

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Developing the future of Australian contemporary arts practice, now.

A REAL PROPERTY OF

Championing all contemporary art forms, Metro Arts is focused on developing and co-presenting contemporary arts.

In the heart of the Brisbane CBD, we're pumping with artists taking risks, creating, developing, experimenting, and presenting ambitious contemporary art.

We support the wider artistic community with low cost short and long term venue hire for creative businesses, photo shoots, rehearsals, exhibitions, performances, auditions, forums, celebrations and more.

Step inside to take a closer look at our artists pushing boundaries and creating exciting contemporary art for you to experience.

> David Fenton and Brian Lucas, Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* (2015). Photograph by Dylan Evans.

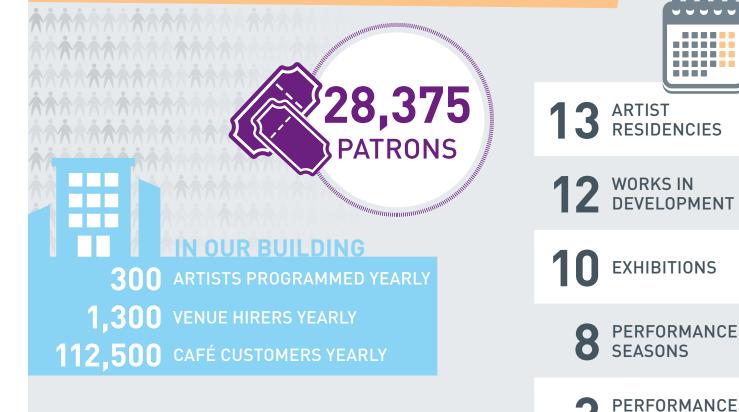
Cover image: Mira Oosterweghel, Unstable Moments (2015).

There are days when the Brisbane arts scene needs to count its blessings for having Metro Arts under its banner. – CONCRETE PLAYGROUND

> It's the **friendliest**, **most helpful**, **most accessible** and **generous program** with regards to resources and assistance that you can find in Brisbane. – 2014 ARTIST

> > 11/1/

I was ecstatic to find so much **inspirational** and **amazing** art and artists. – MOUSTACHE MAGAZINE







OUR PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE CREATION, DEVELOPMENT, EXPERIMENTATION, AND PRESENTATION OF EXCITING AND BRAVE CONTEMPORARY WORK.

TOURS

CREATIVE DIRECTOR REPORT, Jo Thomas

I was asked at a function recently how Metro Arts was going. When I responded positively the reply back to me was "Good. Metro Arts is very important." I feel this way too.

It's important for the artist's community it creates in Brisbane – a vital hub where everyone is welcomed and welcome; where there's an opportunity to try and fail and try and succeed regardless of whether you're an emerging artist or an experienced practitioner. We encourage new process, new collaborations and new forms and we encourage artists to look more deeply at the work they're creating and to contribute to the big questions of today. We believe in the slow cook approach to creating work so it can be sustainable and truly excellent.

It's important for our audiences. As the only multiarts venue in Brisbane's CBD, Metro has a vital role to play in the cultural landscape of this vibrant city. Our work is from the edges, left of centre and all places in between, and offers an unique experience to audiences wanting to engage with brave and inventive contemporary art and performance.

It's important for the work we do assisting artists to present their work not only locally but nationally and internationally. In the last few years we have assisted our artists to present their work in 4 countries and every Australian state and territory. Metro Arts is still the only Brisbane-based arts organisation that offers a specialist producing service for outstanding midcareer artists allowing them to focus on creating new innovative works of excellence.

2015 was a seminal year for Metro Arts. Our new five year strategic plan was developed and implemented; our commitment to diversity was reinforced and formalised, and our curatorial framework was remodelled maintaining our peer-assessed open callouts sitting alongside new curated special projects, initiatives and micro-festivals. Our newly articulated vision is a response to filling the need in the sector for exclusively contemporary arts work while allowing us to be nimble and responsive to artist requests and audience needs. We hold community history here at Metro Arts while providing a place of 'home' for artists, and a place for everyone to gather and reinvision the future. And all of that is... important!

