

# 2024—2028 Strategic Plan





Australian Dance Theatre acknowledges the traditional owners of Kaurua Yerta. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community and we extend this respect to First Peoples across the land. We pay our ongoing respects to them, their cultures and their elders, past and present. We acknowledge the ongoing significance of dance as cultural practice, as interconnected with story, song and country.



# Welcome



“We chose Australian dance theatre ... ‘Australian’ - because we planned to support Australian dance artists and nurture Australian choreographers ... to celebrate our identity as Australian and that our works would come from the Australian landscape ... ‘dance’ - to encompass forms of movement far beyond the vocabulary of ballet ... ‘theatre’ - to bring intellect to dance and enable us to explore social and world issues in our choreographic representations. We believe that by using the word ‘theatre’ it would allow us to push the boundaries of dance and lead us into new fields of movement.”

Dr Elizabeth Cameron Dalman AM CdOAL, Founder



Savage  
Photo by Sam Roberts

Elizabeth’s still resonate and inspire us today.

We are an Elder of Australian dance. We have always led from the front; been the tip of the spear. A company of firsts from the city of firsts. With this role comes responsibility – an expectation to keep leading and be a guide for exploring social and world issues through our art.

To gather, inspire and connect. To continue to be a company of firsts. Dance is a place for everyone. Dance can reach through time to connect ideas and themes that reflect ourselves and our cultural landscape.

We have explored, reflected, experimented, and tested our contemporary cultural landscape and our place in it. From this we will take the next step in our six decade-long dance ...

- Moving the conversation on social, cultural, and political complexities.
- Forging a First Nations viewpoint.
- Crafting a culture of care, in our own studio and around the country.
- Taking greater responsibility for our sector.
- Strengthening the relationship and connection with our audiences and communities.

We warmly invite you to join us as we draw on our significant legacy, respond to the possibilities of today and help shape and share a future.

# Our Vision: Dance that Leads Cultural Change

● Our Values

Care comes first  
Dance always was, always will be  
Collective creativity is community

● Our Commitment

Our intentions, words, movements and actions come from a place of deep Care.

- Care for our artform.
- Care that supports artistic expression.
- Care that invites people to connect.
- Care for our people.
- Care for our friends and colleagues across the arts.
- Care that honours our shared humanity.
- Care for our legacy.
- Care for the future.
- Care for Country.
- Centring care in everything we do.
- Care is our starting point, not an afterthought.
- Care takes time, determination, and intentional focus.
- Care evolves. We learn and respond to situations in a constantly transforming world.
- This is our commitment and an invitation.

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The Hum (with The Australian Ballet)  
Photo by Daniel Boud

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“We exist to create dynamic dance theatre experiences that reflect the true diversity of our nation’s artistic voice, one that reflects our current social, political and cultural conversations. We prioritise ideas and ideals that resonate with the current and future generations of storytellers and audiences. Our works shapeshift between artforms and ancestries.”

Daniel Riley, Artistic Director







# Since 1965



Elizabeth Cameron Dalman dancing in ‘Inside’  
Photo by Jan Dalman

## ● About Us

We are Australia’s oldest continuing contemporary dance company, established on Karuna Yerta (Adelaide) in 1965 by Dr Elizabeth Cameron Dalman AM CdOAL.

For nearly 60 years we have upheld one of Elizabeth’s founding principles, to ‘expand the horizons of contemporary dance’, supported by the work of our six Artistic Directors – Elizabeth, Jonathan Taylor, Leigh Warren, Meryl Tankard, Garry Stewart and now Wiradjuri man, Daniel Riley.

The cumulative legacy and impact of these artists means we hold a pivotal role in the local, national and international dance communities to nurture dance and storytelling that leads cultural change; a role that will only grow in importance across our next 60 years.

Since 1965 over 300 dancers from around the world have come to Adelaide to dance with us, creating more than 130 mainstage works of varying scale, ambition, and a limitless approach to the artform.

We have worked with some of the country’s leading composers, writers and visual artists including Peter Sculthorpe, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Nigel Triffit through to Jonathan Jones, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO, Kate Champion and Dean Cross more recently.

