



**THEATRE
NETWORK**

Theatre Network NSW

**2019
ANNUAL
REPORT**

Theatre Network NSW

2019 – A Year in Review

2019 was a year of change and re-visioning for Theatre Network NSW. The Board undertook important sector wide consultation to design and implement a new program that addressed the current needs of the NSW Theatre and Performance sector. This new program better reflected the company's financial and staff resources.



Annette Shun Wan, The Hon. Don Harwin MLC, Antonia Seymour and Adrian Collette
State of the Sector Address
photo by Katrina Douglas

GOVERNANCE

Theatre Network NSW's 2019 Board

- Nick Atkins (Chair)
- Imogen Gardam (Deputy Chair)
- Dr Jane Kreis (Treasurer)
- Ben Kay (Public Officer)
- Pippa Bailey
- Fraser Corfield
- Peta Downes
- Maria Mitar
- Penny Watts
- Katrina Douglas (resigned May)
- Dan Graham (resigned May)
- Georgia Mokak (resigned November)

At the AGM, Bronwyn Edinger (Chair), Amy Maiden (Deputy Chair), Carmen Maisenbacher (Treasurer) and Ali Murphy-Oates stepped off the Board. Theatre Network NSW thanks them for their hard work and dedication to the company and the sector.

In 2019, the Board held seven Governance and nine Operational meetings. The AGM was held on Wednesday 1 May at Bell Shakespeare's Rehearsal Room. The Strategic Planning session was held on Sunday 19 May at ATYP.

– *Staff*

In May, Theatre Networks NSW's inaugural Executive Director Jane Kreis resigned to pursue new opportunities. Under Jane's leadership and guidance, Theatre Networks NSW grew into a valued, important and much needed part of the NSW sector. Jane continues to support and work the company as the Treasurer of the Board



Dr Jane Kreis

In response to receiving less than requested annual funding, the Board re-structured the Executive Director position to a 7 hour a week Coordinator role. Katrina Douglas was subsequently employed in the newly created position of Coordinator.

– *Membership*

As part of the company restructure, the Board removed all membership fees for individuals and companies. At the time of this review, TNN has 160 active members.

PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

– *May Day Forum*

The May Day Forum was sector wide gathering to discuss the future of TNN. The Forum was organised after TNN received notification from Create NSW that funding for 2019 would be \$50,000, a 40% decrease from funding received in 2018. The meeting followed the 2019 AGM.

The Forum was an opportunity to consult with the theatre sector and ask: do we close the doors?; what becomes of TNN?; does NSW theatre need a network, a peak agency, any longer?; what do you want, what do you need, and how can we ensure it is provided?; if we can find a way to continue operations beyond 2019, how do we sustain the agency – what does the business model look like?.

Outcome

Theatre Network NSW was highly regarded within the sector and it was agreed that NSW needed a state based advocacy body. There remained ongoing confusion about the difference between Theatre Network Australia and TNN, and that this confusion needed to be addressed. The consensus was for TNN to continue as an independent organisation and that Board work toward new business models and programs.

Attendees: 35 artists and arts workers

Date: Wednesday 1 May, 3pm to 5pm

Venue: Bell Shakespeare's Rehearsal Room



photo by Peta Addy

– *Health of the Sector Survey*

The Health of the Sector Survey was designed as a health check for the NSW Performing Arts sector. The Survey aimed to check in with the sector to see how organisations and independent artists were travelling. It was also an important opportunity for Theatre Network NSW's new Board to undertake vital consultation and test the need for, and viability of, an NSW Industry body. Theatre Network NSW aims to implement this Survey every two years.

The survey was loosely divided into four parts: identity and work; economic health; creative health; and wellbeing. Respondents were also asked to nominate their top three challenges that the Arts face in 2019.

201 people responded to the survey. Statistical data revealed:

- 43.28% of respondents were Independent Artists – the highest of any category. Producers were the next highest respondents with 41.62%.
- 30.35% of respondents are TNN members, 30.85% are members of MEAA; and 30.35% were not affiliated to any organisation.
- 51.74% of respondents lived in Sydney; 14.43% lived in a regional NSW; and 13.43% live in Western Sydney.

