

**THEATRE
NETWORK
AUSTRALIA**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 – 2024**



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<https://www.tna.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Why-We-Do-What-We-Do-and-Timeline-of-Achievements.pdf>

A SAFE, HEALTHY AND RELEVANT PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR

Theatre Network Australia believes in the central role that creativity plays in a society. We want a more diverse and fair performing arts sector, which 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 want fair pay and conditions for our sector. We know that risk and experimentation are important. And we want ongoing, respectful but challenging conversations that connect us, open new ideas, and lead to a stronger sector.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Theatre Network Australia (TNA) is the leading national industry development organisation for contemporary small to medium and independent performing arts. TNA strengthens artists and arts organisations; influences cultural policy; facilitates critical debate; and advocates for a more robust, interconnected and innovative sector.

The organisation was founded as Theatre Network Victoria in 2009 by nine Victorian companies, in response to an urgent need for sector advocacy. The success of our program resulted in annual, then multi-year funding from the then Arts Victoria. In 2016 we became a national organisation and received four-year funding from the Australia Council 2017-2020.

This is our third strategic plan, but the first as a fully national organisation. We continue to have a dedicated Victoria program, funded by Creative Victoria. We operate under a T model – the bar of the T is the national advocacy, forums, research, communications and the state/territory gatherings – and the stem of the T is the deep program of work in Victoria.

This strategic plan is based on genuine and extensive consultation undertaken as a part of our core work. As a peak body, we engage with artists and companies on a daily basis; and with partners, funding bodies, government and media at least weekly. We gather data and insight at forums and meetings, through research and surveys, and from one on one liaison. We document extensively and use evidence to inform all of our work.

OUR ROADMAP FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

The Strategic Plan on a Page, following, lays out how we will achieve our vision for a **Safe, Healthy and Relevant Performing Arts Sector**. This vision is what we deeply know is needed, and what we believe we can help to achieve. Our three goals address this vision – **Stronger Artists and Companies** will have greater capacity to create new relevant work, and contribute to a safer and healthier sector; **A Stronger Sector** will be able to adapt to become more relevant and more reflective of the diverse society in which we live. **A Stronger Organisation**, with more members across the country supporting us and giving us true insight, will be able to take on the work needed to reach the vision.

Our nine objectives are ambitious – but each of them is essential. The first five are about justice, fairness, and addressing inequities for the people in our sector. While these objectives are interdependent, we feel strongly they must stand alone and will explicitly guide TNA's work over the next five year period:

- First Nations First,
- Justice and Diversity,
- Safe Theatres,
- Access and Inclusion, and
- Gender Equity.

The last four objectives are what we need to achieve to directly strengthen the sector:

- Growing Arts Funding,
- Strong Ecology,
- Artists Central, and
- Effective Networks.

The way we will achieve these objectives (and through them our goals and our vision), are through a series of strategies and specific focus areas. The strategies are generic – advocacy, gatherings, sector development initiatives, artist development initiatives, communications, and research and evidence. The focus areas are bigger specific programs, but they act as a set of tools to achieve our objectives: our ASSITEJ strategy for the theatre and young people sector; our strategy for Circus and Physical Theatre; our new work with Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM); and our new Victorian Independent Producers Initiative.

This strategic plan includes an outline of the actions we will take under each of the strategies across the five-year period, with detailed annual programs developed every year. We have analysed the dynamic strategic context in which we work: the external environment socio-politically and also at a cultural policy level; and we have looked at our own internal situation to ensure that what we are planning is strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

We have determined that we need some organisational growth to achieve our vision, but we are extremely well placed to do that, with ten years of excellent work and experience to build on, four new multi-year programs, diversified funding, and highly qualified board and staff, with a mix of very experienced people and some fresh faces.



STRATEGIES (TOOLS)

FOCUS AREAS

TEN YEAR VISION - A SAFE, HEALTHY AND RELEVANT PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2020-2024 PROGRAM

- A new strategic partnership with **Safe Theatres Australia**, supported by multi-year funding from the Sidney Myer Fund.
- Our **ASSITEJ Network** strategy, representing and connecting the **Australian Theatre for Young Audiences and Youth Theatre** sector to 70 other member countries, and coordinating international opportunities for our sector.
- New **Circus and Physical Theatre** initiatives and the rigorous folding of these into our national engagement and advocacy.
- A new partnership with **Australian Performing Arts Market** enabling us to weave our national network internationally.
- **A continuation of our advocacy**, with a long-term view for an ambitious, united vision for the Australian arts – reaching a cultural investment of 1.11% of GDP or above.
- A leading practice model partnership with BlakDance on their program **BlakDance Residency Program Naarm**, to support an emerging First Nations producer to work locally with Independent Indigenous choreographers and dancers.
- Delivering the **Victorian Independent Producers Initiative (VIPI)** through three programs: paid mentorships targeted to diverse groups; multi-year grants for established independent producers; and a series of salons and coaching for artists and the wider sector.
- Delivering the **Creative Facilitation** program in which an annual national cohort of 10 arts leaders will train in various facilitation methods including the Lewis Method Deep Democracy.
- Replacing the Australian Theatre Forum with **National Performing Arts Gatherings 2021 and 2023**. The Creative Facilitation participants will co-curate and facilitate the elements of each gathering.



Image of people mingling in small groups of 2-3, next to a long table of fruit and snacks. They are smiling and engaged in conversation. Photo by Alexander Francis.

