



THEATRE  
NETWORK  
NSW

2016

*a year in review*



# from the Chair

**Julianne Campbell**

Now more than ever, the role of Theatre Network NSW is clear – to connect, to advocate, to empower, and affect positive change for the sector.

I'm grateful to the vision of our industry peers back in 2012 who believed the NSW theatre sector needed to be working together, and have a shared voice on common issues. They possibly didn't realise how necessary that would be in the coming years.

2016 was a big year as the fight for federal funding continued. TNN was able to feed into and support the national lobbying which – we hope – contributed to last week's decision to axe Catalyst and return \$61m to the Australia Council. But it is bitter sweet news. It is still hard to fathom the level of disruption caused, and quantify what's been lost.

At a state level, we are still understanding the changing face of Arts NSW, soon to be Create NSW), but early signals that their focus on under-representation, sector development, and practical opportunities sound promising.

Throughout the year, we continued to promote diversity in the sector, and provided tangible support to independent artists and the small-to-medium sector, including a booth at APAM and auspicing, as well as regular advice and networking opportunities.

At our strategic planning day late last year, the Management Committee re-affirmed our commitment to continue to have critical conversations that will affect the NSW theatre sector. We will support research into new models for sustainability, advocate for diversity and empowerment in our sector, and continue to lobby for the value of the arts.



Julianne Campbell, Chair

There has never been a better time to become a member of TNN. A collective approach is possibly the best way to affect the change we want, so if you're not a member, please join and if you are, ask a peer to join.

A special thanks to the hard work of our amazing Director Jane Kreis, and the dedication of our industry-based Management Committee.

# from the Director

**Jane Kreis**

As I write this, many are still grappling with the year that was 2016, what it means for them and the industry they work in.

**W**e saw major crisis and instability in the federal arts funding arena, two federal arts ministers, a national day of action and many days of action that were less publicised. It also saw a galvanised sector and growth in many unexpected areas.

Throughout all of this TNN's focussed on:

- Cementing its operations and grow its own capacity
- Engaging strongly with the theatre industry
- Providing relevant services & events for its Associates
- Monitoring and identifying innovative or inspiring models that can build capacity in the NSW theatre sector
- Advocating the incredible value and strength of the NSW theatre sector.

TNN's focus as it entered 2016 was to determine a common consensus and voice **with**, not for, the theatre sector in NSW. And, through its connections and relationships, TNN fed that voice into the changing national arts landscape. That voice was challenged by the Federal funding upheavals but amplified by the 2016 advocacy campaign **#istandwiththearts**. TNN's 2016 meetings, services and events were developed to facilitate local relationships and collaboration and to strengthen the sector despite, and in spite, of a growing sense of unease around the future of the arts.



Jane Kreis, Director

*2016 was TNN's first year of independent operation and it focussed on developing mechanisms for identifying gaps and concerns in the sector and generating responses.*



# from the Director



TNN Key Words 2016

At the heart of all of TNN's operations and engagement are two key considerations:

*"What's the benefit to theatre in NSW of this action?"*

*"What is TNN doing to benefit our associates?"*

Continually appraising the answers to these questions has been fundamental to the way TNN has developed and grown in the 2 years since it was first incorporated. Often when I am out and about meeting with people, advocating for our sector, or considering programming or services I stop and reflect on why TNN exists, who we serve and the value of what they do. Those of us working in theatre inherently know the value of what we do but I believe we can work better at expressing that value with our communities and partners.

# the Board

2016

TNN held its 2016 AGM at Sydney Dance Company's Meeting Room on 19th May.

This was its first AGM as an Incorporated Association and approved an appropriately revised constitution with support from Kay & Hughes Arts and Entertainment Lawyers. TNN's board meets quarterly with an Annual Planning Session in November/December.

In 2016 board meetings were held in January, March, June, & November with a joint Theatre Network NSW and Theatre Network Australia (Victoria) board meeting in September.

## 2016 Board Members are:



**Julieanne Campbell**  
Chairperson since 2015

Currently General Manager, Urban Theatre Projects. Previous roles include General Manager, Performance Space (2003-2011) and Business Manager, Parramasala.



**John Baylis**  
Deputy Chairperson since 2015

Currently Chief Programs Officer at Bundanon Trust near Nowra. Previous roles include CEO of Stalker Theatre, Producer with Performing Lines, Director of Theatre at the Australia Council, and Artistic Director of Urban Theatre Projects.



**Chris Bendall**  
Treasurer since 2015

Currently CEO of Critical Stages. He was previously Artistic Director and CEO of Deckchair Theatre (2008-2013), and prior to that he was Artistic Director of Theatre@Risk (2001-2007)



**Viv Rosman**  
Secretary & Public Officer since 2015

Currently Executive Producer and Co-CEO of Polyglot Theatre. Previous roles include Deputy General Manager of Griffin Theatre Company, Producer of the MAPS NSW program at Performing Lines and Program Manager of Darwin Festival.



