

ACTNOW THEATRE ANNUAL REPORT 2016



DESIGN & PUBLICATION

ActNow Theatre

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The 2016 program was also proudly supported by partner organisations Reconciliation SA, Renewal SA, Tandanya, Flinders University, Gay Men's Health and Carclew.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Various sources - as stated on the image.



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ABOUT ACTNOW THEATRE

ActNow Theatre was founded in 2007 by three high school friends who wanted to create a street theatre performance about (then) Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks. Driven by an ambition to explore issues around injustice and oppression through theatre, this ensemble presented highly visual performances in public spaces, with a guerrilla approach to its unscheduled appearances and the agitprop content of the work. Today the company employs two full time staff, two Associate Artists and dozens of emerging artists.

The small not-for-profit performing arts organisation creates collaborative and socially conscious performances that are innovative, informed and inspiring.

The Company works in partnerships to engage diverse communities in conversations around important contemporary issues, with a focus on cultural diversity and celebrating sexuality.

ActNow's projects have been critically acclaimed, commended in South Australian Parliament, and highly praised by audiences, participants and community organisations alike.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-18

VISION

- » Theatre is a conduit for public discourse and a catalyst for social change.

MISSION

- » ActNow Theatre creates collaborative and socially conscious performance projects. We work in partnerships to engage diverse communities in conversations around important and complex contemporary issues.

PRINCIPLES

Imagination

- » For us, creating a better world starts with imagination. We use art as a bridge between what is and what could be. Our work creates spaces for audiences, participants and artists to imagine a better world and build it.

Participation

- » Empowerment starts by taking part. We believe that in theatre, as in democracy, representation isn't enough. We need direct participation in political processes and universal access to arts as part of daily life. We break down barriers to participation by creating work in schools, workplaces, and in public spaces. Our work is participatory democracy in a theatrical form, and we want it to help make education more engaging, activism invigorating and citizenship empowering.

Openness

- » We are open to learn, open to share, open to collaborate, open to conversation, and open to uncertainty. We don't know the future or hold the answers. We see our work as building the conversations that matter to people, not ending them. Culture, identity, storytelling and relationships are things to explore, share and cultivate.

OBJECTIVE 1

Audience and Business Development

- » Build strategies for audience engagement and partnership development with a focus on high schools and NGOs.

OBJECTIVE 2

Program Excellence and Impact

- » Demonstrate artistic excellence and cultural leadership. Create a positive legacy through our programming.

OBJECTIVE 3

Organisational Capacity

- » Strengthen the company's governance and management.



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and socially conscious
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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

CHAIRPERSON

- » Peter Grace
- » Tenure: 4 Years

TREASURER

- » Jo Coventry
- » Tenure: 14 Months

BOARD MEMBER

- » Melissa White
- » Tenure: 3 Years

BOARD MEMBER

- » Shaez Mortimer
- » Tenure: 3 Years

BOARD MEMBER

- » Simon Kreig
- » Tenure: 4 months

BOARD MEMBER

- » Eliza Lovell
- » Tenure: 6 months



BOARD CHAIRS REPORT

This year was a period of change resulting in very strong outcomes for the company. There were several transitions for the company staff and board as part of this exciting period of growth. For the first time, we employed additional administrative staff to support the Artistic Director. This increase in capacity resulted in a significant increase in output, and a strong sustainable base for the company.

We were successful in Arts Organisations Funding (Arts SA), further securing our position in the South Australian Arts Landscape. In 2016 we also bid farewell to Peter Grace from the role of Chairperson. I would like to thank Peter for his outstanding contribution to the company over the 4 years in the role. I stepped into the role in October 2016 as Acting Chairperson post his departure. We also welcomed new members to the board, Lilla Berry, Ella Pak Poy, Cassie Magin and Ben Brooker – their diverse experience and knowledge will provoke new and exciting directions for the company.

