

ARTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*an independent
voice for the arts*

SA Performance Makers Forum 2012 Report

prepared by Jennifer Greer Holmes and Jane Howard
for The Arts Industry Council of South Australia

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Executive Summary

The SA Performance Makers Forum was held at Adelaide College of the Arts on Friday 7th of September 2012. The Forum was presented by the Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA), supported by a \$5,000 grant from Arts SA as well as in-kind support and \$300 from Theatre Network Victoria. The forum was organised by a committee comprising: Craig Harrison, Deputy Chair AICSA and Manager Artform Development, Country Arts SA, Andy Packer, Artistic Director, Slingsby, Steve Mayhew, Artistic Director Kumuwuki/Big Wave Regional Arts Conference, Geordie Brookman, Artistic Director, State Theatre Company of SA and Jennifer Greer Holmes, independent arts manager. The committee prepared a list of topics based on similar events which took place in 2009 and 2010 that were then shortlisted using Survey Monkey and voted on by the sector. Jennifer Greer Holmes coordinated the program including the venue, guest speakers, catering and documentation on the day and then prepared a report with assistance from Jane Howard. Guest speakers included The Honorable Lord Mayor Stephen Yarwood,, Nicole Beyer, Director, Theatre Network of Victoria and Danielle Madsen, The Australian Centre of Social Innovation.

Method

Nine topics were selected by survey for discussion sessions: Vacant & Empty Spaces; Personal Sustainability; Resilient Artists; Arts SA: The Changing SA Landscape; Cultural Leadership in SA; How can we make people want art as much as beer?; Curated performance space in SA; How can we influence the political landscape in SA?; Producers: The Changing SA Landscape; Use of local artists by SA festivals and venues. Approximately fifty performance makers attended during the day representing a broad range of artistic practice. Performance makers chose roundtable sessions about the topics of most relevance to their practice. Each roundtable was facilitated and documented by a representative from the organizing committee.

Themes and recommendations

Recurring themes and recommendations that emerged from a number of the sessions were:

- investment of \$2 million in the middle sector of the arts in South Australia
- the need for a central, well equipped (portable floor and rig), curated, 120-200 seat performance space
- the need for a central, administered, rehearsal and resource space
- upgrade government owned Queens Theatre and alternative spaces within the Adelaide Festival Centre
- adequate funding for content as well as infrastructure to boost the reputation of South Australian arts
- advocacy to progress arts policy across the three levels of government and the major political parties
- a consistent longer term framework for arts in South Australia
- arts practitioners communicating to share resources, knowledge, artistic processes and support

The outcomes of each topic are presented below in a raw, unprocessed and unedited form so that the reader can gain an insight into the thoughts and perceptions of those contributing to the roundtable discussions. It is acknowledged that the dialogue at the roundtables is based on the opinions of the contributors and as such may contain some inaccuracies. Where this potentially occurs the words such as “perceived” or “in the opinion of” have been inserted. Key action points are listed for each topic.

This report builds on the work of the previous 12 May 2011 Independent Performance Makers weekend.

Vacant & Empty Spaces

Abstract

Adelaide was identified as missing an accessible space where artists from different disciplines can come together to share resources: including office space, studios, and performance spaces. There is significant concern not only for the lack of suitable and flexible presentation spaces, but also spaces that can be used for rehearsals and development.

There are many spaces that are recognized as being well suited to artists' needs, but many are inaccessible: Renew Adelaide has found some landlords won't return calls, and that assumes that the owner can be identified. In looking at these spaces, there was concern as to the amount of energy that would be required from artists, taking away from their practice, and the role of a financially backed administrator was noted as one of importance. An investigation into current government assets was requested, seeing if any existing spaces would be suitable for offices, rehearsals, and/or performance.

Venues such as Erin Fowler and Amber Cronin's upcoming space The Mill, Urban Myth's new home at the Goodwood Institute, and the AFC's new initiative to open black space up were identified as places to keep an eye on, to support, and to forge relationships with.

Summary

We all drive past lots of vacant sheds, warehouses, mechanics shops and think *there is something waiting to be made there*.

What are we missing? What don't we have in Adelaide? And how can a vacant or empty space fill that? An accessible space that artists from different mediums can come together, and share the resources of that space: office, studios, and a café. Local enough that people can access it.

The discussion raised the issue of three performance spaces in Adelaide that are perceived by some to be mismanaged: [The Bakehouse](#), [Holden Street](#), and [Higher Ground](#). They could all be something, but they're not. We need to talk about spaces that are currently operated and fitted out as well as empty spaces.

The difficulties are questions of ownership and investment. How can the industry influence management when we're not the ones putting money into the space? There are places that have worked in the past: the Red Shed was an extraordinary place to go. Provocative and alive. Should they be being better utilized?

We're looking for more than simply performance space: we're looking for a base.

What are the spaces predominantly? Are we referring to spaces for artists and practitioners to create? Or to network and collaborate? Or are they for the public to come and view work, too? There are lots of different ideas and needs.

Erin Fowler and Amber Cronin are setting up a "multi-arts hub" called [The Mill](#): visual artists, dance, performance space, and networking resources. This space will be focusing on the creative stage and sharing resources rather than a performance space: less of a public space, about incubation and residencies, and artists connecting. They would also like to have office-supported residencies.

[Vitalstatitix](#) was cited as an organisation that developed within an empty space at Port Adelaide. They also have residencies and other programs.

The "German model" was spoken about: a very rough conversion of an old building into office and studio space, provided with electricity, water and Wi-Fi, relatively open access. These spaces are about the networking and communal element.

Arts SA ran an initiative with the Adelaide City Council about ten years ago where artists could get access to empty space on Hindley Street to present work for free, but that isn't running anymore. [Black Lung](#) running a show in the 2007 Adelaide Fringe on Hindley St was cited as ruining a lot of relationships between building owners and artists, as they trashed the space, leaving it as a bomb site.

It was suggested that [Renew Adelaide](#) has found some landlords won't return calls; they don't want people to utilise their buildings temporarily; real estate agents don't care. There are the added problems of finding out who owns space, and the time to broker and then fix up space: artists are too busy making their own work. People who do invest often run out of steam: how do we stop this from happening?

Do we need to look at places just in the city? When you move out of the city prices drop, and Vitals was started in Port Adelaide partially for this reason. Yet Port Adelaide was cited as being seen as distant. You need a place that feels central. On the issue of rates for rent, it was noted that the Bakehouse is owned by the Communist Party of Australia, and was originally offered on Peppercorn lease terms.

It was discussed that the space should be formalized, sustainable and something you can't be moved on from. Amazing communities can be created but are destroyed when the real estate sells: where is your community after that? It happens through bad management of assets.

There is a challenge in the balance between: VCA compliance, a lease without a redevelopment clause, and commercial leases. Somewhere between those things a space like The Mill can exist. The arts don't generate a commercial lease income, so they probably need to look at somewhere with a redevelopment clause they can have for two or three years that is compliant, because no one is going to spend the money to get it up to compliancy. The process is made more complex, too, because they have no start up capital.

[Urban Myth's](#) new venue was cited as being the result of something "quite extraordinary", where Glenn Hayden (AD of Urban Myth) cultivated relationships with individuals, and they now have a long-term lease in a refitted building. Goodwood is still seen as being "outside" of the city, though.

It was said it is worth seeing what buildings are already there *from a positive as well as a negative sense*: Goodwood Institute could be taken up and utilized by the community. They will be asking for a really minor financial commitment from artists.

It was discussed we need space for both creating and presenting work: what is the use of having space for one but not the other?

People spoke about presenting work in lounge rooms; the Botanic Gardens, and how there is a desperate need for mid-sized venues: bigger than [La Boheme](#) and smaller than The Playhouse.

The Balfour's space as the 2008 Fringe Factory (Hub) was cited as extraordinary, while other years the spaces selected for the hub sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. Does the fact there is no consistency mean people don't know where to look? How to plan ahead?

In February/March it is an issue across the board that people can't get a theatre: in 2013, State Theatre Company will be constructing their own venue, but they can't do that every year.

There was discussion about the "missing venue": somewhere between 120 and 200 seats – "almost viable" in a funded environment, with the possibility of being utilized by companies such as State and Brink.

It was discussed if there is need for a performance space that can be used by State, Brink, Windmill and Patch but also the independent sector: creating communication, cross-over, and an idea that audiences will know of a space or a venue because they know State is there with their massive marketing power. But who will put their hand up to find that space, to run it, to pull it together?

Across the industry, there needs to be a certain amount of quality control. Bad cleanliness standards at Higher Ground were cited, along with outdated electrical equipment at the Bakehouse.

For dancers and choreographers, there is also a consideration for needing space with sprung flooring. We need to think about spaces that are accessible for other performance types, including circus. Josh at [CirKidz](#) was cited as a person to talk to about access to space with their new venue in Bowden. From this, it was noted negotiations with the council could be a risk: who knows where it will be in three years?

[The Forge](#) at Marryatville was cited as a brilliant space, but administratively put up too many barriers for artists to work with: any 'empty spaces' found perhaps therefore need to be artist run. While some companies have used it, it hasn't been utilized the way the school originally said it would be.

It was questioned as to how could spaces that the [AFC](#) be used? The theatres themselves are too expensive. The AFC will be creating a program to activate black spaces by artists and communities for rehearsals and so forth.

Part of what is missing in the theatre sector is decent rehearsal space. The State Theatre's rehearsal room will be full 49 weeks of 2013: not taking into account education workshops, auditions, and other things the space needs to be used for. This exists across the arts sector, including music. [AC Arts](#) and [Carclew](#) can be wonderful, but are also quite limited in what they can offer.

[Metro Arts](#) in Brisbane was suggested as an ideal model: several small performance spaces, rehearsal space, galleries, offices and hot desks, a bar, in the CBD. It is funded by a combination of Brisbane City Council and Arts Queensland; and has a cross-section of support from across the local industry, where the resource rich companies could provide people and resources.

BCC was also discussed in their part ownership of Metro Arts, [The Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts](#), and the [Brisbane Powerhouse](#).

The Adelaide City Council was noted as a "missing voice" in a lot of these conversations, but they struggle to see past the AFC, the Festival and the Fringe. It is about the argument of year-round culture, which all other states have. With Sandy Verschoor at the ACC, there is a lot of hope there will be changes.

Could a hub have both consumers and funders in the same space, for example the Helpmann Academy sharing space with artists?

[Tuxedo Cat](#) was discussed: they have mid-sized theatres, and a bar, and the potential for rehearsal space. Why isn't that used? It was discussed how it is a great space, but the people who run it can be hard to communicate and arrange meetings with. From this, it was discussed that there is a lot to be said about artist-run spaces, but there is also a lot to be said for good administrators. Is there a space for independent administrators and artists to meet up and forge connections?

It was discussed if the State Government should be driving or supporting these spaces? The point was made that funding organizations are there to distribute funding, not to lobby; while some argued that organisations like Arts Victoria are also helping to create the culture. It was said there is a lot of leverage, a lot of brokerage, and a lot of mainline support that governments can offer, but unless they have specific people to run spaces or initiatives other factors will come into play.

The [Fourwords](#) warehouse operated on temporary licenses, to run performance and eighteen months ago put in an application for a six-month license. They received the application back three weeks ago: 13 months later for the six months that had already elapsed. If had been an application for Feb, it was said, there would have been no issues but because it was July it got pushed from one desk to another.

The Play-See-Bo readings at La Boheme were cited as filling a gap: giving artists exposure to work they wouldn't have access to in other circumstances, and they got that space from leveraging personal relationships. We need to develop like-minded groups, we need to better utilize what's there, and we just have to go ahead and do it.

If the idea is the creation of a multipurpose space in a place owned by government or a private benefactor, we need funding for administration. If you have someone who wants to volunteer that's great, but those skills aren't going to remain.

The spaces Arts SA owns are: the buildings on North Tce, the Queens Theatre, Her Majesty's Theatre, the AFC, and the Lion Arts Centre. There are government dormant spaces, but not necessarily Arts SA spaces: e.g. the schools that are moving for the Super Schools. Could Arts Industry Council engage Arts SA about what is there, and how could these spaces be activated?