We have taken these works and artists around Australia and the world, using our own dance theatre language to drive and support cultural change.

## ● Where are we now?

From 2020 to 2023 we went through significant change and growth. What is important now is our shape and role, and how we measure value and success beyond just metrics of tickets sold, kilometres travelled and digital reach.

Under Daniel’s artistic leadership, we have become one of the few companies that can meaningfully and genuinely bring together First Nations and non-First Nations artists, stories and audiences in a space that is aspiring to be truly Australian.

This has been embedded in renewal of the Company, with increased diversity and First Nations’ representation on the Board, within our Company Artists, staff and creative collaborators, to forge enriching environments as we navigate the Australian experience.

In recent years we have come back home, performing more regularly and frequently in Adelaide and across the state. Quite simply, we are the dance company *of* and *for* South Australia. We are letting the local sector and public know who we are, this new iteration of their Australian Dance Theatre.

We will be reflective of what is happening outside the studio walls, as we continue to form who we are; our big aspiration is to have 50:50 First Nations and non-First Nations representation across the Company by 2028. In our workforce, our Board, our audiences and our extended creative family to fully embody the name Australian Dance Theatre.

## ● Our Next Step

This Plan is based on four pillars as the foundation for a relevant, reflective and resilient organisation:

- The Art
- Our Audiences
- The Ecology
- Our Business

Building on our strong six-decade legacy, across these five years we will:

- *Redefine* what a performing arts company is and can be: questioning the anachronistic model of hierarchical, genius-led companies; to be genuinely open, collaborative and supportive in creating new works and artforms; underpinned by a commitment to ‘care’.
- *Reaffirm* our role as an Elder of dance in Australia, with a renewed drive and capacity to reflect the ever-evolving composition of our Country on stages, in our studio, offices and boardroom, and online.
- *Reconnect* with Australian audiences by prioritising seasons in Adelaide and across South Australia, followed by interstate capital cities and regional centres and then, when strategically aligned, international destinations

## ● Artistic View

bundadhaany dhudungura

Dance is an integral pillar of communication and storytelling across the world. As a form, it is instinctual and has the ability to speak to us all in ways that connect our intellect and emotion.

The moving of bodies in space, whether that is in proscenium arch theatres, community halls or on richly coloured Country, connects us to the importance of place and the interconnectedness of story.

The land we inhabit here as a nation, and those that have danced upon it, stretches back over 75,000 years. The work we make, the stories we tell, are respectfully further down river of this extraordinary lineage.

We acknowledge that dance as a form is ancient but is also constantly shape-shifting to better communicate the ideas and stories of our contemporary era.

Australian Dance Theatre, as an Elder of Australian dance, is the organisation that always forges new ways of connecting audiences to story and story to place. Artistically, we support and nurture each story individually. As each story and creative work grows, we are led by how it needs to be told, and ensure the right protocols, respect and artistic investigation are surrounding the development period and presentation. Our work explores and utilises all forms and technologies to ensure fierce and dynamic dance theatre experiences for all Australians.

Intentionally being reflective of our national conversations, be they political, social or cultural, feeds the work we make and firmly places us here, now. Utilising these histories and ancestries respectfully, ensures our work speaks to the rich diversity of our nation, and opens doors to conversations that allow us to better understand each other, and open new possibilities of a future we are moving towards as a nation.

I firmly believe dance can create cultural change, and that change will be guided by the collective creativity of the artistic community that we work with here, at Australian Dance Theatre.

Dance always was, always will be.

yindyamarra

Daniel Riley, Artistic Director





# The Art

GOAL

## To evolve a model for performing arts companies 13

A community of voices is stronger and more generous than genius-led models of artistic leadership.

As societal and cultural attitudes around agency, creativity and individual expression shift and change, so must companies like us and those in our sector. We learnt through the significant disruption and pause of the pandemic how vulnerable and important connection and expression is to all of us.

We need to provide greater emphasis on deep care, plurality and artistic development that supports many.