2. MEASURING SUCCESS

TNA GOALS	WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE	TNA METRICS	CONTRIBUTION TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE
STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES Strengthen, support and connect independent performing artists and producers, small to medium organisations and larger performing arts organisations.	Salaries and conditions improve in companies and for independents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above CPI increase in salaries between surveys. Average fee for independent casual gigs improve above CPI. 	Artists and arts workers have long-term, sustainable careers in the arts.
	Collaborative networks within the performing arts and outward to the broader arts sector are increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum delegates make 2+ new connections. TNA networks (mapped annually) grow in size and number. 	Artists and companies are thriving: employing more arts-workers; making more relevant work to wider and more diverse audiences.
	Increased diversity of participants at TNA and partner events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of CaLD, First Nations, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+, Regional = at or above population figures. 	Artists and companies from these backgrounds have equity of opportunity including paid creative leadership roles.
STRONGER ARTS SECTOR Achieve progressive change in the arts industry and impel evidence-based, values driven cultural policy.	Providing a safe workplace is a priority for employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants of our Safe Theatres workshops report increased skills, understanding and capacity to address this. 	The performing arts sector provides safe and healthy workplaces.
	TNA's work makes a difference to the sustainability of small to mediums and independents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members report that our work increases their capacity. TNA partners report that TNA's work helps them achieve change. 	The small to medium and independent performing arts sector is valued and financially sustainable.
	Australian cultural funding increases from 0.72% of GDP, to above 1.11% (average OECD countries).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TNA uses data and evidence of the benefits of investment, and enhances public value of the performing arts sector. 	A well-funded, united, sustainable arts sector.
	Increased diversity of makers, board members, creative leaders and performing arts audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TNA includes disability or First Nations or CaLD led sessions. TNA leads dialogue about the need for equity and justice in at least one national gathering per year. TNA provides dedicated safe spaces at major gatherings. 	The arts sector is more inclusive and leads a culture which understands and addresses the intersectional needs of different groups of people.
STRONGER ORGANISATION TNA is recognised for its effective leadership in the performing arts and galvanises an extensive, broad and diverse membership in Victoria and across Australia.	TNA members are highly satisfied with our work and are highly engaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high level of membership <i>retention</i> (benchmark in 2020) Annual growth in numbers. Membership is representative of the population. 	The sector benefits from a strong network of diverse members to enhance sector cohesion.
	Reserves are ample for a rainy day. Aim for 20%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserves will be increased to 10-15% by 2024. 	Resilience of TNA as a vital peak body in the ecology.
	A turnover that gives capacity for a small team of staff with excellent salaries and conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnover of above \$0.5million (and below \$1million). 	TNA leads the way in good governance and providing excellent conditions for employees.
	An engaged, relevant and influential board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase board numbers to 14 addressing identified gaps and provide pathways; with working committees operating in between. 	TNA leads the way in representative governance for the sector.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 HISTORY AND EMERGENCE AS A NATIONAL ORGANISATION

TNA was founded as Theatre Network Victoria (TNV) in 2009 by nine Victorian small to medium performing arts organisations, in response to a need for connection, advocacy, and sector development. A report by Deloitte commissioned by Arts Victoria [2007]¹ into the small to medium arts sector, showed that it is:

A vital sector linking public audiences and popular interest in the arts with the major arts companies and agencies. Small arts organisations develop new work and cultivate new and diverse audiences across Victoria... They provide significant employment... They promote professionalism in the arts and provide training... but they are also constrained by their small scale, limited outreach and minimal resources [p.13].

The report also noted that:

Lack of strategic support to small organisations is leading to a withering of the grass roots of the arts industry. But the impact will also be felt by the medium and major arts sectors in fewer candidate new works for production, fewer experienced arts professionals and weaker links to new audiences [p. 3].

An eighteen-month project was funded by (then) Arts Victoria's Sector Development program. At the end of the project, there was a hunger for ongoing networking and advocacy, and TNV had demonstrated that it was able to meet that need with practical strategies and effective advocacy. With annual funding from Creative Victoria from 2011 to 2012 and multiyear funding from 2013, we became a thriving service organisation for the professional, non-profit theatre sector, focusing on the small to medium and independent sectors.

Early on, TNV identified the need for national coordination of the sector, and in particular, national advocacy for the small to medium and independent sectors. TNV was already producing the Australian Theatre Forum (2011, 2013, 2015, 2017), and was able to build on those networks. TNV named and drove the Free The Arts campaign from May 2015, leading the performing arts sector alongside other sectors and colleagues to eventually effect the dismantling of the ill-fated Catalyst program. Our work and our inclusive approach was highly valued by the sector across the country.

An extensive strategic planning process in 2015 resulted in an expansion of our national work, and a name change to Theatre Network Australia. In 2016 we achieved four year funding from the Australia Council for 2017-2020, allowing us to grow our small organisation, and build on our advocacy, research, communications and gatherings, and to strengthen our partnerships and engagement across the country.

TNA is now highly regarded for an impressive body of national work. In the first ten years we focussed on Victoria and Australia – for the next strategic plan period we are modestly branching out to connect our sector internationally, through expanded work on the ASSITEJ Network (theatre for young audiences and youth theatre) and a new partnership and co-location with the Australian Performing Arts Market.

Most recently, our advocacy work has included modelling what will be needed to avoid 30 fewer organisations being funded in this next Four Year Funding program [\$7mil p/a] and engaging with the federal, state, and territory Ministers, along with Nationals and independent MPs. This work continues, and will feed into a bigger piece of work to lead a whole of performing arts sector planning process to unify parts of the sector, strengthen our advocacy to enhance public value of the arts, and to achieve an ambitious investment of funding for the arts through a doubling of the Australia Council budget and other measures.