If Arts SA are interested in Adelaide artists making work, they need to fund an administrator. This role was discussed as being essential. Could there be a venue version of MAPS – someone providing venue services to a wide range? Can AICSA lobby for this?

It was also raised is there a possibility to look at Small Business funding? What can we discuss with ACC, in terms of having a 'vibrant city'? Ask for a small amount of money to pay someone to run a space. How do we, also, get ACC to trust the artists, so it isn't administrated top down from council? Arts has to be bottom up: from the artists, not from bureaucracy.

Action points:

- There is a great deal of passion, desire, and need, but we suffer from a lack of direction, and that's probably because we are so diverse in what we need.
- Can we investigate the use of Arts SA / other Government departments' current assets through AICSA?
- Can we also look at the possibility of administrative funding through ACC?
- Making sure long-term conversations can happen between independent artists and large funded organizations, and looking at models of community access programs.

Personal Sustainability, Resilient Artists

NB no audio was recorded for this session, only the action points are available.

Action points:

- Think long-term and believe in your own self worth.
- Arm yourself with diverse skills.
- Find inspiration in all creative disciplines.

Arts SA: The Changing SA Landscape

Abstract

The discussion primarily focused on the allocations of money in the independent and small to medium organisation sectors of the SA landscape. [MAPS](#) was briefly touched on as a positive, but there was some contention that the scheme which helped to really develop [Slingsby](#) and [The Border Project](#) had been removed. There was a great deal of concern, too, into the fact that Arts SA triennial funding is tied into Australia Council triennial funding, so decisions aren't made at a level which represents local industry.

Contentions also surround the Festivals Commissioning Fund, and it was questioned if this was the best place to inject money into the sector. The amount of time which must be dedicated towards writing grants from independent artists and small companies was discussed, with agreement this was not the ideal way to allocate funding.

There were worries about the need to move interstate for support and presenting partners, and there is no way to forward plan with out an official policy in place. What pathways are there for local artists?

Ways of creating change at policy level were discussed: primarily through direct communication with MPs who have expressed interest in the arts from all parties. Some warned against the use of the word policy, and suggested a more neutral word like framework would be better suited.

Summary

There was a brief run down on things that have changed in the SA landscape. These include production and organisation funding, disability and community programs, the amount of project funding available, the development of the Festivals Commissioning Fund, and the instatement of MAPS - perceived by some to have been taken from the pool of money that was previously the Theatre Development Scheme.

[Managing and Producing Services](#) is shared between [Arts SA](#) and [Australia Council](#), supports a Producer to assist in the creation and delivery of dance and theatre works by independent SA artists. In SA it will be run by Sasha Zhara with [Insite Arts](#).

Concern was expressed that company funding in SA needs to have a significant partner, and that is primarily Australia Council. Therefore companies on notice or who have lost funding with Australia Council won't be able to be funded by Australia Council, which means decision making happens at a national, rather than a local level. What could artists recommend to avoid that so decision making that happens in SA?

This happens because Arts SA believes without a partner these companies won't have enough money to run as a business.

The one-off [Theatre Development Scheme](#) was cited as a wonderful opportunity for three developing arts companies – Ladykillers (now defunct), [Border Project](#), and [Slingsby](#). These companies were nurtured in SA before they moved to Federal funding, and this was seen as a nationally leading program. The trouble now is that they receive Australia Council support, that Australia Council funding becomes the primary factor as to whether they will continue to receive ongoing support in SA.

The [Festivals Commissioning](#) money was noteworthy due to the fact that the core business model of a festival is selling tickets, while for many small companies selling tickets is important, but not as important as art-form development. It was seen as interesting that there was a large pool of money which was about selling a large amount of tickets in a small amount of time: how does a relationship between the [Adelaide Festival](#) and a company such as the Border Project work? Do the two support each other in the best way possible? How do we create models that create ideas over a longer period of time instead of a short window?

The fact that the weight of the decision making for organisation funding rests on Australia Council, while the weight of the funding in terms of dollar amounts rests on Arts SA was cited as problematic.

Questions were asked: is there any discussion within Arts SA as to the lack of venues? And is the only possible business model for creating a company looking at aiming for triennial funding? How are small companies and independents balanced against each other? It was cited that often both are going for the same grants

throughout the year, taking away time from core activities of the small companies, and placing independent artists in competition with applicants with a much greater resource base.

For independent artists not connected to a company (and playwrights in particular), there was a concern expressed that they must leave the state because there is great opportunity to develop work as an SA based artist, but there are no companies who will produce and stage the work. This can feel isolating; and Arts SA may have invested money in the creation, but there are no opportunities to go further.

Tight funding for small to medium organisations was noted as a concern. In Victoria there are case studies to see what the impact of a 3.5% cut was – in SA there was a 25% cut across the small to mediums, but the full impact of that has yet to be seen. Could an action be to see improvement in that area, as well as in project funding?

The word “competition” was brought up as a concerning word. Art as an industry is not efficient and sustainable, is there too much emphasis on business models and connections with economics?

Some people said that looking at efficiency isn't a bad thing: if funding was organised in a different way so small companies didn't have much of their time taken up with grant writing it was proposed more employees at small organisations could work part time and this money leveraged could go back to supporting work by independent artists. This was noted as a bigger question than Arts SA could deal with, but is an interesting thing to look at.

It was noted in the Arts Organisations Review that some of the criteria seems to have moved towards more investment in artistic vibrancy, and the conversations have moved away from business models. This picks up on ideas of being able to support things which are emerging and exciting: the tension is in how is that balanced?

Some expressed concern how, culturally, older career and experienced artists are respected, supported, and sustained: the notion that you can have a career beyond working as a triennially funded Artistic Director.

There was concern that in SA we can exist in a vacuum when it comes to policies and what money is being spent where: it would be nice to know that, in three years time, there would be X amount of money. This would give independent artists the ability to forward plan, and organisations knowledge there will be an increase to their CPI.

It was said, that money has been able to be sunk into the arts for film and Festivals, which maybe couldn't have been siphoned off if there was a strict policy. There is concern, however, that policy couldn't be developed with the Opposition: developing one opens the door to many problems.

There was concern where companies have grown in five or six years in a small state with a small population: where are pathways leading? And does having Australia Council as a driver simply compound these problems?

It was suggested all the Key Organisations need to have some national impact, and need to look at what they are doing nationally. Being in South Australia can be an economically tough place to operate from to compete nationally.

At a policy level, there was concern that if we don't have a policy we can never wrestle the bigger arguments: we need to say where we want to be, and what we want to build. People are seriously questioning whether there are pathways for them in Adelaide to develop a sustainable career in the arts: and it was noted that many people don't feel there are opportunities, and that's why they leave.

\$2million dollars towards the middle sector was noted as something that could transform the industry for a proportionally very low amount of the State Budget.

It was asked if Project Officers at Arts SA once held stronger lobbying positions, and if that has been lost? From this, what are the mechanisms to be involved in decision making as a sector, and where do we go to be useful? This is why some believe developing a policy would be useful: the process would involve consultation, a prime time for the sector to think about and contemplate what they want, for the bureaucracy to do the same, and for the politicians to take note.

There was discussion about the party differences, and how each will be working towards writing their platforms. It was stated artists need to start talking to and lobbying members of parliament. While Arts SA can put up bids on money and speak to the impact funding decisions will have on the industry, they are not actually part of the conversations – they exclusively happen within the parties.

It was suggested that to change what is happening in Arts SA it isn't about talking to Arts SA, but about talking to politicians. The sports industry was identified as employing professional political lobbyists: do the arts need to do that? Can that happen through [AICSA](#)?

AICSA currently employs one person one day a week and is independently funded through membership fees and small fundraisers: as an organisation it is very fragile. If it could get stronger, it could be in a position to write policy and talk to politicians, or at least be in a position to hold conversations to develop that policy.

The SA Film industry was identified as having a “golden era” in the last five years, in response to the flexibility afforded when a policy isn't in place.

From the Minister's point of view, too, the proliferation of Festivals has been a positive in terms of access for audiences in this state. But the next task on the agenda needs to be the eco-culture of the local artists: if we don't put this in the context of artists for the whole community, it was said, that the argument will never get any further. There was a concern that in fifteen years Adelaide will be a city where we only buy in work, and this is a huge problem. This was noted as a narrative to tell without being anti-Festival or anti-organisations. It was also noted that changes in the film and Festivals industry do highlight what a powerful and passionate Minister can achieve.

SA was cited as somewhere that has always been a great starting (and finishing) place – it's the middle ground that is missing.

On policy, it was noted that there is always a fear about something called “a policy”, and a level of interrogation that surrounds “a policy” that isn't to such an extent if it is given another name, such as a “framework.” The National Arts and Health Framework was provided as an example, where that word was carefully selected. The word policy indicates money, commitment, bind, and stricture. It was stated that the delay in the release of the National Cultural Policy is making it hard for state governments to articulate and contemplate their own views.

It was noted at the 2011 Australian Theatre Forum the energy in the room felt like it was directed towards policy, and that everyone from independents to major organisations were standing together to contribute to a major document. For participants, this created a real commitment to going to future state and national forums; each time it feels like the industry moves forward. On the other side, there was concern that so much energy was taken up last year in submitting towards that Policy, and now it's not known where that would go.

Some final thoughts were articulated:

- \$2million to middle sector, including reinstating organisations with CPI.
- Invite more diverse groups to these conversations.
- Promote the value of the arts across government.
- Investment in organisations dealing with ideas rather than organisations that are dealing with the economics of those ideas.
- Less festivals, and a venue – including rehearsal space.
- Centralised infrastructure to pool resources for independent artists.
- How can we convince the Minister and the government that the \$10million earmarked for the AFC (or some portion of it) is better invested in the independent sector?

Action Items:

- AICSA to publish a list of MPs who are sympathetic to the arts, and lobby them.
- AICSA to invite them to discuss issues with above list.
- Research who is developing the arts platforms within the political parties.
- Talk to all sides of politics about the arts.
- Develop a SA Arts and Cultural Framework document and present it to all MPs
- Lobby for a \$2m investment in the middle sector.

Cultural Leadership in SA

Abstract

Cultural Leadership was discussed as a broad term, recently introduced to Australia via research and publications which have come out of the UK.

The Australia Council Theatre Board have embraced the term and have applied funding opportunities to programs that explore cultural leadership, both for organisations and individuals.

The discussion covered a breadth of matters ranging from a discussion about leadership in general, the absence of artists in big picture discussions in think tanks about the future of the state, the benefits of joining with aligned organisations to form lobbying blocks, the position of SA as a former cultural leader and its perceptions now and examples of cultural leadership programs and events.

Summary

Cultural Leadership is a relatively new term in SA, and has recently been adopted by the Theatre Board of Australia Council, more so than other boards, and is largely due to the research that has come out of the UK on the matter. The director of the Theatre Board, Lyn Wallis thinks it is worthwhile to introduce this thinking to the Australian landscape. In terms of funding, there are funding streams that Australia Council has introduced (which support organisations and individuals in professional development and skills development. [Country Arts SA](#) is currently running a program funded through this [stream](#).

The discussion began by discussing leadership broadly. It was suggested that the definitions that come from the UK may not be suited to the Australian landscape, and that we can take the best bits and apply them to our situation.

