

SUBMISSION

20-YEAR STATE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

To: Infrastructure SA
Level 15, Wakefield House
30 Wakefield Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Attn: Mr Jeremy Conway, Chief Executive
Ms Sabina Schaare, Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications

From: Jodi Glass
Executive Director
State Theatre Company of South Australia

Subject: New Theatre Infrastructure – New Home for State Theatre Company of South Australia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A. State Theatre Company of South Australia (**the Company**) is aligning with strategic partners to support the development of a new home for the Company.
- B. This new home will:
- a. give the Company the necessary platform to fulfil its strategic purpose: to become Australia's pre-eminent storyteller, through the presentation of world-class, South Australian-produced and performed theatre;
 - b. become the central hub for a number of professional Adelaide-based theatre companies and theatre-makers, creating a vibrant new multi-faceted theatre precinct – something Adelaide lacks but which many of the great cultural cities of the world enjoy;
 - c. house and foster a new generation of independent artists, S2M performing arts organisations and creative entrepreneurs who will develop innovative new businesses that will spark and lead new economic opportunities, create jobs – enabling local creative businesses to go global while enriching South Australia culturally and economically.

ANALYSIS

About the Company

1. The Company is South Australia's leading theatre company, classified by the State and Commonwealth Government's as one of Australia's 28 Major Performing Arts (**MPA**) companies (alongside Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Queensland

Theatre Company, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Belvoir, Malthouse and Bell Shakespeare). The Company is one of only three South Australian MPA companies, the others being State Opera South Australia and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

2. The Company is an instrumentality of the Crown – a statutory authority of the Government of South Australia – with its own Act of Parliament, established by Don Dunstan’s Government in 1972.
3. The Company produces a diverse program that resonates locally and reaches globally. This includes an annual subscription season of 8 theatre productions performed in Adelaide, a state-wide education program (including performances, workshops, work experience, summer school, secondments, training, playwriting competitions and more), extensive touring to outer metropolitan, regional and remote communities across South Australia, runs dedicated highly-skilled and experienced set construction and costume departments, and provides considerable support to the local performing arts sector.
4. The Company’s strategic purpose is to become Australia’s pre-eminent storyteller, through the presentation of world-class, South Australian-produced and performed, theatre.
5. The Company’s missions is to create *theatre that opens your heart and fires your imagination*.
6. Company culture is founded on creativity, bold invention, respect and empathy. “We believe in the strength of diversity, the spirit of collaboration and of finding joy in all that we do. We operate on the lands of the Kurna people, the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains. We honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the oldest continuous living culture on the planet.”
7. The management and board of the Company are the current custodians of State Theatre Company and honour their duty to leave the Company in a stronger position for the next generation of theatre makers and audiences.
8. The Company’s annual operating budget is around \$7 million. Approximately half of the Company’s annual operating income is received through State and Commonwealth funding. The Company generates more than 50% of its income through its own activities including ticket sales, performance fees, donations and sponsorships.
9. The Company has a permanent and fixed term contract workforce of 48 employees (27 FTE) and each year in addition to these employees the Company engages a significant number of artists and technical staff for productions and touring shows.

Background

10. The Company has leased premises in and continuously operated from the Adelaide Festival Centre (AFC) for the past 46 years.
11. The AFC’s drama centre comprising the Dunstan Playhouse, the Space Theatre, and the Company’s production facilities (set construction workshop, wardrobe department, rehearsal room and production offices) and administration offices were purpose-built for the Company in 1974.
12. The Company has been the Resident Artistic Company of the AFC since the early 1970s.

13. The Dunstan Playhouse has been the Company's primary performance venue and on average performs 5-6 theatre productions per year in the Dunstan Playhouse. The Company also performs, when necessary for artistic reasons, in the Space Theatre or when the Dunstan Playhouse is unavailable, in Her Majesty's Theatre or the Odeon Theatre.

