



**Effecting social
change through
the power of
performance.**



MILK CRATE THEATRE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2028

Image Credit: 2023 Collaborative Artist Photoshoot
Photo by Liam O'Keefe

In all that we do, we acknowledge that the foundations of Milk Crate Theatre are on Gadigal land of the Eora Nation and that wherever we create, we walk in the footprints of the ancestors that were here before us.

We pay homage to the tradition of storytelling practiced by the earth's longest living culture and embrace those stories of the past and continue to share stories of the now.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and to walk side by side, hand in hand for a healing future.

Sovereignty was never ceded, and we acknowledge those who have nurtured and respected the land for generations before us.

Acknowledgment of Country

Co-written with Peta-Joy Williams, a Wiradjuri woman and artist, and Jessica Pantano



Image from DUST
Photo by ©Robert Catto

Welcome

It is with great excitement that we launch Milk Crate Theatre's 2024-28 Strategic Plan.

2024 sees Milk Crate Theatre celebrate 25-years of creating provocative performance works created by, with and for people with diverse backgrounds and complex lived experiences. As we reach this milestone, we have taken the time to reflect, consult with our community and map out a bold new future.

This strategic plan builds upon our strengths in artistic and creative innovation, along with our expertise in driving social impact to inspire a courageous and some might even say audacious plan, that empowers our vision to ensure that people with diverse and complex lived experiences have equal access to the transformational power of the arts, are genuine producers of their own narratives and actively take part in shaping Australian culture.

Over the next five years, we will grow opportunities for individuals who are disadvantaged or marginalised to engage in creative practice; introduce new creative streams, increase opportunities for paid employment and provide stronger engagement opportunities for our audiences. We will continue to invest in our Social Impact framework and measurement, enabling us to share the real impacts of our work on the community and shape programs that make a difference in the lives of people in the communities we work. And finally, we commit to implementing a new business model which will see Milk Crate Theatre thrive well into the future.

We would like to acknowledge all of the Milk Crate Theatre team and community for their contributions to this strategy – our artists, creatives, management, board, donors, collaborators and most importantly our Collaborative Artists.

We are excited about our next chapter and invite you to join us on this journey!



JODIE WAINWRIGHT, CEO



MARGOT POLITIS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**We believe
every person
has the right
to be heard
and seen.**

Our Purpose

Milk Crate Theatre effects social change through the power of performance.

Our Vision

People with diverse lived experiences have equal access to the transformational power of the arts, are genuine producers of their own narratives and actively take part in shaping Australian culture.

Our Mission

Milk Crate Theatre provides a vibrant and inclusive space where artists of all backgrounds can come together to create provocative and transformational performance works.

Through deep and meaningful creative engagement, individuals build confidence, skills and connections; facilitating increases in self-reliance, empowering aspirations and providing a gateway for future social and economic engagement.

Our work offers audiences a new lens through which to view some of society's most pressing issues, both challenging and expanding perspectives to inspire positive change in the world.



Our Community

Our community of Collaborative Artists (participants) are generally living with, have experienced or are at risk of homelessness and/or housing instability; living with mental health or disability support needs; have experienced domestic violence, or come from First Nations and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.

We use the term 'Collaborative Artist' in place of 'participant' to recognise the vital creative energy and experience individuals in our community bring to workshops, developments, productions and performances.

Our Values

- **BELONGING** - We put Artists at the heart of everything we do, providing a safe and accessible environment for the community to connect and personally develop through creative practice.
- **ARTISTRY** - We use a range of creative practices to develop skills, foster confidence, and provide platforms for expression. Our public outcomes offer space and open discourse for social justice and change.
- **RESPECT** - We create an environment where the experiences, feelings and rights of everyone are respected and valued.
- **COLLABORATION** - We work collaboratively within our creative processes, and in partnership with arts, social purpose, government, corporate and funding partners to further our reach and impact.
- **CHALLENGE** - We challenge our Collaborative Artists and audiences; pushing the boundaries of what art can be and disrupting conventional viewership paradigms.

Strategic Goals

Goal #1 Provocative New Works

Foster the development of original high-quality performance works, created by, with and for people with diverse backgrounds and complex lived experiences.

Goal #2 Transformational Creative Practice

Grow opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds and complex lived experiences to engage in creative practice; expanding our reach across a broad variety of artforms, as well as offering greater depth of engagement and increased skills development.

Goal #3 Inspired and Connected Audiences

Present works through a variety of mediums to bring a broad cross-section of audiences together to connect and inspire positive change in the world.

Goal #4 Diversity and Equity

Position our community at the centre of all we do; by committing to greater diversity and equity across all levels of the organisation.

Goal #5 Resilient and Sustainable Company

Build and diversify income to ensure our structure, culture and operations support our artistic and impact goals, whilst maintaining the agility to respond to community needs and future challenges.



Goal #1

Provocative New Works

Foster the development of original high-quality performance works, created by, with and for people with diverse backgrounds and complex lived experiences.

To achieve this, we will implement the following tactics:

Best Practice Community Arts & Cultural Development (CACD)

We will continuously develop and implement exceptional artistic programming that empowers artists from all backgrounds; offering resources and platforms to create and share impactful new performance works.