3.2 SECTOR ANALYSIS

ARTS FUNDING AND OPPORTUNITIES

The first report from A New Approach², using ABS and MCMO-SWG datasets, shows that federal expenditure on culture has decreased by 18.9 per cent, per capita over the last decade. While there have been increases in cultural funding by state and local governments, overall, the report notes that “Cultural expenditure is not matching population growth” (p.5).

In addition, recurrent expenditure (programs, grants, subsidies) has decreased by 11.7% as a proportion of spending compared to capital (fixed assets) spending across all levels of government (p.21). The squeeze that artists and companies are feeling at the moment is real.

¹ Arts Victoria – Small Arts Organisations Research And Evaluation - Précis.

² A New Approach / Insight Research Series / Report One / 2019, ABS=Australian Bureau of Statistics; MCMO-SWG= Meeting of Cultural Ministers Officials Statistics Working Group.

At the same time, the growth of demand for Australian work internationally is positive. New markets in Asia are hungry for new Australian work, and the Australian government increasingly understands the benefit of creative soft diplomacy. This is particularly so in China where democratic and critical thinking values can be shared effectively through the performing arts. However, we are not yet fully equipped to take advantage of this – the sector needs capacity building and professional development to fully take up these opportunities. TNA will continue our work to grow arts funding, and we will help the sector build capacity to take full advantage of international cultural diplomacy opportunities.

“The advocacy work you guys do is so very valuable in our current political climate, but equally important is the emotional support which always feels very heartfelt.”

– Sharon Custers, Arena Theatre, VIC

THE NEW NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

From February 2020, the Australia Council’s new National Performing Arts Partnership Framework will be rolled out, replacing the Major Performing Arts Framework. The Framework responds to the recommendations of the nationwide consultation process in 2018, and will invite new entrants into stability of funding through 4 + 4 year contracts. Circa has already been invited in under the old framework, and it is anticipated that several companies from the current Four Year Funding program will be invited in to the new framework.

The impact on the sector of the MPA framework changes will depend on funding allocations – new money to support new framework entrants would benefit the whole sector. Without new money, the strain on the companies outside the framework will not ease, but the changes will at least provide stability for a greater number of organisations. TNA also believes that increased transparency and accountability will be of benefit – we hope that the per audience disparity will increase funding to the ‘partnership’ theatre and circus companies (formerly majors), which are bringing in 39% of the total attendees, with only 11% of the Commonwealth funding.

AMPAG, the peak body for the former major companies, is undergoing a timely review. TNA has been included in the consultation and will bring our deep sector insight to the table, with an aim for unity and efficiency of advocacy effort and resources.

FOUR-YEAR FUNDING PROGRAM AND GRANTS FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

The current financial situation at the Australia Council, with a shrinking discretionary budget for four year funded organisations and grant rounds, means that we are heading for at least 30 fewer companies funded. Funds available to independent artists through grant rounds will be tighter as non-funded organisations compete for programming money, and the funded organisations will have a larger scope of work and stakeholders, and less funded collaborators. TNA will stay committed to achieving the necessary \$7mil p/a for the FYFO program, as a short-term goal.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ARTS’ ROLE IN ACHIEVING THE GOVERNMENT’S PRIORITIES

TNA believes that unity and a shared vision for a well-funded performing arts industry is urgently needed.

There is an opportunity with the coalition government to demonstrate how the arts can achieve social cohesion, how it benefits education, how it achieves real cultural diplomacy. A call for a doubling of the Australia Council’s budget, to address the per capita fall in federal funding over the last decade, is worthwhile and would bring together all parts of the sector. Longer term, an advocacy goal is for Australia to increase its investment to culture from 0.72% to 1.11% of GDP - reaching the OECD country average.

TNA is well placed to lead such a piece of work, and will embed this into our advocacy work over the coming five-year period.

SPECIFIC SECTOR ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Through our ongoing engagement with artists and arts organisations, TNA has a deep understanding of the key issues currently facing the sector:

- An urgent need to increase arts funding – federal arts funding has decreased by 18.9% in the last decade, and it is devastating the small to medium and independent sectors in particular.
- Putting First Nations work at the centre of Australian arts - in policy, how it is created, how it is supported, how it is presented.
- Using a justice framework - a more equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and power.
- Increasing diversity on stage, in our companies, in our artists, in our audiences, especially of People of Colour and people with disabilities.
- Gender equity in creative leadership roles in the performing arts.
- Interconnections between the whole sector – different sized companies and independents, presenters, festivals, producers, service organisations.
- Making the systems fairer for artists – brokering better access to opportunities in creation, marketing, presentation, and touring.
- The wellbeing crisis in our sector – 44% of workers experience moderate to severe anxiety.
- Addressing sexual harassment – 40% of respondents to MEAA’s 2017 survey experienced harassment in the live performance sector.
- The poor representation of and support for circus and physical theatre work.
- Connections outside the arts – to other portfolios, sectors, and to other creative industries.
- Fixing touring and regional development - local arts development, and touring regional work to the cities.
- Efficient management and environmentally sustainable practice at all levels.
- Critical appraisal, feedback models, critical dialogue and reviewing. The need for celebrating and promoting work (awards and prizes).
- Sustainability for independents – wellbeing, financial, creative. Career progression.
- Support for Small to Medium companies – new models of governance and administration, new financing models.

Within this environment, the role of TNA is vital. We help to build networks of support; we bridge gaps between the sector and the decision makers; we provide opportunities for individual and organisational capacity building and we help develop resilience. Importantly, we facilitate dialogue with the sector to ensure artistic practice remains relevant, that it creates the change it promises, and that it is valued and supported by the broader community.

