

The Blue Room Theatre

**Annual
Report
2021**



Purpose

The Blue Room Theatre enables the development of new theatre and performance by providing artists with a venue, resources and support to create and produce their own work.

Our Vision

To be recognised as the preeminent organisation in Australia for independent performing artists to make and present their work and an indispensable voice for new Australian theatre from the West Coast.

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Overview



The Blue Room Theatre is the trading name of the Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS), incorporated in 1989 by Perth based theatre artists to support development opportunities for professional theatre practitioners and generate communication and networking opportunities across the sector.

The state government-owned heritage building Arts House is the home of The Blue Room Theatre, and it is shared with youth arts advocacy body Propel Youth Arts WA. The Blue Room Theatre spaces include: two intimate black box theatres; two rehearsal rooms; a kitchen; the main office and box office; a bar; and backstage facilities.

Independent artists are at the heart of the organisation. The Blue Room Theatre is a creative hub servicing the needs of theatre artists through support (financial and in-kind), resources, opportunities, advocacy, information, and advice.

The Blue Room Theatre Development Seasons were established in 1994 and give independent artists the opportunity to present new work, a work that has not been produced in WA or is an innovative interpretation of an existing text. Presented as one season annually, the Development Season is the core activity of The Blue Room Theatre and is programmed by an independent peer panel who assess applications from independent artists. The programmed works are supported by The Blue Room Theatre with in-kind equipment, venue and rehearsal space hire, a seed fund and sliding scale of 65-80% of the box office, adjusted according

Our Values

Creativity

We support the creation of risk-taking and rigorous new Australian theatre.

Development

We produce flourishing artists, advance our organisation and strengthen the Western Australian theatre sector

Community

We are an inclusive and accessible space of mutual respect and influence.

Sustainability

We are transparent and accountable, financially, environmentally and socially.

to any additional funding awarded to the work. In 2021, fifteen works were presented between April and December, with most seasons comprising two or three weeks. Capacity restrictions and cancellations due to COVID-19 impacted four of the fifteen works.

Our regular Summer Nights program, that was established in 2009 and has been presented as part of FRINGE WORLD since 2012, did not run in 2021. Instead, a Summer Program of COVID-19 restriction responsive short works was created and presented.

The Blue Room Theatre is committed to the continuous professional development of artists. Practical skill and career development workshops are integrated within programs or offered in addition or in partnership with other organisations. While reduced in 2021 compared to previous years, two workshops were facilitated towards the end of the year to support Development Season and 2022 Summer Nights artists and arts workers.

In 2021, The Blue Room Theatre continued its carbon neutral operations and dedication to environmental sustainability. Efforts to redress systemic racism continued with the formation of an Equity and Justice Working Group and creation of an organisational Equity and Justice Pledge – a new public commitment to strive towards greater inclusivity and belonging at all levels of The Blue Room Theatre's operations.

2020 – 2022 Goals

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Goal 1: | To develop skilled and resilient professional artists and risk-taking new work |
| Goal 2: | To deliver broad cultural impact |
| Goal 3: | To sustain a thriving organisation |

Words from the Chair Monica Kane



"It is the poets, artists, and musicians that will carry us through the pandemic attacks into a new reality. They are the ones who tell us how to navigate, breathe, feel, think, enjoy, and fully live our lives. ("Because the world had corona")" - Erik Pevernagie

As I reflect upon 2021 with a steady gaze into 2022, it is these words that hold most true. The arts and culture sector across Australia has taken a huge hit due to COVID-19 and here in Perth, and at The Blue Room Theatre, we are preparing solidly for the months ahead. It's an anxious time for many, but preparation, community, and kindness are key.

Despite the heartache and uncertainty of last year, there is much to celebrate. Our Annual Giving Campaign, Bring Back Summer Nights, raised \$30,385 and enabled The Blue Room Theatre to support a fabulous season of new, exciting work during the 2022 festival season. We are grateful to all the donors who supported this campaign, in particular Ian and Jill Green who matched all donations. I'd like to personally thank Board member, Liesbeth Goedhart for her guidance on our fundraising strategy, which has ensured The Blue Room Theatre's fundraising profile is in its strongest position yet.

Another highlight of 2021 was the sharing of our inaugural Equity and Justice Pledge. This pledge is a commitment to anti-racism work and structural change. The pledge is The Blue Room Theatre being honest, transparent, and accountable. In 2022, our Equity and Justice Working Group will co-create a roadmap to guide the organisation through sustainable systemic change as we learn together. In particular, I'd like to thank Board members Zainab Syed, Sam Nerida and Ian Wilkes and the Sustainability Sub-committee for leading this progressive and significant work. I encourage you to take a moment to watch the video, read the pledge, and hold us to account.

I also acknowledge the immense support that we have had from the Department of Local Government and Cultural Industries during this time of change and challenges. They have stood beside us as funders, partners, and colleagues. We also thank the City of Perth, who continues to be a significant partner of our Development Season, and the Australia Council for the Arts for providing transitional funding support as we exit the four-year funding program for the next few years. Thank you to our 2021 business partners David Mullen Wine Agency, Terms of Service and Scott Print, and a special thanks to our new sponsors The Fulcrum Agency and Block Branding who financially supported First Nations work in the 2021 Development Season.

