



# Tuggeranong Community Arts Association 2019-2020 Budget Submission

For nearly 30 years the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association (TCAA) has been working with the people of the Tuggeranong Valley and beyond to create a unique personality for the region and support the creative and cultural aspirations of a community which has seen dramatic demographic change, and is currently in a state of identity redevelopment.

The Tuggeranong Arts Centre (TAC) opened its doors in 1998 and has been under the management of the Arts Association ever since. Art related programs and projects are also offered in the neighbouring suburbs of Woden & Weston Creek.

The Association also manages the delivery of an ACT-wide youth specific early intervention mental health arts program funded through the ACT government: The Messengers Program.

The well-established urban dance program, Fresh Funk, also operates under the Arts Association's umbrella across the Territory, offering dance classes to over 332 families in Tuggeranong & Gungahlin.

The TAC facility offers two dance studios, three exhibition spaces, an arts workshop, and a 110 seat theatre.

**The Arts Centre remains the only arts facility in the region and welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the 2019 - 2020 budget process.**

## Summary of the submission

This submission seeks funding for a restoration and renovation of the **Tuggeranong Theatre** situated in the Tuggeranong Arts Centre.

The TCAA successfully manages the government facility the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, and has been able to increase overall visitation and participation numbers to the arts centre over the past five years.

The Theatre plays a major role in the success of the arts centre operations and remains a significant community asset.

The submission outlines the history of the theatre and its operations briefly but focuses primarily on the current strategic goals of the Association and the necessity to maintain a functional small entertainment and arts development space for the community.

The changes occurring in the community that directly impact on the operations of the centre and support the necessary renovations to the theatre space are also outlined.

## History and Rationale

The Arts Centre opened in 1998 and was the subject of a major refurbishment in 2013 which excluded the theatre space. The theatre remains in its original state apart from a few minor improvements such as handrails, fireproof curtains and changes to the heating & air-conditioning.

Since 2013 the Association has had to rely on the ArtsACT facilities management & minor capital works budget to have any maintenance or upgrade work carried out in the arts centre. Despite several requests to have lighting rigs, technical equipment and the stage floor repaired, to date this has not won budget support.

In the Better Infrastructure Fund (BIF) 2017/18 Tuggeranong Arts were informed that they were not considered a priority.

Now in late 2018 the theatre is in need of major upgrades and renovation in order to remain safe and operable into the future. When touring companies are invited the organisation often has to bring in additional basic equipment at a considerable cost. TCAA is losing the opportunity to present quality entertainment to the community due to the poor technical state of the theatre.

The programs and projects of the TCAA make the following contributions to the ACT community:

### Health

- The Arts Centre provides several early support/intervention based programs to a range of community groups including sufferers of Dementia, Parkinson's, depression & anxiety, eating disorders, mental health disorders, etc. Although we are not a primary health care provider we certainly play a role in the early intervention/prevention and secondary health care areas.

The youth mental health arts program **Messengers** utilize the theatre as a development space and the program is free of charge to all ACT young people.

The Arts Centre also runs a large dance program, **Fresh Funk** for over 300 children & young people who use the theatre on a weekly basis.

### Education

- The Tuggeranong theatre plays a significant role to many schools in the area. High schools hire the theatre for their annual performances and in 2018 TCAA successfully staged a self-devised children's musical with 23 participants including a number of children referred through DVCS, local schools and other community service providers. This program was awarded a 2018 Children's Week award.

Recently Bonython Primary school held a self-curated large whole-of-school exhibition at the arts centre and hired the theatre for a performance launch. This was the result of a year-long collaboration with TCAA.

*List of schools TCAA has worked with over the past 12 months, ACT wide:*

**Tuggeranong**

Namadji School  
Caroline Chisholm High School  
Calwell High School  
Lanyon High School  
Lake Tuggeranong College  
Gordon Primary School

**Gungahlin**

Harrison School  
Gold Creek High School  
Amaroo School

**Belconnen**

Canberra High School  
UC Kaleen High School  
Kingsford Smith School  
Melba Copeland

**Northside**

Campbell High School  
Dickson College

**Woden**

Stromlo High School  
Melrose High School

**Other**

Karabar Distance Education  
Home schooled

Community Services & supporting families

- The Role of the TCAA has always had a strong focus on the provision of services in arts and culture to the community and in doing so the partnerships and collaborations with community service providers are strong and essential.
- We often work with service providers to assist them to be able to extend their offer of programs and projects to their clients. Our theatre is a tool for community cultural development.
- No one is excluded from TCAA programs and projects for financial reasons: for instance, the Association is able to subsidise places in the Fresh Funk dance program for families that cannot meet the fees, and this offer stretches across all of our programs and projects.

