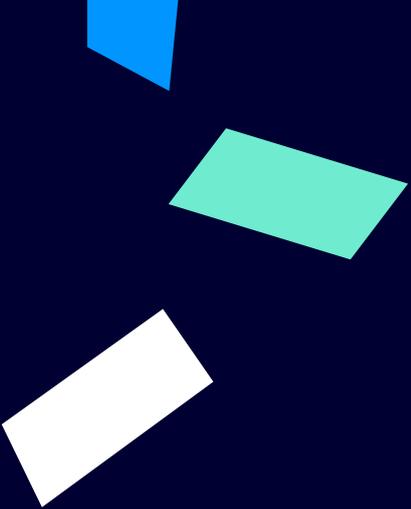


A photograph of two young women with their arms raised in celebration, surrounded by falling confetti. They are wearing white t-shirts. The background is a plain, light color.

monkey
baa theatre
company

strategic plan

20225

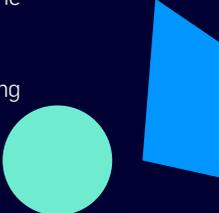


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this nation and honour their continued cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose land we work, live and share stories.

We acknowledge that our theatre is located on Gadigal land. This land was home to storytelling long before Monkey Baa and we are grateful for the privilege of sharing our stories today. We engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, supporting their right to self-determine artistic identity, while promoting artists and community engagement.

Always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.





2022-25 strategic plan

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BACKGROUND

Monkey Baa makes great theatre for young people and for over 24 years we presented award-winning theatrical experiences that inspire and empower young people across Australia and internationally.

For the past decade, Monkey Baa has made its home at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre in Sydney and on Gadigal land. This is where we work, play and produce high-quality theatre.

We are one of Australia's widest touring companies with 28 national tours to 135 regional and remote communities, 5 international tours and over 3000 performances reaching over 1.5 million young people.

Nearly a quarter of a century of operation requires resilience and ingenuity. Much has changed since its inception in 1997 – particularly in the past 2 years – but Monkey Baa's appetite for development, transformation and renewal remains the same.

With our founding director and Artistic Director, Eva Di Cesare and our Executive Director, Kevin du Preez, this strategy marks the start of the next chapter of the Monkey Baa's story.

