

**National Touring Framework**  
***Are We There Yet?***



## Executive summary

Performing arts touring in Australia is highly interdependent. This Framework recognises the inherent complexities of the touring systems and aims to guide the future development of touring in Australia. This report is not a prescriptive plan, but a framework of principles and broad strategic goals.

### Objective

The objective of this project is to outline a framework for national touring that:

- considers the connections, overlaps, gaps and opportunities in order to tour more artists and arts organisations
- provides practical examples or models to assist artists and arts organisations in their decision making about touring
- references the value of touring to the sector.

### Scope

The scope of this project is national performing arts touring, which is defined as tours that visit destinations within more than one state or territory.

This refers to touring of all forms of live performance by large and small subsidised companies, independent producers and commercial producing organisations. The commercial music sector falls outside the scope of the project.

### Methodology

The Framework was developed through extensive individual and group face-to-face consultations of performing arts touring stakeholders, a literature review and the expertise of the consultants. Consultations took place in every capital city, as well as in three regional centres.

The project steering group and project working group (see Appendix H) were instrumental in directing the Framework.

### Key findings

The national touring landscape involves many stakeholders, often with competing demands. It is very complex and is, to some degree, in a state of flux. However, overwhelmingly performing arts touring is a vibrant sector with a willingness to engage with one another. In addition, there is considerable commitment to improving the sector and several organisations are already undertaking initiatives in this regard. Australia's unique geography and population distribution mean there are few international touring systems that we can look to as examples. Stakeholder consultations revealed a broad range of issues that inhibit touring. The issues are outlined in detail in the report.

### The Framework

The Framework consists of Foundation Principles, Drivers, Key Reforms and Development Goals. It is envisaged the Foundation Principles will be adopted by all stakeholders actively participating in the touring sector (within the scope of this report).

The Foundation Principles include:

- community engagement
- access
- artistic vibrancy and diversity
- partnerships and collaboration.

The following Drivers aim to underpin the Foundation Principles:

- environmental sustainability
- economic sustainability
- social sustainability.

The Key Reforms include:

1. A national plan: Develop a national plan for touring in Australia, not to dictate touring practice but to guide coordination and strategy.
2. Funding harmonisation and simplification: Simplify and harmonise funding programs to improve touring effectiveness and minimise waste of resources.
3. Production selection: Improve and develop production selection processes and systems that are diverse, equitable and strategic.

The Developmental Goals include:

1. Relationships, dialogue and tour coordination: Enable opportunities for meaningful dialogue in industry forums that support collaboration, and develop a complementary system of tour coordination.
2. Diversity of work toured: Remove impediments to small tours, provide new 'lite' tour coordination services more widely, and support presenter<sup>1</sup> risk-taking.
3. Community engagement: Integrate planning of engagement activity into the touring process at all stages and establish reliable resources to deliver effective engagement strategies.
4. Marketing and audience development: Invest in the development and implementation of long-term, relationship-driven audience development programs, prioritising local government engagement, with specific investment in presenter and producer<sup>2</sup> marketing staff.
5. Capacity building (people and Infrastructure): Invest in tour brokerage services and a professional development program for presenters, with particular focus on curation and audience development, and develop and adopt national professional standards.
6. Environmental sustainability (low-carbon touring): Develop a sector-wide strategy with resources to audit and reduce environmental impacts, and ensure production selection and funding programs encourage low-carbon touring.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper a Presenter refers to the organisation providing the production to the audience, most often a venue managed either professionally or by a voluntary body. Presenters may also be non-venue based, for example arts councils and festivals.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this paper a Producer refers to the creator of the production.

# National Performing Arts Touring Framework

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES			
1. Access	2. Artistic vibrancy and diversity	3. Community engagement	4. Partnerships and collaboration



**KEY REFORMS**  
*Priority Recommendations*

- 1. A national plan**
  - Determine responsibility for a national touring co-ordination and management service.
  - Conduct biannual state and federal government touring policy meetings.
  - Develop a local government engagement strategy.
- 2. Funding harmonisation and simplification**
  - Simplify funding process by funding earlier in tour development cycle, with presenters confirmed but before finalising itinerary.
  - Establish an 'apply any time' quick response program alongside one or two set rounds.
  - Complement single tour funding with triennial grants to selected producers and presenters.
- 3. Production selection**
  - Structural change to Long Paddock and/or alternative booking conference/market.
  - Re/development of strategic, diverse and equitable online production menu system.

**DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
*Priority Recommendations*

- 1. Relationships, dialogue and tour coordination**
  - Enable opportunities for meaningful dialogue in industry forums that support collaboration.
  - Develop and adopt a complementary system of tour coordination.
- 2. Diversity of work toured**
  - Remove marketplace and funding program impediments to small tours.
  - Provide tour coordination, brokering and new 'lite' consulting models more widely.
  - Support presenter risk-taking through curatorial upskilling, shared audience development strategies and providing certainty on programming centrepieces.
- 3. Community engagement**
  - Build sector's capacity to deliver effectively.
  - Integrate planning of engagement activity into the touring conversation at all stages.
  - Clarify relationship to funding programs and establish reliable resources.
- 4. Marketing and audience development**
  - Invest in the development and implementation of long-term, relationship-driven audience development programs.
  - Prioritise local government engagement.
  - Invest in presenter and producer marketing staff.
- 5. Capacity building**
  - Invest in tour brokerage services.
  - A professional development program for presenters.
  - Develop and adopt national professional standards.
- 6. Sustainability – low-carbon touring**
  - Develop a sector-wide strategy.
  - Develop resources to audit and reduce environmental impacts.
  - Ensure production selection and funding programs encourage reduction of impacts.

**- DRIVERS -**

1. Economic sustainability   2. Environmental sustainability   3. Social sustainability

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## 1 Preamble

Why do we need a National Touring Framework in an industry already known for its complex systems?

For all the structures, and all the stakeholders working diligently within them, no one is actually *responsible* for national touring.

It's now twenty years since the last major reform of the national touring system: the advent of the national funding program, Playing Australia. In the absence of a national touring policy per se, this development transformed the performing arts landscape. It created many more opportunities for artists to perform, and for audiences to experience their work, in a much wider footprint across the country. In doing so, it has stimulated substantial cultural development outside the capital cities, and encouraged and assisted the professionalisation of regional performing arts centres.

Along with other cultural, social and technical developments, the advent of Playing Australia made possible the development of a national circuit, a national marketplace, and a national audience. Sophisticated mechanisms have arisen to service these trade routes and these markets, to deliver product efficiently.

Touring is an inherently complex activity, with many stakeholders, and highly interdependent.

*Yet while touring is necessarily complicated, we can at the very least decide which complexities are inherent in the process, and which are unnecessary hindrances.<sup>3</sup>*

But stepping back for a moment, it appears that a great deal of the complexity in our industry structures and mechanisms is at the detail level. For example, 'How many crew hours to bump it in?' is often the first question a presenter will ask in a conversation with a producer. Or 'How much will the taxis from the airport cost?', before applying for funding. These are important details for rigorous planning, budgeting and decision making about public resources. But they are a barrier in the conversation and to the very purpose of touring, which is about artists sharing with audiences. We need this logistical conversation, of course, but we also need a conversation about what we want out of touring on the whole: at the level of policy; in programming our venues for our communities; and even while we are making the art we are going to tour together, if not before.

This National Touring Framework is not a prescriptive plan, but a framework of principles and broad strategic goals. It has space and flexibility within it for action tailored to local jurisdictions, context and needs. For audiences in the cities, in regional centres, and in remote communities. For community and professional presenters of performing arts. For artists working across theatre or dance or music or live art, or new forms as yet uninvented. For popular work appealing to large audiences, and for work that is adventurous today but may well be popular tomorrow. And for work showing diverse cultural perspectives, in every sense of the word, that may speak to very specific communities.

Performing arts touring has evolved considerably over the past 30 years. We've moved from a broadcast model, where touring was often a centrally planned process, with product sent out from the cities to the bush. The advent of national touring funding, a proliferation of professional

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<sup>3</sup> Comment by consultation participant.

performing arts centres, and rise to ubiquity of the sell-off model<sup>4</sup>, created a national marketplace and empowered local programmers.

But a new paradigm is starting to emerge, moving beyond the pure customer relationship, to collaborations and partnerships between producers and presenters, and further, into a model of community engagement. In this new paradigm, venues become not simply recipients of product, but can be a network of cultural hubs sharing with each other. Audiences are invited into a more active relationship, not just as spectators but as participants in the programming, or even into the creative process as artists. And touring becomes much more than the transporting of finished productions – though this will still be a core activity – but one of a number of activities in the suite of mobility projects, along with residencies, exchanges and other projects reinventing or creating new work.

Funnelling performing arts touring through a primarily standardised mechanism is no longer appropriate, effective or efficient. One size does not fit all.

This is an exciting opportunity, if we recognise that some current touring practices have barely managed to keep pace with the changing dynamics of the industry and the way people engage with the performing arts. It's an opportunity to imagine the kind of performing arts touring industry we want for the next ten to twenty years and, ultimately, the kind of vibrant, liveable communities we want to be part of.

*The future of presenting and touring must be bound by a mutuality of purpose which recognizes that our success or failure must be shared. No artist, presenter, or manager works alone. No audience and community experience art without the collaborative efforts of artists and arts organisations. No successful presenting occurs without the community as context.<sup>5</sup>*

Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989

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<sup>4</sup> The sell-off model describes the relationship whereby a presenter purchases the production from the producer (as opposed to venue hire or a risk share model).

<sup>5</sup> Continuous reference is made throughout this report to the paper *An American Dialogue*. It is important to note that while it reflects the circumstances of the USA in 1989, the similarities to the current Australian industry make it a particularly relevant reference.

## 2 Project brief

The terms of the request for tender stated the following as the aim and objective of the project:

### **Aim**

The aim of the framework is to deliver more art to more audiences.

### **Objective**

The objective of this consultancy is to deliver a report that outlines a framework for national touring that:

- considers the connections, overlaps, gaps and opportunities, in order to tour more artists and arts organisations
- provides practical examples or models to assist artists and arts organisations in their decision making about touring
- references the value of touring to the sector.

The framework aims to be a practical document that is used by:

- arts organisations, to help determine pathways and funding options for touring
- funders, to better link up funding programs
- venues, to consider models to support tours.

This framework will identify opportunities, connect key players, and streamline touring to audiences around Australia.

Interpreting the first two dot points of the objective above, the consultants determined two distinct parts to this project:

#### *Pathways to touring*

Provide a system to help performing artists and companies access clear, current and practical information to find the right touring pathways through Australia's performing arts touring systems.

#### *Pathways to the future*

Based on feedback and research, make recommendations to support simpler and more effective national touring.

This paper is concerned only with the second part of the project.

## 3 Scope

The scope of this project is *national* touring. The research and this report therefore focus on tours that visit destinations within more than one state or territory. (Tours are eligible for Playing Australia support if they visit destinations in two or more states or territories outside the producer's home state. However, this report defines national touring more broadly.)

This is not to say that intrastate touring – that is, tours wholly within one state or territory – are not an important part of touring activity nationally, nor indeed of the cultural life of the communities visited. However, it is beyond the scope of this project to report in detail on intrastate touring in eight states and territories, which vary markedly (with good reason) in terms

of touring infrastructure, activity and funding programs. This also means that this report predominantly refers to the professional presenting network. While volunteer or community presenters are recognised as an integral part of the overall touring landscape, the highly variable and unique set of conditions under which they operate, combined with the sheer number of community/volunteer presenters (over 480 in Western Australia alone) prevents the distillation of their experience and needs into meaningful commentary.

The scope is also specifically limited to performing arts touring. Touring of visual arts practice without a time-based or live performance element is not discussed.

The project focuses on touring of live performing arts works in the genres of theatre (from traditional drama through to contemporary and hybrid forms), dance and dance theatre, and music theatre and opera. Music is considered only insofar as its touring intersects with the touring processes and systems described in this report. Consequently, the commercial music sector largely falls outside the scope of the project, as it rarely engages with the processes described in this report.

Therefore, the primary focus of this report is the activity of those individuals and organisations, largely from the subsidised performing arts sector, who were involved or wish to be involved with national touring. While consultation sessions were promoted through avenues that made the process available to a broad cross-section of the performing arts (that is, through Live Performance Australia's membership, and via the Australia Council for the Arts website), only a small number of commercial producers and venue operators chose to participate.

## 4 Key definitions

**National Tour** – tours visiting destinations within more than one state or territory.

**Producer** – Producers make the work that goes on tour. There are a wide variety of producers within the sector – large and small subsidised companies, independent producers and commercial producing organisations.

**Presenter** – This most commonly refers to venues in which the work is seen, both professionally managed and community/volunteer run. Presenters may also be non-venue-based, for example arts councils and festivals.

**Tour coordinator** – Tour coordinators liaise with the producers and presenters to develop and deliver tours. There are a wide variety of tour coordinators within the sector, providing a range of different services.

**Blue Heeler Network** – The Blue Heeler Network is an informal consortium of state touring coordinators that is a part of Regional Arts Australia and manages aspects of national touring. The Blue Heelers consist of arTour (Queensland), Country Arts SA, Country Arts WA and Regional Arts Victoria. The network also includes Associate Blue Heelers Artback NT and Tasmania Performs.

## 5 Methodology

Consistent with the overarching aims of the framework, the methodology used in this project was based on the premise that one size does not fit all.

Accordingly, the consultants undertook several methods of both primary and secondary research. The focus of the research was primarily qualitative in nature. Where quantitative information was required, the consultants drew from existing reports and statistics as opposed to undertaking additional primary research.

The consultants investigated the possibility of a stronger online presence (for example, online surveys, a website, Facebook, Twitter) as a means of garnering input, but felt that the specific nature of this project did not lend itself to broad, mass input. The purpose of the project was not to determine what *most* people think, and thus inform the development of a touring system by majority vote, but rather to gather a broad range of experiences from current touring systems (from both users and non-users), expert opinion and views and, through a process of analysis, propose systematic improvements that are effective and respond to the needs of users.

Recognising the importance of acceptance by the industry in order for the framework to be effectively adopted, the consultants undertook an open and transparent approach wherever possible.

The consultants moved through a staged and targeted process that focused on multiple, separate face-to-face consultations as opposed to large, unwieldy forums. Over the period between November 2011 and January 2012, project consultants Rick Heath and Harley Stumm talked with over 330 people representing the interests of over 284 organisations from Australia's performing arts sector. (See Appendix A.)

Group consultations and individual interviews took place in every state and territory capital, as well as in Launceston, Cairns and Warragul. Regionally based participants inputted via consultations scheduled during meetings of VAPAC, INAPAC and CircuitWest, and teleconferences with the NARPACA Executive and with remote Northern Territory stakeholders.

The consultations explored why people engage with touring, what touring programs they were aware of, what they considered was working and what they considered was not working in national touring. Finally, the consultants invited participants to propose ideas for improving the touring landscape: its systems, practices, mechanisms, relationships, policies and programs. This was an open invitation and resulted in ideas ranging from relatively discrete, simple actions through to wholesale structural change.

One-on-one interviews were held separately with peak bodies and major stakeholders as listed in Appendix E.

As a result, well over 150 ideas and suggestions for developing the sector were recorded. The consultants then reviewed the ideas in light of information from a literature review, and rated each idea according to the impact it would have on the sector (being consistent with the aims of the project), the ease or difficulty of implementation, and the maturity of the idea (the extent to which the idea was developed).

A similar process was also undertaken with the Project Steering Group. (See Appendix H.)

Subsequently, a draft report was created and a workshop was undertaken to refine and develop the recommendations with an expanded Project Steering Group. (See Appendix H.)

In addition, written submissions responding to the draft report were called for, from national peak bodies and state and territory arts ministries/departments.

Feedback from the workshop and written submissions was used to further refine the report and create the final touring framework.

Noticeably absent from discussion throughout this report is the direct voice of audiences. The stakeholders who were consulted considered audiences central to informing their business practice, and frequently noted audience relationships and research in their comments throughout the consultation process. However, properly conducted primary audience research was well beyond the scope of the report.

## 6 Conceptual framework

### 6.1 Four generations of touring: the evolution of touring models and practice

This section considers the evolution of the Australian touring sector, and touring models over the past forty years and into the future. It draws inspiration from Steven A. Wolff's paper *The Evolution of the Performing Arts Center*,<sup>6</sup> which identifies four generations of change in the evolution of the American PAC.<sup>7</sup>

It seemed to us that Wolff's approach in mapping the evolution of the PAC, its role, and its relationships with both artists/producers, and audiences/communities, might usefully inform an analysis of the evolution of touring to date, and identify directions for the future. We have looked at the evolution of these relationships, as evidenced in shifts in product development, programming, distribution models, financial relationships, and the underlying rationale and public discourse. A more thoroughgoing analysis might explore connections with broader cultural and social developments in more detail.

We propose that in Australia we are currently in an overlap between Generation Three and the early stages of Generation Four. This is not to present the schema as a hierarchy, supposing a narrative of evolutionary advancement. Nor is it to imply that models identified as predominant in earlier generations can't or shouldn't be utilised effectively today. Indeed, a diverse and multilayered approach to touring is desirable. Our purpose is simply to identify patterns in shifts in practice and relationships, to assist in understanding the implications of making the choices facing us today.

#### First generation: broadcast distribution (pre 1990)

- Performing arts touring is managed and programmed by central touring organisations, commonly state government units or statutory authorities or similar organisations funded by and heavily dependent on the state, and integrated into their policy framework and operations.
- Communication follows a broadcast model – the distribution of product from a central point (capital cities) to passive receivers.
- Venues operate as branches of the central organisation, who 'hire the hall' regularly enough to have a key stake in their operation.
- Financial risk is taken by the touring organisation.
- Product toured comprises finished works in traditional genres by a small number of state-funded companies, with this serious 'art' complemented by popular 'entertainment' toured by commercial producers using a similar presentation and risk model, minus the public subsidy.

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<sup>6</sup> Presented 20 October 2011 to the annual convention of AAPPAC, the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres in Melbourne, and published in full at [www.ams-online.com/trends/evolution.php](http://www.ams-online.com/trends/evolution.php)

<sup>7</sup> Summarising Wolff for the time-poor:

- Generation One: Arts Center as 'Home' – the advent of multi-space venues such as the Lincoln Centre from the 1960s, providing a home for major organisations presenting traditional repertoire, targeted to local elites.
- Generation Two: Arts Center as 'Place' – by the mid 1970s, PACs had helped drive (re-)development of the neighborhood surrounding the centre, and were recognised as anchoring city centre vibrancy.
- Generation Three: The Community's 'Centre' – from the early 1990s, PACs took a broader role in the community, offering access to cultural activities, including touring companies from 'out-of-town' and supporting newly emerging local practice.
- Generation Four: Creativity and Innovation – a focus on 'cultural vitality', offering opportunities for expression and participation, and diversifying programs and audience reach, including beyond the walls of the centre.

- The discourse and rationale for the activity is built around notions of showcasing excellence, sometimes tending towards a more paternalistic discourse around education, improvement and betterment.

### **Second generation: marketplace (~1990–2005)**

- Communication still follows a broadcast distribution model, but the venues are now independent buyers in a marketplace, customers of the producer. However, the market is geographically segmented, so that venues are more often cooperating rather than competing with each other.
- Touring is still managed by bodies based in the ‘centre’ of the touring network, usually a state capital city. However, it is increasingly managed not by the producing company itself but by specialist tour coordinators, seen as facilitators undertaking service delivery for touring stakeholders – presenters and producers.
- Venues now drive programming, through mechanisms such as voting to select the shows toured, and also with the idea that they represent the will of their audience.
- Product toured still predominantly comprises finished works of traditional form, but from a wider range of players, and including some works in new artforms and genres.
- Financial risk is more complex, with box office risk taken by the venues, and the logistical touring risk taken by the touring organisation. Risk on developing the work has already been taken by the producer, and generally funded from other sources outside the touring equation.
- More generally, there is a high degree of separation between touring and the development of new work, conceptually, operationally and in its resourcing.
- The audience is seen more as spectators or consumers than recipients of enlightenment.
- The rationale for touring is based on notions of the audience’s access and equity – equal access to the arts, regardless of where they live.