Please see Addendum One for the Health of the Sector Survey's Key Findings.

– *Life As A Regional Indy Theatre Artist*

Presented in partnership with Critical Stages Touring, 'Life As A Regional Indy Theatre Artist' was presented at Artstate Tamworth. Thirty-five independent theatre practitioners, producers and arts workers joined speakers Sally Blackwood, Adam Deusien, Caroline Dunphy and host Chris Bendall to discuss the challenges and opportunities of working as a regional theatre artist in NSW. Adam Deusien also presented key findings from Theatre Network NSW's *Health of the Sector Survey*.

Host: Chris Bendall, CEO Critical Stages Touring

Speakers: Sally Blackwood, director and performing arts leader; Adam Deusien, Artistic Director of Bathurst based Lingua Franca; and Caroline Dunphy, Co-Artistic Director of Belloo Creatives and Artistic Associate at NORPA.

Attendees: 35 regional artists and arts workers

Venue: UNE Tamworth Centre



photo by Emma Corrick

– *State of the Sector Address*

The State of the Sector Address (SOTSA) is a crucial sector gathering and opportunity to hear the vision for the future of our theatre industry from the State Government and Federal arts funding bodies and examine how we as a sector can create positive change. This discussion is an opportunity discuss the Arts funding landscape over the coming three years; and to reflect on and discuss the issues currently faced by the theatre and performance sector in New South Wales and Australia. 2019 was the second year of the SOTSA, and the aim is to make this an important annual event for the NSW Sector.



Annette Shun Wan, The Hon. Don Harwin MLC, Antonia Seymour and Adrian Collette
photo by Katrina Douglas

Welcome to Country: Uncle Allen Madden

Chair: Annette Shun Wan, Executive Producer of Contemporary Asian Australian Performance

Speakers: NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin MLC: Adrian Collette, CEO of the Australian Council for the Arts: and Antonia Seymour, Executive Director of Arts on Tour

Attendees: 91 artists and arts workers

Date: 12noon to 1.30pm Wednesday 27 November

Venue: Belvoir Street Theatre

Please see Addendum Two to read Antonia Seymour's Keynote Address

- *Industry response to the omission of Best Production for Children and Best Production for Young People from the 2020 Sydney Theatre Awards*

In December the Youth Arts Sector prepared a response to the omission of *Best Production for Children* and *Best Production for Young People* from the 2020 Sydney Theatre Awards. Theatre Network NSW published the response on behalf of the sector on social media, Theatre Network NSW's website and through a direct email campaign to the administrators and judges of the Sydney Theatre Awards.

The statement was written and signed by:

- Australian Theatre for Young People
- CDP Theatre Producers
- Monkey Baa Theatre Company
- PYT Fairfield
- Q Theatre
- Riverside Theatres
- Sydney Opera House
- Theatre Network NSW

Please see Addendum Three for the full statement.

- *TNN Hub*

Theatre Network NSW continued to reach out and engage with members and subscribers through regular emails to members; monthly e-newsletters; and daily social media posts.



The Hon. Don Harwin MLC, Annette Shun Wan, Antonia Seymour and Adrian Collette at the State of the Sector Address
photo by Katrina Douglas

FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2019

ABN 59 590 131 741

The organisation's finances are tracking to budget with the majority of expenditure confined to Theatre Network NSW staff salary and operational management. The change in membership fees approved in 2018 is reflected in the reduced membership income in 2019. However, the increase in membership has led to an increase in State of the Sector Address event ticket sales. The organisation's budget and programming was revised in 2019 to reflect an actual grant of \$50,000 from Create NSW Annual Service Organisation funding from the original \$80,000 request.