The Problems

14. State Theatre Company is operating over multiple sites and has done for many years. This is inefficient, resulted in reduced productivity and waste of resources and increased operating costs and is no longer sustainable.
15. The cause is primarily the AFC's increasing focus on using AFC venues, facilities and resources to present its own programs featuring non-South Australian (i.e. national and international) touring shows and artists at the expense of locally produced and performed work which has resulted in the AFC's administration expanding.
16. While the AFC's own administration and programming have expanded over time, particularly in recent years, simultaneously the operating conditions in the AFC have deteriorated and are no longer fit for purpose. This means that our Company can no longer fulfil its strategic purpose at the AFC.
17. As a result, in the early 2000s the Company's administration was required to move out of the AFC. Administration was housed in the Train Station offices until the casino redevelopment forced the Company to again relocate its administration to Fowlers building at the Lion Arts Centre on North Terrace.
18. In the past two years, the significant construction and precinct redevelopment works in and around the AFC have severely interrupting the Company's operations resulting in the Company having to relocate its entire production facilities out of the AFC to temporary facilities in mid-2018.
19. Since June 2018, the Company has been rehearsing its productions, building its sets and making its costumes and storing its huge archive of costumes and props in the former Wigg & Son building at 79 Port Road, Thebarton. Whilst these premises were not built for theatre making, the ingenuity and skill of our production team has created a temporary fit-out of the site that has drawn together all the creative and entrepreneurial operators within the Company, into the one space, and inspired our entire team and loyal network of supporters, enabling a new future to be envisioned: the need for the Company to operate from its own premises where we can determine our own future and in so doing, spark a new wave of energy in theatre-making in a world otherwise dominated by remote, isolated, digital screen experiences.
20. Concurrently, in Adelaide over the years entire performance and rehearsal venues have been demolished (Union Hall) or are no longer available for performance hire (Scott Theatre) or inadequate professional spaces that are not of professional standards or fit for purpose or technically compromised (Queen's Theatre, Lion Theatre, Arts Theatre, Royalty Theatre) or are just too small (Lion Theatre, Odeon Theatre, Bakehouse Theatre, Holden Street Theatres).
21. Professional South Australian companies like State Theatre Company, Zephyr Quartet, Slingsby, Australian Dance Theatre, Windmill Theatre Company, Patch Theatre Company are struggling to find suitable, available rehearsal and performance venues. This is a recognised vulnerability in the Adelaide performing arts community. This is a problem that the AFC cannot solve; is not within its charter or plan to solve; and, it appears, unwilling to solve.

22. While some companies such as Slingsby, Windmill and Australian Dance Theatre have home bases for rehearsals, these premises are not suitable for performances and as there are so few professional theatre spaces of the right scale and size, these companies have to compete with State Theatre Company, Brink Productions and every performing arts company and artist based in Adelaide – as well as with visiting companies such as Sydney Dance Company, Bangarra Dance Theatre – for inadequate venues.
23. Adelaide lacks professional quality, affordable performance venues and rehearsal spaces beyond those controlled and operated by the AFC that enable local arts companies to produce and present high-quality works artistic works to a broad cross-section of the population. The price of producing, making and seeing theatre in South Australia is always rising, and those costs operate as a barrier to art-making and entrepreneurship, and those costs always trickle down to audiences, making audience engagement with the performing arts all year round increasingly difficult. Even the Adelaide Fringe and Adelaide Festival are struggling each year to secure suitable performance venues.
24. Adelaide lacks a home for South Australian theatre – a true theatre precinct – where theatre is conceived, made and performed by professional local artists and entrepreneurs (writers, directors, actors, designers, technicians).
25. There is an opportunity to develop a significant new cultural asset for Adelaide and the South Australian arts sector, and through this sector, the South Australian community as a whole. It will support the creative vibrancy of Adelaide and provide State Theatre Company and other small, poorly resourced arts companies and independent artists and potentially other more established theatre companies with a fitting and productive home, while also unleashing new opportunities for performing arts companies and extend their connection with audiences. If located on the CBD-fringe, adjacent to public transport and convenient on-site or adjacent car parking facilities, this new venue will also contribute to the revitalisation of one of Adelaide's inner city suburbs. It is our hope that, through this development, our Company will participate in urban transformation, to become a vibrant and creative centre. It will create opportunities for other cultural producers in theatre, chamber music, dance and related fields.
26. It follows that providing an affordable, well-designed and developed space for artists to create and present work, and for audiences to enjoy that work, will lead to benefits for artists and audiences alike and add to Adelaide's vibrancy and cultural depth.
27. This new home will provide State Theatre Company, as well as a variety of artists and companies from a range of disciplines, with a place to make work, create and collaborate. In a world where remote, digital connection is dominating, co-locating entrepreneurs and cultural creatives in the one location is universally accepted as an essential ingredient in the sparking of new economic activity and social fulfilment.
28. Moreover, reduced costs in the production of work will not only allow for more diverse, bolder programming (thus providing artists from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds with significantly increased employment opportunities) but will also allow for audiences from all sections of society to see, enjoy and be inspired by the arts.
29. Affordable professional standard facilities for professional and independent theatre companies, chamber music, and dance companies is desperately needed in Adelaide. The renovation of Her Majesty's Theatre (controlled by AFC) and the AFC's business model under the current leadership is to continue to increase the AFC's own presentations and festivals (including the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, OzAsia, Guitar Festival, DreamBIG, French Festival).

