



# **REPORT on the third PATA National Performing Arts Touring Forum held Monday 24 October 2016 10.00am – 4.00pm in the Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House**

## **BACKGROUND**

The third PATA National Performing Arts Touring Forum gathered key participants in the performing arts touring sector to:

- Discuss issues that impact access to the performing arts for audiences across Australia, and the presenters, producers and tour coordinators involved in touring;
- Review progress of scoping the PATA National Performing Arts Measurement Framework and consult on options for implementing the Framework.

## **GOALS OF THE FORUM**

The goals of the 2016 Forum were to review achievements since the 2015 Forum against the updated PATA National Touring Action Plan (*supplied to each participant*); to identify and discuss issues still requiring work and/or resolution; to make recommendations for action on the proposed Framework; and to identify and discuss any new issues relevant to touring, with possible actions.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Key touring stakeholders were invited to participate in the Forum, including producers, presenters, tour coordinators, peak bodies, funders and policy makers. A full list of participants is included in Attachment A at the end of this report.

## **FORMAT**

The first morning session comprised discussion on topics proposed and led by PATA Council member organisations as follows:

- Tour Markets (led by APACA) + Tour Delivery services (led by Country Arts SA)
- Local Government (led by RAA)
- Parliamentary Report: Arts and the news to rural and regional Australia (led by AMPAG)
- Mapping Touring (led by AMPAG)

The second morning session comprised discussion led by PATA Manager Merryn Carter, about the progress in scoping and identifying methodologies to develop and implement the PATA National Touring Measurement Framework.

After a networking lunch, the afternoon began with small-group discussions on the following topics (which had been proposed by PATA Council members):

- Playing Australia and National Touring Status
- Security of Supply (of work for touring)
- Education and touring
- Market Development (ensuring markets are 'ready to receive' touring work)
- APAM and International Touring's relationship to national touring
- Community Development/Engagement, and the role of Local Government in touring

The final session comprised reports back from the small group discussions, followed by whole group discussion of the issues arising, and recommendations for action.

## **DISCUSSION OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

### **1. Tour Markets**

Rick Heath, Executive Director of APACA, led the discussion about the current tour market landscape. His opening remarks and the discussion that followed included the following points:

- Curated markets are now the norm (representing a change from non-curated markets in the past)
- There are now quite a lot of markets around Australia, with a lack of clarity around which markets do what
- The PATA National Action Plan 2013-2015 suggested a need for coordination on the timing and purpose of touring markets, and for promotion of each market and its purpose – is this still the case?
- Markets are ‘not just about touring any more’ but include opportunities for sector networking, professional development, production development, and developing relationships between producers, presenters and tour coordinators
- We can’t afford to just rely on market forces to deliver the kind of markets the sector needs
- Is there any measurement of market participation? Are presenters attending fewer markets than previously?
- Better and longer term relationships are now being developed directly between some producers and presenters
- What are the relationships between state, national and international markets?
- There is an ongoing task around market analysis – which markets are doing what, for whom, and why?
- Could we develop a simple plan to help inform the market managers of the similarities and gaps in the overall market landscape and at the same time help people navigate the various markets?

**RECOMMENDED ACTION (1): Develop a Market Overview Document. PATA will develop and collate the answers to a simple questionnaire which each market manager will complete, answering the questions posed above about what their market aims to do and for whom, and how they measure success. PATA will distribute the resulting document through its member networks and on its website.**

### **2. Tour delivery services**

Steve Saffell, CEO of Country Arts SA, led the discussion about the role of the online market/touring tool, the National Touring Selector. He suggested the National Touring Selector, and tour coordinators, dealt with the ‘what happens next’ after each market. Craig Harrison spoke about the new national market, ShowBroker, to happen in Adelaide from 27 February to 1 March 2017 and explained how they were working hard to make it different from all the other markets. ShowBroker staff members are talking to all the state markets, APACA (re PAX) and APAM, to ensure their new market fulfills a complementary role. ShowBroker will use the National Touring Selector.