Dr Jane Kreis, Treasurer

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee on:



Nick Atkins (Chair)

Date 18/06/2020



Dr Jane Kreis (Treasurer)

Date 18/06/2020

Balance Sheet

Theatre Network NSW Inc As at 31 December 2019

31 Dec 2019 31 Dec 2018

Assets

	31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2018
Bank		
ANZ Online Saver (6365)	19,202	16,734
ANZ Operational (7563)	7,139	7,993
PayPal Account	6,126	5,251
Petty cash	58	58
Total Bank	32,525	30,036
Current Assets		
GST Adjustments to be Made	-	88
PayPal Account (clearing)	-	(808)
Wages Overpayment	-	58
Trade and Other Receivables		
Accounts Receivable	-	935
Total Trade and Other Receivables	-	935
Total Current Assets	-	273
Total Assets	32,525	30,309

Liabilities

Current Liabilities		
ATO Running Balance Account	828	2,997
ATO		
GST	(74)	55
Total ATO	(74)	55
Trade and Other Payables		
Accounts Payable	-	330
Superannuation payable	-	1,491
Total Trade and Other Payables	-	1,821
Total Current Liabilities	754	4,873
Total Liabilities	754	4,873
Net Assets	31,771	25,436

Equity

Current Year Earnings	6,336	51
Retained Earnings	25,436	25,385
Total Equity	31,771	25,436

Profit & Loss

Theatre Network NSW Inc 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

	31 Dec 19	31 Dec 18
Income		
Create NSW - Core	50,000	82,000
Entry Fees	1,277	845
Interest	94	221
Membership fees	1,391	4,826
Total Income	52,763	87,892
Less Cost of Sales		
Production/Exhibition/Tour cost including events	391	2,863
Total Cost of Sales	391	2,863
Gross Profit	52,372	85,029
Less Operating Expenses		
Allowances and Per diems	260	1,171
Audit and Accounting Fees	3,820	4,895
Bank Fees	2	-
Contractors and Consultants	225	4,446
Evaluation and Research	-	324
Governance fees	-	176
Insurance	900	1,519
IT Maintenance & Software	1,086	862
Marketing & Promotion	493	199
Meetings/Catering	79	3,247
Memberships, Subscriptions	833	1,577
Office Equipment, Supplies and consumables	271	1,014
Parking	95	232
PayPal Fees	54	12
Postage	-	40
Printing / Mailouts	607	265
Salaries and Wages	30,665	49,791
Stationery	73	116
STRIPE Fees	38	126
Superannuation Expense	2,192	4,730
Telephone and Internet	620	1,397
Travel & Accommodation	2,144	8,504
Website / Hosting / Ecomms	358	335
Workers' Compensation	1,223	-
Total Operating Expenses	46,036	84,977
Net Profit	6,336	51

Cash Summary

Theatre Network NSW Inc For the 12 months ended 31 December 2019 Excluding GST

	Dec 2019	Avg	Variance
Income			
Create NSW - Core	50,000	50,000	0.0%
Entry Fees	1,277	1,277	0.0%
Interest	94	94	0.0%
Membership fees	2,241	2,241	0.0%
GST Adjustments to be Made	88	88	0.0%
PayPal Account (clearing)	(808)	(808)	0.0%
Wages Overpayment	58	58	0.0%
Total Income	52,951	52,951	0.0%
Less Operating Expenses			
Allowances and Per diems	260	260	0.0%
Audit and Accounting Fees	4,120	4,120	0.0%
Bank Fees	2	2	0.0%▲
Contractors and Consultants	225	225	0.0%
Insurance	900	900	0.0%
IT Maintenance & Software	1,086	1,086	0.0%
Marketing & Promotion	493	493	0.0%
Meetings/Catering	79	79	0.0%
Memberships, Subscriptions	833	833	0.0%
Office Equipment, Supplies and consumables	271	271	0.0%
Parking	95	95	0.0%
PayPal Fees	54	54	0.0%
Printing / Mailouts	607	607	0.0%
Production/Exhibition/Tour cost including events	391	391	0.0%
Salaries and Wages	30,665	30,665	0.0%
Stationery	73	73	0.0%
STRIPE Fees	38	38	0.0%
Superannuation Expense	2,192	2,192	0.0%
Telephone and Internet	620	620	0.0%
Travel & Accommodation	2,144	2,144	0.0%
Website / Hosting / Ecomms	358	358	0.0%
Workers' Compensation	1,223	1,223	0.0%
ATO Running Balance Account	2,169	2,169	0.0%
Superannuation payable	1,491	1,491	0.0%
Total Operating Expenses	50,387	50,387	0.0%
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	2,564	2,564	0.0%
GST Movements			
GST Inputs	(6,362)		
GST Outputs	6,288		
Net GST Movements	(74)		0.0%