The Solution

30. To fulfil State Theatre Company's strategic purpose and secure the Company's future, the Company must establish a new home for itself away from the AFC.
31. This will have the additional benefit of creating a new home for South Australian theatre practitioners where they can thrive and make (build, rehearse, perform theatre productions) in a single, purpose-built facility comprising:
 - 31.1. a professionally equipped, purpose-built theatre, akin to Queensland Theatre's newly renovated Billie Brown Theatre in Brisbane or Melbourne Theatre Company's Southbank Theatre or Sydney Theatre's soon-to-be-refurbished Wharf Theatres,
 - 31.2. dedicated full-scale rehearsal rooms (based on our rehearsal room at AFC and temporary facility at Wigg & Son site),
 - 31.3. full-time set building workshop facilities,
 - 31.4. dedicated wardrobe department with making and repairing/maintenance facilities,
 - 31.5. storage facility for the Company's extensive sets, properties, small furniture items, costumes including shoes and wigs, used in staging our plays,
 - 31.6. sound recording studio,
 - 31.7. lighting and audio-visual design studio,
 - 31.8. creative offices,
 - 31.9. actors' retiring room (in which they can rehearse scenes and practice lines),
 - 31.10. green room (for the cast and crew of performances),
 - 31.11. dressing rooms,
 - 31.12. costume hire fitting room,
 - 31.13. production and stage management offices,
 - 31.14. front of house facilities including café, bar and ticketing office, and
 - 31.15. administration offices that can house the entire Company in a single site.
32. With the right site, we could operate a car park that would provide a long-term revenue stream for the Company or a property developer who invests in the site, just as the Australian Ballet has done in Southbank Melbourne.
33. The ability to control and sell our own tickets represents a significant increase in box office income without the need to increase ticket prices (compared with having to deal with the current monopoly operated by AFC through its monopoly ticket agency, BASS). This is key to offering accessible options to our audiences and ensuring we can present bold, imaginative work of the highest quality to all South Australians and ensure our own financial stability.

34. With a new creative base we would generate opportunities for diverse and lucrative income streams including but not limited to: venue rental to other organisations and community groups; an expanded prop and costume hire facility; hospitality offerings such as a café or bar; and car parking facility. Vitally, it would free the Company from the obligation to operate as a hirer of other venues, and associated fees. At this time, we are required to use the ticketing system of the Adelaide Festival Centre (BASS), with inside charges amounting to around 15% of the published ticket price. The national average for interstate organisations with a similar arrangement averages around 10%.
35. Through creative and flexible programming, a new home for the Company will operate efficiently, effectively and sustainably to be an important asset for a wide range of Adelaide cultural communities and audiences. It will provide a visible home for many smaller under-resourced companies alongside State Theatre Company, deliver education programs, improve financial viability and efficiency while contributing to the revitalisation of the inner city and engaging with the area's academic, professional and artistic communities.

The Vision

36. Our goal is to reunite State Theatre Company into a single purpose-built facility and create a new, first-class creative hub for State Theatre Company and other theatre and small-scale performing arts companies.
37. Our vision is to create a new home base for State Theatre Company, as it used to have at the AFC and what other Australian companies enjoy, such as Queensland Theatre in Brisbane, Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne, but reimagined to fulfil the Company's and Adelaide's enormous potential:
 - 37.1. to expand the heart of this city;
 - 37.2. to make space for art forms we haven't yet imagined, and a creative community that we aspire to have;
 - 37.3. to build on more than 40 years of theatre making in Adelaide.
38. Cities are living entities that change and adapt over time and must have capacity to respond to what the city values, what it cherishes and what it is capable of achieving and fostering. Adelaide is known around the world as a festival city and we have the potential to build that reputation beyond the confines of festivals to a city with world-class, year-long theatre making and performances that are recognised nationally and contribute locally.
39. It is expected that self-sustaining businesses in the performing arts sector will have grown or been created due to the new home project. In turn, this will spark a wave of philanthropy and benefaction and corporate community support for the performing arts, as those funds attach to the vibrancy that this hub will create, and fresh revenue streams, including from online engagement, will have been sparked; all of which will be supported by ongoing Government funding support as the fundamental pillar of the project.
40. To deliver this project, we will partner with a property developer or investors, education providers, State Government, Commonwealth Government, philanthropists, benefactors, charitable trusts and foundations, other South Australia theatre companies, independent theatre makers creatives including actors, writers, directors, producers, designers, marketing personnel.