While we are more than simply what we put on stage, our artistic program is our key strength and our celebrated public persona. Since 1965 we have given life to some of the most acclaimed and iconic works of dance in Australia. Often driven by a singular voice, we will now weave together a strong and vibrant tapestry of artists, stories, audiences and creative partnerships, reshaping our artistic program.

By valuing and highlighting First Nations' voices and practices within this artistic ecology, we will cultivate a new holistic model of artmaking that centres care, respect, collaboration and reciprocity. Our works can be capital-C Culture, where First Nations stories are pushed to the front of the stage. Our works can also be little-c culture where each contribution is evolved through true collaboration to bring forth something entirely new.

We are one of only a handful of companies that can offer ongoing, full-time employment to dancers. Our Company Artists have been central to how we have worked since the founding days with Elizabeth in the late 60s. Contemporary career ambitions of dancers and creatives prompts us to question ensembles, and the way we plan and schedule. Across the life of this Plan we will provide many opportunities to dancers to join us, based on our resources, artistic planning and repertoire.

We will support these dancers in their artistic growth and creative expansion by listening to their needs and providing development opportunities. We are here to nurture them as artists and humans.

As South Australia's largest and longest continuing dance

company, we recognise the responsibility to utilise our legacy and resources to present works of scale that excite, inspire and significantly contribute to the celebration of dance and movement.

As we find our new form and voice, supported by a shift in our own culture, we will see bigger cultural change outside our studio walls.

- WHAT WE WILL DO ACROSS 2024-2028
1. Centre First Nations' voices.
  2. Ensure new, emerging and underrepresented choreographic voices are heard through commissions, exchanges and residencies.
  3. Build and strengthen our artistic collaborations through generous exchange and artistic reciprocity.
  4. Make works of varying scale, across artforms and differing presentation styles.

# Our Audiences

GOAL

## To be a must-see company for local and Australian audiences 14

Communities have been coming together on this land for millennia to tell stories, share knowledge and celebrate life through dance. From our First Peoples to the many waves of migration over the past two centuries, dance has brought communities together and given space to artists to create and perform.

We have been a gathering point for the Adelaide community since 1965. We have developed more than 130 mainstage works, starting from our first small studio off Rundle Mall through to our popular home in Adelaide's Chinatown and now at The Odeon. We acknowledge the power of this place and its people, supporting us in theatres, galleries and studios, and now online.

Our presence over the past thirty years has focused largely on international seasons, garnering much success and acclaim. Since 2020 we have thought deeply about this, and now look to bring our attention back home – to Adelaide, South Australia, and Australia. From this foundation we will prototype a new touring framework that puts Adelaide at the centre, then radiates out through regional South Australia, across the nation, into the Asia Pacific region and then across the rest of the world.

We want to get to know our audiences better. The success of being presented by major festivals and state arts centres means we haven't always had direct connections with ticket buyers. Over the life of this Plan, we will find ways to increase our understanding and relationship with existing audiences, helping in turn to identify our audiences of tomorrow.

In 2025 we will celebrate our 60th anniversary, a major milestone for any organisation. This moment presents a significant opportunity to pursue a range of major collaborations and partnerships to grow our own ecology and amplify our voice to new audiences.

We want to be as synonymous with our hometown as Pina Bausch is with Wuppertal and William Forsythe is with Frankfurt. We will build such a deep connection of pride and place in the nation that when people think of Adelaide they think of us alongside our other icons like the Central Market, Haigh's Chocolates and Coopers.

WHAT WE WILL DO ACROSS 2024-2028

1. Understand, grow and diversify our audience and build long term connection and loyalty.

2. Increase the frequency of connection with our audiences on and off stage.

3. Cultivate the next generation of audiences for dance.

4. Enhance our relevance and presence in the South Australian community through a range of artistic, educational and community partnerships.



Savage  
Photo by Sam Roberts



# The Ecology

GOAL

## To shape and nurture the vitality of our sector16

We are an Elder of Australian dance.

We generously reach out across the country and abroad to gather, inspire and connect like-minded storytellers and creative partners in support of the spirit of Australian Dance Theatre.