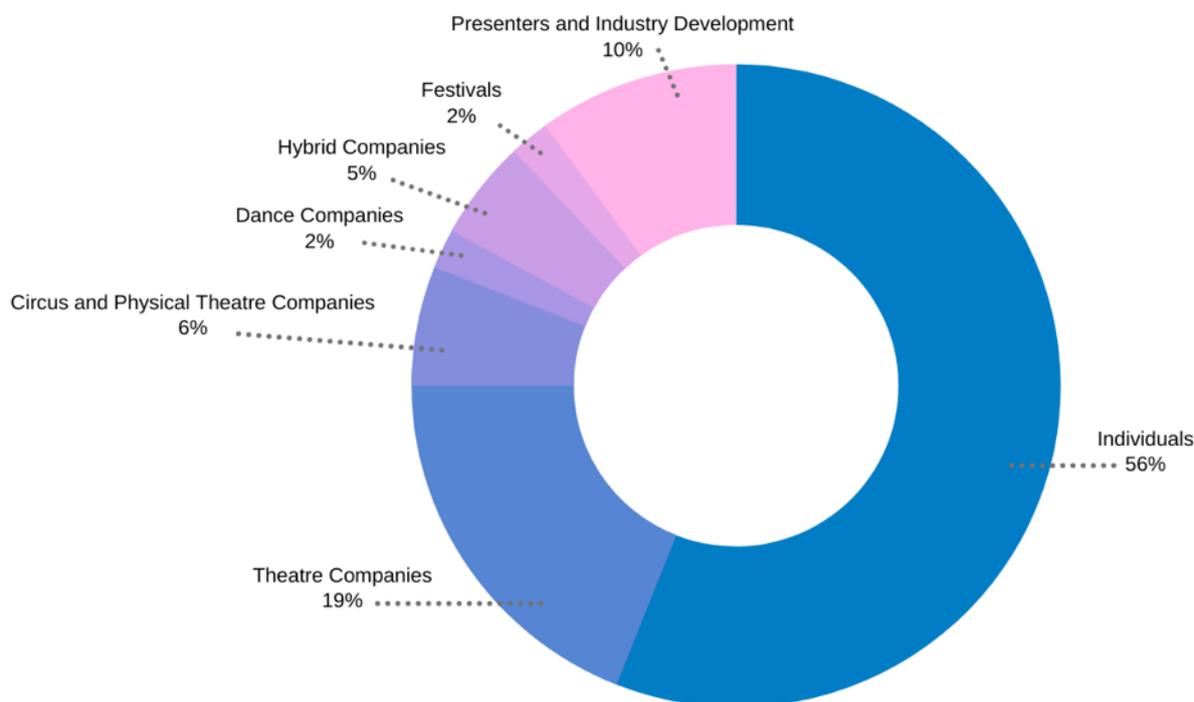
“Never have I attended a national event of this nature that gave justice to the ‘unheard’... [ATF2017] was incredibly inspiring and it gave the feeling of liberation and empowerment.”

–Yvette Walker, Creative Producer, QLD

3.3 MEMBER ANALYSIS

Theatre Network Australia (TNA) uses a broad church definition of theatre and at October 2019, has 381 active and engaged members, made up of 166 companies and 215 individuals.

TNA MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW



These members make up a core constituency to consult with and report to as the organisation undertakes its national advocacy and sector development work. However, our work benefits constituents beyond our membership – our subscribers, delegates, participants and of course the wider sector. Our E-News reaches a further 3500 subscribers.

MEMBERS' REASONING

Companies and individuals join TNA because they want an organisation to represent their issues and voice their aspirations – to the arts industry, to the media, to government, to their audiences and to the broader community. They also want to network with others in the performing arts, attend professional development forums and workshops, and have access to up-to-the-minute information about what's happening in the arts industry. TNA works closely with other service organisations to ensure that we can be strong as possible, and to complement rather than duplicate the other industry development efforts.

PRICING STRUCTURE

Our T model of operation is reflected in our membership structure, with those organisations based in Melbourne joining as full members - benefiting from TNA's office location in Melbourne, and those located in regional Victoria or beyond, becoming Associate Members, at around 50% of the cost. All individual memberships are a flat rate.

MEMBERS' PROFILES

TNA members work across artforms; are located across regional and metropolitan Australia; include independent artists, producers, arts workers and collectives; small nimble ensembles with no formal structure; organisations and companies from the small to medium sector; established key organisations and larger performing arts companies; festivals; local councils; institutions and peak bodies. While TNA's primary focus is on artists and small to medium companies, importantly, TNA manages to unite and service the broader subsidised performing arts sector, with many of the 'Partnership' (formerly MPA) companies also securing a TNA membership, endorsing the interconnectedness of the sector. Over the next five years, a priority for TNA is to increase the diversity within our membership, to better reflect the diversity of the Australian population – a bottom-up strategy. [Our complementary top-down strategy is to increase the diverse representation on our board – see Governance Plan p.16]

MEMBERS' WORK

The range of work that TNA's members make, present or support, is extremely broad. There is work for, with and by young people, visual theatre and puppetry, text-based work, music theatre, comedy, theatre made by artists with disabilities, cabaret, theatre made with and by communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre, dance, circus, physical theatre, and hybrid work. It is made by emerging artists as well as established veterans, it is made in regional areas and capital cities, it is made alone or in partnership with others as co-productions, and it is made as commissioned work by presenters and festivals.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to current members (individuals and companies), TNA stakeholders include: potential members in theatre, dance, physical theatre/circus, music theatre and cabaret, large companies (dance and opera), festivals and presenters, peak bodies, and other industry development organisations. Beyond members, there is interest held in our work by venues, academics and universities, philanthropic organisations (as partners and funders), politicians, media, the Australia Council for the Arts and Department for the Arts, Creative Victoria, other government departments, audiences and communities. TNA's work is guided by a stakeholder analysis which outlines current and future interaction with all stakeholders.