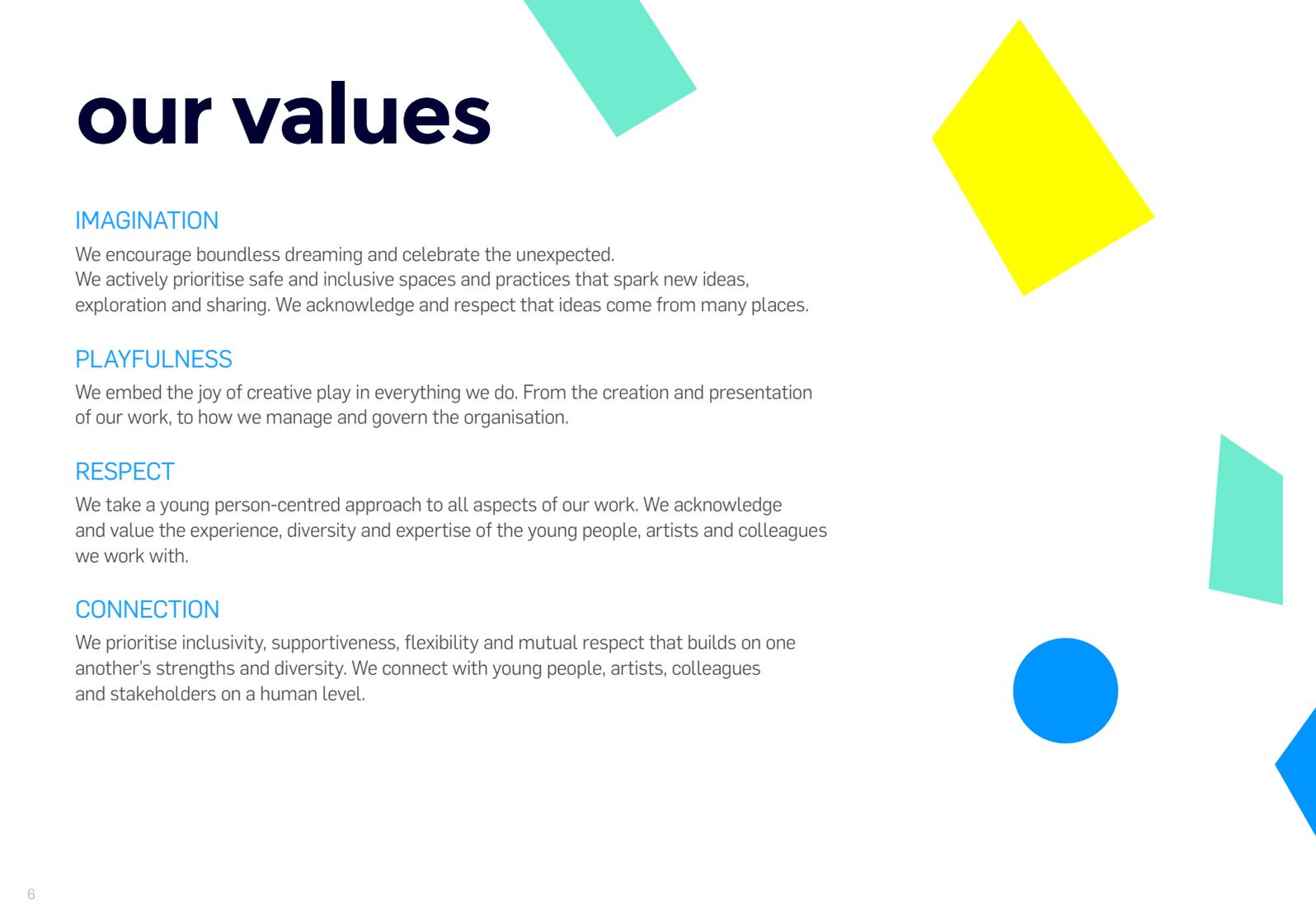


our vision
a world where
all young people
are emboldened
by creativity.

our mission
we empower young
people to shape and
navigate their lives
through inspirational
theatre and creative
experiences.



our values



IMAGINATION

We encourage boundless dreaming and celebrate the unexpected.

We actively prioritise safe and inclusive spaces and practices that spark new ideas, exploration and sharing. We acknowledge and respect that ideas come from many places.

PLAYFULNESS

We embed the joy of creative play in everything we do. From the creation and presentation of our work, to how we manage and govern the organisation.

RESPECT

We take a young person-centred approach to all aspects of our work. We acknowledge and value the experience, diversity and expertise of the young people, artists and colleagues we work with.

CONNECTION

We prioritise inclusivity, supportiveness, flexibility and mutual respect that builds on one another's strengths and diversity. We connect with young people, artists, colleagues and stakeholders on a human level.

**young people
are at the
centre of
everything
we do.**





artist

OUR ARTISTIC VISION AND OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY ARE DEEPLY INTERCONNECTED.
THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES GUIDE OUR ARTISTIC RATIONALE.

I am thrilled to be leading Monkey Baa boldly into our changed and brave new world; to invite the brilliance of young people and artists into our fold, to create what comes next.

The last two unprecedented years have given me much time to reflect, to see how far this company has come over 24 years. 28 national tours and 5 International tours created with some of the country's most talented and inspiring artists and incredible young people.

Our remit has always been to spread joy and wonder through the visceral medium of theatre; shared experiences connecting us to each other and our humanity. And now more than ever we need to share in each other's stories.

Our vision is for a world where young people are emboldened by their creativity, where young people are seen, where their voices are heard.

2022 sees the formation of our very first young people's council, whose contributions will be woven throughout not just the creative processes, but every facet of the company.

To lead and step back are seemingly at odds with each other. But this will be my task over the life of this strategic plan... to lead our incredible team of artists and young people and also to step back and be led and watch the magic unfold.

EVA DI CESARE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ic vision

context

The world outside our stage door looks nothing like it did two years ago. Yet our ambition to create exhilarating theatre and creative experiences for young people is stronger than ever.