Cash Summary

	Dec 2019	Avg	Variance
Net Cash Movement	2,490	2,564	-2.9%▼
Summary			
Opening Balance	30,036		
Plus Net Cash Movement	2,490		
Closing Balance	32,525		

ADDENDUM ONE

2019 Theatre Network NSW's Health of the Sector Survey Key Findings

"We need to divert funding for the NSW arts wherever and whenever we can. We need a sociocultural shift to value the arts, increase funding and pay all artists across the board above minimum wage. We're in an uncertain climate which is incentivising artists to create in order to understand. Artists cannot be replaced by technology, and therefore this is a sector which should be highly incentivised and emphasised as an affordable and sustainable model for economic growth in not just NSW, but the entire country."



photo by Peta Addy

The Health of the Sector Survey was divided into four parts: identity and work; economic health; creative health; and Personal Health and wellbeing. Respondents were also asked to nominate their top three challenges that the Arts face in 2019. All quotes are anonymous comments from survey respondents.

1. Identity / Statistic Data

201 people responded to the survey.

- 43.28% of respondents were Independent Artists – the highest of any category. Producers were the next highest respondents with 41.62%.
- 30.35% of respondents are TNN members, 30.85% are members of MEAA; and 30.35% were not affiliated to any organisation.
- 51.74% of respondents lived in Sydney; 14.43% lived in a regional NSW; and 13.43% live in Western Sydney.

2. Economic Health

"The entire sector is under funding pressure and a competitive model that despite the best attempts of peer assessment panels results in many excellent projects, programs and artists unfunded."

"Peer reviewing in theatre is hugely depressing given the tiny percentage of works that are funded in S2M."

- 37.71% indicated that the annual turn-over of the company they work for is less than \$50,000 per year. This was the biggest proportion of respondents. Next largest was 15.43% who indicated that the company they worked earned between \$1million to \$5 million
- 40.80% of respondents had not received any funding (government, philanthropic or private) for their work; 32.43% had received Australia Council funding; 37.31% had received Create NSW; and 33.83% had received Local Council funding. Only 24.38% had received philanthropic support.

"Wages don't match to other industries, especially corporate, across all levels of admin. The Arts sometimes find it hard to attract top quality workers when other industries pay a lot more."

"I've given it up as an income source. It's too hard, especially Theatre. I still practice but for no money and no artistic restriction."

- 44.78% indicated that 100% of their annual salary was from working in the Performing Arts.
- 26.37% indicated that less than 25% of their salary was from the Artists.
- 53.23% work full time in the performing arts and 46.77% have another job outside of the performing arts

3. Creative Health

"I would much prefer to work creatively on a full time basis but it's impossible. I need to take on non-creative roles in the Performing Arts to survive."

- 25.97% (largest response) indicated that they spent between 26-50% of their work in the Performing Arts doing creative roles. Only 8.44% indicated that 100% of their work in the performing arts is creative.
- 83% of respondents had carried out their work in NSW over the past two years.
- Where in NSW? The answer is very diverse. Our sector obviously gets out and about. 127 of respondents had worked in metro and Western Sydney, 209 of respondents were working in regional and remote areas of NSW and 228 were working in other states of Australia. 38% also worked internationally during this period. And all of you intend to work in similar places in the next two years.
- 98% of respondents have training or significant professional experience in the performing arts or related fields however only 55% do not undertake regular training or professional development but more would if it were more affordable or they had more time.