3.4 INTERNAL ANALYSIS

TNA has an excellent reputation for its achievements to date. Our industry-based Board is committed, and our growing team of staff live and breathe the values of the organisation. We are respected by our members, by government and by the sector for our accurate, and insightful position and high quality delivery.

TNA's financial situation continues to strengthen, now with consistent funding from both state and federal government, significant multi-year philanthropic support, 65 individuals donating annually, increasing contract fees and earned income, and a diverse income base. We continue to focus on building our reserves steadily, as our turnover increases.

Our business processes have significantly benefitted from multi-year support including four-year funding from the Australia Council for the Arts, allowing us to invest in our infrastructure for the first time. We have implemented a high quality database system, and our memberships now automatically renew annually. With a capital grant from Creative Victoria, we have a brand new, vibrant and well-resourced office in Southbank, co-locating with APAM in the heart of the cultural precinct. We are also now able to provide hot-desks to the sector, and host workshops and events.

However, with this growth, we must prioritise agility and sustainability. Maintaining our relevance as a service organisation relies upon our ability to respond to changes in the landscape quickly. Our key internal challenge is balancing our small team and the ever increasing needs of the sector. We address this through leveraging partnerships, sharing resources, building on what others are doing, and adding value to them. In the last three years we had 57 organisational partnerships. Our approach is collegiate and efficient –avoiding duplication and achieving outcomes otherwise too complex or difficult.

Our move into multi-year projects (see Activity Plan 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3) allows us to build capacity over time and to implement continuous improvement. Our work over the past four years in sharing corporate knowledge will continue – sharing insight of the Executive Director's role, for example with the General Manager taking on Co-convenor of Arts Industry Council Victoria (AICV), growing our team, and giving staff higher duties. Flexible working arrangements, and an agreed plan to commit to increasing salaries – as part of succession planning - are also key to sustainability.

TNA's work is often hard, as we push for change, but our strong internal culture celebrates the small wins, and the process as well as the outcome, and we know that we are on the right side of history. We are part of the change, explicitly leading by example – the metrics on p.4 show how we will measure our progress against this.

“Thanks for your inclusive and supportive approach. The sector is in good hands!”

- Meredith Bell, Artistic Director, Theatre Kimberley, WA

4. ACTIVITY PLAN

Our vision for the period 2020-2024 is based on a strategic planning process undertaken with board and staff throughout 2019. From 2020, we build on our national identity and ongoing impact on the sector, to tell the story of the Australian performing arts sector more clearly.

We will continue a dedicated Victorian program through our funding agreement with Creative Victoria; and we will continue the national work that we have demonstrated fills a vital role: advocacy work, gathering the sector, the research including the Salary Surveys, artists development, and sector development.

BUILDING ON THE AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FORUM (ATF)

The growth of our organisation, our new multi-year projects, and our new partnership with APAM gives TNA the opportunity to build on the five successful Australian Theatre Forums (2009 produced by the Australia Council; 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 produced by TNA).

Instead of a 2019 ATF, TNA ran a national symposium for the Theatre and Young People sector in partnership with Melbourne University (Converge, at Abbotsford Convent, October 2019); and will run a National Sector Day in partnership with APAM and the Australia Council during AsiaTOPA, February 28th 2020. This new approach will continue over the next five years as a more strategic way to work: being agile with our efforts and resources; and partnering to make an impact in targeted areas. In 2021 and 2023 we will run major gatherings in partnership with APAM, with location and dates yet to be confirmed, and we will still have capacity between those years to run other smaller, targeted gatherings in response to sector need. These will include gatherings for the ASSITEJ and the CaPT sectors, and gatherings to help drive our vision for a united arts sector.



25 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. Converge 2019, Abbotsford Convent. Photo by Alexander Francis.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS 2020 – 2024	GOALS ADDRESSED		
		STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES	STRONGER ARTS SECTOR	STRONGER ORGANISATION
1. ADVOCACY Public policy influence within three levels of government, arts and related agencies.	1.1 National Advocacy – focus on developing and promoting a united and ambitious vision for the arts, and increasing awareness of the public value.	✓	✓	✓
	1.2 Victorian Advocacy – contribute to design and roll-out of Creative State 2 strategy. Continue role with AICV	✓	✓	✓
	1.3 Australia Council Engagement – focus on sector engagement and arts advocacy.	✓	✓	
	1.4 Other State Advocacy – work in partnership with other advocacy bodies to strengthen local work.	✓	✓	✓
	1.5 Increasing the Advocacy Capacity of the Sector – in professional development, masterclasses and resources.	✓	✓	
	1.6 Representing Sector Issues – in forums, meetings, the media, conference presentations, funding panels and reviews.		✓	✓
2. GATHERINGS A series of state and national gatherings that are responsive to our Objectives and emerging sector conversations.	2.1 National Sector Gatherings – including the National Performing Arts Gatherings (formerly the Australian Theatre Forum) in 2021, 2023.	✓	✓	✓
	2.2 Safe Theatres Australia – workshops, events and exchanges across the country.	✓	✓	✓
	2.3 Victorian Sector Gatherings – focused on Independent Producers and Artists.	✓		
	2.4 Peer Learning Circles – small, sector-led, facilitated roundtables for small to medium companies.	✓		✓
3. SECTOR DEVELOPMENT Building sector capacity, filling gaps, advocating internally in the sector for our Objectives.	3.1 Partnership with BlakDance – BlakDance Residency Program Naarm – a best practice model to appoint a First Nations Independent Producer for First Nations Independent Dancers (2020-23) in Victoria.	✓		
	3.2 Safe Theatres Australia Partnership – sharing, enhancing and reviewing policies, guidelines and codes. Role on the Creative State Victorian Respectful Workplaces Working Group, with Arts Centre Melbourne’s Wellbeing Collective.	✓	✓	✓
	3.3 Creative Facilitation Program – Multi-year program to enhance the capacity of our national sector to have urgent and difficult conversations.	✓	✓	✓
	3.4 Playwright Support - playwriting sessions at gatherings; TNA member Playwrights connected; representation on TNA Board; specific advocacy.	✓	✓	
	3.5 Promoting Lists and Supporting Networks – grow and maintain THE LIST addressing gender inequality in technical design, and the Independent Producers listing. Provide advice, support and resources to other fledgling networks or sub-sectors - supporting self-determination.	✓	✓	
	3.6 Best Practice Recommendations – provide cultural leadership through all of our work, promote ways to increase the inclusion of culturally diverse people, and First Nations people, and people with disabilities in the arts at all levels.	✓	✓	✓

		STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES	STRONGER ARTS SECTOR	STRONGER ORGANISATION
4. COMMUNICATIONS Telling the story of the sector, sourcing and crystallising information to empower the sector and effect change.	4.1 Sector Analysis – record and substantiate sector needs and values through member surveys, event evaluation surveys; program evaluation surveys.	✓	✓	✓
	4.2 E-News and Regular Media – provide relevant, targeted and concise industry information, opportunities and movements through the TNA E-News, and regular media spots.	✓	✓	
	4.3 Online Presence – drive, monitor, and be involved in topical discussions on social media - supporting initiatives and offering advice, directing towards resources. TNA website up to date and accessible including event documentation.			✓
	4.4 Member Advocacy Briefings – on current issues, Federal budget summary, policy platforms.	✓	✓	✓
5. ARTIST DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION Providing specific advice, awards, bursaries and mentoring for artists; supporting independents to take on leadership and board roles.	5.1 ‘Go Pitch’ Strategy – continue to advocate for fairer conditions including free registration for independent artists and producers at market-places; offering pitching advice; first timer support.	✓	✓	
	5.2 SMASH Independent Bursary – offer this national bursary for a break-through independent annually: \$500 including a free membership. (Donations from TNA staff and board cover 2019-2022).	✓		
	5.3 Mentorships and Professional Development – mentor award winners e.g. Melbourne Fringe, SMASH. Provide governance experience for Artists through placements as observers on arts boards.	✓		
	5.4 Access Initiatives – allow for an allocation of free and discounted tickets to TNA events and for TNA membership, as well as offering travel bursaries – a short-term action that removes barriers to participation for pathways into other programs.	✓	✓	✓
6. RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE Undertaking primary research alone and in partnership. Providing analysis and user-friendly summaries of relevant research to the sector.	6.1 Small to Medium Salary Survey and Report – used to advocate for better conditions for the small to medium sector. Company staff and boards use it to benchmark their own salaries. (2021, 2023)	✓	✓	
	6.2 Independents Survey and Report – This Is How We Do It on remuneration and other work trends. (2020, 2022, 2024)	✓	✓	
	6.3 Sector Specific Surveys – gather specific data from the Circus and Physical Theatre sector; the ASSTEJ Network (Theatre for Young Audiences and Youth Theatre); Dance sector; and Independent artists and producers.	✓	✓	✓
	6.4 University Partnerships and Relationships – contribute to research goals of the performing arts by maintaining current (Deakin University and Melbourne University) and developing new partners - Arts8 training institutions.		✓	✓
	6.5 Summarising Outcomes and External Research – through our e-news and other bulletins, collate, edit and summarise for the sector - outcomes of our own work and gatherings, as well as useful research undertaken by others.	✓	✓	✓

FOCUS AREAS		STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES	STRONGER ARTS SECTOR	STRONGER ORGANISATION
7. ASSITEJ NETWORK - THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES AND YOUTH THEATRE Representing and promoting Australia in the ASSITEJ global network; facilitating international and national opportunities for our sector.	7.1 ASSITEJ Bulletin – quarterly bulletin to ASSITEJ List; ASSITEJ section in TNA monthly e-news.	✓	✓	
	7.2 National Centre Membership and National Advisory – connecting Australia with over 70 other country members. Run National Advisory Group.	✓	✓	✓
	7.3 Sue Giles’ Australia Council Fellowship – Support Sue Giles’ international Fellowship ‘Wide Open Window’ (2020-2022).	✓		
	7.4 Provide Training Support and Advice – including national webinars, letters of support, networking.	✓	✓	
	7.5 Facilitate International Opportunities – promote, assess and support connections to the ASSITEJ international network.	✓	✓	
	7.6 Support Australian Bids and Delegations – at ASSITEJ Congress and gatherings eg. annual artistic gatherings or the triennial congress in 2023.	✓	✓	✓
8. CAPT STRATEGY - CIRCUS AND PHYSICAL THEATRE Providing advice, information, professional development, networking, communications, research and CaPT specific advocacy.	8.1 CaPT Strategy Review – including New Advisory Group, 2 year term – beginning mid 2020.	✓	✓	✓
	8.2 Advocacy for Circus Specific Needs – following finalisation of Rigging advocacy.	✓	✓	
	8.3 Peer Assessment – promote greater CaPT Representation	✓	✓	
	8.4 National CaPT Gathering – held interstate on even years and in Victoria on odd years.	✓	✓	
	8.5 Communications and Business Advice – ongoing referral, information and intelligence, and brokering connections. 4 bulletins annually, and CaPT section in monthly E-News.	✓	✓	
9. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY AND APAM PARTNERSHIP Co-located and working alongside the Australian Performing Arts Market, connecting the sector internationally, and providing sector and curatorial insight to the APAM work.	9.1 Shared Office – co-locating and co-running The Guild office with APAM staff; offering ad-hoc hot-desking and meeting space to artists and companies.	✓	✓	✓
	9.2 Sector Insight – to APAM’s Office function and its Market Intelligence strategy, bringing TNA members’ and constituents’ interests to bear on APAM’s planning.	✓	✓	
	9.3 APAM Gatherings – contribute to curatorial design and directly program specific elements using TNA networks. Partner on major gatherings 2021 and 2023.	✓	✓	✓
	9.4 Communications – provide information about international opportunities to the TNA network. Expand our ‘no travel’ international strategy connecting international visitors and the local sectors across the country.	✓	✓	✓
10. VICTORIAN INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS INITIATIVE [VIPI] Strengthening the careers of independent performing arts producers, upskilling the artists and companies who work with them, and diversifying the producing sector.	10.1 Producers Mentorship Program – minimum of 8 participants during 2020-2024, each financially supported for 2 years. Prioritising mentees from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, First Nations people, people with disabilities and regional applicants.	✓	✓	✓
	10.2 Unlocking Capacity Grant – Up to \$35,000 p/a for up to three years, for established independent producers – 9+ available (at least 4 reserved for under-represented). Grants through Creative Victoria, TNA point of contact.	✓	✓	✓
	10.3 Salon Series – 6 salons annually (2020-2023), providing peer learning for program participants and business coaching for independent artists.	✓		✓

