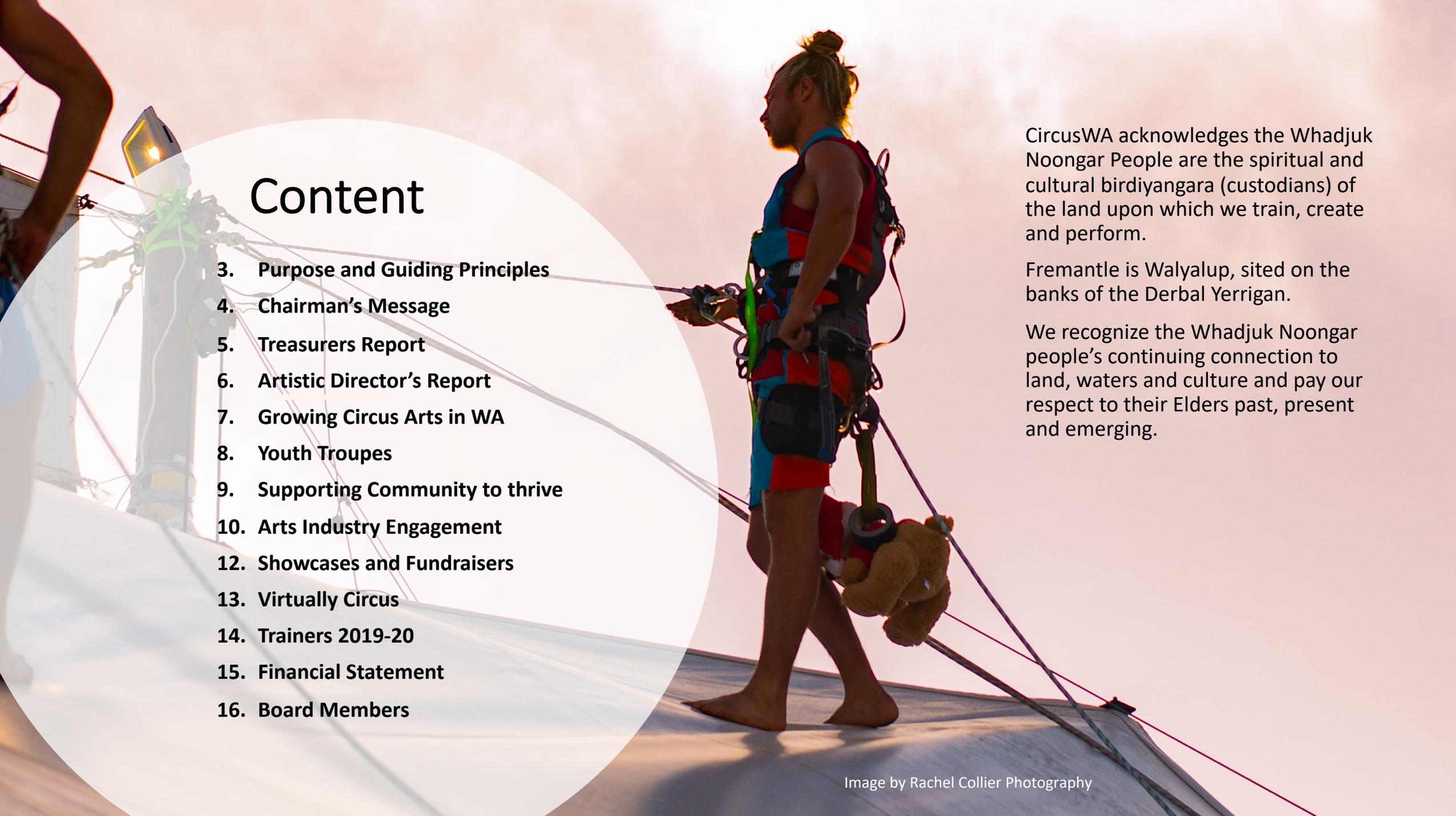




ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Transformative Circus
Helping grow artists for the future





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

Fremantle is Walyalup, sited on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan.

We recognize the Whadjuk Noongar people's continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

CircusWA's Purpose

Leviathan: image by Sergio Lordao

We are a development Centre for circus arts providing access to training, performance opportunities, professional development and collaborations.

We are a voice for the sector and advocacy for the artform.

Guiding Principles

- **LEAD:** Our Trainers provide leadership and mentorship to young people. We engage with circus communities locally, nationally and globally. We advocate to government and community so the value of circus is known, acknowledged financially, and grown.
- **CREATE:** We provide a training program that is inclusive to create outstanding and enriching performance experiences. We nourish our participants' creativity to develop a circus repertoire encompassing traditional and contemporary circus.
- **INCLUDE:** We celebrate and support diversity in the backgrounds and abilities of our students, recognising circus is an art, not a sport, that 'excellence' in circus is a subjective value and that the path to reach it is not linear.
- **CONTRIBUTE:** We offer scholarship programs to individuals, schools and organisations in our community who can not afford to participate in circus programs.
- **INTEGRITY:** We build trust with our students through strong working relationships, respecting individual differences, whilst challenging them in a safe environment.



