



# CIRCUS WA

TOGETHER WE CAN

A CIRCUS REVOLUTION FOR ALL

OUR CASE FOR SUPPORT



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

CircusWA acknowledges the Whadjuk Noongar People are the spiritual and cultural biridiyangara (custodians) of the land upon which we currently train, create and perform.

“

In my many years as a freelance professional circus artist, I've witnessed the great work that CircusWA has done in developing the art, character, and confidence of young Western Australians. Whether they become professional acrobats, tertiary-level students of circus, or nurses who can do backflips, CircusWA's programs imbue them with values and skills which will serve them, and their communities, for the rest of their lives. **I encourage you to support the important work of CircusWA in any way you can.**

—  
Ross Vegas  
Independent Artist

“  
One day during  
rehearsals I looked  
around the tent and  
noticed a sense of  
connection. I realised  
as a team we were  
working on something  
greater than all of us.

Dayna Sulaiman, 17  
Youth Troupe performer

**TOGETHER  
WE CAN  
DO MORE**

Donate  
online:



Photo: Tashi Hall

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Cover: Leviathan by CIRCA 2020 with  
CircusWA Youth. Photo by Sergio Lordao.



**THIS IS OUR CIRCUS REVOLUTION**

Photo: Rachel Collier

## **WE'RE CONTRIBUTING TO A CONNECTED, INCLUSIVE AND BETTER WORLD...**

... where youth of all backgrounds and abilities come to experience collaboration and creativity.

... where an exciting circus arts program stimulates an authentic exchange of ideas and friendship.

... where our community is introduced to the joy and energy of circus arts lending an essential and unique element to the rich canvas of Western Australia's creative and cultural output.

... where specialised programs extend accessibility to people of all abilities and transform and empower individuals and communities.

... where aspiring performers can enjoy a welcoming and inclusive environment to showcase their artistic endeavours.

**This is our circus revolution. We need your support to continue to have an impact.**

**TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE**

## SIDE BY SIDE

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CircusWA is committed to supporting the growth of circus programs for youth of all backgrounds and abilities in Western Australian. This is done through designing programs which respond to the needs and culture of these unique groups. Currently we are building unique movement and circus skills with Aboriginal youth, children and teenagers living with disability, and with any young people keen to perform through our Act Belong Commit Youth Troupes.

Today we stand on the threshold of a brilliant new future for circus in WA.

CircusWA is ready to grow our circus arts programs and expand our contributions to the community. To help these opportunities fly we are launching an ambitious fundraising effort – an initiative that will elevate us and allow us to make an even greater impact locally and nationally.

On the following pages you will discover how we are investing in WA's youth by diversifying opportunity, supporting health and wellbeing, and empowering

young artists of all abilities to flourish into mentally and physically strong people of tomorrow.

But our impact is only as great as the support we receive.

Our income streams from project funds, ticket sales and tuition fees are crucial to delivering our programs, yet this is not enough to cover the cost of expanding and developing responsive programs for young people.

**We invite you to support our young artists and help secure our future through our circus revolution.**

**Gavin Corfield**  
Chairperson

**Jo Smith**  
Artistic Director



**TODAY WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF A BRILLIANT NEW FUTURE FOR CIRCUS IN WA.**

Photo: Tashi Hall

“

As both the federal representative for Fremantle and a long-time resident of this community, I can attest to the dynamic and life-affirming role that CircusWA has played within this community for over thirty years.

Their inclusive programs for all members of the community are deeply worthwhile for developing physical and emotional wellbeing, advancing social inclusion, and building confidence and creative skills in people of all ages. Thousands have benefited from youth programs facilitated by CircusWA.



**Josh Wilson MP**  
Federal Member for Fremantle

“ Starting circus has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. It has had so many positive impacts on my life. I love being part of a group that fosters creativity and teamwork and it has helped me grow so much more confidence in myself as a performer.