While impacts of COVID-19 on young people are emerging, the full impact will be complex and not yet fully understood. The next few years will be dynamic and the outcomes for young people might change quickly. Mental wellbeing and social connectedness are and will continue to be a challenge. For instance, 74% of young people reported their mental health had been negatively impacted since the outbreak of the pandemic¹.

Digital technologies are changing how audiences are engaging with and experience art and culture. During the last 18 months, many arts organisations responded by presenting content online and exploring new ways of engaging digitally. Although there have been some successes with new business models, many are still investigating how digital technology and practices can be embedded in the core business model and what the financial return of these projects will be. Developing digital capabilities is a key priority across the sector with organisations such as the Australia Council delivering new programs to uplift the sector digital skills.

¹Headspace 2020, Coping with COVID: the mental health impact on young people accessing headspace services.

“

THE WORLD OUTSIDE OUR STAGE
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”

The arts and culture industry has experienced significant setbacks as a result of COVID, both economical and otherwise. Across all areas of the industry regardless of size or artform, restrictions on gatherings, changes in audience behaviour (voluntary or otherwise), and unemployment have taken a devastating toll on the sector. The full scope and scale of the impact will be difficult to determine.

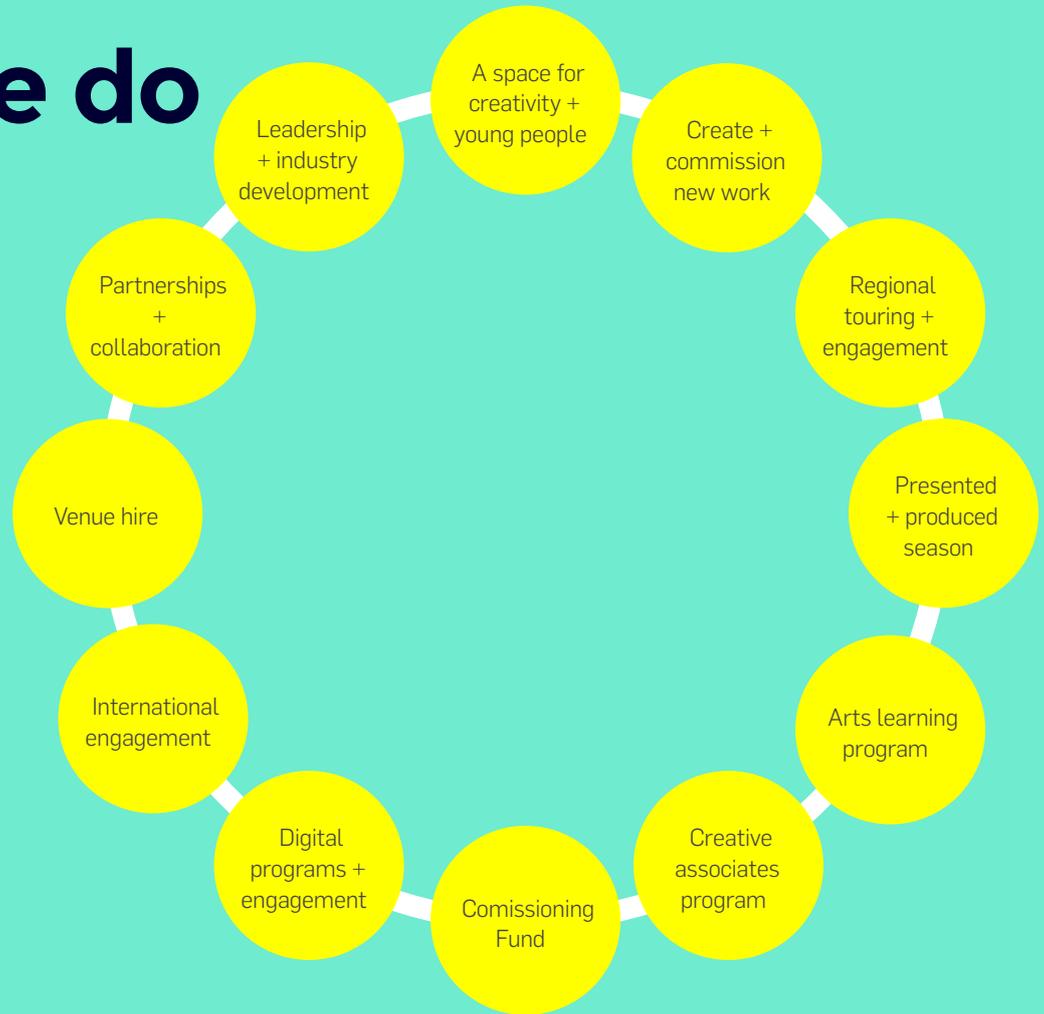
Governments at all levels have made significant investment in the industry to try and minimise this impact. This support has created a temporary and artificial uplift in government support. Programs such as JobSaver and JobKeeper were the lifeline to many organisations, including Monkey Baa. The question now is how do we rebuild sustainability from diverse sources of support?