### **3. The role of Local Government in touring**

John Oster, CEO of Regional Arts Australia, led the discussion about the role local government plays in the performing arts touring sector. His presentation opened with the proposition that local government is at the front line of cultural engagement and represents enormous potential for further development. He explained that RAA’s objective is to raise awareness of local government as a key driver of arts and culture delivery in the regions, and to increase the

commitment by local government in its engagement with regional arts and culture. The following statistics support the importance of local government to arts and culture:

- Australia's local governments make the largest investment in arts and cultural activities of any level of government: more than \$1b per year
- There are currently around 560 councils in Australia (note: amalgamations)
- Of these, 539 are regional/rural
- Rates collected in 2012-2013 totalled \$14b
- Total expenditure in 2012-13 totalled \$32.2b
- Number of employees: 188,900 (as at June 2014)
- Value of infrastructure: total land and fixed assets in 2012 -13 was \$333b
- In aggregate, local councils raise more than 80 % of their own revenue
- Less than half of all local Councils have Cultural or Cultural Development Plans

The Cultural Development Network ([www.culturaldevelopment.net.au](http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au)) is working with the National Local Government Cultural Forum on an agreed framework for measuring the inputs (investment) and outputs (activities) for local government's cultural development activity across Australia.

[John also spoke about the work he is doing with the *PWC Skills for Australia: Culture and Related Industries - Industry Reference Committee*, which oversees relevant courses in the VET sector and has a four year Work Plan setting out the training product development priorities for the Committee through to June 2020. He encouraged people to contact him if they wished to have input to this process.]

Discussion around what action might help progress local governments' development in the arts and culture sector identified some roadblocks, including that ALGA (the Australia Local Government Association) no longer has an arts and cultural staff member and is not interested in reappointing one. The Cultural Development Network is working in this area but progress is slow. Progress in Victoria was noted: Creative Victoria is funding an arts and cultural staff position to be based at MAV (the Municipal Association of Victoria).

In discussion about building evidence of the impact and value of the arts at local level, it was noted that VAPAC (the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres) has information on its website about the economic value of performing arts centres: [www.vapac.org.au/economic-impact-research](http://www.vapac.org.au/economic-impact-research)

Several participants pointed out that local government structures around performing arts venues vary enormously and are often not strategic (they can be part of 'facilities' or 'building management' rather than a relevant outward-facing service division). In councils with both venues and community arts/cultural development staff, they could be in different departments, their work uncoordinated and sometimes at cross-purposes.

Rick Heath suggested we should think about ways of supporting performing arts centres at local government level without just asking local government for more money. Suggestions included advocating to state governments about the availability of matching grants, eg for employment of marketing staff – leveraging and providing an incentive for further local investment in ongoing resourcing.

One alternative model for local investment in arts and culture involves taking a regional cooperative approach amongst numerous councils, eg Red Ridge in regional Queensland: [www.redridge.org.au](http://www.redridge.org.au)

#### **4. House of Representatives Report: Arts and the news to rural and regional Australia**

Bethwyn Serow, Executive Director, AMPAG, led discussion on this little-known report that includes recommendations which acknowledge the value of arts and culture to rural and regional communities, and provides opportunities for further advocacy from the sector. Recommendations include funding increases to Playing Australia for touring and regional engagement, and support for the National Touring Status model. Bethwyn suggested that we should quote from this report to support our submissions to and discussions with government, especially advocacy for increased funds to support Playing Australia and the National Touring Status model.

It was noted that arts and health initiatives in NSW and WA affirm the role of the arts in health and in particular, amongst ageing populations and in regional areas.

It was suggested that we could work with the Australia Council to create the business case for increased funds for the National Touring Status program, to broaden its reach. There is a strong case, for example, around leveraging, as illustrated by Sydney Dance Company's considerable success in attracting philanthropic support to add education programs to its touring activity.

#### **5. AMPAG's mapping of the majors' touring activity**

Bethwyn also illustrated AMPAG's mapping of member companies touring activity on their website ([www.ampag.com.au/touring-interactive-map.htm](http://www.ampag.com.au/touring-interactive-map.htm)) and led a discussion around the potential to eventually map the national touring activity captured in the National Touring Measurement Framework. Participants enthusiastically supported this prospect.

#### **6. PATA National Touring Measurement Framework**

Forum participants supported PATA's proposed methodology and warmly welcomed the prospect of aggregated national touring data available in the near future.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION (2): that PATA apply for multi-year funding to begin to implement the identified methodology for the Framework proposed at the Forum as soon as possible**