**Amy Fimmel, 18**  
Sliders Youth Troupe

**TOGETHER  
WE CAN  
CREATE**



Photo: Rachel Collier

## CIRCUSWA BEGINNINGS

Established by a group of bold, dynamic street performers, our origin story is still seen in performances at community events and festivals and informs our conscience driven social programming.

**For over 30 years, we have been celebrating, nurturing and supporting distinctive artistic and cultural endeavours in our community.**

Since 2017, our training and development centre has been in the Freo Big Top in the east end of Fremantle. Co-located with arts organisation DADAA we are an open and accessible training centre. Via partnerships with local government and youth arts organisation, we have grown and developed exciting new works and contributed to a flourishing creative hub in Fremantle.

## CIRCUSWA TODAY

Today, we are a training and youth performance organisation promoting excellence, inclusion and innovation in circus arts.

With community at our core, each year we engage approximately 400 students in our training programs and over the years we have helped thousands of young people develop into confident, healthy individuals who have gone on to pursue exciting careers.

Through our youth training and performance programs we are empowering young people to develop creativity and strengthen their voices to build a more connected, creative and inclusive world. We are supporting them to be the agents of change throughout their own lives.

The achievements of CircusWA to date are in no small part thanks to generous government and philanthropic partnerships. This support is essential to our creative output and survival. We are proud of the strong partnerships we've formed that are enabling us to develop programs with great impact.

We also couldn't achieve what we do without the ongoing encouragement and support of our circus community.

**To all our students, performers, trainers, youth, Fremantle neighbours and circus community around Australia and beyond, thank you!**

Over the next five years we are implementing a suite of strategies to grow our organisation responsibly so we can continue to make a lasting impact in our community. We will develop our advocacy role alongside the Physical Theatre sector, and strive to create a strong voice for circus arts in our State while engaging nationally with youth and circus groups.



**TOGETHER  
WE ARE A  
COMMUNITY**

“

CircusWA gave me the space and opportunities to develop as a young artist, along with the knowledge and support I needed to launch my circus career as a young adult. It will always hold an important place in my heart.

—  
**Maya Tregonning**  
Independent Artist  
and member of GOM

## STEP BY STEP

A glimpse into the incredible support of our government and corporate partners whose commitment to CircusWA is invaluable. We thank them for believing in us and our mission.

### 1980s

State Government gifted Fremantle's Old Customs House to the visual and performing arts sector.

### 1992-2001

Circus artists launch a training centre and with Government support establish a training and development program.

WA Circus School is incorporated in 2001.

### 2001-2014

Healthway begins ongoing funding for WA Circus School's community programs promoting 'Be Active'.

Lotterywest pledges ongoing funding to purchase new equipment and grow the delivery and quality of programs.

Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) provides support via subsidised rent and one-off project grants for youth performances and projects for young artists.

### 2015-2016

New philanthropic engagement with The Fremantle Foundation.

The Merenda Family Fund generously funds four Hilton Aboriginal youth to attend circus training programs.

WA Circus School becomes CircusWA.

### 2017

CircusWA moves to the Freo Big Top in Princess May Park with financial support from the City of Fremantle, DADAA, Lotterywest, DCA Strategic Initiatives grant, funding from the Federal Government's Better Communities Programme supported by Josh Wilson MP, and a successful community crowdfunding campaign.

### 2018-2020

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC, formerly DCA) continues supporting program development with a Strategic Initiatives business development grant, plus a grant funding the annual Youth Troupe program.

Lotterywest COVID-19 Relief Fund grant received in 2020 helps alleviate significant impacts from the pandemic.

### 2021 & THE FUTURE

DLGSC Strategic Initiatives grant supports engagement with consultants Pracsys to develop Feasibility study and Case for Support for a State Centre for Circus and Physical Theatre.

Youth Troupe program supported with second year of program funds from DLGSC.

Biennial funding from Healthway supports outreach programming.

Creative Partnerships Australia awards Plus1 funding matching up to \$25,000 of philanthropic contributions. This Case for Support outlines this ambition.