### **Third generation: collaboration and consortia (~2000–2010)**

- More fluid relationships emerge. Presenters, producers and tour coordinators work together in new ways to share product and even to commission or develop new work collaboratively.
- Alongside the main ‘national circuit’, venues come together in small consortia to program around shared geography, audience or programming policy.
- Some presenters begin to produce their own work, to complement the touring product still predominantly emanating from the major centres.
- Traditional tour coordinators are joined by new players, including some with genre-, artform- or community-specific briefs.
- In these newer model relationships, financial risk sharing may be negotiated to suit each production and the needs and capacities of stakeholders, but the sell-off model still predominates.
- Discourse around touring focuses on collaboration and partnerships. Audiences are invited into a more active relationship with the venue, as members or subscribers, and to participate in activities complementing the viewing of works, such as artist talks, workshops, and social functions.

### **Fourth generation: engagement and exchange (~2010–2020)**

- Touring product is not just presented, but can be reinvented or even created in situ.
- New forms of mobility arise – artists are no longer just touring finished works, but can tour their process (making a show or a work-in-progress through a residency). Collaborative exchange models blur the line between making and touring, producing and presenting.

- Traditional tour coordination continues where required for complex logistical delivery, but making and residency models may be managed more directly by the venue and the producer – in some cases now better thought of not as presenter and producer, but as host and visitor.
- Multiple models exist, perhaps even within a single tour – conventional presentation of a finished touring work in one town, an adaptation of it in the next, a slightly extended stay with community engagement activity in the next, or even a longer residency.
- Relationships around the creation and presentation of work, and around the product and artforms themselves, reflect broader social and cultural developments, such as the democratisation of culture through the proliferation of home-owned technologies, the connectivity offered by social media, and developments in art-making practices including relational practices (including non-artists collaborating alongside artists).
- The audience is invited into the programming (through surveys, competitions, social media, and new means yet to be developed), and into the creative process as an active community for the art-making, or even as artists participating in it.
- The touring circuit has moved away from a centralised broadcast model to a network of linked producer/presenters sharing their work with each other.
- Discourse and rationale is around engagement and exchange.

## 7 Environmental analysis

### 7.1 Internal environment

Evidence that the performing arts touring landscape in Australia is going through a process of change and maturation is apparent on several fronts.

- **Performing Arts Touring Alliance (PATA)**

The recent formation of the Performing Arts Touring Alliance (PATA) reflects a response from the industry for a more coordinated, sustainable and accountable approach to touring. Similarly, the investment from the Australia Council for the Arts to seed the formation of PATA appears to indicate a renewed interest from the Australia Council to support a more cohesive touring sector, possibly with a view to supporting presentation opportunities for Australia Council-funded clients. This appears to indicate recognition of the relevance of both the supply and demand side of the arts marketplace – that is, both the making and the showing/presenting of work.

- **Australia Council initiatives**

Programs offered through the Australia Council in recent years, such as Local Stages, Program Presenter grants and Cultural Places, have facilitated stronger collaboration between presenters and producers and a more relevant engagement with audiences. This has in turn created – or aims to support – touring opportunities. Similar initiatives such as Mobile States, Road Work and Kultour appropriately intervene to support a more diverse suite of productions in the marketplace.

- **Playing Australia's in-principle funding agreements**

Recent changes to Playing Australia program practices has seen the removal of what were in-principle three-year agreements for regular touring companies of the Major Performing Arts Board such as Bell Shakespeare, Circus Oz, Sydney Dance Co, Oz Opera and Bangarra Dance Theatre. This has limited the planning abilities of these companies, and of presenters reliant on them to provide works for their subscription seasons.

- **APACA**

Over the past five years in the professional presenting sector, there has been a shift by the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association (APACA) from a focus on venue-based, bricks and mortar issues, to a more inclusive and open organisation focusing on developing the activity occurring within the buildings and the communities around them. This is reflected in the recent Arts NSW Touring review (2011), which states that '90% of professional presenters develop self-presentation programs of 7 or more productions' – that is, they are actively engaged in designing programs for their audiences as opposed to acting as a 'hall for hire'.

- **Theatre Network Victoria and the Australian Theatre Forum**

The growth in profile and significance of Theatre Network Victoria (TNV) and the Australian Theatre Forum further suggests a maturing of the sector. Notably, touring has arisen as a key issue in the last two Australian Theatre Forums. Indeed, moves toward a national Theatre Network Australia further confirm this maturation.

- **Policy collaboration**

Moreover, collaboration between networks such as TNV, APACA and PATA, as well as Live Performance Australia (LPA), the Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) and APACA<sup>8</sup> reveal a trend towards stronger cooperation, with touring once again being a key common issue.

- **Contemporary Music Touring**

Contemporary music touring is a major contributor to the overall level of national performing arts touring activity. Indeed, as an indication, Live Performance Australia's 2010 Ticketing Survey reports that non-classical (contemporary) music attendances constitute a 40.8 per cent share of industry attendances.

While this sector is clearly an important contributor to the arts environment, contemporary music touring producers and promoters engage only minimally with the processes and systems being addressed in this report.

This basically applies to touring by large commercial producers as well (that is, producers of work other than contemporary music).

- **Independent Producers Australia**

The establishment of Independent Producers Australia (IPA) in 2010 is a further indication of the changing performing arts landscape. Notably, IPA refers to touring in two of its objectives: 'To facilitate increased creation, production and touring of Australian Work nationally and internationally' and 'To lobby and seek funding for the creation of independent new Australian Work and the associated touring of Australian Work nationally and internationally.'

- **Regional Arts Australia**

Regional Arts Australia (RAA), through a number of its territory and state-based member organisations, has a history of investing in and supporting national touring throughout Australia, in the main by providing the services of the state touring coordinators. Recently RAA, through the Blue Heeler Network, has made changes to the CyberPaddock website with a view to improve service to the sector. Further improvements to the site are currently in development and propose to increase its effectiveness and 'user-friendliness'.

- **Australian Performing Arts Market**

Importantly, the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) was recently reviewed (2011) and further to a competitive tender process APAM will take place in Brisbane in conjunction with the World Theatre Festival for the years 2014, 2016 and 2018. As a national market, as well as an international one, the development of APAM under new management is an important consideration in the national touring landscape.

- **Arts On Tour NSW**

Arts On Tour NSW is a critical resource and national leader in touring in Australia. Of the state-based regional arts organisations, Arts On Tour is the only organisation with touring as its specific focus. Importantly, Arts On Tour NSW traditionally delivers a higher volume of touring to more venues than its state-based counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

- **State touring**

Intrastate touring (that is, tours that take place entirely within a state or territory) occurs in all of Australia's states and territories. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge the mostly well-

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<sup>8</sup> LPA, AMPAG, APACA – 2010 Election Key Messages.

<sup>9</sup> Arts NSW, *Review of Performing Arts Touring* (Edinger, 2011).

established touring infrastructure in each jurisdiction, some of which involve a sophisticated level of interaction with local government.

- **The value of 'liveability'**

A 2008 submission to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability stated that there is increasing evidence that arts and culture make a positive contribution to the liveability of a city or region, and hence to its competitive advantage, in particular with regard to the development of suburban and regional communities to attract new residents and businesses.<sup>10</sup> This information is relevant to the Framework as the current federal political climate appears to recognise this value, and there is thus the opportunity to use related arguments to leverage support for touring.

- **Structural reviews**

The current development of the National Cultural Policy and the review of the Australia Council for the Arts are two significant undertakings that have the potential to impact on the current performing arts touring landscape. Not since *Creative Nation* (1994) has the Australian Government actively considered our nation's cultural policy.

In summary, this internal environmental analysis indicates that the national touring landscape involves many stakeholders, is highly complex and is, to some degree, in a state of flux. There appears to be considerable willingness to make improvements and, indeed, initiatives are being undertaken on several fronts.

## 7.2 External environment

- **Political**

The current political climate sees an incumbent, minority-led, Labor government. It is noteworthy that the Minister for the Arts is also Minister for Regional Australia and Local Government. This collection of portfolios under the management of one Minister provides opportunities for connections pertinent to national touring.

A Federal election in 2013 sees an opportunity – particularly following the release of the National Cultural Policy – to place performing arts touring on the national arts agenda.

Over 60 per cent of performing arts centres that are APACA members are owned and/or operated by local government.<sup>11</sup> In a recent survey of local government authorities in Western Australia in which a performing arts centre is operated, two out of 16 had a plan or strategy in place relating to performing arts. It is also important to recognise that each jurisdiction has a different set of political, financial and sector drivers that will affect their ability to engage with national touring.

- **Financial**

While Australia is faring well in light of the global financial crisis, the high value of the Australian dollar, combined with a tight fiscal environment outside of Australia, is likely to have a negative effect on international touring opportunities. That is, some Australian companies may find overseas interest slowing due to falling demand in international markets, or because overseas buyers are subject to funding and revenue cuts. Similarly, the high dollar is making Australian

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<sup>10</sup> Arts Victoria, *The Role of Arts and Culture in Liveability and Competitiveness – Précis*, June 2008.

<sup>11</sup> APACA, 2009 Economic Activity Report.

products less competitive in global markets, exacerbating the loss of international demand due to economic recession and public sector contraction.

In regard to revenue from ticket sales in Australia, Live Performance Australia's *Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey 2010* states that total revenue from ticket sales in 2010 was \$1.328 billion, as compared to \$1.083 billion in 2009, representing an increase of 22.6 per cent following two years of downturn.

#### ▪ **Technological**

The ever-increasing prominence and reach of social media – combined with access to affordable software and hardware, which enables more people to be creators of their own content – provides a strong avenue for the invention, distribution and promotion of the arts. It is anticipated that this will be increasingly prevalent, particularly with the rollout of the National Broadband Network, currently underway and due for completion in 2021. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that more than half of all 15 to 24 year olds had used the internet to engage in some form of art during 2010.<sup>12</sup>

The National Broadband Network undoubtedly offers exciting opportunities for new kinds of interactive cultural experiences. However, it should not be seen as replacing the touring of live performance, any more than previous broadcast technologies have managed to do.

#### ▪ **Geographic**

While obvious, it is important to note the largely unique physical nature of Australia's touring environment, the result of the vast distances and small regional populations in this country. Australia has approximately 180 non-commercially operated performing arts centres, spread across 7,617,930 square kilometres. By comparison, the Netherlands has 154 venues in a country 185 times smaller than Australia. *Notionally*, this equates to one venue per 267 square kilometres in the Netherlands as opposed to one venue every 42,321 square kilometres in Australia. Unfortunately, our unique geography and distribution of population means there are few international touring systems that we can look to, to inform our own situation.

#### ▪ **Environmental**

Touring, by nature, involves vast amounts of road and air travel. Indeed, arts environmental impact specialists Julie's Bicycle states:

*Travel is one of the major contributors to the theatre sector's carbon footprint. Audience travel has the largest impact across the industry, but artist and business travel creates impacts too, and touring is therefore a key area for focus in terms of reducing our emissions.*<sup>13</sup>

Similarly *The Garnaut Climate Change Review* states that 'Australia's per capita emissions are nearly twice the OECD average and more than four times the world average ... Transport emissions represent about 14 per cent of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions.'<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Australia Council for the Arts, *More than Bums on Seats: Australian Participation in the Arts*, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

<sup>14</sup> Ross Garnaut, *The Garnaut Climate Change Review*, 2007.

## 8 Research findings

### 8.1 Primary research findings

#### Group consultations

The key questions explored in the group consultations, as outlined above in section 5, Methodology, were:

- a) Why are you involved in touring? (Framed for producers as: Why do you tour? And for presenters as: Why do you present touring work?)
- b) What are the mechanisms, models, processes and programs you use to tour?
- c) Of those mechanisms etc., what's working well? (Or what elements of those are working well?)
- d) Of those mechanisms etc., what's not working well? (Or what elements of those aren't working well?)
- e) What suggestions do you have to improve the touring landscape – to capitalise on the strengths, and address the weaknesses just identified?

Question a) Why tour? The primary reason for brainstorming the reasons for touring was to inform and shape the subsequent discussions regarding the touring landscape. In addition, it enabled participants to state the value of touring. (See Appendix B.)

Question b) was primarily aimed at preparing the ground for the subsequent questions, and the material is not included here.

The responses to questions c), d) and e) have been digested and analysed in section 9, Analysis of research.

A comprehensive summary of answers to e) – that is, all the proposals for improvements to the touring landscape – was circulated publicly in January 2012. That communiqué is attached as Appendix C.

#### Interviews

The consultants conducted approximately 30 interviews with peak bodies and other selected key stakeholders, in order to explore some key themes in greater depth. Many of these interviews were one-on-one or with two or more individuals from the same organisation. In some cases two or more organisations participated in a single interview, to create a dialogue around their shared or contrasting experience. The interviews have informed the analysis of research, and in many cases are referenced – in most cases anonymously, in order to ensure discussions were frank. A complete list of interviewees is attached at Appendix E.

## 8.2 Secondary research findings

### ▪ National Review of Performing Arts Touring

Many issues identified in the report prepared by Positive Solutions, *National Review of Performing Arts Touring* (2005), are common to the findings from the original research undertaken as part of this project. While it is unfortunate to find that many of the same issues remain prevalent today, the 2005 report serves to confirm the relevance of the issues identified throughout this report.

Notably, the *National Review of Performing Arts Touring* refers to issues for discussion, including:

- a national touring plan
- enhanced resourcing of the Blue Heelers network
- training support for presenters
- establishment of a national touring office
- differentiation or quarantining of touring funds for specific purposes
- the encouragement of risk-taking
- coordinated interventions in the touring supply chain.

More specifically, the paper questions the degree to which current systems may need adjusting to add weight to criteria other than presenter popularity, in spite of the common acceptance of the value of a presenter-driven (or demand-driven) approach to the allocation of funding.

The paper also highlights the lack of coordination between producing companies, venues and funders to work on audience development or consistency of supply.

### ▪ A Sustainable Future for National Touring

Similar issues were raised in Regional Arts Australia's proposal for the future support of the Blue Heeler Network, *A Sustainable Future for National Touring* (McClements, 2007) which noted the following priorities:

- Priority One: appointment of a Blue Heeler National Coordinator
- Priority Two: ongoing project support (this would include activities determined as strategic priorities in any given year)
- Priority Three: national consultation with stakeholders into future directions for national touring management, including a round table discussion with key industry stakeholders regarding the establishment of governance structure for the Blue Heeler Network, and the new role that will include representatives of the producer and presenter sectors.

Furthermore, Regional Arts Australia noted that an increase in audiences and the allocation of additional funds<sup>15</sup> has meant that tours have grown longer and more complex, and a greater number and diversity of venues are now involved in national tours.

This paper also stated 'clearly, the national performing arts touring network is under substantial operational pressure.'<sup>16</sup>

### ▪ Future of National Touring in Australia

*The Future of National Touring in Australia*, a paper submitted jointly to the Federal Minister for the Arts in 2007 by AMPAG, RAA, APACA, AoT and representatives of the small to medium producing sector stated the following:

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<sup>15</sup> This refers to the increase in Playing Australia funding in 2004.

<sup>16</sup> *A Sustainable Future for National Touring* (McClements, 2007).

*Consultation with all stakeholders over the past three years has achieved general consensus within all networks that growth over the range of indicators provokes the need for the coordinated development of policy and advocacy to ensure continued growth is managed sustainably for all producers, presenters and tour co-ordination agencies involved in national touring.*

Evidence suggests that since the RAA paper and *The Future of National Touring in Australia* submission, touring has continued to become more complex and the expectations of all stakeholders, including audiences, have continued to increase.

▪ **Touring Strategy Consultation Report**

The 2008 *Touring Strategy Consultation Report* by Arts Queensland details recommendations that are highly consistent with those of this National Touring Framework. In particular, Arts Queensland's report relates directly to:

- increased community engagement (a touring strategy that considers promoting touring products and processes that support community engagement)
- capacity building (a touring strategy that includes continuous sector development and professional development objectives)
- alignment of funding programs (that Arts Queensland's funding agreements for performing arts touring are redeveloped to reflect the key policy drivers of the touring strategy)
- diversity of work toured and relationships and dialogue (a touring strategy that supports the inclusion of a range of tourable products and people who can provide rich partnerships and cultural development).

Arts Queensland's report goes on to identify policy drivers that are remarkably aligned to those identified independently in this report.

Interestingly, the *Mapping Queensland Theatre* report notes that consideration should be given to developing a mechanism within Queensland to extend the life of independent work through touring.<sup>17</sup>

▪ **Victorian Statewide Performing Arts Forum**

Many considerations raised in the Arts Victoria Victorian Statewide Performing Arts Forum were similar to those detailed in this report. These were reflected by Greg Andrews, Deputy Director of Arts Victoria, in his closing remarks when stating, 'We want to build better, more fulsome relationships that give the community of Victoria better outcomes.'

▪ **Arts NSW Review of Performing Arts Touring**

Among many relevant recommendations, the 2010 Arts NSW *Review of Performing Arts Touring* highlights the need for greater alignment between state and federal funding programs in the following specific recommendation:

*There is not enough integration between the state and federal funding round and the mismatch of timing of funding rounds creates a disproportionate level of difficulty for the sector.*<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Arts Queensland, *Mapping Queensland Theatre* (Baylis, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Arts NSW, *Review of Performing Arts Touring* (Edinger, 2010).

The review goes on to state that ‘the interconnection between state and national touring appears to be a central issue in the improvement of national touring’. Furthermore, the review found that ‘Playing Australia funding is critical for delivery of over half the tours funded by Arts NSW.’

This highlights the interdependency of state and federal touring programs and the need for strategic alignment.

Interestingly, the report also found that over a quarter of NSW venues program according to the available product. That is, a significant proportion of NSW venue managers tend to attempt to find audiences that suit available product as opposed to seeking product in order to meet audience demand.

This was consistent with a recent survey undertaken by APACA that found that 33 per cent of venues nationally commit (in funding applications) to presenting 50 per cent or more shows than they can actually present.<sup>19</sup> That is, as a result of the dependency on touring funds, presenters are hedging their bets and making programming decisions based on what productions they feel are most likely to receive tour funding.

▪ **Integration of National and International Touring/Markets**

The industry workshop to discuss the APAM scoping study stated the following:

*The notion of national and international integration was wholeheartedly endorsed by the participants as a vital need and issue. The group noted that opportunities within APAM were compromised until a national touring framework is developed. Discussion specifically highlighted the need for consultation with APACA and Long Paddock noting that APACA’s goals are not necessarily those of APAM. Equally discussion noted that the current complex structure of national touring makes formation of any meaningful relationship difficult.*

The ‘way forward’ to address this issue was stated as being to ‘ensure APAM and its role in delivering some goals of a national touring framework is actively pursued’.

The *APAM Scoping Study* recommended that APAM ‘have as its secondary goal the national exchange of the performing arts largely, though not exclusively, through touring’.

The study also noted:

*we have encouraged domestic participation in APAM while divorcing the domestic trade fair mechanism from it. APAM fulfills a need not met by the current domestic mechanisms of Long/Cyber Paddock and the like.*

### **8.3 Value of touring**

The non-economic value of touring as commented on by participants in the consultation is represented throughout the Framework and referenced at Appendix B – Reasons for Engaging in Touring.

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<sup>19</sup> CyberPaddock voting, APACA online survey, January 2012.

Consultation participants reported that touring provided value in many ways, including artform/practice development, the sharing of creative vision and stories, building audiences, brand development and profile raising and, more broadly, encouraging social cohesion, sharing our differences and sameness, exploring our national identity and promoting cultural development.

The economic value of touring will be addressed in a separate project, to be managed by the Australia Council and the Office of the Arts. However, current data is included at Appendix K.

## 9 Analysis of research

Analysis of both the primary and secondary research enabled the consultants to identify nine broad common themes. These were subsequently reviewed, discussed and further refined by the Project Steering Group. A key aim of the review by the Project Steering Group was to determine an industry-wide shared purpose for national touring. This would consist of a common set of principles that would guide national touring. There was a particular focus on these principles being shared values for the three tiers of government.

