pac Australia

ANNUAL REPORT

2025/2026

PAC Australia, and our members, have a role in creating workplaces, opportunities and communities that value, support, and uphold the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and community.

Our work takes place across the country, and PAC Australia's head office is situated in Boorloo (Perth) on the lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people.

Cover image: Jake Silvestro in ROOKE's *Nook* for Junction Arts Festival, Image by John Fisher. Opp page: *See You at the Dance* by Ellen Steele, presented by Vitalstatistix, produced by Insite Arts, Image by Sam Roberts. The Huxleys, Garrmalang Festival 2026, AANT Centre, Image by Leicolhn McKellar. Australian Performing Arts Market 2026, Image by Edwin Sitt.

VISION

Vibrant and connected communities through the shared experience of the performing arts.

PURPOSE

Our purpose is to connect and unlock the potential of performing arts presenters and creators, to transform and expand opportunities for artists and audiences across Australia.

OUR VALUES

We are **accessible** and **inclusive**, **courageous** and **tenacious**, **relevant** and **transparent**, in everything we do.

Firm in our role as advocates for our members, we form our positions collaboratively.

We listen and act based on these values and engage with those who share them.

ROLES AND GOALS

GOAL 1

CONNECTION

A connected presenting eco-system.

ROLE

PAC Australia enables and supports the connection between art and audience, creator to presenter, presenter to presenter, and the performing arts sector and (three tiers of) government.

GOAL 2

BETTERMENT OF PRACTICE[1]

An informed & accountable presenting eco-system.

ROLE

PAC Australia enables members to build their own capacity, and to build compelling cases for support and development through research, advocacy and training.

We develop standards and support the conditions for their implementation.

GOAL 3

LEADERSHIP

An evolving & sustainable presenting eco-system.

ROLE

PAC Australia creates and enables the conditions for presenters, artists, and audiences to thrive.

GOAL 4

SUSTAINABILITY

An ambitious, strong and sustainable organisation.

1. Betterment, not best practice. Presenters are active organisations representing a wide range of communities, management models, practice, and scale – notions of best practice become compromised and impossible to achieve when creating conditions that are 'one size fits all'. Betterment of practice recognises the evolution of people, conditions, practice and procedure.

PRINCIPLES

The principles guiding our Strategic Plan, and the standards to which we hold ourselves accountable, are:

Respect for First Nations arts & culture

First Nations people are the custodians of their culture, stories, and knowledge and their authority must be acknowledged and respected.

Respect

We recognise and value the unique knowledge, skills and backgrounds of our members, and the broader performing arts sector. As advocates for our membership, and a representative for the industry, respect is based on timely communication, sensitivity, safety, representation and delivering what we promise.

Transparency

Being explicit about the drivers behind decision-making, and who is making those decisions.

Accountability

Being accountable for commitments as agreed, responsible for our actions and decisions, and being clear about expectations and capacity.

Sustainability & opportunities to thrive

This relates to the impact of our decision-making on the sustainability of the organisation, the environment, or the sector. Sustainability is also directly connected to a commitment to wellbeing, connectedness and security. Further, the sector can only thrive when there are equitable opportunities to do so, and relies on a commitment to diversity, access, and inclusion.

Safety

We are responsible for considering and accounting for the cultural, physical and psychological safety of our workplaces and engagement practices.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PAC Australia continues to expand its reach as we double down on our commitment to connect, champion and support the performing arts here at home and internationally.

It has been a year of significant growth and impact, beginning with the delivery of our first Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) in Boorloo/Perth. Bringing APAM to Western Australia was an important milestone for PAC Australia and for the national performing arts ecology. It created new opportunities for artists, producers, presenters and international delegates to connect with Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand work, while showcasing the extraordinary creative practice emerging from across the country.

APAX in Garramilla/Darwin continued our commitment to connecting presenters, producers and independent artists through showcase opportunities and robust discussion. The event sold out and there was something particularly valuable about gathering in the Top End: the opportunity to experience the place, its communities and culture, while stepping outside our usual contexts and considering the future of presenting and touring.

Along with showcasing some exceptional artists, both the APAM and APAX programs reflected on many of the critical issues confronting our sector. Conversations explored changing audience expectations and behaviours, new models for the performing arts, strengthening community-engaged practice, First Nations storytelling and touring, and the sustainability imperative. We were challenged not simply to identify the pressures facing the sector, but to consider what we can do differently to respond to them.

The focus on audiences has been an important priority for PAC Australia this year. We know that audience behaviour is changing and the performing arts is operating in an increasingly complex environment. This year, PAC Australia brought cultural leaders and audience specialists together through a series of roundtables providing a valuable opportunity to step beyond organisational boundaries and unpack national priorities and contemporary approaches to audience development.

The strength of this work lies in bringing different perspectives into the same conversation: considering programming, marketing, brand, customer experience and artistic ambition together, and asking what we need to change to build deeper and more enduring relationships with audiences. This is precisely where PAC Australia can add value — creating the space for the sector to share knowledge, challenge assumptions and develop solutions collectively.

I am pleased that PAC Australia has delivered these achievements (and many more highlighted throughout our Annual Report), whilst delivering a manageable result in a year of significant growth, supported by a substantial asset base. During this phase of significant growth and expanded delivery, we have continued to be fiscally responsible and ensured we have balanced ambition with risk.

The Events Centre Caloundra *Christmas Actually* presented by The Little Red Company and The Events Centre.
Criena Gehrke headshot, Image by Georgia Haupt.

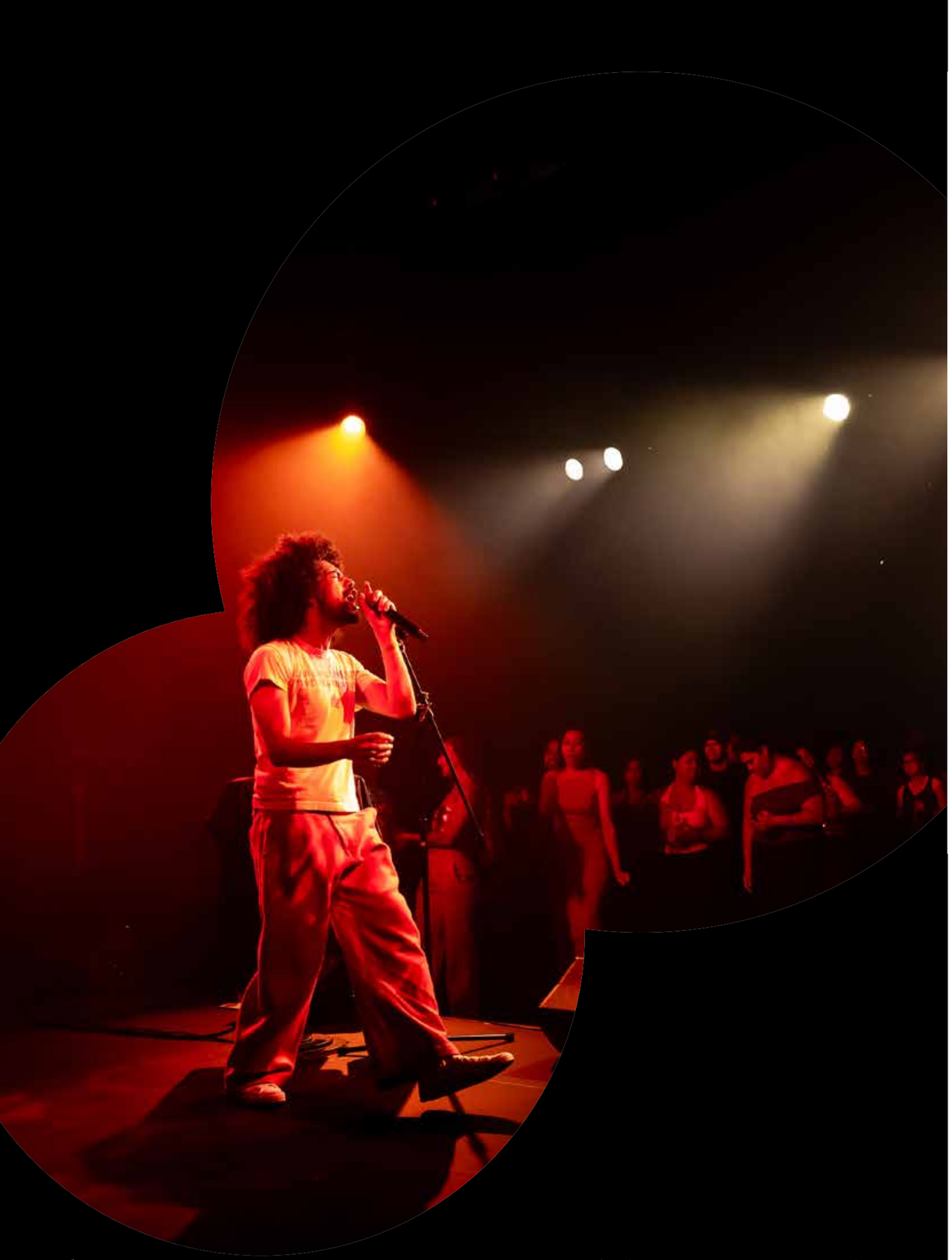
My sincere thanks to Katherine Connor and the PAC Australia team for their extraordinary vision and hard work throughout the year. Katherine is an outstanding cultural leader, both fearless and compassionate in her advocacy for our members.

To my fellow Board members, thank you for your stewardship, insight and generosity. I would particularly like to acknowledge Ian English, Angela Flynn and Louisa Norman as they end their terms with us. Their commitment, expertise and support have made a lasting contribution to the organisation and the broader sector.

Most of all, thank you to our members. The strength of PAC Australia comes from the willingness of our sector to come together, share what we know and imagine what is possible.

Our purpose remains clear: to help create the conditions for presenters, artists and audiences to thrive. This year has demonstrated just how important that work is — and how much more we can achieve when we do it together.

Criena Gehrke
President



Zion Garcia from the music series *UNDERCURRENT*, presented at Riverside Live at PHIVE, Image by Grant Leslie.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In 2025/26 PAC Australia delivered both of the nation's principal performing arts markets within six months of each other, alongside new work on audiences, climate adaptation and the technical workforce.

Much of this year's activity was shaped by what members told us about the conditions they are working within, and by a commitment to responses that are practical, grounded in evidence and shared across the sector.

APAX 2025 returned to Garramilla/Darwin in August, on Larrakia Country, for the first time since 2012. The event sold out, with 435 delegates from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, 39% of whom were attending for the first time. The conference program invited the sector to consider structural change, and delegate feedback was strong: 96% agreed APAX is a valuable program for the sector, and 74% of arts market participants anticipate at least three presentation opportunities to follow.

In February 2026 we delivered the Australian Performing Arts Market in Boorloo/Perth, the first under our service agreement with Creative Australia and the Western Australian Government. With both APAM and APAX now managed by PAC Australia, we are able to consider the two markets as complementary parts of a national market development system, and to plan across the 2028 and 2030 editions.

Across APAX 2025 and APAM 2026, more than $520,000 was distributed to over 200 artists, producers and presenters to support their attendance. Access to the markets remains uneven across the country, and this support continues to be one of the most direct ways we can broaden who is in the room.

Audiences were a defining theme of the year. Amy Maiden's keynote at APAX 2025 prompted a conversation that Creative Australia invited PAC Australia to extend through *Centering Audiences: Leadership Dialogues on Audience Development,* held in Melbourne in June 2026. The findings, outlined in the project report in this document, position audience development as a shared responsibility across the ecosystem. They align closely with what presenters reported through this year's National Presenter Outlook, and will inform our advocacy and program development in the year ahead.

The technical workforce has also been a growing focus. In October 2025 the PAPA network convened the first National Performing Arts Technical Safety and Workforce Meeting, bringing together presenter associations, technical networks and subject-matter experts to consider how workforce, training, programming and safety intersect. The resulting Insights Report sets out an agreed roadmap and has already informed policy submissions stimulating a critical dialogue across presenting and producing organisations. At the year end, PAC Australia are working alongside the PAPA network and contractors to deliver vital new resources for the technical workforce in performing arts centres. Alongside this work, the Tour Ready, Tour Fit pilot, a partnership with Arts on Tour and ATYP designed and led by Cally Bartley, is building capacity in tour management, informed by the experiences of venue technical managers across the country through a telling national survey.

Adaptive Futures, delivered with Creative Climate and funded by Creative Australia, continued our work on climate adaptation through six professional development sessions for board members, executives, programmers and operational staff. The program content remains available to access, and has become a resource for organisations not only in Australia, but across the world.