## FUNDING PRIORITIES

We are raising funds to support three key youth programs

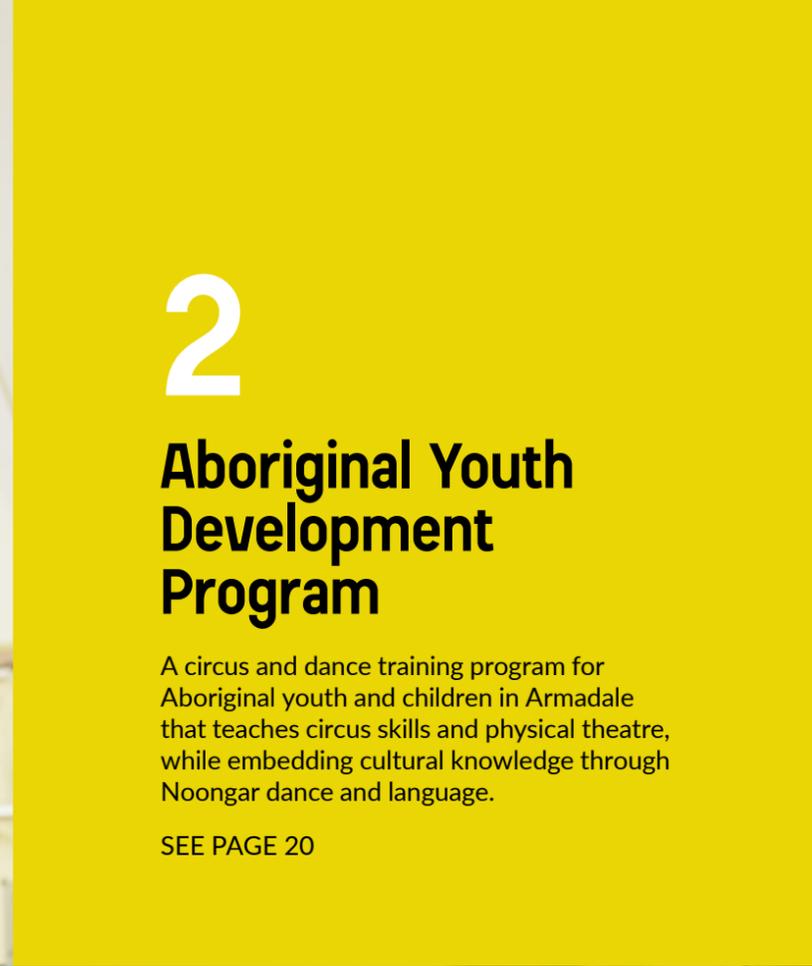
Donate online:



## 1 All Abilities Training Program

A dynamic and transformative physical arts program helping young people with disability to reach their full potential by engaging in arts and developing cultural ability.

SEE PAGE 18



## 2 Aboriginal Youth Development Program

A circus and dance training program for Aboriginal youth and children in Armadale that teaches circus skills and physical theatre, while embedding cultural knowledge through Noongar dance and language.

SEE PAGE 20



## 3 Youth Troupes and Young Artist Programs

Empowering young circus students to develop performance and physical theatre skills with annual programs that offer opportunities to engage with guest artists, perform new works and tour to other circus centres around Australia.

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## SIDE BY SIDE

### All Abilities Training Program

#### Children with disability leading the way to an inclusive future

All Abilities Circus allows children and teenagers living with disability to imagine more and dream beyond society's determination of their limitations.

This circus program has been developed to support diverse abilities and, in partnership with DADAA, we are generating a unique and supportive all abilities program that caters for the needs of young people who love to engage physically with the world around them.

In 2018, a collaboration between DADAA and CircusWA produced *Experience Collider* – a performance project for teenagers with high support needs disabilities and our Youth Troupe performers. Supported by Telethon and the Telethon Kids Institute, the project saw 30 young people aged 13 to 19 work together for 18 months to create, rehearse and ultimately perform *Experience Collider* at the State Theatre Centre as part of the 2019 AWESOME Festival.