Strong governance is critical to the effective running of The Blue Room Theatre, and this is overseen by a diligent, thoughtful, and compassionate Board of volunteers, who are a pleasure to work alongside. Thank you to each Director for your time, commitment, and robust input. However, the heart and the real outcomes are achieved by those responsible for getting the stories to the stage. The artists, the stage crew, volunteers, bar and box office staff, and the formidable, relentless, and fun Blue Room team - led by the talented, methodical, and savvy, Katt Osborne. Thank you all. Katt maintains a solid operation, but also the heart and vibe that The Blue Room Theatre is renowned for - that intangible joy that Erik Pevernagie's words speak to.

MONICA KANE
Chair

Words from the Executive Director Katt Osborne



In 2021, we were very fortunate to present all fifteen shows from our April-December Development Season in some public capacity, despite four shows being impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns and capacity restrictions. Our end-of-year awards party was a warm celebration of the achievements of our productions and the artists and production teams who brought their work to the stage. After not being able to gather freely in 2020 or present many productions, 2021 gave us many opportunities to assemble together and see the work and stories that independent makers are creating and sharing here in Perth.

The risks around COVID-19 still demanded some pivoting from The Blue Room Theatre, and for the first time in ten years we did not present a Summer Nights festival. Instead, we created a risk-responsive Summer Program of short works, including a first-time collaboration with Perth Festival.

In another first, The Blue Room Theatre worked in collaboration with Black Swan State Theatre Company to pilot a pathway opportunity for an original Blue Room Theatre production to be remounted for the mainstage. Our 2019 production *Playthings*, by Scott McArdle, was chosen by the artistic staff at Black Swan and its April season and played to almost sold-out audiences at the State Theatre Centre. Thanks to our Professional Pathways Partner Minderoo Foundation, this support of independent artists to develop their careers and works will continue in 2022 with a remount production of Liz Newel's *TOAST*.

Between our Summer Program finishing and the Development Season beginning, we undertook our transformational bar renovation works that our supporters made possible with \$138,000 worth of donations raised over 2019/20. A huge thank you again to everyone who contributed to the campaign. The newly renovated bar - our lounge room of Perth indie performance - is now able to welcome members, artists, and general public for a variety of events, casual gatherings and hot-desking throughout the year (COVID-19 restrictions allowing).

The staff team at The Blue Room Theatre continued to evolve in 2021. Mid-year we said goodbye to Program Manager Harriet Roberts, who took an exciting position at Perth Festival after five years working in various positions at The Blue Room Theatre. Our Program Coordinator Melanie Julien-Martial also moved on to Performing Lines WA to follow her producing passion. And after seventeen years as our Finance Officer, Karen Connolly finished her last pay run at the end of December. A huge thank you to Karen, Mel and Harriet on your massive contribution to The Blue Room Theatre over many years. We wish you the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you to all of the staff team who continue to be light on their feet and continue to search for better ways of working and supporting artistic teams during another disruptive year. I am very proud of how we continue to build on The Blue Room Theatre's 30+ year legacy and evolve alongside the changes in the world and to the needs of independent artists and arts workers here in Perth.

Finally, a big thank you to the Board for your governance and stewardship on behalf of our members and community. It is a big commitment for a group of volunteers to give and the organisation continues to be supported well by you all. Thank you.

KATT OSBORNE
Executive Director

Goal 1:
To develop skilled and resilient professional artists and risk-taking new work

Summer Program

In 2021, we took our first break in ten years from presenting Summer Nights as part of FRINGE WORLD. The risk of a COVID-19 lockdown and safety risk to artists and audiences was too high for us to commit to our usual jam-packed 30 shows across four-weeks. Instead, The Blue Room Theatre team created a program of ‘short works’ for audiences to delight in, that was responsive to the risks and capacity restrictions. The program comprised of two halves – *900 Seconds* and *MoveMoveMove*.

Firstly, we presented *900 Seconds* – inspired by our successful *600 Seconds* program – and gave independent artists the opportunity to make a 15-minute new work. Over three weeks we had three curator/mentors support five artist teams to create and perform their work. Each week had a different focus under a different mentor. Jo Morris supported short text-based works, Bernadette Lewis steered short physical pieces and Joe Lui worked with artists exploring post-dramatic and experimental shorts. We presented two of the three weeks, with the final week of experimental shorts occurring in the week of the February lockdown and therefore, sadly had to be cancelled.

We partnered with Perth Festival for the first time to co-present *MoveMoveMove* – a curated promenade dance performance journey across three venues. The short works were curated by Tyrone Earl Lraé Robinson and began at Rechabite’s Goodwill Club. The journey then moved into the garden beside the State Theatre Centre Courtyard, finishing back at The Blue Room Theatre. With space and costume design by Kaitlin Brindley and lighting design by Joe Lui, the three short works were brought together as a site-responsive journey for audiences of 20 per session.

Three weeks of intimate performances were able to be performed to full houses and 45 artists were supported.