BUSINESS DIRECTOR REPORT, Jess Murphy

The hire demand in our unique buildings continued throughout 2015 with our spaces gaining popularity among independent theatre companies as well as universities and corporate clients. Being utilised for workshops, seminars, performance seasons and photoshoots, the Studio, Warehouse, Studio 4.2 and the Whitlam had a busy year!

We started out in 2015 with a double air conditioner breakdown which put us on the back foot financially, however strong food and beverage results and a generous equipment donation kept us buzzing along.

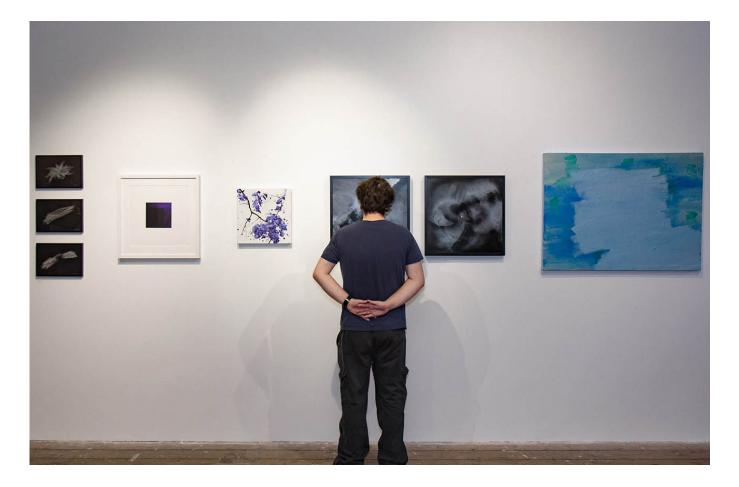
We welcomed the introduction of in house professional development for staff and artists – 4Change Coaching was, and is a wonderful incentive and resource for all at Metro.

The Espresso Bar continued to reach new heights financially and we were lucky to have a focussed, consistent team throughout the year. During the year we went in a new direction with suppliers, switching our coffee to a smaller, family owned business Schibello Caffé – our staff and customers have enjoyed consistent, strong, affordable coffee ever since! With the expansion of our food and beverage capacity high on our agenda, two additional sites were explored in 2015 and we are investigating internal opportunities for 2016.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Food and Beverage profit increased by 49% since 2014
- Equipment donation to the Studio valued over \$10,000, including a projector, LED lighting and lighting desk
- The introduction of Company in Residence and the Metro Arts Grievance Policy
- Upgraded internet and phone systems for Administration
- Hosting X Factor auditions, Megan Gale's Swimwear viewing, Lorna Jane catalogue shoot, *The School* workshops by Megan Morton and a Campari product launch
- Facilitating the construction of a house in the Gallery for Jarrod Van Der Ryken's exhibition *Empty Spaces/With Suspicion*.

The staff of 2015 once again pulled together and accomplished an impressive 12 months. Metro will continue to focus on delivering outstanding customer service and value for money across our two sites.



CHAIRMAN REPORT, John Dunleavy

I am pleased to provide you with my report on the 2015 calendar year. I take this opportunity to thank the team at Metro for your tireless efforts during what was another tough year in the Arts sector in Australia. Strategically I am proud to report on a very sharp artistic positioning for Metro and take this opportunity to formally acknowledge the contribution of our former CEO – Dr David Fenton for his input into crystallising our focus on Contemporary Arts. Whilst there are many others much better qualified than myself to offer an artistic view on this statement our Board reflection was that many of the tenements of our strategic thinking around Contemporary Arts were already in train from prior years.

I know this Annual Report includes a number of Artistic metrics and statistics which I encourage you to view. For such a small number of staff the outcomes artistically for the Organisation are a testament to the hard work of those involved and the artists we were fortunate enough to have collaborated with. It is a list to be proud of.

Strategically 2015 was also beneficial in crystallising our planning around our Studio space and other works at 109 Edward Street. I am calling these developments "Building 1.0" albeit this description doesn't seem to be catching on with anyone else other than myself. Hopefully 2016 will see this planning pay off. On the facility front it is worth mentioning that our decision to renew our commitment at the BCC Norman Park site has been successful with essentially full occupancy realised at that premise. The site offering good facilities for more industrial artistic endeavours.