Our members remain central to all of this work. In 2025/26 we retained 93% of members and welcomed 29 new members. As an organisation without operational funding, PAC Australia relies on membership fees to sustain our core work: advocacy, research, member services, and the capacity to take on national projects on the sector's behalf. Members also contribute the evidence on which that advocacy depends, through the National Presenter Outlook and our biennial benchmarking reports.

The picture presented by this year's National Presenter Outlook was a sobering one, delivered in March when the impact of rising fuel costs was sudden and steep. The cost of touring and presenting continues to rise, and presenters are absorbing those increases within budgets that have not grown at the same rate. Fuel prices are compounding freight and travel costs, 44% of presenters reported fee increases after contracts had been agreed, and many are moving away from traditional buy-in arrangements towards hire or shared-risk models to manage their exposure. For regional venues, these pressures sit alongside the challenge of meeting touring technical and staffing expectations with small teams. Rising costs are increasingly shaping what can be programmed and where work can travel, and they informed every submission we made this year.

In March and April 2026 I undertook a three week advocacy roadshow, meeting with state and federal government representatives, peak bodies and other key stakeholders on behalf of our members. The timing proved significant. The meetings coincided with the sharp rise in fuel prices and with the release of this year's National Presenter Outlook, which meant we could put current data and members' own experiences in front of stakeholders as those pressures were being felt across the sector.

The review of the National Cultural Policy provided an important opportunity to set out the structural settings affecting presenting and touring. Our submission addressed touring and presenting, audiences, workforce, cultural infrastructure and market development, and drew attention to the imbalance between investment in the creation of new work and investment in the capacity to present it and build audiences for it. We also led the joint submissions through the PAPA network, focused on the technical workforce, and through the Australian Arts Market Managers group. Our submissions are available on the organisation's website to review.

We were pleased to see the rollout of the $2.7 million Playing Australia Audience Development Fund this year, an outcome of the National Touring Strategic Roundtable convened by PAC Australia in 2024. The funded projects are closely connected to presenters, and we look forward to following their progress over the next three years.

PAC Australia remains operationally unfunded, sustained by our members. The projects we deliver are funded through contracts and agreements with government, and this year's revenue of $2.69 million, almost double that of 2024/25, reflects how far those responsibilities have grown. This model allows us to remain independent and accountable to members, with our core operations not tied to government priorities. It does, however, also carry risk, as we build and hold national delivery capacity without recurrent operational funding, which is why membership is so fundamental to the organisation's stability and our ability to advocate for the presenting and touring ecology.

The year's financial result reflects the scale of what was delivered - revenue rose to $2.69 million, largely as a result of delivering APAM for the first time. However,

Australian Performing Arts Exchange in 2025, Image by Alex Sibbison

reporting a deficit and lower cash reserves at year end, the Board and I are focused on close management of cash flow and costs, applying the lessons of our first APAM, and returning to a balanced result, as outlined in the Treasurer's report.

2025/26 was the final year of our Strategic Plan 2023–26. Over the life of the plan, PAC Australia took on the delivery of APAM, expanded its training and industry development program, built a national team and strengthened its role in policy and sector convening. We look forward to the development of our next Strategic Plan - a central consideration will be how we secure a sustainable base for core member services alongside major contracted programs, and members will be invited to contribute in the coming months.

I extend my sincere thanks to the PAC Australia team, working across several states, for their commitment and professionalism through a demanding year, as well as their patience as we navigated rapid organisational growth.

Thank you to our President, Criena Gehrke, and the Board for their counsel and support. I would also like to acknowledge Ian English, Angela Flynn and Louisa Norman as they conclude their terms, and particularly thank Ian for five years as Treasurer.

We are grateful to Creative Australia, the Western Australian Government, our colleagues across the PAPA network, and all our partners and sponsors for their support of this year's programs, particularly d&b audiotechnik who joined us in 2025 as our first year-round Technology Partner.

Finally, PAC Australia's work is only possible through the continued support of our members. As membership renewals open for the year ahead, I encourage every member to renew, and to consider who else in your network should be part of PAC Australia. Your membership is what makes this work possible.

Katherine Connor
Executive Director

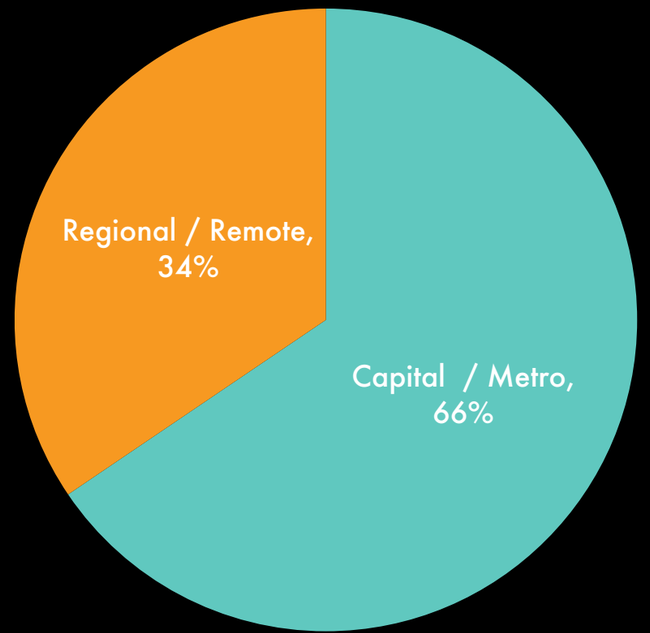
Young Franco performs at Eton Mess - Sutherland Pavilion's brand new outdoor music festival, Image by Vitor Duarte.

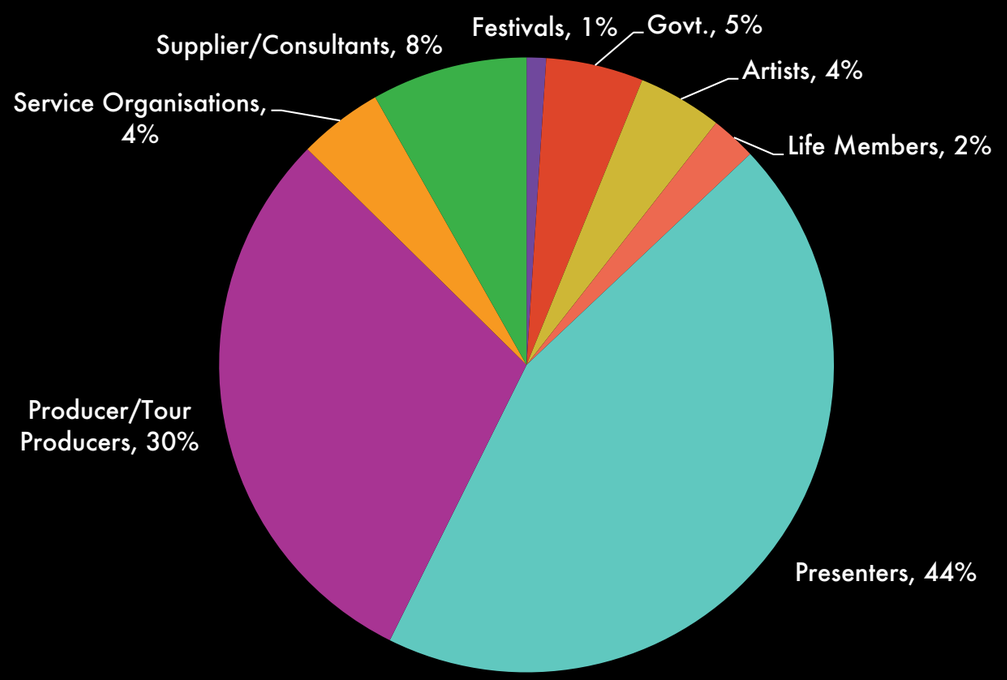
2025 - 2026 MEMBERSHIP

93% Membership Retention

293 Members

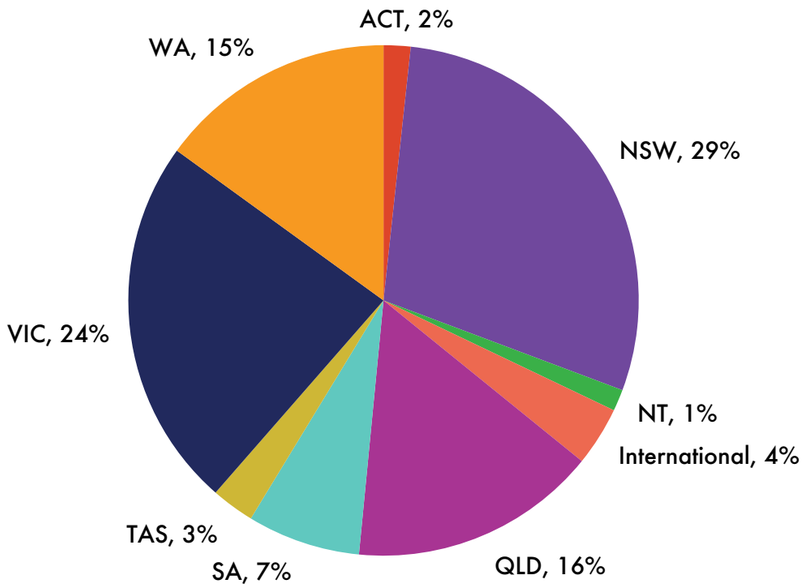
29 New Members





Membership statistics represent rounded figures.

2025 - 2026 MEMBERS



LIFE MEMBERS

Bronwyn Edinger
Bruce Carmichael
David Gration
Ian English
Peter Owens
Robyn Birrell
Simon Dawkins

ACT

Belconnen Arts Centre Inc
Canberra Theatre Centre
The Street Theatre
Tuggeranong Community Arts Association

NSW

Albury Entertainment Centre
Arts On Tour
AUSTI. Dance and Physical Theatre
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra
Australian Chamber Orchestra
Australian Theatre Live
Bangarra Dance Theatre
Bankstown Arts Centre
Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre
Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre
Bell Shakespeare
Blue Mountains Theatre
Bondi Pavilion
Bryan Brown Theatre
CDP Theatre Producers Pty Ltd
Central Coast Council
Civic Theatre Newcastle
Contemporary Asian Australian Performance
Cowra Civic Centre
Creative Australia
Creative Galah
Creative Plus Business Group
Curious Legends Limited
Dance Partner Productions
Danza Del Arte
Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre
Ensemble Theatre
Entertainment Venues, Tamworth
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Flying Fruit Fly Circus
Glasshouse Port Macquarie
Glen Street Theatre
Goulburn Performing Arts Centre
Griffith Regional Theatre
Hawkridge Entertainment Services
Hurstville Entertainment Centre
Intimate Spectacle
Jetty Memorial Theatre Coffs Harbour
Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre
Lake Macquarie City Council
Leeton Shire Council
Legs On The Wall
Love Stages
Magic Inc.
Maitland City Council
Manning Entertainment Centre
Maxwood Technology
Merrigong Theatre Company
Middleton Arts
Milk Crate Theatre
Monkey Baa Theatre Company
Moogahlin Performing Arts
MPE I Performing Arts & Events
Musica Viva Australia
NAPACA
NIDA Theatres
NORPA
Orange Civic Theatre
Performance Arts Culture Cessnock
Performing Lines
Phillip Channells
Powerhouse Youth Theatre
Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre
REA Consulting
Richard Stuart Theatre Consultant
Riverside Theatres Parramatta
Seymour Centre
Shaun Parker & Company
Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre
Sydney Coliseum Theatre
Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Sydney Dance Company
Sydney Opera House
Sydney Theatre Company
The Art House
The Byron Theatre
The House that Dan Built
The Pavilion Performing Arts Centre
The Twyford Hall Complex
TixTrack Australasia
Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre
Willoughby City Council
Wollondilly Performing Arts Centre

Albert Hall, Image by Melanie Kate.