41. Discussions are underway with property developers and investors about a new home for State Theatre Company and local theatre makers whereby State Theatre Company will be the anchor tenant on a long-term lease.
42. Letters of support for our vision for a new home are attached from Commercial & General (property developer), Zephyr Quart (independent string quartet) and local philanthropist Roger Salkeld.
43. In 2017, understanding the Company's needs and current situation, Mr Salkeld secured a significant donation from an anonymous donor towards the Company securing a new home. This was a wonderful and happy surprise for which we are very grateful as it forms a strong foundation for our as-yet-to-begin fundraising campaign to realise our vision.

The Outcomes

44. Over 10 years:
 - 44.1. Trebling of annual audience numbers to SA-produced theatre in SA.
 - 44.2. 33% increase in the number of direct jobs in theatre sector in SA.
 - 44.3. 50% increase in exports from SA-produced theatre (SA shows touring interstate and overseas).
 - 44.4. 50% increase in economic impact (spend in SA economy) generated by SA-produced theatre.
 - 44.5. National awards in arts innovation and entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

A new home for State Theatre Company and new home for theatre making in Adelaide will support the production, programming, creative development and entrepreneurship and creative fellowships, supplemented by the Company's \$7M existing budget, to drive the production of multiple theatre works in the complex each year and enable the complex to house multi-faceted performing arts groups and their productions and practice, to achieve a singular performing arts hub that will become the new best practice model for performing arts complexes in Australia.

Recommendation

Infrastructure SA considers a new home for State Theatre Company South Australia in its development of the 20-year infrastructure strategy.

Jodi Glass
Executive Director/Producer
State Theatre Company of South Australia
31 July 2019

Attached: letters from Mr Jamie McClurg, Mr Roger Salkeld and Ms Hilary Kleinig

16 November 2018

Ms Jodi Glass
CEO
State Theatre Company of South Australia
Cnr North Terrace and Morphett Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Ms Glass

State Theatre Company - Creative Performing Arts Hub for Adelaide

I write in support of State Theatre Company of South Australia's strategic vision for a new creative performing arts hub for Adelaide.

This vision, if realised, would see the development of a new permanent home of South Australia's leading theatre company, State Theatre Company, with performance and production facilities all housed in a single, multi-faceted development complex that will also act as a central hub for other leading South Australian theatre companies, performing artists, designers and practitioners.

Commercial & General is an Adelaide-based property development and funds management group of companies. We develop, construct, manage and invest in – together with our investor clients – high quality commercial, industrial, healthcare and residential properties throughout Australia. The total value of projects undertaken by our group of companies to date exceeds \$700 million, with more than \$1 billion of work in the pipeline.

We confirm that we are in dialogue with you about making the above vision a reality. We believe that this development will not only be a significant cultural landmark for South Australia, it will activate substantial new economic activity, by establishing a central hub where the creation, development, production and performance of main-stage and independent theatre in South Australia can occur and flourish. This will not only enhance Adelaide's vibrancy and social cohesion, it will deepen South Australia's strong performing arts culture and promote a new wave of entrepreneurship in the creative sector, which we believe is an essential component of South Australia's future economic and social success.

We are confident that such a development not only has the potential to be an attractive commercial opportunity, it is likely to activate substantial philanthropic, public funding and government support. We look forward to collaborating with you further on this exciting opportunity.

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JAMIE MCCLURG
Executive Chairman

PO Box 7030
HUTT STREET SA 5000

16 November 2018

Macquarie Group Foundation

To whom it may concern

My wife and I have been Gold subscribers to The State Theatre Company of SA for five years and during that time have increased our involvement with the Company by being supporters of the Commissioning Collective, State Ed Giving Circle and Dramatic Women, all of which support the Company's development of new work, touring to regional areas and supporting particular productions each year.