One of my fellow directors is not re-standing in 2016 and as is appropriate I take this opportunity to thank Nigel Lavender for his considerable contribution to the stewardship of the Organisation. Your personality and insight will be sadly missed. It is worth mentioning that all director positions at Metro are unpaid and voluntary with each director sacrificing their private time to attend our meetings or various management group sessions. Without the contributions of my fellow directors at Metro we would struggle to maintain an adequate balance of conversation around the issues we were confronted with in 2015. As with my other acknowledgments in this report I take this chance to express my gratitude to the volunteer directors at Metro who help me and the team guide the Organisation.

As I see it the challenges for the Arts community in Queensland remain – to do more with less, avoid duplication but encourage collaboration, further develop our strengths and foster a unique individual style of Queensland art and apply rigour to strategies so that they have the best chances of success. For Metro in 2016 I look forward to fostering these objectives in a way that makes the broader community stronger and artistically more vibrant.

TREASURER REPORT, Michael Cottier

It is a pleasure to present my 4th annual Metro Arts Treasurer's report.

2015 was an extremely challenging year for many arts organisations; Metro included.

The themes and operating conditions were similar to past years but moved more to the negative. Arts funding continued to become harder to secure, forcing arts organisations to increase their own fundraising activities. Locally, fundraising activities were negatively impacted by relatively weak economic conditions. For Metro, this manifested as fairly flat 2015-year café sales and tenancy income (net of subsidies), and lower interest income. A small number of tenants failed to honour their debts to Metro, causing bad and doubtful debts expense to increase about five-fold compared to 2014.

The Australia Council is a key source of funding for Metro. During 2015, its Managing and Producing Services (MAPS) funding ceased mid-year with Metro losing \$40,000 of funding compared to 2014 (annualised funding loss circa \$100,000). Fortunately, Arts Queensland and the Brisbane City Council continued as generous supporters of Metro.

Other Federal Government funding policy changes reduced funding available to the Australia Council to distribute. This created great uncertainty and significant funding pressure on arts organisations that often operate on "paper-thin" financial margins. Total Australia Council Funding to Metro was down by around 20% overall compared to 2015.

As a small contemporary arts organisation, Metro is not only subject to general arts community challenges, we have to work even harder than most to access funds, competing as we do with organisations operating more in the mainstream. For example, in 2015 philanthropic contributions represented less than 2% of Metro's total income. We sincerely thank the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation for its significant contributions in this area.

Finally, we work in an aging building on Edward Street that demands increased care and attention in the form of replacement plant, equipment, and ongoing repairs and maintenance. It is frustrating that we have insufficient funding to repair or replace our elevator, restricting our ability to offer easy access to everyone to our multi-story building.

This year the above factors, plus a significant increase in artistic program expenses, served to impact Metro adversely. I report that Metro Arts delivered an operating loss for 2015 of \$117,959 (2014: surplus of \$7,205).

Accounting revenues for the year were up 23% at \$1,786,566. This metric is impacted by the accounting requirement to recognise in-kind goods or services as income. Adjusting for this, revenues were up 9%. The Metro Arts Espresso Bar continues to be a success



and a vital contributor to the financial sustainability of the organisation.

Total expenses were up 32.0% to \$1,904,525. Adjusting again for in-kind, the increase was 19%. This is a big increase in one year. The major contributing factors were increases in the expenses associated with delivering the 2015 performing arts program, increased marketing and website development costs, significant travel costs associated with programs including New ERA, and as noted above, greatly increased bad debts. Payroll related costs, including wages, salaries, superannuation, leave, taken together with consulting and contractor costs were up less than 2% on the prior year.

The Board and management are focussed on ensuring a more sustainable financial future for Metro. Recent actions taken include:

- restructuring and repurposing the senior leadership team
- increasing focus on effective fundraising activities (including government grants, tenancies, food and beverage, and philanthropy) that are vital to funding our artistic programs, and
- expense control and productivity gains.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the staff for their hard work, dedication, focus and significant artistic and administrative delivery in such challenging conditions during 2015.

I look forward to working with management and the Board to secure a more sustainable as well as an artistically vibrant future for Metro. I thank Chairman John Dunleavy and the other members of the Board for their continuing support.