We have a responsibility to hold and support the South Australian dance sector – to employ artists, to commission, to mentor, to promote our artform. Our home has always been in Adelaide, and we are integral in ensuring that we continue to be a cultural capital, a place where the arts and artists thrive. The cumulative impact of sixty years of welcoming artists to the state to dance with us – this decades-long nurturing of the artform – supports not just us, but emerging artists through to the community of senior, established artists.

After the recent significant social, health and financial impacts we have a responsibility and a potent opportunity to redefine how the performing arts sector broadly – not just dance – thinks and acts. With the work that we are doing around ‘slow touring’, allowing more time to reflect on projects and a greater emphasis on care, we can be an exemplar for our friends and colleagues.

Our size enables radical and swift experimentation, which can be shared across the arts. We will take the time to rethink how arts companies and individual artists can engage in creative exchange.

While our trajectory historically has been towards the western hemisphere, we will reorient towards our neighbours in the Pacific and across Asia. Long before we made a name for ourselves in Europe we were blazing a trail closer to home, visiting New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, India and Taiwan in the early 1970s.

Going back to these places now not only makes sense sustainably, diplomatically and artistically, but with a First Nations-led approach we can share experiences around colonisation and the impact of climate change.



Marrow in rehearsal  
Photo by Thomas McCammon

### WHAT WE WILL DO ACROSS 2024-2028

- 1. Re-establish our profile in Adelaide with artists, arts colleagues, companies and presenters.
- 2. Build deep, strong and generous regional connections across South Australia.
- 3. Develop partnerships that support commissioning, touring and skills-sharing around Australia.
- 4. Forge strong relationships across Asia and the Pacific with likeminded artists and companies to generate reciprocal creative opportunities.

# Our Business

GOAL

## To have the foundations for future success17

Across 2020 to 2022 we changed leadership and since then have been prototyping what this new iteration of Australian Dance Theatre looks like. In 2022 and 2023, particularly, this has seen the realisation of a new artistic direction; our job now is to marry the artistic with the financial, governance, technological and operational, to have a business model that sets us up well beyond 2028.

With relatively static levels of state and federal government funding we will continue to look at how we can proportionally grow other earned income – from our philanthropic community, from new corporate partnerships, from our Learning and Engagement programs. The reality of costs increasing at a faster rate than how we can grow income is a concern across the sector, and one that affects a Company of our scale acutely and immediately.

We will also question where there could be efficiencies and what resources we need in-house or where there is value in being open to fresh external options. A major consideration in this line of investigation is finding a sustainable, long-term solution to our home base.

Since 1965 we have had many homes, occupying the top floor of a shopping arcade, two nineteenth century theatres and a suburban ‘ballroom’. None have been designed as a fit-for-purpose space. Currently we operate a venue as our rehearsal, office and presentation space, as well as providing access for other companies to perform. We’ve taken opportunities as they come, but now we want to deeply question what is required for our ‘home’. Is operating a venue the best focus for our core work? Does it constrain our artistic options? Is this the most efficient and sustainable model to support necessary resources?

Across the arts we need to look at how we measure success, what we measure and within this, what we value. Responsibly look at metrics that are not solely based on growth or financial return, and create appropriate evaluation frameworks.

As the world questions how we might value, measure and use ‘time’, we will start to flex and reshape how we create, perform and tour. With more time for artistic development and experimentation, making sure there is time for the entire company to reflect at the end of any project rather than simply moving on.

By 2028 we will have the people and financial resources, as well as processes and systems, to match our role as the state dance company of South Australia and our reputation for excellence on stage nationally and internationally.

### WHAT WE WILL DO ACROSS 2024-2028

- 1. Prioritise periods of rest, reflection and recharging to ensure sustainability for our people and the Company.
- 2. Grow and diversify income through government advocacy, philanthropy, corporate partners and commissioning partners.
- 3. Define what our sustainable, long-term home base in Adelaide looks like.
- 4. Enhance our governance and organisational processes through review and continual improvement.