The Project Steering Group agreed that the nine common themes broadly summarised the sector's collective views and captured the most important issues in developing a framework for national touring.

It is important to note that it was agreed that there is no single solution or 'silver bullet' that will address all of the matters raised throughout the consultation. Accordingly, the issues raised and recommendations described below often intersect between Key Reforms and Development Goals, reflecting the interconnection between issues.

The outcome of the analysis of the research and the review conducted by the Project Steering Group resulted in four Foundation Principles for touring, three Drivers underpinning the principles and nine Priority Areas (later redefined as three Key Reforms and six Development Goals). These are detailed below.

### 9.1 Foundation Principles of a national touring industry

It is anticipated that the following principles be adopted by all stakeholders actively participating in the touring sector (within the scope of this report).

#### 9.1.1 Community engagement

- Create deeper connections and understanding with audiences and potential audiences.
- Create cultural impact.
- Where appropriate, extend engagement beyond the performance only.

#### 9.1.2 Access

- Deliver broad geographical access through the equitable distribution of performing arts activity to metropolitan, regional and remote communities.

#### 9.1.3 Artistic vibrancy and diversity

- Ensure high quality work is toured.
- Ensure a variety of work is offered (scale/content/artform).
- Ensure a range of diverse production selection processes exist.

#### 9.1.4 Partnerships and collaboration

- Encourage relationships that assist in achieving more productive outcomes for the sector and audiences.

## 9.2 Drivers for a national touring industry

The following Drivers aim to underpin the Foundation Principles.

### 9.2.1 Environmental sustainability

- Ensure that due consideration is afforded to the environmental impact of touring.

### 9.2.2 Economic sustainability

- Ensure that touring activity is conducted in such a way as to be financially sustainable (and where possible beneficial) for the all parties involved.

### 9.2.3 Social sustainability

- Recognise that touring provides a key opportunity to increase cultural development, community building and liveability throughout the country.

*If one adheres to the doctrine that multiple perspectives on social issues are useful in a democratic society, even though they may be in conflict with prevailing popular sentiment and social norms, the freedom of expression exemplified by self-oriented creativity is a social asset. If consumers are only presented with what they want or will readily accept, then the potential for social change and intellectual diversity is greatly curtailed.<sup>20</sup>*

## 9.3 Key Reforms – summary

The following are derived from responses throughout the consultation. In summary, the three Key Reforms are:

- a national plan
- funding programs – simplification and harmonisation
- production selection.

## 9.4 Development Goals – summary

The following are derived from responses throughout the consultation. In summary, the six Development Goals are:

- relationships, dialogue and tour coordination
- diversity of work toured
- community engagement
- marketing and audience development
- capacity building – people and infrastructure
- environmental sustainability – low-carbon touring.

<sup>20</sup> E.C. Hirschman (1983) 'Aesthetics, ideologies and the limits of the marketing concept', *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47, No. 3.

## 10 Key Reforms

### 10.1 A national plan

#### 10.1.1 Context and commentary

As the 2005 *National Review of Performing Arts Touring* identified, there is a need for a 'National Touring Plan – a set of priorities and targets and a framework within which each stakeholder plays an agreed part'.<sup>21</sup>

*No one has linked up the bodies (funding) – we're looking after our own because of limited resources and because that's our job. The will is there but we're limited by our own jurisdictions. We need drivers to open it up.*

*There is a need for a cohesive national strategy of which Playing Australia is just one tool.*

*Playing Australia is perceived as a default national touring policy, largely as a result of the bulk of national touring activity being funnelled through this program and there being no alternative policy.*

*The resources the states offer is positive but the mechanism is negative.*

- **A unified touring strategy**

While this project aims to bring the sector together through the development of a structured framework, beyond this, there is a need to identify specific responsibilities for the coordination and delivery of an ongoing, unified national touring strategy.

The extent to which the touring industry has adapted over many years to ensure its continuation is highly admirable. However, a gap exists in that the lack of a national plan has enabled the evolution of systems that are often uncoordinated, relate poorly to each other and, at worst, negatively impact on one another. Similarly, this evolution and the lack of a plan has, by default, inadvertently assigned responsibilities for touring functions to organisations not resourced or accountable for their delivery.

- **A foundation**

It was regularly cited throughout the consultation that a strategic approach and a 'global view' of national touring is both missing and required. Indeed, it was identified that the success of touring initiatives/programs (new and existing) is often predicated by a strong, existing foundation on which they can be built. This foundation may include a local government's Cultural Plan or a performing arts centre's artistic policy, or common objectives between government funders.

Given the inherent complexity of national touring the need for national coordination was strongly advocated throughout the consultancy as a means of avoiding inconsistencies between touring mechanisms and funding programs.

- **Range of activity**

It has been clearly identified that the scope or range of national touring activity throughout Australia is very broad. It varies according to many factors; scale, accessibility and genre of product, jurisdiction, geography (metropolitan/regional/remote), etc. While this suggests a

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<sup>21</sup> Cultural Ministers Council, *The National Review of Performing Arts Touring* (Positive Solutions, 2005).

differentiated and healthy ecology, by and large, the management of that ecology is undertaken separately by a number of stakeholders, with some aspects not tended to at all. This has led to false and often unrealistic expectations within the industry of the various stakeholders' obligations.

- **Coordination, not uniformity**

While the consultation process determined a need for national coordination, the need for diverse touring models and processes was also commonly noted. Similarly, the notion of centralising all touring programs was often rejected. To this end a national plan should focus on achieving coordination of disparate programs and processes and not necessarily attempt to establish uniformity among these programs.

- **Local government**

As noted above in the environmental analysis, over 60 per cent of performing arts centres that are APACA members are owned and/or operated by local government. Indeed, of the almost 30 per cent of revenue provided by government subsidy, local government investment constitutes 71 per cent. (Figures exclude the Sydney Opera House, the Arts Centre Melbourne and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre.)<sup>22</sup> Despite this investment, it appears that in the majority of cases local government currently has an ancillary role in national touring. A greater level of engagement by and with local government is likely to return mutual and substantial benefits.

- **Performing Arts Touring Alliance (PATA)**

The place of PATA must be considered in the development of the national plan. PATA was formed largely in response to the 2007 federal government proposal<sup>23</sup> jointly developed by representatives of Regional Arts Australia, the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association, Arts On Tour NSW and small to medium producers.

Throughout its development PATA has been constricted by its resources. In addition, the complexity of the touring landscape and the sensitivity of the relationships therein has meant that considerable time has been spent delicately forming the structure, governance and operation of the alliance. While a workable entity has been created, the resources consumed in doing so have stifled the output of the alliance, compromising the very reason it was created.

As PATA Executive Officer Greg Randall states:

*PATA is not incorporated and is widely seen as a 'waypoint' in its current format towards a more clearly empowered, incorporated and appropriately resourced national entity.*

While this framework strongly recommends that a national resource be developed, the consultants note it is beyond their remit to prescribe the future role of PATA in this context.

- **Authority**

As stated above, a lack of coordination exists among the various sub-sectors of the touring industry (and even within them). Similarly, competing interests and agendas were regularly reported throughout the consultation. Accordingly, it appears – with the exception of

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<sup>22</sup> APACA, 2009 Economic Activity Report.

<sup>23</sup> Arts On Tour, APACA, RAA and small to medium producers, *The Future of National Touring in Australia: Proposal to Federal Government*, 2007.

endeavours by PATA – that there is rarely a unified position on matters of national touring. This in turn seems to stifle the opportunity for a recognised authoritative voice for the sector.

- **Benefits**

A coordinated, strategic national plan could provide benefits such as:

- increased collaboration and productivity between producers and presenters
- realisation of the full potential of the touring productions. Specifically, there is significant room for improvement in audience attendances and box office revenue.
- a reduction in the complexity involved with developing tours that cross state borders
- improved coordination of intrastate touring with interstate touring.
- the development of a structured relationship between the investment in creative development of productions and the investment in the presentation of that work. This could in turn result in exponential benefits in regard to touring efficiency (for example, avoiding remount costs) and effectiveness (for example, increasing the return on the original investment in making the work) and, more broadly, cultural development (for example, providing greater opportunities for work to be seen).

### 10.1.2 Priority recommendations

- **Determine responsibility for a national touring co-ordination and management service**

A national touring service would help determine the responsibilities for the development and delivery of national touring. This resource would not be in addition to any existing resource or body. Potentially it would rationalise national touring resources, expanding or transforming an existing service (retaining elements that are valued). The sector would decide on the exact nature of the resource.

A national touring service would:

- formalise the network and the responsibilities of each of its participants
  - pool national touring information and act as a central point of contact for access to that information (NB: not as a help desk or hotline, but more akin to the project officers attached to arts funding bodies, providing advice and directing parties to sources of information as required)
  - provide resources to establish *national* touring business development managers – business advisors who have intimate knowledge of the sector and can help the industry to build relationships, match work/productions to buyers (and vice versa), and direct the industry to appropriate sources of funding and/or philanthropy and sponsorship (recognising the intermittent need for touring skills in production companies and assisting in building ‘affinity relationships’)
  - identify and drive key national industry development projects (for example, maintain and deliver appropriate elements of the National Touring Framework)
  - ensure the provision of benchmarks, guidelines and a code of conduct for national touring practice
  - liaise between governments and their agencies to harmonise policy and programs
  - manage the primary national networking and tour development mechanisms
  - represent the interests of touring stakeholders (including the touring coordinators) on industry committees and meetings
  - liaise between the sub-sectors (producers, presenters and tour coordinators)
- NB: Does NOT undertake tour delivery.

- **State and federal government touring policy meetings**  
Establish a cycle of policy meetings of senior bureaucrats between relevant state and federal local jurisdictions, with the aim of reaching agreement on broad principles, common touring priorities and, where appropriate, to develop and monitor strategies to achieve them.
- **Local government engagement strategy**  
Develop and implement an engagement strategy to build direct relationships between major touring funders and local government representatives to align funders' objectives with local government objectives and/or cultural plans as relevant to individual jurisdictions and performing arts stakeholders.

### 10.1.3 Secondary recommendations

- **Supply and demand**  
Identify opportunities to align investment in both supply (making) and demand (presenting) sides of the market place.
- **Complementary funding**  
Coordinate and align funding programs, at all levels of government, that complement existing touring programs (for example, for audience development and community engagement), potentially through departments other than cultural/arts (for example, local government community development, the Office of the Not-for-Profit sector, the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education).
- **Cultural plans**  
Develop a strategy to encourage local government to write and adopt cultural plans, where appropriate, that are specific to their unique circumstances.

## 10.2 Funding programs – simplification and harmonisation

### 10.2.1 Context and commentary

*The landscape has changed dramatically over the last 10–20 years. Some of the funding and operating models have not kept pace with this change. The model needs to be recalibrated rather than renovated.<sup>24</sup>*

*Playing Australia is absolutely fantastic, and we owe our programs to it. But it needs updating.*

*While touring is necessarily complicated, we can at the very least decide which complexities are inherent in the process, and which are unnecessary hindrances.<sup>25</sup>*

The advent of Playing Australia in 1992 transformed the performing arts landscape. It created many more opportunities for artists to perform, and for audiences to experience their work, in a much wider footprint across the country. In doing so, it has stimulated substantial cultural development outside the capital cities, and encouraged and assisted the professionalisation of regional performing arts centres. The program is overwhelmingly seen as a positive by industry players throughout the country, from small to large companies, and among presenters, producers and tour coordinators. In particular, it is seen as consistently achieving the objective of facilitating access to the performing arts for those living in regional and remote areas.

Analysis of applications shows that the quality has increased in recent years, in that a higher proportion of applications are being assessed as meeting or exceeding the criteria, and to a higher degree. Applications are being lodged by a wider range of producers and tour coordinators than ever before.<sup>26</sup>

But it is important that all players, including arts agencies, keep pace with these very developments that they have helped foster. Touring, like all areas of arts and cultural practice, has evolved significantly in recent years, with new audiences, new artforms, new players, new relationships, new programming imperatives and mechanisms, and new touring models all arising.

In particular, participants in the consultation process across the country identified the following key issues for touring programs in general, across all three levels of government. As noted above in the section on scope, this report focuses on national touring, defined as touring to destinations within two or more states or territories. Comments about specific programs are mostly confined to those of the two key national agencies, Office for the Arts (OFTA) and the Australia Council, rather than addressing those of the eight states and territories, and the hundreds of local governments involved in performing arts touring. However, that does not necessarily indicate that the broad themes do not apply across other contexts. (See Appendix F for a summary of state and federal touring programs and their deadlines.)

- **Complexity of the application process**

*The Playing Australia application requires incredible detail, and I don't know of another funding program which requires the minutiae that this one does. Every single leg (and*

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<sup>24</sup> Debra Jefferies, General Manager, Market and Community Development, Arts Victoria

<sup>25</sup> Unattributed comments are by consultation participants or interviewees unless otherwise noted.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Office for the Arts staff.

*every single venue is a leg), must be individually detailed – the cost of accommodation every night of the tour; the cost of every taxi transfer ... the list goes on. And on. And on. And all of this before we even know if the tour is going to get up.<sup>27</sup>*

The current model for public investment in touring is built on support for single tours, comprising confirmed presentations which must be completely itinerised with net touring costs (NTC) budgeted in detail. This model works well in ensuring applicants demonstrate presenter demand and efficient use of funds. However, many participants reported that very significant resources must be invested to develop a tour and apply for funds. Staff resource demands appear disproportionately higher than in applying to other competitive funding programs – one participant quoted 30 hours per tour week = 6 weeks' work for an 8 week tour = \$10,000 invested before knowing whether the activity will take place. Flow-on effects include:

- Opportunity costs for all parties as a result of holding venue dates for up to six months, for tours which do not eventuate;
- A significant barrier to touring, particularly at opposite poles of the producing sector, firstly major companies, some of whom stated that this had caused their withdrawal from regional touring, despite unmet audience demand (presenters also noted this resulted in loss of program centrepieces and revenue);
- And secondly newer entrants, especially smaller companies, emerging artists, commercial producers, producers of culturally diverse work and work for younger audiences, who frequently noted this as a barrier. Some stated that they lacked the skills and networks to undertake tour development, or that they lacked the necessary resources (staff and financial), for example producers without significant operational funding. This barrier limits program diversity and audience development for new work.

- **Heavy reliance on the single tour model mitigates against longer-term planning**

Many presenters stated they wished to develop longer-term relationships with selected producing companies, using repeat visits to build brand recognition among audiences, encourage repeat attendances, and build audiences. However, this cannot easily be assured under the current production selection and funding mechanisms, particularly since the end of Playing Australia's in-principle triennial funding for key major producers. The lack of certainty about touring outcomes leads some presenters to commit to more shows than they could actually present, distorting their own programs and the sector's planning.

Conversely, a number of producers stated that they were discouraged from investing more resources in developing work designed for touring because of the risk of not being able to find a market for it and recover that investment.

All arts agency programs grapple with balancing continuity with innovation and openness to new entrants, typically through offering a mix of longer-term program investment alongside one-off project support. Currently, touring support offered by Playing Australia and most state agencies is restricted to exclusively project funding, without any complementary program funding for key producers or presenters.

- **Long lead times**

The most prevalent model for touring is still for the producer to premiere the work, and aim to sell the work as a known quantity. In such cases, lead times from premiere to tour start at a minimum of 15 to 18 months, but 24-month lead times are not uncommon. Arts agency

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<sup>27</sup> Christine Dunstan, *Looking Over the Fence*, paper for VAPAC November 2011 meeting.

mechanics are just one driver of this delay, and perhaps secondary to that of annual subscription season marketing lead times, so reducing lead times significantly for those venues with subscription programs would require other reforms as well. However, there are an increasing number of presenters who program on a faster cycle than this, and both they, and the producers they present, could benefit from speeding up the funding cycle.

- **Difficulty of transferring direct from premiere, or cost to remount later**

But there are other paths to touring besides the ‘spec-building’ model described above. Increasingly, more works are being co-commissioned by groups of presenters, who commit to presenting the work from development stage, perhaps contributing financially to development costs, and buying a stake in the framing of the work logistically or even creatively, in return for their pre-commitment to present it. This model was once the preserve of the capital city festivals through their Major Festivals Initiative commissioning fund, the major producing companies, and the flagship venues.<sup>28</sup> They operate mostly independently of the regional touring circuits and the touring funding programs, falling outside funding cycles and indeed eligibility, and with alternate sources of support.

But no longer – a wider range of presenters is engaging in the development of new work, or wishing to do so, including many core regional touring presenters. This has been facilitated by Australia Council programs such as Road Work and Mobile States, which have promoted the development of touring circuits; by the Theatre Board’s Presenter Program support for the presentation of new works, often used by presenters as commissioning funds; and by the various Local Stages and Regional Stages programs that assist regional performing arts centres to produce new work.<sup>29</sup> Industry initiatives such as APACA’s Power PAC program, again with Australia Council support, aim to support and extend local production. Facilitating easier transfer to other co-commissioning presenters off the back of the premiere would reduce or eliminate remount costs and time lag.

There was a strong current of opinion in the consultations that funding programs discourage this model of touring, yet the current Playing Australia guidelines state: ‘Applications for new work are eligible for funding. This includes both works which are completely new, and productions which have not yet had a public season at the time of application.’<sup>30</sup> It appears that the industry has yet to catch up with policy change in this area – or that clarification is required to clear up sector misconceptions.

- **Variation in timelines, processes and forms among funding programs**

While different tiers of government naturally have responsibilities and agendas that differ to some extent, national touring is increasingly dependent on support from multiple sources for the same activity. This increases the complexity of the process, increasing workload for applicants, and jeopardising otherwise viable tours. At times producers and tour coordinators are unable to commit to delivering shows as they are often waiting for one component of funding (state or federal) to be confirmed.

- **Access and the ‘freight equalisation model’<sup>31</sup>**

Throughout the consultations, there was a consensus that the ‘freight equalisation model’ generally works well; that the key barrier to access in regional and remote areas is the cost of travel, and that public investment based on NTC (net touring costs) addresses this. However

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<sup>28</sup> E.g. Sydney Opera House, The Arts Centre, Adelaide Festival Centre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

<sup>29</sup> Co-funded by Australia Council with Arts NSW, Arts SA and Country Arts SA, Arts Queensland and Arts ACT.

<sup>30</sup> *Playing Australia Guidelines, Round 39.*

<sup>31</sup> Funding based on the principle that supporting the net touring costs (freight, travel, per diems, accommodation) from the show’s hometown equalises the cost of presenting that show in any location.

there are other barriers to participation besides distance, including population mass and historical access to other cultural resources. Many presenters argued that support for other costs of touring, such as audience development, could extend the reach and effectiveness of touring activity further and enable them to be more adventurous in presenting riskier work.

- **Efficiency versus effectiveness**

Public programs naturally value efficient and accountable use of funds. Some participants appeared to be unnecessarily discouraged from activities such as niche touring and community engagement, in the belief that these are ineligible for support or would not meet expectations of 'efficiency'. Again, there appear to be misconceptions in the sector regarding what is acceptable. This may arise from the strong emphasis placed on geographically logical routing in public announcements at Long Paddock, whereas in practice the Playing Australia program accepts this needs to be balanced with matching productions to audiences for maximum effectiveness and engagement.

- **Assessment process**

A range of views was expressed on the assessment process and criteria of touring programs in general. Some argued for more emphasis on artistic assessment to increase curatorial rigour in the funding process. Others argued that decisions should be made solely on an assessment of the business case, and that curatorial judgments were best left to others in the process, either the individual presenter or collective programming systems.

## 10.2.2 Priority recommendations

- **Simplified applications process**

Tours could be funded earlier in the tour development process, still requiring presenter commitments, but without the need for a final detailed itinerary, and budgeted broadly along known average cost parameters rather than itinerary-specific costs. Further detail could be supplied later (once in-principle support was determined), before finalising the funding terms, to meet accountability requirements. This would reduce the resources expended on unsuccessful applications, and remove a significant barrier to the participation of many potential players.

