

Comment from AICSA

Thursday 3 June, 2010

THEATRE SPACES AND VENUES AUDIT ASA 275/09

Arts SA Government of South Australia

By Elizabeth Raupach

December 2009 - January 2010

<http://www.arts.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=385>

The Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) - *an independent voice for the arts*, commends the State Government for taking seriously the growing concerns of the arts industry about the lack of suitable venues in Adelaide. These concerns arise in a context of increasing demand for access to quality performing arts spaces from festivals, companies, artists and audiences.

The AICSA recognises that the existing network of performing arts venues is a complex system. The successful operation of the network of venues involves a combination of government ownership, government funding, management by statutory authorities, management by not for profit arts organisations, private ownership, leasing, plus ownership and management by organisations from other sectors, such as schools, churches and universities.

The AICSA is pleased to see a very high priority and strong recommendations given to maintaining and improving the functional and technical capacity of the venues that already exist. Ensuring up to date technical equipment, facilities and accessibility, according to universal design principles, is a priority for arts workers and audiences. Many artists currently work in conditions that would be unacceptable in other industries, despite their professional approach and commitment to OH&S issues. Providing appropriate disability access ensures that the arts can be enjoyed by everyone.

The AICSA welcomes the recommendation contained in the Raupach report, to consider a new government funded venue, or cluster of venues, including a centrally located performing arts facility. Ideally, such a proposal will be considered in the context of 'An integrated design strategy for South Australia' as suggested by Professor Laura Lee, the newly appointed SA Integrated Design Commissioner. Proposals for the commission and design of new performing arts spaces, should take into account future population and audience projections. The AICSA notes that the audit of theatre spaces and venues, as released by Arts SA, does not include a focus on quantitative data or statistics and that this is a limitation of the study.

The report also identifies a lack of rehearsal space as a critical issue. The AICSA supports recommendations for the implementation of a rental subsidy scheme and improvements to the coordination of access to existing spaces for arts practitioners.

AICSA commends the government on its present significant capital investment in the arts including a new \$52 million 'Black Box' at the Entertainment Centre and the \$43 million South Australian Film Corporation hub at Glenside.

South Australia is proud of its place as a leader in arts and culture and the AICSA draws attention to other state governments' investment in river-side developments which continue to attract visitors, support the cultural life of residents and enrich the working life of artists.

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