NT
AANT Centre
Araluen Arts Centre
Artback NT
Brown's Mart Arts

QLD
Australasian Dance Collective
Belloo Creative
BlakDance Australia
Brisbane Powerhouse
Brolga Theatre & Convention Centre
Burdekin Theatre
Cairns Performing Arts Centre
Central Highlands Regional Council
Circa
Clint Bolster
Cluster Arts
Cre8ion
Dancenorth
Everybody NOW!
Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre
Goondiwindi Regional Council
Gympie Civic Centre
HOTA, Home of the Arts
indelarts
Ipswich Civic Centre
Logan City Council
Mackay Entertainment & Convention Centre
Moncrieff Entertainment Centre
Opera Queensland
Proserpine Entertainment Centre
Queensland Ballet
Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Queensland Theatre
RAVA Productions
Redland Performing Arts Centre
Regional Arts Services Network
Rockhampton Regional Council
Shake & Stir Theatre Co
Stage Queensland
Sunshine Coast Council
The Empire Theatre
The Events Centre
The Farm Gold Coast
The World Theatre
Theatre Safe Australia
Townsville Civic Theatre
Vivaticket

SA
ActNow Theatre
Adelaide Festival Centre
Adelaide Fringe
Amplified House
Australian Dance Theatre
Brink Productions
Country Arts SA
Golden Grove Arts Centre
Hey Dowling
IDH Consulting
Marion Cultural Centre
Patch Theatre Company
Restless Dance Theatre
SA Circus Centre
South Australian Presenters Association
The PaperBoats
Tracy Crisp
Tutti Arts
Vitalstatistix
Windmill Theatre
Woodville Town Hall

TAS
Mature Artists Dance Experience
Mudlark Theatre
paranaple arts centre
ROOKE
Terrapin Puppet Theatre
The Burnie Arts and Function Centre
Theatre North - Princess Theatre
Theatre Royal

VIC
ACT - Natimuk
Alternative Facts Pty Ltd
Ararat Town Hall
Arena Theatre Company
Artefact Consulting Services
Arts Centre Melbourne
Arup
Australian Digital Concert Hall
Back To Back Theatre
Bellarine Arts Centre
Bendigo Venues & Events
Black Hole Theatre
Bunjil Place
Cardinia Shire
City of Kingston
City of Stonnington
Clocktower Centre
Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre
Drum Theatre
Fever
Frankston Arts Centre
Geelong Arts Centre
Gippsland Performing Arts Centre
Gregory R Hordacre
Hamilton Performing Arts Centre
Her Majesty's Theatre
Hobson's Bay Cultural Venues
Horsham Town Hall
ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
James Fischer
Jens Altheimer
Karralyka Centre
Knox Community Arts Centre
Laura Trenerry
Lighthouse Theatre
Limelight Touring Company
Live Performance Australia
Melbourne International Comedy Festival
Melbourne Recital Centre
Melbourne Theatre Company
Mildura Arts Centre
Monash University Performing Arts Centres
Nicholas Clark Management
Opera Australia
PBM Entertainment
Playable Streets
Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre
Polyglot Theatre
Portland Arts Centre
Profurn Commercial
Red Stitch Actors Theatre
Riverlinks Venues, Shepparton
Schuler Shook
Snuff Puppets
SO Creative Projects
Stani Goma/Beats of Any Nation Downunder
Studio Entertech
Swan Hill Town Hall Performing Arts Centre
The Cardboard Mill
The Cube Wodonga
The Forge Theatre
The Round
Theatre Network Australia

The Art House Wyong, audiences at Words on the Waves Opening Address, Image by Syl Marie.

Theatre Works
Tony Grybowski & Associates
Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres
Wangaratta Performing Arts & Convention Centre
WUCAC
Wyndham Cultural Centre
Yarra Ranges Council

WA
Albany Entertainment Centre
Albany Town Hall
Artrage
Arts Margaret River
Arts Narrogin
Barking Gecko Theatre Co
Black Swan State Theatre Company
Broome Civic Centre
Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre
CircuitWest
CircusWA
City of Melville
City of Joondalup
Co:3 Australia
Crash Theatre Company
Damdamé
Don Russell Performing Arts Centre
Encounter Theatre
Esperance Civic Centre
Goldfields Arts Centre
His Majesty's Theatre
Kalamunda Performing Arts Centre
Koorliny Arts Centre
Libby Klysz
Mandurah Performing Arts Centre
Matt Dann Theatre & Cinema
Moora Performing Arts Centre
Push Management
pvi collective
Queens Park Theatre
Red Earth Arts Precinct
Saltwater Busselton
Scene Stealers WA
Sensorium Theatre
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
State Theatre Centre of WA
Subiaco Arts Centre
The Actors' Hub Studios
The Last Great Hunt
THEATRE 180
Town of Cambridge
West Australian Ballet
Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

INTERNATIONAL
Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres
Auckland Live
Baycourt Community and Arts Centre
Canadian Arts Presenting Association
d&b Audiotechnik Asia Pacific
EVANZ
Isaac Theatre Royal
Performing Arts Network New Zealand
Regent Theatre Trust of Otago
SquareSums&Co
Toitoi Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING ARTS EXCHANGE

GARAMILLA / DARWIN, 11-15 AUGUST 2025

"Have heard nothing but rave reviews of the whole week. The general feedback is that APAX is an essential gathering. The only national sector gathering where we are really reflecting as a sector and discussing the future, and the way we want to be."

Simon Hinton, Artistic Director & CEO, Merrigong Theatre Company

There was something distinctive about APAX 2025. Returning to Larrakia Country for the first time since 2012, APAX sold out completely — a milestone in its history. Across five days, 435 delegates from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand gathered in Garramilla/ Darwin for a week of conversation, connection and exchange.

The timing shaped the experience. Taking place during Darwin's dry season, alongside Darwin Festival and immediately following the National Indigenous Art Fair, APAX unfolded in a city that moves at a genuinely human pace. Delegates experienced Darwin at its most inviting, with outdoor events and a relaxed tempo encouraging connection. Conversations spilled from conference rooms into the festival park, and relationships formed with an ease that's harder to come by in a capital city.

The program brought the arts market (11–13 August) and conference (14–15 August) to four venues across the city, anchored by our host venue AANT (formerly Darwin Entertainment Centre). Delegates moved from the opening event at Darwin Festival's Port Bandstand and the IMPACT Awards at the much-loved Darwin Ski Club to the conference opening keynote at the Mindil Beachside Pavilion. Across five days, delegates pitched work, forged new partnerships and tackled the questions shaping the future of presenting, touring and audience engagement.

APAX 2025 also marked the introduction of Swapcard, PAC Australia's new delegate app, used to host session information, profile artists and producers, manage schedule selections and facilitate connections between delegates throughout the week. Already used by a number of arts markets nationally and internationally, Swapcard was a welcome addition to the APAX experience, and delegates embraced it with 87% of delegates using it actively throughout the event.

The choice to bring APAX to the Northern Territory had a measurable impact. NT participation grew from just 1% of delegates in 2024 to 8% in 2025, a shift made possible by proximity, targeted bursary support, and a genuine commitment to bringing the market to the sector rather than the other way around. First Nations representation also continued its steady growth, from 7% to 10% of total delegates. Attendance across the sector was further supported by $165,654 in bursary funding from state and territory governments, helping 63 artists, producers and presenters take part in APAX, in addition to a directed $5,000 donation for First Nations artists and producers.

APAX 2025, Image by Alex Sibbison.

Continuing a practice introduced at APAX in 2024, the official opening included a First Nations cultural response offered by our Aotearoa New Zealand delegation — a moving expression of reciprocity that has become a meaningful part of APAX. Delegates were guided throughout the week by Elders-in-Residence Dr Bilawara Lee OAM and Roque Lee, whose generosity and wisdom set the tone for a gathering that was candid, collaborative and future-focused.

Rather than looking for quick fixes, APAX 2025 asked the sector to sit with its own cycles. In her conference opening provocation, Erica McCalman challenged the long-held assumption that growth should be the sector's default setting, drawing on the metaphor of a forest ecosystem to argue that Australian performing arts is not in a temporary downturn but a genuine structural transition — one that calls for resilience and reinvention rather than a return to what came before.

Andy Packer picked up a similar thread from a deeply personal vantage point in his keynote, reflecting on 20 years of Slingsby Theatre and the company's decision to conclude on its own terms in 2027. Not every organisation needs to last forever, and knowing when and how to end can be its own act of leadership.

Three hundred and fifty people rose in a standing ovation for both Erica and Andy.

Amy Maiden's keynote, *It's Not Them, It's Us*, put the sector's relationship with audiences under the same honest light, arguing that the real threat isn't cost-of-living pressure or shifting habits, but our own resistance to change. Her call — to build trust and relevance for audiences into every part of an organisation, not just marketing — echoed through *We Need New Models* and *Strengthening Community Engaged Practice* panels, which both landed on the same conclusion from different directions: there is no single fix, only a willingness to experiment (i.e slow touring, blended investment, deeper artist relationships) and to share the risk of trying.

SOLD OUT for the first time in the APAX's history

The *New Presenters* panel looked to the next generation of programmers building sustainable practice on their own terms, while the Blak Lines to a *Blak Future* panel brought Indigenous artistic directors, producers and presenters together to ask what self-determined First Nations presenting and touring genuinely requires. The panel was clear: not more work on stages, but deeper trust, reciprocity and structural accountability from the organisations that present it with care as infrastructure, not sentiment. The closing panel, *Competing Desires and the Sustainability Imperative*, sat with the discomfort that no one leaves APAX with easy answers — only a clearer sense of the trade-offs worth making.

The conference closed with thinker-in-residence Kevin du Preez drawing the week's threads together through the concept of abundance. Rather than defining the sector by what it lacks — funding, time, staff, opportunity — Kevin argued that the arts already hold deep reserves of creativity, relationships, knowledge and generosity, and that the real work is learning to recognise, activate and share what already exists. He offered delegates a simple formula to carry home: abundance as what we create, multiplied by how we care, multiplied by how we share. It was a fitting way to end a week that asked the sector to start recognising what it already holds, in our people and our stories, and what continues to bring us together. Local Elders closed proceedings with a blessing, a reminder of the arts' deeper role as nourishment for the human spirit.

The numbers bear out what delegates told us in the room: 96% agreed APAX is a valuable program for the sector, 94% said they attend primarily for networking and relationship building, and for those participating in the arts market, 74% anticipate that APAX 2025 will lead to at least three future presentation opportunities.

APAX is delivered by PAC Australia for the sector, and it is only possible with the ongoing support of our partners, venues and, of course, our delegates. Our appreciation and heartfelt gratitude go to:

- **Event Partner** Darwin Festival and the Northern Territory Government through Arts NT
- **Principal Partner** Maxwood Technology
- **Event Supporters** Schuler Shook and Vivaticket
- **IMPACT Awards Supporter** Charcoalblue
- **Our 2025 Venue Partner** AANT (formerly Darwin Entertainment Centre)

We're also grateful for support from Federal, State and Territory funding agencies, whose contributions helped fund $165,654 in bursaries to assist delegate attendance and participation.

- 52 arts market pitches, showcases, roundtables, company updates and digital shorts.
- 10 keynotes, plenary and panel sessions
- 9 breakouts and workshops

We also had two performance tours (*Shundori Durational* performance) programmed as part of Darwin Festival.

APAX 2025, Images by Alex Sibbison.

PANELS:

- *Blak Lines to a Blak Future* with Merindah Donnelly (BlakDance), Simon Hinton (Merrigong Theatre Company), Gary Lang (NT Dance Company) facilitated by Kate Eltham (BlakDance)
- *The New Presenters* with Sukhjit Khalsa (The Blue Room Theatre), Jeanette Wedmaier (The Empire), Vanessa Immink (Auckland Festival), Tom Molyneux (Monash University Performing Arts Centres) facilitated by Heidi Irvine (Frankston Arts Centre)
- *We Need New Models* with Anne-Marie Heath (The Art House Wyong), Harley Mann (Na Djinang Circus) and Jayne Lovelock (Creative Australia) facilitated by Kevin du Preez (Thinker-in-Residence)
- *Sector Hotspots* featuring Libby Old (QUT), Angharad Wynne-Jones and Eliki Read (Creative Climate), and Ping Flynn (ILBIJERRI Theatre)
- *It's Not Them, It's Us* by Amy Maiden
- *Strengthening community engaged practice* with Liesel Zink (independent artist), Li a Pa'apa'a (Independent Producer / Artback NT), Carl Sciberras (Dance Makers Collective), Kate Baggerson (Everybody NOW), facilitated by Luke Harriman (RASN)
- *Sector Update*: Sarah Greentree (Creative Australia), Katherine Connor (PAC Australia)
- *Competing Desires and the Sustainability Imperative* with Travis Cardona (NIDA), Tessa Long (Contemporary Asian Australian Performance) and Criena Gehrke (Queensland Theatre + PAC Australia), facilitated by Kevin du Preez (Thinker-in-Residence).

Elders in Residence: Dr Bilawara Lee OAM and Roque Lee.