In 2021, a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry recommended that the Commonwealth Government develops a new National Cultural Plan. The industry will advocate that this new plan is adopted and includes a focus on young people and their engagement with the arts. The new plan provides an opportunity to support recovery and shape the future of our industry. It will likely be a key advocacy priority during the 2022 federal election.

The arts landscape will be irrevocably changed post-COVID. At this moment in time, our industry has the opportunity to strengthen itself and look towards the future. A future that is more sustainable and more equitable; a future where the arts are fiercely valued by all society and organisations such as Monkey Baa thrive.



what we do



we create and present great theatre for young people

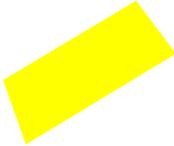
We collaborate with internationally acclaimed authors, award-winning creatives and, most importantly, imaginative young people, in bringing our shows to life.

We tour our shows all over Australia, to big cities and remote country towns, making theatre accessible to young Australians everywhere.

The stories we share embrace social and cultural connections, celebrate our rich cultural heritage and inspire young audiences to learn about the world and their place in it.



our work



A SPACE FOR CREATIVITY + YOUNG PEOPLE

At our home in Sydney at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, we present and produce high quality work for young people. We host special workshops and events attracting young people from across Sydney and beyond.

CREATE + COMMISSION NEW WORK

Our theatre making includes new writing, adaptation and reinterpretation. We collaborate with exceptional artists, sharing and extending our practice as we explore new ways of making theatre.

REGIONAL TOURING + ENGAGEMENT

We are Australia's most widely toured arts organisation and by partnering with likeminded venues we make our work accessible to young people and their communities across Australia.

PRESENTED + PRODUCED SEASON

Our annual season is a curated mix of shows that are created and presented for young people of all ages, from young children to teenagers. Our season includes shows created by Monkey Baa and other works from Australian and international theatre companies.

ARTS LEARNING PROGRAM

Our learning program makes theatre more accessible to young people in an educational context. Aligned with the national curriculum, we provide innovative resources and opportunities for students and educators alike.

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES PROGRAM

An industry development program to mentor and support diverse artists by providing them with time, space and resources to create their own work. An annual intake welcomes new artists in the program.



COMMISSIONING FUND

A long-term strategy to invest in artists to create new and innovative work. We are building partnerships with funders and donors to co-invest in a fund that supports the sustainability of our creative development.

DIGITAL PROGRAMS + ENGAGEMENT

Our comprehensive digital strategy aims to extend and deepen our engagement with young people. We are building our capability to deliver purpose-built digital platforms, experiences, connections and models.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

In the past, we have toured internationally to the US and when international travel returns plan to do so again. Our international engagement builds strategic relationships with international collaborators for future projects.

VENUE HIRE

We manage both corporate and community hires of our theatre ARA Darling Quarter Theatre. We promote our theatre as an intimate space for a wide variety of uses including corporate events.

PARTNERSHIP + COLLABORATION

Our relationships with venues, other arts organisations and artists are at the heart of what we do at Monkey Baa. We explore, research and co-create with others to benefit our shared stakeholders, young people.

LEADERSHIP + INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

We advocate for the importance of the Theatre for Young People sector and in turn our own aspirations. We play key leadership roles in the development of emerging artists and representation in key networks and groups.

who we are here for

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Our primary audience are young people between the age of 5 to 16 years. We are taking a balanced approach to creating experiences for children (5-12 years) and increasingly more for teenagers (13-16 years).