“MoveMoveMove defies all expectations as audiences move through Northbridge”

“MoveMoveMove is a choreographic, sonic and visual adventure”



900 Seconds

900 Seconds (of Storytelling)
Mentored by Jo Morris

‘What’s Poppin’ - Elise Wilson & Christopher Moro
‘What Are the Odds?’ - Anna Lindstedt & Courtney Cavallaro
‘APPLEBY’ - Claire Appleby
‘Avareh درآوا & Found’ - Asha Kiani, Raneen Kousari, Elisha Rahimi & Elham Eshraghain
‘Call Me’ - Jen Jamieson

900 Seconds (of Movement)
Mentored by Bernadette Lewis

‘Reimagined’ - Giorgia Schijf & Jesse Vivante
‘Fake Empire’ - Samuel Gordon, Holland Brooks, Donita Cruz, Scarlet Davis, Shaun Johnston, Elouise Martin, Evi Cruz & Mazey O’Reilly
‘Oy Vey’ - May Greenberg
‘Swan Twink (Pas De Youth)’ - Andrew Sutherland, Michelle Aitken & David Vikman
‘Set Unset’ - Mitch Spadaro

900 Seconds (of Futurity) [cancelled due to lock down]
Mentored by Joe Lui

‘Wrestling With My Regrets’ - Louis Spencer
‘Mother of Compost’ - Noemie Huttner-Koros
‘Lemon’ - Amelia Sgrabb
‘Rupert Murdoch and the Jellyfish Girl’ - Sally Davies
‘A Profound Conversion of the Heart’ - Phoebe Sullivan

MoveMoveMove

Program Curated and Mentored by Tyrone Earl Lraé Robinson
Lighting Design by Joe Lui
Site and Costume Design by Kailin Brindley

Unearthly
Choreographed and Performed by Bernadette Lewis, Natalie Allen & Daisy Sanders
Sound Design by Tess Stephenson

To Place
Choreographed by Lauren Catellani
Performed by Mitchell Spadaro, Michelle Aitken & Mani Mae Gomes
Sound Design by Alexander Turner

The Walk
Choreographed and Performed by Tahlia Russell
Sound Design by Peter McAvan

Development Season

The Blue Room Theatre's Development Season exists to support new works made by artists ranging from emerging to mid-career and established, and to foster further professional development for all involved.

In 2021, our Development Season comprised of fifteen works with 169 artists and arts workers involved. The total capacity reached across the season was 87%, a 7% increase from 2019 figures*. Gross box office income was \$168,500, also up on the 2019 figure. 2021 saw nine productions created and led by emerging artists and twelve world premiere works. Culture Counts was once again utilised in 2021, with audience surveys recording an average score of 89% across the dimensions of distinctiveness (89%), risk (93%) and local impact (90%).

In 2021 we were able to offer an increase in seed funding, with each production getting \$2,500 – \$500 up on previous years. This was thanks to the 18 members of our newly formed Giving Circle who collectively donated \$33,500 to support our 2021 Development Season.

Seven of the fifteen works for 2021 were re-programmed after being cancelled in 2020, giving them a well-deserved second chance at presentation. These shows were *The Summer of Our Lives*; *MoR*; *Ugly Virgins*; *Beginning at the End (of Capitalism)*; *Borderline*; *small & cute oh no*; and *Unbound*.

Unfortunately, four of the 2021 productions were again impacted by cancelled shows and reduced audience capacities, but thankfully all fifteen were able to present a season.

*Comparison to 2019 due to COVID-19 cancellation in 2020

"It was a wonderful opportunity to share this story with a broader audience and receive so much positive feedback from sold out audiences many of whom would not have seen the show had it not been part of the Blue Room Program."

EVELYN SNOOK
(*Borderline*)

"FIRE would never have become the work it is without the support of The Blue Room Theatre. It is impossible to express how valuable all the tools The Blue Room provides are to creating work. From the use of rehearsal spaces to the always warm and welcoming staff, participating in the 2021 program was the best experience I have ever had making theatre."

MADELEINE YOUNG
(*FIRE*)

Development Season Program



Kangaroo Stew
Desert Wirla
27 April – 8 May

Supported by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and presented by Desert Wirla, *Kangaroo Stew* was a First Nation family drama written and directed by Zac James. It explored the significance of family relationships and the sacredness of land. The production faced audience capacity restrictions due to a COVID-19 lockdown.



The Summer of Our Lives
Western Sky Projects
4 – 22 May

An original West Australian musical comedy about a summer holiday gone wrong and revenge, infusing 80s sci-fi elements inspired by the likes of *E.T.* and *Carrie*. Strong performances and a killer soundtrack saw a sold-out season.



MoR
Third Culture Kids
18 May – 5 June

MoR was a one-woman show by Dureshawar Khan (*SHARBAT*). It was told through a combination of spoken-word poetry and science experiments as a nod to Dureshawar's mother, a science teacher.



Ugly Virgins
Lindstedt & Davies
1 – 16 June

A roller-skating rink in a black box theatre had to be seen to be believed as the Theatre was completely transformed. While deftly and sometimes precariously performing the sport of roller derby, the all-female cast attempted to form a new team amidst conversations on dating, internal conflicts and developing camaraderie.



FIRE
Kalyakoorl Collective
22 June – 10 July

Kalyakoorl Collective's debut followed two sisters learning to reconnect as adults after becoming estranged as young girls. A First Nations work that combined dance, poetry, song, and storytelling. After having its first showing at FRINGE WORLD 2021 impacted by COVID-19, *FIRE* also faced some cancelled shows and capacity restrictions during its Development Season.



Beginning at the End (of Capitalism)
Phoebe Sullivan
5 – 10 July

A mixed-media show that saw live performance filmed, edited and projected in real time. *Beginning at the End (of Capitalism)* celebrated a sci-fi escapist fantasy while exploring real issues of capitalism, fashion, and Phoebe's own relationship with her mother. The team faced cancelled shows and audience restrictions due to a lockdown.

"Being at the Blue Room is such a fantastic opportunity to take risks and test new ideas."

