



Metro Arts

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



FEAST WITH US 2017

In 2017 we loosened our belts as we dined on contemporary art from Brisbane, around Australia and from around the world.

Our program had something for every taste – ranging from experimental music, to cutting edge dance, performance in the dark, and Bluebirds from Canada.

Audiences feasted with us on unique experiences in nearly every art form imaginable.



Cover image: *Wireless* by Paul Charlier & Lisa Wilson, 2017. Photograph by Dylan Evans. *HAIR* by Melina Wightman, in *Metro Arts The View From Here Takeover*, 2017. Photograph by Dylan Evans.

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

"The support and inclusion offered by Metro were invaluable and enabled the work to have a life."

- 2017 PERFORMANCE PROGRAM ARTIST

"Working at Metro Arts has afforded me a space for thinking and reflection, which is extremely useful without the stress of having an outcome straightaway."

Metro Arts covers a diverse range of disciplines. It is commendable that the institution promotes experimental practices and forms, many of which do not have foreseeable outcomes and forms."

- 2017 PERFORMANCE PROGRAM ARTIST

"There is no other space in Brisbane that compares to Metro Arts."

- 2017 EXHIBITION ARTIST



16 EXHIBITIONS

15 PERFORMANCE SEASONS

8 ARTIST RESIDENCIES

6 WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT

5 WORKSHOPS

2 TAKEOVERS

2 PERFORMANCE TOURS



IN OUR BUILDING

185 ARTISTS

232 HIRERS

100,220 CAFE CUSTOMERS



8,727 LIKES



2,987 FOLLOWERS



2,289 SUBSCRIBERS



OUR FOLLOWERS ARE

68% FEMALE

29% MALE **3%** OTHER

56% LIVE IN BRISBANE

52% UNDER 35 YEARS OLD

CEO & CREATIVE DIRECTOR REPORT, Jo Thomas

Recently I heard author and activist Patrisse Khan-Cullors speak about her work with #BlackLivesMatter. One of the driving messages I took away from hearing this prolific woman is that you have to do the work – and you have to keep on doing this work! It's a message all of us working in grass-roots and outside the well-funded status quo will understand. And reflecting on the 2017 artistic program at Metro Arts, Khan-Cullors work is particularly poignant. In a year of outstanding art, one of the most memorable for me was Warraba Weatherall's inaugural solo exhibition *InstitutionalLies* marking the 30th anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody.

One attendee at the exhibition sent us this comment, *"Continue providing the world with your work...we desperately need it in these troubled times"*.

All of our artists continue to ask the questions and challenge for agency in an era of ongoing decimation of public funding, cynicism and 'forgetfulness' of the urgent value of arts and culture. This is why we all keep doing the work.

Metro Arts is a unique hub of activity across art-forms and community, and nothing showcases this more clearly than our Takeover events. In 2017, *(the view) from here Takeover* offered the opportunity for everyone to participate and co-create.

Within this Takeover, I wanted us to engage with works on the human-level; the one on one; to give all of us as audience members or viewers a chance to engage and to explore relationships and perspectives. This may be a

point of view metaphorically or literally or philosophically but a view from here from through other eyes at a world that is increasingly complex and confused. Art can be reflection, art can give us time out, allow us to step out of the pace and the place, art can be brave and ask the questions and say

I want to see what you see...

And thankfully 774 people came on this journey with us through the Takeover, considering the perspectives of others. To me this is a small but important contribution to change in our world.

2017 is also the year we decided to take on the challenge of major improvements to our building at 109 Edward Street. Built in 1890, and now heritage-listed, maintenance and refurbishment of our "old broad" is an expensive challenge for a small not-for-profit arts company. Our first step was to "Lift the Lift" raising over \$210,000 towards a new (working!) elevator. As our first major fundraising venture this was a superb effort and success. I thank everyone who helped us in this regard, including the staff, our Board and our new Patron Wesley Enoch.