Thinker in residence: Kevin du Preez

Provocation/opening address by Erica McCalman

Keynote address: Andy Packer

ARTS MARKET

Arts Market Curatorial Panel:

- Celia Coulthard, Adelaide Festival Centre
- Georgia Hendy, Darwin Entertainment Centre
- Heidi Irvine, Frankston Arts Centre
- Sarah Knight, Country Arts SA
- Haneen Mahmood Martin, Performing Lines
- Erica McCalman, Independent
- Wanyika Mshila, Sydney Opera House
- Roz Pappalardo, Tamworth Regional Council
- Vanessa Pigrum, Theatre Royal Hobart
- Michelle Wright, Arts Margaret River
- NZ Observer: Helaina Keeley, Auckland Live

Arts Market hosts:

- Samuel Gaskin, BEAT Entertainment
- Roxy Smith, AANT Centre
- Heidi Irvine, Frankston Arts Centre
- Vanessa Immink, Auckland Festival

Arts Market Program
(in alphabetical order)

- 13:12.
- A Good Catch / Double Take
- ACT NOW THEATRE
- Australian Chamber Orchestra
- Branch Nebula
- BRG PRODUCTIONS
- Brown's Mart
- Cassandra Fumi and Vidya Rajan
- Chamber Made
- Chunky Move
- Clint Bolster
- Cluster Arts Global
- Curious Legends
- Dale Woodbridge Brown
- Damian Callinan
- Force Majeure
- Gravity & Other Myths
- GUTS Dance Central Australia
- Hey Dowling
- Humphrey Bower & Libby Klysz
- Insite Arts
- Intimate Spectacle
- Jessie Lloyd
- Joel Bray Dance
- JOSEPH O'FARRELL (JOF)
- Legs On The Wall
- Lemony S. Puppet Theatre
- Luminous Productions
- Melbourne Theatre Company
- Merrigong Theatre Company
- Mudlark Theatre
- Nexus Arts
- Oli Mathiesen with Lucy Lynch and Sharvon Mortimer
- Patch Theatre Company
- Payanggatha
- Performing Lines
- Playable Streets / Barking Spider Creative
- re:group performance collective
- ROOKE
- Sally Chance Dance
- Shock Therapy
- Soft Tread Enterprises
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
- Stuck Pigs Squealing with Bureau of Works
- Te Pou Theatre & The Dust Palace
- The House that Dan Built
- The PaperBoats
- The Rebel Alliance
- THE RABBLE
- Windmill Theatre Company

62% of total delegation were PAC members

58% PAC members in attendance

2,672 messages exchanged on APAX app

87% delegate uptake of APAX app

First Timers Hosts: Katherine Connor (PAC Australia), Harley Mann (Na Djinang Circus), Georgia Hendy (AANT Centre) and John Glenn (Hey Dowling).

First Base supported 10 independent producers and the participating presenters included Jeanette Wedmaier (The Empire), Claire Harris (Wagga Wagga Civic Centre), Fiona de Garis (Bunbury Entertainment Centre), Sharon Custers (Saltwater Busselton), Andrew Frith (Queens Park Theatre), Jordan Best (Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre), Kathy Corcoran (Wyndham City Council), Peter Ross (Tamworth Entertainment Venues), Kristy Witmitz (Her Majesty's Theatre Ballarat), Chris Bendall (Bondi Pavilion).

52 artists & producers presented in the market

18K+ page views on APAX app

APAX 2025, Image by Alex Sibbison.

Breakouts and workshops:

- *Care-Based Practice* Workshop by Monica Davidson from Creative Plus Business
- *Ok, but How? It's Not Them, It's Us* keynote follow-up workshop by Amy Maiden
- *What I Wish I Knew Before We Started* with Jim Hultquist (Schuler Shook), Sharon Custers (Saltwater Busselton) and Shayne Price (Creative Whitehorse)
- Roundtable – *Out of the box programming*: outdoor and participatory facilitated by Chris Bendall (Bondi Pavilion)
- Roundtable – *Plotting a new approach to plotting* facilitated by Andrew Threlfall (CDP)
- Roundtable – *Adaptive Futures* facilitated by Rosie Dwyer (PAC Australia)
- Roundtable - *Programming International Work: 101* for Australian presenters facilitated by Virginia Hyam (PAC Australia)
- Roundtable - *Culture for Climate: the performing arts and eco-creative sustainability* facilitated by Grace Nye Butler
- Training Intensives – PAC Australia Presenter Training Program, Tour Producer Training and Presenter Development Program

DARWIN FESTIVAL
Darwin Entertainment Centre
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TOUR PRODUCING TRAINING SUPPORT
Australia Council
Creative Australia

PRESENTER TRAINING PROGRAM SUPPORT
CIRCUIT WEST

IMPACT Awards 2025, Images by Alex Sibbison.

IMPACT AWARDS

Hosted by Darwin artist, Lisa Pellegrino, the winners of PAC Australia's 2025 IMPACT Awards were announced at APAX, taking place at the local, much-loved Darwin Ski Club.

The ceremony unfolded against a stunning Top End sunset over the beach — a fittingly beautiful setting for a night that celebrated the people, companies and initiatives making a genuine difference in their communities and the presenting ecology. Eight awards were presented to individuals, producing companies and performing arts centres from across regional and metropolitan Australia.

Wendy Blacklock Industry Legend Award

The highest achievement in the awards, the Wendy Blacklock Industry Legend Award acknowledges exceptional, longstanding contributions to the performing arts sector by an individual or organisation. This award honours the illustrious career and the services of Wendy Blacklock AM; a pioneer of national touring and founder of Performing Lines.

The 2025 Wendy Blacklock Industry Legend Award was bestowed to Widjabul Wiyabul Bundjalung leader and cultural icon Rhoda Roberts AO. Across a body of work spanning decades, Rhoda played a defining role in bringing First Nations stories into the mainstream of Australian culture, shaping festivals, programming and presenting in our nation's most significant cultural institutions, and forging pathways for generations of First Nations artists and producers, many of whom credit her as the reason their careers exist at all.

It is with deep sorrow that PAC Australia acknowledges Rhoda's passing in early 2026. Her legacy lives on through everyone she touched and supported along the way. Vale Rhoda Roberts — you will always be respected, revered and loved.

8
Awards presented to individuals, producing companies & performing arts centres

Performing Arts Centre of the Year

The 2025 Performing Arts Centre of the Year Award went to Merrigong Theatre Company, in recognition of the bold and thoughtful way the organisation has reimagined its role since the pandemic. The panel was especially impressed by Merrigong's commitment to First Nations collaboration, artist wellbeing, and long-term support for local artists through programs like MerrigongX and the Strangeways Ensemble. Ambitious programming and an unwavering focus on what matters most to community have helped grow both audiences and impact, positioning Merrigong as a national example of what it means to be a truly community-connected, artist-focused and forward-thinking regional arts organisation.

Innovator Award

The Innovator Award recognises work that is redefining what's possible for the sector.

The 2025 recipients were Queensland Ballet and Queensland Health, honoured for their visionary partnership and the transformative impact of the Van Norton Li Community Health Institute. Together, the two organisations are creating new pathways for wellbeing, social connection and cultural participation by embedding dance within the continuum of care. The panel was struck by the scale and quality of Queensland Ballet and Queensland Health's evidence-based programs across the state — innovation at its most meaningful, connecting art and science, performance and purpose, and proving that dance belongs not only on stage, but in every part of community life.

IMPACT Awards 2025, Images by Alex Sibbison.

IMPACT Awards

A total of five IMPACT Awards (general category) were presented in 2025. The winners were:

Fraser Corfield

This award recognises Fraser's extraordinary contribution to youth arts over the past 30 years. His leadership at ATYP, and beyond, has shaped the lives of countless young Australians, giving them a voice and a place to discover their creativity. The awards panel was deeply moved by the lasting impact Fraser has made through nurturing young artists, championing new work, and building a national community that values youth theatre. His generosity, vision and dedication have left a remarkable legacy that continues to inspire the arts sector and the wider community.

Dancenorth Australia

Dancenorth Australia was recognised for its 2024 national tour of Wayfinder — a landmark achievement in scale, ambition and community connection. The awards panel was deeply impressed by Dancenorth's commitment to growing and strengthening dance audiences across the country, and to challenging the conventional touring model through meaningful, place-based engagement. With 32 performances and 59 workshops across 19 locations, this was more than a tour — it was a movement. Dancenorth's ability to meet each community with generosity, rigour and joy is a testament to its artistic leadership and the deep care embedded in its practice.

Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre

Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre was recognised for its leadership and commitment in addressing the urgent skills shortage in technical theatre through its innovative Traineeship Program. The initiative is a powerful example of how regional venues can take the lead in nurturing and mentoring emerging talent, especially where formal education options are limited. The strong outcomes achieved, and the meaningful impact on both the local community and the broader sector, demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to workforce development and cultural sustainability.

Slingsby Theatre Company

Slingsby Theatre Company was recognised for its extraordinary contribution to Australian theatre over the past two decades. As the company prepares to take its final bow, the awards panel felt strongly that this was the moment to honour the profound impact Slingsby has had on audiences, artists and the wider sector. Their final work, *A Concise Compendium of Wonder*, powerfully encapsulates everything Slingsby stands for: artistic excellence, deep community connection, and a bold commitment to sustainability. This nomination was both a celebration and a thank you — and one Slingsby's Andy Packer would reflect on further just a day later, when his conference keynote on closing a company well drew a standing ovation from 350+ delegates.

Corrugated Iron Youth Arts

This award recognises Corrugated Iron's extraordinary 40-year commitment to youth-led, place-based performance in the Northern Territory. Through Futures Collide, the company not only celebrated this milestone with artistic excellence, but demonstrated the long-term impact of creative pathways that centre young people as artists, leaders and changemakers. The panel was particularly moved by Corrugated Iron's intergenerational approach, deep First Nations engagement, and the powerful legacy visible in alumni decades on, honouring the vital role the company continues to play in sustaining a vibrant, inclusive cultural ecosystem in one of the most unique and expansive regions of the country. The award was presented by NT Arts Minister the Hon. Jinson Charls.

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING ARTS MARKET

BOORLOO / PERTH, 23 - 27 FEBRUARY, 2026

"A genuinely productive week. The volume and quality of conversations was high, and the location worked in terms of creating a contained, focused environment where conversations happened organically. The informal connections, hallway conversations and post-session networking were often as valuable, if not more, than the scheduled meetings. It was encouraging to see strong international representation alongside the Australian presenter cohort, and the cross-sector conversations — circus, theatre, children's work, festivals — felt genuinely integrated rather than siloed." Danielle Kellie, Executive Producer, Circa

APAM 2026 was a gathering of firsts.

In its 32-year history, the Australian Performing Arts Market had never been held in Boorloo/Perth. It was also PAC Australia's first APAM as producer and presenter, the first of three editions we have been appointed by Creative Australia to deliver across 2026, 2028 and 2030. Across five days, 563 delegates from across Australia and around the world gathered on Whadjuk Noongar Country for a week of performance, conversation and exchange.

The timing shaped the experience. Taking place during the final week of Perth Festival, APAM unfolded in a city already alive with performance, as delegates moved between the market and the festival program.

For international delegates, the alignment made it possible to build APAM into broader touring and market development itineraries, taking in key markets and festivals across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand while they were in the region.

The program brought more than 100 events to nine venues across the Perth CBD and Fremantle, anchored by the Pan Pacific Hotel, which flexed to accommodate a wide range of set-ups when access to other city venues was limited. Delegates moved from pitches and showcases in the city to sector gatherings in Fremantle, with Perth Festival performances and an APAM-exclusive visit to Terracotta Warriors: Legacy of the First Emperor at the WA Museum Boola Bardip, supported by Business Events Perth, woven through the week.

Australian Performing Arts Market 2026, Image by Edwin Sitt.

The work began well before delegates arrived. In the lead-up to APAM 2026, PAC Australia launched Groundwork, an online learning and engagement platform offering monthly sessions on international touring readiness and APAM preparation. Groundwork gives artists and producers practical resources, market intelligence and introductions to presenters, festivals and markets from around the world, and it will continue to evolve as we lead into the 2028 and 2030 gatherings.

International participation was strong. APAM welcomed 171 international delegates from 31 countries, with priority regions spanning the Asia Pacific, Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom and Europe, alongside continued engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific, Canada and the Americas. The ASEAN delegation alone numbered 34, reflecting the investment made through our partnership with Turning World, supported by the ASEAN Australia Foundation.

171 international delegates from 31 countries

563 delegates

Some of the most meaningful outcomes came from reciprocity. Through PAC Australia's partnership with CAPACOA, two Canadian artists and companies were invited to pitch at APAM, while earlier in the year three Australian companies were invited to pitch at CAPACOA's own market — and all three went on to feature at APAM 2026. Moogahlin Performing Arts opened the Arts Market with The Visitors, Alternative Facts presented Sincere Apologies, and Merrigong Theatre Company showcased an excerpt of A Place in the Sultan's Kitchen (or How to Make the Perfect One-Pot Chicken Curry) in Fremantle.

Before the main program began, APAM hosted a dedicated First Nations and Indigenous pre-gathering, creating space for connection, dialogue and Indigenous leadership. First Nations delegates made up 9% of the total delegation, and their experience throughout the week was supported and guided by the First Nations Advisory Group, Traditional Owner-in-Residence Ilona McGuire and Elder Derek Nannup.