Chairman's Message

Going into the pandemic I did not think we would survive, however here we are sharing the story.

As the pandemic started the whole of the arts sector was in shutdown - no performances, no revenue, no training and no capacity to plan.

CircusWA chose to be pro-active in supporting artists and students. Most of our trainers are professional performers and many of them tour yearly. These artists were faced with 100% loss of work and income. We committed to support as many artists as we could with JobKeeper and paid work. We were rewarded with an innovative online "Virtually Circus" program. This inclusive response has strengthened CircusWA's engagement with students and families and grown trust and connection within WA's circus sector.

I would like to thank our various funders that have helped us survive this year. The Department of LGSC supported our youth troupes, in addition to helping us grow our governance skills and business modelling. LotteryWest's COVID19 relief funding added to this survival and our ever-present champions at the City of Fremantle.

During this year we have grown our visibility with representation on Theatre Network Australia's Circus

and Physical Theatre committee (TNA-CaPT) as well as participation in an important national forum 'Youth Circus Arts Network'.

Strong and creative partnerships have enabled us to share strengths and workload and grow projects with bolder impacts. In 2019-20 we worked with DADAA to develop and deliver Experience Collider, a performance created by high support need teenagers and our teen youth performers. Through the Perth Festival we joined the commissioned work 'Leviathan' by Circa. With APM we've kickstarted a program to support young adults emerging from homelessness called Y16+.

I am proud to be part of the CircusWA community, which has shown agility, creativity and inclusivity to continue to develop, evolve and survive in a very challenging year.



By Gavin Corfield



Image by Jordan Pursey



Treasurer's Report

Not surprisingly, this year has been like no other for CircusWA.

At the start of this financial year, we were met with the normal challenges of contemporary not-for-profit organisations - rising costs, increasing competition for grants, sponsorship and philanthropy and ongoing challenges to increase revenue with limited personnel.

From August to September, however things became more difficult than usual with two significant increases to our insurance premiums followed by a deferral in funding. In response there was a significant and urgent effort by the Board and Management to develop a strategy to trade through this period.

Working with a financial advisor and specialist consultants to assess the situation, it was clear that we could not achieve this without funding support. By October we received strong commitment from the Department of LGSC for funds from their Strategic Initiative program, along with Healthway funds to reboot in early 2020. We continued operations in the knowledge that this support was coming.

As funding support landed in early 2020, COVID19 struck and shutdowns hit. It turned out that timing was everything. We were able to temporarily re-allocate some of our funding to kickstart JobKeeper payments to trainers immediately. Once the Stimulus package begun

we were able to return funds to the programs they were allocated for. In addition to this, the Federal Government's Cashflow boost saw significant credits applied to our ATO balance and it was this final financial support which gave us the chance we needed to pull through.

With a Lotterywest COVID relief grant we were able to cover damage to the big top sustained during lockdown, and launch an online program firstly for free and then highly subsidised to anyone who was keen to join up. This gave us the capacity to stay visible, and continue engaging and be ready for when our students could return.

CircusWA not only survived 2019/20 but we have turned it to our advantage. All insurances are covered in advance and tax debts cleared putting us in a reasonable financial position to face 2021. From here the organisation is looking forward to developing long-term plans for growth and recovery of our centre while supporting the growth of the Circus and Physical Theatre sector through our ongoing advocacy. A great result and success found out of adversity.

By Paul Ingleson

Artistic Director's Message

Circus is a delicate balance between probable physics and improbable expectations. It's a space where practitioners respond to problems with a 'how will we achieve that?' approach. When a student is heard to say, 'I can't', Trainers gently turn them to face the task and find the possibilities.

With this attitude CircusWA has faced and ridden the waves of many crises since 2017. Shirking straight lines and seeking opportunities within adversity, this gutsy circus community has managed to survive in a way that belies explanation. And so here stands CircusWA in the middle of 2020 with Covid19 just one of the many obstacles to navigate.

