



# National Performing Arts Touring Action Plan 2013-14 and 2014-15

## Introduction

The **National Performing Arts Touring Action Plan** responds to recommendations from two key sector initiatives:

- (i) The *Are We There Yet? National Touring Framework* report commissioned by the Australia Council for the Arts, authored by Rick Heath and Harley Stumm, and published in July 2012; and
- (ii) The *Tour Programming Futures Forum*, convened by PATA in late February 2013<sup>1</sup> with support from the Australia Council.

PATA has taken a lead role in addressing the production selection key reform outlined in the National Touring Framework by convening the Tour Programming Futures Forum and preparing a plan of action for implementation by the national touring sector.

The Action Plan addresses the sector's concerns around touring processes that are impinging on its collective capacity to foster a more dynamic, sustainable, targeted and diverse touring environment. In particular, the sector has called for significantly improved and more dynamic mechanisms (including showcases, markets and booking conferences, online booking systems, networking and co-commissioning) to support access to and selection of works for touring.

The Plan outlines industry priorities and provides a framework for collaborative stewardship over the next 18 months to two years. As such, its implementation relies on the commitment and effort of the producers, presenters, programmers, tour coordinators, industry bodies and governments who play an active role in touring performing arts nationally.

In a dynamic and constantly evolving sector, PATA<sup>2</sup> is a sector-driven strategy focused on continuing to build strong, sustainable and accountable touring and presenting mechanisms across Australia that support our creative artists and companies and the diversity of their work, and facilitate meaningful engagement with audiences and communities in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia.

The work to be undertaken over the coming 1-2 years by the Australia Council, PATA and all touring sector stakeholders will result in a more effective and more cohesive national framework for touring.

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<sup>1</sup> The Forum was facilitated by Sandra Fields (Fieldworx, [www.fieldworx.com.au](http://www.fieldworx.com.au)) who also prepared an initial draft of this action plan.

<sup>2</sup> Further information on PATA can be found at [www.pata.com.au](http://www.pata.com.au)

## Tour Programming Futures Forum - Background

We are fortunate in Australia to have an incredibly rich and diverse national touring environment. Touring contributes to the development of a vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural sector, and plays a significant and often quite powerful role in supporting the cohesion, sustainability and creativity of our communities.

Performing arts touring enables those living in urban, regional and remote places to share their stories and experiences and develop a tangible sense of a much broader cultural landscape.

Numerous studies confirm the significance of the arts as a contributor to economic and community wellbeing. Touring the performing arts beyond our cities to outer urban, regional and remote locations is critical to improving the quality of life for all Australians.

The Tour Programming Futures Forum involved 25 presenters, programmers, producers and tour coordinators from the national touring sector (see list of participants attached).

The Forum used as its basis, the National Touring Framework (NTF) report commissioned by the Australia Council, which provides the performing arts sector and relevant government agencies with the research, rationale and recommendations to initiate and drive significant changes in the national touring landscape.

The NTF report highlighted three key areas in need of reform and development:

- A national plan
- Funding harmonisation and simplification
- Production selection

The Australia Council has taken a lead role in addressing the funding harmonisation and simplification key reform following the transfer, in September 2012, of the Federal government's regional touring programs, including Playing Australia, to the Australia Council. In recent months, the Australia Council has convened meetings with State and Territory arts funding agencies to review their respective roles and touring policies and to develop a coordinated approach to facilitating touring. The Council has also initiated preliminary work on national touring data collection and analysis, as well as new audience and market development initiatives associated with touring.

Forum participants noted that the environment for touring is constantly changing and the past twelve months has been no exception, noting that other recent developments include:

- The increasingly significant role of local government in facilitating the presentation and touring of work;
- The changing priorities, and political and economic environments, of the Federal, State and Territory governments;
- The heightened awareness of the need for more and better quality audience development and community engagement strategies;
- A more strategic, industry-wide approach to tour management and emerging collaborative relationships;
- The increasing diversification of showcases and performing arts markets, and more active curatorial practices;
- Significant changes in the producing sector, including the demise of key companies;
- More opportunities for the production and touring of Indigenous works; and
- More diversified financing avenues.