"There is not much scope for original creative thinking in the performing arts in Australia at the moment. Most of the money goes to major organisations that are not forward-looking about where the artform could go. Huge amounts of the creative talent of performing artists, young, mid-career, and mature, is underutilised. Our creative potential as a nation is therefore seriously diminished."

"Artists from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds find it difficult to have entry points into the sector and to grow their skills/experience in writing/performing/producing and in developing partnerships with organisations or venues that have knowledge of culturally sensitive and ethical processes. , Without strategic and regional investment in development for artists from new/emerging refugee or minority communities or emerging artists in general, especially in Western Sydney, these voices are isolated and not connected to the broader sector (geographically, socio-economically and culturally)."

"Creative Health is unsustainable without funding and REAL support. There is a huge unfunded industry in Sydney that has needed the support of an organisation like TNN for the past 5-10 years."

4. Personal Health & Wellbeing

"The mental health and wellbeing of workers tends to be put last. Smaller organizations often employ on short-term contracts, practice sham contracting, and fail to ensure workplaces are safe for employees. The preservation of organisations, be it financial or legally motivated, often seems to come at the sacrifice of staff wellbeing. Raise a bullying complaint? You can bet your contract won't be renewed."

"There are plenty of wellbeing issues that need attention. The top of the list would be mental health of artists on tour and in long-running shows, drug and alcohol abuse and the treatment of women in the arts."

"Burn out is, and has for years been, a major issue but nothing ever gets done about. We are just all expected to continuing pushing ourselves above and beyond for the 'love of it'."

"Job security is an ongoing problem. Unless artists are paid their worth and compensated for the time between jobs then job stress will never dissipate."

5. The Main Challenges Facing the Arts in 2019

The challenges outlined in the survey include:

- A revitalisation of our artistic culture that ... takes the focus off big organisations and top down Government initiatives.
- Artist mental health particularly linked to financial insecurity.
- The lack of funding is indicative of a general lack of interest, respect for all arts at a Government level
- Finding affordable space for rehearsals, affordable theatres for self-funded works and independent start up type nights where creatives can share first draft type works, experimental performance.
- Access to ready language translation/translators subsidised to support
- a risk averse production climate, particularly when touring to regional venues and when programming non-commercial work

ADDENDUM TWO

Antonia Seymour's State of the Sector Address Keynote Speech As published in Artshub

"We need great art – perhaps more than ever"

Art matters. We know that it makes sense of challenge and difficulty. We know that as a society, we are becoming more isolated and less connected, and that mental health is a massive issue – particularly amongst young people – and that in all of these areas, art has a hugely beneficial impact. We know art creates community, and helps us make meaning, and brings us joy.

Great art shifts the dial for the better – on how we see ourselves and the world. But back in this room, in the here and now, how's our mental health? How connected are we feeling? How curious and creative?

Theatre Network NSW's recent survey reveals we are in a chronic state of anxiety, of stress and fatigue, and of feeling undervalued, and I want to acknowledge just how difficult the current situation is for many artists and arts workers in this room. I hear it and see it every day.

From a neuroscience point of view, we know that long-term stress shrinks our creativity. Is it even possible then, to make great art from this state?

THE CURRENT FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Let's look at the current funding environment. What does it look like for independent artists and S2M companies?

If we look at project funding, we know current success rates at a state and federal are less than 20%. Australia Council's success rate averages at around 15%; the last Create NSW project round was 2.7%.

We also know from 2021 the number of small to medium companies (S2Ms) receiving multi-year funding from the Australia Council will decrease by 25%, meaning there'll be more competition for reduced project funding at a federal level. And the new guidelines from Create NSW open up funding to interstate artists and companies, meaning we can expect increased competition for limited project funds at a state level.

The current funding environment for independent artists and S2Ms has anxiety and insecurity built-in.