Metro Arts is *not* a building, we are a community, but while we are custodian of this home for artists we will continue to do more of the heavy-lifting (!) to make her a warm and inviting home! It is a lot of work, and there's much more to be done. Come join us. I promise it will be creative and enlightening and possibly also quite a bit of fun!

Be Your Own Boss! by Kiah Reading, 2017.
Photography by Llewellyn Millhouse



CHAIRMAN REPORT, John Dunleavy

I am pleased to welcome you all to Metro Arts' Annual General Meeting for the 2017 calendar year. As most of you would be aware there is a formal side to these proceedings to complete such things as election of Office bearers and Auditors but also a chance for the Board and management of the organisation to update you on the year that was.

As is customary 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 an improved financial outcome for the organisation which can be directly linked to a serious focus on the issue and the untiring efforts of our Finance Committee and Treasurer Michael Cottier. Whilst there are many others much better qualified than myself to offer artistic comments I consider we, as an organisation; can be equally proud of the artistic outcomes achieved for 2017 and Metro's place in the Art ecology of Queensland and broader Australia.

I take this opportunity to comment on our "want" as a Board and organisation to strive to achieve more time to spend on the Art; as ultimately this is our reason for being. During the 2017 year and many of its predecessor years we were unfortunately distracted with a range of issues that may not be considered as "core business". I suspect this situation is not one confined to Metro Arts but a reflection of modern day living. The variety of issues confronted in 2017 are extensive and included:-

- Storm tracking to assess whether our Building roof damage was claimable under Insurance;
- Navigating DA, BA and heritage 'red tape' and the myriad of issues which go with a redevelopment project;
- Understanding the nuances of modern passenger lifts and related variables that go with a purchase of

such equipment; and

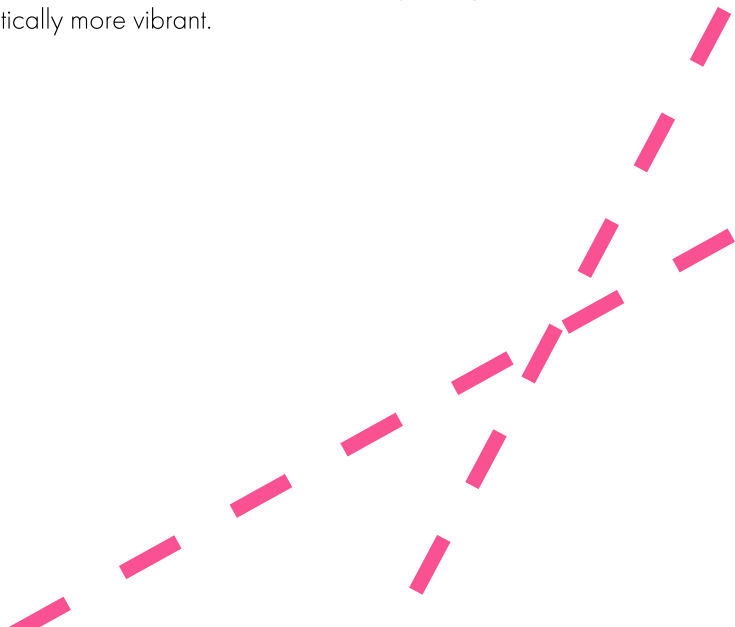
- Concrete cancer, its management, its removal or other ways to deal with it.

Despite all of the above and many more we were able to achieve a number of Artistic metrics and statistics which I encourage you to view in this Annual Report. 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.

In 2017 we invested further in our continuous improvement initiatives with change occurring in our systems, structure and finance and accounting processes. These changes whilst not immediately obvious are significant and will assist in our strategy to build capacity and scale by making us less reliant on third parties. Another change was the addition of another site to our portfolio of non - owned facilities in the form of the Ferryman's Hut of Teneriffe in Brisbane.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their totally voluntary commitment and significant contribution they have given to Metro in 2017 and prior years. I regularly comment that Metro is a values and ethics based organisation meaning that we genuinely apply good values and ethics in our decision making and in our dealings with others. Good values and ethics can only be maintained where you have good people in the Board and Management. To date Metro has been very lucky with the calibre and good character of our Board members and management.