Cultural leaders aren't necessarily Ministers. They could be a middle manager in an organisation. Many questions were posed. Leadership to where? What is our responsibility to culture? How are artists in dialogue about the bigger issues in this country? For example the revolution in education, and the things that Rann did in his time, we had lots of [Thinkers In Residence](#), programs about Urban Planning and progressive projects and if you look at any of those think tanks and panels; where are the artists in all of the conversations about where this state is heading? Their absence speaks volumes about the value that is placed on artists and their ability to influence public policy. Cultural leadership is more than leading an organisation or a management career; it is also about leadership in a wider sense, of participating in dialogue about the big picture vision for the state. There's also the reflection on SA's former position as the festival state, as a leader and now it seems that we are just laughed at, even though the work that comes out of the state is excellent. The new organisation called [Festivals Adelaide](#), which is made up of 10 major festivals, and is intent on redressing the balance. It was suggested that SA has a major image problem; every other state's festivals "feel better," which makes SA feel bad. We are no longer perceived as a cultural leader. Someone mentioned that lots of the interstate festivals have taken the good things that SA did and are doing them with more money, such as [Festival of Ideas](#). There is no suggestion that the responsibility to improve this falls to the artists. There was some disagreement between participants at this point in the discussion. Cultural leadership can also be about pushing the form and the way that they are doing the art, and then we also have cultural leaders such as Rob Brookman and Ian Scobie who made big changes not just by what they were doing but also by how they did it (e.g. [WOMADelaide](#)), Margie Fischer with [Feast Festival](#), along with the other people who look at how the art fits in with the community. That is where SA does have an edge.

It was suggested that anyone who runs a company is a cultural leader because they are shaping the way that society digests culture and they make decisions that make an impact on artists and the wider community. Festivals Adelaide can bring together a group of organisations to have an influence on policy. The ability to band together is an important strength, in the same way that [AMPAG](#) does it. They get together four times a year, and discuss the major issues that are affecting them at the time and decide as a cohesive block who to lobby to have these issues addressed and changed and if this was able to happen on a local level would be excellent. The notion that SA's festivals have influenced the way that interstate festivals are now run, should be hugely flattering for the city. We need to be looking to the future. For example, we had a drama centre built around the German Model, we saw that it worked and now every other theatre company around the country has utilised that. We had a festival model that worked, and everyone is using that, so instead of now trying to catch up to the pack, we need to be reaching forward. Some of that reaching forward is already happening, it is just under-recognised. For example, SA's disability arts scene is absolutely at the forefront of the national disability arts landscape, and has been a major shift and is "kicking goals" - the projects that come out of SA are often funded and recognised nationally. Youth arts is very strong at the moment, and for the first time the three

companies are coming together and initiating things at the level of tertiary education and acknowledging that these companies are touring internationally. It's been 40 years since Dunstan kicked it off, and that the children's theatre companies have enjoyed bipartisan support. We have a brewing pot of youth arts activity that operates at a national level, and it could be influential that these companies get together and operate as a united force (as Festivals Adelaide is doing) so that some sort of identity happens. We all work in little enclaves without sharing our vision, and no critical mass happens until you join together.

There needs to be a line drawn between the two. In the 1970s there were the big gestures, the ones that focused national attention on SA. And it is unlikely that in the next 20 years we will have the resources to have these sorts of grand gestures. There can be a lack of honesty and self-reflection about where SA sits. Dunstan's shadow is so vast and so long, and so rightly celebrated that it has been used as a scapegoat for not doing more for a long time, and finally we are getting to the end of that shadow. If you go to Brisbane and look at the investment, they are making the grand gestures now. We are a smaller state and we just don't have the resources to make those big gestures, so we have to think more cleverly and band together. The smallness can be an advantage. We aren't recognised for running the best festivals. No-one can take away the fact that geographically we have the best city for running these types of festivals but we are not taking full advantage of that, and we need to look at ourselves honestly, we've got a foundation to ask "what are our great strengths? what are we doing well now?" If we band together, what we may find is that the landscape will suggest itself to us that this is the most viable way forward.

Festivals Adelaide required the festivals to put in money to hire someone to run it, as well as some funding from Adelaide City Council and Arts SA which enabled them to get together and start to address the fact that they didn't feel like they were any good. People from interstate laugh at Adelaide. But cultural leadership isn't necessarily about the best show, the best festival. It's about a lot more that underpins to create that. It wasn't suggested that it is a competition, but SA is no longer particularly respected for cultural leadership or art making. Within young people's theatre, it is.

There is a perception of apathy; historically [CAN](#) used to lobby and run conferences and all the organisations had more input. But perhaps we're just not talking about it enough and there is a very top down view of how things get done. We now just do the things that the funding bodies want us to do. Another discussion was talking about how we get around the gatekeepers so that we can do things the way we want to. Cultural Leadership is about saying; we are not going to be told what to do. We are going to tell you what we want to do, and how are you going to support us to do that? An ideal model where politics and vision has come in to play has been the [Adelaide Film Festival](#). The strike rate of the films that have come out of the commissioning funding is tremendous; three films a year.

We need to be doing what nobody else is doing. We need to be taking much higher risks. It is beholden upon us to say in whatever area we practice, not how do we compete or get better but how do we lead against the way things are currently being done? How do we go in the opposite direction and come out the other end?

Country Arts SA got together with a small live arts organisation in Castlemaine called [Punctum](#). CASA is spending 12 months trying to articulate a practice for individual live artists who work in regional areas, and looking at how those artists can use strategies to get civic imagination and civic engagement happening in their own communities. There is funding from various stakeholders to fund these six artists to look at individual practice as well as the live art art-form within regional areas. They got that money was because no-one else was doing anything like it.

Another example is the Peter Sellars/Adelaide Festival [situation](#), where, had the Festival backed him; we'd be talking about it today as being such a visionary festival. That situation really did something to this state, in terms of the history of artistic directors and boards. "They got the appointment right but then they didn't back him." The discussion also outlined that there was a significant error of judgment about not programming any local artists, but overall it was agreed that he was talking massive risks and needed the infrastructural support to pull it off and that was not forthcoming. It's about being enabled to have the confidence to take risks. When this city has been electric, when it's been a national cultural leader, it's not because we've risen to the top of the pile and we've stayed there, it's when we are a place where ideas start. Speaking from a theatre context; there is an entire generation of theatre makers working all over the country who started here. There is no expectation that any of them are going to come back all the time. Instead of wishing they would, we should be saying, what's the next big risk to take; who is the next artist to push? We need to support more risk taking and acknowledge

that big isn't better. There are great things happening but they are much less public and much less celebrated. The city has become introverted. How does an introverted city express itself? It's a lack of reaching out. It's enormously important to have a cohesive well-supported local industry that reaches out to the rest of the world. It shouldn't be about the sector saying we have to protect things here; we have to protect our own patch of turf. Part of the reason that the youth sector is doing so well is because the three companies travel the world and reach out. There is a general lack of that happening more broadly across the arts sector. What is also missing is an engagement with community that allows that to happen. There has to be both. The lack of community theatre and community arts is impacting on the makers, in terms of what we do and how we do it. The arts feels very commercialized in terms of, "there's our festival/festival/festival and there's our audience and they're consuming and it's good" but is that a gate that stimeys creativity? An example is of an artist from Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills, which is mostly funded through the council, and for all the talk about leadership and innovation, which happens on a community level, but there is not funding to sustain it. A lot happens through goodwill, it's very different to overseas. There are the festivals, but where are the funds to support the little local companies who operate within small communities and have big impact?

When there is an absence of adrenalin, whether through fear or excitement, when there is a sense of things just being what they have been before, that's when there is a lack of vibrancy. There have been moments of that recently in Adelaide.

A great example of innovation and leadership came from [Barrio](#), which was a bar and didn't make any economic sense but what was brilliant about it was that it didn't separate community from artistic exchange. It was suggested that Feast Festival does this but that it's not valued because it's queer. There is something about the sustainability of these events, as well. The notion that these environments can continue is absurd when the people who run these spaces "nearly die" by about half way through. How do we find that feeling of adrenalin and excitement and pull that into our day-to-day, year round activities? The proliferation of festivals has create a mind set of local culture which is event based and people relate to the arts through the sense of event. How do you do a year's programme that is event after event when after each event we need rest time? Both the artist and audience burn out. If Barrio happened every weekend we would switch off from it. In the context of presenting a show at STCSA now, people need it to be an event. If you can't sustain that, you need to do less and you the events fuller.

Feast arose because it was a cultural event. Festivals for a specific thing, like the Film Festival, celebrate and generate different things. They need to be spread out. We need to recognise that they aren't a problem, they're an opportunity, but they have changed the way that people psychologically relate to art. Audiences seek to be engaged in a different way now, lots of them just want to be entertained, we need to re-engage them with the making and being part of the art. If you look at the Sellars festival and do a football analogy, when Port Adelaide lost so badly that they've never recovered, people want a grand final every week, because winners are grinders. The pressure is on to always be creating winners. We need to try to articulate what we are working towards and argue the validity of being lost for a while and that the work doesn't have the same sense of success.

Adaptive leadership is close to the artistic process which is about making something slowly, getting lost and working out what that might be, having an end point in view, getting to the end point and then re-evaluating the whole thing again, in order to actually push a little bit further than what you last did. When you read about "just leadership" not cultural leadership, you realise just how close it is to the artistic process. With cultural leadership, whether individual or organizational, we already have the language and the skills, it's just about recognising it and picking out what is not happening at the moment. What is just outside of our reach that we want to explore? How do we bring a couple of other things/people/organisations along with us? Then we reflect and then it's the cycle starting over.

Leadership is not always about being in front of everybody all of the time, it's actually taking a step back sometimes and leaving it to other people to come forward and then coming forward again. There should be always something just out of reach that we are striving for. We should be asking the hard questions of each other when we come together, and it may not be clear but to say, "Here is a sense of where I am wanting to get and an intuitive hunch of what I trying to reach for" and we should be able to articulate that. If we can't then there is a problem. The vibrancy of those processes could be much more shared. For example, when we make work over a long-term process, we can open up our processes and invite people into it. It's about how we talk about it. There is no reason why we couldn't have a full house of a one-hour rehearsal and the director articulating their vision for the work. But because we are a small city this can be hard because there are less opportunities and our natural impulse is to hold back, at crucial moments. One of the things that the "producer

model” does is force people to open up their processes, in order to get people to buy in. Now that Adelaide has an annual festival many of us aim for inclusion or we know we are going to have a difficult year, because we’re not going to be able to program from January to May. Part of that closing down and keeping your cards close to your chest is thinking “I’ve got to get that festival slot, I’ve got to keep my special idea just here and not float it out because essentially we know that we are in an environment where we are competing against each other for a really critical piece of exposure.” That’s where the issue that was raised earlier is relevant, the structure is determining the art making. And while that is true, there is a festival mentality in this state and we are going to have to “live it and love it”. The annual landscape is going to change SA significantly but there are national conversations that aren’t being had here. What are the national conversations that we could kick off? So everyone has got a festival now, that’s moot. Now it’s about what we can lead and look outside of the state and the country.

The impact on Adelaide is unique because the festivals elsewhere don’t change the eco-system. They are not such a big rock in a small pond. That aside, we are living with certain pressure points in a community that can lead us to conversations that nobody’s even thought of yet but are still translatable to the rest of the country and maybe even internationally. We need to embrace the problems, look at how we solve it and then say “well this is how we managed it in Adelaide” and suddenly we may find ourselves at the top of a conversation that nobody’s thought about before.

We have a finite range of practitioners, we all know each other personally, we don’t really talk about what we do and how we do it, but we should be opening up to each other’s practice and making something of the fact that we are an arts making hub with showcasing festivals. It was suggested that it is much more likely in the eastern states that they’d be holding the work close to their chests much more fervently than we do. But that point was refuted by some people saying that they don’t; it’s far more open and that’s because they feel big enough to survive.

What about turning it around? The companies that are going to be in the festivals, talking about what they’re planning and what they’re making and engaging with the festivals and the festival director, rather than waiting for them to pick what they want. Work together on when in the year to do things and be creative about how to work together. Even things such as STCSA and Brink’s opening nights in the Festival weren’t planned, luckily they don’t clash, but it was an accident. In a few years’ time when Adelaide Festival is part of the annual landscape, it will become like Sydney and Melbourne, and opening nights in those cities are very vocal and open, people say what they think straight away. Adelaide is not unique in the number of festivals that it has. Festivals Adelaide is based on the Edinburgh model and that is what we have that is unique.