Mainstage Works

We will foster creative collaboration between our Collaborative Artists and peer artists from across the sector, to develop and stage at least one major performance work each year.

Digital/Screen Creative Stream (NEW)

We will develop and launch a new digital/screen-based creative stream to sit alongside our theatre-based program; including skills-based workshops and content creation for online and streaming platforms.

Sector Collaboration

We will invest in the development of a new partnership framework that facilitates collaboration with renowned Australian and/or international artists and arts organisations; building pathways to employment and supporting the sector to engage with Artists with diverse backgrounds or complex lived experiences in a safe and meaningful way.

Goal #2

Transformational Creative Practice

Grow opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds and complex lived experiences to engage in creative practice; expanding our reach across a broad variety of artforms, as well as offering greater depth of engagement and increased skills development.

To achieve this, we will implement the following tactics:

Proactively Increase Accessibility to Participation in the Arts

We will deliver free accessible creative arts programs for vulnerable/marginalised communities across Sydney through collaboration with the social sector. We will engage with community and work collaboratively with professional artists to create original new works. We will share artistic outcomes in local communities engaging the broader community in works created.

Artist Development Program

We will expand our Artist Development program to deliver advanced skill development and build genuine pathways to further opportunities in the creative sector.

Demonstrated Social, Cultural and Economic Impact

We will design and deliver programs that develop individuals' skills, confidence and connections (short-term), ultimately facilitating increases in self-reliance, and providing gateways to future social and economic engagement (medium/long-term).

Leadership in Social Impact Measurement

We will position ourselves as leaders in the arts social impact space by embedding measurement across our program and working with sector to build an evidence base and share skills.

Goal #3

Inspired and Connected Audiences

Present works through a variety of mediums to bring a broad cross-section of audiences together to connect and inspire positive change in the world.

To achieve this, we will implement the following tactics:

Position Milk Crate Theatre as a leader in the Arts Impact Space

We will increase audience engagement through an annual marketing and communications strategy that elevates the work and stories of our community and the impact we create.

Grow Audience Reach

We will grow audience reach with a new audience development plan that contexts existing and new audiences to our performance works. We will invest in our digital presence by launching a new website in 2024, improving the opportunity for audiences to engage with us and our work digitally. We will grow strong partnerships with organisations and companies which can support and share our digital works in innovative ways.

Slow Touring Model

We will develop a Slow Touring Model which considers the support needs, regular social services appointments and personal situations of our community, along with deeper engagement in the communities that we visit.

MCT Education

We will relaunch our educational engagement with new publications of recent works, special performances in our seasons, and explore DIGITAL stream outcomes. Using these tools, we will visit schools and deliver screenings and workshops. In support of delivery, we will employ Collaborative Artists to co-host any screenings, discussions or workshops.

Goal #4

Diversity and Equity

Position our community at the centre of all we do by committing to greater diversity and equity across all levels of the organisation.

To achieve this, we will implement the following tactics:

First Nations Engagement

We will undertake strategic consultation with local First Nations Communities to foster meaningful and ongoing opportunities to engage with First Nations Elders, Communities and Artists.

Disability Programming

We will investigate and build a business model to provide stronger programming for people living with disability including equitable programming accessible via the NDIS.

Employment Pathways

We will ensure that Collaborative Artists working on our productions are equitably employed and actively look to train and recruit Collaborative Artists, so they are able to gain paid professional work within and outside of Milk Crate Theatre.

Diversity from the Board Down

We will commit to an annual review of our board and management structure to ensure we have succession plans in place that consider both relevant skills and diverse representation. We will establish open communication structures that feed information from the bottom up, to ensure our leadership team is best placed to make informed decisions.

Policies & Resources

We will ensure that our staff and community are supported to thrive in a complex and evolving environment by reviewing and updating best practice policies, frameworks and resources.

Goal #5

Resilient Sustainable Company

Build and diversify income to ensure our structure, culture and operations support our artistic and impact goals, whilst maintaining the agility to respond to community needs and future challenges.

To achieve this, we will implement the following tactics:

A New Business Model

We will devise and implement a new business model which is focused on growing and diversifying revenue. We will ensure we are sustainable and able to effectively navigate a complex and evolving landscape.

Professional Development/Culture

We will maintain Milk Crate Theatre as a diverse and inclusive organisation that supports continuous professional development by ensuring our team is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver programs in a complex and changing environment.

Employment based Social Enterprise

We will launch an employment-based Social Enterprise designed to provide additional revenue and deliver employment opportunities for our Collaborative Artists.

Strong Partnerships

We will build strong relationships and collaborations across the creative and social sectors to enable skill/resource-sharing to maximise individual and sector-wide impact. We will focus on sustainability with new project budgeting that incorporates overhead cost ratio of 25%.

Sustainable Programs & Strong Reserves

We will maintain reserves at a min. 30% of expenses with a view to invest any additional reserves into business development of new revenue streams.

Image Credit: Holdsworth Community
Photo by Bethany Simons





Milk Crate Theatre

Alexandria Town Hall
73 Garden Street
Alexandria, NSW 2015

Phone: 0481 348 218
mail@milkcratetheatre.com

ABN: 94 147 548 605