APAM's core purpose is to increase international and national touring and presenting opportunities for Australian contemporary artists and companies, but the 2026 gathering was designed to offer more than a transactional marketplace. Building on the format of previous APAMs, the program responded to current global conversations and to topics raised directly by the industry. A new Broker Program was piloted to make targeted connections between a select cohort of presenting artists and a carefully chosen group of international presenters and programmers. Led by Marion Potts with five brokers, the program matched artists and producers with the presenters best aligned to their touring and market ambitions, facilitating more than 80 brokered meetings across the week. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we plan to expand the program in future editions.

Through 38 pitches, 25 showcases and selected Perth Festival programming, delegates experienced a diverse cross-section of contemporary performance from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Spanning multiple artforms and scales, the program included a particular focus on Theatre for Young Audiences, with works selected by a national and international panel of presenters and producers that included strong representation from the Asian region.

Clothilde Bullen set the tone in her opening keynote, offering a sustainable and transformative vision for the future of arts and cultural institutions grounded in cultural sovereignty, new leadership models and a reimagining of systems of power.

That ambition carried through the panel program. Creativity in the Climate Crisis and Free to Create? took on climate action and censorship, while Recalibrating the Compass – Survival Isn't Strategy asked what radical ideas a sustainable sector might need. Roundtables went deep on specific markets, from South America, the UK and the Nordic region to Hong Kong and China, Southeast Asia and North America, and sector gatherings for Theatre for Young Audiences, circus and dance, each led by specialist industry leaders, brought practitioners together in venues across Fremantle.

A highlight of the week was the inaugural APAM Debate. Arguing That the Art Comes Before the Audience, the debate was brilliantly delivered by national and international peers, warmly received, and is set to become a staple of APAM. PAC Australia also convened a dedicated networking event bringing together representatives from 15 international arts markets, whose feedback reinforced APAM's place as a critical platform for connecting with trade partners from Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The week closed with Virginia Gay, the celebrated Australian actor, writer and director, whose uplifting address drew the market's focal points together, tying her own artistic outlook to some of the sector's largest hurdles.

APAM is an initiative of Creative Australia, delivered by PAC Australia, and it is only possible with the support of our partners, venues and, of course, our delegates.

Australian Performing Arts Market 2026, Images by Edwin Sitt.

9%
First Nations representation

34
strong ASEAN delegation

The APAM week at a glance

- 38 pitches
- 25 showcases
- 20 panel discussions, keynotes, roundtables and debate
- 16 targeted networking events, including a Market Hall spotlighting 26 artists and companies, arts organisations, funding bodies, international markets and tour coordinators
- An APAM-exclusive exhibition visit to Terracotta Warriors: Legacy of the First Emperor at the WA Museum Boola Bardip, supported by Business Events Perth

Panels:

- *Creativity in the Climate Crisis* with Amir Nizar Zuabi (THE HERDS), Fraser Orford (THE HERDS), Professor Anne Poelina, Angharad Wynne-Jones (Creative Climate), Kaz Therese (WEREWOLF CREATIONS) and kelli mccluskey (pvi collective)
- *Free to Create?* with Iris Nemani (Stanford Live, USA), Merindah Donnelly (BlakDance) and Mohd Jayzuan (Projek Rabak, Indonesia), facilitated by Amrit Gill (Theatre Network Australia)
- *Recalibrating the Compass – Survival Isn't Strategy: Radical Ideas for a Sustainable Sector* with Darcy Grant (Gravity & Other Myths), Wolfgang Hoffmann (Aurora Nova, Germany), Fergus Linehan (Carriageworks) and Lauren Eisinger (Parrot Ox), facilitated by Penny Miles

Debate:

- *That the Art Comes Before the Audience* with Thomas E.S. Kelly (Karul Projects), Peter Glanville (Farnham Maltings/Caravan, UK), Colin Wolf (Gwaandak Theatre, Canada), Andrew Threlfall (CDP Productions), Zohar Spatz (Creative Australia) and Jo Thomas (Artrage), facilitated by Fergus Linehan (Carriageworks)

Curated networking sessions:

- *Networking: Meet cultural leaders from Southeast Asia* facilitated by Tam Nguyen and Kate Ben-Tovim (Turning World)
- *The Long Table: Artistic Exchange and Co-Creation with Asia* facilitated by Tam Nguyen (Turning World) and Jeff Khan (Asia TOPA)

Traditional Owner-in-Residence: Ilona McGuire

Elder Representation: Derek Nannup

Opening address by Clothilde Bullen

Closing address by Virginia Gay

Event Host: Jonathan Parsons

First Nations Advisory Group:

- Sinsa Mansell, Performing Lines Tasmania
- Ping Flynn, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
- Maitland Schnaars, Yirra Yaakin
- Janine Oxenham, Regional Arts Western Australia
- Chloe Ogilvie, Perth Festival
- Thomas E.S. Kelly, Karul Projects
- Dalisa Pigram, Marrugeku
- Joshua Pether, Arts Access Victoria

100+
events across 9 venues in Perth and Fremantle

Australian Performing Arts Market 2026, Images by Edwin Sitt.

Arts Market

Assessment Panel:

- Bradley Chatfield, Queensland Performing Arts Centre (Meanjin/Brisbane)
- Dolina Wehipeihana, Tāwhiri – Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts (Wellington)
- Kenneth Lee, Hong Kong Arts Festival
- Luanne Poh, The Artground (Singapore)

Assessment & Curatorial Panel:

- Ping Flynn, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company (Naarm/Melbourne)
- Bernie Haldane, Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki / Auckland Arts Festival (Aotearoa New Zealand)
- Sasapin Siriwanij, Bangkok International Performing Arts Meeting (Thailand)
- Kylie McRae, Chamber Made (Naarm/Melbourne)

Programming and Curatorial Consultant: Amrit Gill
Brokerage Planning and Lead Broker: Marion Potts

APAM Brokers:

- Brendan O'Connell
- Vicki Middleton
- Sue Giles
- Guy Boyce
- Tam Nguyen

Arts Market hosts:

- Jeremy Smith
- Sandi Woo

38 pitches

25 showcases

Arts Market Program (in alphabetical order)

- A Good Catch Circus
- Alternative Facts
- Back to Back Theatre
- Bad New Days (Canada)
- BlakDance
- Box of Birds
- Circa
- Counterpilot
- Cubby House Co
- Cypher Culture
- Dancenorth Australia
- Erth Visual & Physical Inc
- Footnote New Zealand Dance (New Zealand)
- Force Majeure
- Gravity & Other Myths
- ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
- Mindy Meng Wang & Monica Lim, supported by Insite Arts
- Infinity Ensemble
- Isha Sharvani
- Joel Bray Dance
- JUTE Theatre with Bureau of Works
- Lemony S Puppet Theatre
- Liz Lea Creates
- Lucy Guerin Inc
- Marrugeku
- Melanie Lane / Corps Conspirators
- Merrigong Theatre Company
- Monkey Baa Theatre Company
- Moogahlin Performing Arts
- Movement Of The Human (New Zealand)
- Na Djinang Circus
- One Fell Swoop Circus
- Patch Theatre Company
- Jumaadi and Michael Toisuta, produced by Performing Lines
- Performing Lines
- Pigram Productions & Black Swan State Theatre Company
- Polyglot Theatre
- PYT Fairfield
- ROOKE
- Samara Hersch
- Sensorium Theatre Incorporated
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
- Te Pou Theatre (New Zealand)
- The Farm
- The Last Great Hunt
- Threshold
- Too Close to the Sun
- TRIAGE LIVE ART COLLECTIVE
- Video Phase (Canada)
- Windmill Theatre Company

80+ brokered meetings through the pilot Broker Program

15 international arts markets represented

Roundtables and sector gatherings:

- *Doing Business in the UK* facilitated by Helen Salmon (British Council in Australia) and Dan Kok (Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture)
- *How do we fund international touring?* facilitated by Darcy Grant (Gravity & Other Myths)
- *Navigating the Nordic Performing Arts Landscape* facilitated by Geir Lindahl (CPH Stage)
- *Special Envoy: An invitation to Artists and Producers reimagining an Arts Market* facilitated by kelli mccluskey (pvi collective)
- *The New American Matrix* facilitated by David Baile (International Society for the Performing Arts) and Rebecca Podsednik (Lincoln Center, USA)
- *Understanding Australian Arts Presenters* facilitated by Rhys Holden (Geelong Arts Centre) and Georgia Hendy (Canberra Theatre Centre)
- *Touring into Latin America* facilitated by Frank Madrid (Australia Latin American Foundation) and Carolina Roa (Teatro a Mil / PLATEA, Chile)
- *Building the shared international touring circuit* facilitated by Cluster Arts
- *Hong Kong in Motion: Inside a dynamic performing arts ecosystem* facilitated by Florence Lau (Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo)
- *International collaboration in China* facilitated by Andrew Threlfall (CDP Productions) and Liz Ren (Tong Productions)
- *Empowering Cultural Intelligence* facilitated by Ping Flynn

- *Local Voices, Global Conversations* facilitated by Aaron Fernandes
- *Sector Gathering – Dance* facilitated by Joshua Pether (Arts Access Victoria)
- *Sector Gathering – Circus and Physical Theatre* facilitated by Jo Smith (Circus WA)
- *Sector Gathering – Theatre for Young Audiences* facilitated by Noel Jordan

Technology Partner: d&b audiotechnik
Design Partner: Hours After

Venue Partners

Australian Delegate Travel Bursaries

CENTERING AUDIENCES:
LEADERSHIP DIALOGUES ON AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

At APAX 2025, Amy Maiden's keynote *It's Not Them, It's Us* asked delegates to stop treating audiences as a problem and to look instead at audience-centric practice. The response was strong enough that Creative Australia partnered with PAC Australia to take the conversation further.

The result was a series of leadership dialogues - *Centering Audiences* - delivered by PAC Australia and curated by Amy Maiden, designed to build an evidence-informed picture of the audience challenges facing live performance and to test where investment and structural change would have the greatest impact.

In June 2026, participants met in Melbourne across four full-day sessions, grouped by role: chief executives, artistic directors and programmers, heads of marketing and audience, and independent producers and artists.

The outcomes of Centering Audiences include the report, Building Australia's Audience Capability, since delivered to Creative Australia. It sets out five key findings.

1. **The sector is individually solving a collective challenge.** Many organisations are grappling with similar audience challenges, yet much of this work continues to happen in isolation. Stronger shared capability can reduce duplication, accelerate learning and improve decision-making across the sector.
2. **Audience development is no longer just marketing.** Audience relationships are shaped by programming, participation, accessibility, customer experience, leadership, governance and organisational culture. Building audiences has become a whole-of-organisation responsibility.
3. **Audience confidence drives attendance.** Attendance decisions are influenced as much by trust, relevance, familiarity, belonging, recommendation and perceived value as by price. People are more likely to participate when they feel confident an experience will be meaningful, rewarding and welcoming.
4. **Future audiences are built through cultural participation.** Schools, families, festivals, community experiences, creative learning and early cultural participation all contribute to lifelong engagement with live performance.
5. **The next chapter of audience development is audience capability.** Strengthening audience outcomes requires investment in the shared systems, knowledge and conditions that allow audience relationships to flourish across the sector.

The report concludes by identifying six strategic opportunities for strengthening Australia's audience capability:

- Establish a national audience capability initiative.
- Build a national audience intelligence capability.
- Strengthen leadership and workforce capability.
- Strengthen lifelong participation pathways.
- Strengthen infrastructure and data capability.
- Strengthen collaboration, innovation and knowledge exchange.

Together, these opportunities reflect a central insight from the Leadership Dialogues: many of the capabilities needed to build stronger audiences cannot be developed by individual organisations alone. Progress will require shared stewardship across governments, cultural organisations, peak bodies, researchers, artists, educators, funders and practitioners, and PAC Australia looks forward to sharing the full report in due course, and working with Creative Australia and the sector on the action that follows.

Australian Government | Creative Australia | pac Australia

Centering Audiences – Leadership Dialogues on Audience Development was an initiative of Creative Australia, delivered by PAC Australia.

TECHNICAL SAFETY AND WORKFORCE

In recent years, PAC Australia have been actively working across critical sector issues related to staff retention, skills shortages, skills development, and training pathways. What we've also identified as a missing, but vital, part of this work to date is the flow-on effects of a reduced workforce on the capacity of the sector to continue working at unsustainably high levels of output. This impact is being felt across all departments and all types of organisations working in live performance.

However, these capacity issues are manifesting acutely in the technical workforce, with our primary and urgent concern being the depleted workforce and the impact of this reduced capacity, and the lost skills and years of experience, on the workforce that remains.