As a practical example, [The Hive Labs](#) were put together to bring together filmmakers and non-film making artists. It took a while to come together but after a while people had really interesting conversations and events like this forum are really good for bringing people together to talk. Perhaps there is space for an event in Adelaide for artists to come together and talk for 3 or 4 days and people don’t bring their company or their projects, they come to share how they make their work in an environment which is just a conversation about making. It’s about embracing our limitations and weaknesses and taking advantages of them. Is there a structure whereby we can encourage each other and invite each other in to each other’s processes? It’s about meeting around the practice, a little bit like Adhocracy but even less structured, less outcome driven and demystifying process. Examples were cited about being able to spend time with artists such as Kate Champion or Roslyn Oades and the ripple effect of being able to witness and apply their processes, even after a relatively short time of exposure to them.

Action items:

- Bring together a number of orgs and independent artists (possibly in the Riverland) and make an application to the Cultural Leadership fund to explore practice and conversations about ideas.

How can we make people want art as much as beer?

Abstract

This conversation looked at the similarities between art and alcohol; across consumption, range, effect, marketing and need. Participants examined the perception of the arts by the wider public and discussed the need for an awareness campaign to remind people that they are arts consumers and how much they love the arts.

Summary

Participants in this conversation started by examining what people like about beer.

Reasons included; it makes things look good, things look different, changes your perspective, social lubricant, associated with relaxing and communication, it's ingrained in our culture, part of being Australian, fundamental to our society and national identity, it's simple; you know what you're going to get from a beer – you pay your money, you get a standard size, you know how it's going to happen, it's not challenging. You might not know what happens at the end! It allows people to share something of themselves and have that reflected back at them. It's social glue and an equalizer, you can be on the bones of your arse and like beer, but you could also be a fancy high-fallutin' person. It's accessible, it's on every street corner, through sport, every theatre. There's a huge range of beer, to suit every budget and taste.

An art and beer Venn diagram was then drawn, so the question was asked – what do people like about art? Changes your perspective and your outlook. Can be enlightening. Diverse. Makes you feel good. Takes you to other places. Connects you to the rest of the world. Enables expression. Beautiful. Ugly. Controversial. Provocative. Don't know what you'll get. Provides insight into other lives, cultures and times.

The conversation then explored the notion of predictability and the unknown; for example people know what to expect from a commercial musical or a ballet that has been performed for hundreds of years. It was noted that the scope of the discussion was not large enough to deal with the difference between art and entertainment, but it was acknowledged that there is some cross over and that in many cases; ways have already been found to make people like entertainment as much as beer (through massive marketing, which is why commercial musicals are successful – they spend around \$90k a week). If you walk into a pub you may not even be aware of the high levels of marketing and these companies have the luxury of only ever needing to market one type of product, e.g. Coca Cola markets Coke and its range of other soft drinks, it's not diverse. They're marketing who you will be if you drink Coke, or beer. They market the experience, which lots of arts organisations don't do. Is there something in drinking that pre-dates advertising, where people had home stills, and were looking for the high, the social experience, long before the mass-marketing and capitalist driven advertising phenomena? The advertising is about one brand versus another, but all the brands are part of one desirable pursuit which is core to lots of people's existence – and sits next to water, sleeping and air for the things that they need in their lives. Whereas the marketing is more about market share, "Drink my beer as opposed to their beer," and hijacks the desire.

The negatives social ramifications are huge, and when compared to the arts industry, the negative impacts are minimal (apart than for the artists!). Do people really think that people like beer more than art? If you think about radio and music and TV, is it more that they take art for granted, rather than the assumption that they like beer more?

The Industrial Revolution was the time when time was determined as work and play. Arts got determined as a fun pursuit, and outside of "normal" daytime office hours and has been trying to squeeze back in to being considered as "work" ever since, through having standard office hours even though most of what we do publically is after 7pm.

Including the broader arts, it is something that is part of most people's lives, for free – through radio, internet and free to air TV. People are consuming story telling all the time, in their cars, offices and homes. Now it's about convincing them to come out of their homes to consume it in a social setting. There is something about that parallel with beer there, and consuming it with friends to add to social cohesion.

It was considered that performing arts have shied away from the term community arts, there is less interaction and more a passive experience for the audience. Perhaps that is where performing arts organisations need to explore the relationship with the audience more to create a shared responsibility for the experience. The

difference between watching a TV program and a live performance is that during a performance you are an implicit part of the experience, because every performance is different and because of the energy exchange that occurs. Maybe that's also why commercial musicals are successful because it's a passive experience, like TV. Some of the participants question whether audiences really want to be implicated in the performance. It can be done incredibly successfully but it can be very dangerous and challenging for the audiences. Passive participation has been learnt. Kids watching TV can sometimes be very active but adults lose that and particularly in Australia we find the "Look behind you!" type of active participation passé. It was suggested that stand up comedy captures a different type of participation, and that the performing arts (specifically theatre makers) may be accused of having fallen into the trap of saying "You are the audience, sit quietly, we are on stage, we are the teachers, you have to come to us and bow down to us" ... but perhaps what we need to be looking for is a togetherness, not necessarily audience participation but a new entry point for audiences that introduces them to the performers on their level and being able to touch things on the set and handle props etc. which instantly creates a different experience.

When you open a can of beer, is the same as when the curtain raises, you're putting your trust in something. When you sit down and wait for the show to engage you, sometimes it doesn't. The first time you had a beer, did you like it? No, but society tells you that one day you will, so you keep trying. If you look at something like the Garden of Unearthly Delights, but replaced the beer with a handrail, the beer is just a device for people wanting an excuse to get together in a shared space, although statistically they are now raising more money in ticket sales than they are in booze sales.

It was suggested that the idea of engaging the audience is inherent in the very act of the actor walking on stage, the lights going down and the actor beginning to tell their story. The act of asking the audience to listen and "come with us". The notion that the way we look at this issue of engagement from a very polite white - Anglo - Saxon way was also raised; that audiences have been taught to behave in a certain way and if they choose not to, by calling out or talking, then the rest of the audience will police that behavior, and that is also engagement. It was noted that school's shows are so great to perform because the audience is less inhibited and more energetic. Children demonstrate their genuine response.

There may also be a case for reminding actors that it's not just about the actors "feeling it", the audience needs to feel it. It's worth remembering what the role of the audience is; sometimes they feel alienated, or the parameters aren't clear enough for the audience to be able to respond, they need to be comfortable enough to interact in the way that they want to. Examples were provided about musicians who request that applause is held until the end of the final movement of a piece but audiences feel that is their time to show their appreciation. The sensation of the hair standing up on the back of your neck when something exquisite happens on stage is similar to the sensation that beer might create. It might make you behave irrationally, you want to hug the person next to you, cry, call out.

It was at this point that the group asked themselves the question; as art makers, is the audience there for us? Or are we there for the audience? Artists are there to provide an experience that the audience is there to take but it's not about being in passive receipt of the art. It's a conversation, they will let you know how engaged they are. Audiences certainly don't want to be condescended; they want to feel like they've been treated with intelligence. But with beer, people drink to feel stupid.

The group concluded that the arts are as ingrained in our culture as beer is but is it the role of the arts to tell that to the public? Is the missing link that the link hasn't been drawn that obviously? Perhaps an approach that combines a number of companies' marketing teams aimed at reminding people how much they love art and what they can do to support it is in order. Links were drawn between another of the day's sessions wherein raising the profile of the arts was discussed and it was noted that an independent body such as AICSA was perfectly positioned to do this, rather than Arts SA. As an industry we need to do more lobbying and examples were given about other interest groups such as sports who pay lobbyists to make direct contact with MPs to achieve their industry's goals.

A collaborative tool such as ShoGo which aimed to do collective marketing was a good idea but is no longer around. The problem with the way it was run was that it expanded beyond the small to medium sector and promoted the commercial musicals and the big companies. It was suggested that the general public were unaware of the website (as were some people sitting at the table) and therefore it failed.

“Terroir” is something that the wine and boutique beer industries do very well, which is promoting that the particular characteristics of their product could not have come from anywhere else. Small to medium arts organisations produce in exactly the same way, they make boutique work, but they do not promote it in the same way; instead they compete with each other.

The reason that people have the third glass of wine at dinner or take drugs even when they know they are potentially harmful is that they are looking for an experience that is greater than life. Sam Shepard said “No one ever left a Rolling Stones concert asking what it meant” and people pay \$500 for that because they know they can’t get that experience anywhere else. Barrio did that, blending arts experiences with drinking. There are many perceptions of the arts, and if someone has a shit experience at their first show after being dragged along, then they may never return (same as tequila!). If a beer company sold bad beer, their sales would plummet. Our product is not the only thing that will impact on someone’s choice to buy the product. No matter how good the product is there are lots of other things influencing someone’s decision to buy the ticket. “Theatre is those people up there, talking Shakespeare and I don’t understand it. Theatre is boring.” These are hard perceptions to challenge and it may be that we need to be less cynical about major commercial musicals and things like Cirque de Soleil because they can help audiences have quality experiences that make them want to seek out something different next time. It was suggested that we need to make word of mouth work differently, and do two shows, have a break and then do the rest of the season. Similarly, perhaps not invite industry to opening night, wait until the show is run in and stop giving comps to industry.

A survey was done in NSW on young audiences and why or why they don’t go to the theatre. A number of different theatres and venues participated and it was discovered that the venues with bars were better attended because it provided a place for the audiences to dissect the shows and discuss their experiences, share their divergent perceptions of the work.

There is also an audience segment that sees theatre as a special occasion. They love it but it is something that they only do rarely because that’s how they’ve always done it. It may be an expense but that it’s worth the investment.

If we banned theatre, it would continue to be made. Government supports theatre with funding and “buys us off”, the sector isn’t funded because of love, but because it keeps us from being dangerous. The arts isn’t at the top and it is not recognised as being fundamental to life.

The increase of young people’s engagement with screens verses the “liveness” of theatre is something that could be highlighted. We need to consider the total experience, it’s the person sitting next to you, the immersion in a different world. You can feel it when it’s live, the vibrations in the floor of loud music.

The benefits of a live art experiences for audiences need more evidence although some people think it’s reductive. One participant said “Art and beer is a feeling that when consumed individually is highly enjoyable, but when combined together are out of this world.” At their best, they provide cohesion.

The Australia Council video that came out, “So you think you’re going to get paid for this?” may serve as a good campaign for the general public to boost their sense of pride in their decision making about their consumption of the arts. Car marketing was used as an example - car brands market back to the owners they’ve already sold to, reinforcing the choice that the consumer has made.

We need to throw the net wide - if you are consuming something afterhours, chances are it’s art.

The subscriber schemes such as club membership at the football and buying a seat in the AFC can alienate people and make them feel like they don’t belong, e.g. when you sit in a seat that literally has someone else’s name on it. We need to be aware of that. But the membership/subscriber approach does build community that assists with word of mouth.

We need to build a tribalism that is similar to football in children. Perhaps the national arts curriculum changes will assist. We need to champion each others’ work and infect people with our enthusiasm in the same way that people say, “You should try Coopers,” and it was noted that social media is an excellent tool for this.

The moments on stage when something goes wrong are the moments when the audience sits up because they are witness to life. How do we manufacture that kind of aliveness? Circus sometimes build in the mistake to build the audience investment in the performer getting it right.

Are beer companies having the same conversation but reversed?

Final question: If you had \$20 would you spend it on theatre or beer?

Action points:

- We need to provide an experience that is transformative.
- Remind people that they love the arts.
- Be like the alcohol sector and lobby.
- Generational commitment.
- Encourage participation.

Curated Performance Space in SA

Abstract

With significant concern in the lack of presentation opportunities for South Australian contemporary artists, the Curated Spaces discussion took a planning document prepared after the last SA Theatre Forum as a launching point. This document details a proposal for use of the Queen's Theatre as the venue for a curated space in Adelaide, focusing on contemporary performance. The current model is for six weeks at each of the beginning and end of the year, acting as a presenting partner for three to four presentations in each of the six weeks. As presenting partner it would be expected there would be a significant cash injection, alongside covering all costs of venue and marketing.

The model asks for \$500,000 a year, which is similar to the pot of money currently allocated for the Festivals Commissioning Fund. It is believed this money is earmarked for local artists, and investment of that money in this project would require convincing that the investment shouldn't be with a ticket-sales outcome, but with an outcome of investment in ideas.