In addressing new strategies for the sourcing and selection processes related to touring, it is also necessary to address issues related to national planning, and to funding harmonisation and

simplification at the same time. In this context, the Forum focused on ten critical areas for improved national touring:

- Data collection, analysis and sharing
- Community engagement and 'slow touring'
- Marketing and knowing your audience
- Programming policy and planning
- Professional development for producers
- Professional development for presenters/programmers
- Selection mechanisms
- Finance and funding programs
- Relationships between producers and presenters
- Relationships with local government

## National Performing Arts Touring Action Plan 2013-2014 and 2014-15

### Aim

Forum participants agreed that the overarching aim of the action plan is:

*To work together in fostering a more dynamic, sustainable and diverse touring environment that actively engages audiences.*

### Priorities

In achieving this aim, the ten critical areas for improved national touring listed above have been clustered under five priorities, all of equal importance:

Priority One:	Selection mechanisms
Priority Two:	Communities and audiences
Priority Three:	Policy, planning and professional development
Priority Four:	Relationships
Priority Five:	Finance and evaluation

Forum participants agreed on the importance of ensuring that strategies for action should be few in number, relevant and implementable, and highly effective in being able to bring about change. It was also agreed that actions would have clearly identified agencies responsible for driving their implementation.

### Implementation

The Action Plan provides a framework for significant reform and development and, as such, it will require an investment of time and commitment by all stakeholders to create the capacity and focus to implement and deliver on recommended actions. The five strategies outlined below have been kept at a high level for the purposes of the Action Plan but will each require more detailed development in their implementation.

In order to ensure clear commitments and responsibilities, it is proposed that, ideally, there be only one or two drivers for each strategy. PATA will work with each of these entities in the development of their workplans and timelines for addressing the objectives and recommended actions for each strategy, including the setting up of working groups and consultation with key stakeholders (which may include through their participation in a working group).

**Over the coming months, PATA will maintain momentum and focus on the delivery of all aspects of the Action Plan, work with key stakeholders regarding their progress on implementation, broker and negotiate with stakeholders if and when required, and maintain communications with the sector.**

## ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Please note that organisations have been listed by their acronym, as follows:

AC	Australia Council
AMPAG	Australian Major Performing Arts Group
AOT	Arts on Tour
APACA	Australian Performing Arts Centres Association
CDN	Cultural Development Network
CPA	Creative Partnerships Australia
LGA	Local Government Authority
LPA	Live Performance Australia
NLGCF	National Local Government Cultural Forum
PATA	Performing Arts Touring Alliance
RAA	Regional Arts Australia (including the Blue Heeler Network)
SPACAs	State Performing Arts Centres Associations
STAFAs	State and Territory Arts Funding Agencies
TCs	Tour Coordinators
TNA	Theatre Network Australia

**PRIORITY ONE: SELECTION MECHANISMS**

**Strategy:** Develop a National Booking Conference/Market Place Action Plan  
**Co-Drivers:** RAA and APACA

Objectives	Recommended Actions/Timeframe	Consultations
<p>To improve knowledge and profile of, and access to, the range of national and regional showcases and similar events</p>	<p><b>2013-14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map current and proposed national, state and regional showcases and similar events</li> <li>• Coordinate the timing of and actively promote these events to the broader touring sector, and identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration</li> </ul>	<p>AMPAG TNA TCs AOT AC</p>
<p>To improve the relevance and effectiveness of the Long Paddock national showcase</p>	<p><b>2013-14 and 2014-15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate alternative presentation models for Long Paddock from 2014, including timing of the event, its presentation once a year rather than twice a year, on-line events and its relationship to the Playing Australia program</li> <li>• Establish an advisory/curatorial committee and selection guidelines to ensure that the Long Paddock program includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pitches determined by votes through Cyberpaddock</li> <li>○ A curatorial component</li> <li>○ Works in development</li> <li>○ Where possible, full length showcases</li> </ul> <p><i>(Note that this process is already in development by RAA)</i></p> </li> <li>• Rename Long Paddock and transition the governance and management of the annual event during 2014-15, potentially in two stages:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stage one: governed by a sector representative group, and auspiced by RAA; and</li> <li>○ Stage two: governed and managed by a new entity involving producer, presenter/programmer and tour coordinator representatives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>To improve the functionality of Cyberpaddock to provide a strategic, diverse and equitable online production menu system</p>	<p><b>2013-14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Cyberpaddock content and capability to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Easier navigation</li> <li>○ Links or information about relevant events, agencies and organisations</li> <li>○ Additional filters/categorisation of work to enhance searches</li> <li>○ Blind voting for round one</li> <li>○ Include option to purchase productions from first round voting</li> <li>○ A field for producers to include information on range, style, engagement strategies etc</li> </ul> <p><i>(Note that this process is already in development by RAA)</i></p> </li> <li>• Secure adequate resources to enable dedicated and ongoing management of Cyberpaddock</li> </ul>	
<p>To facilitate improved programming development options</p>	<p><b>2014-15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a monthly producers' online curated program/webinar</li> <li>• Develop a system for clustering presenters/programmers according to geographic location, artform interest and scale to enable producers to target their work, and review annually to accommodate changes in programming priorities</li> </ul>	