THE ORGANISATION		STRONGER ARTISTS AND COMPANIES	STRONGER ARTS SECTOR	STRONGER ORGANISATION
11. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT Growing our organisation and our membership and strengthening our governance.	11.1 Membership Plan – annual membership growth of 3-5%; diversity goals and retention KPIs.	✓	✓	✓
	11.2 Fair Play and ADAPT Follow On – implement, communicate, evaluate and refine our Equity Action Plan (based on a human rights framework where every human has the right to participate in cultural life - article 27 of the UN human rights charter)	✓	✓	✓
	11.3 Annual Audit – reveals robust financial systems.			✓
	11.4 Governance – annual board review against matrix and board charter. Effective Sub/Working Committees. Board inducted in cultural awareness.			✓
	11.5 Staffing – implement our Human Resources Continuous Improvement plan. Pro-active approach to succession, planning, mentoring, shoulder tapping and providing pathways to employment for those missing out.		✓	✓
	11.6 Financial Position - build reserves to approximately 10-15% of turnover by 2024 through annual surpluses.			✓
	11.7 Strategic Plan – 6 monthly formal review against progress, undertake planning process for 2024-2028.		✓	✓



VTF 2016 delegates greet one another. People are shaking hands, making eye contact, smiling and talking. In the background we can see the speaker on the stage with an Auslan interpreter. VTF 2016, Arts House. Photo by Know Studio.

5. ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT PLAN

5.1 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

CURRENT SITUATION – DIVERSE INCOME AND GROWING PRIVATE SUPPORT

TNA's 2017 and 2018 audits show a diverse range of income sources, with a balance of federal and state funding (including three separate multi-year contracts with Creative Victoria), philanthropic and private income, earned income and other income. Overall we received grants or funds from 16 different agencies. This puts TNA in a strong position. Depending on the scale and location of our national gatherings, turnover varies significantly from year to year. On average across the two most recent years (2017-2018), the following table shows the proportion of income by percentage:

INCOME SOURCE	TOTAL 2017 & 2018	% OF INCOME
Membership	\$86,067	10%
Other Earned Income	\$146,108	17%
Australia Council	\$219,150	24%
State Government	\$333,400	36%
Other Government	\$90,700	10%
Private Support	\$24,890	3%
Total	\$900,315	100%

We first introduced financial membership in 2014 (earning \$17k) and membership income has since grown steadily, exceeding our targets each year. Our target for 2020 (as forecast in 2015) was \$40k, but the actual for 2019 is already at \$44,253. Over the next period, however, TNA is conscious of limited sector capacity, and is focused on maintaining this level of income, and instead has secured a significant increase in our private support which will be directed towards our Safe Theatres' work and Creative Facilitation Program.

FINANCIAL FORECAST

Our growth plan for 2020 to 2024 is modest, and it is founded on a well-developed strategic plan and sound sector analysis including benchmarking of national service organisations and infrastructure. The growth is capitalising on an excellent reputation, demonstrated capacity to take on nationally significant multi-year initiatives, and demonstrated capacity to seek diverse income and manage large and complex projects and budgets. In 2022 TNA will have the opportunity to increase our allocation from Creative Victoria, through the next round of multi-year agreements. We will continue to build the cash amount in our reserves steadily as our turnover increases.

FORECAST FIGURES	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Income	\$563,283	\$646,887	\$737,900	\$760,200	\$780,000	\$799,500
Expenditure	\$557,032	\$638,126	\$724,430	\$740,870	\$769,710	\$792,010
Result	\$6,251	\$8,761	\$13,470	\$19,330	\$10,290	\$7,490
Closing Retained Profits	\$57,542	\$66,303	\$79,773	\$99,103	\$109,393	\$116,883
Reserves as at % of Turnover	10%	10%	11%	13%	14%	15%

5.2 GOVERNANCE

ROLE OF THE BOARD

The role of the board is to advise, assist and oversee the overall operations of the organisation. The board includes expertise across finance, advocacy and government policy/strategy, and as an industry body, it is primarily made up of representatives of the arts sector. Day to day operational management is the responsibility of the TNA Executive Director and staff. The Board of Management is co-opted by existing members against a matrix, to ensure a representative mix of members from across the sector. Tenure is for a three-year period renewable by agreement for two further terms.