# the Board



**Paschal Dantos-Berry**  
Committee since 2015

**Currently** Performing Arts Development Officer, Blacktown Arts Centre, Paschal is also a playwright and theatre maker who has presented work across Australia and overseas.



**Stephen Champion**  
Committee since 2015

**Currently** Manager of the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre (BMEC) and has worked in the performing arts for 40 years. Previous roles include Associate Director with Drugie Studio Wrocławskie, Poland, Artistic Director of Jigsaw Theatre Company in Canberra, and Domain Manager for the Sydney Festival.



**Andrea James**  
Committee since 2015

**Currently** the Aboriginal Producer at Carriageworks. Andrea James is a descendant of the Yorta Yorta and Kurnai Aboriginal nations. Previous roles include Artistic Director of Melbourne Workers Theatre and Director of the Yellamundie Playwriting Festival in 2013. Andrea and is currently a Board Director of Moogahlin Performing Arts and Urban Theatre Projects.



**Elizabeth (Lizzi) Nicoll**  
Committee since 2015

**Currently** Development Director with Sydney Dance Company. Previous roles include Head of Development at National Institute of Dramatic Art, Director of The Federation of Scottish Theatre and Head of Sponsorship at the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

# Key Events

TNN's 2016 events included:

## January

### Associate booth at our Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) 2016.

TNN made the most of its first APAM opportunity. In the mornings we stuck by our booth where we were able to connect with members and send them chasing other members who might have just passed by or APAM delegates who came to our stall looking for product. It was great to have TNN members' material on show in addition to our events and programs. Thanks to Intimate Spectacle, NORPA, UTP, ArtsReady, Branch Nebula, Ensemble Offspring, Michael Sieders Productions, Performance 4A, Sketch Evolution, and Cat Jones for providing us with their 'stuff'. The TNN booth was nice and central (just outside the speed dating and major function rooms) and made for some great connections and conversations over the 3 days. In the afternoons TNN made the most of the variety of venues and meeting opportunities to establish some wonderful partnerships for 2016-17.



Jane Kreis & Michael Sieders at TNN's APAM Booth in Brisbane

*"In the afternoons TNN made the most of the variety of venues and meeting opportunities to establish some wonderful partnerships for 2016-17."*



# Key Events

## March



Jane Kreis talks with Caroline Bowditch, Cast & Crew at our Inclusive Arts Practice Q&A

### TNN's Industry Talks event

TNN's Industry Talks event on Saturday 5th March considered 'Inclusive Arts Practice' with a matinee performance of Caroline Bowditch's 'Falling In Love with Frida' and a Q&A to follow. This TNN event was created in partnership with Riverside Theatre, Caroline Bowditch and Outlandish Arts. In the Q&A that followed Bowditch's show, Caroline and her cast and crew responded with openness and enthusiasm to the questions and comments. Discussion ranged from font size for programs ('just pick one and make it large') to discussion of sexuality, identity, accessibility, rehearsal process, touring and even state liquor licensing laws. This event allowed all 40 guests to consider inclusivity not just

as priority but as the bedrock for making performance. 'I work with the people who are prepared to do the work' said Bowditch and inclusivity is built into everything she does. She and her cast used movement, storytelling (through both sign language, written word, and spoken voice) and music to establish not only their connection, but each audience member's connection to Frida Kahlo. Through this connection we also experience love and inclusivity. Caroline makes it seem so easy so why is it often thought of as hard or yet another thing to do? Perhaps we need to change our thinking before we even enter the creative process.



# Key Events

## May

Postcard image from the #istandwiththearts Curtain Call campaign developed and implemented by the NSW Theatre Producers Group in 2016



### 'Where To Next?' workshop

Our 'Where To Next?' workshop on 27th May offered planning tools and ideas for organisations whose future has been affected by funding changes. There is no doubt that we are facing a tumultuous time in the arts. But we don't need to do so alone. For those of you who have questions (or answers) about how you might move on, Theatre Network NSW is offering this free lunchtime workshop in partnership with Bronwyn Edinger. Thanks to Sydney Theatre Company (STC) for hosting the event at The Wharf, Walsh Bay, Sydney.

## August

### NSW Theatre Producers Meeting

August and September saw a fourth NSW Theatre Producers Meeting held at Belvoir with the #istandwiththearts thank you drinks for campaign volunteers. TNN also visited Wollongong and presented a lecture to UOW Final Year Creative Industries students before heading down the Arts Centre Melbourne for APACA and its Theatre Network Australia meetings.

## October

### 'Beyond The Limits'



Beyond The Limits Keynote Presenter Julian Louis (from left) with panellists: Lindy Hume, Lily Shearer, Stephen Champion, Sarah Parsons and Scott Howie

29th October saw TNN's major event for 2016 'Beyond The Limits - regional theatre in the national landscape' was part ARTLANDS DUBBO 2016. With Keynote provocation by Julian Louis, Artistic Director of NORPA and panellists Stephen Champion (Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre), Scott Howie (Easter Riverina Arts), Lindy Hume



# Key Events

(Opera Queensland), Lily Shearer (Moogahlin Performing Arts), and Sarah Parsons (Outback Theatre for Young People) explore where contemporary regional performance making, our venues, communities, and careers fit in the Australian and broader context. Jane Kreis, Director of Theatre Network NSW facilitated the Q&A, case studies, and break-out sessions that emerged from this discussion. TNN's Beyond The Limits 2016 Report has been sent out to 50 attendees and shared with content producers for the Australian Theatre Forum 2017 and Arts Front 2030 but ultimately it provided key ideas and actions for TNN and the sector to implement in 2017 and beyond.