- **A program open to applications at any time, with quick response**

Such a program, open to applications at any time, could complement existing application rounds, or perhaps replace one round annually, in the case of agencies with two or more rounds each year. The quick response program could be limited to tours seeking an amount under a set dollar threshold, to ensure that agencies can preserve funds for major touring activity or other strategic priorities, and meet accountability standards. The Australia Council's Going Global export program has been operating on this principle for some years, so the experience of that program could be applied to assist in program design.

This was one of the most widely supported initiatives in the consultations, among all parties, with producers stating it would remove barriers to participation in touring to presenters who don't operate on an 18-month subscription season programming cycle. It would also enable them to respond to opportunities; for example, a producer who secured a major capital city season fully funded by that presenter could then maximise its value by piggybacking regional venues onto it, with only those seasons supported by the touring funding program. Likewise, presenters argued it would help them complement their mainstage program with more niche touring product, be more responsive to new developments, and increase their program diversity.

- **Triennial touring agreements – to key producers and presenters**

Complement the current model of supporting one-off tours with longer-term program support to designated key producers and/or presenters, for example,

- To producers: Touring status for designated companies (a possible model could be the Australia Council Theatre Board's 'International explorer status', which carries confirmed funds for producers to allocate for touring activity over the triennium as opportunities arise, consistent with the terms of the agreement). Include key major producers (as was previously the case with 'in-principle funding') but complement with key smaller/newer companies with a proven track record and commitment to touring as well. This would address the presenters' desire for certainty and long-term programming. It would also encourage the designated producers to create work designed for touring circuits and their audiences, and facilitate greater entrepreneurship, thereby leveraging additional investment from outside current sources.
- To presenters: Tiered annual or triennial program support direct to a small number of presenters, based on their audience or community catchment, as a bank of funds to invest in any tour at any time in the triennium. Presenters could use these funds to generate new touring activity – for example, touring off the back of premieres rather than waiting for remount, picking up surprise hits while they're hot, touring their own or bought-in work to a circuit of smaller local centres, as well as buying into conventional tours. Eligibility would be limited to venues with highly developed programming policies, strong audiences, and a strong track record in programming and delivery.
- Both producer and presenter recipients of triennial support would be ineligible to apply to the conventional project funding program.
- A condition that triennial support must be fully or partially matched by state programs could leverage additional funds, and drive harmonisation on key strategic priorities.
- Adoption of any of the three new programs proposed above would require a review of assessment processes, criteria and panel membership. The assessment of triennial applications implies a more significant curatorial element in the decision, which would shape the program palette, artform development and industry development over a longer term than is currently the case. The experience of the Australia Council artform boards could be applied to assist in program design. A more significant role for artform board members in the assessment of triennial applications would capitalise on existing knowledge, and aid in harmonisation of development and distribution programs. Rolling deadlines may require a review of panel numbers and composition.

### 10.2.3 Secondary recommendations

- **Shorten timelines** for both programming and arts agency processes where possible and appropriate.
- **Harmonise arts agency timelines, forms and processes** where shared objectives and operational contexts permit, recognising that the different contexts and responsibilities may require divergence.

- **Investigate better linking of export international touring and domestic touring support programs.**
- **Review demarcation between interstate and intrastate touring.** In particular, many participants suggested that support for home state legs by Playing Australia would lead to greater efficiency. Similarly, state agencies could support interstate destinations with a demonstrated community of interest in an otherwise intrastate tour. Introducing both measures simultaneously could ensure that each program's resources continued to be allocated toward that agency's objectives, while creating opportunities to extend the reach of tours, with reduced administrative workload for both applicants and funders.
- **Review what constitutes eligible touring and supported costs, and undertake a communications strategy to clarify uncertainty.**

The review could consider that suite of performing arts touring options beyond the presentation of finished productions, such as exchanges and residencies, creative collaborations, engagement activity and the notion of 'touring a process'. Assess whether and how effectively these deliver the objectives of existing touring support programs, and, where appropriate, review the eligibility, guidelines and assessment criteria to support those deemed to do so.

Where stakeholders identify benefits from, and demand for, activities but they are not found to be compatible with touring programs' objectives or processes, assess whether other existing arts programs could support the activities, or develop new initiatives to do so. Examples may include:

- While Playing Australia Guidelines support net touring costs for engagement activity ('additional activities'),<sup>32</sup> support for the fee associated with such activity may better fit the objectives of programs run by state arts agencies, local government community services programs, or philanthropics.
- Many presenters and producers expressed a wish for direct public investment in audience development, but these costs are rarely supported currently. Further initiatives or expansion of initiatives along the lines of Road Work, with some direct funds also leveraging the benefits of mutual co-operation among circuits of presenters, could be considered by the Australia Council.

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<sup>32</sup> *Playing Australia Guidelines, Round 39.*

## 10.3 Production selection

### 10.3.1 Context and commentary

*Without the content-based programming that artistic vision implies, presenting loses its meaning.*<sup>33</sup>

*I felt a need to know why venue managers choose to program the theatre we make. What animates a venue's curatorial choices? What philosophical thinking underpins their cultural and artistic considerations?*

*A festival works because they curate a program.*

#### ▪ Affinity relationships

A strong sentiment arising from the consultation process was that good decision making when choosing productions is dependent upon good relationships. Moreover, the current range of forums provides valuable *opportunities* for networking, but these opportunities are not always well exploited.

This was strongly reflected by experienced producers with solid networks and knowledge, who selectively approach potential 'partners' and develop tours through agreements that are individually crafted and mutually beneficial. This is akin to what Keen and Rhodes term 'affinity relationships'. That is, a coming together around common artistic goals for the commissioning and production (and in this case presentation) of particular works of art.<sup>34</sup>

Consistent with the commonly expressed sentiment that relationships are key to successful outcomes, much commentary indicates that the current focus within domestic markets/showcases/forums on the 'pitch' approach inhibits open, meaningful discussion about the work on offer, often reducing the debate to purely pragmatic factors. Conversely, for work needing little explanation this process can be a highly valuable and efficient means to develop a largely mainstream, main-stage program with minimal effort on behalf of the presenter.

Further, it appears important, and is seen as desirable by the sector, to 'encourage and support relationships in which institutions and individuals seek one another out because of their common interests in an idea or artist rather than for geographic proximity.'<sup>35</sup>

#### ▪ Misalignment between funding program objectives and production selection mechanisms

Through the primary process for choosing touring productions, CyberPaddock,<sup>36</sup> the selection is often based on logistics or functional criteria (for example, box office appeal, cost, ease of bump in/out, likelihood of tour being funded) that may sometimes not be entirely consistent with the objectives of touring programs that seek, for example, to 'expand audiences for quality, innovative and uniquely Australian productions'.<sup>37</sup>

This reflects a limitation of the product selection processes as opposed to the funding program objectives.

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<sup>33</sup> Keen and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Keen and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989, p.78..

<sup>35</sup> Keen and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989, p. 71..

<sup>36</sup> PowerPAC Report , APACA, Oct 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Playing Australia Aims (<http://www.arts.gov.au/topics/regional-touring-arts/playing-australia>).

- **The polarisation of production selection**

The two broad processes for selecting productions mentioned above – via strong relationships and via online mechanisms – are largely polarised. That is, that they are either driven by popular vote, simplifying the process to achieve efficient decision making and identify potential tours with broad appeal and support, or the process is based on highly developed relationships which require in-depth, specialist knowledge, and is time consuming and cliquey. As a result, these production selection processes tend to favour those producers that are well resourced, with specialist skills or highly attractive product. This inhibits opportunities for a large number of viable tours that sit between these two extremes.

- **Programming complacency**

The consultation indicated that presenters sometimes vote for productions based largely on what the nearest venue to them has voted for, the votes of a colleague that they believe has good judgment and/or what the majority of other presenters vote for. Less knowledgeable or confident presenters looking to their more experienced colleagues for direction may benefit from this; however, it appears this behaviour is adopted by a majority of presenters.

As a result of highly developed production selection processes (CyberPaddock and Long Paddock), limited programming resources (dedicated staff and skills) and a high degree of guidance by touring coordinators, presenters appear to lean towards the simplest means of programming, investing considerable responsibility in third parties. Or, as one producer put it: 'As presenters, and as cultural leaders in your community, your single most important job, and your greatest challenge, is programming. And I put to you that you are abrogating that responsibility to your tour coordinators.'

Responding to demand, and with thoroughly good intentions, tour coordinators have effectively taken measures to streamline what is a high consumer involvement decision, requiring extended problem solving (purchasing shows against intangible aesthetic criteria) into a low-involvement purchase decision, with only routine problem solving required (tick this box).

- **Mechanism awareness, scope and diversity**

Many of the people consulted noted the range of processes available when engaging in national touring. It is important to note, however, that while consultation participants were aware of smaller niche programs such as Showroom, Road Work and those offered by Kultour, some were unsure of the relevance of these programs and how to engage with them.

Also, it was stated by many participants that some of the current forums, while effective in some regard, are limited in their scope.

It is important to note that CyberPaddock and Long Paddock, as means of gathering, distributing and identifying common reaction from a broad range of productions and a geographically disparate group, were widely acknowledged and valued. In spite of this, it appears that a key issue is that the majority of work – small, large, popular, contemporary, commercial, subsidised – is competing for touring opportunities primarily through a single process. Other mechanisms exist, but awareness and participation by both producers and presenters in these mechanisms is limited.

In considering this, it is apparent that a range of product selection systems, or processes within existing systems, are required in order to align with the needs of the sector, as reflected in the following comment: 'The needs of the presenter in Ceduna will be different from those of the presenter in Melbourne.'

*Both presenters and managers have expressed their concern that traditional booking conferences suffer from a number of problems. First, they tend to place the artist outside the relationship between the manager and presenter where he or she is more susceptible to being treated as incidental. Second, they create a relationship defined almost entirely by the economic transaction rather than the artistic one. Third, they display artworks and artists much like ready to wear garments to be sold off the rack, without any true consideration of the special needs and opportunities that each artist and presenter represents, or of the possibilities that occur when they work together ... Indeed, if we begin to view conferences as gatherings of the field rather than solely as opportunities for commerce, they will become much more effective.*

Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989

#### ▪ **Industry maturity**

It is important to note that the development of Long Paddock from an informal gathering (some 15 to 20 years ago) to its current highly structured state resulted largely from the increase of the number of organisations and individuals engaging with the touring process, and the need to establish a democratic and fair process as well as a high level of accountability (at the request of both producers and presenters). Comments from participants indicate that the industry has matured to a point that such a high level of structure is no longer required and may not serve the best interests of the sector.

#### ▪ **Curation of Long Paddock**

Curation of the work listed on CyberPaddock and selected to pitch at Long Paddock was also regularly raised by those consulted. The lack of both transparency and apparent meaningful criteria were cited as issues. Interestingly, this is consistent with the outcomes of the recent APAM Scoping Study, which concluded that a curated approach across the program (APAM), from showcases to skills development sessions, was an appropriate way forward.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, research into showcases/booking conferences in other parts of the world indicates that almost without exception all of these markets undertake a curatorial approach to selecting the productions that are showcased/pitched. Long Paddock stands uniquely as a market almost solely programmed according to popular vote.

In contrast to a curatorial process, the current product selection and tour development process, in which tours are fully developed without funding confirmation, results in presenters committing to many more tours (and many more tours being developed) than they can actually present. In a recent survey by the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association, over 33 per cent of presenters (from a total of 62) indicated that they commit to 50 per cent or more shows than they can actually present. This reflects the extent to which presenters 'hedge their bets' in an attempt to secure a full program, as a result of the inability to confirm tours in advance of funding being granted.

#### ▪ **Management of CyberPaddock and Long Paddock**

Currently the management of Long Paddock rotates among the Blue Heelers, largely depending on the state in which the Long Paddock is held. The associated workload is simply added to the existing workload of the Blue Heeler, often without any additional resources. This service is provided in kind from the regional arts organisation hosting the event. Indeed, reports and

<sup>38</sup> Beyond APAM 2012 Industry Workshop, Australia Council, 2011.

touring related forums dating back to 2003 repeatedly noted that national touring is maintained by goodwill.

While it was noted from the consultations that this service is greatly appreciated by the industry, it was also noted that the rotation of management impedes the development of the forum, as no single individual or organisation retains detailed corporate knowledge and is necessarily empowered to carry improvements forward.

At a practical level, the current CyberPaddock system is reported as being problematic. Producers repeatedly express frustration with the time and difficulty involved in uploading work and the detail they are required to provide, often in advance of the show being fully produced. Similarly, presenters often claim that the site is slow and not user-friendly. In addition, restrictions of access imposed by local councils mean that some individuals resort to using computers at home, in their own time, to vote.

In contrast, the standardisation of production information on CyberPaddock allows presenters to compare 'apples with apples', and at the same time make informed assessments of the operational requirements and costs of a show (both purchase and running).

Throughout the consultation the limitations on resources attributed to the management of CyberPaddock were repeatedly recognised. However, the commitment of Regional Arts Australia in delivering in-kind resources through the Blue Heeler Network is acknowledged as providing a valuable service to national touring, in particular the management of Long Paddock and CyberPaddock.

▪ **A strategic approach through multiple mechanisms**

The *Mapping Contemporary Dance in Regional WA* report (Carmichael, 2009) noted that the recognition of dance companies that return to the same communities over a number of years had significant benefits. The same report noted that the development of ongoing relationships between particular artists and communities has the potential for long-term impact.

This not to say that this particular strategy is applicable across multiple situations; however, it shows how a strategic approach with a planned program of activity can increase the effectiveness of touring. Similarly, this does not suggest that touring projects chosen biannually based on popularity do not have a place in the touring system. Indeed, it appears a multiplicity of mechanisms would best serve audiences. Importantly, however, the accessibility and ease with which all of these mechanisms can be used must be similar, because of the natural tendency of any user to seek the simplest of options, particularly in an industry with limited resources.

• **Online tools and accessibility**

In an industry in which the stakeholders are affected by factors such as vast distances, small travel budgets and limited ability to take time away from their place of work, the value of online tools such as CyberPaddock cannot be overestimated. Indeed, the basic functions of online mechanisms and improvements in technology were reported as diminishing the need for face-to-face markets.

• **Commitment to sourcing product**

The investment of time, money and effort on behalf of the sector to gather regularly at markets and forums indicates a strong commitment to sourcing touring product and developing touring networks. A single Long Paddock is conservatively estimated as requiring a collective financial investment of between \$150–200,000, based purely on travel, accommodation and running costs. The value of people's time would see a further contribution of \$100–150,000. Events such

as the annual APACA conference and the biennial Australian Performing Arts Market would see considerably larger investments.

### 10.3.2 Gaps and overlaps

- The primary existing production selection and programming processes, while complex in their function, are limited in their ability to effectively support the full range of productions on offer and the disparate needs of presenters nationally.
- The inclusive approach used by CyberPaddock (that is, accepting many and varied productions to be listed), its direct relationship to Long Paddock and its alignment to the Playing Australia funding deadlines means that the majority of presenters are often tied to this process. This in turn places CyberPaddock in a unique position, without comparable production selection options available in the market, to some extent creating a monopoly.
- This centralisation of production selection through CyberPaddock and Long Paddock determines a large proportion of the productions that are submitted to the key funding program Playing Australia. This has the effect of creating the *perception* among some producers of a 'cartel' that prevents open access to Playing Australia funds.
- Alternative, existing methods for tour development (other than CyberPaddock and Long Paddock) do exist; however, they are often unknown by many segments of the industry, and are used primarily by highly experienced and knowledgeable producers.
  - Producers and presenters are encouraged or drawn towards CyberPaddock and Long Paddock as the primary process for tour development despite the mechanisms seeming to be inappropriate for some presenter and producer needs. This in turn curtails opportunities to develop tours of work that do not have mass appeal.
  - Similarly, opportunities to develop tours of work currently in the development stage are limited, resulting in higher cost of shows, due to the fact that tours are unlikely to follow from premiere seasons, thus incurring remount costs.
    - Based on the importance of relationships in the tour development process, it is difficult for new producers to enter the marketplace unless they are pitching highly attractive product.
    - Similarly, less commercial/popular artforms (challenging and/or adventurous work) are inadvertently disadvantaged.
- Presenters' curatorial processes are driven predominantly by factors that mitigate risk (often without thorough research into audience demand and capacity) rather than by critical assessment of the audience and the production.
- Producers have a limited understanding of the restrictions placed on presenters' curatorial decision making, often perpetuating the perception that presenter production selection is ill-informed.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The programming decisions of presenters are often limited by their ability to take risk as dictated by a board or governing third party. This is addressed under Development Goal 4, Market and Audience Development.

- The tendency towards processes that enable and reinforce group decision making by presenters (block booking) appears strongly linked to the tendency of presenters to make programming decisions based on what they believe is likely to be funded as opposed to what they think will meet the specific needs of their audiences. The likelihood of a tour being funded has been cited as the primary driver for programming decisions.
- Producers reported high levels of frustration and anxiety when attempting to ‘sell’ shows to presenters via the pitch process. This, in turn, appeared to perpetuate an ‘us and them’ mentality in the producing and presenting sectors, inhibiting collaboration.

### 10.3.3 Priority recommendations

**NOTE:**

A. The reforms noted here are interdependent with each other and with other reforms throughout the report. In particular, the decision to move to a single major round of Playing Australia funding with other ‘rolling grants’ available throughout the year will significantly direct the idea of moving to one booking conference (that is, Long Paddock) per year.

B. The words ‘Long Paddock’ and ‘booking conference’ are interchangeable in this context. The term Long Paddock is used so as to provide the reader an example of the concept and nature of a booking conference.

▪ **Structural change to Long Paddock and/or alternative booking conference/market**

**Structure and timing**

- Develop one Long Paddock each year to be more collaborative, that favours conversation and discussion as opposed to pitching, for example enabling dialogue around the early stages of creative development and ideas. ‘More like APAM.’ (Assumes two Long Paddocks per year.)
- Align one Long Paddock to APAM in alternate years. Or rethink the format of the autumn Long Paddock in the years in which APAM is held.
- Presenters pitch at Long Paddock to help develop an understanding of presenter profiles – for example, what they look for when programming, the needs of their audiences/community.

**Technology**

- Establish an online tool in place of one Long Paddock each year, allowing for final product selection without the need to be physically present for the ‘pitch’ – or, indeed, without there being a ‘pitch’ at all.
- Live stream Long Paddock to enable more presenters to participate.

**Curation**

- Curated shortlisting – a curatorial committee of presenters and producers shortlist productions for pitching at Long Paddock, with artistic and strategic assessments complementing the voting.
- The first day of Long Paddock pitches are curated; the second is by determined by popular vote.

### General

- Establish and resource a dedicated position for the ongoing management *and development* of a national booking conference.
- Change the name of the Long Paddock forum (to some producers there is a denigrating implication that productions are akin to sheep purchased at a saleyard).
- Provide relationship matching like the Adelaide Fringe's Honey Pot program.

### ▪ Re/development of online production menu

- Invest in the development (redevelopment) of an online menu of shows:
  - to create a more user-friendly production representation, selection and voting
  - to provide a service that more closely aligns the characteristics of presenters and producers and supports 'affinity relationships'
  - where the interests of all sectors are equally prioritised and the benefits of the site are shared with all tour developers.
- Establish and resource a dedicated website manager for the online menu.
- Resource and undertake an independent review to identify key stakeholder needs and priorities for servicing the sector through an online mechanism.
- Ensure any new or redeveloped site lists all tours continuing in the process (after voting) to tour development on the roster of tours, not just those managed by the Blue Heelers.
- Improve the categorisation of work on CyberPaddock so that presenters can search for shows according to scale and risk.

### Additional amendments

- Establish and display a measure of 'tour readiness' for shows listed on CyberPaddock.
- A curatorial committee of presenters and producers 'tag' productions as 'highly recommended' on CyberPaddock.
- Further develop CyberPaddock.

