

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Theatre funding heralds first step towards a new era of performance programming at PICA

A two-year funding agreement with the WA State Government's Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) has allowed PICA to take the first step towards a radical new model of performance programming. This new model sees PICA move to a model in which:

- Independent artists will not be charged hire fees and venue staff costs; and
- PICA will take the risk on productions, contribute towards artist fees and commission new works.

PICA is thrilled to confirm that it will implement stage one of this new model from 2016 with the assistance of two years of funding from DCA to support WA theatre projects in its program.

Traditionally, through PICA's venue-for-hire model, artists have had to cover venue and staff fees and market their shows to offset these costs through box office income. PICA will implement a new co-production model for its theatre projects thanks to a DCA grant of \$60,000 per year for theatre programming and \$40,000 per year for a creative producer.

Five exciting new WA theatre projects in 2016 have been identified to receive support in the form of fee-free seasons within PICA's performance space and its curated artistic program, a strategic and targeted marketing campaign and opportunities to receive feedback from, and connections with, key industry professionals.

This new model greatly reduces the financial risk that artists face. It will leverage additional resources so that more new projects can be fully realized and have the potential to tour nationally and internationally. PICA's intention is to free up artists to focus on taking creative risks rather than financial ones and to create a professional, supportive and nurturing environment that fosters innovation and excellence.

PICA is currently sourcing additional public and private sector support to fully implement the new model so that it encompasses other work by Australian and international artists, performance forms such as contemporary dance, new music and those that are interdisciplinary and offers artists' fees and commissioning opportunities.

"This new model is exciting terrain for PICA and will be the only one of its kind in WA. It represents a great boost to WA artists and audiences who will reap the rewards of a greater level of financial as well as artistic investment in home grown projects"

– says PICA Director Amy Barrett-Lennard.

There has been overwhelming support for this new approach from the performance sector in Perth and indeed, nationally. In developing this new model PICA has been responsive to the needs and ambitions of the artists and audiences it works with and very much looks forward to embarking on this new era of expanded opportunities for contemporary performance in WA.

“PICA is an establishment with an impressive reputation for curating theatre works of high quality; works which require audiences to engage in visceral, tangible and analytical ways. As a crucible of arts excellence PICA insists on innovative, probing, challenging creations that embody both relevancy and currency. The organisation sets a sky-high bar, necessitating rigour and excellence from early to mid-career and established artists, and in so doing, provides an irreplaceable service to the independent theatre artists of Western Australia. This new co-production model is a great advancement and will see PICA play an ever more greater role in the creation of significant new theatre works.”

– Hellie Turner, Playwright/Director/Dramaturg, Jedda Productions

“One of the greatest ways a venue can provide support to independent artists is by collaborating with them as a co-producer and this is an approach that has been adopted by many venues and institutions nationally and internationally, including the Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne.

In Perth, theatre artists and performance makers have limited number of venues to work within, and an even more limited number of producers to collaborate with. With PICA now starting to be in a position to financially invest and co-produce independent artists, it will provide a new tier of support for Perth artists. This is a timely new step by PICA; it comes at a time when there is a strong cohort of independent artists in Perth at the top of their game, who are seeking new pathways towards sustainability and would greatly benefit from support of this kind. With this new model PICA is displaying great insight and leadership.”

– Matthew Lutton, Artistic Director and CEO, Malthouse Theatre

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