For Metro 2018, and assuming I am re-elected I look forward to fostering these values and ethics in a way that makes Metro and the broader community stronger and artistically more vibrant.



TREASURER REPORT, Michael Cottier

It is a pleasure to present my 6th annual Metro Arts Treasurer's report.

2017 was another very challenging year for Metro Arts but with many positives, including conducting our very successful "Lift the Lift" fundraising campaign to fully fund the replacement of our non-functioning elevator in 109 Edward Street. We are very grateful for the support. We also continued to enjoy the support and improved arts organisation funding that I outlined last year, including from Arts Queensland, The Australia Council and the Brisbane City Council. This funding is reflected in our financial statements this year.

However, fundraising activities continued to be otherwise negatively impacted by relatively weak economic conditions and a very competitive environment to attract arts funding.

I am pleased to report that after two years consecutive losses, Metro Arts delivered an operating surplus for 2017 of \$6,254 (2016: loss of \$107,571).

Accounting revenues for the year were down 19% at \$1,288,282. 2017 saw our café sales down more than 20% on 2016, fairly flat (but improved) tenancy income (net of subsidies), and lower interest income.

Total expenses were down 24.5% to \$1,282,028, reflecting the Board and management team's efforts to contain costs and improve productivity in light of reduced funding and difficult operating conditions. While total grants expended were up from our principal funders as mentioned above, overall grants expended were down 21% on 2016. This reflects a reduced producing

programme with lower overall number of sources of artistic project funding compared to 2016.

Liquidity is tight and requires continuous oversight by both the Board and management via the Finance Working Group. We continue to occupy an aging, heritage-featured building in Edward Street as well as leasing other properties for artists' use outside the cbd that demand increased care and attention in the form of replacement plant, equipment, and/or ongoing repairs and maintenance. This year Metro has also been burdened with increased council rates, which we are seeking to reduce given the nature of our organisation's community activities.

The Board has cause to believe that Metro can continue to operate and thrive into the future. This is formally addressed in the Directors Report and the Directors Statement. The Board and management remain very focussed on ensuring a more sustainable financial future for Metro, including ongoing initiatives for:

- increased and more effective fundraising
- maximising the value generated from our buildings, especially 109 Edward Street, through tenancies, cinema, food and beverage, and
- expense control and productivity gains.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our CEO and Creative Director Jo Thomas and all of the Metro staff and supporters for their hard work, dedication, focus and significant artistic and administrative delivery in the continuing challenging conditions during 2017.

I thank Chairman John Dunleavy and the other members of the Board for their dedication, hard work and support.



Pussy Play by Strawberry Siren, in Metro Arts The View From Here Takeover, 2017. Photography by Darren Thomas.



2017 PRESENTATIONS

31 January - 18 February

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

CARGO CLUB

Centre For Australasian Theatre & Darahrogue.
Co Presented with Brisbane City Council
as part of BrisAsia Festival

15 February - 4 March

EXHIBITION: Gallery

THE CURVE OF SENSATIONS

Christopher Handran

11 March

PERFORMANCE: Gallery

TOGETHER

Phil Soliman

22 March - 8 April

EXHIBITION: Gallery

BY WAY OF NAVIGATION

Emma Hamilton

18 - 29 April

LCL PERFORMANCE: Gallery

ENGLAND by Tim Crouch

Co-presented with Nathan Booth & Matt Seery

20 - 29 April

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

JARROD DUFFY IS NOT DEAD

Applespiel

10 - 27 May

EXHIBITION: Gallery

THE REMAINDER

Susan Hawkins

25 May - 3 June

LCL PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

SWALLOW by Stef Smith

Co-presented with E.G.