I would also like to acknowledge the hardworking staff members (Edwin Kemp Attrill, Belinda Berry, Yasmin Gurreeboo and the associated artists and thinkers) whom contribute to the success of the company. Staff work tirelessly to develop and create programs and interactive performances and spaces to support young emerging artists and audiences. The result of this important work will see future generations being the change they wish to see in the world.

It is with great delight I hand the baton over to Matthew Ives the companies new Chairperson.

I wish Matthew all the best.

Here's to a super 2018 and beyond.

Eliza Lovell

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR REPORT

Our work is borne from the world of social media, share-economies, peer networks, Wikipedia and co-everything. In almost every aspect of society (politics, media and education) hierarchical power structures are being replaced by network while theatre has remained largely unchanged. This is a central meta question of our work; how can the power of the crowd transform art? Brecht famously stated, "Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it". ActNow's work is the beauty of the mirror shattered by the power of the hammer. It is the fragmented reflections of society/ies with no sole author. We reflect a 'multitudinal image', not a singular one, and in it our audiences see themselves from many angles, at times distorted, and always from new perspectives.

ActNow's 2016 program has been developed through multi-year partnerships with artists and communities on several projects clustered around two key areas of diversity: cultural and sexuality. This is a result of the continuation of highly successful projects in these areas, and reflects our business model of responsive programming to the needs of the community. A wide range of complementary projects and partnerships have grown from Responding to Racism that reflect our desire to create an Australian national identity that places

Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal stories, as central to Australian culture. Our projects focusing on diverse sexualities come at a critical time in Australia's national discourse. In the wake of the recent tragedy in Orlando, the controversy surrounding the Safe Schools program and homophobic responses from the public, media and (some) politicians to the same sex marriage debate, instances of homophobia are front and centre.

Throughout 2016 there was a clarification of our work within it's increasingly eclectic forms and presentation settings. Our work is the 'art of engagement'; it is the embrace of participatory forms of storytelling, the design of safe spaces to enable open discussions, a theatricalisation of participatory democracy. We work with some of the best emerging artists to create projects that are wildly ambitious and innovative and going where no theatre company is going in South Australia. Our work finds the balance between provocation and inspiration to not just make an audience feel, but motivates them to do.

Edwin Kemp Attrill
Artistic Director, ActNow Theatre

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Artistic Director

» Edwin Kemp Attrill

Producer

» Jennifer Greer Holmes

Project Coordinator

» Gemma Beale

Volunteer

» Zoe Bogner, Online Content Manager

CASUAL ARTISTS

Claire Glenn

» (Co-director, Undead Adelaide)

Manal Younus

» (Performer, Responding to Racism)

Lochy Maybury

» (Performer, Responding to Racism)

Nicolle Orr

» (Performer, Responding to Racism)

Elizabeth Hay

» (Performer, Undead Adelaide)

Andrew Thomas

» (Performer, Undead Adelaide)

Harry Lee

» (Consultant on Undead Adelaide)

Meg Wilson

» (Designer, Zero Feet Away)

Chiara Gabrielli

» (Associate Producer, Zero Feet Away)

Matilda Bailey

» (Divisor and Performer, Zero Feet Away)

Melissa Maidment

» (Divisor and Performer, Zero Feet Away)

Jamila Main

» (Divisor and Performer, Zero Feet Away)

Jason Marsiglia

» (Divisor and Performer, Zero Feet Away)

Matthew Gregan

» (Composer and Musician, Zero Feet Away)

Alexander Ramsay

» (Lighting Design and Technician, Zero Feet Away)

Andrew Thomas

» (Actor, Dads and Kids)

Meg Wilson

• (Designer, Dads and Kids)

Ben Brooker

» (Writer, Dads and Kids)



TREASURERS REPORT

2016 was a very successful and rewarding year for ActNow Theatre – both creatively and financially. This was the year where the finances of the company finally allowed for a reasonable remuneration for core staff members and the planning of the introduction of a full-time General Manager by the beginning of 2017.