Discussion fell into five main streams:

- a new paradigm of assertiveness (relocating 'regional' outside deficit mode),
- implementation of support structures including more equal exchange between metro/regional and resource sharing,
- generating critical appraisal of work created in regional contexts,
- celebrating quality of diversity,
- theatre's critical and provocative role in addressing issues that face humankind.

## November

### Speed Networking Evening

On 7th November TNN organised a Speed Networking Evening for independent practitioners with Australian Institute of Music (AIM) Dramatic Arts and Creative Plus Business. Pilgrim Theatre, 262 Pitt Street, Sydney. This event was remarkable for the professional connections it generated between established between the independent producers and emerging independents although the human bingo was a bit of a hit as well! 30+ attendees enjoyed meeting new theatre colleagues, drinks and some pretty tasty bar snacks.



## December

### Indy Theatre Forum with Critical Stages

On 6th Decembe, Pizza and beer and good company drew a crowd of about 50 who openly and collectively discussed issues for action including: access to venues and performance spaces; sharing knowledge of resources and production tips; working to get more independent theatre texts into high school curriculum; funding calendars and event calendars for the sector; touring and extending production life of shows. TNN furiously took notes onto giant butchers' paper which have been developed into advocacy and actions for 2017.

# Services

## and Associated Memberships

TNN provides a full range of general as well as specifically tailored services and support to its Associates and the NSW theatre sector more broadly.

In 2016 TNN launched its Associate Membership. TNN's Associates are at the heart of all its activities. An Individual Associate Member package was developed in mid-2016 to directly engage members regardless of where and how they worked in the NSW theatre sector as well as a strategy to leverage stronger partnerships with sponsors and funding partners. By taking annual Associate Membership of TNN, Associates can join with their peers to enjoy NSW theatre industry networks, services and events.

TNN Associate Membership provides access for the individual or the organisation to:

- network events and activities;
- monthly e-news;
- Network Perks (industry discounts and specials);
- research and advocacy;
- auspicings;
- funding support and general industry advice;
- events, workshops, meetings tailored to your industry;
- online directory;
- industry networks; and
- associated national engagement through Theatre Network Australia (TNA) and other national peak bodies.



*As we've grown so too has our communications style and online platforms.*

The website now feeds into our Facebook and Twitter pages and our online resources also include a pilot resource sharing site called TNN Share, Swap 'n' Sell. A central theme in stakeholder feedback was the need for a platform through which the theatre sector could more easily access or share resources. After some research, a pilot Facebook group was established. Through this site members sell, seek and swap items such as storage, sets, props, costumes, furniture, office equipment, and opportunities <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TNN.share.swap.sell/>



# Financial Overview

2016 was TNN's first year of self-financial administration. In 2015 TNN transitioned to in-house financial administration by confirming its incorporation, annual funding, charitable status, and banking structures.

In TNN's 2015 annual program funding (Arts NSW) was auspiced by Performing Lines. TNN carried forward income of \$3,882.33 in 2015 to sustain the organisation through the January and February months of 2016 until its annual program funding (Arts NSW) was cleared in February 2016. TNN budget and business plan was reviewed in late 2015 in order to address 2016's funding shortfalls of \$10,000 and future increases in in-house administration expenditure.

This review focussed on reducing 2016 administration costs through development of sponsorship, in-kind partnerships, volunteer support, and to implement Associate Membership program and fees for service in 2016 rather than in 2018 as previously planned. These variations allowed TNN to operate within budget for 2016 with a modest surplus of \$1,339.62

For a more in-depth view of the finances, please download our Annual Report from the website at: [www.tnn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/TNN\\_2016FinancialReport.pdf](http://www.tnn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/TNN_2016FinancialReport.pdf)

# 2016

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## THEATRE NETWORK NSW

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## Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible through the generous and creative support of:

 **APM Graphics Management**  
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Theatre Network NSW would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, live and create. In particular, TNN would like to acknowledge the Gumbainggir, Bundjalung, Dharug, and Eora nations in which our offices are situated as well as the Jarowair, Giabal, Turrbal, Jagera, Wiradjuri, Dharawal and Kulin nations on whose lands we met and held events in 2016.

TNN would like to acknowledge the generous support of its peers and partners who enriched and strengthened our sector.

In addition to our partners and sponsors, TNN would like to thank our volunteers: Melissa Sims, Michael Sieders, Sonia McAlpine, and Irene Lemon for donating their time and experience to TNN in 2016.



Theatre Network NSW is supported by the NSW Government through Arts NSW