In addition, we have provided significant financial support for the creative development of Rumpelstiltskin and, after the first season in Adelaide, funds to assist with travelling to London for a season at The Southbank Centre over Christmas 2018.

This more intimate involvement with the Company has meant that we have witnessed at first hand the skill and dedication of the Company as a whole, both creatively and administratively, and been awed by what they have achieved in a time of incredible disruption.

In the 1970s the creation of the Festival Centre by Don Dunstan included a theatre, rehearsal space, workshop, as well as wardrobe, all next door to each other. Facilities the envy of other theatre companies and ones that provided significant cost control for productions.

With the redevelopment of the Festival Precinct they have been forced to move first from their office space near the Playhouse Theatre to temporary rented offices in The Lion Arts Centre, and then their rehearsal space, wardrobe and set building facility to temporary rented space in the vacant ES Wigg warehouse, kilometres away from management and theatre.

I became a Trustee of The State Theatre Foundation in 2017 and quickly realized the urgency of securing a permanent home for the Company, one which accommodates the administrative and creative arms in one place where sets can be designed and built, wardrobe stored and created, rehearsals take place and, ideally, plays be performed.

To this end I was able to secure a significant donation from an anonymous donor to commence the capital raising program by pointing out the synergies that result from having all of the Company at one address. In addition, commercial office space could be rented to small theatre companies, a café would attract

people to the theatre precinct, a bar would provide interval drinks and a convivial spot for pre and post show events.

The State Theatre Company of SA is an essential component of the cultural life of South Australia. It tours widely to the whole state, telling the stories of the First People, the migrants, the young, entertaining and educating and bringing people together

The business of theatre is uncertain at the best of times, this Company does not need the uncertainty and, in my opinion, indignity of not having their own, permanent home. A new home for State Theatre Company that encompasses all the above features will inspire a fresh generation of cultural practice, audience development and engagement and creative entrepreneurs and artists to inspire our city, our State and our nation.

Yours sincerely

A white rectangular box redacting the signature of Roger Salkeld.

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Roger Salkeld



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16 November 2018

Ms Jodi Glass
Executive Director/Producer
State Theatre Company of South Australia
Cnr North Terrace and Morphett Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Re: State Theatre Company of South Australia - Creative Performing Arts Hub for Adelaide

Dear Jodi,

I write following our conversations about State Theatre Company's ambition to create a new and much-needed creative performing arts hub for Adelaide.

In my role as Artistic Director / cellist of Zephyr Quartet and as an independent musician and composer I am excited to hear about STCSA's plan to create a performing arts hub in Adelaide.

I have been working in the sector as a staunchly Adelaide-based artist for over 20 years now and whilst I am proud of the achievements that I have made with both Zephyr (Australia's leading, award-winning genre-defying ensemble that regularly explores dynamic musical collaborations) and as an independent artist, and greatly appreciate the support of the public and government, in many ways my journey has not been easy. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that my career (and others' also) would have been enhanced, and would continue to be in the future, by being a part of a Creative Performing Arts Hub and by having a dedicated space to create and present work.

I believe that many great artistic achievements could be made by creating a hub for artistic organisations and artists in Adelaide and that not only would a Hub make artistic sense it would also make economical and practical sense by creating a space where resources, audiences, ideas and inspiration could be shared.

I have spent much time in recent years travelling overseas attending conferences and festivals and it has become blatantly apparent that Adelaide's lack of performing arts venues and infrastructural support for independent, small to medium and major performing arts companies in Adelaide is extremely dire.

STCSA has shown outstanding leadership as an MPA over the last seven years by engaging meaningfully with independent artists and small-to-medium organisations of all kinds, by responding intelligently and responsibly to issues of gender and cultural diversity and also arts and social policy. I believe that they would be excellent custodians of a Creative Performing Arts Hub for Adelaide.

Zephyr Quartet, and other artists and organisations, are seriously hampered in our artistic and audience development by Adelaide's lack of a dedicated performance venue. I therefore strongly support and am an advocate for State Theatre Company South Australia's aspiration to build an administrative, rehearsal and multi-purpose performance and collaborative space on the Adelaide city fringe as this would have significant benefits to existing and emerging artists, Adelaide audiences and organisations alike.

Yours truly,

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