In terms of project funding for national touring, the current mechanism is challenging – principally because both Australia Council and Create NSW funding are needed for a national tour to go ahead, and there's currently no decision-making coordination between the two agencies on which tours are successful. It takes up to a year to build a tour and on average 200 to 300 hours of work – liaising and negotiating with dozens of venues, itinerating and budgeting. If only one of the two funding applications is successful, the whole tour falls over.

And there's another point to be made here that applies to all one-off project funding. If a tour does get up, there's no avenue for building on its success with a follow up tour and a long-term audience development strategy for that company. Only the National Touring Status initiative facilitates this with multi-year funding, but it's only available to four companies nationally, and it's currently under review. The current funding environment then, for independent artists and S2Ms, has anxiety and insecurity built-in. Funding for making new work is precarious, at best, and it's difficult to plan for, or capitalise on, success.

This is despite us knowing that the independent and S2M sector is the audience driver and innovation generator of our industry, where the vast majority of new work is made, and where our future takes shape. The current funding environment then, makes this future precarious.

GREAT ART FINDS SUCCESS

Let's shift gear a little, and look back out, at where great art has found success. What conditions have allowed this art to be made, and to find audiences? One of my favourite stories of 2019 is Dubbo Regional Theatre's presentation of Cassie Workman's *Giantess* – an exquisite one woman show that explores growing up transgender. It's funny and accessible, heartfelt and clever, and Dubbo venue manager Linda Christof saw an immediate shift in the attitudes of audience members that went on to have a positive ripple effect throughout her community.

Cassie wrote *Giantess* as an independent artist without project funding. It premiered at Griffin Theatre's Batch Festival, and was seen by producer Lisa Freshwater. Lisa and Cassie then pitched it at Arts on Tour's Salon, where it was seen by Linda Christof – and from there it found its way to Dubbo.

My first thought, is how many *Giantess*'s are we missing out on, given the scarcity of project funding? How much latent talent does this sector have, that we don't see?

And secondly, while the gestation of *Giantess* was precarious, once made, it was lifted and carried by specific initiatives and people in the sector ecology. Batch and Salon provided the showcasing opportunities that enabled it to be seen. They provided connectivity. Lisa Fresh-water provided essential artist support. And Linda Christof provided the cultural leadership and the bravery to take the risk on presenting it.

One of our tours this year tells a similar story. *In Between Two*, from Contemporary Asian Australian Performance, or CAAP for short, was created and performed by James Mangohig and Joel Ma. It toured to 13 venues across Australia and was nominated for tour of the year.

Like Cassie, James and Joel didn't get project funding to make this work, and like *Giantess*, *In Between Two* was lifted and carried to audiences by specific nodes in the ecology: namely the capacity building and artist development support of CAAP, and producer Annette Shun Wah and mentor William Yang. Through CAAP, the work was further developed and found its way to Sydney Festival then Melbourne Festival and OzAsia, before being supported by Arts on Tour to tour nationally.

In Between Two and *Giantess* survived the gestation process because they were small enough in scale to get their first iteration up without project funding, and this makes them both anomalies. The scarcity of project funding comes at a massive cost to artists and the sector, and our ability to make bold and ambitious new work.

The scarcity of project funding comes at a massive cost to artists and the sector, and our ability to make bold and ambitious new work.

But what I also want to highlight here is the role of the ecology in these works being further developed and finding audiences – where specific organisations provided support, cultural leadership, capacity building and connectivity to carry these fragile pieces of art to audiences far and wide.

Let's now go to the Bega Valley, to regional arts organisation South East Arts and their inaugural Giiyong Festival – a multi-artform festival celebrating First People's culture that engaged 6000 people. It took South East Arts three years to bring to fruition and to map a biennial festival framework that will see First Peoples take the lead by 2024.

This Festival is a phenomenal feat for a small arts organisation. Its success, like *Giantess* and *In Between Two*, relied primarily on the artistry of the many artists involved, as well as the cultural leadership of South East Arts' Andrew Gray and team.