BRIDGET LE MAY
(*Unbound*)



Borderline
stumble.
20 – 31 July

A heartfelt tale told in honest glory by Evelyn Snook, *Borderline* brought in a high percentage of new audiences to The Blue Room Theatre. This autobiographical tale of living with Borderline Personality Disorder was told through poetry, puppetry, and dance breaks.



small and cute oh no
Squid Vicious
22 July – 7 August

small and cute oh no examined capitalism and identity through dark comedy. Set in a surreal shopping mall, this show was an all-too-real dive into the line between fiction and fact. The production faced COVID-19 lockdown impacts and cancelled shows.



Unbound
Blank Space Productions
24 August – 4 September

Unbound turned the tables on Shakespearean characters with a feminist retelling of the Bard’s iconic tales. The remixing highlighted irony and increased autonomy for female characters. The dance-lead coda or Second Act was a visual feast of movement and colour.



My Shout
Undercurrent Theatre Company
31 August – 18 September

Commenting on the role that alcohol plays in Australian contemporary culture, *My Shout* was an ode to our inherent desire for connection through alcohol. This was the debut from Undercurrent, a company of fresh WAAPA Bachelor of Performing Arts graduates.



Watch and Act
Katie McAllister
28 September - 16 October

In this one-woman stand-up dark comedy, Katie McAllister expounded on her struggles with OCD to raise awareness for climate grief. A timely response to the tragedy of Black Summer and what dealing with personal crises might teach us about the increasingly urgent climate crisis.



Love Letters to the Revolution
Sian Murphy
5 – 23 October

Written and directed by Sian Murphy, *Love Letters to the Revolution* explored how the micro revolutions we undergo might lead to the macro changes the world needs. Told through a series of vignettes and monologues, the work showed brave experimentation with a non-narrative structure.



Queer as Flux
The Nest Ensemble
26 October - 13 November

After a sold-out season at the Brisbane Powerhouse, *Queer as Flux* came to The Blue Room Theatre. Stace Callaghan’s autobiographical solo invited audiences into the journey of transitioning. The production undertook outstanding outreach to connect Perth’s LGBTQI+ communities.



Little Women
Mel & Sal
9 - 27 November

Little Women progressively adapted the beloved Louisa May Alcott classic through a queer lens while retaining the beauty and warmth of the original novel. With detailed set design and costuming, the show transported audiences into a reimagined Civil War era America.



The Bleeding Tree by Angus Cerini
Ian Michael
23 November – 11 December

Ian Michael’s *The Bleeding Tree* by Angus Cerini was a powerful WA first production of Cerini’s play. Performed by a stellar all-female First Nations cast, the show utilised lighting and shadow on a simple yet striking set design to tell this harrowing and impactful tale.

Artist Advisory & Professional Development

Artist Advisory

This group was set up in 2020 to provide feedback and support to The Blue Room Theatre staff team. In 2021, we selected the eight members of the group to include people with diverse artistic practices and experiences and held four meetings through the year. We thank our 2021 Advisory Group members: Barbara Hostalek, Daley Rang, Grace Chow, Jo Morris, Joe Lui, Laura Maitland, Sally Davies and Scott Elstermann.

Mentorships and Workshops

32 mentorships were offered over the course of 2021. 14 of these were through the \$300 mentorship fund accessible by Development Season artists to upskill their teams, and 18 dance and theatrical mentorship opportunities were accessed across *900 Seconds* and *MoveMoveMove* as part of the Summer Program.

We offered two workshops to support Development Season and 2022 Summer Nights artists and arts workers towards the end of 2021. These were ‘Lighting 101,’ a practical how-to guide for emerging designers and operators, and ‘Communication and Collaboration in the Arts,’ guiding teams through the art of deep listening.

Yirra Yaarnz

Held during 2021NAIDOCWeek celebrations, Yirra Yaakin brought *Yirra Yaarnz* to the Theatre; two days of play readings from emerging West Australian Aboriginal playwrights. It comprised readings of selected works by the Yirra Yaakin Writers’ Group, an intensive playwriting program that guides emerging Aboriginal writers to turn ideas into scripts. Mentored by award-winning playwrights Hellie Turner, Zac James, Polly Low and Geoff Kelso, this presentation showcased the importance of storytelling and playwriting as it relates to Aboriginal culture.

Goal 1:

Key Performance Indicators

GOAL	KPI	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 TARGET
To develop professional independent artists & work	New works presented through TBRT programs	18	43	39
	New work developments supported by TBRT	18	39	39
	Professional development projects delivered	39	42	39
	% workshop attendees satisfied or highly satisfied*	80	N/A	80
	% development season producer satisfied or highly satisfied	80	89	80

*Due to staff turnover and COVID-19 disruptions, only two workshops were held in 2021 and satisfaction statistics were not recorded.

Goal 2:
To deliver broad
cultural impact

Equity and Justice

After completing an initial Diversity and Inclusion Audit in 2020, the Board, its Sustainability Sub-committee and our staff began work on the first two of the Audit’s recommendations.

Recommendation 1:
Create and share a manifesto

In October, we released our Equity and Justice Pledge. This statement was created by the Board and staff to acknowledge our part in reinforcing systemic oppression through our structures and expresses a commitment to change.

Recommendation 2:
Co-design a strategy that embeds equity and justice

We assembled an Equity and Justice Working Group, consisting of eight members of our community with different experiences and perspectives. The group, along with representatives of the Sustainability Sub-committee, met for an initial three meetings across October to December to unpack and influence key diversity, equity and inclusion issues at The Blue Room Theatre and to share lived experience. The discussions will help shape our strategic direction and operational action plan for the organisation.