## Economic development

- TCAA makes a solid contribution to the value of the arts and cultural sector in the ACT.
- The organisation is a major employer of artists and arts workers across the ACT.
- TCAA adds value to the cultural landscape and reputation of a region of the ACT that currently sees itself as disadvantaged & neglected due to a range of issues including the exclusion from light-rail transport options, as well as a very limited offer of youth leisure and support services and general community space in both the Tuggeranong and Woden/Weston Creek areas.
- TCAA has recently boosted tourism by staging events and exhibitions with wide-ranging appeal such as “The Making of Midnight Oil” and “Another Day in Paradise”.
- TCAA has a strong financial base due to the income generated from a range of sources including theatre hire. This enables the organisation to support initiatives to the Tuggeranong area such as ‘Shakespeare by the Lake’ and ‘Southfest’. To continue to do this, having a functional theatre space for rehearsals and development work is essential.

The lists below demonstrate the many ways in which the Tuggeranong Theatre directly enables TCAA to make these contributions:

### **Theatre Uses 2016-2018**

Performing Arts Theatre – Major touring companies (National/International)

Performing Arts Theatre – Development & community projects (TAC produced)

Performing Arts Theatre – Schools and amateur productions

Performing Arts Theatre – Other/semi-professional

Performing Arts Dance – Major touring companies (national)

Performing Arts Dance – Fresh Funk program (TAC produced)

Performing Arts Music – National and International touring artists (Blues, Soul, Classical, Flamenco, Rock)

Performing Arts Music – Local artists/bands/ensembles

Performing Arts Music – Classical/Opera (TAC produced)

Performing Arts Cross-disciplinary – Local artists (TAC produced)

Comedy – Local/National (focus on First Nations)

Film – Feature Films (focus on First Nations)

Film – Local stories & filmmakers (TAC produced)

Film – Film Festivals (short film)

Visual Arts – Exhibitions/Installations (touring)

Visual Arts – Exhibitions/Installations (TAC produced)

Panel Discussions

Meetings/Forums/Consultations

TAC Keynote Events – Openings/Launches

## List of Theatre Hirers 2016-2018

ACT Fencing Association  
ACT Keyboard Association  
Amnesty International  
Australian Music Examination Board  
Bruce Matheski Music  
Canberra Academy of Dramatic Arts  
Canberra Mandolin Orchestra  
Caroline Chisholm School  
Childspace Early Learning  
Communities @ Work  
Croatia House  
Gai Brodtmann MP  
Jarbo Productions  
Legal Aid ACT  
Rebus Theatre  
Serbian Nights Theatre  
Sri Lankan Theatre Group of Canberra  
St Mary MacKillop College  
Tuggeranong Community Council  
ANU School of Music  
The Lanyon Trio  
The New England Ensemble  
Sarah Louise Owen  
David Perieira

## List of touring theatre companies/performers in the Theatre 2015-2018

**ILBIJERRI Theatre Company** - Australia's leading and longest running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Company  
**KAGE Dance Company** - Melbourne  
**Warren Fahey & Max Cullen**  
**Serbian Theatre** - Sydney  
**Damien Wright Flamenco**  
**Finucane & Smith** - Melbourne  
**Deadly Funny** - Melbourne International Comedy Festival x3  
**The Backsliders x2**  
**The Turner Brown Band**

[This submission responds to the key questions of the 2019-2020 Budget Consultation process in the following ways:](#)

What services do you believe are most important for the ACT?

- Creativity and engagement in the arts are vital to a city that strives to be healthy and innovative.

TCAA supports a budget that reflects the responsibility of the ACT Government to maintain existing assets and make contributions to facilities that are now dated.

The Tuggeranong Arts Centre remains a vital asset to this community and will continue to be a valuable resource for community cultural development and engagement.

How can the ACT Government deliver current services more efficiently or in ways that better meet the needs of our community?

- In some areas of population growth in the ACT it is necessary to build new facilities, including arts hubs and infrastructure. However, existing facilities are not maintained to a standard that includes long-term planning and strategies addressing environmental sustainability and population growth/change. Much cost-saving could be achieved by upgrading the energy efficiency of existing facilities and by carefully considering the needs of communities into the future.