But this project also benefited from the stability and security of ongoing operational funding for South East Arts. This enabled the team to leverage its base funding to raise \$250,000, including a high proportion of non-arts government and private funding, and partner with local Twofold Aboriginal Corporation. It also gave the project time to develop long-term relationships with local Elders, cultural leaders and artists. And to be bold and ambitious. Without the foundation of stability and security, a project of this vision, scale and impact would not be possible.

Back in Sydney, the success of another work we're looking to tour, Henrietta Baird's *The Weekend* from Moogahlin, was similarly made possible through multi-year funding, this time in the form of a four-year Catalyst project grant for Moogahlin's Yellamundie playwriting festival, a critical platform for First Peoples' new writing. Like South East Arts, the security of foundational funding enabled Moogahlin to leverage additional funding and map out long-term outcomes. It gave Henrietta's work a pathway to be seen, developed and produced by Moogahlin and presented at Sydney Festival – and now reach a broader audience through touring.

These last two stories demonstrate the benefits of multi-year funding, either at an operational or a project level, in providing cultural leaders with the foundation to be financially resourceful and artistically ambitious, and in being able to provide a long-term framework that supports artists to make great work and see it succeed.

CONCLUSIONS

What can we conclude then from these success stories in relation to our current approach to funding?

For me it comes down to three key points.

First and foremost, we need to prioritise empowering and supporting our artists. And this isn't only about money, but we will get to that. It's also cultural. As one survey respondent eloquently wrote: *'the importance of cultivating a culture of respect and encouragement of art and artists cannot be understated'*.

Cultivating a more supportive culture, of more transparency from funding agencies, more acknowledgement of how difficult things are, less us and them – would make a big difference.

Secondly, we need to address the inherent insecurity of project funding and acknowledge the real and deep impact this has on the ability of Independent artists and S2Ms – and therefore collectively our ability as a sector – to make new work and great art.

We need a more strategic approach – one that not only funds more creative development for bold new work, but also supports follow up funding and a longer-term view of projects to capitalise on successful new work like *In Between Two* and *Giantess*.

But this would require addressing the current critical under investment, and on this major issue TNN supports Theatre Network Australia's call for an urgent injection of \$7M into four-year funding for S2Ms. We also need to urgently and radically reverse the steady decline in project funding investment, essential for the development of new work for both independent artists and S2Ms. At current levels, the best we can do is a scattergun approach, where assessors spread what little there is to as many projects as they can. This does not set us up for success.

And if an increase in funding for the sector is not on the horizon, despite the best efforts of our Arts Minister and funding agencies, and if we want a future of bold and ambitious art, then there seems to be no choice other than a redistribution of current funds, based on artistic quality; return on investment and need; and current and future impact.

And my third and final point is that we need to safeguard the ecology and the existence of specific organisations that play a critical role in determining success – as capacity builders, as catalysts and as connectors. Take one of these away, and the potential for success also falls away.

And that is all I want to say. Except that right now, in this current environment, we need great art – perhaps more than ever. And we owe it to our audiences and our artists to make sure we're doing everything we can to make great art possible, and to make it matter.

This is an edited version of Antonia Seymour's keynote speech delivered at Theatre Network NSW's State of the Sector Address at Belvoir on Wednesday 27 November 2019.

Published in Artshub Thursday 5 December 2019

<https://performing.artshub.com.au/news-article/opinions-and-analysis/performing-arts/antonia-seymour/we-need-great-art-perhaps-more-than-ever-259374>

ANTONIA SEYMOUR

Antonia is the General Manager of Arts on Tour. She possesses a rich knowledge of the performing arts sector and touring, having worked at producing companies large and small, from Sydney Dance Company to Urban Theatre Projects, as well as London's Lyric Hammersmith and Performing Lines. Over her 20-year career in the sector she has held senior roles in producing, marketing and development. An alumna of Social Leadership Australia's Sydney Leadership program and Australia Council's Emerging Leadership Program, Antonia has a deep interest in the social impact of arts experiences and working collaboratively to affect change.