Thank you to our Equity and Justice Working Group members: Crystal Nyugen, Ellie Murray-Yong, Ian Michael, Jay Emmanuel, Joe Lui, Meelee Soorkia, Melanie Julien-Martial and Phebe Cho.

Next Steps
In 2022, the Working Group will undertake further meetings as our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is finalised. The staff will work with the input of the group to create an Equity Action Plan that will address all areas of the organisation including programming, recruitment, community engagement and venue operations.



Equity and Justice Pledge

At The Blue Room Theatre we believe that stories humanise, inspire and connect our individual and collective experiences, and that they must be nurtured and celebrated in all their diverse forms.

While The Blue Room Theatre has been working to redress historic and systemic racism, we acknowledge that we have not done enough. There are many communities in our society that continue to face discrimination and are excluded on the basis of their race and ethnicity.

We recognise that White Australia and the mainstream arts industry has been built on racist and colonial policies and attitudes that reward exclusion. We recognise that in the past we have been complicit in perpetuating these structures of exclusion. We also recognise that there are intersectional systems of oppression that marginalise individuals and identities beyond race and culture, and these communities continue to be kept out of spaces of decision making, while having to shoulder a disproportionate burden to educate and hold others accountable.

We must change this.
We commit to actively interrogating our organisation, structures, and policies so that not only our stages but our programs, membership, board rooms, foyers and venues accurately reflect and celebrate the beautiful, rich and diverse communities in Western Australia.

We commit to removing systemic barriers. We commit to unpacking our own unconscious bias, privilege and power. We commit to listening more. We commit to making room for new people, and voices. We commit to implementing safe and inclusive practices. We commit to being generous and open hearted.

This is necessary and urgent work.

So, our plan is to initially focus on working with communities that identify as culturally diverse, acknowledging that identities are intersectional and our work with one community will inform our subsequent work across all communities that are marginalised and discriminated against.

We began this process by engaging in a Diversity and Inclusion Audit in 2020. Now, our newly established Equity and Justice Working Group (comprising of Board, Staff, Members and Industry) will work together to create an Equity Action Plan that will inform policy, operations and activities over the coming years.

This plan will be responsive and embedded across all levels of our organisation and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure we continue to do better. We hope that our members, and wider community, old and new, will hold us accountable to this pledge as we aim to become more transparent, equitable and sustainable through all facets of our organisation.

This public commitment is endorsed by all staff and the Board of The Blue Room Theatre.

An artwork inspired by this pledge was commissioned and created by Charlie Yong. To watch a video of the artwork being created, and hear the pledge read in full, follow the QR code.



Awards & Touring

The Blue Room Theatre Awards

Audience Engagement

Winners: *Borderline* (stumble.) & *Queer As Flux* (The Nest Ensemble)

Nominees: *Kangaroo Stew* (Desert Wirla) *Watch and Act* (Katie McAllister)

Design

Winner: Overall Design, *The Bleeding Tree* by *Angus Cerini* (Ian Michael)

Nominees: Overall Design, *Ugly Virgins* (Lindstedt & Davies) Set, Kelly Fregon for MoR (Third Culture Kids) Overall Design, *Beginning at the End (of Capitalism)* (Phoebe Sullivan)

Writing

Winner: Sally Davies & Anna Lindstedt, *Ugly Virgins* (Lindstedt & Davies)

Nominees: Katie McAllister, *Watch and Act* (Katie McAllister) Ebony McGuire, *FIRE* (Kalyakoorl Collective) Dureshawar Khan, *MoR* (Third Culture Kids)

Direction

Winner: Ian Michael, *The Bleeding Tree* by *Angus Cerini* (Ian Michael)

Nominees: Sally Davies & Anna Lindstedt, *Ugly Virgins* (Lindstedt & Davies) Sam Bruce, *My Shout* (Undercurrent Theatre Company) Michelle Endersbee, *Watch and Act* (Katie McAllister)

Ensemble Or Individual Performance

Winner: Ensemble, *The Bleeding Tree* by *Angus Cerini* (Ian Michael)

Nominees: Nick MacLaine, *The Summer of Our Lives* (Western Sky Projects) Katie McAllister, *Watch and Act* (Katie McAllister) Stace Callaghan, *Queer as Flux* (The Nest Ensemble)

Members Choice

All shows nominated

Winner: *The Bleeding Tree* by *Angus Cerini* (Ian Michael)

Behind The Scenes Awards – Production

Catherine O’Donoghue –Stage Manager for *FIRE*, *My Shout*, and *Little Women*

Maddy Mullins –Stage Manager for *Ugly Virgins*, *Watch and Act*, and *Queer as Flux* and a volunteer usher

Peter Young – Lighting Designer for *Kangaroo Stew*, *The Summer of Our Lives*, and *Queer as Flux*

Behind The Scenes Awards – Producer

Maddy Young – *FIRE*
Emmanuelle Dodo–Balu – *Kangaroo Stew*

Behind The Scenes Award – All Rounder

Amber Kitney – Performer in *Ugly Virgins* and *Little Women*, Producer of *My Shout* and *Unbound*

Performing Arts WA Awards 2021

The PAWA Award Ceremony for shows presented in 2021 will take place in May of 2022, after this annual report has gone to print.

At the PAWA Awards 2021, celebrating presentations from 2020, productions supported by The Blue Room Theatre received three awards and 25 nominations across 13 categories. Our 2020 Winter Nights program was also shortlisted for Outstanding Digital Engagement During COVID-19.