## 10.3.4 Secondary recommendations

- **Enable tour development processes that align like-minded presenters and producers.** Loosely classify/stratify producers and presenters according to measures that allow them to better identify similar or like-minded organisations for collaboration. Particular measures could help determine factors such as touring 'maturity' and the accessibility of product, presentation capability and the sophistication/aesthetic maturity of audiences. This could be a self-assessment process based on criteria with sliding scales such as: cost of show, riskiness of show, popularity of the show, scale of the show, tour readiness, track record, programming processes, marketing resources and skills, programming budget, etc. This process aims to support the building of affinity relationships, not to 'pigeonhole' organisations and limit the scope of their relationships.
- **Encourage the development of venue consortia** (touring circuits) with 'like-programming' needs for commissioning and touring.
- **Recognise and/or establish marketplaces for specific art forms**, for example Dance Massive for contemporary dance, The Dreaming Festival for Indigenous content, etc.
- **Establish a programming mentor initiative**, with skilled programmers leading one or a small number of presenters/programmers through the programming process, for example shadowing at APAM.

- **Establish funding criteria that require presenters to have a programming policy** in place in order to be eligible to receive financial support for touring. An amnesty period would be required. NB: This is consistent with funding requirements placed on producers that require artistic assessment.
- **Provide bursaries to attend national arts markets** for a limited number of presenters and producers.

## 11 Development goals

### 11.1 Relationships, dialogue and tour coordination

#### 11.1.1 Context and commentary

Merce Cunningham in discussion with Art Bcofsky (cited in Keens and Rhodes, 1989), states that multi-year, long-term commitments in the form of commissioning help him ‘keep a company in an honorable fashion’.<sup>40</sup>

*Both producers and presenters may need to step down from the production line in order to think and communicate more deeply about what we do and why we do it. Depth and intensity take time, effort and commitment. They brew slowly and are animated by visionary thinking.*

*Collaboration is key.*

*We need to be really honest – when we know things are going to be tricky we need to admit and discuss that – we are a bit fearful of having honest conversations.*

*Bring local government into the process.*

*The old days of presenting and producing are over.*

*The relationship between producer and presenter – is it a customer relation or a partnership?*

Relationships and dialogue are strongly linked to the processes of production selection. Accordingly, aspects of the above section are also reflected below.

- **Direct relationships**

Throughout the consultation process, presenters and producers in every state and in every sector stated that ‘strong relationships’, ‘direct contact’, ‘partnerships’ and ‘picking up the phone’ were extremely important means of developing touring activity, often reporting more effective or more satisfying outcomes via these means than through mediated mechanisms.

This was strongly reinforced in several in-depth interviews that compared and contrasted Australian arts markets/booking conferences with those overseas, noting that the conversation between presenter and producer and artist is critical to making things happen – that is, talking to discover what the options are.

Further, this raised the issue of the nature of the relationship between producer and presenter and the current trend away from transactional relationships. This was reflected by several participant comments that noted a desire for relationships that tended toward partnership, and the mechanisms to facilitate them.

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<sup>40</sup> Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989.

- **Shared understanding (of each other's business)**

A culture of collaboration appears to be inhibited by an apparent limited understanding by presenters and producers of each other's business practice and constraints. This was evident throughout the consultation when producers and presenters queried the motivations of the other without thorough knowledge of the prevailing conditions. This appears symptomatic of the extent to which dialogue between producers and presenters is confined to the practicalities concerning the purchase of a show.

- **Intermittent touring activity and agents**

As the nature of touring in Australia is such that most production companies will not tour annually, a company's engagement with the touring industry is often intermittent. However, as indicated above, key factors affecting success in touring are strong networks and relationships and a current knowledge of touring systems. These two factors – the intermittent nature of touring and the need for strong relationships and current knowledge – are at odds, and mean that production companies are required to maintain ongoing touring relationships and knowledge that may bear no return in the short, medium or long term. This supports the notion of those touring skills and knowledge being maintained by a third party that can be drawn upon on an 'as required' basis, consistent with the role of the 'artist agent' often employed in Europe and North America.

- **Evidence-based community desires**

Presenters often stated that 'they know their audiences', but responses from the consultation indicate that often this knowledge was not founded on strong evidence. Indeed, comments from presenters indicated that it is likely that they are basing the profile of their community's interest on existing attendance patterns, as opposed to analysis of potential audiences.

- **Value with local government**

It was reported that local government, as the owners of the majority of presenter facilities,<sup>41</sup> are sometimes unable to realise the full benefit of their arts centres, possibly due to poor information regarding the full scope of what an arts centre can potentially deliver.

- **The role and responsibility of tour coordination**

*There is a need to change the attitude towards Tour Coordinators [to] where they're valued and recognised more. They're currently the 'poor cousins'.*

*Do we always need a Tour Coordinator or can presenters have direct relationships with producers? Building stronger ties with producers and presenters seems critical.*

Throughout the consultation tour coordination in its various guises was questioned. On one level it was suggested that the direct relationships between producer and presenter were impeded as a result of the tour coordinator position. Conversely, presenters and producers regularly extolled the value of the tour coordinator's role, noted the limited resources at their disposal and the usefulness of the advice and assistance that they provided, for which they were grateful.

It is important to note that the role of tour coordinator varies greatly throughout Australia, from 'on-the-road' tour delivery through to comprehensive full service development, delivery and administration; however, the tour coordination role of the Blue Heelers (see Glossary) is largely consistent. Importantly, the role of the Blue Heeler as a subsidised tour agent has created a

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<sup>41</sup> 60% based on research provided by APACA's 2009 Economic Activity Report.

culture of dependency on the Blue Heelers, and has inadvertently prevented the rise of the independent touring agents that dominate the European and North American markets.

This sentiment was reflected in comments from producers who questioned the process that determined which works receive tour coordinators' free or low cost service. Similarly, they noted the inequity in the allocation of this service that appears to disadvantage less mainstream productions.

- **The remit and obligation of the Blue Heeler Network**

Interviews with state and territory arts ministries and departments revealed that, with the exception of South Australia – where the Country Arts Trust Act 1992 (SA) describes a function of the Trust as being 'to develop and manage programs for the touring of country arts activities within the State or within or outside of the State' – none of the current organisations that facilitate the Blue Heeler role have an obligation to participate in national touring. This highlights the potentially perilous state of the supply chain in regard to tours developed and delivered by the Blue Heelers.

Similarly, the consultation has discovered that a great deal of national touring responsibility is invested with the Blue Heelers, yet it appears that they are not obligated to deliver this service. Furthermore, interviews with Blue Heeler representatives revealed that in some circumstances they are neither empowered nor resourced to make decisions or take carriage of some issues.

The consultation also identified that governance of the Blue Heelers is the responsibility, respectively, of each state regional arts organisation (Country Arts WA, Country Arts SA, Regional Arts Victoria, Queensland Arts Council). Further, it is understood that Regional Arts Australia informally assumes a management role of the Blue Heelers, and no legal entity exists that binds the Blue Heeler Network or requires accountability for service delivery at a national level.

### 11.1.2 Gaps and overlaps

- Limited understanding by presenters and producers of each other's business practice, purpose, aims, markets and constraints are an impediment to success.
- A shared purpose in regard to touring as a whole appears to be missing.
- Limited opportunities exist for *meaningful* dialogue in industry forums.
- The understanding of community 'wants' in regard to choices of performing arts activity often appears to be based on the opinion of the venue manager.
- Local government could better exploit the full value arts centres can provide to the community.
- Resources invested by local government into arts centres are often insufficient.
- Funding programs, touring models and systems appear to be inadequately understood by the industry.
- Currently no entity exists that is obligated to coordinate the gamut of national touring.
- The development and delivery of *national* touring by tour coordinators appears to occur only as a result of the goodwill of the parties involved. Indeed, there is little evidence of a formal, secure structure bringing together state tour coordinators for the purpose of national touring.
- Affordable tour coordination is often not available to tours of productions that do not have mass appeal.
- There is a limited practice of independent tour management in Australia in comparison to Europe and North America.
- There appears to be limited recognition of tour coordination as a specialist skill.

- Opportunities to develop collaboration are reportedly limited.
- Tour coordination is increasingly highly stressful, with excessive levels of burnout.
- With the exception of this report, the Australia Council is, to some extent, detached from structural and policy issues regarding national touring.

### 11.1.3 Priority recommendations

- **See recommendations under 10.3.3 and 10.1.2 (dot point 3).**
- **Enable opportunities for *meaningful dialogue in industry forums***, limited not only to producers and presenters but also funders, other peak bodies and agencies and all three levels of government.
  - In particular, support alternatives to the ‘sell-off fee model’, noting that shared investment will encourage closer collaboration, better marketing, cost savings and other efficiencies.
  - Support the development of more circuits of presenters; for example, encourage more presenters to facilitate/broker presentations beyond their own venue (such as major regional centre on-tours to smaller outlying centres). Encourage circuits of presenters based on like programming (genre, audience) rather than geography. Some examples include contemporary dance, new music/sound, and intercultural/culturally diverse work.
- **Develop and adopt a complementary system of tour coordination** that supports the full range of national touring activity.
  - Enable the establishment of more ‘tour brokers’ or ‘tour producers’ (as distinct from creative producers, general managers) into the national touring marketplace.
  - Formalise the coordination of all tour coordinators involved in national touring under independent management; that is, undertake biannual face-to-face meetings and regular communication between all tour coordinators (not just the Blue Heeler Network).
  - Clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of existing tour coordinators.
  - Increase the resources of the Blue Heeler Network. At a minimum, establish a full-time dedicated position to manage the Blue Heeler Network.
  - Establish an autonomous legal structure or business unit for the Blue Heeler Network that provides a clear and well-defined licence to act.
  - Enable the process of tour *development* to be managed independently of the Blue Heeler Network, thus enabling them to focus on tour *delivery* – a service that appears to sit more comfortably within their remit.

### 11.1.4 Secondary recommendations

- **Develop a clear communication strategy** that informs the sector of the range of funding objectives and reduces a real or perceived preference for longer tours by Playing Australia.
- **Resource the Australia Council to make a commitment to continued participation in the national touring industry**, providing information and advice on national touring activity (recognising the value of touring to the sector and audience development).
- **Develop an emerging tour producer program that sees an emerging producer mentored by an experienced touring producer** to write touring grant applications, for producers with viable tours that have not received the low-cost touring service provided by the Blue Heelers.

## 11.2 Diversity of work toured

### 11.2.1 Context and commentary

*We've toured all over the world but we can't get a touring gig here. Australian presenters say the work's too difficult for their audiences. But we play mass GP audiences internationally.<sup>42</sup>*

*The system requires every tiny detail of the touring production's technical requirements to be contracted two years in advance – this makes touring new work virtually impossible. We should have a model that encourages the touring of new works, of site-specific and adaptable works and of those which create collaboratively with local communities.<sup>43</sup>*

*The Paddock process has kept regional audiences behind the times for years. They say there's no audience there for anything new, but they've never tried.*

*Cross-cultural work isn't touring as much as it should. Last APAM (2010), only one show was spotlighted.*

*Our stages are like our TV screens – you never hear an accent, unless it's world music.*

As outlined above at section 10.3, the Long Paddock process primarily delivers conventional mainstream work for mass audiences, with occasional exceptions. A number of producers and presenters expressed the view that other areas of practice are less catered to, in particular:

- new form work such as contemporary and non-narrative theatre/performance, contemporary dance, hybrid performance, new music and sound and work for non-conventional spaces
- work that is seen as only for niche audiences or marginal communities, often because it's by artists from those communities or exploring content only of interest to them, such as CALD audiences, younger audiences (between school age and middle age), queer audiences, etc.
- works of large scale, for example with a large touring party, and/or with a large production footprint.

A relatively small number of regional presenters is currently prepared to present such works. Lack of familiarity with the artforms, lack of confidence in ability to market them, lack of audience demand and lack of suitability of venue facilities to contemporary practice were all cited by presenters and producers as reasons for the paucity of presentation opportunities.

While otherwise financially viable and funding-eligible, tours of contemporary, adventurous or niche work frequently fall below the threshold of the minimum number of presenters required to compete in the main touring institutions, which prioritise tours of longer duration. The main touring marketplace actively disadvantages small tours, for example with tours below a threshold of presenters eliminated from the final voting round. Such a tour's producer can still proceed to tour development, with a well and truly viable tour of a dozen or more interested presenters. But they find themselves at a disadvantage, since their product has been marked as

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<sup>42</sup> Unattributed comments are by consultation participants or interviewees unless otherwise noted.

<sup>43</sup> Simon Abrahams, *Necessity Creates Momentum*, paper delivered at VAPAC meeting November 2011.

unavailable to its buyers, most of whom will shift focus to the tours listed on the tour development roster prepared by the Blue Heeler Network.

Touring of these kinds of work appears to be highly dependent on one or both of two alternative structures: specialist tour coordinators, and Australia Council funding initiatives. Specialist producers and tour coordinators such as Kultour, Performing Lines, and Critical Stages are filling this gap in the market to some extent. They do so often with the support of the Australia Council and other funding initiatives, which support audience development and in some cases may subsidise riskier work to help it compete in the marketplace. These initiatives have helped enable – and in some cases drive – the development of specialist presenting circuits such as Mobile States, Road Work, and the new circuit for presenting Indigenous work.

However, these are relatively small organisations and initiatives, without the resources to even meet the current demand for their various specialty products. Consultation participants reported that many viable tours are not proceeding, instead falling through the gap between the Long Paddock process (which generally favours large tours) on the one hand, and the limited resources of the specialist tour coordinators on the other. In this context, ‘viable’ is taken to mean there is sufficient presenter interest to make them financially viable (remount costs can be amortised and they are priced competitively in the marketplace) and funding-eligible (there are enough regional and remote presenters in enough states, and they form an efficient itinerary).

A small number of producers reported that they undertake their own tour coordination. Many more stated that they didn’t feel equipped (with the requisite skills, or resources, or both) to undertake one or more elements of the tour development, the funding application, the tour coordination itself, or some combination of these.

Some of these relatively small-scale tours would not require the same level of tour coordination resourcing as the major mainstream tours, because of shorter duration or less complex production values. In some instances – for example, in the case of established triennially funded producing companies – they would be capable of coordinating their own tour, perhaps with external consultant support from a Blue Heeler or independent producer/broker. This option may be more easily provided by the current tour coordination infrastructure, and more affordable to the producer if charged at cost, than the current reliance on handing over to a third party tour coordinator model.

Many participants said that touring off the back of premiere seasons was easier. Increasingly, presenters are co-commissioning works, particularly with the advent of the Theatre Board’s Program Presenter grants.

### **11.2.2 Gaps and overlaps**

- The main marketplace for touring product actively disadvantages small tours.
- More players such as independent producers could offer tour brokering or tour coordination services, but are currently unable to compete with the subsidised tour coordinators, as tour development to the point of funding application currently requires too great a time investment.
- Many viable potential tours of contemporary work, or work seen as being for niche audiences or marginal communities, do not proceed because they are not being matched to tour coordination resources.

- Artists working in these areas find it harder to tour, and therefore harder to access the benefits of touring (wider exposure, economic sustainability, developing their work and practice, opportunities for exchange, etc.).
- Audience choice is restricted by the unavailability of these kinds of work.
- Access to and participation in the performing arts – a key objective of all touring activity and funding programs – is restricted.
- Opportunities for presenters to diversify and expand their audiences are limited, and those presenters who do wish to present more adventurous product find it unavailable or unaffordable.

### 11.2.3 Priority recommendations

- **Remove marketplace, planning and funding program impediments to small tours.**
  - Review national touring planning features which disadvantage niche touring, for example:
    - Keep all (or many more possible viable) tours in play on CyberPaddock voting through to the last round.
    - List all tours going to tour development on the roster of tours, not just those managed by Blue Heelers.
    - Have a curatorial committee of presenters and producers ‘tag’ productions as ‘highly recommended’ on CyberPaddock.
  - Review allocation of tour coordination services by the Blue Heelers – for example, not just the top 20 tours by scale or duration, but also a list balancing the popular votes with a curated list.
  - Implement funding reforms such as a simplified application process and ‘apply any time’ programs as per section 10.2.2, which will assist entry for new players and smaller tours.
- **Provide tour coordination, brokering and new ‘lite’ consulting models more widely.**

Provide assistance to small companies and independent artists not served by current arrangements on a scale from a tour broker or tour coordination consultant service (assisting producers to develop and/or manage tours), through to full service tour coordination; that is, with the service level tailored to suit the project and the producer’s capacity.

  - This service could be provided by a number of entities: the state-funded Blue Heelers; existing Australia Council-funded specialist tour coordinators; other independent producers; or a hypothetical new national touring office.
  - It could be supported in a number of ways: as part of the core activities of funded tour coordinators; through new funding, or a tender process offered by the Australia Council or by Playing Australia; or by building tour development costs into sell-off fees paid by presenters and/or Playing Australia supported tour coordination fees. The latter choice assumes adoption of recommended reforms that simplify the application process and reduce the investment in tour development required to seek funds to a sustainable level.
- **Support presenter risk-taking through curatorial upskilling, shared audience development strategies and providing certainty on programming centrepieces.**
  - See section 11.5, Capacity building, re presenter professional development in programming curation, and exposure to a wider range of work.
  - See section 10.2, Funding simplification and harmonisation, re triennial funding – measures that give presenters greater certainty around presenting core established producers may free them up to present riskier niche work.

- See section 11.4, Marketing and audience development, re shared marketing and audience development strategies tailored to the relevant genre, target audience, etc., and initiatives to help manage risk.

See also relevant recommendations under sections 10.3, Production selection.

#### **11.2.4 Secondary recommendations**

##### **Complementary Australia Council programs**

- Maintain current Australia Council programs such as Mobile States (for contemporary theatre and dance, subsidising sell-off price), Road Work (for adventurous theatre and dance, towards marketing costs), and Hopscotch (live art, towards net touring costs).
- Review whether these programs should be expanded and/or complemented by new programs, once the structural changes noted above have taken effect.

##### **Venue infrastructure**

- Ensure new venues and any refurbishment works are compatible with the needs of contemporary artform practice, and the access requirements of artists and audiences.
- Ensure venues are culturally appropriate and welcoming to culturally diverse audiences (including people with a disability and the deaf community).

## 11.3 Community engagement

### 11.3.1 Context and commentary

*Tours of continuous one night stands result in artists losing the opportunity to create a fuller educational context for their work or to benefit from audience reaction to it. In the USA these circumstances have been identified as being attributable in part to funding limitations that force artists and presenters ... to be in constant pursuit of earned income.<sup>44</sup>*

*We're over the one night stand. We want a longer-term relationship.<sup>45</sup>*

*Touring isn't just doing the same show in a different room. We ask the artists to reinvent their work for the local context, sometimes with local people.*

*Presenter A: Our subs season delivers very few figures I can use, and a lot I have to make excuses for. Performing Arts Centres must be more than presenters. Community cultural development is a natural fit – and Councils will reward those who take it on.*

*Presenter B: We still lose money on 340 kids laughing at Possum Magic. But we meet more measures than 50 kids being challenged.*

*Presenter A: We had 120 kids in Polyglot's City of Riddles. Weeks later the teacher called to say they were still talking about it, and invited us to an exhibition of artwork the kids had made in response. I'm sick of feeling despondent because no one came. I want to feel like we succeeded because we're measuring other things.*

*Communities are not passive consumers of content, but can also be active participants in presenting, publicising and selecting product.<sup>46</sup>*

Deeper community engagement was noted as a high priority throughout the consultation process, summed up by the catchcry 'longer, slower, deeper'. Many artists expressed a strong desire to slow down the pace of touring, to find out more about the place they are visiting and the people who live there, and to share skills and collaborate on creative projects with locals, whether the general public, specific communities or local artists. Similarly, many presenters are beginning to see the staging of finished works as just one part of their program, and attending to it as just one of a number of ways their community can engage with touring art and artists.

Engagement activity is becoming more sophisticated than minimalist add-ons, the quick workshop while the crew bumps in. Some examples encountered:

- Artback NT buys four weeks of Finucaine and Smith's *Caravan Burlesque*, toured by Regional Arts Victoria; touring party collaborates with local artists for a week each in Darwin and Alice Springs, and perform together in Darwin, Alice, Katherine and Tennant Creek.
- Back to Back Theatre's *The Democratic Set* project, toured by Performing Lines for Mobile States, spends a week in residence working with 15–150 local artists, with the outcome being a short film of their performance contributions, edited and screened as the

<sup>44</sup> Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989.