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

When our resources allow and strategic opportunity presents itself, we also focus on our secondary audience. This includes early childhood (0-4 years) and early adulthood (17-18+ years).

ANCILLARY AUDIENCE

We know parents, carers and other significant people in young people's lives enjoy our work. We are also strategically focusing on this segment of our audience.

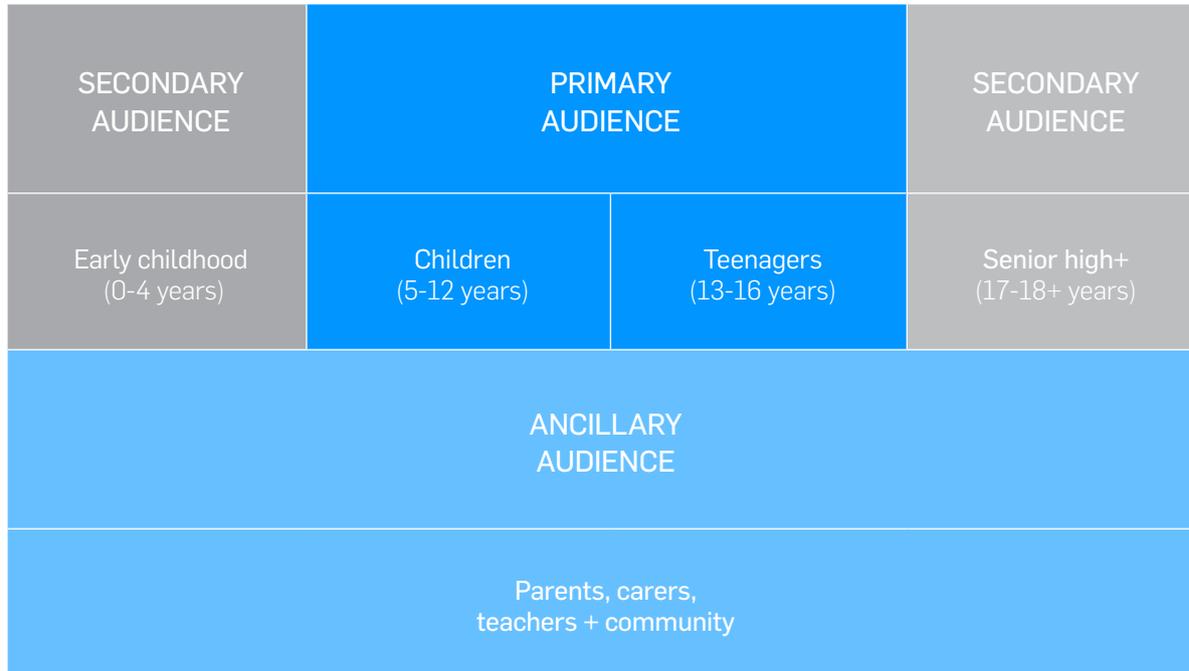
LOCATION

Our young audience is based in Greater Sydney, other cities, regional and overseas. We engage with young people in and around our theatre, in other theatres, in schools, in community and online.

EQUITY FOCUS AREAS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people(s).
- Culturally and linguistically diverse young people and/or young people of colour.
- Young people with disability and/or who are d/Deaf.
- Young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ or are discovering their orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination.
- Young people in regional and remote Australia.

our audience



other stakeholders

ARTISTS

Our artists reflect the society we live in. We prioritise work with a range of professional artists from across Sydney and NSW. We also engage with artists from around Australia and internationally.

COMMUNITY

Our community is diverse and reflects who we are as Australians. We connect with young people and their communities across metro, regional and rural locations. We bring young people to the theatre, and we take theatre to young people.

FUNDING BODIES

Our primary funding bodies include Australia Council for the Arts, Create NSW, City of Sydney and the Office for the Arts. We continue to build strong relationships with funders at all levels of Government.

GOVERNING BODY

The Board stewards our strategic vision and governs our organisation to enable the company to achieve its strategic goals. Our guiding instruments are set out in our constitution and strategic plan.