"The community at Metro Arts filled my heart with goodness; it gave me belief in myself and my practice and pushed me to places I wouldn't have gone without that support."

- 2017 EXHIBITION ARTIST

7 - 10 June

TAKEOVER: Metro Arts

THE VIEW FROM HERE:

A SMALL PERSPECTIVE ON BIG IDEAS

Curated by Jo Thomas

9 - 26 August

EXHIBITION: Gallery

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Curated by Amy-Clare McCarthy

15-17 June

PERFORMANCE: Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts

WIRELESS

Paul Charlier and Lisa Wilson

12 - 15 July

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

AFTER JULIA

Decibel New Music

9 - 26 August

EXHIBITION: Gallery

INSTITUTIONALIES

Warraba Weatherall

6 - 23 September

EXHIBITION: Gallery

BE YOUR OWN BOSS!

Kiah Reading

7 - 17 September

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

THE BLUEBIRD MECHANICALS

Too Close To The Sun

4 - 7 October

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

DARKLIGHT_I: UTTERINGS

Julie Vulcan

18 October - 4 November

EXHIBITION: Gallery

DONNAS ON THE RUN: EXHUMING THE AUSTRALIAN BADLANDS

Lucy Forsberg & Sally Molloy

4 - 20 October

PERFORMANCE: Tour

PIANO LESSONS

Anna Goldsworthy

Civic Theatre Newcastle, Port Fairy Spring Music

Festival & Sydney City Recital Hall

7 - 18 November

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

SPECTATE

Counterpilot

15 November - 2 December

EXHIBITION: Gallery

DISRUPTIVE (ILL) LOGIC

Robert Andrew

6-9 December

PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner Theatre

DANCE: A DOUBLE BILL

Sarah Aiken & Rebecca Jensen

Spectate by Counterpilot, 2017. Photograph by Stephen Henry.



InstitutionalLies by Warraba Weatherall, 2017. Photograph by Mick Richards.



2017 RESIDENCIES

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

1 MONTH RESIDENCY / Warraba Weatherall
 4 MONTH RESIDENCY / Robert Andrew
 5 MONTH RESIDENCY /
 Susan Hawkins & Lara Burslow
 5 MONTH RESIDENCY / Anastasia Booth

ARTIST RUN INITIATIVE IN RESIDENCE

Cut Thumb Laundry

WORKS IN RESIDENCE

CARGO CLUB

Centre for Australasian Theatre & Darahrouge

DARKLIGHT_I: UTTERINGS / Julie Vulcan

TRAINING RESIDENCIES

ACCESS ARTS / in Partnership with Theatre Ensemble & Phluxus2 Dance Collective.

EMERGENCE / led by Sandi Woo & Artists

"I found that by taking part in the Metro Arts residency I learned a lot about what I want to do in the future as an artist. I also learned that sometimes collaborations change over time and that also ideas do as well."

- 2017 ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

HAIR by Melina Wightman, in Metro Arts *The View From Here Takeover*, 2017.
Photography by Dylan Evans.



2017 WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT

HAIR by Melina Wightman

HIGHNESS by Melanie Jame Wolf

PENICILLIN by Joshua Pether & Lynnette Voevodin

THE GIF OF DANCE by Matt Cornell

SOCIAL STUDIES by Shian Law

LEAVES OF GRASS by David Fenton & Brian Lucas

Wireless by Paul Charlier & Lisa Wilson, 2017. Photograph by Dylan Evans.