A Quiet Language in rehearsal  
Photo by Morgan Sette

# Our Pathway to Success

The totality of the goals, outputs and impacts below will place us to re-enter the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in the lifetime of this plan. Detailed targets under areas of measurement will be set annually to help plan and track our success within the scope of each annual program and budget.

### The Art

**GOAL** To evolve a model for performing arts companies

WHAT WE WILL DO	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES	AREAS TO MEASURE
1. Centre First Nations Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Commission and present two new self-determined First Nations works of national significance by the end of 2028.</li><li>Create identified employment and training opportunities for First Nations artists and arts workers.</li></ul>	<p>Number of new works created.</p> <p>Number of self-determined works presented.</p> <p>Number of creative opportunities provided to First Peoples.</p> <p>Number of emerging artists participating in our program of works.</p>
2. Ensure new, emerging and underrepresented choreographic voices are heard through commissions, exchanges and residencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with emerging and established artists at all stages of the life cycle of a work.</li><li>Each year, continue to offer opportunities for independent artists for creative development and experimentation.</li></ul>	<p>Number of partnerships with dance organisations.</p> <p>Number of collaborations outside dance.</p> <p>Positive peer reviews and media coverage.</p>
3. Build and strengthen our artistic collaborations through generous exchange and artistic reciprocity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>From 2024, build a three-way network with Chunky Move and Dancenorth, utilising each other's homes to present new, low/zero freight work and tour Australia.</li><li>Collaborate with leading Australian companies on new works, residencies, community programs and artist exchange.</li></ul>	
4. Make works of varying scale, across artforms and differing presentation styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Create opportunities for creative input from artists outside dance.</li><li>Investigate new presentation locations to push the boundaries of scale.</li></ul>	

## Our Audiences

**GOAL** To be a must-see company for local and Australian audiences

WHAT WE WILL DO	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES	AREAS TO MEASURE
1. Understand, grow and diversify our audience and build long term connection and loyalty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>From 2024, start annual audience research, including surveys and focus groups, to build our database and understanding.</li><li>Introduce a refreshed brand identity in 2025 that reflects our new Vision and Values.</li></ul>	<p>Continual growth of audience database that enables tailored connections.</p> <p>Strong brand recognition locally and nationally.</p> <p>Percentage of local audience repeat ticket purchases.</p>
2. Increase the frequency of connection with our audiences on and off stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Present seasons every year in Adelaide, accompanied by state touring, in collaboration with Regional Arts SA and Arts SA.</li><li>Perform in capital cities each year, in partnership with major venues including Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House and QPAC.</li><li>In 2024, develop and implement our first dedicated social media/digital strategy.</li></ul>	<p>Box office results in other major cities.</p> <p>By 2028 have a combined audience that represents the demography of contemporary Australia.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people participating in our Leading Program.</p> <p>By 2025 have a nationally recognised schools program.</p>
3. Cultivate the next generation of audiences for dance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand our Learning Program to deliver a calendar of events engaging at least 3,000 young people each year by 2028</li><li>Design and deliver an education program of performances, in-school workshops and online resources.</li></ul>	
4. Enhance our relevance and presence within the South Australian community through a range of artistic, educational and community partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use the 60th anniversary as the catalyst to publicly launch a strengthened profile</li><li>Reconceptualise the relationship with Adelaide Festival Centre that includes residencies, workshops and sector development, not just performances.</li></ul>	