2015 PRESENTATIONS

18 FEBRUARY - 7 MARCH D&M / THE COSMIC CENTRE EXHIBITION: GALLERY / METRO ARTS

25 FEBRUARY - 7 MARCH

ASSEMBLIES FOR ONE BODY / RHIANNON NEWTON PERFORMANCE: BASEMENT / METRO ARTS

25 MARCH - 11 APRIL

EMPTY PLACES/WITH SUSPICION / JARROD VAN DER RYKEN EXHIBITION: GALLERY / METRO ARTS

22 APRIL - 9 MAY

UNSTABLE MOMENTS / MIRA OOSTERWEGHEL EXHIBITION: GALLERY / METRO ARTS

22 APRIL - 2 MAY

DE PROFUNDIS / DAVID FENTON & BRIAN LUCAS PERFORMANCE: VISY THEATRE / BRISBANE POWERHOUSE

Presented by Brisbane Powerhouse and Metro Arts as an official SWEET selection.

20 MAY - 6 JUNE

A NOISY KIND OF RESONANCE / ALI BEZER EXHIBITION: GALLERY / METRO ARTS

2 - 20 JUNE

DUST COVERED BUTTERFLY / THOMAS HUTCHINS PERFORMANCE: SUE BENNER THEATRE / METRO ARTS Metro's support for experimentation and development of practice and work is uniquely situated in the Brisbane arts community.

- 2015 PRESENTING ARTIST

6 JUNE - 4 JULY

PIANO LESSONS / ANNA GOLDSWORTHY **TOURING WORK: ADELAIDE CABARET FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE, PORTLAND ARTS CENTRE, REDLANDS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE**

24 JUNE - 11 JULY

LIKE A BURDEN / RACHAEL HAYNES EXHIBITION: GALLERY / METRO ARTS

14 - 26 JULY

ARGUS / DEAD PUPPET SOCIETY TOURING WORK: TOWNSVILLE, CAIRNS, MOUNT ISA, HUGHENDEN & CHARTERS TOWERS

22 JULY - 8 AUGUST

THE HEIGHT OF A MOUNTAIN, THE WIDTH OF A VALLEY / BRIDIE GILLMAN, SARAH POULGRAIN & KYLIE SPEAR EXHIBITION: GALLERY

13 - 15 AUGUST

SLIPSTREAM / A FESTIVAL OF TIME-BASED ART MICRO FESTIVAL: METRO ARTS

19 AUGUST - 5 SEPTEMBER

YELLOW PERIL / EUGENIA LIM EXHIBITION: GALLERY



15 - 19 SEPTEMBER

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING / THOMAS QUIRK PERFORMANCE: THEATRE REPUBLIC. **QUT KELVIN GROVE / BRISBANE FESTIVAL** Presented by Brisbane Festival and QUT as part of Theatre Republic, in association with Metro Arts.

16 SEPTEMBER - 3 OCTOBER

CATACOUSTICS / CHARLES ROBB **EXHIBITION: GALLERY**

22 – 26 SEPTEMBER

SALTWATER / JAMIE LEWIS PERFORMANCE: THEATRE REPUBLIC. **QUT KELVIN GROVE / BRISBANE FESTIVAL** Presented by Brisbane Festival and QUT as part of

Theatre Republic, in association with Metro Arts.

9 OCTOBER

AFTER THE LIGHTS / 4CHANGE COACHING, FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCE & ELOISE MAREE FORUM: METRO ARTS

15 OCTOBER – 4 NOVEMBER

A LIBRARY FOR THE END OF THE WORLD / SARAH WINTER **TOURING WORK: MOUNT ISA, HUGHENDEN, CHARTERS TOWERS, TOWNSVILLE & CAIRNS**

21 OCTOBER - 7 NOVEMBER

DEMENTED FURY / ATHENA THEBUS **EXHIBITION: GALLERY**

18 NOVEMBER – 5 DECEMBER

BURNING / BENJAMIN CROWLEY (ARTIST IN RESIDENCE) **EXHIBITION: GALLERY**

10 APRIL, 1 MAY, 5 JUNE FRIDAY NIGHT

Hearing about the removal of fees is great, as finance is the biggest impediment of artists involvement with the program.

- 2015 EXHIBITION PROGRAM ARTIST

We received much more support than other spaces I've exhibited at, it felt like Metro has much more of a commitment to our practice ... Plus the standing of Metro Arts and the visibility you get from showing with Metro is a great benefit, it's a well-regarded space in the visual arts landscape and it means a lot to show here.