**PRIORITY TWO: COMMUNITIES AND AUDIENCES**

**Strategy:** Facilitate more effective engagement with communities and with locally specific audience development and marketing strategies

**Co-Drivers:** *PATA and the Australia Council*

Objective	Recommended Actions	Consultations
To build knowledge and capacity to foster more in-depth approaches to community engagement, 'slow' touring, audience development and marketing	<p><b>2013-14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a clear definition of community engagement in the context of national touring (while acknowledging that not all shows selected and funded for touring will be well-suited for community engagement activities)</li> <li>• Develop a community engagement tool-kit, including good practice case studies</li> <li>• Implement and document pilot projects focusing on 'slow' touring</li> <li>• Require all touring proposals to include audience development and marketing plans</li> <li>• Collate and publish online good practice audience development and marketing plans</li> <li>• Continue support for the Australia Council's 'Engage' funding program to assist the industry in developing audience development practices</li> <li>• Identify other avenues for additional public and private funding to support community engagement initiatives, and audience development and marketing activities, associated with tours</li> </ul>	<p>APACA RAA AMPAG TNA TCs AOT</p>

**PRIORITY THREE: POLICY, PLANNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Strategy:** Improve policy and planning in programming

**Co-Drivers:** *APACA/SPACAs, TNA and AMPAG*

Objectives	Recommended Actions	Consultations
To build relationships between, and provide a program of professional development for, producers and presenters/programmers	<p><b>2013-14 and 2014-15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate and make available good practice case studies in programming guidelines, policies and planning</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for mentorships and work exchanges between producers and presenters/programmers</li> <li>• Make available local knowledge and public information about local audiences to assist producers and presenters in the development and planning of tours</li> <li>• Develop more opportunities for strategic networking and encourage direct dialogue between producers and presenters in the planning, presentation and evaluation of shows</li> <li>• Develop a funding program that would enable presenters/programmers to apply for touring presentation funds</li> </ul>	<p>RAA AC</p>

	<p><b>Producers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop two training packages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An introductory package – I want to tour and I want to do it well</li> <li>○ An intermediate/advanced package – I’m touring, so how do I do it better?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Deliver an agreed-to standardised training module in each State/Territory at least annually, involving at least one presenter/programmer</li> <li>• Identify, collate and make available existing producers’ tools</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Presenters/Programmers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key professional development needs and build development opportunities for presenters/programmers from entry to advanced levels (including skills development in advocating the value of the arts for communities)</li> <li>• Develop a presenters/programmers 101 webinar to induct new venue presenters/programmers on the basics of market awareness and to break down the touring jargon</li> <li>• Develop a curatorial workshop day (possibly geographically based) to provide professional development for presenters/programmers on the broader Australian arts scene, and curatorial skills. Consider including a panel of Artistic Directors, break-out sessions and lessons from other industries such as museums and galleries</li> <li>• Create a presenters/programmers online resource library that accommodates user generated content, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Templates and guides</li> <li>○ Programming policies</li> <li>○ Sample Contracts</li> <li>○ Split financing case studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