In 2020, Erica McCalman and Caroline Bowditch will be supported onto the executive team as Co-Deputy Chairs, joining Lou Oppenheim as Treasurer and Jill Smith as Chair, with the plan for the Executive to become Erica, Caroline and Lou from 2021.

NATIONAL ADVISORY PANELS

In addition to the board, TNA utilises national advisory panels on specific programs. For the 2017 Australian Theatre Forum, for example, TNA worked with an Advisory group of 26 artists and producers from across the country to increase local engagement, and to assess the independents' Expressions of Interest applications. We have a five member, national paid Circus and Physical Theatre Advisory Committee, and we are in the process of identifying a national group of advisors specifically for the ASSITEJ Network.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The TNA Board assesses the risks to the organisation as part of its strategic planning cycle, and reviews them as needed, as the detail of programs and activities emerges. As a service organisation, our key operational risk is limited financial security. This is mitigated through a financial diversification and growth plan, to achieve multi-year funding from both state and federal government, significant multi-year philanthropic support, ongoing annual donors, and increasing contract fee income and earned income. We also have thorough and transparent budgeting and reporting process, and a rigorous audit process.

The other key risk is loss of core staff and, with them, corporate knowledge. The crucial role that the Executive Director plays in advocacy is well understood. The board has implemented a staggered pay rise over four years to ensure that the role remains attractive to her and future candidates, and the growing team has created a significant mitigation of that risk, with the organisation's work, including advocacy and public representation, now shared across many roles. In addition, this risk is eased with robust documentation of processes and knowledge, and retention of a highly experienced and very active industry based board and advisory groups.

Our key production risk is when undertaking events and forums. To manage these risks, we undertake a risk assessment for each event, in conjunction with the venue partners and other key partners such as festivals.

5.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: 2020 - 2024

TNA has five core part-time staff. We also engage administration and project staff and contractors as needed. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Management, the General Manager reports to the Executive Director, with all other staff reporting to the GM.

The main planned change to staffing over the next five years is to consolidate our recent growth, and to develop and implement succession plans for key roles. Our slimline structure is still a paramount goal but staff will take on higher duties to embed corporate knowledge across the team and increasingly define distinct roles and responsibilities, including direct lines of reporting to the Board. All staff will take on outreach work, speaking opportunities and facilitation of meetings, ensuring that TNA's impact is expanding.

TNA'S EMPLOYMENT POLICY

We value the rich contributions to the arts made by people from a variety of backgrounds, and we aim to have a diverse group of people working at TNA. We are an equal opportunity workplace and we strongly encourage applications by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations people, and people with disabilities –we then provide what people need to do their best work, whether access services or other needs. We understand needs of people with family obligations and we provide a flexible working week, and part-time positions. We understand artists' working lives, and by negotiation we allow time-off for artistic practice and other commitments such as touring. We understand First Nations' protocol, including time for sorry business and other needs. Our philosophy is based on generosity, empathy, and a commitment to deep work satisfaction for employees. We know that this is repaid in retaining committed, passionate staff who live and breathe the values of the organisation. (See p.14 11.2 and 11.5 for details on how this policy is implemented.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 0.8 EFT [NICOLE BEYER, SINCE MAY 2009]

The Executive Director leads and manages TNA in an effective, creative, dynamic and sustainable manner. The position is largely self-directed and governed by the needs of the stakeholders as identified through ongoing consultation and by the Board. This position leads the organisation's advocacy work, builds and maintains partnerships, drives the strategic directions and is the main spokesperson for TNA.

GENERAL MANAGER 0.6 FTE (SIMONE SCHINKEL, SINCE AUGUST 2016)

The General Manager ensures that TNA operates at the highest level of professional conduct, maintaining our reputation for providing exemplary and generous services to the performing arts sector. This includes strategic planning, compliance, budget management, policy development, the implementation of systems and processes, improving workflow, acting as the primary funding liaison and managing all HR related matters.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR 0.5 FTE [BETHANY SIMONS, SINCE MAY 2014]

The Program Director works collaboratively to co-design and deliver TNA's national program of activity in order to provide opportunities and education for our members and stakeholders. This position's primary focus is on producing events, leading the work for the ASSITEJ Network, and is responsible for the successful release of TNA's monthly e-news. This position also supports TNA more broadly in advocacy campaigns and research.

PROGRAM PRODUCER 0.6 FTE (RANI PRAMESTI, SINCE SEPTEMBER 2019)

The Program Producer is responsible for driving TNA's Victorian work, primarily the Victorian Independent Producers Initiative which includes curating salons and workshops, administering and running a mentoring program and liaising with the sector regarding funding opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER 0.5 FTE (JAMIE LEWIS, SINCE MARCH 2017)

The Communications Manager works collaboratively to develop and implement the communication and marketing strategy maintaining excellent communications with our members, subscribers, followers and stakeholders. This position takes the lead on our Circus and Physical Theatre work, and is the key driver of our partnership with Safe Theatres' Australia.

CONTRACTORS

- Safe Theatres Strategy – Eryn Jean Norvill and Sophie Ross, Co-directors Safe Theatres' Australia.
- Creative Facilitation Program – Kate Sulan, Rawcus Artistic Director and Freelance Facilitator.
- Membership and Communications – Yuhui Ng-Rodriguez, Performance Maker and Producer.
- Book-keeping and Finances – Sam Ryan, Director, SAYSO.

Theatre Network Australia (TNA) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the unceded lands on which we meet, gather, and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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