ActNow Theatre’s success at sourcing meaningful and exciting partnerships, funding opportunities and outstanding project outcomes is a testament to the extraordinary ability of its founder and current Artistic Director, Edwin Kemp-Attrill. The time and commitment that Edwin has put into establishing this organisation is to be commended. Although the 2016 financials shows a small operating loss, the work put in during this time has ensured that 2017 and beyond have healthy budgets, more adequate staff numbers and we should recoup this loss and add to our profits in the year to come.

ActNow Theatre’s Board of Management is working towards a reserves figure of 20% of gross turnover to ensure the longevity of the organisation. We hope to achieve this figure within the next 3 years.

It is encouraging for me as treasurer to see the exponential growth of the organisation and very important that the financial structures that have been put in place (and recommended by the auditor) are continued to be monitored and improved on – so that we are accurately able to gauge and monitor the financial situation of the organisation at the monthly meetings as well as to streamline administration procedures for core staff. This is now being achieved which is excellent.

I would like to also acknowledge the tireless work of our new General Manager Belinda Berry and our former and current book-keepers for their work in getting these financial records into an ordered and accurate state, so that the audit could be conducted swiftly and in line with our funding agreement with Arts SA.

It has been a pleasure for me to serve on the board of this exciting and socially valuable organisation. Bring on 2017.

Jo Coventry

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS

ActNow Theatre Incorporated

ABN 65 672 485 445

Statement of Profit or Loss

For the Year Ended 31 December 2016

	2016
Note	\$
Income	
Provision of services	90,827
Interest received	1,110
Other income	56,948
	<u>148,885</u>
Expenditure	
Accounting and bookkeeping fees	3,150
Depreciation and amortisation expense	1,757
Bank charges	142
Other expenses	66,214
Performance production expenses	83,258
	<u>154,521</u>
Income tax expense	-
Profit after income tax	<u>(5,636)</u>
Retained profit at the beginning of the financial year	<u>11,269</u>
Retained profits at the end of the financial year	<u>5,633</u>



PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

ActNow Theatre Incorporated

ABN 65 672 485 445

For the Year Ended 31 December 2016

Profit and Loss Account

	2016
	\$
Revenue	
Fees	90,827
Grants	55,513
Other income	1,434
Total revenue	<u>147,774</u>
Less: Expenses	
Accounting and bookkeeping fees	3,150
Administration and management fees	1,450
Advertising	525
Cost of sales	213
Bank charges	142
Catering expenses	2,622
Computer expenses	1,702
Consulting and professional fees	204
Depreciation	1,757
Equipment < \$1,000	4,275
Insurance	1,783
Postage	237
Printing and stationery	2,052
Rent expense	1,920
Salaries	40,963
Staff training	53
Subscriptions	667
Sundry expenses	90
Superannuation contributions	4,219
Telephone and fax	628
Travel - domestic	2,351
Workers compensation insurance	144
Website expenses	117
Performance production expenses	83,258
	<u>154,522</u>
Interest income	1,110
Net revenue(deficit)	<u>(5,638)</u>

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

ActNow Theatre Incorporated

ABN 65 672 485 445

Assets and liabilities statement 31 December 2016

	2016
	Note \$
ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	48,376
Trade and other receivables	880
Current tax receivable	419
Prepayments	702
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>50,377</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	
Plant and equipment	3,834
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>3,834</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>54,211</u>
LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Trade and other payables	4 6,861
Other liabilities	5 41,718
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>48,579</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>48,579</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>5,632</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS	
Retained profits	5,632
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUND	<u>5,632</u>

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Responding to Racism was (and still is) an award winning Forum Theatre performance by culturally diverse artists supporting high school students and adults to identify, prevent and respond to and raise awareness about racism through the delivery of full day schools' congresses and community forums across regional South Australia, in partnership with Reconciliation SA.

