



## **PROGRAMMING POLICY**

*Policy approved by Board: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023*

*Next revision due: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024*

Performing Arts Centre Society is an Incorporated Association that trades under the name The Blue Room Theatre. Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) have a board of management that governs over The Blue Room Theatre and any reference to Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) or The Blue Room Theatre (TBRT) are to be considered interchangeable.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

TBRT aims to provide members, artists and hirers with transparent information on how it programs performance seasons at our venue. This policy embeds our values of creativity, community and sustainability and aims to make clear how decision-making occurs in programming public seasons of performance.

### **TBRT'S ARTISTIC PROGRAM**

We have two key public presentation seasons within our artistic program – the Annual Season (April – November) and Summer Nights (January and February)\*

#### **1. Applications and Selection Criteria**

Artists/producers apply to present their show as part of either season. There is an annual opportunity to apply for either season.

TBRT provides options for applications to be submitted in flexible formats - either written, audio or video.

The seasons are programmed subject to the following:

- Applicants successfully demonstrating they meet the selection criteria
- The overall balance of the season (including diversity of styles of work and emerging and established artists, and meeting TBRT's representation targets).

The selection criteria for programmed works may include:

- Creativity (the creative vision, rationale and process)
- Development (of the artistic practice and professional careers of the artistic team)

- Representation (of people from underrepresented communities as artistic leaders of projects and/or within the artistic team)
- Engagement (with an audience or community and how you will connect with/reach them)
- Planning (evidence that the team will be able to deliver the work within the parameters of the opportunity)

Each person on the selection panel scores against each criteria to create a total score for the application. The scores are then combined to provide an initial ranking of applications from strongest to weakest. The panelists then discuss the applications to make a final recommendation for each program.

**Not all selection criteria will be met by each applicant in an equally strong way. TBRT encourages authenticity and intentionality in creating and presenting work and does not require all successful applications to be strong in all areas.**

TBRT's application process is competitive. The success rate of programmed shows to applications for Summer Nights is 20-30%, and for the Annual Season is 40-50%. TBRT provides all unsuccessful applicants with written feedback and encourages these applicants to re-apply for future programming opportunities.

*\* Please note the Annual Season and Summer Nights seasons occur annually subject to funding.*

## **2. Representation Targets**

TBRT is seeking to increase the diversity of the works and artists that we program each year.

Our [Equity & Justice Action Plan](#) sets out targets for programmed works that are led by people from underrepresented groups. Between 2023-2025, the specific focus of reaching this target will be on artists/producers who identify as First Nations and Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse\*

*\*The Office of Multicultural interests defines Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse as "including groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity, except those whose ancestry is Anglo Saxon, Anglo Celtic, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander." We acknowledge that this term is used by Government bodies to measure a broad intersection of people and communities, but that it is not an inclusive term. As part of our Equity & Justice Action Plan, The Blue Room Theatre will invite all artists and arts-workers to self-identify in a free text box, instead of ticking a box against pre-assigned terms, and use this definition to measure our overall progress against our representation targets.*

## **3. External Selection Panelists**

The Annual Season has a panel of at least three WA-based external industry panelists, which changes every year. The panelists select the works that will make up the Annual Season, based on the selection criteria. TBRT facilitates the programming panel meeting and provides additional key information and appropriate contextual information to the panel to support the decision-making process.

The Summer Nights performance program is programmed internally by TBRT staff, within the selection guidelines.

The Short Works aspect of the Summer Nights program is programmed by the program mentors and TBRT's Producer within the selection guidelines.

Each year, external panelists are selected by TBRT ensuring there is a diversity of artistic/professional expertise and representation of people from underrepresented groups. Additionally, all external panelists attend a pre-selection panel onboarding meeting where the selection criteria, programming process and Equity and Justice Action Plan are discussed in detail.

#### **4. Other Selection Processes**

After the selection panels have made their decision on which works will be selected, TBRT staff make initial offers to these artist/producers on the date and time of their performances. If the artist/producer no longer wishes to be programmed, TBRT staff will undertake a second round of offers to the projects that were highest ranked outside of the original list of selected works, while still taking into account the overall balance of the season.

On occasion, TBRT staff may approach specific artists or shows and offer them a spot in the program (outside of the application process). All approaches will be made considering the overall balance of the season alongside shows that have applied for the season.

At least 75% of any programmed season will comprise of works that have come through the application process.

#### **5. Conflicts of Interest**

In all cases, selection panelists are asked to declare any direct conflicts (eg a partner, someone they live with, or someone they are working with\*\*) and in these cases they are asked not to score the application and to leave the room at any time when the application is being discussed.

External Season Panelists: are only appointed if they have no direct involvement on any applications (eg they cannot be in a named role on any application).

TBRT Staff Panelists: from time to time, TBRT staff are permitted to be in certain roles (producer, marketing/publicity or as a performer) on TBRT applications/productions. In these cases of direct conflict they are asked not to score the application and to leave the room at any time when the application is being discussed.

*\*\*TBRT defines 'someone a panelist is working with' as being contracted in a current creative process or position of employment, during the dates of the assessment period, either by or with someone in a named role on an application.*

#### **PERFORMANCE SEASON HIRES**

TBRT prioritises its public performance program over other performance season venue hires.

On occasion, TBRT will engage in a performance season venue hire agreement with other organisations and artists.

The organisation, artist, performance type and subject matter of all performance season hires are only approved if:

- The hire either aligns with (or does not conflict with) our strategic objectives, values and Equity and Justice Action Plan
- The hire does not impact on the resources and support available to Annual Season and Summer Nights programs
- The venue is available and the organisation has the capacity to manage an additional season.

The final decision on all performance season hires will be made by the Executive Director.

### **ARTISTIC AUTONOMY & CONTENT WARNINGS**

TBRT gives all programmed shows complete artistic autonomy in their work.

TBRT has the right to create and communicate content warnings based on its values for audiences for any public performance if it deems the artist/organisations content warnings are not sufficiently explicit.

TBRT will work with all public seasons to ensure appropriately communicated content warnings and support resources are provided to audiences for challenging, confronting or provocative subject matter.