TEAM

The Monkey Baa team works closely together to achieve our strategic vision and deliver on our overall plan. We are a close group of theatre and arts professionals with extensive experience, knowledge and expertise.

PARTNERS

We are actively engaging with partners which include our donors, sponsors, suppliers and venues across Australia. Our approach to partnership is based on ethical decision making for reciprocal outcomes for all.





strategic



THESE GOALS WILL GUIDE OUR WORK OVER THE NEXT 4 YEARS
TOWARDS OUR VISION + ENACTING OUR MISSION.

GOAL 1. CONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE

More connected and engaged theatre and creative experiences for young people.

GOAL 2. EQUITY AND BELONGING

Greater equity and belonging for all our young people, our artists and community.

GOAL 3. ADVENTUROUS WORK

We create and support artists to develop bold and adventurous new work.

GOAL 4. FUTURE FIT

A company that is resilient, sustainable and enables our artistic
and organisational goals.

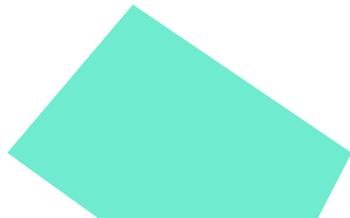
goals

goal 1

connected young people

MORE CONNECTED AND ENGAGED THEATRE AND CREATIVE EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

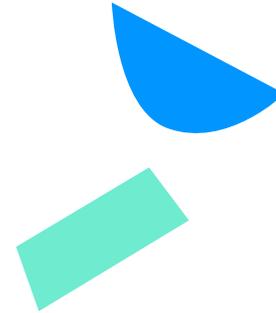
- Develop more opportunities for young people to access theatre regardless of where they are and how they want to connect.
- Embed young people in our creative practice and our core business by employing more young people, providing access to our resources and involving them in our decision making.
- Involve more young people in how we communicate our work and change our language to be more relevant and young people friendly.
- Enrich our digital engagement and platforms to broaden our reach and connection with young people and their communities.
- Provide more inclusive learning experiences to young people by shifting our education program beyond the curriculum.
- Attract more young people and families to our theatre by redesigning our spaces to be more welcoming, engaging and fit-for-purpose.



goal 2

equity + belonging

STRATEGIC GOALS



GREATER EQUITY AND BELONGING FOR ALL OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, OUR ARTISTS AND COMMUNITY.

- Create work that reflects our diverse cultural society by telling stories that give voice to more diverse young people and artists.
- Establish and maintain diverse artistic teams, creators and casts. Hire staff and recruit board members that reflect the diversity of our community.
- Embed a diversity action plan focusing on First Nations peoples, cultural diversity, people with disability, LGBTQIA+ community and regional and remote audience.
- Examine policies and procedures including governance, programming, fundraising, communication, and operations through a lens of equity.
- Commit to accountability, transparency, learning and conversation. Engage in active dialogue to respond to the needs of our community.
- Use our platform to advance equity, inclusion and belonging towards a sustainable and thriving arts and creative industry.

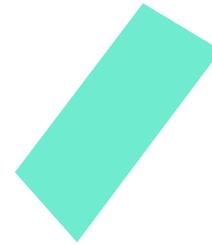
goal 3

adventurous work

WE CREATE AND SUPPORT ARTISTS TO DEVELOP BOLD AND ADVENTUROUS NEW WORK.

- Create cutting edge work with diverse communities and explore new scale of work including major immersive theatre projects.
- Prioritise and centre First Nations stories by working with community to develop and present new works by First Nations artists.
- Invest in long-term development of new work, artists' careers and industry growth through capacity building, investment and advocacy.
- Create a more sustainable touring model by shifting towards more flexible, smaller and balanced itineraries achieving national coverage over multiple tours and years.
- Expand both our produced and presented work to include more contemporary and relevant topics to our young people including for teenage years.

goal 4 future fit



A COMPANY THAT IS RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLES OUR ARTISTIC AND ORGANISATIONAL GOALS.