The show was described as a journey during which all the young people moved through the experience together, all exploring it differently – some suspended in the air, some in chairs or on wheeled platforms, some singing, some carrying lights or video cameras, and some vocalising or signing.

By removing the barriers to participation for children with disabilities, the program offered skills development, creativity and social connection. It displayed the wonderful impact of arts participation, not only in a recreation and enjoyment sense, but for outcomes on a social and personal development level.

#### This is what social circus is all about...welcoming and celebrating difference.

These programs are designed to bring out young people's creativity and confidence, along with an opportunity to have a voice in performance.

We are proud of this program, which develops physical skills and social connectedness, and fosters successful outcomes for talented, ambitious young people no matter their ability.



“Experience Collider changed me so much. At first, I didn't understand how we would be able to perform a show with the DADAA kids, but as the project progressed, and I learnt how to communicate without speaking, I experienced performing in a completely different and moving way to anything I've done before.”

Belle Butler, 15  
Youth troupe performer

“Projects such as Experience Collider build confidence, self-worth, social connection, and reduce isolation. It is important that individuals are supported to overcome the barriers they face every day to participation in activities with their peers.”



Ricky Arnold  
DADAA  
Director of Arts Services

## TOGETHER WE CAN BE STORYTELLERS

This program strengthens the physicality of the young participants and encourages them to feel connected through their bodies and minds. By participating in activities and performance training that promotes respect, pride and cultural strength, young Aboriginal people are encouraged to engage emotionally and imaginatively.

Community and kinship are at the heart of this program. It recognises leadership within the Aboriginal community and supports Aboriginal people to be in key roles – program managers, circus and dance trainers, and elders.

This unique program will develop a growth in confidence for its participants, along with a sense of pride from their achievements.

**Together we are offering the building blocks on which the community can nurture the next generation of Aboriginal artists and cultural leaders.**

## Aboriginal Youth Circus Development Program

### Circus, Dance, Theatre and Culture – Guiding the next generation of young Aboriginal performers.

In partnership with the Noongar led Champion Centre in Armadale, we are delivering a circus and dance training program to Aboriginal youth that encourages a connection to Country and culture through Physical Theatre storytelling.

Guiding this program is Aboriginal contemporary dance artist, Moopa (Ian) Wilkes, supported by circus trainers who are trained in Social Circus. Together this creative team is infusing circus arts with Aboriginal culture to produce unique community performances.



Photo: Travis Hayto

“ We are developing a troupe of Aboriginal youth with circus and dance skills underpinned by a sense of belonging. The program facilitates sharing of cultural knowledge and skills between generations and lets our creative stories and cultural knowledge come together.



**Ian Wilkes**  
Program director



## TOGETHER WE CAN GROW

We help them to grow artistically, personally and professionally.

And we give them the opportunity to become strong, committed and capable humans for the future, as artists and in any work they embark on.

Our programs are designed to offer:

- Affordable skills training – ensuring time is our participants' only limiting factor
- Partnerships with other circus revolutionaries across the state and nationally
- A chance to rub shoulders with internationally recognised elite circus artists, directors and companies
- The experience of creating new performances which reflect participants' ideas and values while also challenging them to look beyond their experiences

## Youth Troupes and Young Artist Programs

### Growing circus artists of the future to be much more than their tricks.

Young people are our future. We nurture the ability to inspire awe and wonder. To equip our young artists to cultivate new skills, expertise and leadership, inspire creative expression, and put imaginations to work.

Arts and recreation are key vehicles for youth to become involved, active members within our society. CircusWA offers young people an abundance of opportunities to be a part of their community and help ensure that they are physically, mentally and emotionally happy.

With the support of Healthway's **Act Belong Commit** message, our underlying focus is on ensuring youth understand the importance of their mental wellbeing to sustain physical health and creativity.