The 2016 program underwent the most significant changes since the original development of Responding to Racism in 2014 and focused on the physical design of the Schools Congress spaces to create consistency within the touring program. The primary artistic change to the program was the addition of 'Image Theatre' games within 'Responding to Racism' performances. Students in small groups without their teachers, were asked to create images using their bodies as statues to students begin to feel comfortable being stage in front of their peers. During some Congresses, the same techniques of creating images using bodies as statues was used, but looking at images such as "what are the factors in this character's life that is affecting his behavior" or "what needs to change in his life". This was a very successful way to 'zoom out' of the interpersonal aspects, and look at the context and systemic issues.

As a result of the success of this project in engaging with Aboriginal artists and organisations, ActNow partnered with Tandanya and Flinders University to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) young people's access to professional pathways in the arts industry.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Dads and Kids, delivered in partnership with Carclew and Anglicare in the City of Onkaparinga, was designed for non-sports focused families to have father-child bonding experiences through an arts activity. Specifically, it was designed to engage fathers and/or male caregivers and their children using storytelling, visual art and physical exercises to create 'real world games' for families to play. Workshop participants were children aged 5-12 and their fathers or male caregivers and there was no cost to participate. Young people and families in need of social support identified and referred by health and welfare organisations, developed relationships and engaged in recreational and creative activity that responds to the unique issues of fathers and the relationship with their children.

The project was a highly successful pilot program of workshops. There was a very high rate of engagement and enjoyment, and interest to attend future sessions.

Key benefits, identified through written testimonials (solicited and unsolicited), participant surveys, anecdotal feedback and artists reflection included:

- » Positive impact on the relationship between parents and kids
- » Positive attitude shift towards non-screen based activities
- » Ability to apply games in other contexts and build other relationships
- » Developing social, imaginative and communication skills



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Undead Adelaide, supported by Renewal SA and the Adelaide Festival Centre's inSPACE Program, was an innovative activation concept to engage the community to create a 'Zombie Apocalypse Survival Plan' for the City of Adelaide. The 'Survival Plan' is a way to capture people's imagination and creativity in a place-making and cultural mapping project using the hypothetical scenario of a Zombie Apocalypse. The project focused on young people's engagement in political processes and activism.

Through this project, ActNow engaged with a new community of people from the general public through the workshops and call out, and from the gaming community through a targeted approach.

Successful engagement outcomes of the project included finding new ways of working, new tools, developing new performance content and attracting new partnerships.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Zero Feet Away was a live art / theatre performance exploring intimacy, identity and sexuality delivered in partnership with Gay Men's Health and the Australia Council for the Arts, at Ancient World in the Adelaide CBD. ActNow hosted a number of Queer community youth workshops to explore the various techniques the production's app could be used and to hear a variety of Queer stories to act as a base for the final script's content. With a combined group of local artists and Queer community members the development team began creative research to develop into writing and devising for the final script. The research content included dramaturgical techniques into story and character arcs when using a variety of nonfiction stories, local and global Queer issues and local and global verbatim text and stories. The script was performed to a general public audience by the combined artistic group, alongside with nightly submitted audience content via the production's mobile phone application to facilitate anonymous conversations.

The performance was highly successful in engaging the target demographic and changing their thinking about same sex practices.

Zero Feet Away had a softer politic than most of the company's other projects. This production was not driven by an audience outcome of a particular awareness of behaviour change, but an expression of a community/group of artists' experience and identities. The group of Queer artists were also allowed to be more diverse within this production, to not only discuss the issues and experiences of cis-gendered homosexual men, but gender nonconforming and Queer female artists as well. It worked towards our vision of 'theatre as a conduit for public discourse', and as a result many non-Queer people who considered themselves strong allies said they gained a lot more than expected, and many people said that being at the performance was the most Queer pride they ever felt. Zero Feet Away was very collaborative in its development and presentation, it was highly socially conscious and steered away from conventional theatre.





ActNow Theatre

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