPT)→ Tessa Leong Manager, Artist and Sector Development (ASSITEJ) (from April)→ Rani Pramesti Program Producer (VIPI & Strategic Visioning)→ Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez Communications Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Sam Ryan of SAYSO Financial Management→ Eryn Jean Norvill and Sophie Ross Safe Theatres Australia→ Kyla Davies Graphic Design→ NGNY Website Design→ Wild Hardt Photography→ Amelia Ducker Filmmaker and Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Jill Smith AM (Chair)→ Caroline Bowditch (Co-Deputy Chair)→ Erica McCalman (Co-Deputy Chair)→ Lou Oppenheim (Treasurer)→ Sue Giles AM→ Ben Graetz (to November)→ Andrea James→ Catherine Jones→ Cassie McGannon→ Sam Routledge→ Brad Spolding→ Annette Vieuxseux→ Lyn Wallis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Simon Abrahams→ Sarah Austin→ Alice Nash→ Bethany Simons 

Long-serving staff member, Bethany Simons, was awarded Life Membership for her 5+ years with TNA. **Photo: Sarah Walker.**



2020 PARTNERS

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ADVOCACY PARTNERS

- APRA AMCOS
- Arts Access Victoria
- Arts Industry Council (Victoria)
- Arts Industry Council of South Australia
- Ausdance National
- Ausdance VIC
- Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) (to August)
- Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria
- BlakDance
- Chamber of Arts and Culture WA (CACWA)
- Diversity Arts Australia
- Express Media
- Feral Arts/Arts Front
- First Nations performing arts sector alliance
- Live Performance Australia
- Multicultural Arts Victoria
- Museums Australia (Victoria)
- Music Victoria
- National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)
- National Exhibitions Touring Support—NETS Victoria
- Performing Arts Connections Australia
- Public Galleries Association Victoria (PGAV)
- Queensland Chamber of Arts and Culture
- Regional Arts Australia
- Regional Arts Victoria
- Songlines
- Symphony Services Australia
- Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC)
- Writers Victoria

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ActNow Theatre
- APAM (Australian Performing Arts Market)
- Arts Centre Melbourne
- Arts West
- AsiaTOPA
- ASSITEJ International
- Barking Gecko
- Black Swan Theatre
- Circus WA
- Creative Industries Advisory Group (Victoria)
- DADAA
- Fabretti
- Fremantle Theatre Company
- Fringe World
- Green Room Awards Association
- Griffin Theatre Company
- Kaleido Company
- Malthouse Theatre
- Melbourne Fringe
- NGNY
- Patch Theatre
- Performing Lines WA
- Producers SG
- Rumpus Theatre
- Safe Theatres Australia
- Soul Lounge
- South Australia Circus Centre
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
- State Theatre Company South Australia
- Sydney Theatre Company
- The Blue Room Theatre
- Toccata Studio
- Vision Australia Radio 'Behind the Scenes'
- Vitalstatistix
- Western Australian Youth Theatre Co Inc.
- Windmill Theatre Co

RESEARCH & EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Deakin University's Arts and Cultural Management Program
- The University of Melbourne
- University of Queensland

FUNDING PARTNERS

- Australia Council for the Arts
- Creative Partnerships Australia
- Creative Victoria
- City of Melbourne - Creative Spaces
- Sidney Myer Fund



2020 PARTNERS

Chapter 10

THEATRE NETWORK AUSTRALIA

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