<sup>45</sup> Unattributed comments are by consultation participants or interviewees unless otherwise noted.

<sup>46</sup> Arts Queensland, *Touring Strategy Consultation Report*, 2008.

culminating event of the week. The film has a life locally beyond the tour – and can be shared among the twelve tour presenters to create a national exchange spanning Launceston to Goolwa, Darwin, Newcastle and most of the major cities.

- Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre buys a full week of Big hART's *Namatjira* (toured by Arts On Tour) instead of its usual one night, and programs a week of activities, talks and workshops in performance and watercolour painting, in collaboration with schools, artist groups and Indigenous organisations.

There may be a spectrum of engagement, from the traditional workshop options through to 'reinventing the work for the local context', as one festival director put it, through to longer-term residencies, exchanges and collaborations between visiting artists and local artists or communities to create new works.

Such activity stretches the definition of touring and the scope of the touring system and funding programs. Participant comment indicated there is little clarity or consensus as to what activity is eligible for funding.

Consulted presenters stated that not every touring presentation could or should be extended with engagement activities, because of high running costs or a lack of connection between the touring company's skills and local community needs. Indeed, some audience needs may be better served by a stand-alone engagement project. But engagement activity by touring artists that is well matched can deliver outcomes more cost-effectively and with synergies between the various strands of the modern PAC's program.

### 11.3.2 Gaps and overlaps

- Many presenters state a desire for engagement activity, but not all have the skills, resources or community relationships to deliver, and nor do all producers.
- Poorly conceived or managed projects are unsatisfying for all, damage presenter and/or producer brands, and discourage further participation.
- There are inadequate benchmarks to appropriately evaluate engagement activity, which limits the capacity for improvement, and also limits presenters' ability to seek support for activity from owners and potential supporters such as philanthropics and sponsors.
- There appears to be uncertainty about who can or should pay for such activity. Playing Australia Guidelines state that 'Playing Australia funds can support the Net Touring Costs associated with providing additional activities', defined as 'additional activities outside the core performances such as workshops and master classes, where communities may not have current access to particular skills development opportunities.'<sup>47</sup> Participant comment indicated a lack of understanding about what was eligible, and about who could or should pay for the running costs of such activity, apparently often discouraging activity.
- Some funding assessment criteria (for example, efficiency, sound budgeting) currently prioritise performances and ticket sales, to the detriment of planned engagement activity.
- Some presenters are accessing support from local government community services budgets, but for many this is an untapped source.
- Activities demand a close and collaborative partnership between artist and presenter, yet these may be impeded by the sell-off financial model, and by the relationship being mediated by a tour coordinator.

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<sup>47</sup> *Playing Australia Guidelines, Round 39.*

- Engagement activity creates new types of relationships with participants, which may create new issues and obligations, such as management of intellectual property created in projects, duty of care obligations, and industrial issues.

### 11.3.3 Priority recommendations

- **Build the sector's capacity to deliver effectively.**
  - Develop presenters' skills in managing engagement activities, and producers' skills in conducting them, through discussion in industry forums, resource materials, training opportunities, placements, etc.
  - Develop agreed benchmarks/KPIs for evaluating activity (for example, in consultation with CCD practitioners/theorists, social service provision agencies, etc.).
- **Integrate the planning of engagement activity into the touring conversation at all stages, from creative development through to programming and tour development.**
  - Create opportunities for engagement conversation in forums such as Long Paddock, The ShowRoom, informal dialogue.
  - Include more information in producer kits, CyberPaddock and other tools.
- **Clarify relationship to funding programs and establish reliable resources.**
  - Funding agencies to review guidelines and assessment criteria so that value of activity is properly assessed, and fairly compared with conventional touring.
  - Dedicated funds for engagement touring – for example, state agencies could consider funding fee costs as well as net touring costs, or support could be sourced through the federal government's Social Inclusion Agenda.
  - Increase local government support through developing advocacy tools, and better connections between cultural and community services programs.

### 11.3.4 Secondary recommendations

- **Fund artists/producers to go to a regional place to develop and present work** (for example, NT) – provides opportunity for community engagement strategy, creates relevance and provides benefits for the local industry regarding professional development opportunities.

## 11.4 Marketing and audience development

### 11.4.1 Context and commentary

*Audience development and engagement remain a challenge.*

*The ability to conduct positive audience development (strategies) is dependent upon personalities.*

*Marketing is only thoroughly considered after the tour is funded – often too late.*

*The limited capacity of regional presenters to market productions can constrain their ability to program more challenging work even if they wish to select it.<sup>48</sup>*

While not critical to the *delivery* of tours and often not considered a priority for the presentation of touring productions, marketing and audience development was consistently raised as a central issue, and vitally important to the overall success of touring. Comments throughout the consultation noted that marketing and audience development is directly related to the diversity of work toured and the extent of risk borne. Similarly, it appears quite possible that more effective marketing and audience development would provide a strong opportunity to increase revenue to the touring industry.

- **Limited resources**

A national survey of presenters undertaken by APACA indicates that only 60 per cent of presenters have staff dedicated to marketing activity in some capacity (contracted, full-time or part-time). Of those, less than 55 per cent work in a full-time capacity. This is similar to the Arts NSW *Review of Performing Arts Touring* that states that only half of the professional presenters surveyed (53 per cent) have a staff member whose role is primarily marketing.

- **Multiple audiences**

Often, conversations in consultation sessions referred to a single audience attached to a particular venue. It appears that presenters may benefit from considering the notion of multiple audiences in order to effectively address marketing and audience(s) development.<sup>49</sup>

- **Strategy versus tactics**

The 'readiness' of an audience to receive work was often noted in terms of the need for a broader audience development strategy as opposed to one-off marketing tactics. By way of an analogy, a seed dropped on barren land is unlikely to germinate, let alone grow. A seed planted in fertile ground that is tended and harvested appropriately will yield infinitely better produce. This is strongly linked to the Community Engagement Development Goal above.

- **Matching audience development with product (shows)**

It appears that there is a need to consider the availability of shows that appropriately align with a structure approach to audience development. As Baylis states in the Mapping Queensland Theatre Report:

*The foundation for more theatre touring exists but that depends on a certain critical mass of suitable work being consistently available for presenters to invest in appropriate audience development strategies.<sup>50</sup>*

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<sup>48</sup> Arts NSW, *Review of Performing Arts Touring*, 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989.

### 11.4.2 Gaps and overlaps

- Marketing and audience development strategies are often limited in their resourcing, scope and effectiveness.
- Resources and staff for venue marketing are extremely limited.
- Evidence-based knowledge of potential audiences was seldom noted.
- The limited understanding of audience ‘wants’ by some presenters appears to perpetuate relatively mainstream programming.
- Presenters possessing audience development plans are in the minority.
- Local government authorities possessing cultural plans are in the minority.
- A single marketing message may not be appropriate for a diverse national market.

### 11.4.3 Priority recommendations

- **Invest in the development and implementation of long-term, relationship-driven audience development programs.**

Establish and invest in long-term, relationship-driven audience development programs, including those for specific genres/audiences/communities, to the point where funding is no longer essential – that is, with a view to increasing box office revenue and reducing demand on subsidy over the long term – thereby freeing up presenters’ entrepreneurial funds so they can invest in more diverse and challenging work.

- **Prioritise local government engagement**

That the Australia Council facilitates representation to local government associations and other appropriate organisations and agencies on behalf of the sector to argue the case for the necessity of employing marketing staff in their arts centres.

- **Invest in presenter and producer marketing staff.**

### 11.4.4 Secondary recommendations

#### **Nomenclature**

- Redefine presenter-driven touring as demand-driven touring, and maintain and develop demand-driven touring.

#### **Marketing tools**

- Where possible, provide audience development templates and tools to assist presenters to design audience development plans which, to some extent, may be transferable to other venues.
- Provide one-off funding programs to presenters to research their audiences and develop a marketing/audience development plan.
- Encourage and support producers to create a ‘market development plan’ for productions – an identified pathway that a production may take from initial premiere to national touring, with funding programs (for example, for tour development and marketing) that support it.

#### **Complementary funding**

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<sup>50</sup> Arts Queensland, *Mapping Queensland Theatre* (John Baylis, 2009).

- Establish a funding program that confirms support, in principle, for marketing/audience development/community engagement work at the development stage of a tour, so that when an application for touring funds is submitted the demonstrated additional support improves the chances that the application will be funded. Eligibility for this could be limited to particular styles of work or particular audience segments. This would be similar to Road Work, but not genre specific – that is, ‘If this tour gets up we will provide \$X support for show X’ – thereby making the application more competitive without having to change the Playing Australia Guidelines. On the downside, this adds another application process for producers.

## 11.5 Capacity building (people and infrastructure)

### 11.5.1 Context and commentary

*While venues appreciated our increased efforts to communicate and offer marketing support, the dilemma is that APACA venues are generally small infrastructures running very ambitious programs on lean budgets.*

*Acknowledge the specialist skill set in touring.*

*Presenters who have an understanding of their communities and of where they stand in relation to them are well served by their understanding.<sup>51</sup>*

*Turnover of venue managers was identified as a major obstacle to building confidence around programming contemporary dance.<sup>52</sup>*

*Utilisation of arts centres sits at approximately 60% of capacity.<sup>53</sup>*

- **Human resources**

Participants in the consultation regularly reported the need for technical and marketing skills development by producers and presenters, specific to the touring environment. Further, many organisations noted that regardless of the skills, there are minimal human resources to adequately deliver professional standards of service.

Similarly, comments from all sectors indicated that there is a need to increase ‘cultural competence’ throughout the touring industry. This included the need for people to be able to speak and act with knowledge of the performing arts industry, and particularly touring outcomes.

- **Hard infrastructure**

Many producers and presenters noted that effective, well-equipped venues are central to the ability to provide presentation opportunities for touring companies and artists. They also noted that in some instances the inadequate maintenance of performance spaces and, indeed, the lack of suitable spaces, were preventing the presentation of some works.

- **Blue Heeler capacity**

Importantly, Regional Arts Australia in their report *A Sustainable Future for National Touring* stated that:

*the current output of the Network is made possible by the good-will of individual Blue Heelers and their state-based organisations. This cannot be sustained long-term and as such presents a central weakness in the long-term viability of the national performing arts touring model.<sup>54</sup>*

This issue was raised in 2007 and appears central to ongoing debate regarding the resourcing and coordination of national touring.

- **Company development**

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<sup>51</sup> Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989.

<sup>52</sup> Arts WA, *Mapping Contemporary Dance in Regional WA* (Carmichael, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> APACA, 2009 Economic Activity Report.

<sup>54</sup> *A Sustainable Future for National Touring* (McClements, 2007).

Many artists and producers in the consultation made particular mention of the extent to which touring provides for:

- The development of the artists' and creatives' practice.
- Development of the production as a whole, while on tour.
- Profiling and positioning performing arts companies in a national context.

### 11.5.2 Gaps and overlaps

- There is an identified need for technical skills development in presenting organisations.
- There is an identified need for highly skilled *touring* technical/production staff.
- There is an identified need for highly skilled marketing staff in both presenting and producing organisations, particularly small to medium organisations. (Indeed, there is a need for *any* marketing staff in some presenting and producing organisations.)
- Currently there are no agreed standards of competency for venue managers.
- Some venues are ill-equipped to present the work of some touring companies.
- Resourcing of the Blue Heeler Network is inadequate, based on current responsibilities.

### 11.5.3 Priority recommendations

- **Invest in tour brokers for producers** (particularly the small to medium and independent sector).

- **Invest in presenter professional development program.**

Determine a comprehensive strategy for venue manager professional development that encompasses curatorial skills and enables articulation of the value and benefits of arts experiences.

- **Develop and adopt national professional standards.**

Establish national competency standards for venue management and tour coordination, as well as national benchmarks for venue manager and tour coordinator recruitment.

Develop a program with local government associations (ALGA and LGMA and state chapters) to upskill venue staff.

### 11.5.4 Secondary recommendations

#### Information exchange and evaluation

- Analyse and report on information collected in grant acquittals, to inform development of the touring systems.
- Undertake peer reviews of venues/presenters (producers sharing with other producers their experiences of working with presenters), and the same for presenters.
- Provide opportunities for better evaluation of tours, including producers, presenters, tour coordinators, and sharing and learning from this information.
- Equip presenters with research that prioritises and communicates the value of the cultural/social impact of touring (over purely economic value).
- Establish a national think tank to determine ways cultural activity may best exploit the NBN.
- Develop programs that support workplace exchanges – producer and presenter residencies/internships in each other's organisations.

**Advocacy**

- Advocate for arts management training institutions to deliver content applicable to touring.
- Support presenters by advocating to local government for greater investment. Provide funding for mentoring to write Playing Australia applications for ‘below the line’ tours – that is, tours that are viable but don’t attract the support of the funded touring coordinators.
- Advocate for cultural representation on Regional Development Committees, making recommendations in regard to federal government capital/infrastructure spending.

**Hard infrastructure**

- Establish a dedicated national fund for the improvement of venue infrastructure, including appropriate equipment to exploit the NBN.

**Regional producing hubs**

- Provide investment to encourage and develop venues as low-cost producing hubs – production companies could rehearse and create work in regional venues.

**Collaboration**

- Exploit opportunities for sharing the cost of touring resources – for example, the cost of audio captioning could be shared across many presenters, thereby making it affordable.
- Incorporate non-managed venues, where possible, as a part of the national tour development process.
- Use state-based organisations to provide additional technical support as required.

NB: Resourcing of the Blue Heeler Network is addressed in sections 10.3.3 and 11.1.3.

*... the best activist presenters have a strong understanding of, and experience with, a wide variety of artforms, artists and cultural contexts, enabling these presenters to function as knowledgeable curators of the art and artists on their stages. They also take the initiative in effectively and appropriately marketing artists and their work, making community an integral part of what they do, educating new audiences and creating a welcoming atmosphere for them, building long-term relationships with artists, articulating their organisations’ purposes, and responsibly managing resources, staffs and facilities.*

Keens and Rhodes, *An American Dialogue*, 1989

## 11.6 Sustainability – low-carbon touring

### 11.6.1 Context and commentary

*Travel is one of the major contributors to the theatre sector’s carbon footprint. Audience travel has the largest impact across the industry, but artist and business travel creates impacts too, and touring is therefore a key area for focus in terms of reducing our emissions.<sup>55</sup>*

*Australia’s per capita greenhouse gas emissions are the highest of any OECD country and are among the highest in the world. Australia’s per capita emissions are nearly twice the OECD average and more than four times the world average ... Transport emissions represent about 14 per cent of Australia’s total greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>56</sup>*

*The first question to ask ourselves is should we be touring at all? ... (In 2009) Artsadmin and the British Council held a conference, SLOW BOAT, to talk about the issue with 100 touring theatre and dance companies in the UK. The ideas that came from it were some steps on the way to reducing our carbon footprint, including geographically proximate tours, longer stays, sourcing sets and performing companies locally, dropping ‘exclusion clauses’ in contracts, keeping existing works in repertoire longer, collaborating more and possibly simply ‘doing less’.<sup>57</sup>*

*We can’t keep flying people around the country and sending big trucks out on the road without thinking about it. At the very least, we can start with the changes that don’t require compromise – stop waste.<sup>58</sup>*

*As the capacity of the creative sector to consider the environment increases, there is substantial scope for the development of new touring models where the environment is placed equally alongside artistic and financial considerations.<sup>59</sup>*

A large number of consultation participants raised the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and other adverse environmental impacts as a high priority for consideration in planning for the future of performing arts touring. There is argument as to how significant a contribution to reducing emissions could be made by the touring sector, but the counter-argument is that no area of activity is, or ought to be, exempt from a general responsibility to reduce emissions. Indeed, reducing emissions is Australian Government policy, in line with obligations under international treaties. This goal is consistently supported by a clear majority of Australians, although there is debate about the means of achieving it. This paper therefore takes the position that carbon reduction is a valid concern and a responsibility of the touring sector, and indeed a priority area.

While the consultation process identified this as a key goal, there was no clear agreement as to how far the sector needed to go: would it be enough to deal with glaring inefficiencies through ‘easy wins’ that didn’t entail any compromise to current touring practice (for example, to the geographic reach or the production values of touring product)? Or is much more substantial change needed that would require us to completely rethink what can tour, where and how, if

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<sup>55</sup> [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

<sup>56</sup> Ross Garnaut, *The Garnaut Climate Change Review*, 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Judith Knight, Director, Artsadmin UK, ‘What will international touring look like in a zero carbon future?’, in *Greening the Arts*, Tipping Point Australia, 2010, at [www.tippingpointaustralia.com/resources](http://www.tippingpointaustralia.com/resources)

<sup>58</sup> Unattributed comments are by consultation participants or interviewees unless otherwise noted.

<sup>59</sup> Julie’s Bicycle, *Practical Guides: Touring* at [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

touring is to be economically viable, or even permitted, in a future low carbon economy? Given that transport is just one of a number of contributors to GHG emissions (around 14 per cent), it may be surmised that touring is not such a major polluter that it is inherently unsustainable.

The consultations did not propose a large number of practical or well-developed strategies to achieve the goal of increasing sustainability. Discussion centred on the general need to ensure that travel is undertaken efficiently, and that venues and venue operations are energy efficient, yet many participants expressed a sense of powerlessness, feeling that they didn't have the knowledge or tools to take action.

That said, there are a number of initiatives underway in the industry already, including the examples below:<sup>60</sup>

- Non-profit organisations focused on discussion, research and advocacy for sustainable practice, such as Tipping Point Australia, Green Music Alliance, various informal city-based networks of practitioners, and the nascent national network Green Alliance.
- Some work on research and sustainability done by industry bodies such as Live Performance Australia. Its project *Greener Live Performances* aims to develop sustainability case studies, online resources and training and assessment tools for the live performance industry, including performing arts companies, producers, promoters, festivals, venues, touring coordinators and suppliers. This project is funded by the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and undertaken by Lisa Erhart from Dynamic Eco-Solutions.
- Public sector agency resources, such as the Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) website, with resources including practical guides, and online tools such as the Carbon and Ecological Footprint Events Calculator.<sup>61</sup>
- Researchers working in tertiary and scientific sectors, for example RMIT.
- Private sector consultants such as Sustainable Event Management Systems and GreenShoot Pacific, advising on making arts practice more sustainable, particularly in the fields of event management, and building design and operation.
- International resources available for Australian use online, most significantly the UK not-for-profit Julie's Bicycle, which offers the most comprehensive online information resources for sustainable arts practice. In particular its Industry Green tools offer the most detailed free environmental auditing tools specifically designed to measure the greenhouse gas emissions of arts activities, including performing arts touring. But while they are theoretically designed to measure the impact of activity anywhere in the world, they have been created by an organisation operating in the UK – a very different context. However, free online resources created in Australia are much less comprehensive: Sustainability Victoria describes EPA Victoria's Carbon and Ecological Footprint Events Calculator as 'for beginners – approximately summarises your event's impact'.<sup>62</sup> More comprehensive auditing tools such as Sustainable Event Management System operate on a commercial, pay-for-use basis.

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<sup>60</sup> This survey is by no means comprehensive – see *Greening the Arts*, Tipping Point Australia, Oct 2010, at [www.tippingpointaustralia.com/resources](http://www.tippingpointaustralia.com/resources)

<sup>61</sup> [www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/event/introduction.asp](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/event/introduction.asp)

<sup>62</sup> Sustainability Victoria, *Resource Smart: Sustainable Events Tools Review*.