**PRIORITY FOUR: RELATIONSHIPS**

**Strategy:** Build strategic relationships with the local government sector  
**Driver:** APACA/SPACAs and RAA

Objective	Recommended Actions	Consultations
<p><b>To promote increased engagement in touring by the local government sector</b></p>	<p><b>2014-15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop meaningful data and research that promotes the benefits of touring in a local government context</li> <li>• Advocate to local governments the inclusion of touring in their corporate plans</li> <li>• Provide meaningful opportunities for senior LGA officials to engage in showcase and market events</li> <li>• Integrate local government core objectives into programme planning and policy development</li> <li>• Advocate for increased funding to local government to engage in training and professional development</li> <li>• Advocate for increased funding from local government to performing arts venues to enhance their programming capacity</li> <li>• Investigate the development of a recognition award for good practice in local government support for touring</li> </ul>	<p>ALGA  CDN  NLGCF  RAA  AC  Federal Dept for LG  CPA</p>

**PRIORITY FIVE: FINANCE AND EVALUATION**

**Strategy: Review current funding programs for national touring and undertake comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the touring sector**

**Driver: Australia Council**

Objectives	Recommended Actions	Consultations
<b>To align funding programs to the changing market place</b>	<p><b>2013-14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to harmonise touring funding program guidelines, application processes and acquittal requirements across federal, state and territory governments</li> <li>• In relation to the Playing Australia program, develop a discussion paper to investigate:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provisional funding for tours through an expression of interest process</li> <li>○ quick response/out-of-round grants for tours where there is sufficient programmer interest (in order to leverage off a premiere season rather than having to remount later)</li> <li>○ triennial/rolling funding for companies that tour regularly</li> <li>○ opportunities for remount funding</li> <li>○ the impact of only one annual round of Playing Australia</li> <li>○ responsive funding on a smaller scale for out-of-round tours to enable programmers to 'back fill' their programs based on the outcome of Playing Australia applications</li> <li>○ timing of the Playing Australia funding rounds in the context of the change to one annual (Long Paddock) market place</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Publish a guide on sources of funding and financial investment opportunities for touring</li> </ul>	AMPAG RAA APACA AOT LPA STAFAs
<b>To develop a sector-wide framework for gathering, analysing and sharing data on national touring</b>	<p><b>2013-14 and 2014-15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a user friendly online data collection and management system, and harmonise data collection requirements to reduce duplication</li> <li>• Agree on what sets of data collection should be included in producers and presenters/programmers contracts</li> <li>• Analyse data and assist the touring sector to 'tell the story' of the value and benefits of the arts and of presenting performing arts, for use within local, state and national contexts</li> </ul>	

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## Tour Programming Futures Forum – Participants

### **Australian Performing Arts Centres Associations (APACA)**

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Anne-Marie Heath General Manager, Angel Place City Recital Hall, Sydney (NSW)

### **Regional Arts Australia (RAA)**

Jane Scott Executive Director, RAA  
Steve Saffell Chief Executive Officer, Country Arts SA  
Kane Forbes Manager, Performing Arts Touring, Regional Arts Victoria

### **Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG)**

Bethwyn Serow Executive Director, AMPAG  
Sandra Willis General Manager, Oz Opera, Opera Australia

### **Live Performance Australia (LPA)**

Suzanne Daley Director, Policy and Programmes, LPA

### **Performing Lines (PL)**

Fenn Gordon Chief Executive Officer, PL

### **Arts on Tour (AOT)**

Heather Dransfield General Manager, AOT

### **Critical Stages (CS)**

Luke Cowling Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer, CS

### **Independent Producers**

Lee Anne Donnelly Executive Producer, Arts Projects Australia  
Nicole Beyer Director, Theatre Network Victoria/Australian Theatre Network

### **State Performing Arts Centre Associations**

Rob Robson Chair, VAPAC (Manager, West Gippsland Arts Centre)  
Tim Long Member, INAPAC (Head, Performing Arts, Willoughby Council)  
Guy Boyce Chair, Circuitwest (Manager, Manjura Performing Arts Centre)  
Destry Puia President, NARPACA (General Manager, The Arts Centre Gold Coast)

### **Performing Arts Touring Alliance (PATA)**

Karilyn Brown Chair, PATA  
Greg Randall outgoing Executive Officer, PATA  
Merryn Carter incoming Manager, PATA  
Annette Downs Producer, Tasmania Performs  
Angela O'Donnell Performing Arts Touring Manager, ArtBack NT  
Peter Owens Manager Arts and Heritage, Rockhampton Regional Council

### **Australia Council for the Arts**

Rose Hiscock Executive Director, Arts Development  
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