- 2015 EXHIBITION PROGRAM ARTIST

The Metro Arts community has been one of the most welcoming and supportive that I have ever experienced. I have immense gratitude for their dedication towards the professional and creative development of my practice and I am genuinely excited for any other visual artist who is afforded the opportunity to participate as I was.

- 2015 EXHIBITION PROGRAM ARTIST

2015 RESIDENCES

2015 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE BENJAMIN CROWLEY

2015 COMPANY IN RESIDENCE 4CHANGE COACHING & FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCE

2015 WORKS IN RESIDENCE VIS AND RAMIN / BARAN

JAR'D / RE'ANNE DUFFY

THE FORGIVENESS PROJECT / THE GOOD ROOM THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING / THOMAS QUIRK KIDNAPPED / DANIEL SANTANGELI THE WISHING DARK / JULIE VULCAN THE STANCE / LIESEL ZINK JOKE TRADING / JOSEPH BREIKERS EYE RESOLUTION / RUBY DONOHOE & KYLE BERRY UNDERWORLD / REBECCA JENSE & SARAH AIKEN NEVERLAND (WELL THIS IS EMBARRASSING) /

M'CK MCKEAGUE

Independent artists in Brisbane are currently facing numerous challenges, from funding cuts to the lack of space. Specifically artists attempting to graduate from ARI's to more established institutions. To my knowledge Metro Arts is one of the few and most effective spaces supporting this demographic.

To my knowledge Metro Arts is the largest organisation supporting emerging artists in Brisbane. Importantly Metro Arts also possess a reputation for attracting and producing some of Brisbane's (and beyond) most critical and informed contemporary artists. It is this kind of support and reputation that enables Metro Arts to remain at the centre and edge of the Brisbane contemporary art community. With the dropping of exhibition fees and the bolstered residency program I believe Metro can only become more competitive in attracting more and stronger artists from Brisbane and Australia wide.

- BENJAMIN CROWLEY 2015 EXHIBITION PROGRAM ARTIST AND ARTIST IN RESIDENCE





2015 WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT

EXQUISITE / FRAN BARBE & GUESTS

LET'S SPEAK OF THE UNSPOKEN / EMMA WORKMAN BOLT

WHAT WAS LEFT / VICTORIA CARLESS & KATHRYN KELLY

BODIED ASSEMBLIES / RHIANNON NEWTON

ASKEW / PAUL YOUNG

VERSIONS OF TRUTH / ALL THE QUEEN'S MEN

THE NAKED MONOLOGUE / CAROLINE DUNPHY

ERESHKIGAL / THE FEATHER COLLECTOR

DRAWN IN / FLATLINE

THE TALK / MISH GRIGOR

TYRONE & LESLEY'S FESTIVAL PIECE / DAVID MEGARRITY

UNTITLED / SAMMIE WILLIAMS

The conversations from both [our development showings] were incredibly useful and inspiring- just the right amount of challenging in terms of what comes next ... Having Metro as a platform for the development has been invaluable!

- 2015 RESIDENCY ARTIST

Metro's support for experimentation and development of practice and work is uniquely situated in the Brisbane arts community.

- 2015 PRESENTING ARTIST

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Space, time & critical feedback = A+

It feels like a really important and exciting time to be a part of the Metro family - looking forward to continuing to build strong independent futures with you all.

- 2015 RESIDENCY ARTIST

PRODUCING HUB

EXQUISITE / FRAN BARBE & GUESTS **KNEE DEEP / CASUS** FINDING THE SILENCE / CASUS MADAME CARANDINI'S TRAVELLING MUSICAL CURIOSITY SHOW / SANDRO COLARELLI, STEPHEN CARLETON & JOHN RODGERS **BOY GIRL WALL /** THE ESCAPISTS **PACKED /** THE ESCAPISTS **SUBURBIA /** THE ESCAPISTS **ELEPHANT GUN /** THE ESCAPISTS **DE PROFUNDIS /** DAVID FENTON & BRIAN LUCAS PIANO LESSONS / ANNA GOLDSWORTHY PEACE: A BOY LIKE ME / THE HUMAN COMPANY THE EMPTY CITY / THE HUMAN COMPANY **LAKE /** LISA WILSON PROJECTS PERFORMANCE ANXIETY / BRIAN LUCAS FLAUNT / CLAIRE MARSHALL BEAR WITH ME / DAVID MEGARRITY & SAMUEL VINCENT **AURELIAN /** GENEVIEVE TRACE

> Exquisite, Fran Barbe & Guests (2015). Photograph by Barbara Lowing.