The conversation looked at interstate venues as models, but most were seen as long-term ideals based on multi-million dollar investments. Two distinct strands of conversation came out of this: is the focus on a physical space venue (which could be the Queen's or another space)? Or, is it on the curatorial vision, not tied down to a venue and instead taking on a floating model? Significant drawbacks and benefits to each of these strands arose, and the discussion didn't settle on which one was the more important question.

Summary

One of the major conversations at the last forum was the idea of a curated performance space in Adelaide, in the same vein of [Brisbane Powerhouse](#), [Arts House](#), [Performance Space](#), and [PICA](#). These organisations often make up the venues which host the [Mobile States](#) tours, which did come to Adelaide until the [AFC](#) decided that this wasn't a viable ticket selling avenue. Next year it will come back to Adelaide through [Vitastatistix](#).

Out of this came discussions that with the shifting nature of contemporary performance, there isn't a venue or presenting partner that helps artists to present that work in a South Australian context, and also tie us into the national conversation. While Vitals does some of this, there was also the conversation that there needs to be something city-based.

The Queen's was identified as a centralized venue, where audiences are used to going (and are freezing in) and artists are used to working in. A committee was formed between Ross Ganf, Steve Mayhew, Jennifer Greer Holmes, Sasha Zhara and Sam Haren, who got together over a weekend and wrote a business plan on Arts SA's request. While the plan was written for free, it is valued at \$10 - \$15,000 for the amount of work and expertise, a parallel between the commissioning of Libby Raupach's Venues Audit was also made.

It isn't about re-inventing the wheel, but looking at leading examples such as Arts House, which is an interesting model because it is co-funded on a National, State, and Local level. [Campbelltown](#) in NSW is another interesting organisation from the Local Government level. These kinds of curatorial spaces respond to the interests of a local government: to get people into the CBD, purchasing tickets, "vibrating" Adelaide. For Arts SA it is about supporting South Australians and South Australian artists, so SA is seeing a vibrant community and contemporary performance practice. On a Federal level, it is seeing the art form continuing and we're part of a national network and ecology.

The proposal looks at operating for six weeks at the beginning and end of the year: it doesn't look at running year round, as there isn't the money, and at different points you are in competition with major festivals so you don't want to be operating in those times. It has a budget for a presenting partner that isn't just the cost of the venue: it's about \$30,000 presentation partner, as well as the venue, as well as the marketing from another part of the budget. It looks at the idea of a curator – like Arts House's Angharad Wynne-Jones – with a strong track record, and who can act as an advocate at a state, local, and national level.

The model looks at three or four presentations within that six week period, and some developments happening: taking on the Arts House Culture Lab development at \$10,000 and presentation at \$30,000. Also a multiplatform space: black box with moveable and removable seating bank, which acknowledges the changing forms of contemporary performance.

The report is still in a draft form, and hasn't gone to Arts SA, although there have been discussions.

The discussion moved to what do we need conceptually: the Powerhouse was seen as a great model: has a bar, a restaurant, it sees comedians alongside contemporary performance, a lot of space where it grows. It was questioned if there was room in the draft for it to be a year-round venue.

The committee was wary of creating "another AFC". The five-year plan sees it as more important to have a temporary space that became alive for the presentation of contemporary work in the sector at different times, with influence from places like Barrio, but only activates in specific times. This means there isn't a lot of investment in the administrative side and the bricks-and-mortar, and so it could be moved into another space. It's not about another [Carriageworks](#) or something for a Premier to put their name on, but about the investment in the creation of new art.

Places like Arts House and PICA were spoken about as multi-million dollar investments. This model is seen as a way to test the waters, a transition to building up infrastructure.

There was concern that so much energy had been put into the document, but we still need to *convince* government that this is a major problem, and that the AFC isn't filling that gap: so artists are missing out both in terms of presentation and seeing work from interstate and internationally.

Are there two issues: one is about the lack of the physical spaces, and one is the issue around contemporary curation. Would it be useful to separate those issues in conversations with Arts SA? Is this document primarily about curation, where the venue follows? Is the strategy to convince the Premier and Cabinet that instead of \$10million being invested in upgrading the AFC we argue for that money to build a new space, or is it about looking at these slower models with a curatorial focus?

While most of the conversation pairs a venue against the AFC model, it was also raised if we need to talk about the fact that [Holden Street](#), [Bakehouse](#), and [Higher Ground](#) also aren't presentation partners or curators. There isn't any presentation partner for contemporary work in Adelaide outside of Vitals. There are some avenues within [ADT](#) for their artists but they aren't a presentation partner.

The document was discussed as perhaps being unfairly balanced towards Arts SA: should it also be looking at the ACC? Performance Space was cited as an example as a company that has struggled through being absorbed by Carriageworks.

While there was an economic understanding of having the venue for only twelve weeks, it was questioned how viable that would be in terms of people understanding what the venue and curation is.

Performance Space's [Hall For Hire](#) was then cited as a way of Performance Space having curatorial vision over various venues throughout Sydney; but others argued this was only done as a necessity because PSpace located within Carriageworks wasn't working out. The argument is still there that PSpace doesn't have a home.

If it wasn't locked into a venue, then, could there be a curator that ties work into different locations? But there was concern that without a home it would be harder to produce: all of the models we talk about have a base.

It was raised that curation can lead to cohesive, collective marketing, where currently almost all work in Adelaide has to start and run their own marketing from scratch.

It was noted that bars enable many arts organisations to stay afloat; but some raised this again comes back to the idea that we need to run the infrastructure of the bricks-and-mortar.

The plan asked for \$500,000 a year – which is about the same amount of money from the Festivals Major Commissioning Fund.

Concerns with the Queen's Theatre were raised: it is freezing in winter, boiling in summer, the heritage protection means you can't do anything to the space, you have to move everything in and everything out, you can't black it out, it rains and can be subject to flash flooding.

Someone raised that they feel the part of the conversation that is missing is the space to create and develop work.

It was asked if Vitalstatistix could be looked to take on more dance, theatre, and live art: have a greater curatorial role, and give them more money to do that? But is Port Adelaide too far away for people who rely on public transport? Could Vitals also present work within the city?

Vitals feel like they have been trying to create Waterside as a contemporary space, but there is also an issue that there isn't more contemporary work in the city. PICA was cited as an example of an organisation that programs as a venue, but would program outside of the venue as well: under the PICA brand.

[Half Real](#) for Border Project was noted as never having an Adelaide presentation; people described this as absurd that one of the states best companies couldn't get a show up in Adelaide because there was no presenting partner. [Griffin Theatre Company](#)'s 2013 season was noted, where the first three plays in their season are written by South Australian playwrights who are not being produced in SA.

There are a series of works out there that would fit into a venue such as Arts House. Artists that were in there would benefit from the exchange of ideas and resources. It isn't that the sector isn't happening, it's that it's not centralized; it doesn't have a home.

The Space Theatre is cost prohibitive, and is a larger house than ideally wanted with 350 seats, with about \$20,000 in box office return needed against the venue costs. When looking at developing a space, it was noted, we need to look at the scale: ideally an audience of 120 – 150.

The Royal Adelaide Hospital buildings were brought up; what will be happening with that space? It was believed that some people in the arts industry and Arts SA have expressed interest, but discussions are ongoing and nothing has been settled.

Looking at other councils, inner suburbs such as Prospect, Unley, Kent Town, or Norwood were all raised. Could these have interest for both artists and councils? Someone noted the Brickworks in Thebarton as being ideal, but unfortunately Woolworths got in first.

It was asked if we can say *we don't know* the scale of operation yet? Can we start on a shoestring and then build up a model of flexibility? This goes back to the question: what sort of venue or building is the ideal? And does this need to be tied into the curatorial vision?

[Renewal SA](#) was noted as having a different approach to suburbs like Bowden and Port Adelaide, and brings up questions as to *where does something like this sit in urban renewal?*

Spaces in Bowden were noted as being temporal, meaning there is less room for the organisation to be daring and build, because they will also be wondering when they'll need to leave. Commercial Leases solve this issue, knowing that you have a long-term access, but they're not feasible economically for artists working independently.

The idea of a moveable rig, floor, and seating bank available to be moved as venues open up was cited: moving fluidly with a circus venue. [Tuxedo Cat](#) was cited as an organisation that is currently doing this successfully in Adelaide, but they have issues coming up against renewal contracts and it was noted in other sessions about the difficulties that some artists have experienced in working within that space. It was thought a moveable venue could become sustainable within two years, instead of five or six.

It was questioned if a moveable venue was hard to engage with artists and audiences. How do you build a career of it? In terms of communicating to audiences, it was said that a moveable venue would be fine if an effective marketing person and strategy was engaged. Adelaide's burgeoning food truck culture was cited as successful movable businesses, in a city small enough that people know where they are.

It was noted that audiences do exist in Adelaide: they are seen in February and March, and they go to curated venues during that time. But who are they?

It was said a curated space wouldn't have a focus on the sale of tickets, as the Festival environments – and the Festivals Commissioning Fund - do, but on a long-term focus on the investment on contemporary ideas and practices. As the Fund is about investing in *work* not for *festivals*, it was suggested that the argument the money would be better invested elsewhere would be possible. It was suggested that having the Fund tied to the Festivals system is an indication that there is fear that tickets couldn't be sold outside of the Festivals.

It was questioned if too much non-costed investment was being put into the scoping document with people not being paid, and if Arts SA should fund a scoping document? But there were fears it would be lost at that early stage, and so much energy had already been invested it would be best to keep on going.

Several more concerns were raised about the Queen's: along with things needing to constantly be moved in and out of the venue, certain sound levels have a tendency to shake the walls so sound needs to be adjusted, everything – including the floor – is Heritage Listed. It was suggested that conversations happen with architects in Australia who are experienced in working with Heritage buildings.

Another option would be to go back to the AFC and ask to use the Space with them absorbing all the costs. It was noted that the AFC was going to be redeveloped in the next few years.

Action items:

- Have people read the document, have feedback filtered through, and engage more people in the group covering more art forms.

How can we influence the political landscape in SA?

Abstract

The discussion started by asking whom the sector needs to talk to about these issues.

The group discussed who the sector needs to focus on when talking about the political landscape: there was wide disappointment in Stephen Yarwood's recently professed ideas about the local industry, and the need to look beyond the Premier and Arts Minister in State Parliament. This included looking for MPs and MLCs who are interested in the arts, as well as talking to and influencing young people of political parties now, before they reach parliament. When targeting these people it is important to outline that there is not only a cultural argument, but also a strong economic argument for return on investment. The group discussed how this can be effectively communicated: and it was thought through direct conversation in the absence of Arts SA, perhaps supplemented by a simple video showing the importance of independent and small-to-medium performance sectors.

There were questions how to effectively talk about these sectors when the arts industry in SA has a perception of being well supported through the Festivals and the new Adelaide Studios for film. \$2million wouldn't be much in the State Budget, but it could be transformative to the sector. There were also questions about how alternate models could benefit the sector: could a MPAB model work at this level, lessening competition and freeing up time writing grants.

There was also talk about the need to have community on board: can this be done effectively by collecting names, or hosting a minute of silence for funding before performances? And what can the arts learn from non-arts activist organisations?

Summary

The discussion opened in asking how do we define the political landscape? The conversation needs to focus around decision makers who influence our realm, it was decided: policy makers, not only arts ministers but having all ministers understanding the power arts has in all of their portfolios. Trying to discover, invent, or manipulate how to get that language right.

Some current ministers don't believe that the arts should be subsidized: the idea of a wider conversation or representation is incredibly important. It was noted the industry will occasionally see the Minister at a show, and the Premier will sometimes go to Festival works, but question if there are many state government ministers that come to much else?

For some it was a question of dissemination of information and knowledge. How do we give information to people who want to learn more but don't have a good starting base?

Following Stephen Yarwood's presentation, it was questioned if he was aware of the quality and caliber of people in the room and how they can contribute to the city. Disappointment was expressed in him talking about "challenging paradigms", when it is believed that that is what we do as artists. How can this information be given to him?