#### **6. Playing Australia and National Touring Status**

The small group discussion on Playing Australia and National Touring Status resulted in a strong recommendation, endorsed by the whole group during the final plenary, that PATA advocate for increased funding to Playing Australia and for more flexibility around the use of that funding. In discussing the benefits enjoyed by National Touring Status companies, it was noted that increasing the proportion of the funding pool allocated to this program would 'lock up' funds on a multiyear basis that would then be inaccessible to other companies. Additional funding could help offset this effect. It was also suggested that a parallel fund be established, to leverage Playing Australia's 'distribution' of performances across the country, to invest in market and audience development activity to better prepare venues and audiences to receive touring shows. One possibility might be to establish this parallel market and audience development fund within the Ministry for the Arts, or as part of Catalyst, as it matches Catalyst priority areas.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION (3): that PATA initiate discussions with the Australia Council and with the Ministry for the Arts on future directions for Playing Australia and the National Touring Status program, and possible complementary funding for audience development, as soon as practicable.**

#### **7. Security (and diversity) of supply**

The small group discussion on security and diversity of supply of work for touring covered a

wide range of related issues, including:

- The effect of funding cuts on small to medium companies and independent producers is likely to reduce the quantity and diversity of work available for touring, and the company infrastructure which enables them to offer work for tour
- What is the likely effect on the diversity of work available for touring, after the conclusion of funding for Mobile States, Roadwork and Blaklines? What are the next initiatives?
- Creative development is the beginning of the supply chain for touring work: how is this more effectively supported?
- How can work be more effectively nourished at development stage, and be seen as it becomes ready for touring, so that it has advocates?
- It was noted that venues are working in clusters in Victoria to select and negotiate their own tours direct with producers
- The outcome of a showcase or tour market is not necessarily to buy a show, but to start conversations and build relationships
- Although it was noted there is a more positive attitude among presenters towards developing audiences for more contemporary work, further investigation is needed to understand the hurdles to programming more contemporary work: what do the venues want? How can long-term market development be supported? How do we keep developing the appetite for innovative and diverse work?
- How can presenters be supported/enabled to program more diverse work, including indigenous performances?
- The nature of touring has changed; we need more flexibility and different presentation models
- Curated markets/showcases seem to be resulting in more innovative work touring, but there is still work to be done to increase opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse and indigenous work

## **8. Education**

The small group discussion around education issues related to touring identified a number of barriers to building education activities or working with schools on tours:

- Schools increasingly don't want to visit the performing arts centres, it's administratively more complex, arranging busses, permission paperwork, etc
- Producers feel, however, that some education performances are much more effective in the performing arts centre rather than the school, and are easier to set up
- It's hard to build relationships with schools due to staff changes – constantly have to reconnect and build new relationships
- Pre/post performance sessions enhance the experience but are difficult to arrange and increase costs
- Likewise, identifying and engaging the right person to facilitate or host educational performances enhances the experience but increases cost
- Some venues/presenters resist education work
- State arts ministries say if it's education it's not our turf, and arts centres aren't interested if it's not on their stage

## **9. Market Development (or 'readiness to receive')**

The small group discussing market development began by defining what was meant by 'market development', and pondered the explanatory phrase 'readiness to receive'. The discussion therefore focussed on what is required to ensure audiences and communities are 'ready to receive' – and perhaps better understand - the work that is programmed by or toured to their venues. The following points and questions were raised:

- We need policies and systems that help deliver the right work to the right places
- Sometimes it's a question of art versus entertainment
- Many performing arts centres have no programming policy or plan, and insufficient (if

- any) marketing resources
- There needs to be a greater understanding of what it takes to develop an audience for any given genre or artform: hand in hand with programming decisions is programming regularly and consistently over the longer term
- Is touring even the answer to regional programming?
- Playing Australia might be a strong 'distribution' model, but what is the corresponding 'reception' model? How is 'readiness to receive' being funded and supported?
- Could we explore state-based consortia like in parts of the USA? Perhaps taking a lead from the Victorian venue cluster approach?
- Would fewer tours, staying in each place/region for longer, provide more opportunities for market development?
- Should state tour funding and Playing Australia funding be aligned?
- Presenters are under resourced and so default to easy decision making on programming which 'ticks their boxes'
- Any funding for market development should go to presenters rather than producers
- Presenters and producers need more community engagement tools/approaches/understanding of principles
- Need more local cultural leadership and local cultural awareness
- Could brokerage play a role in touring/programming: someone who listens to what a community wants and then finds organisations that fit?
- Could the National Touring Status model be applied to all Playing Australia tour applications?