- Diversify our income sources by reviewing our business model to unlock new value and explore fee generating income and alternate funding sources.
- Build longer term sustainability including healthy reserves to safeguard against disruption and future development of creative product.
- Secure resources and support to renovate our spaces at the theatre to be more young people friendly and fit-for-purpose.
- Extend our impact and reach by partnering with like-minded and supportive donors, collaborators, funders and community leaders.
- Uplift staff capability and skills by prioritising learning and development programs in areas such as digital, cultural awareness, management and production.
- Embed sustainable work practices across the organisation including carbon offsetting and reducing energy use.

key performance indicators

GOAL 1. CONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE

KPI	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of young people involved in the creative development of our work.	260	390	450	400
Percentage of our workforce that is under 25 years.	10%	15%	17%	20%
Active participation of members in the Young Person Council.	75% attendance	80% attendance	80% attendance	80% attendance
Attendance numbers of young people across our program.	50,000	70,000	65,000	65,000
Growth in attendance of young people at ARA Darling Quarter Theatre.	+5%	+10%	+12.5%	+15%
Increased brand and exposure recognition through digital reach.	10,000	12,500	15,000	20,000
Total participant numbers in our arts learning program.	3,500	7,800	4,000	4,000
Positive feedback from students and teachers about our arts education outcomes.	75%+	80%+	90%+	90%+

GOAL 2. EQUITY + BELONGING

KPI	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of work(s) led by First Nations artists.	1	2	2	2
Number of works led by artists who identify as CALD, artists with disability and/or who are d/Deaf.	6	9	11	11
Percentage of Board directors who identify as First Nations, CALD, person with disability and/or who are d/Deaf.	30%	40%	40%	50%
Percentage of our Executive and Board directors who identify as Female or non-binary.	67%	67%	67%	67%
Percentage of our staff, artists, creatives and casuals who identify as First Nations, CALD, person with disability and/or who are d/Deaf.	35%	45%	50%	50%
Measures to grow our young audiences who identify as First Nations, CALD, young people with disability, d/Deaf or part of the LGBTQIA+	Set benchmark	+5%	Sustain	+3.5%
An embedded Cultural Competency Framework across all aspects of the organisation.	Establish	Review + deliver	Review + deliver	Review + deliver

GOAL 3. ADVENTUROUS WORK

KPI	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of self-presented productions annually.	6	6	7	7
Number of productions by others presented annually.	7	7	8	8
A major national tour of a First Nations led work.	Script development	Creative Development	Tour	-
Total number of artists engaged across all our work.	58	74	69	70
New Australian works by Monkey Baa developed and/or presented.	4	5	7	9
Number of Creative Associates projects progressed to full production.	1	2	2	3
Overall audience satisfaction and likelihood to recommend their experience of our work.	85%+	85%+	90%+	90%+
Significant local, national and/or international collaborations including co-producing, partnerships and exchanges.	3	4	4	5

GOAL 4. FUTURE FIT

KPI	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of revenue from non-government sources.	54%	58%	60%	60%
Build reserves towards >15% (net assets/expenditure).	5%	7.5%	9%	12%
Growth in grants (government and private) towards operational expenditure.	+5%	+10%	+12%	+15%
Increase earned income from venue hire and other fee generating activity.	+10%	+10%	+15%	+15%
Increase revenue from philanthropy and donations.	+\$25,000	+\$50,000	+50,000	+\$75,000
Increase in ticketing sales.	+5%	+7.5%	+7.5%	+8%
Allocate additional 2.5-3% of revenue to be invested in a Commissioning Fund.	1%	2.5%	2.5%	3%
Deliver ongoing and successful capital campaign that supports the remodelling and activation of the theatre foyer and other venue projects.	Developed	Funds raised + project starts	Next campaign starts	Funds raised
Increase carbon offsetting and reduce energy consumption.	Implement strategies	Monitor	Implement strategies	Carbon neutral

we have adopted four key financial strategies to develop our financial resilience and sustainability.