ADT:RAW  
Photo by Morgan Sette

# The Ecology

GOAL

To shape and nurture the vitality of our sector

WHAT WE WILL DO	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES	AREAS TO MEASURE
1. Re-establish our profile in Adelaide with artists, arts colleagues, companies and presenters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be invited to participate in each Adelaide Festival from 2024–2028.</li><li>• Partner with local festivals including Illuminate, Adelaide Fringe, DreamBIG and OzAsia, presenting works, or programs in all festivals by 2028.</li><li>• Inverting our touring model to place Adelaide at the centre of our presentations, then radiating out.</li></ul>	<p>Number of local, metropolitan and regional presentation partnerships.</p> <p>Growth in number of presentations in outer metropolitan venues and regional venues in SA.</p> <p>Increase in the amount of time spent in regional SA as a percentage of each year.</p> <p>Increase in the number of invitations to participate in national and international events.</p>
2. Build deep, strong and generous regional connections across South Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In partnership with Country Arts SA, establish a regional residency network, in Mt Gambier, Renmark and Whyalla.</li><li>• Re-establish relationships with outer metropolitan Adelaide venues.</li><li>• Develop a new work on, and based on stories from, Kangaroo Island for presentation by 2028.</li></ul>	
3. Develop partnerships that support commissioning, touring and skills-sharing around Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secure Major Festivals Initiative funding for at least 2 new works by 2028.</li><li>• Perform in all states and territories across the 2024–28 period, built around our 60th anniversary in 2025.</li></ul>	
4. Forge strong relationships across Asia and the Pacific with like-minded artists and companies to generate reciprocal creative opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue conversations with Aotearoa New Zealand Turtle Island (Canada) for artistic exchange and touring.</li><li>• Work with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support government ‘soft diplomacy’ with our closest neighbours.</li></ul>	



Cultivate:ONE  
Photo by Sam Roberts

# Our Business

GOAL

To have the foundations for our future success

WHAT WE WILL DO	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES	AREAS TO MEASURE
1. Prioritise periods of rest, reflection and recharging to ensure sustainability for our people and the Company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collectively design systems and processes to prioritise care and sustainability in all we do.</li><li>• Develop ‘slow touring’ that supports wellbeing, and is environmentally and financially responsible.</li><li>• In 2024 introduce a new care-focused role to guide cultural safety and organisational planning.</li></ul>	<p>High retention of employees and volunteers across all activities.</p> <p>Be sought out as an employer of choice for artists, arts workers and volunteers.</p> <p>Be recognised as a case study of success of slow touring and/or care including representation in industry discourse and at relevant forums.</p> <p>Growth % of non-government funding of overall income.</p>
2. Grow and diversify income through government advocacy, philanthropy, corporate partners and commissioning partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through Board-led advocacy, secure additional funding from state and federal government.</li><li>• By 2028 build our reserves to 15%-20% of turnover.</li><li>• Launch an endowment campaign aligned with our 60th anniversary in 2025.</li></ul>	<p>Proportion of reserves to annual turnover.</p> <p>Value of endowed funds annually, and plan to grow.</p> <p>Regular governance reviews.</p>
3. Define what our sustainable, long-term home base in Adelaide looks like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertake home-base options research.</li><li>• Work with SA companies and government on an arts hub, co-locating performance, production and administration.</li><li>• Generate funding from government and supporters to realise home-base aspirations.</li></ul>	
4. Enhance our governance and organisational processes through review and continual improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regularly evaluate Strategic Objectives to ensure we are reaching targets while mitigating risks and maximising opportunities.</li><li>• Meaningfully increase diversity and skills across Board and staff.</li><li>• Identify, support and mentor future leaders in the company and the sector.</li></ul>	



# Supporting our Success

With our four pillars in place, we will have the right people, processes and resources to ensure success and longevity.

● Finding the right people and structure

With a full-time ensemble of artists and a cohort of experienced arts workers, we have to find the right balance of investing directly in the making of the art and investing in the supports around the art.

The number of artists that we have employed has varied significantly throughout our history, reaching a peak of nearly twenty in the late 80s to a sustained core of nine between 2010 to 2018. In 2023 we have employed six full-time Company. Artists – in 2025 we will aim to increase this to seven, and ideally by 2028 go back up to nine.

We have always been led by a maker, and this will continue. The direct support around our Artistic Director has been provided by a series of Rehearsal Directors, Associate Artists and Associate Artistic Directors. In 2024 we will introduce a reconceptualised amalgam of these roles, not only providing support to our artists in the studio but looking at care across the organisation.

In 2023 we reviewed our Finance and Producing capabilities, both of which had sat outside the Company with independent contractors. We have now brought these in-house, rebuilding the corporate knowledge and processes to ensure that we can deliver the Strategic Objectives of this Plan.

Where we need additional expert support, particularly around strategy, IT and HR, we will continue to use networks and independent contractors.