ADDENDUM THREE

Industry response to the omission of *Best Production for Children* and *Best Production for Young People* from the 2020 Sydney Theatre Awards

We recognise the value of the Sydney Theatre Awards to our industry and thank the organisers for their efforts as volunteers to run the Awards each year.

As stated on the Awards website, the event was originally created because “the lack of public recognition in Sydney for the city’s theatre practitioners was wrong and had to be addressed.”

As producers and presenters of theatre for children and young people, we are concerned that the public recognition of our practice will suffer due to those awards not being included in the 2020 Sydney Theatre Awards. This is wrong and must be addressed.

Prior to 2019, separate awards were presented each year for *Best Production for Children* and *Best Production for Young People*. In 2019 these were combined into a single award, *Best Production for Children and Young People*. In the 2020 nominations, the category does not exist at all.

We are calling for the Sydney Theatre Awards to recognise the quality of productions created and presented in Sydney for Children and Young People by reinstating both awards for the 2020 presentation.

The quality of theatre produced in Sydney for children and young people is recognised nationally and internationally. It is unacceptable that it not be recognised by our own colleagues in our own city.

To assist the Sydney Theatre Award organisers, we have prepared a list of productions from 2019 that would be eligible for the awards. This list demonstrates the breadth and quality of potential nominations and we are confident there are additional entries not included here.

The Sydney Theatre Awards is a prestigious award and we rely on the recognition that it brings to promote our work and our sector. We hope that this oversight can be addressed for the 2020 presentation and welcome the opportunity to assist the organisers in any way that we can.

Signed,
Australian Theatre for Young People; CDP Theatre Producers; Monkey Baa Theatre Company; PYT Fairfield; Q Theatre; Riverside Theatres; Sydney Opera House; Theatre Network NSW

Preliminary list of works eligible for nomination:

Sydney venues are listed for each production. Several productions also toured extensively outside of Sydney.

The 91-Storey Treehouse, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Sydney Opera House, The Joan Penrith

April Aadvark, Australian Theatre for Young People

Presented at: SBW Stables Theatre

Bathory Begins, Australian Theatre for Young People & Q Theatre

Presented at: The Joan Penrith

Billionaire Boy, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Riverside Theatres, The Concourse, Seymour Centre

The Box Show, Junkyard Beats

Presented at: WOW Festival, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

Fangirls, Queensland Theatre, Belvoir and Brisbane Festival in association with ATYP

Presented at: Belvoir Theatre

Follow Me Home, Australian Theatre for Young People

Presented at: Riverside Theatres

The Gruffalo's Child, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Riverside Theatres, The Concourse, Seymour Centre

Hitler's Daughter, Monkey Baa Theatre Company

Presented at: ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, Riverside Theatres, Glen St Theatre, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, The Joan Penrith

Intersection 2019: Arrival, Australian Theatre for Young People

Presented at: SBW Stables Theatre

Meeting Mozart, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Sydney Opera House

Playlist, PYT Fairfield

Presented at: Sydney Opera House, Sydney Festival, PYT Fairfield

Possum Magic, Monkey Baa Theatre Company

Presented at: ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Riverside Theatres, Glen St Theatre, The Joan Penrith, Sutherland Entertainment Centre, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

The Red Tree, Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta

Presented at: Sydney Opera House

Room on the Broom, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Riverside Theatres, The Concourse, Seymour Centre

Spot, CDP Theatre Producers

Presented at: Sydney Opera House, The Joan Penrith, Riverside Theatres Parramatta,

Take 2: A Comedy of Errors, Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta

Presented at: Riverside Theatres

There's a Sea in My Bedroom, Australian Chamber Orchestra

Presented at: Sydney Opera House

To Be Honest, Outloud (formerly Bankstown Youth Development Service)

Presented at: Riverside Theatres

The Ugliest Duckling, The Q Theatre

Presented at: The Joan Penrith, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

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