Are there particular services that you think the ACT Government should stop delivering or should deliver in a different way?

- As an arts and cultural program provider TCAA welcomes the possibility of having an arts program integrated into the new model of community space and service delivery for the Woden Community. This is the same model that is the basis of TCAA's programs.

What new ideas, services or programs should the ACT consider to meet emerging or evolving community needs?

- There is a strong trend across the nation to look carefully at the planning of arts and cultural facilities and invest not only into large entertainment spaces that support large touring companies, but to also consider the appetite for direct involvement in the arts.  
The ongoing support of smaller venues is vital. The Arts touring industries are currently welcoming smaller productions that can offer affordable touring across the nation and enliven smaller community spaces, particularly in the outer suburbs of cities and regional and remote areas.

## Request for consideration

**The Tuggeranong theatre is an important community asset which is now in urgent need of a major renovation. As such, TCAA is requesting that the ACT Government consider a full refurbishment of the venue as part of the 2019-2020 budget.**

The stage floor, seating and carpets of the Tuggeranong Theatre are extremely worn and need complete replacing. These are original features of the theatre, which have not been replaced or upgraded since 1998.

The seating often causes accessibility issues for wheelchair bound visitors and performers.

There are no other accessibility features available to the disabled community- eg a hearing loop.

The Association has recently purchased several technical items for the theatre, such as a suitable film & digital projector. TCAA has also had to rely on a number of small infrastructure grants (Community Service Directorate 2018) for the purchase of essential equipment for community projects. However, TCAA cannot maintain the theatre's operations without major ACT Government support beyond what is in the annual Arts ACT budget or received through minor grants.

Since 2012/13 the Arts Centre has not been considered a priority for any major upgrade work, despite the poor state of the theatre.

For all of these activities to continue to take place and to ensure public and occupational health and safety, the facility requires an urgent upgrade of the following:

#### Auditorium

- Replacement of existing, worn-out seating
- Installation of accessible spaces for wheelchairs at top and bottom of Theatre with adjacent seats for companions
- Replacement of threadbare carpets throughout Theatre
- Repainting of all walls
- Install T-loop hearing loop to improve accessibility for deaf and hearing impaired patrons
- Install smoke detection isolation with automatic reset
- Purchase small scissor lift to reduce reliance on ladders and increase workplace safety
- Install wireless digital communications system between bio box, backstage and front of house

#### Stage

- Installation of new curtains upstage and on wings
- Replacement of existing floor with new semi-sprung stage floor
- Purchase of flyable curtains and freestanding flats for stage masking to create greater versatility and allow the creation of a false backstage
- Purchase of modular stage risers with interchangeable 200mm and 400mm legs

#### Lighting

- Complete overhaul of lighting systems to remove outdated and incompatible incandescent lights with new LED pars and profiles lights. This will increase venue usability and versatility, reduce energy consumption, reduce maintenance, and future-proof the venue
- Replace existing electrical patching with digital DMX infrastructure for LED lighting

- Replace existing lighting desk in Bio Box with new model with greater LED DMX compatibility
- Install motorised drop lighting bars from existing catwalks

#### Sound

- Replace original front of house PA with new surround sound speakers
- Purchase portable sub-woofers and fold-back speakers to increase audio capabilities and reduce reliance on equipment hire
- Remove and replace existing and non-functional audio patching
- Install additional audio patching to increase versatility
- Replace existing sound mixing desk with more user friendly digital model

#### Backstage

- Refurbishment of backstage loading dock, dressing rooms, and storage room to increase amenity for performers
- Installation of new storage to increase safety and functionality

Note: Wireless digital lighting and sound equipment will be far more portable than the existing infrastructure and make the venue far more versatile, including providing the ability for equipment to be used in other spaces throughout the Centre. This will greatly increase the Centre's ability to cater to a diverse range of artists and audiences and deliver innovative, engaging programming.

## Conclusion

The Tuggeranong Community Arts Association remains confident that the ACT Government will prioritise the needs of the Tuggeranong /Woden/Weston Creek communities and their limited access to cultural facilities.

We look forward to your response and a constructive, collaborative process so that the needs of our communities can be met into the future.

On behalf of the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association, I thank you for the opportunity to put this submission forward.

**Rauny Worm, CEO Tuggeranong Community Arts Association Inc.**

**October 29, 2018**