Best Independent Production

Winner: *The Golem: or, Next Year In Jerusalem* (Humphrey Bower & Tim Green)

Best Director Of An Independent Production

Winner: Alexa Taylor, *Love* (Eat Life Productions)

Best Sound Design

Winner: Joe Paradise Lui, *The Golem: or, Next Year In Jerusalem* (Humphrey Bower & Tim Green)

Additional Presentations

These productions, originally supported by The Blue Room Theatre, went on to present in 2021.

Miss Westralia (Western Sky Projects) at Don Russell Performing Arts Centre and a regional tour to Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Narrogin, Ravensthorpe, Harvey, and Beverly

Tale of Tales (Bow & Dagger) at State Theatre Centre of WA for FRINGE WORLD 2021

Partnerships

Black Swan State Theatre Company
Presentation of a main-stage remount season of *Playthings* by Scott McArdle at the State Theatre Centre of WA. A next level opportunity for an independent production originally premiered at The Blue Room Theatre.

Circuit West
Research and Development

Curtin University
Hayman Theatre: Stage One

Minderoo Foundation
Professional Pathways Partner. In 2022, Minderoo Foundation will support The Blue Room Theatre to continue its Black Swan State Theatre Company collaboration and present another main-stage remount, this time of *TOAST* by Liz Newell.

The Fulcrum Agency & Block Branding
The Bleeding Tree by *Angus Cerini*

Perth Festival
Summer Program: *MoveMoveMove*

Rechabite
Summer Program: *MoveMoveMove*

State Theatre Centre of WA
Summer Program: *MoveMoveMove*

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
TILT

Yirra Yaakin
Yirra Yaarnz



Goal 2:

Key Performance Indicators

GOAL	KPI	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 TARGET
To develop professional independent artists & work	Supported works have further presentations*	6	1	3
	WA sector partnerships each year	6	10	6
	CALD audiences*	4,480	1,723	4,480
	CALD participants**	240	43	240
	Partnerships with diversity organisations	3	1	3

*Note that this projected target was set with the assumption that Summer Nights would occur in 2021. As a percentage of audiences, CALD audiences made up 16% of audiences at The Blue Room Theatre.

**Note that the total amount of participants in the 2021 program was only 214 as we did not present Summer Nights or support many workshop opportunities. As a percentage, CALD participants made up 20%.

Goal 3: To sustain a thriving organisation

The Transformation Project

In 2021, our transformative bar renovations were complete. This two-year project began in 2019 – the year that The Blue Room Theatre celebrated our 30th birthday. To ensure we could continue to support and serve the WA performing arts sector and community for another 30 years, we launched our ‘transformation campaign’.

The goal was to renovate our bar for the first time in 15 years and to convert our downstairs rehearsal space into a third performance space, securing a bright future for The Blue Room Theatre at the heart of a revitalised Perth Cultural Centre.

We raised an incredible \$137,000 from donations, including \$50,000 from Creative Partnerships’ Australia’s Plus 1 Matched Funding scheme. The campaign exceeded our wildest expectations.

And then came 2020 – with COVID-19 shutdowns, capacity restrictions, and the news that our federal Australia Council funding would not be renewed beyond the end of 2020. We were one of 49 national arts organisations to receive this news, and we received it only weeks after the reality of the global pandemic had set in.

For the transformation project, we had under a year to turn the vision into a plan, and the plan into a completed renovation. We needed to move quickly and adjust constantly. On a macro scale, the world had changed. On a local scale, finding the last piece of funding to make our third black box space into a reality had disappeared (though hopefully not forever...) into COVID-19 relief funding.

We still have plans for a third black box space in our building, and to have the capacity to deliver a larger public season of new works. But the renovation and upgrade of our 15-year old bar was achievable, essential, and our immediate priority.

And in April 2021, the newly renovated bar re-opened. As well as the physical changes, we were kindly supported by Lavan Legal to navigate the web of liquor licensing and improve our trading conditions. Previously, patrons were only allowed to come up to the bar if they had a ticket to see a performance, and we were only able to open after 5pm and 2 hours before and after a performance.

Since re-opening in April, our new licensing conditions allow anyone can come and enjoy this space, even when they’re not seeing a show.

Thank you to...

The 192 donors and the Plus 1 matched funding support from Creative Partnerships Australia for making the bar renovation possible.

Our suppliers who donated or gave us things at cost for the bar. Brayco for the stainless-steel benches and products and Polyfloor for donating the new vinyl flooring.

Lavan Legal.

Our team who gave their time to the renovation plans and execution: David Chandler, Clancy of Whitehaus Archtiects, Tom Kimmel and Rhi Coffey.

And a huge thank you to the bar’s designer Bryan Woltjen, who has spent many hands-on hours sourcing and upcycling materials for the bar, and who continues to pop in and refine the space even today.



Services & Resources



As a member-based organisation, The Blue Room Theatre continues to provide invaluable services and resources to independent performing artists, arts workers and members through the provision of in-kind or significantly subsidised access and hire, as well as administrative, producing, marketing and technical support. In 2021 there were 309 financial members - the full list can be seen on page 22.

Hire

In 2021 The Blue Room Theatre continued to engage with tertiary institutions to deliver public performance programs showcasing the work of graduating students. We were proud to partner with WAAPA for the seventh year of TILT, an original program of self-devised and directed works created and performed by final-year Bachelor of Performing Arts students. After a hiatus in 2020, The Blue Room Theatre again engaged with Curtin University’s Stage One program in December. A total 2,156 hours of in-kind room and rehearsal space hire was provided to Development Season productions and events to support the sector.