2017 PRODUCING HUB

ARTISTS PRODUCED BY METRO ARTS

FRAN BARBE

THE HUMAN COMPANY

BRIAN LUCAS

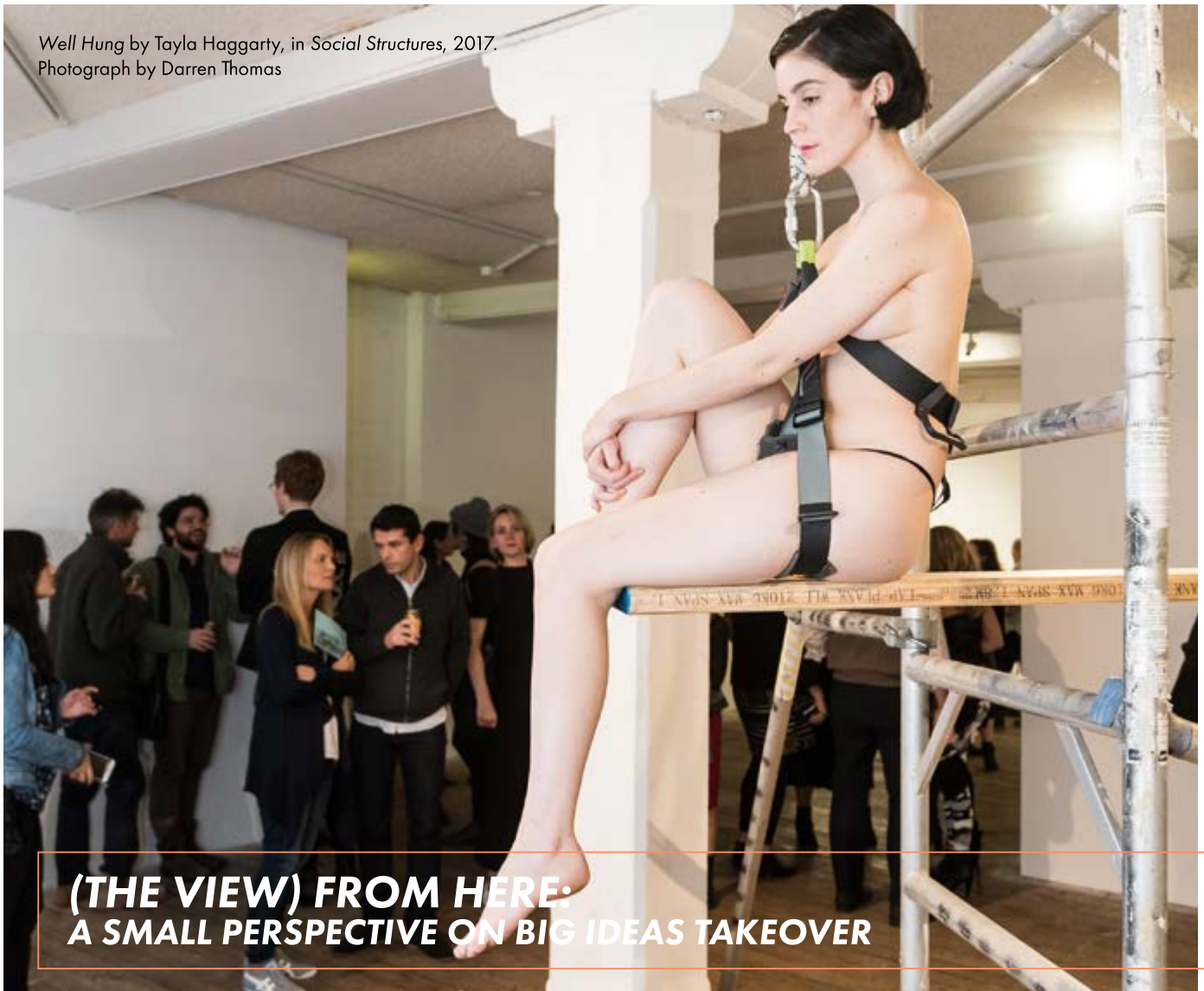
CLAIRE MARSHALL

DAVID MEGARRITY

LISA WILSON

ANNA GOLDSWORTHY

Well Hung by Tayla Haggarty, in *Social Structures*, 2017.
Photograph by Darren Thomas



(THE VIEW) FROM HERE: A SMALL PERSPECTIVE ON BIG IDEAS TAKEOVER

Away from the monumental, Metro Arts presented immersive and relational work that invited audiences to participate, lead and create. Solo works, intimate engagements and work in restricted sites could be found throughout the whole building. This Takeover was curated by Jo Thomas and included the group exhibition *Social Structures*, curated by Amy-Clare McCarthy.

