

South Australian Heritage Council
Attn: Zeljka Danilovic
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide SA 5001

Sunday, 16 May 2010

Dear Zeljka,

Re: Letter of support for entry of Union Hall to the South Australian Heritage Register

Further to our email correspondence March 19, 2010 the Arts Industry Council of South Australia wishes to formally advise that we strongly support the entry of Union Hall to the South Australian Heritage Register as a State Heritage Place due to the strong and important place that the building and arts venue has in the cultural history of South Australia.

Since being built in 1958 through public subscription the Union Hall has been of major artistic importance to South Australia. Of architectural note are ties to the buildings designer Louis Laybourne-Smith and the fact that the building is the only Functionalist style theatre in South Australia. At the time it was built the Union Hall was the premier theatre in South Australia as well as being a highly regarded theatre nationally with exceptional facilities

Without diminishing the architectural importance of the Union Hall in Adelaide's history, of particular importance to the Arts Industry Council is the impact that the venue has made on the cultural landscape of South Australia and also nationally. The Union Hall has been operational since 1958 and in this time it has accommodated all manner of cultural and artistic productions across all genres from drama to dance, music, opera and film. Of notable importance is the close association that the venue has had with Patrick White being the premiere venue for three of his plays. Many of Australia's leading performers and arts practitioners from around the country as well as those based in South Australia, took part in their first performance or produced their first production at the Union Hall. The Union Hall was also a foundation venue for the first Adelaide Festival of Arts in 1960.

The other incredibly important point that the Arts Industry Council would like to make is that Adelaide is facing a performing arts venue crisis. There is a chronic lack of available performance venues, particularly in the central business district, and for a state that prides itself on cultural and artistic endeavour the loss of this incredibly important venue will be crippling to the performing arts industry. The venue certainly hasn't been used to its full

capacity in recent times, however, this is because it has not been adequately maintained in many areas. The core of a first class venue remains through and with some refurbishment and more efficient and flexible management, many of Adelaide's performing arts companies as well as community and school groups would relish the opportunity to use the venue.

In a year when it has been announced that the Adelaide Festival of Arts will become an annual event, the arts industry in South Australia as well as the wider community cannot afford to lose this valuable and culturally important arts venue.

Sincerely,



Torben Brookman
Executive Officer