With a new bar license in place, we also hosted several functions for arts industry organisations, including events for the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA, Barking Gecko Theatre Company and WAAPA, as well as private function hires.

Auspice

The Blue Room Theatre has offered auspice services to independent performance artists for many years. As an incorporated body, we ensure all auspiced productions maintain public liability insurance, worker’s compensation and superannuation payments for all artists involved, and complete their financial acquittal to the funding body.

Projects Auspiced In 2021

To The Front (static drive co.) DLGSC \$59,391

FIRE (Kalyakoorl Collective) DLGSC \$14,675 & Australia Council \$50,000

The Bleeding Tree by Angus Cerini (Ian Michael) DLGSC \$59,997

In The Works (Michelle Aitken, Mitchell Spadaro and Lauren Catellani) DLGSC \$50,765

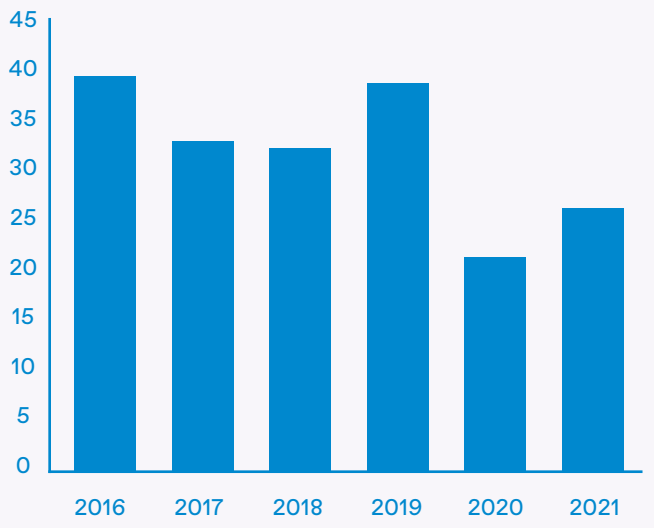
Environmental Sustainability Report

Since 2015, the installation of our solar panels and acquiring our LED lights, we have continued to reduce emissions and electricity costs overall. Our success in prioritising environmental sustainability has been made possible by the amazing support of our members and community over successive fundraising campaigns and years. We continue to make huge savings on our electricity use and purchase carbon offsets to bring our emissions to zero.

This is The Blue Room Theatre’s third year of carbon neutrality. After seeing a dip in the emissions and expenses in 2020 (due to being closed for most of the year), in 2021 we achieved lower green-house gas emissions than would be expected in a ‘normal’ year, but electricity usage and prices saw an increase.

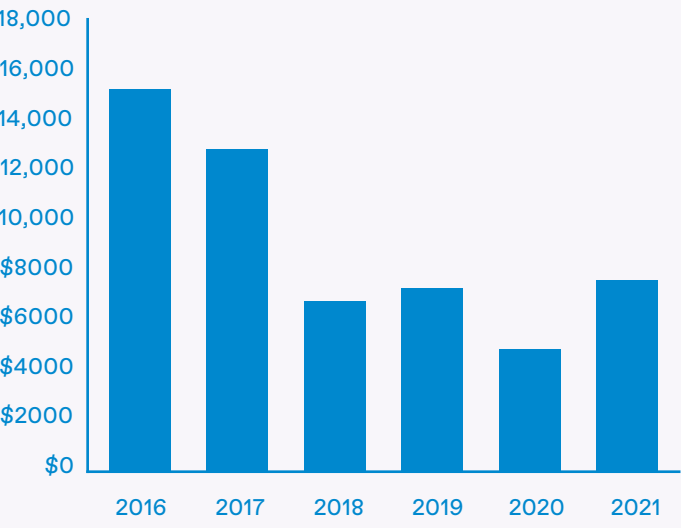
In 2022, thanks to the support of the Australia Council for the Arts, The Blue Room Theatre will participate in a carbon audit process. This will provide a good opportunity for the organisation to check our progress and find new ways to continue to reduce our carbon footprint and improve waste management.

Green House Gas Emissions 2016 - 2021



CO2-e Tonnes					
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
39.15	33.84	32.19	38.84	21.66	26.25

Electricity Expense 2016 - 2021



\$					
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
\$15,376	\$12,810	\$6,508	\$6,727	\$4,497	\$7,901

Notes:

- 2019 includes brochure paper and printing for the first time
- 2020 is lower due to being closed for performances the majority of the year
- 2021 includes water and compost waste for the first time
- Includes Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions
- Excludes calculations for staff and audience commutes
- Excludes business travel - all offset



Goal 3:

Key Performance Indicators

GOAL	KPI	2021 TARGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 TARGET
To sustain a thriving organisation	Maintain reserves at 20% (exc. independent producer box office & auspices)	25%	34%*	30%*
		\$275K	\$173K	-\$59K**
	Increase non-box office earned income	207%	44%	-20%**
		-\$65K	-\$43K***	\$10K
	Increase private income	-45%	-27%	10%
	Artist Board membership	3	3	3
	CALD Board membership	3	3	3
	PD opportunities for Staff & Board	6	6	6
	Weeks of programming at TBRT	36	33	36

*Our reserves grew in 2021 based on job keeper income and a successful increase in earned income. The surplus reserves will support strategic projects that will sustain The Blue Room Theatre over the next three years as we adapt our operations without four-year funding from the Australia Council.

**In 2022 our target is an adjustment from 2021’s increase, based on conservative forecasts as a result of projected COVID-19 restrictions in 2021.