DIVERSIFY INCOME

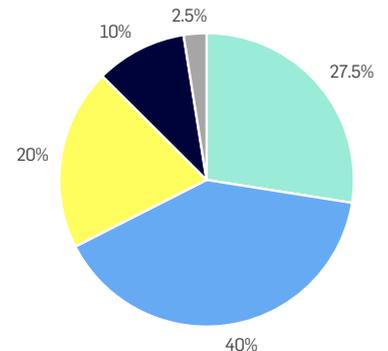
We will review our business model to unlock new value and opportunity for more sustainable income. We plan to complete a full review of our venue income, fee-generating activity and partnerships. The next two years will see us test and explore alternate models.

INCREASE OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Key to our success is a strong foundation to build from. We aim to shift our funding model to provide more security around operational funding. We are adopting a 25% contribution of all projects towards operational costs and pursuing increased operational funding from Government.



SOURCE OF INCOME *



* Income source goal by 2023/2024

financial strategy

BUILD RESERVES

We will actively build our reserves to strengthen our ability to respond to future disruption.

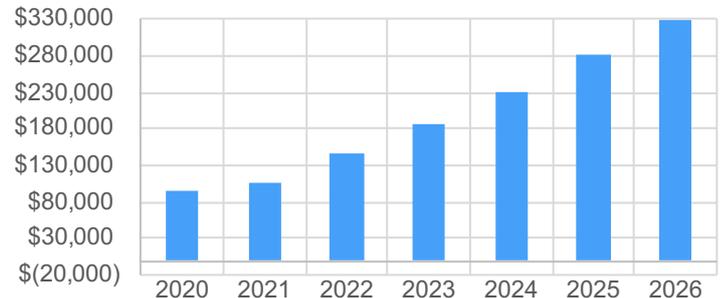
We have adopted a goal to build our reserves over the next five years and have set a target of \$330,000 by 2026. To achieve this, we will need to ensure we invest \$40-50K profit every year.

ESTABLISH A COMMISSIONING FUND

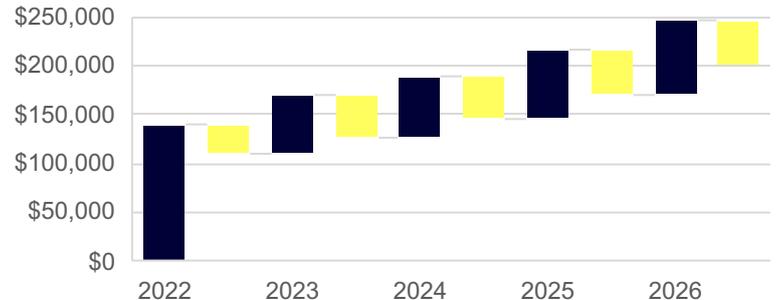
A commissioning fund will be established in 2022 to support our longer-term creative development goals. We will raise funding through a targeted campaign with our donors, government partners, and other foundations.

We will aim to allocate approximately 2.5% - 3% of our annual expenditure towards the fund.

BUILDING RESERVES

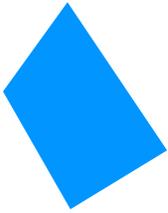


COMMISSIONING FUND



our team





governance

COUNCIL OF YOUNG PEOPLE (WORKING TITLE)

We take a young person-centred approach to all aspects of our work. We acknowledge and value the experience, diversity and expertise of the young people we work with.

The Council of Young People plays an important role in guiding Monkey Baa affairs and raising the views of young people across our organisation.

The Council meets regularly throughout the year to inform creative development, program design and give the company feedback on a range of matters.

The 15-20 members, aged between 10 and 25, come from all over the Australia and are representative of the diversity of young people in our community.

THE BOARD STEWARDS OUR STRATEGIC VISION AND GOVERNS THE ORGANISATION TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS.

The Monkey Baa Board meets 6 times a year that includes 5 board meetings and one strategy session. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 12 directors are required. As part of our succession planning, we will be recruiting a further 2 to 3 directors in the coming 12 months.

Several sub-committees assist the governing of the organisations.
They are:

- Audit & Finance Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Policy Review Committee
- Venue Committee

Monkey Baa has implemented best practice governance policies which includes a clear Code of Conduct, policies around confidentiality, conflict of interest, risk management and delegation. Our guiding instrument is our constitution that was updated in April 2021.

support us



Your donation will help us empower young people to shape and navigate their lives through inspirational theatre and creative experiences.

Donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible.

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