The New ERA (Engaging with Regional Audiences) Initiative launched in 2015 to develop a concentrated Queensland network for contemporary performance, with a focus on regional audiences. In 2015 New ERA toured two new contemporary works (*Argus* by Dead Puppet Society and *A Library for the End of the World* by Sarah Winter) to Mount Isa, Hughenden, Charters Towers, Townsville and Cairns and engaged with six regional champions through face-to-face workshops and professional development throughout the year.

New ERA is about:

- actively engaging with audiences as fellowcollaborators
- a holistic approach to art-making and presenting which recognises and reflects culture and social interaction
- deliberately and actively contributing to the community's long-term development; and
- collaborating with key community-members on the ground in remote and regional areas.

The thing that made the most impact on me was the people I met at Metro Arts. Their commitment to theatre and the Arts were an example of being a passionate advocate of creativity and all the forms it takes as artists bring us their stories.

- ANNA TELFORD, MT ISA CHAMPION

Please do more things like this – arts enrich us and help us celebrate our existence.

- CAIRNS LIBRARY PARTICIPANT

More exhibits like this please! Thank you.

- TOWNSVILLE LIBRARY PARTICIPANT

That was the best play in the world. I want to be in it when I grow up.

- CONNOR 8YO, MT ISA ARGUS PARTICIPANT

It was great... breaking down barriers and engaging totally different sectors of the community and opening up their perceptions of what performance and art is ...

- SUE HAYES, CAIRNS CHAMPION

I've found that being involved with this project has strengthened my own connection to the community and has provided networking opportunities and collaborative projects that may not have been realized without New ERA.

- ROSSINA MOORE, CHARTERS TOWERS CHAMPION

METRO ARTS ANNUAL REPORT 2015



The best experience/outcome was having the opportunity to work with other people. I have had the chance to work with colleagues from the Council, teachers from the schools, artists from large cities and my fellow Champions.

- CAITLIN SMITH, HUGHENDEN CHAMPION

... it is now more than ever that you see community members gaining from the social wellbeing and personal enrichment that arts and culture provides.

- MEL DRISCOLL, SHIRE OF FLINDERS

NEW ERA STATISTICS 2015

739 REGIONAL AUDIENCES





CHAMPIONS

2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS IN BRISBANE

36 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



BOARD AND STAFF

Alex Anderson, Maintenance Coordinator Amida Callinicos, Administrator David Fenton, CEO December 2014 to December 2015 and current Consultant Olivier Grant, Café Manager Nicola Jones, Venues and Facilities Officer Talulah Jung, Development Officer Joy Lane, Finance Manager Emmaly Langridge, Communications Manager Amy-Clare McCarthy, Programming Coordinator (Visual Art) Jess Murphy, Business Director Tom Noble, Administration Assistant Genevieve Trace, Executive Assistant Kieran Swann, Programming Manager (Performance) Jo Thomas, Creative Director

A total of 13 board meetings were held in 2015.

| CHAIRMAN | John Dunleavy, Barrister and Chartered Accountant |
|-----------|--|
| TREASURER | Michael Cottier, Chartered Accountant |
| DIRECTORS | Penny Everingham, Actor Nigel Lavender, Arts Manager Brian Lucas, Performance Maker Daniel McKewen, Visual Artist Joon Yee-Kwok, Creative Producer Margo Powell, Fundraiser |

SECRETARY Andrea Moor, Actor and Director

Metro Arts acknowledges the traditional custodians of Brisbane, the Turrbal and Jagera people and their unique relationship with their ancestral country. We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, and recognise their strength, wisdom and creativity.

THE HEIGHT OF A MOUNTAIN

THE WIDTH OF A VALLEY

SUPPORTERS

Metro Arts acknowledges the support of the following partners to deliver its 2015 program.





Metro Arts is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



Metro Arts, and the New ERA project, are supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Metro Arts is proudly supported by the Brisbane City Council. Norman Park Substation No.9 is assisted by Brisbane City Council.



New ERA is made possible by the generous support of the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation.











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