There were also questions raised about legacies through the local industry in the next generation: where is the next Don Dunstan? Should the industry have an affirmative action policy with the Young Liberal and Young Labor parties? Indoctrinating them into the value of culture in their early years, finding out who are the key decision makers in these youth-driven organisations. Federally this could be someone like [Mark Butler](#), who was always a leading light in the arts industry.

Whilst it was recognized as important to have strong advocates in the department and the AICSA, it was raised as perhaps an issue that there are so many disparate voices within the arts. While some things were gained in the arts under Rann – particularly with festivals and film – lots of other things were lost. Are there discussions about these being lost?

It was suggested that perhaps Don Dunstan needs to stop being used as a touch stone; that the conversation needs to move beyond this, we can't continue to say *things were so much better when*. As a figure like this is highly unlikely to exist again in our working lifetimes, how can we focus on weaving the arts into society?

The Parks Community Centre was cited as something that was lost when “tough decisions” needed to be made by government until enough people raised their voices in the debate until it was back with an increase in funding. This wasn’t a case of being in support of increased arts funding, but of trying to save votes being lost. The internal mechanism, it was proposed, was about staying in power. Is it about getting on the ground, being listened to, and mechanisms for lobbying those in power?

It was questioned if, in South Australia, has the argument been won that the arts aren’t economically viable and must be subsidized? Some noted that Greg Mackie is someone who believes there is too much reliance on funding, and there is a sense through Arts SA and government that we need to become self reliant. If that question were placed to the room, it was said, it would be evident that we’re not there. We’re not here to work in the commercial sector: on practical economic terms, it was said, most artists couldn’t survive on box office and non-subsidized avenues.

There was some disagreement on this point, with some members at the table saying they have been able to survive without government funding. Others, though, said while it might work for some, a lack of funding would discourage diversity in the sector. While they’re not mutually exclusive, there needs to be a continuum.

While there was some questioning on the level of investment through tax payers, and if it would be better if artists could bypass this and instead talk directly to communities to get funding and build sustainable careers. Others noted the paper Geordie Brookman had read from to open the forum - [Mike Bradwell's speech at the Society of Theatre Research](#) [PDF] -which cited the fact that there is actually a high level of return on taxpayer investment into the arts into the general economy. This, too, is an argument the Minister already uses with the Festivals. What we’re trying to shape, it was said, was a model that does have a strong return on investment.

Like all industries, there needs to be money to create: e.g. the car industry, and its research and development. But in the arts, there is an issue where companies can build towards success and are then left to their own devices. There isn’t necessarily a point where they can become a commercial company: reducing overheads and increasing income.

It was asked what can we learn from non-arts activist organisations, particularly looking at the environment sector and social services: they employ lobbyists that talk directly to ministers, and put strategies in place. These sectors, too, are arguing against a purely profit driven and economic argument, which the arts sector needs to argue, too. This is an investment for the future: which is antithetical to a three-year election cycle, cited as a reason that the arts sector never gains traction. This turns back to the idea of talking to people before they’re elected. If we can shape our key issues so they are bipartisan, and are equally attractive to both sides of parliament, there will be some degree of insulation from the electoral cycles. The sector would never be able to survive something like the current situation in Queensland: that is something that can’t be planned for.

It was noted that people often say the arts are better funded under Liberal governments. Historically, the governments that came after Dunstan and Whitlam were too scared to touch arts funding. Labor governments that followed, however, felt entitled to remove funding levels.

While this conversation was happening at a State level, it was noted that at a national level Actors Equity inside the [MEAA](#) is a powerful lobby group. There was a funding round being considered from SBS and a group including Julia Zemiro, Bruce Spence and other high profile actors went to Canberra. When a group of people like that come in the door of a ministers office, it was said, they listen.

Who are the local people who can do this? Who in our community has the profile and lobbying power?

There was concern it could be difficult to directly work with the Minister, and it was reiterated that we need to be looking at a wide range of levels: seeing who is out there in the conversation. We can engage across all areas of government, not just the arts, and help them to see how important the arts and creativity are.

It was questioned if there was an issue in the generalisation in the terms used? When we say “creative industries” is that so broad as to be problematic? The Australia Council has identified 13 sectors in under [the creative industries banner](#), including advertising, graphic design, music, visual arts, and so forth. Some thought as a compiled list that has been identified, this makes it a good starting point. Others thought this was too broad.

It was agreed the best way to have these discussions would be to talk about local makers. As stated earlier, \$2million in their budget is tiny, but would be transformative to the sector.

It was questioned if talking about the value of art was useful; perhaps the focus should be more on a really clear step by step process towards the ask. It is about using the right language: we need money for content, not infrastructure. This was also seen as a critical misunderstanding Yarwood had about the industry.

It was seen that Yarwood implied artists had a civil duty to work for free: there was no sense it was professional, and artists should be paid. When he spoke about the Fringe being a market place, he didn't understand that it is built upon people working for nothing: that's how the model works.

From this, it was questioned how much do we need to educate people about what is happening in the sector right now?

There was discussion on figuring when was the best time to strategically have these conversations.

It was noted that Minister Hill wants to remove State Theatre Company and other major organisations existing as statutory authorities, so the Premier doesn't appoint their board, it makes fundraising easier, the company isn't subject to the Government's accounting decisions. This was seen as a positive thing, but would probably take five plus years. Some noted that if the top end is deregulated, this gives more freedom for vibrancy and growth at the bottom end, allowing more autonomy in the sector. This could be an upward flow rather than a drift out to Eastern States.

With the only commercial head office based in Adelaide being Santos, there was discussion about how there are few opportunities for sponsorship in SA. If this state doesn't invest in its own artists the business sector can't in a meaningful way.

The Australia Council's *Do You Really Expect to Get Paid* video [[research](#) ; [video](#)] was noted as the most coherent explanation to people outside of the arts industry what the industry has to deal with. It was asked if it was too reductive, but there was the feeling it was good to use in talking about a single issue. (Please note that this video is also referred to in the session "How do we make people like art as much as beer?")

If the discussion is about the benefit we provide to the state, and why the base level should be further funded, having it concentrated in that way in 90 seconds could be really beneficial.

It was said the AICSA has a big part to play as the industry representative. Often, the industry is only represented in high level discussions by the AFC, State, and the Festival: perhaps, it was questioned, if that is the level Yarwood felt he was pitching his discussion at? When many members of the government think about the arts they only think about the major players: AICSA is a collective that can speak for other parts of the sector.

AICSA meets monthly, and has met with the Minister in the past. There was a feeling that at this time, though, there had been some Arts SA gate keeping. It was said from this day, their should be briefings of the Labor, Liberal and Greens parties, meeting in Parliament House, making sure the presence is seen in the building, and it should be made clear that Arts SA should not be at the meeting. AICSA represents the makers, and it needs to be separate from the department.

The Greens were seen as having a way to get into Government and Opposition ears. There was a need to recognize the arts passion within parliament. The Minister was seen as being intelligent and largely supportive; the Premier as being more passionate about events and education than arts industry; Redmond and Hamilton-Smith as both deeply arts passionate; the two Greens MLCs; Kelly Vincent MLC. The conversation is about opening up information to all these other people, too.

It was asked if anyone has leveraged a freedom of information request, for example, on the Arts SA assessment panel minutes and whether this would keep people on their toes. When the cuts came though last year, it would have been great to see the decision-making behind that. This was also seen as something with very little outrage or media coverage, partially because the scare list was released before the "gentler" cuts.

AICSA was agreed as being a good representative to hold regular discussions with all levels of government for relationship building. While some thought it should be done behind the scenes, others said we mustn't refrain from taking it into the public realm.

These discussions shouldn't be about defining the value of the arts, it was agreed, as that should be accepted as standard. A succinct 90 second video about the major impact of the industry, and the flow on effect would be useful. The rest of the meeting, then, can be dedicated to talking about what a significantly strong making sector we have, particularly in the youth arts. Windmill was cited as a company that had investment, though being created as an Act of Parliament, and now sees great returns in being part of a global industry.

It was noted the amount of money which would transform the independent to medium sector was miniscule to the amount of money put into the North Tce cultural institutions. There was a fear that in going up and asking for funds it is about getting the dialect right: people don't realise the vast amounts of money which go into these institutions don't support much of the industry.

The success of the [MPAB](#) model, like it or not, it was said, was extraordinary in the way it strengthened and grew that part of the sector in the early 2000s. These companies have the tri-part agreement, with knowledge no-one can back out. Is there a way to replicate this in the small to medium sector, so you know it is locked away? If this can be done on a smaller level we could see similar growth and strengthening.

This was questioned, though, as the Australia Council's Key Organisations were locked in for twenty years, and it was only four years ago this was revived and "dead wood" was removed. Now it is suffering the opposite problem, in that it is so volatile they don't know how to handle it.

At a state level though, when you're drawing up companies like Slingsby and Border Project, and there are existing companies like Vitals and Brink, there needs to be a balance. Emerging and established both need a place. It was then questioned if SA needs a second major performing arts organisation like each of the Eastern States. If a structural approach is taken, taking some companies out of the same pool as independent artists, money is released: arts wages aren't tied up in writing grants, everyone isn't competing for the same money, there is the possibility for movement in the sector.

This is how the [National Theatre of Scotland](#) is funded: completely separately, and therefore non-competitively, with the other theatre companies.

It was asked if anyone had a solid idea of plans for the AFC, and some said it felt like the arts industry wasn't included at all. The dream situation in a ten year plan, it was said, is to redevelop the entire building, kick out all of the home companies, turn the State Theatre workshop and rehearsal room into a 200-seat cinema, and have a rehearsal room up stairs that the State Theatre Company can hire, and they can send their workshop out to [Dry Creek](#).

This industry, it was noted, is not one built entirely upon infrastructure. When [Nimrod](#) was under threat and shares were bought in the building, there was an overwhelming sense that people were investing in something important. Is there some kind of way of getting a lot of signatures with everyone's audiences to demonstrate that the companies hold political power?

There was a discussion about how audiences could be brought into the conversation: could a minute's silence for arts funding be held at the start of every performance? While some said the [ASO showing up late](#) and not in blacks to argue for a pay rise was met with lots of bad blood, others said it isn't about destroying the audiences' experience. It isn't a strike like the ASO, it's an awareness campaign. It appropriately honours an imagined future without independent artists.

It was suggested that there isn't the knowledge so many artists aren't paid. By far the biggest dollar input into this sector is the artists, forgoing a living for a tiny box office split: this isn't recognized that this is a subsidy to the tune of millions of dollars. What we're fighting is the cultural romance: people wouldn't expect a Clipsal driver to not be paid, but they expect artists to do just that.

When the Industrial Revolution occurred, designating 9-5 as “work” and after 5pm as “play”, the arts were seen as play, and this is ingrained in the wider belief that the arts is not an industry.

Action points:

- Education of policy makers across the political spectrum
- The ability to have concentrated lobbying through AICSA or for the industry to engage a lobbyist.
- Funding for content, not just infrastructure.
- A briefing that comes out of this session either in person or on paper that goes to every political party, without Arts SA being present.
- Identify more political targets, both once they are elected and before they are elected in organisations like Young Labor and Young Liberals, putting them on every invite list and creating them as valued patrons.
- If necessary, bringing all of this together into some awareness campaign.

Producers: The Changing SA Landscape

Abstract

The conversation aimed to both look at the current South Australian landscape, and what opportunities exist and need to be fought for in the future. Several definitions of what a producer is were put forward, but the role was primarily identified as a flexible one that can change definitions frequently.

Adelaide has a few companies that work as producers (although it was questioned if a company can be a producer, or if this title is reserved for a person within the company), several independent producers, and Sasha Zhara's new role working with Managing and Producing Services (MAPS) SA with six artists was identified as being of particular interest.

There was concern that in Australia so much of the administrative role needs to be taken on by the artists, as there aren't companies and venues that will do this role as readily as they do in Europe. It was agreed more independent producers are needed, particularly with the high-end skills and contacts, but most people in these roles work for Festivals.