**RECOMMENDED ACTION (4): that PATA investigate a process parallel to Playing Australia that helps increase *effectiveness* rather than *efficiency* of touring, working with presenters.** (NOTE: this action could be part of the proposed Playing Australia discussions recommended above)

#### **10. APAM and International touring's relationship to national touring**

The small group discussed the ways in which international and national touring interact and raised the following questions:

- Does there need to be an integrated national and international strategy around touring for both producers and presenters?
- How can we encourage international artists without weakening the Australian contingent? Reciprocity?
- Can we customise the Australian experience around special interests (for international delegates) using brokering and tailoring?
- Do we need an incoming and outgoing delegate strategy over, say, a 6-year period?
- Would convergence with other events (such as a ticketing conference) help diversify delegates and strengthen markets?

#### **11. Community Development/Engagement and Local Government's relationship to touring**

The small group discussion around community development, community engagement and local government covered a wide range of issues including:

- Not every show, performance or event needs community engagement
- We need to ensure we take our good news stories about 'the wins' to local government, not just our requests for more resources or our whinges about aging venue infrastructure
- It's important to embed arts activity into local government strategic plans, otherwise projects are vulnerable to changes in staff and councillors
- Some performing arts centres form part of the 'facilities' portfolio and management structure rather than being part of an overall arts program; they can have no organisational relationship at all to other arts or cultural program staff within Council

- It's very important to ensure the rationale for building a performing arts centre is right from the start; it's very hard to recover from a flawed building
- We need to articulate what our success looks like, including social and economic outcomes

## **ACTION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

PATA Council met on Tuesday 25 October following the Forum, and agreed to adopt all of the recommendations from the Forum as part of its revised Action Plan:

**ACTION (1): Develop a Market Overview Document.** PATA will develop and collate the answers to a simple questionnaire which each market manager will complete, answering the questions posed above about what their market aims to do, for whom, and how it is measured, and will distribute the resulting document through its member networks and on its website.

**ACTION (2):** As soon as practicable, PATA will apply for multi-year funding to commence implementing the identified methodology for the Framework endorsed at the Forum

**ACTION (3):** As soon as practicable, PATA will initiate discussions with the Australia Council and with the Ministry for the Arts about Playing Australia and the National Touring Status program, and possible complementary funding for audience development.

**ACTION (4):** PATA will work with APACA to investigate establishing a funding process parallel to Playing Australia that helps increase *effectiveness* rather than *efficiency* of touring, working with presenters. (NOTE: this action will complement the proposed Playing Australia discussions recommended above)

## **Glossary of acronyms**

AMPAG	Australian Major Performing Arts Group
APACA	Australian Performing Arts Centres Association
APAM	Australian Performing Arts Market
PAX	Performing Arts Exchange
RAA	Regional Arts Australia



PATA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Sydney Opera House for this Forum through provision of the Utzon Room.

## Attachment A: Forum Participants

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Gerard	Atkinson	Australia Council for the Arts
David	Barrett	PATA Council
Paschal	Berry	Blacktown Arts Centre
Nicole	Beyer	Theatre Network Australia
Karilyn	Brown	Performing Lines
Timothy	Calnin	Sydney Opera House
Merryn	Carter	PATA
Angela	Cecco	Arts NSW
Phoebe	Collier	Bangarra Dance Theatre
James	Cox	Australia Council for the Arts
Lee-Anne	Donnolley	Far and Away Productions
Anne	Dunn	Sydney Dance Company
David	Everist	Arts NSW
Cecily	Hardy	Legs on the Wall
Luke	Harriman	arTour
Craig	Harrison	Arts SA + NTS
Rachel	Healy	PATA
Anne-Marie	Heath	APACA
Rick	Heath	APACA
Matt	Hughes	Circus Oz
Christine	Johnstone	Queensland Theatre Company
Joanne	Kee	National Theatre of Parramatta
Jennifer	Layther	Arts SA
Justin	Macdonnell	Anzarts Institute Ltd
Tim	Matthies	Musica Viva
Philippa	Maughan	Country Arts WA
Penny	McCabe	Opera Australia
Justin	Murphy	Regional Arts Victoria
Stefo	Nantsou	Zeal Theatre
Katherine	O'Connor	APACA
John	Oster	Regional Arts Australia
Jenny	Ryssenbeek	VAPAC
Steve	Saffell	Country Arts SA
Christine	Schloithe	Patch Theatre Company
Bethwyn	Serow	AMPAG
Antonia	Seymour	Arts on Tour
Annette	Shun Wah	Performance 4a
Zohar	Spatz	Brisbane Powerhouse (APAM)
Harley	Stumm	Intimate Spectacle
Ryan	Taaffe	CircuitWest
Penny	Watts	Monkey Baa