As someone with both autism and extreme social and general anxiety, the CircusWA youth troupe has opened many doors in my life and helped me overcome my fears. By expressing myself through movement and theatrical arts, I have grown in self-confidence and made many important friendships and connections with other inspiring young performers.

**Zoe Davidson**  
Sliders Youth Troupe Member

## SIDE BY SIDE



Circus helps so many people from every age and background. It welcomes them into a space where they can grow in confidence, learn physical skills and develop long life friendships within the community both locally and internationally. CircusWA's youth programs are key to the development of circus in WA. Over the 15 years we have run the festival, we have seen many artists that have spent years developing their circus skills within the organisation finally emerging as outstanding professional performing artists conquering the pressures of the modern life we live in.

**Matt Yates**  
Karnidale Festival Director



As a young street artist and circus trainer, I helped develop the Cirque Bizirque - WA Circus School training centre in the early 90's. Since then, I have watched circus artists spin webs of fierce determination and joyful connection into the hearts and minds of many young people who often had little else in their lives. The resilience that CircusWA has maintained through many hard-hit years is testament to the passion and resilience of all involved in the organisation and the community it supports. Thank you CircusWA for ensuring youth sit at the centre of your planning, and for visioning a future for all of us.

**Brendan Coleman**  
Creative Producer  
Fremantle International Street Arts Festival



**Our Experience Collider project, co-produced by DADAA and CircusWA, was about establishing a stronger community that celebrated inclusivity. We tapped into the heart of exchange where our artists with disabilities could share the tools they rely on for movement, communication and performance with their peers. The emphasis on collaboration and difference fuels wonderful creativity**

**Sam Fox**  
Artistic Director of Experience Collider 2019



**Telling our stories through music and dance is helping to connect people and is the way knowledge is passed between generations. These experiences with our young kids are also teaching me about the immense diversity and possibilities of our physical and spiritual expression.**

**Natano Fa'anana**  
Co-director and Founder, Casus Circus



# JOIN OUR CIRCUS REVOLUTION

The launch of these programs has been made possible through one-off government grants, however ongoing annual funding is required to help us maintain the delivery of these important youth initiatives.

**If our programs and the impact they are making resonate with you, please support us and make CircusWA's progress and impact a part of your own legacy.**

Your support will help to ensure that emerging young artists of all backgrounds and abilities can participate in a dynamic circus journey here in WA.

## One donation, Twice the impact

100% of your donation supports CircusWA and your donation is doubled automatically!

We are proudly partnered with the Australian Cultural Fund to raise funds. Every dollar donated is matched by Creative Partnerships Australia's PLUS1 program.

Donations over \$2 to CircusWA via our giving platform at the Australian Cultural Fund are tax deductible.

Donate  
online:



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partnerships  
australia



**TOGETHER WE CAN**

Photo: Tashi Hall

“

The support and opportunity that CircusWA has given me over the past 15 years has been an integral part of my career, not only as a performer but as a theatre maker and director. It started as a child seeing a Bizircus show, then becoming a place of training where I developed my physical practice that has become the basis of my theatre practice. It has supported me to make new works that toured nationally and internationally and connected me to renowned companies and artists leading to opportunities in international arts festivals.

CircusWA is now a place where I can discover exceptional artists, be inspired by them, and create opportunities for them as we create exciting new Western Australian theatre.

**Ella Hetherington**  
Co-Director  
MAXIMA

Design: Lynne Wilky Pearson  
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**CONTACT**  
Call us at 0435 374 492  
to discuss giving opportunities  
that align with your interests.

“

CircusWA is the very foundation of my professional career. Their existence helped me turn my passion into my career, supporting me to fulfil my dream of being an international professional circus artist. They gave me a community which I now call my family.

**Jeromy Nuuk**

Independent Circus and  
Physical Theatre Artist, Finland

**CIRCUS**  
WA

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