***These decreases continue to be an adjustment after the one-off large ‘Transformation Campaign’ in 2019/20.

Treasurer's Report

The Blue Room Theatre continues to receive the majority of its income from various government grants and philanthropic giving. However, in 2021 government funding reduced by 30% or \$360k – a combination of the loss of Australia Council funding and reduced Federal support for COVID-19 relief.

Sources of Income 2021



During 2021, our planned focus on growing other sources of income has continued with the success of the Transformation Project. Our newly renovated bar opened in April 2021, despite a COVID-19 lockdown which disrupted the celebrations. We also saw increased operating revenue in comparison to 2020, which came predominately from having people back in our spaces with fewer COVID-19 restrictions and disruptions through the year.

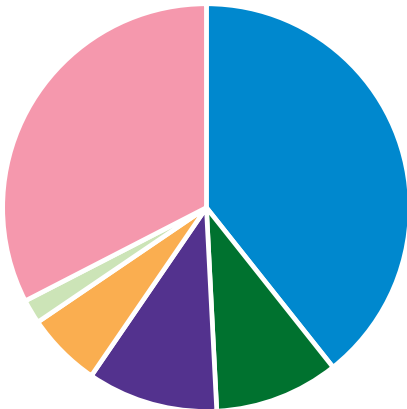
After the disappointment of not having a Summer Nights program for the first time in 10 years, we instead presented a Summer Program of short works before launching into our main Development Season with gusto. With 87% capacity across the season, it was evident that audiences were thankful that The Blue Room Theatre had emerged out of 2020 venue closures with some great works.

Diversifying our income sources has been an important strategy, and we can see that as we create more opportunities for artists, we also create more opportunities to diversify our income.

Whilst performance and box office income has not returned to the pre-COVID levels, a 52% increase on the prior year certainly increased our enthusiasm and we are hoping 2022 will continue to grow audience opportunities once again, despite having to wear masks in the theatre (a key risk mitigation for keeping everyone safe whilst visiting the venue).

Managing expenditure is always tricky with great ideas and small budgets. However, the Board continues to ensure that our funds are focused on providing our members the opportunities, mentorship, support and shows at the highest levels.

Expenditure 2021



Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2021

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
Revenue from continuing operations		
Operating revenue	480,755	257,906
Revenue from Grants	616,970	976,792
Revenue from donations and fundraising	104,470	143,185
Other revenue	21,558	5,355
Operating Expenditure	(1,281,734)	(1,099,315)
Net (Deficit)/ Surplus for the year	(57,981)	283,925
Transfers from / (to) Designated Reserves	87,001	(88,000)
Net Operating Surplus for the year	29,020	195,925

Financially, after adjusting for reserve transfers for money received in 2021 but for spending in 2022, we have achieved a surplus of \$29k. All in all, a successful year.

Our Reserves remain strong at 34% against our benchmark of 20%; ensuring we can continue to provide great opportunities in 2022, whilst repositioning and rebuilding.

We will also be keenly focused on our organisational promises such as the Equity and Justice Pledge, creating opportunities and spaces for engaging works, and providing development opportunities for our staff and artists. Whilst keeping everyone safe with enhanced COVID-19 safety protocols.

For a full copy of the financial statements for the Performing Arts Centre Society Inc, visit the ACNC website at www.acnc.gov.au.

TANYA PAYNE
Treasurer

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Carmel Ahern
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AusDance

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The generosity of our donors allows us to continue to be as accessible as possible and give high levels of support to independent artists. Without the folks below, our 2021 Development Season and 2022 Summer Nights would not have been possible.

Development Season Giving Circle

Thank you to our Giving Circle who raised \$33,500 to support the 2021 Development Season.

Giving Circle Members

Andrew Baker & Rowan Marshall
John Foster
Kevin Della Bosca
Ian Gay
Linda Savage & Stephen Davis
Nerida Maclean
Philip Dundas
Shane Colquhoun & Leigh Cathcart
Kate Chaney
Sand M Glasson
Liesbeth Goedhart
Anonymous x 9

Bring Back Summer Nights

Thank you to our major donors Ian & Jill Green, who matched donations and brought our total donations for this campaign to \$30,365, allowing us to program our beloved Summer Nights in 2022.

\$500+

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Arielle Gray
Clair & Chris Shenton
David Geoffrey Hall
Izaak Lim
Mark Hateley
Shane Colquhoun
Val Rhodes-Newton

\$100-\$259

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Thank you to all 135 donors giving up to \$100!



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Zainab Syed
Deputy Chair: Arts Management + Community Engagement

Tanya Payne
Treasurer: Finance + Accounting

Liesbeth Goedhart
Secretary: Philanthropy + Marketing + Arts Administration

Ian Wilkes
Elected Member: Arts Industry + Artist

Emily Mclean
Elected Member: Arts Industry + Artist

Sam Nerida
Elected Member: Arts Industry + Artist

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Katt Osborne

Program Manager
Harriet Roberts (Until July)
Rose Kingdom-Barron (From August)

Operations Manager
Mitch Thomas

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Melanie Julien-Martial (Until August)
Caro Duca (From August)

Communications & Engagement Coordinator
Amy Howell

Front Of House & Ticketing Coordinator
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George Ashforth (Until April)
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- Housekeeper**
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Tim Green
Zendra Giraudo
Zoe Street

A Big Thank You To
All our wonderful volunteer ushers for the year

The work of The Blue Room Theatre is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the Western Australian Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Our Development Seasons are supported by the City of Perth.



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The Blue Room Theatre
is the trading name of the
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Society Inc.

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