Late in 2025 the PAPA network convened a two-day meeting to review and respond to these critical workforce conditions.

At the meeting were representatives from the PAPA network and invited subject-matter experts (SMEs). Through facilitated discussions, participants outlined the interconnected nature of workforce, training, programming and safety challenges; heard examples of lived experience from venues of different scales; and examined the diverse roles played by venues, producers, training bodies, regulators and governments in leading critical workplace adaptation.

The key issues we are seeking to address include:

1. Sector resilience is at its limits
2. The eroding safety margin
3. A fragile workforce pipeline
4. Ambition (artistic vision, volume of work, KPIs) outpacing capacity
5. Unsustainable presentation and touring models

The meeting provided PAC Australia and our PAPA colleagues with a roadmap for action. The insights report prepared by facilitator Penny Miles is available on the PAC Australia website which provides an overview of our priorities and actions. The findings from this work also informed a joint PAPA submission to the National Cultural Policy review.

While the primary focus of our work is often government-owned venues, the issues that need to be addressed both influence and are influenced by touring practices, production timelines, technical feasibility and safety responsibilities that sit across organisational boundaries. This is a shared responsibility and vital that we embed a culture of collective accountability between venues, producers, presenters and funders. PAC Australia has committed to keeping technical safety and workforce visible across our member channels, training, research and future programs, including APAX.

At the close of the 2025/26 year, we are pleased to confirm a significant outcome achieved in this work, with Creative Workplaces funding a project for the development of safety resources specifically for performing arts centres.

CIRCUITWEST | NSW & ACT PERFORMING ARTS CENTRES ASSOCIATION INC | pac Australia

SAPA | STAGE QUEENSLAND

VAPAC Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

PAC Australia creates the conditions for presenters, artists, and audiences to thrive.

One of the core ways we do this is through enabling the betterment of practice in presenting and touring, delivered through our range of training programs.

Across 2025/26, PAC Australia's training programs strengthened the national presenting and touring ecology by building practical skills, leadership capability and lasting sector networks. Five annual programs supported presenters, producers, artists and arts workers across Australia and Aotearoa, responding to strong demand for bespoke, industry-led professional development that helps organisations plan for succession, deepen community impact and navigate contemporary sector challenges:

- Since 2021, the Presenter Training Program has supported new and emerging presenters to build capacity, share knowledge and shape networks within the PAC Australia membership and the broader sector. Due to high demand, this course has been running twice a year since 2024.
- Developed in 2023, Tour Producer Training has supported producers to better understand the national touring landscape, develop tour-specific producing skills, and build a network of producing support. PAC Australia deliver this program to enable producers to gain a deep understanding of the requirements Presenters have of them when touring nationally.
- Also in 2023, the partnership with Auckland Live was formed, to deliver the Presenter Training Programme Aotearoa, developing leadership among presenters in the New Zealand performing arts ecology.

Image by Alex Sibbison.

- And in 2024 we established the Presenter Development Program, designed to propel forward the careers of established presenters by addressing key issues in the contemporary presenting context, and providing leadership training.

In 2025, PAC Australia were also supported by Creative Australia to deliver Adaptive Futures, an online professional development series exploring how Australia's performing arts centres play a powerful role in climate action, delivered in partnership with Creative Climate. The series attracted 857 registrations, with session views reaching over 1.3K.

"I have been so inspired by every member of our cohort, speaker and subject covered in the program - every word has felt valuable and will stay with me long after the program ends."

Sarah Whitby – Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC), WA

857
Adaptive Futures Registrations

1.3K
Session Views

PRESENTER TRAINING PROGRAM

Presenter Training Program

To date, the Presenter Training Program has empowered 133 presenters across every State & Territory in Australia. As Australia's only specialised training program for performing arts presenters, the Presenter Training Program builds the skills, confidence and networks presenters need to lead with impact. It supports presenters to strengthen audience, stakeholder and community outcomes, while helping organisations plan for succession and future-proof their vital role across Australia.

The program delivers approximately 25 hours of professional development from over 30 leading professionals working across the performing arts ecology each course. Across 25/26 financial year the program welcomed 29 participants.

Partnerships, placements and participation support

In recognition of the need for more First Nations & CALD presenters within the performing arts ecology, PAC Australia provide free course placements each year. In 25/26 this was offered to Matt Godbold from Monash University Performing Arts Centres.

In 25/26, CircuitWest supported nine West Australian presenters to undertake the Presenter Training Program or attend the in-person intensive. Along with their own professional development workshops and programs, this support is part of their commitment to providing tailored professional development to WA presenters.

Every year, the South Australian Presenters Association (SAPA) and PAC Australia support the participation of one emerging SA presenter through the Michael Treasure Presenter Training Placement, bestowed to Zhao Liang of Nexus Arts.

100%
of participants agreed that the training program increased their confidence as a Presenter and increased their capacity to fulfil their current role.

First delivered in 2024, PAC Australia's partnership with Auckland Live to deliver the program in Aotearoa New Zealand has now supported 43 presenters across New Zealand, delivering over 30 hours of content by more than 40 speakers each year from both the Australian and New Zealand creative sectors.

WHAT HAS THE PRESENTER TRAINING PROGRAM ENABLED?

Participants in the Australian program have reported immediate and tangible outcomes within their organisations including (but by no means limited to):

- **Cultural Leadership:** Partnering with First Nations leaders to cultivate a space rooted in cultural safety and mutual respect.
- **Empowered Advocacy:** Strengthened negotiation capabilities to secure better outcomes and resources for the theatre.
- **Community-Centric Engagement:** Deepened relationships with local audiences through authentic, data-informed connection.
- **Sustainable Operations:** Modernised venues through eco-conscious, sustainable practices.
- **Strategic Programming:** Established a robust framework that aligns our annual program with the city's broader arts and culture strategy.
- **Curated Experiences:** Shifted to a deliberate, curatorial approach for venue hires that prioritises cultural impact and audience value.
- **Strategic Marketing:** Pivot from reactive, show-by-show promotion to long-term strategies that build sustained audience loyalty.

TOUR PRODUCER TRAINING

Tour Producer Training

Tour Producer Training equips producers and artists to tour nationally with confidence, strategy and care. The program combines practical touring skills — from budgeting, technical planning and deal negotiation — with a strong focus on cultural safety, accessibility and artist wellbeing. Since its inception, the program has supported 117 participants from every Australian state and territory, as well as Aotearoa New Zealand.

After a successful completion of the pilot program in 2023, in 2024 & 2025, this program ran twice a year due to high demand, supporting emerging and established producers. In 2026 the program was re-designed to support one larger group of established producers to refine national touring skills with deeper learning and context.

In 2025 & 2026, Creative Australia provided project funds to support a range of independent and small companies to participate in the program and attend the in-person intensive and APAX in support of their training experience.

The program delivers approximately 20 hours of professional development from over 25 leading professionals working across the performing arts ecology. Across the 25/26 financial year Tour Producer Training was delivered to 31 artists, producers and touring company staff.

100%
of participants agree that this course helped them to develop a strategic approach to touring and clarified their touring goals.

WHAT HAS THE TOUR PRODUCER TRAINING ENABLED?

Participants in the program have reported a range of outcomes that generally help inform their future approach to touring work including:

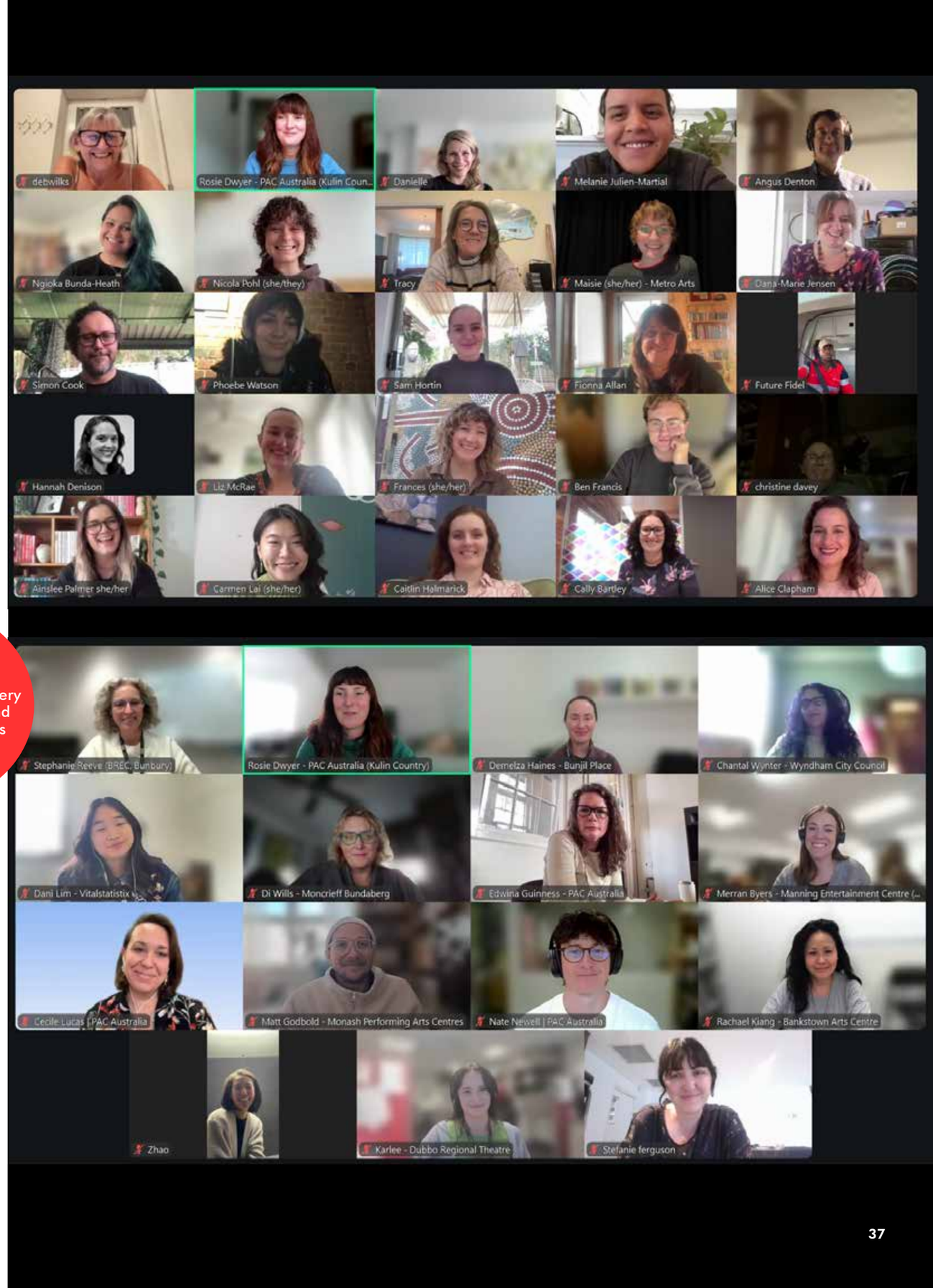
- **Developed a strategic approach to national touring**, strengthening clarity, confidence and long-term planning.
- **Built understanding of emissions management and environmental impact solutions** for more sustainable touring.
- **Created fit-for-purpose marketing assets** to support effective regional and national touring.
- **Strengthened technical planning** through a balanced, practical and collaborative approach.
- **Improved confidence in negotiating contemporary financial arrangements** with presenters.
- **Embedded cultural safety, accessibility and wellbeing** from the earliest stages of tour planning.

117
participants from every Australian state and territory, as well as New Zealand

20
Hours of professional development

"As a First Nations tour producer, this training gave me the tools to navigate the industry with more confidence, clarity, and cultural integrity. I'm walking away with practical skills, a stronger network, and a deeper sense of responsibility to create safe, respectful, and empowering touring experiences for our communities."

Natalie Lingwoodock – Independent Producer, QLD



25
industry leaders, academics and professional consultants engaged to deliver content annually

Image by Alex Sibbison.

PRESENTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Presenter Development Program

The Presenter Development Program supports established presenters to strengthen their leadership, respond to the evolving challenges of contemporary presenting and help shape the future of the performing arts ecosystem. It equips presenters to lead with confidence, vision and impact within their organisations and across the sector.

The program was first delivered in 2024 and has since supported 28 arts manager leaders with over 25 hours of content by more than 25 industry leaders, academics and professional consultants annually.

WHAT HAS THE PRESENTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ENABLED?