With a finite pool of funds for employing and retaining our people we are constantly moulding and remoulding the shape of the Company. Too much focus and resource at one end of the continuum between the artistic and the business risks instability and failure.



Cultivate:ONE  
Photo by Sam Roberts

● Maintaining Good Governance

We recognise effective governance requires a Board of Directors with appropriate skills, experiences and interests which support:

CULTURE

- Identifying our Values and embedding these across everything we do.
- Actively leading a Board and workplace culture to support success.
- Embracing the diversity of experiences of stakeholders.

STRATEGY

- Establishing business and artistic objectives and ensuring these activities align with strategic direction.
- Ensuring resources and workplace culture supports success.
- Setting tolerance for risk.

ADVOCACY

- Developing relationships with key stakeholders.
- Ensuring consistent messaging and values align to organisational culture.
- Maintaining awareness of the interests of all stakeholders (artists, audiences and investors).

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Ensuring policies and risk management are maintained and successfully managed.
- Overseeing solid financial planning and performance and compliance reporting.

In 2022, we undertook a comprehensive review of our governance structure, focussing on representations, skills, processes, and culture. Coming out of this review were 18 recommendations focusing on improvements across the short, medium and long-term.

We continue to make significant headway in responding to the review, implementing actions identified as immediate remedies to existing processes or implementing new processes. Across the life of this Plan, we will not only realise all of the report's recommendations but will reflect on and refine those already implemented to ensure continual improvement.

Coming out of this review we swiftly implemented a new Board Charter and Board induction procedures, as well as recruited our first two First Nations Board Directors. Collectively, the refreshed Board brings considerable professional and personal networks, arts leadership experience and commercial acumen.



● Nurturing Financial Stability

Each year we invest significantly in all phases of the life cycle of new works – creative development, presentation and touring – managing differing stages of numerous works concurrently. While each year is different in shape and scale, we have worked to settle on our core costs that support our artistic program.

Our core funding from state and federal governments supports all people and infrastructure costs, and the majority of our investment in the artform. Our touring and Learning Program are supported by project funding, and any additional artform investment also needs to be sought from partners.

Coming down off significant additional government support between 2020 - 2022, in the form of JobKeeper, RISE and Major Festivals Initiative, we will actively grow our philanthropic, co-commissioning and corporate support, as well as build an endowment to provide ongoing artistic funding.

We prioritise investment in artists and creatives each year. More than 70% of our expenditure on people goes to artists, creative, production and technical workers, with the remaining 30% employing arts workers that support artmaking. Any additional core government investment would enable us to employ more artists and creatives, which would see our people costs become 80%/20%.

Outside people costs and artistic program, our main costs are bound up in our home, The Odeon. This 100-year old former cinema has been our home since 2018, acting as our rehearsal studio, offices and performance space, while also operating as a venue for hire. Net costs each year to run The Odeon are c.\$200,000, excluding any capital expenditure. Now we have the right people and shape of organisation, it's time for us to rigorously look at where we call home.

● Rebuilding Our Reserves

We are in a similar position to a lot of our colleagues across the sector, where we saw a significant hit to our reserves during the pandemic.

We are committed to rebuilding these funds, to reach 15-20% of turnover by 2028.

To achieve this we will use operational processes including:

- Always conservatively budget ticketing capacity at 30% or less, with any funds above this amount quarantined for reserves.
- Utilising our high-interest bearing bank account to generate interest of donations and grants, with these funds also quarantined for reserves.
- Directing any significant earned income from The Odeon towards these reserves.

● Building An Endowment

As part of our planning for the 60th anniversary, we will use this milestone opportunity to build a fund, invested to generate annual returns that directly support our artistic program.

Working with our government and philanthropic partners we will build our 2025 budget so that all funds raised during this year – from individuals, foundations and events – will go directly to our new endowment, rather than to support operating costs.

By 2028 we would aim to have a fund of \$1m, which would generate between \$50,000 - \$75,000 each year for our artistic program.



A Quiet Language  
Photo by Morgan Sette



[adt.org.au](https://adt.org.au)

