



## TASMANIAN PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR COMMUNIQUE

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Theatre Network Australia and Tasmania Performs brought together a group of performing artists and companies, venues and festivals in Hobart to explore the critical factors affecting the performing arts sector in Tasmania.

Theatre Network Australia is the leading industry development organisation for the performing arts, prioritising independent artists and small to medium companies. It runs professional development forums, including the biennial Australian Theatre Forum, workshops on current issues for the sector including sustainability, touring, diversity in theatre, Indigenous theatre, women in theatre and interconnections, and provides information and resources through e-news and the online resource library.

Tasmania Performs works with emerging independent artists in Tasmania to increase their skills and sector awareness, produces the work of these artists and more established artists and companies, commissions new work, connects artists with national and international presenters, and, where appropriate, manages the resulting tours.

To give some context for the local sector, the Australia Council for the Arts *Connecting Australians: Results of the 2016 National Arts Participation Survey* found that, in 2016, 29% of Tasmanians attended theatre and 19% attended dance. From the data collected by Live Performing Arts it was revealed that Tasmania experienced a huge increase in revenue (to around \$14M) and attendances (to almost 250,000) for performing arts in Tasmania in 2016, which were largely as a result of festival attendances.

It was also noted that the average gross annual income for artists (from all sources) is \$48,400 which, when adjusted for inflation, represents a 4% decrease since 2009.

As part of this event, a number of critical issues and problems were identified:

- Lack of recognition of the value of artists' contribution to the State's brand and reputation as a cultural leader and their economic input (including foregone income).
- Limited access to funding and other support so as to capitalise on increased opportunities provided by new arts festivals and events around the state– the 'pool' of government funding is relatively small and shrinking, the 'competition' for resources (from government, business, donors, audiences) is increasing.
- Little informed criticism of work produced and presented in Tasmania, which inhibits growth and development.

- Limited opportunities for creative exchange, especially with colleagues in other states as the costs of travelling are beyond capacity of most artists and companies.
- Because of the poor financial return, many artists lack time to devote to their creative work due to other pressures and responsibilities.
- The costs of creating, producing and presenting work - venue hire, staff, promotions and marketing, advertising, etc - are considerable impediments and mean that artists' time and energies are often diverted to more practical and administrative than creative tasks.
- Inadequate recognition of the mental health issues faced by artists, exacerbated by financial struggles.
- To date, there has been no opportunity to include childcare costs for artists in Arts Tasmania grant applications (though Arts Tasmania's new guidelines allow for child care costs to be included in a funding request).

As result of this meeting, it was agreed that all participants would engage in advocacy to government to address these issues. In the first instance, all participants are advocating for the State government to increase funding to Arts Tasmania's Artist Investment Program and Organisations Investment program, which cater to the performing arts in the State.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **Organisations**

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Tasdance	Mudlark Theatre
Stompin Dance	Drill Performance
Second Echo Ensemble	MADE (Mature Artists Dance Ensemble)
Blue Cow Theatre	Tasmanian Theatre Company
Terrapin Puppet Theatre	Tasmania Performs
Creative Tasmania	Theatre Council of Tasmania
Australian Script Centre	

### **Independent Artists**

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James Brennan	Willloh S. Weiland
Briony Kidd	Emma Porteus
Kelly Drummond	Maeve MacGregor

### **Festivals**

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Unconformity	Situate
Ten Days on the Island	Junction Arts Festival
Mona Foma	

### **Tasmanian Performing Arts Centres**

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Moonah Arts Centre	Salamanca Arts Centre
Theatre Royal	

## **OBSERVERS**

Arts Tasmania

Australia Council for the Arts

For Enquiries please contact

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