Looking forward for the next two years, there was discussion as if to the Adelaide Fringe could instigate some significant mentoring programs with producers who travel to Adelaide for Festival time; and if the next goal in Adelaide should be not to strengthen the enablers, but to find presenters and presenting partners.

Summary

The discussion opened with a discussion of what is a producer?

- Producers are / can be makers. There has been a notion that a producer is a representative of a maker, that a producer brokers relationships between 'makers' and 'presenters'.
- An 'enabler'
- Marguerite Pepper was cited as saying "you're only a real producer if you're putting your own money to a project. If you're personally taking a risk."

The history of producers in Australia can be found in a 'hidden paper' commissioned by Market Development from the Australia Council called *Mad Bastards*. For some reason it never got publically released: perhaps because the head of Market Development who commissioned it left before it was completed, and new head either didn't know what to do with it or disagreed with it.

The paper describes the definitions, the misinterpretation of the word, and where the position of 'creative producer' or 'producer' currently sits in the theatre landscape, and why we have adapted that word as opposed to 'project manager', 'project coordinator', or 'general manager.'

The word *animateur* was also brought up, and it was noted there was a course offered in this by VCA. It means *someone who facilitates other's artistic vision*. It was agreed by people at the discussion that *animateur* speaks to a much more creative role, but they like the integration of this word into the coordinator side of the role.

There was a brainstorm of current producers in Adelaide. Starting with a discussion of Managing and Producing Services (MAPS) South Australia, beginning next year facilitated by Sasha Zhara.

- When the MAPS partnerships were first tendered around Australia by the Australia Council, Arts SA was in the middle of tendering their own Theatre Development Scheme, which went on to support the establishment of Slingsby, Border Project & The Ladykillers.
- It operates as a single person under the umbrella of an organisation to produce three dance and three theatre independent artists or companies from that state. The money comes from the Dance Board, Theatre Board, and the Arts body of that state, with Dance and Theatre Board getting their funding from a contested pool of Market Development funding.
- In Brisbane, the project originally started as a collaboration between [Metro Arts](#) and the [Brisbane Powerhouse](#), but it's now with just Metro Arts; NSW is housed in [Performing Lines](#); WA is housed by [Performing Lines WA](#); in Vic [Stut&Fret](#) ran it for three years, and it has just been taken over by [Insite Arts](#), who will also host SA MAPS.

- The SA companies have been interviewed but are yet to be announced. Post-Fringe Zhara will “land” in that role, and start encouraging those artists to develop new work and sell them, not only within the state but also elsewhere.

Other producers named were:

- [Arts Projects Australia](#)
- [Vitalstatistix](#)
- [State Theatre Company of South Australia](#)
- Belinda Hellier
- Jane Howard
- Janine Peacock - currently at [HotHouse](#) in Victoria
- Jennifer Greer Holmes
- [Windmill Theatre](#)
- [ADT](#)
- [Patch Theatre Company](#)
- Jo Stone

In creating this list the question was brought up: is a company a producer? Or is a producer someone who actually sits inside that company?

It was brought up that in Europe there are a lot of companies and venues that commission work, but that in Australia, the role of a producer is much more about finding the money, contacting venues, setting up tours, establishing the crew and staff around each project. For artists who want to make work, they need to find the money to do that and it's very difficult to pay people if you're not being paid, or if you don't have a lot of money yourself. This means artists frequently take on a lot of these roles.

Some people spoke mentioned Arts SA, who have sent artists with enquires about producing to [AbaF](#), despite the fact that isn't their role.

Around the table, people spoke of “struggling” with the concept of a producer.

Sometimes as a producer you can find the trajectory can be too steep for the artist to climb; sometimes you will put hardly anything into a project and it will just keep going; sometimes you find heaps of money for a project that might then fall over because of circumstances.

At MAPS there are six groups to look after: all with varying levels of experience, trajectories, markets. What the producer is trying to do in these circumstances is pick what their trajectory might be, where the work might land, and then how the work can be sold in order to move them along.

Based on other MAPS models it is assumed that MAPS SA will be supporting each artists with a small amount of funds, with an expectation that the companies and artists will still have to do a lot of the legwork for themselves. One person said “In the landscape of South Australia:

I don't want a producer to write my budget or a grant. With the \$3000 I would want a producer to enable a tour internationally or interstate, or put me in contact with Jo Porter at the Malthouse, so I can meet through you. I want to see you as an enabler rather than a grant writer. I want a higher relationship through the food chain that I don't have.

This was seen as an ideal: developing relationships and partnerships. It was hoped that MAPS didn't mean what we would see a higher level of grant applications, rather than enabling South Australian artists. As an example, it was asked when was the last time a South Australian artist was on a [Mobile States](#) tour?

As the MAPS money is just for the position and possibly some Professional Development, it was said, there will be an increase in project funding sought for those companies with the backing of MAPS. It is seen as an advantage the funding body's eyes if you're an individual person and you have that outside support.

Each one of the artists or companies will have a different need: some will need the support in grant writing and organizational skills.

It was imagined by some a producer would take over all the administrative roles, but it was questioned *is that the role of the producer? Do you need an administrator for that?* It was brought up that the role is flexible, depending on who is in the role, and who they are supporting.

It was said young producers don't know where to go for help. *Where do you go for help when you're starting? Where do you ask the questions? And what are the questions?* [Independent Producers Australia](#) was brought up: but the \$500 cost to join could be a barrier, particularly to those who are young and haven't 'committed' to a role as producer. They have now banded with LPA and they both want the younger, newer producers to be involved.

You can rely on networks, it was said, but not completely. The pot of money for skills development was discussed. It was questioned if the money was only for TAFE courses, or is it broader than that?

It was noted that there is a big gap in South Australia, and possibly Australia: there are not enough companies in Australia to support artists to just do what they do. Artists need to be business people to.

Producers are something we definitely need more of; and probably at a higher end, it was agreed. There needs to be some kind of production house or business management for artists. For emerging artists in particular: somewhere you can go for information about grant writing; how do I structure a company or a project – *do I need a stage manager? A production manager? What do they do?*

There are a few organisations in Victoria which do some of these things: [Auspicious Arts](#); [Moriarty's Project](#), [Theatre Network Victoria's](#) e-news every month was also cited as a resource that puts those opportunities out there: points people in the right direction. Do we need someone to coordinate that?

It was noted Auspicious Arts will work with SA artists. They administer everything for you for 5% of your gross: budgets, contracts, super, acquittal, etc.

It was identified there are not the high level producers in South Australia; and there are very few in Australia working independently. They are working for Festivals because that's where the money is. Some would happily go independent and produce artists, but there isn't the money. Harley Stumm was cited as someone branching out on their own, ever so slightly, and Paul McGill – who have received some seed funding from Australia Council. But what happens when that money goes?

Nationally, it was said, there has been discussion on *where are opportunities for producers?* One member at the discussion said *I know there is further for me to go, but I don't know where that is. And I need someone to take me to the next level.*

It was discussed needs to be a support fund to get those producers out of the Festivals, and then up.

[Boot Camp](#) was mentioned, where emerging- and established-producers were paired up. The Theatre Board acknowledged that was an "interesting" idea, but weren't sure if it worked to its fullest extent. The problem is the upper echelon of producers who have a lot of knowledge but no support, or are embedded into festivals. There is no support for any producing level at this time that allows them to take the next step up, which allows the artists to take the next step up.

Some producers at a higher level probably just need more contacts: it's probably about mentorship. But emerging producers just probably need the basics.

Richard Jordan, an independent producer from the UK, who brings *Ontroerend Goed* over, took *one step at a time like this* to the Cultural Olympiad, and tours Miriam Margolyes' Dickens' play, and he comes to Adelaide every year for Fringe.

It was discussed if the Adelaide Fringe could set something up with him: not just a panel – a master class, or a mentorship opportunity. It was pitched there could be three people attached to him during his stay for Fringe. It would be about bringing those international producers who come over for a festival, and marrying them up.

Questions were raised: what do we try and achieve out of the next set of goals? Where do we want to be in two years? Two years ago there was a lot of discussion about not having MAPS in South Australia, now that is done. One person said they believed next two years shouldn't be about enablers, it should be about presenting partners. What do those enablers move to? What is the extra presenting partner for the independent sector in particular?

[Goolwa](#) was cited as currently is collecting the centrifuge of all contemporary performance in Adelaide because it has no other place to go. When that goes, the bubble bursts.

Who is the presenting partner outside of the Festival in South Australia? Who does the Border Project get *Half Real* up with? There are dozens of shows made by South Australians that aren't presented in Adelaide because there is no presenting partner. It is recognized by the Theatre Board that there are very little presenting partners to work with at a new work level in Adelaide. [Country Arts SA](#) is one of the few, but you need to do it regionally.

In South Australia there is no [ArtsHouse](#), no [Performance Space](#). In Victoria an artist might apply for money from Arts Victoria, OzCo, and a presenting partner, who could have cash, but also a venue and marketing. For many grant applications you need to have a presenting partner, but there is no presenting partner here: so you're not even able to get to that stage. This means South Australians are partnering with Malthouse to get work up in Victoria, but can't get it up in Adelaide.

It was cited that one of the reasons Adelaide hasn't been on the Mobile States tour is because there is no representation here.

Even when Craig Harrison was at the [AFC](#), he didn't have the money for most of the Mobile States productions, or he was never offering money. All risk was placed on the independent artists: no money is given to the projects. The AFC was cited as only presenting theatre work for "under eights and over eighties" in their four theatres.

[Blackbox@The Bakehouse](#) was brought up, but it was highly restrictive, it didn't get many applications, it offered "production funding" which was \$1000 which you only got after closing – which is not production funding.

[Out of the Square](#) was cited as maybe expanding to cover the states. In Victoria there is an organisation that manages all the venues, helping them in commissioning, in being more risk-taking in the work they do, in small tours.

It was questioned if the theatres like [Holden Street](#) and Bakehouse would even be interested: they weren't present at the day's conversations, and never are involved in sector meetings.

There was animosity to Stephen Yarwood walking into the room where the first thing he said was "I'm not going to build a theatre; I'm not going to fund something about that." He already cut off that conversation. You see the roles of [Campbelltown Arts Centre](#); [Brisbane City Council](#); [Footscray](#) – they've said *our grant programs should run through these venues. North Melbourne Town Hall and Meat Market are where we're going to spend this money. We're not going to spend it across the whole city. It's going to be concentrated.* That develops a knowledge of that's where you go to see contemporary work. What's more important is young people are seeing contemporary work constantly. There is a place for it.

The dance sector in contemporary performance in Adelaide was cited as being much healthier than the theatre scene. In Adelaide, people have been seeing repertory theatre for so long they don't know how to make contemporary work. They don't have a map, a template, or a vocabulary to make contemporary work. They get it at Fringe and Festival time, but they don't have it the rest of the year, there isn't a practice of it.

From this, looking forward it was questioned if the goal for producing and producers in South Australia isn't to strengthen enablers, but to find presenters and presenting partners.

On organizations that exist in Adelaide: is that organisation prepared to open its doors and become a hub for independents to come through? It comes back down to resources. Some of this is starting to happen within the

ADT; independent artists might be able to now start to talk to the State Theatre Company as a presenting partner.

Action items:

- Business management for artists; producing services; where artists can go right from the start. An information pool of sorts. Can there be a South Australian based auspicing agent? Or do we invite Auspicious Arts and Moriarty's Project to one of these kind of forums, and use their services over there? Can Fringe invite these people over and host a forum?
- Talking to the Arts Industry Council about money for developing skills in business management for artists.
- Strengthen the enablers and build presenting partners.

Use of local artists by SA festivals and venues

Abstract

The aim of this panel is to explore the relationships that local artists have with festivals and venues. Participants discussed examples of situations they were familiar with, shedding light on the fact that lots of local, established, internationally recognised companies are not supported at home in the same way as they are interstate and overseas, sometimes resulting in making work here that is never shown here. The perception of “gatekeepers” was returned to numerous times, but no-one was able or willing to name them. The importance of planning, building relationships and venues were a major focus.