"Writing and delivering the piece for *(the view) From Here* was one of the most challenging and wonderfully rewarding things that I have done. I'm so eternally appreciative of the opportunities and support that Metro Arts provides- for myself personally, but also for the arts community here (our extended family!)"

- 2017 TAKEOVER ARTIST

774 ATTENDEES
26 ARTISTS & SPEAKERS
8 PERFORMANCES
4 EXHIBITIONS
2 SOCIAL EVENTS
1 ARTIST TALK

METRO ARTS PATRON, Wesley Enoch

Metro Arts was thrilled to announce our new Patron, Wesley Enoch in November. Early in his career, from 1994 – 1997, Wesley was Artistic Director at Kooemba Jdarra, resident here at Metro Arts. Whilst here he created the iconic work *The 7 Stages of Grieving*. In the twenty years since, Wesley has become one of Australia's most influential, respected and loved writers, directors, and artistic directors.

Wesley is Metro's second patron in our 39 year history, filling the place left by our first patron The Honourable Gough Whitlam, AC QC. We are very proud to welcome Wesley back home to Metro Arts, where it all began for him, and for countless other Brisbane artists who have gone on to make significant contributions nationally and internationally in both performance and visual art. As Patron, Wesley will help to spread the word of the fantastic art and artists being supported by Metro Arts.

DEVELOPMENT

In 2017 Metro Arts raised over \$200,00 during our *Lift the Lift* campaign. This was the largest fundraising venture in recent years to enable repairs to our heritage building. Our 77 year old lift was deemed irreparable early in the year. With all abilities access a core remit to our organisation, a working lift across our five levels is critical to serve our communities. With support from state, federal and local government, as well as significant donations from businesses and the private individuals we look forward to installing the new lift in 2018.

We especially acknowledge our Metro Arts community - who continue to support Metro and our artists via donations and sponsorship in many forms.



Metro Arts Board of Directors, Creative Director Jo Thomas and Wesley Enoch. Metro Arts Patron Event 2017. Photo by Erik Bates

BOARD AND STAFF

Alex Anderson, Maintenance Coordinator
Amida Callinicos, Administrator and Finance Officer
Penny Challen, Communications Manager from May
Jonathon Coutts, Venue and Facilities Coordinator from June
Bri Ellison, Administration Assistant and Bookings Coordinator
Shani Gould, Programming and Marketing Coordinator
Olivia Fredheim, Espresso Bar Staff
Nicola Jones, Venues and Facilities Coordinator until June
Joy Lane, Finance Manager
Emmaly Langridge, Communications Manager until April
Bec Lawes, Box Office and Facilities Coordinator until November
Liam Lowth, Espresso Bar Staff from July
Amy-Clare McCarthy, Curator (Exhibition Program) until November
Jess Murphy, Business Director
Lorraine Nothling, Development Manager from March until December
Shani Pickering, Espresso Bar Staff from July
Genevieve Trace, Executive Assistant
Jo Thomas, Creative Director
Kate Usher, Associate Producer until June
Verity Woodford, Producer from June

A total of 11 board meetings were held in 2017.

CHAIRMAN	John Dunleavy
TREASURER	Michael Cottier
DIRECTORS	Brian Lucas Daniel McKewen Andrea Moor Margo Powell

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.

SUPPORTERS

We are truly grateful for the support of all of our partners. Their assistance enables us to continue to support the development and presentation of ambitious contemporary art. Work created at Metro Arts goes on to national and international platforms, connecting with audiences from around the globe.



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



Metro Arts is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of Environment and Science

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



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.



Metro Arts

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