Participants in the program have reported a growth in their own leadership style including:

- **Shifted from reactive to proactive leadership**, strengthening confidence, clarity and strategic decision-making.
- **Embedded cultural consultancy and cultural safety training** as an ongoing team practice.
- **Integrated succession planning** into programming frameworks to support organisational resilience.
- **Re-examined audience data with curiosity and purpose** to inform deeper engagement.
- **Improved sustainability practices** across events and touring programs.
- **Strengthened advocacy** within council settings, building confidence to champion the value and impact of the performing arts.
- **Deepened connection to the broader performing arts sector**, expanding perspective beyond individual venues and strengthening sector-wide engagement.

100%
of participants agree that the course exceeded their expectations of the learning outcomes.

"The Presenter Development Program strengthened my confidence and clarified my direction as a presenter. It deepened my understanding of the national presenting landscape, helped me better advocate for the value of arts and culture, and expanded my networks, which is especially valuable given my regional location, hundreds of kilometres from the nearest major city." Donna Cameron – City of Albany, WA

"This course provided insight into the national context and venue structures beyond the LGA model. It offered insight into ways of approaching current and recurrent issues and networks for discussing and contextualising these. I feel empowered to implement creative solutions, knowing that I am not re-inventing the wheel."

David Burrows –
Bass Shire Council, VIC

28
arts manager leaders participated since 2024

25
Hours of content per program

ADAPTIVE FUTURES

Adaptive Futures was an online, free professional development series supporting performing arts centres to better understand and collaborate on the climate crisis offering a business and creative lens, delivered in partnership with Creative Climate.

Recognising that every job can be a climate job, this program explored actions we can take from every level within an organisation.

Topics included the responsibilities of board and executive in understanding and managing climate risk; achievable ways to decarbonise our venues; moving beyond carbon neutrality and into regenerative practice; artistic programming supporting climate action; and how a climate narrative creates a deeper dialogue with our audiences and young people.

The Uptake

Adaptive Futures generated exceptional interest, with 857 individual registrations across the six sessions, an average of over 140 per session.

Participants joined from every Australian state and territory, as well as from Aotearoa New Zealand, Singapore, and Serbia. Below is a breakdown of the organisations and companies who attended across the series overall (with most attending multiple sessions).

- 114 Venues, Presenters & major festivals
- 21 Support organisations
- 6 Funding bodies, both state and federal
- 11 Universities
- 49 independent practitioners
- 42 producing companies
- 4 peak bodies
- 9 climate specialists within and outside of the cultural sector
- The series has been re-watched 94 times and re-loaded 1,224 times

The breadth and scale of participation clearly demonstrate strong sector-wide appetite for ambitious and sustained engagement with climate change responses within the arts sector.

Creative Climate - the national peak body for arts and climate - mobilising through culture and the arts.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body

Training Programs Contributors

PAC Australia's training programs are primarily delivered by PAC Australia members, as well as leading professionals in the independent, commercial, and academic sectors. We thank all contributors for adding such immense value to each program.

In 2025 and 2026, the speakers across all training and professional development programs included*:

Anthem, Amy Maiden • Aotearoa NZ Festival of the Arts, Dolina Wehipeihana • The Art House Wyong, Anne-Marie Heath & Tom Skelton • Arts on Tour, Antonia Seymour & Sarah Richardson • Auckland Live, Angela (Ange) Gourdie, Haylee Nitschke & Usha Bhana • Auspicious Arts Inc, Hannah Strout • Back to Back Theatre, Tim Stitz • Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre, Fiona de Garis • Bunjil Place, Marisa Cesario • Centre for ReWorlding, Claire G Coleman & Jen Rae • Circa, Danielle Kellie • City of Greater Bendigo, Stephen Henderson • Clarence City Council, Steve Harris • Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, Zoe Scrogings • Creative Climate, Angharad Wynne Jones • Creative & Cultural Consultant, Suzanne Pereira • Creative Whitehorse, Whitehorse City Council, Shayne Price • Creative Workplaces, Patrick McCarthy • Cultural Equity Consultant and Advisor, Caroline Bowditch • Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre, Tiffany Rowland • Darwin Festival, Emma Corrick • Frankston City Council, Tammy Ryan & Heidi Irvine • Geelong Arts Centre, Nicole La Bianca • Glen Street Theatre, Belinda Gibson • Gluttony, Elena Kirschbaum • Green Music Australia, Berish Bilander & Emma Bosworth • Hawaiki TŪ, Kura Te Ua • ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, Ping Flynn • Independent Arts Consultant, Aimee Smith • Independent Arts Consultant, Erica McCalman • Independent Arts Consultant, Pippa Bailey • Independent Marketing Consultant, Jaime Laird • Independent Tour Producer, Libby Klysz • International Convention Centre Sydney, Jess Zickar • La Boite Theatre, Courtney Stewart • Melbourne Fringe Festival, Simon Abrahams • Merrigong Theatre Company, Simon Hinton & Leland Kean • Middleton Arts, Vicki Middleton • MILKE, Laura Milke-Garner • Monash University Performing Arts Centres, Tom Molyneux &

Image by Alex Sibbison.

Ruth Oakley • Monkey Baa Theatre Company, Kevin du Preez • Nicholas Clark Management, Nick Clark • PANNZ, Jo Bond • PAC Australia, Eva Grace Mulalley & Virginia Hyam • Pangolin, Matthew Coleman • Purple Stage, Tracy Margieson • Queensland Theatre, Criena Gehrke • Queensland University, Dr Kate Power • Quiet Riot, Linda Catalano • Regional Arts Victoria, Bindi Green • Dr Shona Erskine • Riverside Theatres, Catherine Swallow • Ross Farnell Consulting, Ross Farnell • Slingsby Theatre, Andy Packer & Georgia Stanley • Sydney Opera House, Wanyika Mshila & Kim Bluett • Te Pou Theatre, Amber Curreen • Ten Days on the Island, Vernon Guest • The Blue Room Theatre, Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa OAM • The Biomimicry Institute, Amanda Sturgeon • The Dust Palace, Rachael Dubois • The Events Centre Caloundra, Bronwyn Edinger AM • Theatre North Inc, Amanda Sheppard • Theatre Producer, Creative Consultant, Teaching Artist, Lynne Cardy • Toi Toi Theatres, Glen Pickering • Tony Grybowski & Associates, Penny Miles • Wellesley Studios, Shona McCullagh • WAMA Foundation, Francesca Valmorbida • Waverley Council, Melissa Twells & Sam McGuinness

*Organisations were correct at the time of delivering training content.

OUR BOARD

2025 - 2026

Criena Gehrke
President
Executive Director, Queensland Theatre

Peter Ross
Vice President
Executive Manager, Creative Communities & Experiences, Tamworth Regional Council

John Glenn
Treasurer (from 16.10.25)
Chief Executive Officer, AANT Centre, Director, Hey Dowling

Ian English
Treasurer
(to 16.10.25)
Managing Director, Staij Services

Candice Sheldon
Secretary Head of People and Culture, City Fertility

Angela Flynn
Co-CEO / Executive Director, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

Drew Dymond
Manager, Albany Entertainment Centre

Georgia Hendy
Executive Director, Canberra Theatre Centre

Harley Mann
Artistic Custodian, Na Djinang Circus

Heidi Irvine
Head of Audience & Arts Development, Frankston Arts Centre

Louisa Norman
Regional and Engagement Manager, Perth Festival

Shayne Price
(Retired 16.10.25)
Manager, Arts & Culture Services, City of Whitehorse

Simon Hinton
(Retired 16.10.25)
Artistic Director / CEO, Merrigong Theatre Company

Governance, Risk, Audit and Finance (GRAF) committee:

Ian English (Committee Chair, to 16.10.25) • John Glenn (Committee Chair, from 16.10.25) • Shayne Price (to October 2025)
Criena Gehrke • Peter Ross • Candice Sheldon

ARTRAGE Fringe World Festival, Image by Sean Breadsell.

BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCES

Board Member	Position (at end of financial year)	Eligible	Attended	Apology
Criena Gehrke	President	7	5	2
John Glenn	Treasurer	7	7	0
Peter Ross	Vice President	7	7	0
Candice Sheldon	Secretary	7	3	4
Angela Flynn	Board Member	7	3	4
Drew Dymond	Board Member	7	7	0
Georgia Hendy	Board Member	5	5	0
Harley Mann	Board Member	7	6	0
Heidi Irvine	Board Member	5	4	1
Ian English	Board Member	7	7	0
Louisa Norman	Board Member	7	6	1
Shayne Price	Board Member	2	2	0
Simon Hinton	Board Member	2	2	0
Jeanette Wedmaier	*Observer**	4	4	0
Kate Heeney	*Observer**	4	2	0
Laura Bonner	*Observer**	4	2	1

**Observers are professional development placements and are not eligible to vote on matters in front of the board, but are otherwise bound by the board code of conduct.*

OUR STAFF

2025 - 2026

Katherine Connor
Executive Director

Virginia Hyam
Executive Producer

Lynda de Koning
General Manager

Rosie Dwyer
Manager, Industry Development & Training

Eva Mullaley
First Nations Producer (to February 2026)

Louise Coles
International Engagement - APAM (to March 2026)

Cecile Lucas
Producer, Programming

Edwina Guinness
Events Producer

Claire Holland
Marketing & Communications Lead

Nate Newell
Operations Manager

Samantha Hortin
Administration Coordinator

Toni Glynn
APAX (2025) Production Manager

Jason Warner
APAM Production Manager
APAX (2026) Production Manager

Maria Pagano
Accounts

CONSULTANTS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Legal Counsel
Delwyn Everard

Financial Advisers & Investment Portfolio Management
Doug Tarrant and Joanne Douglas, Level One Financial Services

Auditors & Accountants
DryKirkness

Sponsorship Services
Vicki Middleton, Middleton Arts

Research Partners
Pilar Cárdenas & Emilia González

Advisory Board for the Arts

Jordan Gibbs, Culture Counts

Performance + Ecology Lab, Griffith University

Creative Industries, Education, and Social Justice Faculty, Queensland University of Technology

Evaluation Partner
Culture Counts

Photographer and Videographer
Alex Sibbison, Masterworks Media (APAX 2025)

Edwin Sitt (APAM)

Graphic Design
Beck Grace

Hours After (APAX & APAM Branding)

IT Services
Accomplice

Veracity

Hello Developers

Travel / Logistics
Stage and Screen

AFFILIATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

A New Approach • Arts on Tour • Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) • Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres (AAPPAC) • Ausdance (National) • Australian Arts Markets Managers Group • Australian Music Centre • Australian Society of Authors • Australasian Performing Right Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (APRA AMCOS) • Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) • Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMAGA) • BlakDance • Canadian Association for the Performing Arts • Chinese Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA) • CircuitWest • Creative Australia • Creative Climate • Creative Workplaces • Diversity Arts Australia • Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) • First Nations Performing Arts Companies • Green Music Australia (GMA) • Griffith University (P+ERL) • International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) • Korean Cultural and Arts Centres Association (KOCACA) • Live Music Office • Live Performance Australia • Performing Arts Network New Zealand (PANNZ) • New South Wales and ACT Performing Arts Centres Association (NAPACA) • National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA) • QUT • RASN (Various) • Regional Arts Australia • Services and Creative Skills Australia • South Australian Presenters Association (SAPA) • Stage Queensland • Symphony Services Australia • The Chamber of Arts and Culture, Western Australia • Theatre Network Australia (TNA) • Venue Management Association (VMA) • Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC)

OUR PARTNERS

TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

d&b audiotechnik

APAX 2025

DARWIN FESTIVAL

Darwin Entertainment Centre

Proudly sponsored by NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

Maxwood Technology

EVENT SUPPORTERS

Schuler Shook
LIGHTING DESIGN / THEATRE PLANNING / AUDIO VIDEO DESIGN

VIVATICKET

IMPACT AWARDS SUPPORTER

CHARCOALBLUE
THEATRICAL INNOVATION | ESTD 2004

DELEGATE TRAVEL BURSARIES

Proudly sponsored by NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Queensland Government

Government of South Australia

CreateSA

NSW GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DESIGN PARTNER

Hours After

TOUR PRODUCING TRAINING SUPPORT

Australian Government | Creative Australia

PRESENTER TRAINING PROGRAM SUPPORT

CIRCUITWEST

APAM 2026

Australian Government | Creative Australia

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BUSINESS EVENTS PERTH

AUSTRALIA

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ASEAN-Australia Centre

creativeNZ
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

GOETHE INSTITUT

Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Coalar
Council on Australia Latin America Relations

Invest & Trade WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Technology Partner

d&b audiotechnik

Design Partner

Hours After

Venue Partners

City of Fremantle | WAFAC WALYALUP FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE

MOORES BUILDING ART SPACE

ARTS AND CULTURE TRUST

Australian Delegate Travel Bursaries

Tasmanian Government

Queensland Government

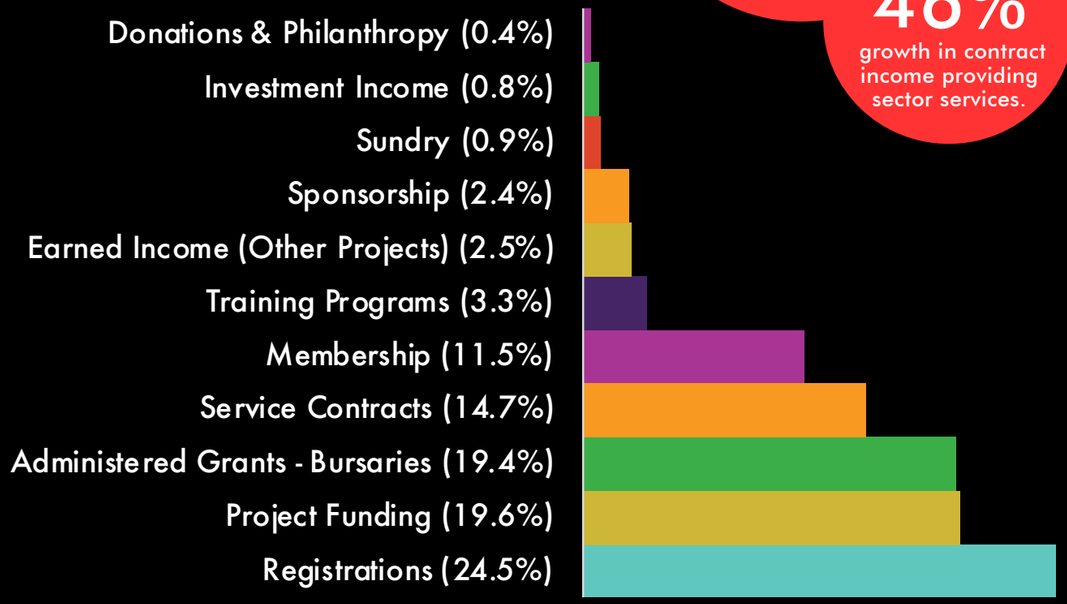
Government of South Australia

CreateSA

Proudly sponsored by NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

NSW GOVERNMENT

INCOME STREAMS



$520K+
distributed to more than 200 people to support attendance at APAX and APAM.

46%
growth in contract income providing sector services.

10%+
growth in number of members and membership income.

91%
growth in annual turnover.

APAX 2025, Image by Alex Sibbison.

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the Year Ended 30 June 2026

On behalf of the Board of Management, I present the Treasurer's Report for Australian Performing Arts Centres Limited, trading as Performing Arts Connections Australia (PAC Australia), for the year ended 30 June 2026.

This is my first report as Treasurer. I thank Ian English for his five years of leadership in the role. He has left a strong foundation for financial oversight, and I appreciate the work that went into it. I also thank him for the advice and handover he provided to me.

This report summarises the result and our financial position. It should be read alongside the audited financial statements. All figures are in Australian dollars.

Financial Performance Overview

The original budget anticipated a return to break-even or small surplus position after the previous years of planned investment. That was our starting point, but the year brought a mix of cost pressures, new commitments and the challenge of delivering APAM for the first time.

PAC Australia recorded a deficit of $54,649, compared with $22,053 in 2024/25.

The single biggest contributor to this result was the unanticipated inclusion in the 2025/26 financial year by the auditors of an additional organisational payroll cycle, accounting for approximately $30,000, or more than half of the eventual $54,649 deficit.

The first of our contracted deliveries of APAM has clearly had a significant impact on year-on-year revenue and expenditure.

Revenue rose by $1,278,303 to $2,688,674 while expenses rose by $1,310,899 to $2,743,323.

Government grant income, including direct financial support through bursaries secured for APAX and APAM delegates, was $962,411, conference receipts $706,440, and service agreement income $394,750. Revenue categories are presented differently from the original 2024/25 statements, so total revenue provides the clearer year-on-year comparison.

Very happily, membership subscriptions increased by $36,101, from $272,182 to $308,283. Membership income remains a critical source of revenue for the organisation.

The organisation's largest expenses include conference expenses which increased from $502,731 to $1,256,724 and employee benefits expense which increased from $755,742 to $1,266,255, clearly influenced by the addition of APAM delivery.

There were other contributing factors to the full year result. We took on dedicated staff to strengthen international engagement to ensure high levels of participation rates at our first APAM. Insurance costs increased, and we invested in critical IT and cybersecurity. The number of complimentary registrations was higher for APAM than anticipated (an investment in ensuring a successful first APAM) and the average ticket price was lower than anticipated. These pressures affected the result, despite tight management of the rest of our expenses.

This was the first time PAC Australia delivered APAM. We were working with some unknowns, and not every outcome could reasonably have been predicted, in addition to the organisation's commitment to ensuring a successful first delivery, paving the way for 2028 and 2030.

Global economic headwinds also affected our share portfolio. While investment income was $18,945, compared with $16,735 last year, the portfolio itself recorded a fair value loss of $12,558, compared with a gain of $73,782 in 2024/25. This loss is recorded in other comprehensive income, not in the $54,649 deficit. Together, the deficit and fair value loss produced a total comprehensive loss of $67,207.

Regular external advice contributes to organisational discussion on the management of our cash and share investments. We remain confident in our investments but do from time to time review the mix and make changes as required and based on advice.

It should be noted that an excellent result from APAX in Darwin helped underpin a difficult year.

Financial Position

Net assets at 30 June 2026 were $429,463, down from $496,670. The $67,207 reduction reflects the deficit and investment revaluation loss.

Assets: Total assets were $1,140,627, compared with $1,351,983 at the previous year end.

Current Assets: Cash and cash equivalents fell from $381,155 to $162,342. Trade and other receivables increased from $13,715 to $109,198. Comparisons only provide a guide of the position, given common fluctuations at the end of financial year, particularly depending on the timing of the delivery of APAX. Current assets of $498,189 were below current liabilities of $697,855 by $199,666.

Investments: Financial assets totalled $816,901, comprising $174,463 in funds at call and $642,438 in shares and managed funds. The funds at call are reported separately from cash and cash equivalents. Together, cash and funds at call were $336,805 at year end.

Liabilities: Total liabilities fell from $855,313 to $711,164.

Deferred Income: Income received in advance fell by $198,477 to $490,427. This includes government grants, conference income, membership fees and other funding. These amounts relate to future obligations and should not be treated as unrestricted reserves.

Employee Provisions: Current and non-current employee benefit provisions totalled $117,758, compared with $72,539 a year earlier.

Cash Flow Statement

Operating activities used $308,496 in cash, compared with an inflow of $342,490 in 2024/25. Higher receivables and the reduction in income received in advance were major contributors to the difference between the deficit and operating cash outflow.
Investing activities provided a net $89,683. Overall, cash and cash equivalents fell by $218,813 to $162,342. The lower cash balance and current asset shortfall make careful cash flow management important, particularly around the timing of grants, membership receipts and event expenditure.

Conclusion

This was a demanding year, with substantially higher income and expenditure and new responsibilities for the organisation. We retained a substantial financial asset base and positive net assets, but the deficit and lower cash balance deserve attention. The priority is to protect members' funds, apply the lessons from our first APAM delivery and keep cash flow and costs under close review. A return to a balanced result remains the goal.
I thank Katherine Connor, Lynda de Koning and the staff for a great year, and my fellow Board members for their work and support. I look forward to working with them to support our members while keeping a clear focus on financial sustainability.

John Glenn
Treasurer, PAC Australia

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

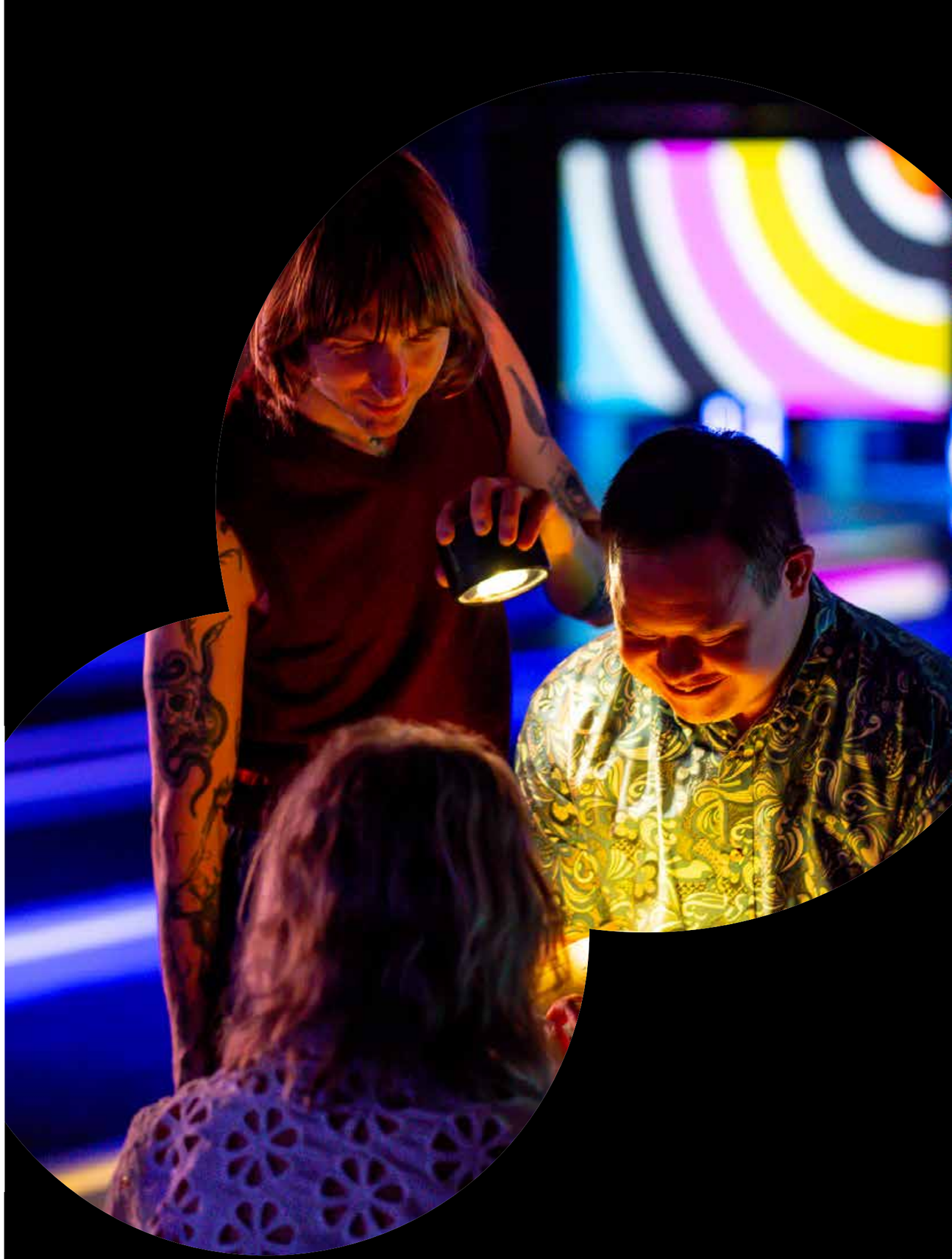
For the Year Ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Revenue	**2,688,674**	1,410,371
Conference expenses	**(1,256,724)**	(502,731)
Consultants and contractor's fees	**(98,776)**	(47,495)
Employee benefits expense	**(1,266,255)**	(755,742)
Other	**(121,568)**	(126,456)
Deficit before income tax	**(54,649)**	(22,053)
Income tax expense	**-**	**-**
Deficit for the year	**(54,649)**	(22,053)
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss	**(12,558)**	73,782
Fair value gain/(loss) on financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income		
Total other comprehensive income for the year	**(12,558)**	73,782
Total comprehensive income for the year	**(67,207)**	51,729

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	**162,342**	381,155
Trade and other receivables	**109,198**	13,715
Other assets	**52,186**	53,600
Financial assets	**174,463**	268,599
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**498,189**	717,069
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Financial assets	**642,438**	634,914
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	**642,438**	634,914
TOTAL ASSETS	**1,140,627**	1,351,983
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	**102,979**	93,870
Other financial liabilities	**490,427**	688,904
Provision for employee benefits	**104,449**	66,652
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	**697,855**	849,426
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES Provision for employee benefits	**13,309**	5,887
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	**13,309**	5,887
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**711,164**	855,313
NET ASSETS	**429,463**	496,670
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Reserves	**273,726**	286,284
Accumulated funds	**155,737**	210,386
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	**429,463**	496,670



Restless Dance Theatre perform Guttered, Image by Tashi Hall.
Back Cover: Rosina Possingham, Vitalstatistix, *Exposure*, Image by Branch Nebula.

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