### 11.6.2 Issues, gaps and overlaps

- Information and resources to assist players to take individual action are not available or not widely known. Auditing resources available tend to be either not specifically designed for the Australian context, or only available on a commercial basis.
- There appears to be no industry-wide consensus on collective responsibility for the issue, nor a strategy on collective action to make touring practice more sustainable.
- The likely impact of carbon pricing on individual stakeholders' operations and viability – and indeed on the industry in general – is not widely known, only a few months before the scheme commences.
- Longer-term impact of carbon pricing is not widely known. Moreover, possible future developments that further restrict carbon emissions, either by pricing or legislative restrictions, to the point of requiring severe change or even threatening the continued viability of performing arts touring as it currently operates, cannot be ruled out.
- Performing arts touring funding that is based on the freight equalisation model of funding net touring costs shields touring participants from the impact of the Australian Government's main policy response – that is, pricing carbon first through a fixed price from July 2012, moving to an emissions trading system from 2015.<sup>63</sup> While this may be seen as good news in the short term, it limits the intended financial incentive to drive change to more sustainable practice. Longer-term impacts could be continued unsustainable carbon emissions, and threats to the image and ultimately viability of the industry if it is perceived to be not pulling its weight in the shared responsibility of reducing emissions.

### 11.6.3 Recommendations

- **Develop a sector-wide strategy to reduce impacts.**
  - The industry to develop a national approach to driving awareness and change, such as a standing representative body. Potentially an enhanced Green Alliance with active involvement from the peak bodies and major stakeholders. This could be a project of PATA or of any putative national touring office.
  - All players (producers, presenters, funders) undertake more rigorous assessment of costs and benefits of activities, including carbon impact, addressing a triple bottom line.
- **Develop resources to audit and reduce impacts.**
  - Develop and distribute resources such as practical how-to guides and environmental auditing tools specific to touring for the sector and the Australian context – for example, an Office for the Arts or Australia Council project, with input from industry representatives committed to change, for example the Green Alliance, funded by the Department of Climate Change.
  - Improve coordination of existing resources and initiatives, and make them more widely available.

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<sup>63</sup> [www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au)

- **Ensure marketplaces and funding programs encourage reduction of impacts.**
  - Governments engaged in touring funding to develop a policy to drive change in the touring sector, such as a mechanism to provide incentives for low-carbon touring.
  - Where emissions cannot be reduced by such policies, encourage carbon offsets by making them an eligible touring funding expense, subsidised by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

## 12 Future action

As described above, this document intends to provide a set of principles and objectives for the future holistic development of national touring in Australia. It does not prescribe definitive actions. Accordingly, future action is required to transform the recommendations into practical working solutions.

The following dot points outline measures that the consultants consider a priority in the short term.

### Implementation

- Recognising the disparity of stakeholders and their specific interests, the consultants recommend that the framework is conveyed through a series of face-to-face stakeholder workshops. These workshops would:
  - Communicate the overriding principles of the framework.
  - Determine through collaboration how practical aspects of the framework might be delivered.
  - Determine where responsibility for action might lie.

### National touring service

- Define the remit and structure of a national touring service in light of the current roles and responsibilities of Regional Arts Australia (including the Blue Heeler Network), the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association, Arts On Tour, the Performing Arts Touring Alliance, representatives of the state and territory performing arts centre associations, Kultour and Performing Lines.

### Risk analysis

- The consultants note that few recommendations are explicitly prescriptive; indeed, in adhering to the outcomes of the consultation, some are contradictory. As part of the process of further refining the recommendations and determining how and if they will be actioned, it is advised that a risk analysis be undertaken.

### Community presenter and remote touring

- Further investigation of community/volunteer presenter touring is required. In particular, this should explore the extent to which the needs of community presenters are being met through existing touring development and delivery processes. Furthermore, examination is required of the extent to which state touring programs that focus on community presenters could be aligned with national touring practice.
- The specific needs of remote touring and processes – which acknowledge the unique set of circumstances that exist in that environment – require special attention.

### Additional research

- Historic touring information (statistics) held by the Australia Council and the Office of the Arts requires review. The value of this information lies in its ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of touring in Australia over the past 20 years, and to inform its future development. The purpose of reviewing this information would not be to assess the effectiveness of the program itself. Specific information to be sought should include:
  - the number of applications submitted and approved in each round
  - the dollar value of applications submitted and approved in each round

- a comparison of the projected capacities and the actual capacities achieved in each tour, or the average per funding round
- the projected and actual number of venues that the applicant said they would tour to in each round
- the percentage of regional/remote, metropolitan and capital cities toured to in each round
- the number of arts workers employed in each round of successful tours
- the projected number of arts workers who would have been employed from all tour applications
- the percentage of tours that focused on CALD audiences in each round
- the percentage of tours that focused on Indigenous audiences in each round
- the sell-off income generated in each round
- the total touring costs in each round
- the percentage of tour expenditure met by earned income on average in each round
- the total number of performances in each round
- the total number of performances requested from all applicants in each round
- the average ticket price per round
- the total box office income per round
- the average per seat subsidy per round
- average surplus/deficit per tour, per round

## 13 Glossary

AoT	Arts On Tour NSW
AMPAG	Australian Major Performing Arts Group
APACA	Australian Performing Arts Centres Association
APAM	Australian Performing Arts Market
BHN	Blue Heeler Network – Regional Arts Australia consortium of state touring coordinators consisting of ArTour (Queensland), Country Arts SA, Country Arts WA and Regional Arts Victoria (also includes associate Blue Heelers Artback NT and Tasmania Performs)
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CASA	Country Arts SA
CAWA	Country Arts WA
GAL	Guarantee Against Loss
INAPAC	Incorporation of NSW and ACT Performing Arts Centres
IPA	Independent Producers Australia
LPA	Live Performance Australia
Majors	Major performing arts companies (see <a href="http://www.ampag.com.au/Member_Companies">www.ampag.com.au/Member_Companies</a> )
NTC	Net touring costs (usually defined as travel, accommodation, freight and living allowances)
NARPACA	Northern Australian Regional Performing Arts Centres Association
OFTA	Office for the Arts
PATA	Performing Arts Touring Alliance
QAC	Queensland Arts Council
RAA	Regional Arts Australia
RANSW	Regional Arts NSW
RAV	Regional Arts Victoria
VAPAC	Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

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  - *Audience Activations*, with Kristine Landon-Smith (Tamasha, UK), Steve Mayhew (CASA), Kyle Morrison (Yirra Yaakin) and Sam Strong (Griffin). Facilitator: Annette Downs (Tasmania Performs)
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## 15 Appendix A – Consultation schedule and participation summary

State	Location	Participants	Date	Persons attending	Groups and individuals represented
VIC	Warragul	Presenters, regional, at VAPAC* Mtg	9-Nov-11	15	15
VIC	Melbourne	Presenters, metro	10-Nov-11	9	9
VIC	Melbourne	Producers	10-Nov-11	23	22
VIC	Melbourne	LPA, commercial producers	16-Feb-12	3	3
TAS	Hobart	Producers and presenters	11-Nov-11	11	10
TAS	Launceston	Producers and presenters	30-Nov-11	9	7
NT	Darwin	Producers and presenters, Darwin	22-Nov-11	21	18
NT	Teleconf	Producers and presenters, remote	22-Nov-11	5	5
SA	Adelaide	Producers	24-Nov-11	33	30
SA	Adelaide	Presenters	15-Nov-11	12	9
QLD	Cairns	Producers and presenters	2-Dec-11	16	14
QLD	Brisbane	Presenters	5-Dec-11	18	11
QLD	Brisbane	Producers	6-Dec-11	36	30
QLD	Teleconf	Presenters, NARPACA* Executive Mtg	15-Dec-11	5	5
NSW	Sydney	Presenters, Metro	7-Dec-11	16	15
NSW	Sydney	Producers	8-Dec-11	19	16
NSW	Sydney	Presenters, Regional, at INAPAC* Mtg	12-Dec-11	18	16
WA	Perth	Producers	12-Dec-11	16	13
WA	Perth	Presenters, at CircuitWest* Meeting	13-Dec-11	25	18
ACT	Canberra	Producers and presenters	30-Jan-12	20	18
<b>Total</b>				<b>330</b>	<b>284</b>

\* Consultations held during scheduled meetings of state presenter associations, VAPAC (Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres), NARPACA (Northern Australia Regional Performing Arts Centres Association), INAPAC (Incorporation of NSW and ACT Performing Arts Centres), CircuitWest (the peak body for WA PACs).

## 16 Appendix B – Reasons for engaging in touring

(Identified in consultations)

Below is a summary of all the reasons for participating in touring identified across all consultations. These have been loosely categorised as either benefits to Artists/Producing Companies, benefits to Hosts (both Presenting Organisations and the audiences and communities they serve), and more generalised benefits at play. In many cases the same point was nuanced differently by different participants, reflecting different philosophical underpinnings or practical considerations. As far as possible the language used has been preserved to reflect these layered meanings, rather than flatten them out into neutral phrases such as ‘brand development’, ‘capacity building’ and ‘programming diversity’.

The reasons for participation in touring identified in the different consultation sessions did not vary markedly from place to place. Taken together, consultation participants identified a fairly consistent body of factors driving participation, and of benefits arising from touring.

That said, there were some variances from group to group, depending on participants’ role in touring, given that separate consultations were held with presenters and producers. Interestingly, presenters tended to cite benefits to producers (artform development, return on investment, etc.) as much as benefits to themselves (program balance, audience development). Producers were generally conscious of benefits to audiences in touring destinations (access to wider range of work, skills development), but less so of the direct benefits to presenting organisations (program balance, staff development).

There were some variations in the feedback from participants according to their location in remote, regional, or metropolitan centre, pointing to a sense of touring as going from the centre to the periphery. For example, participants in regional and remote centres, cited issues such as ‘connection to the outside world’, ‘Touring product can inspire us, both by showing extraordinary quality work, and showing that touring could be within our grasp’, and ‘Access to new Australian work we wouldn’t otherwise have’. Similarly, some producer participants based in regional or smaller metropolitan centres such as Adelaide and Perth cited ‘pursuing opportunities not available here’ and ‘showcasing our work in a bigger market’ as key drivers. Some of these variations are identified below.

### **Benefits to artists and producing companies**

- Economic/Capacity development
  - Earn income
  - Meet demand
  - Extend the life of productions
  - Increase the return on investment in the work’s development/amortise costs
  - Create employment for artists/arts workers
  - Develop company capacity
  - Build company/individual sustainability
  - Build sustainability of ensemble company by creating income to keep an ensemble together to build a shared practice
  - Precursor to international touring
  - Brand development Raise profile
  - Build audiences / Play to new audiences out of home base/outside capital cities / Local audiences alone can’t sustain company
  - Exposure to other presenters / Networking opportunities

- Showcasing our work in a bigger market
- Exposure and prestige of national touring creates sponsorship opportunities
- Promote sales of recordings (for music producers)
- Funding agency expectations
- Artform/Practice development
  - Pursue creative opportunities not available at home
  - Develop the work further (through re-rehearsal and through running)
  - Test work with different audiences / Learn more about the work by testing
  - Skills development / Professional development
  - Growth and development of our practice
  - Benchmarking our practice
  - Cultural exchange / Meet other artists / Build new collaborations
- Cultural/Social
  - Sharing your creative vision
  - Share our stories
  - New experiences
  - Promotion of the state/region
- Personal
  - Travel / See the country / Change
  - Per diems – higher income for artists on tour
  - Personal development / It's fun / Feels good / wellbeing / joy

**Benefits to hosts (presenting venues and their audiences, local cultural contexts and wider community contexts)**

- Economic/Capacity development
  - Quality product more affordable / Share costs (commissioning and remount costs, and inbound travel costs for overseas work)
  - Build presenter branding through association with high-quality arts product
  - Expand audiences
  - Challenge audiences
  - Develop audiences for particular genres e.g. contemporary dance, live art
  - Professional development for in-house staff – exposure to wider range and higher quality work / Help with staff retention
  - Meet expectations of Board/owners, funders/government
- Programming/Artform/Practice development
  - Provide access to quality product
  - Complementary programming – to balance and fill gaps in what's available locally / Access to more diverse product than is available locally
  - Increase depth of programming
  - Meet specific audience/community needs
  - To present new Australian work – when not much is produced locally
- Arts/Cultural Development
  - Cultural responsibility – access and equity for all audiences – ‘A waste not to share’
  - Develop artform skills in audience and community
  - Raises the bar for local practice and artists
  - Inbound touring builds relationships, may lead to outbound touring
  - Access expertise of touring companies
  - Connection to the outside world
  - Offers career option and role model to audiences
  - Develop artist communities in destination centres
  - Touring product can inspire us, both by showing extraordinary quality work, and showing that touring could be within our grasp

- Community building
  - Community building – build capacity, understanding, skills
  - Community development outcomes offered by engagement touring
  - Create a vibrant community / liveable city / improve liveability of regional communities
  - Content can raise social issues and contribute to social policy debates and policy development
  - Meet audience demand

**Other benefits, and benefits to all participants**

- Artistic exchange and sharing – between touring artists, and local artists/communities/audiences
- Sharing our difference(s) and sameness
- Connectedness
- Be part of a debate/exploration of national identity
- Benchmarking our own practice by seeing other work (for both inbound and outbound touring)
- Community engagement
- New network and partnership creation
- Showcasing Australian performing arts or the arts in general – profiling, positioning, advocacy
- Make a contribution to society
- Break down the culture of ordinariness
- Personal development / It's fun / Feels good / wellbeing / joy

## 17 Appendix C – Communiqué summarising consultations

### National Touring Framework Summary of Sector Consultations 20/1/12

Since early November, project consultants Rick Heath and Harley Stumm talked with over 300 people from throughout Australia's performing arts touring sector, regarding the development of the Australia Council's National Touring Framework. Group consultations and individual interviews took place in every state and territory capital, as well as Launceston, Cairns and Warragul. Regionally based participants inputted via consultations scheduled during meetings of VAPAC, INAPAC and CircuitWest, and teleconferences with the NARPACA Executive and with remote NT players.

The consultations explored what's working and what's not working in national touring, and asked participants to propose ideas for improving the touring landscape: its systems, practices, mechanisms, relationships, and policy programs.

This document presents a summary of the issues explored and the ideas proposed in the consultation process. We have distilled the key ideas, done a minor cull for the sake of brevity, and grouped them in nine broad themes:

- Better coordination and national strategy
- Funding programs – modernisation, simplification and harmonisation
- Better forums and marketplaces
- Relationships, dialogue, facilitation and tour coordination
- Greater diversity of work toured, and of touring models
- Deeper community engagement with art and artists toured
- Building capacity, infrastructure and sustainability
- Audience development
- Eco-sustainability – low-carbon touring

We feel these nine themes broadly summarise the sector's collective views of the issues that need addressing, and the priorities for change. We believe they stand as a good first draft statement of principles informing the development of a new framework for national touring.

Beyond that, at the level of ideas listed under the theme headers, this document does not pretend to be a comprehensive or rigorously tested plan for action – indeed, it includes proposals that are contradictory or mutually exclusive. Some require policy change at agency or government level, while some can be achieved by action by industry bodies or even at the level of individual action. Some of the ideas are specific funding program measures, e.g. 'a quick response funding program' – while some are general goals, e.g. 'more diversity', still needing specific strategies to achieve them. Nor does it necessarily represent the views of the consultants or the Australia Council for the Arts.

We initially intended to present this list in a Survey Monkey questionnaire, asking the sector to prioritise them. However, we feel it's more useful to take a step back, and invite a bigger dialogue on system-wide design, as well as at the level of detail. We therefore welcome your response to the process so far and to this document, in whatever form works for you, be it

- a quick email with your top ten priorities from the list,
- your thoughts on implementing one specific idea, or
- a vision for building the ideal touring system from the ground up.

We are currently working on an Options Paper, which we aim to present to the sector in mid-February. We will continue discussions with interested parties, including a forum at APAM (Mon 27 Feb, 12:50-14:20). Our draft report will be published in late March, with sector input again invited, including at a presentation at Long Paddock in Wadonga, April 3–4. The final report will be provided to the Australia Council on April 30.

We would like to acknowledge those who have participated in the project so far, and thank you for your contributions. We feel privileged to have had these great conversations, which showed really strong and universal desire for change. We feel that we have a really exciting opportunity to rebuild the performing arts touring landscape, to reinvigorate our sector, and to improve our cultural life.

## **National Touring Framework: Summary of Sector Consultations 20/1/12**

*Some points are repeated under multiple theme headers because they require addressing in different contexts/forums.*

### **1. BETTER COORDINATION AND NATIONAL STRATEGY (POLICY FOCUS)**

- Develop a coordinated national touring strategy so government policies and programs are consistent (particularly between state and federal programs, although also at local government level)
- Alignment of Australia Council and Office for the Arts – develop a strategy and structure to ensure programs meaningfully complement each other.
- Identify primary purpose/s of national touring – cultural development? Regional/city equity? Increase liveability of regional areas? Extend product life of shows? Development of artform practice?
- State and/or Federal Govts to leverage better Local Govt arts policy and practice through offering matching funds (Arts Vic tripartite agreements could be a model?)
- A national touring organisation/office – a number of different versions were proposed, including:
  - a) A body to coordinate between governments and their agencies, harmonising policy and programs (an extension of PATA?)
  - b) A body to manage the major touring mechanisms and liaise between the sub-sectors (producers, presenters and tour coordinators) – perhaps some of the tasks currently undertaken by the Blue Heeler Network
  - c) A national help desk/advice bureau – ‘Who do I talk to about ... if I want to ...’
  - d) A ‘doing’ organisation – e.g. a national version of Arts On Tour NSW delivering/supporting actual tours

### **2. FUNDING PROGRAMS (MODERNISATION, SIMPLIFICATION and HARMONISATION)**

- Simplification and Flexibility
  - Simplify application process, so that funding is awarded to productions earlier in the tour development process, and without the need for a final detailed itinerary, to avoid wasting time on detailed final itineraries and budgets for unsuccessful tours
  - In-principle commitment could be given at Long Paddock for selected tours
  - EOI process for national touring and in-principle advance commitments (2-stage process)
  - Quick response grants – perhaps only one Playing Australia round annually, could be only for major tours seeking over a set threshold, complemented by quick response grants (apply any time)
  - Shorten all timelines (Long Paddock, PA application process, OFTA/Ministerial sign-off) e.g. 12 months between applying and touring
  - Harmonisation of funding agency timelines, forms and processes
  - Funding direct to presenters based on their audience/community catchment, as a bank of credits to spend on any tour (possibly as pilot project, and for designated venues with highly developed programming policies, program diversity, strong audience, etc.) – they have discretion to use funds to buy in on any tours
  - Touring status and triennial funding for designated companies funded by PA (look at Theatre Board’s ‘International explorer status’, with confirmed funds for producers to allocate for touring activity)
  - Devolve some funding to peak bodies
- Changes to Funding Priorities
  - GALs (Guarantee Against Loss) to support riskier work (risk arising from artform and scale)

- Broader definition of touring including exchanges and residencies, engagement activity, beyond 2 state borders
- Segmentation of touring funding – quotas or pools of funds specifically according to (for example) artform, scale (majors vs. small to medium sector), location, e.g. remote touring.
- Micro-touring: policy and/or mechanisms to encourage smaller tours and increase diversity
- Redefine 'regional'
- PA to fund home state seasons in a national tour (or capped proportion thereof)
- Changes to the costs that are supported
  - Funding not confined to Net Touring Costs – e.g. support marketing/audience devt and remount costs for touring to harder markets or for riskier work or to build greater engagement
  - Acknowledge the higher costs of remote touring, including need to tour equipment
- Assessment Process
  - More artistic assessment of tour proposals (move beyond the demand-driven model)
  - Australia Council artform board representatives on PA
  - Sharpen state input and feedback to PA
- PA funds to be managed by Australia Council
- Go See Funds – more funds, and allow wider use for earlier stages of works, not just finished works
- Extend domestic tours to include Asia, NZ, South Pacific (requires changes to own practice, funding rules, building reciprocity, new partners, e.g. Asialink)

### **3. FORUMS and MARKETPLACES**

- CyberPaddock
  - Better categorisation/grouping of productions (according to scale/risk etc.).
  - More info to help producers and presenters understand each other's context – including info on presenters' programming policies and practices, budgetary parameters, and info on the destination town and community.
  - Include works in development, relationship matching, like online version of AOT's ShowRoom.
  - Review voting mechanism – e.g. blind voting, limit number of votes per presenter.
  - Make CyberPaddock more user-friendly.
  - Independent review of CyberPaddock.
- Long Paddock
  - Less pitching, more dialogue, more like APAM.
  - One LP annually could be as currently, with pitches of works for programming subs seasons, but make the other one more responsive, and more about dialogue around early stage ideas.
  - Curated shortlisting – curatorial committee of presenters to shortlist for Long Paddock pitches, with artistic and strategic assessments complementing the voting.
  - Presenters should pitch at LP.
  - Identify shows that could tour without funding to reduce load on funding programs and increase flexibility.