Summary

The observation was made that there are a number of companies and independent artists in Adelaide whose work travels nationally and is presented by festivals and venues. Whereas in Adelaide it's an umbrella relationship. Why it is that festivals here don't present the locals companies' work when it's clear that the work is of an international standard? It was requested that the conversation not be limited in its thinking about city based festivals but also the festivals that occur in regional centres such as [Kumuwuki](#) and the work that they've invested in and are presenting. [Just Add Water](#) is another regional presenter. There is definitely a range of opportunity for regional presentation of work, mainly through Country Arts SA, that is sometimes underutilised, even local councils are looking for people, but often city artists don't think about those opportunities.

What's the difference between an interstate presenter and an Adelaide based venue or presenter? Adelaide based festivals and venues say that you take your own risk, you can be included in the program, interstate; they pay fees, travel, accommodation, venue, marketing everything - there is no risk for the artist or company, they just make the product and sell it on. Examples were given about some festivals that take all the risk, such as [Come Out Festival](#) in terms of the festival paying the fee, hiring the venue and then taking the box office.

It was suggested that one of the reasons that the [Adelaide Festival](#) doesn't program local work is market driven; Adelaide audiences can see Adelaide companies' work any time that the box office return is with the international companies. There are questions about whether it is indeed a market thing, or if there is something else which prejudices local companies. There is also the level of competition that is introduced when high profile internationals are programmed alongside the local ones and the Festival directors need to consider whether local audiences will choose the company they can see at other times of the year. How will local work fair alongside international work, in artistic terms? It seems to be about stretching budgets. Examples were given about local companies negotiating about participating in the Festival and only being able to offer new work, because being local if they offer existing work the local audience will have already seen it, therefore it is untested and the Festival doesn't know if it will sell. Whereas with international work, it can be more like a shopping expedition and the director can see the work in another festival's context and buy it in once it has already been performed and the risk has been established.

There is a cultural cringe which is fostered by this. Local artists are expected to feel grateful when they are programmed in their own city's festival, just to be alongside their international peers. It's an issue for how we perceive ourselves. We all struggle to legitimise the work that we make in the city where it's made but it has more support interstate and overseas. Examples were cited of Border Project's recent experience of [Half Real](#), after being developed in Mount Gambier and premiered in the Melbourne Festival, it even went to the Riverland but didn't get an Adelaide season.

There is a group of companies and individual artists that travel a lot but their local community doesn't see them because they don't have money to hire a venue, market and take the risk. They have money to make the work and there is a market internationally. How do we encourage local venues and festivals that program work to program that local work? Do festivals and local venues, because they get state funding, have an obligation to spend a proportion of that funding on programming local artists? It's a tricky situation because obviously, an international festival is an *International* festival and it's about getting that balance right with a bit of transparency about it. We would be disappointed if we went to an international festival and all that played was local work. Their needs to be more openness about how programs are made, particularly around local programming. People at the table were surprised to find out that the Adelaide Festival would make financial agreements that require the local artist to take the risks, although sometimes they give \$10,000 or similar. It's quite detrimental to the local works because they are judged against the international touring works, which are sometimes 5 years into the presentation of the work and lots of support behind them.

The other way to look at it is, that because it's an international festival, you have other international presenters there who are looking for work to program and the local work is seen in the context of being suitable for other international festivals. The problem is that they need to be supported in order to make their presentations the best they can be and be given a chance to be successful, to be on equal footing.

There is a potential model within the Festival and the AFC who have marketing and production departments, which could mean that the artists and small companies can use those engines to present the local work. Interstate and international companies currently benefit more from those than the local companies do. It was stated that the artists' only concern should be "I'm just going to make shit hot work and not have to worry about the marketing and if it goes well then they keep the box office, then that's fine because they've paid me a fee." There is also the perception that if you are programmed in the Festival that it's easier to have a sold out season. Regardless of where or when it's programmed and who by, we should be trying to make shit-hot work, all of the time.

There was a question that given that lot of the deals involve a box office spilt, is there a greater option for the artist to make more money than what a fee may have allowed? In music, and using the [Guitar Festival](#) as an example, local acts were programmed with the international headline acts, which worked well in a music setting, in every way; the culture of having a warm up act is established, because the quality of Adelaide musicians is of a world standard, it helps artistically, and brings in audience and introduces them to the international artists which also creates a relationship between local and international artists which is part of the benefit of being programmed in international festivals. The [Adelaide Cabaret Festival](#) started as being very heavily programmed with local artists and now it is more inequitable for them, where they just get a door share.

At this point the Arts SA Festivals Commissioning Fund was discussed, which is a \$500,000/year fund. It also requires a formal commitment from the festival. The feeling around the table was that the Festivals Commissioning Fund money was money was taken from the independent sector through the 2010 budget cuts and handed back to them in the form of the Festivals Commissioning Fund. At another conversation it was suggested that the money be diverted to the Curated Venue (see the notes from that session for more detail.) The intent of the fund is to allow local artists and companies to make work of scale over a period of time. The understanding was that with The Border Project's last Festival work [I Am Not An Animal](#), the Festival invested significant finances into the development of that project as well as the commissioning funds. The show was sold out before it opened (although it was noted that it was for a small audience) and had an enormous buzz about it. The benefit of the local work is that it does create a buzz all year around, when the Festivals and the artists work together to create that, it helps everyone. We need to find a way to tell that story to our local audiences and community here that we have artists making work here that is of international calibre that we should all know about, and that Festivals help do that, and that local audiences want to see it, and that the work is available outside of the festival season. It is risky too. Some of the local shows that were in the last Festival could have done with more development; so earlier development support would have been good. The example of [Man Covets Bird](#) in the Festival a few years ago was given, that Slingsby were paying for the venue and doing their own marketing as well, as well as focussing on making of the work.

How do you think the best ways are to build the relationships? It's such a long-term process requiring a lot of investment from multiple parties. It's all about really good long term planning.

Reflecting on the Lord Mayor's speech, a good idea was about doing the pitch and not waiting for people to find you, but making sure you're in people's face, even if it goes flat, that they'll be aware of you. There is an element of gatekeeping to be aware of. Examples were given about trying to get the foot in the door for years with the Adelaide Festival, and it becomes a waste of time and energy. The age bracket of the people making the decisions in Adelaide and to a certain extent Australia is older than in countries throughout Asia. There are probably opportunities for younger people to be attached to programming departments to shift that balance. The matter was also raised that lots of emerging artists who are still studying don't go out much to see the work that the local companies are doing. The companies need to try to develop the youth/student audiences so that they know that there are many options for them once they graduate.

From a festival programming perspective; you ring and see if you can have a meeting, if the Artistic Director doesn't know who you are then they will turn to their programming team and they will be the ones who

influence. We need to build the relationships with the programming teams. They will be the ones to come and see your work, and will be your advocates inside the Festival. Some examples were cited about Slingsby festival and presenter relationships in Adelaide, they see themselves as being lucky that there was a gap and that the work was good. But the dilemma is now that they are not here very often to perform to local audiences. Interestingly, that is not a KPI from Arts SA. There are instances where Adelaide artists have been programmed within international festivals because other relationships with other artists fell apart and the festival suddenly finds that they have a gap. Making sure that you have a relationship so that you are right there to fill that gap means that none of that relationship building is ever a waste of time.

There are successful export companies such as [ADT](#), who set out to perform internationally and in some ways are more recognised outside of Australia than in their own country. Their business model is based on that, which can mean that they have choices as not needing to spend time developing your “home” audience. There are multiple models that work for companies, subscribers, touring circuits etc. Has the export focus taken away something from the home audience development that subscription seasons build?

A company like [STCSA](#) relies on subscriptions as the bedrock of the company to be a reliable audience. Being in a Festival is imperative to STCSA, if they aren't then they can't do their first show until April and then there's the Cabaret Festival to consider, OzAsia, so there are significant scheduling decisions to work around. Not being in the Festival is also bad for their profile and also terrible in terms of planning, income and audience fatigue. It was stated that one would hope that the flagship company has automatic entry into the Festival but no one can make such assumptions because an artistic director might come in who doesn't want to program it. The year that the Fringe went annual and STCSA had their show in the Fringe programme, ticket sales weren't great because the prices were too high for a Fringe audience, and it's hard to compete with a \$10 or \$20 ticket or a major international comedian. That was a lesson for the STCSA, in knowing that they had to be part of the festival. It was suggested that the good thing about the big companies such as STCSA, the ASO and the State Opera is that during the festivals they employ local artists and are able to do more “risky work.”

It was stated that local artists are not cherished in this state. You can go to China, Canada on tour and meet SA artists who have moved because they are not taken care of here. It was noted by one artist at the table that she had been away for 15 years and has come back and believes that the same gatekeepers are here as when she left.

While one artist at the table suggested that money should not be a barrier to making work and doing what you love, another said that if the money wasn't there then they'd rather pull beers in a pub. Is there a sense of entitlement that just because we are local we should be programmed? The parallel was drawn between the film industry here and the way that casting happens, that by the time you get feature films here, they've all been cast. The example was given that an actor used to get an audition every month for films that were being made here, when she lived in Sydney. But when she was here, you'd be lucky to get a 50-word part. While it may be an awkward parallel, it should be a fair platform for opportunity for SA artists to make work in their home state.

The idea of “Terroir”, a wine term, is used as an example which is about a geographically distinctive work. Is there validity for a local arts festival? There is tension around that idea, some people love it, and others say “not another fucking festival!”... There is a danger in parochialism. At the beginning of the year we see the amazing flavours that come to us from around the world and there might just be one month of the year where we say here is a focus on SA artists. But it would have to be a fully presented festival, so that means finding about \$2m.

Is part of the problem that we don't have a strong second tier scene here? For example, [Griffin Theatre](#) has just launched their 2013 season and it is full of SA artists, who have left because they couldn't get their work presented here, in the other session about Arts SA, it was suggested that if you want to create work then you get a development grant but then once the work is actually developed to put it on, there is no platform here. And for independent artists and companies, that situation is exactly the same. We just need to find a way to address that gap, to create a Griffin or a [Belvoir Downstairs](#) so that if there was a dance piece that was new Australian work, or a show that Slingsby wanted to create that wasn't necessarily for a children's audience there is a home for new SA work, and that work created in SA could see the light of day, rather than having it head elsewhere. There are many parallels here with other discussions, both with the session about Producers and MAPS, as well as the session on the curated venue, as noted.

It was noted that in previous years, Come Out Festival was blessed with a \$150 000 budget from Arts SA for the presentation of SA work. Perhaps this is something that we should collectively lobby for Adelaide Festival Centre and other major presenters to make the demand that they are given a budget to do present SA work. It is not fair that we make the demands on the presenters and venues with the knowledge of their commercial imperatives such as infrastructure upkeep that require budget allocation.

There was a time when [inSPACE](#) had more money to present and develop work than what they currently do, again there is some cross over with the curated venue discussion.

[MTC](#)'s second space, where they work with companies who have been curated in companies like [Theatre Works](#) and Griffin, are picked up after they've worked with the smaller companies for a full season, then into a festival environment and then into a touring environment, which is a slow process but a good example of how a state theatre company is working with the independent sector.

[Renew Adelaide](#) would be a good organisation to discuss the need for this kind of space. There was concern over the suggestion by the Lord Mayor that Renew Adelaide would be the saviour of the industry, in terms of helping them find space. They have limited resources and don't own space. They are funded to assist with obtaining temporary leases and negotiating access to properties. It was urged that people remember that there are spaces and residencies outside of Adelaide in regional areas such as Varcoe's in Mount Gambier and [Up River](#) in Riverland, that get very few applications and they have indoor and outdoor space. There are also audiences in regional areas.

We need to be wary of creating a Them and Us scenario, because it doesn't need to be like that.

It is worth investigating the opportunities available through Arts SA's Building Pathways grant.

Action points:

- Get to know the programming staff.
- Pitch sessions for local artists.
- Info sessions for artists to connect with artists and companies who have toured and done international festivals.
- Make considerations for financial viability such as solo performances.
- Cherish local artists.
- Think outside the CBD.