### **4. RELATIONSHIPS, DIALOGUE, FACILITATION and TOUR COORDINATION**

- More opportunities for informal networking and building relationships – alongside existing structured/formal networks and programs.
- Encourage more direct contact between producer and presenter – indirect relationships via tour coordinator can impede presenter understanding of the art and compromise marketing.
- Rethink the tour coordination role – smaller scale or shorter tours may be better coordinated by the producer or by a consultant Tour Coordinator engaged by the producer, rather than by another entity (skills devt/resources may be needed).
- More circuits of presenters, e.g.:
  - Presenters to broker wider than own venue – major regional centre on-tours to smaller outlying centres.
  - Encourage circuits of presenters based on like programming (genre, audience) rather than just geography. Some examples include contemporary dance, new music/sound, intercultural/culturally diverse work – or package as innovation rather than by artform.
- More tour brokers, agents and/or dedicated 'tour producers'.
- More co-productions, collaborations and exchanges and better funding support, incentives to encourage co-pro's.

- More dialogue among producers – informal networking and sharing and formal (forums, mentoring).
- Encourage major producers to partner with Small to Medium and independents.
- Workplace exchanges – producer and presenter residencies/internships in each other's organisations.
- Venues program repeat visits by a company over three years to build a relationship.
- Involve presenters in the early stages of making work.
- Group of producers share and program each other's work.

#### **5. GREATER DIVERSITY OF WORK TOURED, AND OF TOURING MODELS**

- Rethink 'bigger is better' – more shorter tours so shows with niche audiences can tour – more diverse product.
- Look beyond the sell-off fee model where appropriate – shared investment may encourage closer collaboration, better marketing, cost savings and other efficiencies.
- Develop touring opportunities for new and emerging artists.
- GALs (Guarantee Against Loss) to support riskier work (risk arising from artform and scale).
- Long Paddock process assigns Blue Heeler tour coordination to most popular work which is often the least risky, and produced by companies that least need this form of subsidy.
- A commissioning fund for Small to Medium sector that preferences touring – if they fund a commission that is successful and gets touring offers, you can go back for touring support later.
- Measures to give presenters greater certainty around presenting core established producers may free them up to present riskier niche work.
- More transfers/tours off the back of premiere seasons.
- Address the fact that more tours are being developed than can be funded or indeed presented and the various follow-on effects that has, e.g. competition for dates in venues for tours that may never eventuate, similar genre shows touring in the same month, waste of resources put into developing and assessing grant applications.
- Shared marketing and audience development strategies and initiatives to help manage risk.

#### **6. DEEPER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- Value engagement with communities being toured to more highly – less focus on the project/short term – more on the artists/venue/community relationship and engagement.
- Broader definition of touring – not just finished work at one pole, and exchanges and residencies at the other, but a spectrum – tours can include a collaborative component, or even thinking of reinventing the touring show for the context, where appropriate.
- Support deeper engagement (as opposed to one night stands) – Educate the players towards a change in thinking in national touring that supports deeper engagement – Education around producers attending venues for a whole week.
- More opportunities that focus on engagement – requires producers to develop content/capacity, and funding guidelines to allow.
- Dedicated funds for engagement touring (as there is in NT).

#### **7. BUILDING CAPACITY, HARD AND SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE and SUSTAINABILITY**

##### Skills, Training, Professional Development

- Establish national competency standards for venue management. Establish a national benchmark for venue management recruitment.
- Peer reviews of venues/presenters (from producers sharing their experiences of working with presenters amongst other producers) and the same for presenters.
- Professional development for venue staff, producers, tour coordinators all needed – explore best ways to provide.
- Greater professional development in touring required in Arts Management training.
- Marketing help for presenters – including from producers.
- Marketing resources and other specific opportunities dedicated to the Small to Medium sector.
- Partnering producers to go on tour together – share resources, talk more, increase community benefit.
- Facilitate easier entry into the touring industry.
- Identify touring mentors for 'newbies'.
- Better evaluation of tours including producer, presenters, tour coordinators and sharing and learning from this information.

- Grants for mentoring to write Playing Australia appn's for 'below the line' tours – i.e. tours that are viable but don't attract the support of the funded touring coordinators (could be placements/traineeships in tour coordination offices)

#### Resources and Physical Infrastructure

- Venues as low-cost producing hubs – producing companies could rehearse in regional venues.
- Improve venue infrastructure.
- Support presenters by advocating to local government.
- Small Local Gov't Authorities to increase effectiveness by working together in local area networks – at both venue and council level.
- ABAF and Arts Support to identify businesses nationally to support touring product – and tie this to the Innovation Agenda.
- Agency to facilitate philanthropy and Sponsorship (not ABaF).
- Improve support for Community Presenters.
- Research and prioritise the value of cultural/social impact of touring over economic.
- Start thinking now about the NBN.
- Funding to ensure infrastructure is in place in venues to enable use of the NBN.

### **8. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Better matching of work to audiences rather than mechanistic/logistic-driven or date/itinerary matching
- Venues program repeat visits by a company over three years to build a relationship
- Audience Development programs for specific genres/audiences/communities
- Long-term funding to support audience development – to the point where funding is no longer required
- Invest in audience development in presenters to encourage risk and diversity
- Support for pre-tour tours to developing marketing and engagement strategies
- Invest in audience development with a view to increasing box office revenue and reducing demand on subsidy over the long term

### **9. ECO-SUSTAINABILITY – LOW CARBON TOURING**

- Incentives/support for green touring
- All players (producers, presenters, funders) undertake more rigorous assessment of costs and benefits including carbon impact – quadruple bottom line
- Create a stock of houses in various communities for touring accommodation, with low-carbon operation
- Invest in equipment and facilities to leave in tour destination rather than hiring it to tour
- Carbon offsets to be eligible Playing Australia expense – subsidised by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
- Repurpose military hardware for cultural use – Air Force assets for touring!

## 18 Appendix D – Interview Questions

*Interviews used these questions as a spine, but were tailored to explore the particular expertise or involvement of individuals interviewed.*

1. Why do you tour/not tour/want to tour?
  - a. What are the benefits of touring for your organisation?
2. What touring systems/processes do you engage with?
  - ⑥ Playing Australia.
  - ⑥ State based touring programs from the regional arts organisations.
  - ⑥ State based touring programs from the State and Territory arts Ministries/Departments.
  - ⑥ Long Paddock and CyberPaddock
  - ⑥ State-based Blue Heeler touring
  - ⑥ State Showcase forums
  - ⑥ APAM
  - ⑥ Arts On tour NSW
  - ⑥ Mobile States
  - ⑥ Roadwork
  - ⑥ Critical Stages<sup>2</sup>
  - ⑥ Kultour<sup>2</sup>
  - ⑥ Blaklines
  - ⑥ Tasmania Performs (listed separately from state touring coordinators as it is a special initiative and operates under a different model).
  - ⑥ Major producer driven touring operating outside Long Paddock
  - ⑥ Festivals
  - ⑥ Capital city venue based consortia and collaborative models e.g. Malthouse, Belvoir, Brisbane Powerhouse, Belvoir Downstairs, La Mama, 45 Downstairs, The Blue Room.
  - ⑥ Regional venue based consortia and collaborative models e.g. IPAC, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga and Albury.
  - ⑥ Metropolitan venue based consortia and collaborative models e.g. Victoria's SixPAC
3. (UNPROMPTED) – What factors about the current touring system that you engage with work for you?
4. (UNPROMPTED) – What factors about the current touring systems DO NOT work for you and why?
5. (PROMPTED) – These are some of the issues that have been raised. – How important are these issues to you? Can you tell me why?
  - Leadership – direction over the bigger picture
  - Clear and consistent messages about the touring systems
  - Lack of touring by Major Companies
  - Lack of diversity in what is toured
  - Skills deficit – touring coordination skills, curating/programming skills, technical skills
  - Traffic Jams – competition for dates
  - Lack of coordination between different government funding bodies

- Supply and demand – Balance of resource allocation between the development of work and the distribution or presentation of work
  - Tour coordinators as facilitators ... as blockers/gatekeepers
  - Lead time required for touring
  - Complementary touring activity (e.g. marketing support)
  - Agents/brokers
  - Other ideas/comments
6. (UNPROMPTED) What do you feel are the *main* barriers that prevent you from engaging more in national touring activity?
7. Can you think of any ideas to overcome these issues?
- Is there something that could be done differently?
  - What would encourage you to engage more in touring?
8. If you could change one practical thing about the current touring system (touring development or delivery) tomorrow – what would it be?
9. If you could change anything about touring in Australia what would it be?

## 19 Appendix E – Interviewees summary

1. Melbourne Festival: Mike Harris (Head of Programming)
2. Kultour: Magdalena Moreno (CEO) and Georgie Sedgwick (Program Manager) and Theatre Network Victoria: Nicole Beyer (Director)
3. Arts Victoria: Greg Andrews (Deputy Director) and Debra Jefferies (General Manager, Market and Community Development)
4. Regional Arts Victoria: Kane Forbes (Manager Arts Across Victoria), and Regional Arts Australia: Jane Scott (CEO)
5. Arts Tasmania: Fiona Barber (Manager arts@work) and Steve Kyne (Deputy Director)
6. Ten Days on the Island: Jo Duffy (Artistic Director), Marcus Barker (General Manager) and Annemarie Pollard (Program Manager)
7. Artback NT: Angela O’Donnell (Performing Arts Touring Manager)
8. Arts NT: Hania Radvan (Director) and Angela Hill (Senior Arts Broker)
9. Darwin Festival: Edwina Lunn (Artistic Director) and Anna Reece (General Manager)
10. Arts SA: Alex Reid (Director)
11. Adelaide Festival: Kate Gould (Associate Director) and Lesley Newton (Program Director) and Adelaide Fringe: Greg Clarke (Director) and Belinda Hellyer (Associate Producer)
12. Pamela Foulkes, Playing Australia Panel Chair
13. Junction Festival Launceston: Natalie de Vito (Executive Producer) and Mudlark Theatre: Stuart Loone (Artistic Director)
14. Arts Qld: Vera Ding (Director Theatre and Writing) and Tina Hill (Senior Arts Development Officer, Touring)
15. ArTour: Annette Kerwitz (Manager), Christine Johnstone (National Tour Coordinator) and Libby Ellis (Research and Marketing Manager)
16. Brisbane Powerhouse: Andrew Ross (Director), Sarah Neal (Program Manager) and Zohar Spatz (Producer)
17. Queensland Theatre Company: Wesley Enoch (Artistic Director)
18. Illawarra Performing Arts Centre: Simon Hinton (Artistic Director) and Anne-Marie Heath (General Manager)
19. Performing Lines: Fenn Gordon (CEO) and Critical Stages: Luke Cowling (Artistic Director)
20. Arts NSW: Mary Darwell (Executive Director) and Angela Cecco (Senior Contracts Officer – Funding Programs (Performing Arts))
21. WA Dept Culture and Arts: Ricky Arnold (Director), Caroline O’Neil (Senior Policy Officer, Regional)
22. Perth International Arts Festival: Annette Madden (Associate Producer)
23. Country Arts WA: Paul McPhail (A/CEO), Philippa Maughan (Tour Manager)
24. Arts ACT: David Whitney (Director), Robert Piani (Arts Support Manager)
25. Office of the Minister for the Arts: Helen O’Neil
26. Playing Australia Committee
27. Office for the Arts, Playing Australia staff
28. Tipping Point Australia and Arts House: Angharad Wynne-Jones
29. Green Shoot Pacific: Pru Chapman and Jane Fullerton-Smith
30. Centenary of Canberra: Robyn Archer (Artistic Director)
31. ANZARTS Institute: Justin MacDonnell (Director)



## 21 Appendix G – Organisations providing formal written submissions

- AMPAG (Australian Major Performing Arts Group)
- Arts Access Australia
- Arts NT
- Arts South Australia
- Arts Victoria
- Department for Culture and the Arts WA
- Performing Arts Touring Alliance (response from the Executive Officer)
- Regional Arts Australia

The following organisations provided an informal response:

- Live Performance Australia
- Theatre Network Victoria
- Young People and the Arts Australia

## 22 Appendix H – Project groups

### **Project Steering Group**

- Julia Balkwell/Susan Rogers (Office of the Arts)
- Erin Cassie (Office of the Arts)
- Greg Randall (Industry Consultant)
- Chris Tooher (Bell Shakespeare)
- Michael Frawley (Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre)
- Rose Hiscock (Australia Council)
- Collette Brennan (Australia Council)
- Tory Louden (Australia Council)
- Katie Harford (Australia Council)
- Rick Heath (Consultant)
- Harley Stumm (Consultant)

### **Project Working Group**

- Rose Hiscock (Australia Council)
- Collette Brennan (Australia Council)
- Tory Louden (Australia Council)
- Katie Harford (Australia Council)
- Rick Heath (Consultant)
- Harley Stumm (Consultant)

### **Project Reference Panel (workshop 26 March)**

- Susan Rogers (Office of the Arts)
- Greg Randall (Industry Consultant)
- Teena Munn (Windmill Theatre)
- John Baylis (Marrugeku)
- Michael Frawley (Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre)
- Rose Hiscock (Australia Council)
- Tory Louden (Australia Council)
- Katie Harford (Australia Council)
- Rick Heath (Consultant)
- Harley Stumm (Consultant)
- Jane Scott (Regional Arts Australia)
- Anne-Marie Heath (Merrigong Theatre Co @ IPAC)
- Christine Johnstone (arTour)
- Anthony Peluso (Country Arts SA)

## 23 Appendix I – Sustainable touring practice

Submitted by GreenShoot Pacific [www.greenshootpacific.com](http://www.greenshootpacific.com)

### Major environmental impacts of performing arts touring

- Transport of equipment, artist travel, routing, mode and freighting efficiencies being of primary concern.
- Audience travel, by mode, and how choice of venue influences travel mode.
- Energy consumption of the production, including energy efficiency in technical production and operations.
- Energy supply by the venue.
- Energy conservation efforts by the venue.
- The above impacts include use of fossil fuels, GHG emissions, pushing innovation into the supply chain (equipment and venues).
- Procurement impacts, including set and design, merchandise, printing, signage – the embedded sustainability impacts of these procurement choices.
- Accommodation choice, including sustainability credentials of lodging.
- Waste creation, due to venue chosen and their practices, sponsorship alignments, or site logistics on dry hire venues.
- Water consumption, due to venue chosen and their practices, or site logistics on dry hire venues.
- Legacy – what is the performing artist leaving in the host destination, in terms of best practice examples, knowledge transfer, changing practices by venues.

### Best practice touring – key features

- Efficient routing.
- Using local crews and hire equipment (e.g. not touring tech if not necessary).
- Performing in venues or other events that have their own house in order (waste, energy, procurement, water, transport).
- Staying at lodgings with sustainability credentials (numerous tourism and hotel accreditations and certifications available).
- Engaging local campaigns and supporting them (cycling, environmental protection).
- Having a resource-efficient tour.
- Leaving a legacy.
- Ensuring all procurement, particularly merchandise, is sustainably sourced.
- Ensuring promotional material is not left as litter. Taking responsibility for waste, and not over printing.
- Checklists to include procurement sourcing are developed to be integrated into production management systems.
- Measurement and reporting is integrated into management systems.
- Consult with knowledge partners to identify practical actions that align to budget restraints, people resources.
- Competencies – knowledge and skill embedded into management team and staff, touring production personnel.

### Worst practice touring – key features

- Too many trucks on the road criss-crossing the country.
- Performers criss-crossing the country by air, e.g. non-efficient routing

- Performing at venues and events that have no regard for sustainability.
- Leaving promotional material as a litter legacy.
- Not enquiring, understanding or being tuned into local environmental issues and blundering through.
- Not being tuned into what fabulous environmental solutions exists locally for you to use (cycling campaigns in a city and you not promoting cycling to your show).
- Ad hoc sustainability approaches.
- Green washing.
- Offsetting before addressing possible efficiencies.

#### **Practical ways to reduce the impact**

- Responsibility needs to be taken for air travel and significant additional ground travel.
- If you have to fly, either offset (responsibly) or re-invest in measurable GHG reduction initiatives for your own activities.
- Balance the positive social, economic and environmental impacts and legacies with the negative ones (flying, big road freight). Make sure you balance the scale.
- For more specific ideas on reducing impact, consult a sustainability specialist.
- Research and awareness – to include education, increased competencies, sharing of knowledge and skills, reporting and public communication of results and learnings.
- Sharing within the public space will further awareness, and drive change within the touring arena.
- Government Policy (touring program operation, Climate Change/Environment departments policy, best practice/minimum impact requirements of incoming tours, measurement and reporting requirements)

#### **Resources and organisations working in the sustainable touring, event, performance and production management field (Australian, and relevant international)**

EPA Victoria including Carbon Impact Calculator	<a href="http://www.epa.vic.gov.au">www.epa.vic.gov.au</a>
Green Music Coalition / Green Music Australia	<a href="http://www.australiangreenmusiccoalition.org">www.australiangreenmusiccoalition.org</a>
GreenShoot Pacific	<a href="http://www.greenshootpacific.com">www.greenshootpacific.com</a>
Live Performance Australia	<a href="http://www.liveperformance.com.au">www.liveperformance.com.au</a>
NSW Sustainability Advantage Cluster Event Program	<a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au">www.environment.nsw.gov.au</a>
Sustainable Event Alliance	<a href="http://www.sustainable-event-alliance.org">www.sustainable-event-alliance.org</a>
Sustainable Event Solutions	<a href="http://www.semstoolkit.com">www.semstoolkit.com</a>
Sustainability Victoria including Events Tools Review	<a href="http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au">www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au</a>
Tipping Point Australia including Greening the Arts downloadable guide and resource list	<a href="http://www.tippingpointaustralia.com">www.tippingpointaustralia.com</a>
International	
Julies Bicycle (UK)	<a href="http://www.juliesbicycle.com">www.juliesbicycle.com</a>
A Greener Festival (UK)	<a href="http://www.agreenerfestival.com">www.agreenerfestival.com</a>
Reverb (USA)	<a href="http://www.reverb.org">www.reverb.org</a>

## 24 Appendix J – Economic value of touring

### Australia Council investment in touring 2007–2010

#### Number of Attendance in Touring

	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Key Organisations</b>	503,196	544,665	472,855	468,478
MPA	681,136	878,789	627,768	613,452
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,184,332</b>	<b>1,423,454</b>	<b>1,100,623</b>	<b>1,081,930</b>

#### Australia Council Project Grants – investment

	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Key Organisations</b>	\$2,142,254	\$2,615,989	\$2,466,297	\$2,654,190
<b>MPA</b>	\$3,632,469	\$1,238,052	\$1,583,311	\$902,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,774,723</b>	<b>\$3,854,041</b>	<b>\$4,049,608</b>	<b>\$3,556,414</b>

#### Australia Council Market Development investment

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Road Work			\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
APACA	\$20,000	\$7,000	\$10,500	\$40,000	\$40,000
Mobile States	\$146,250	\$146,250	\$146,250	\$146,250	
PATA			\$18,000	\$50,850	\$19,000
Critical Stages	\$32,000		\$59,000	\$177,000	
Hopscotch					\$50,000
National Indigenous Touring Consortium					\$162,500*
Go See			\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
APAM		\$390,000		\$455,000	
Independent producers Australia				\$40,000	\$250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$166,250</b>	<b>\$543,250</b>	<b>\$314,750</b>	<b>\$872,100</b>	<b>\$499,000</b>

\*2011–2014