The journey of CircusWA's recovery, recuperation and emerging success is not a solo one. It is one with many companions and champions. The first and most prominent being our circus community. This community is local, national and international, and throughout Covid19 the sector reached out together across time and space to support everyone to navigate through. It is with great pride that emerging from Covid19 Western Australia has not only seen the survival of all Circus spaces, but has also made us a stronger, more creative and more connected sector

Local and state governments are imperative in the journey of survival for arts organisations across the

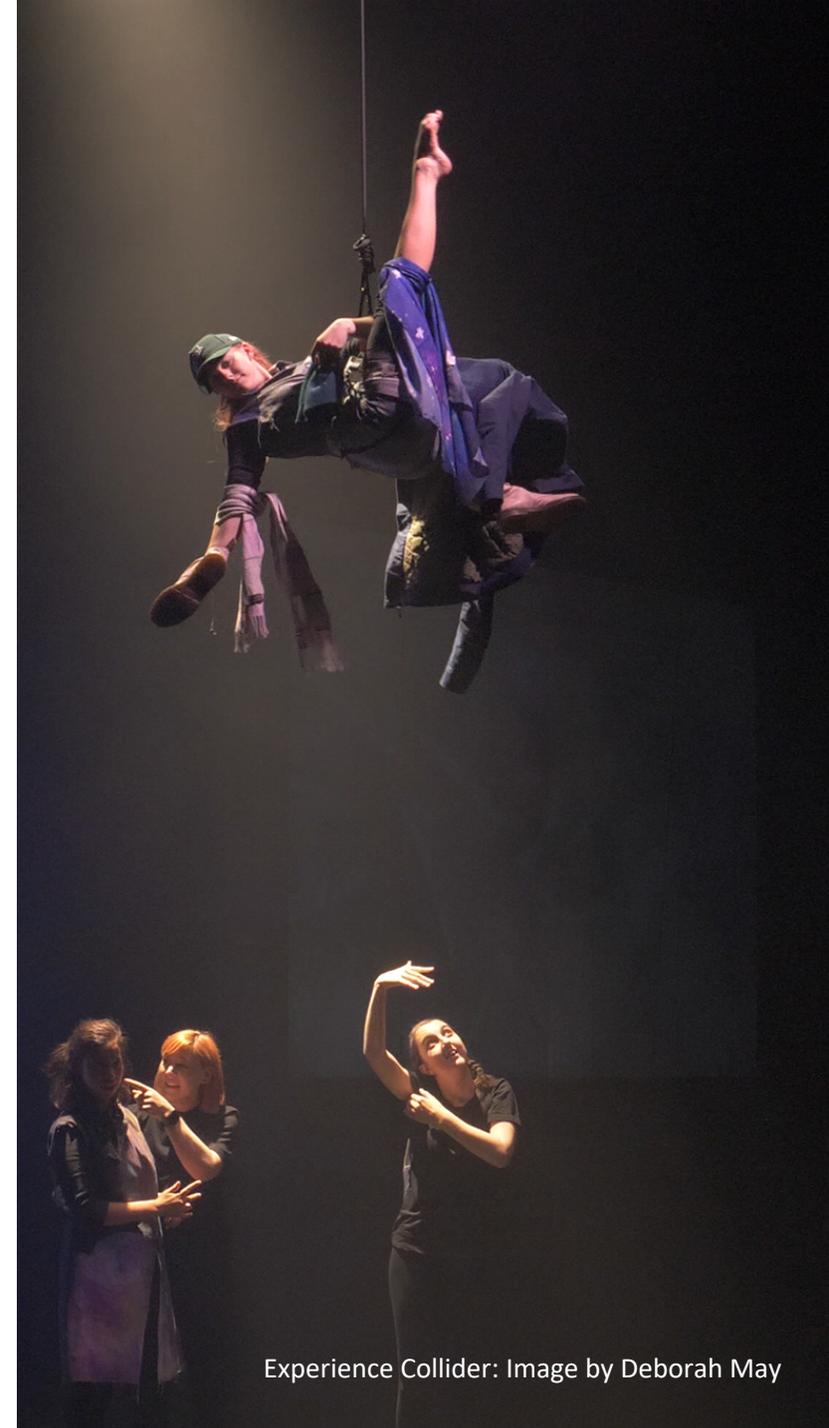
country. Our state government did not let us down in this financial year. They listened, recognised and planted their belief in circus as an art form worthy of support and development in Western Australia. We are grateful for those who have opened their doors to us, shared our achievements and articulated our full potential. Without these strong voices we would not be here today.

Behind any Not for Profit organisation stands a Board. A Board who ultimately carries the brunt of the risk and very little of the glory. Across this year the CircusWA Board replaced fear with focused thinking and helped steer us on a course through the straits of uncertainty. With well earned trust between governance and operations, the journey has left us tired but proud of our achievements and committed to the next leg of the journey.

Looking at our year in review, my breath is taken away by what we achieved. Through our programs we have supported professionals, helped develop future artists, and given people in our community an experience that will not only shape their lives, but allow others to see them differently. The following report is a snapshot of our major achievements in 2019-20.



By Jo Smith



Growing Circus Arts in WA

The Trainers of CircusWA are also professional artists who work in the industry as performers and Directors. Through this engagement, our students come to recognize the validity and possibility of a career in circus.

Supporting Circus Artists is not only essential to our Trainers, but also ensures we are supporting the development of circus and physical theatre in Western Australia. This year we have worked with circus performers to continue to grow a sustainable sector with vibrant contributions to Australia's performing arts sector.

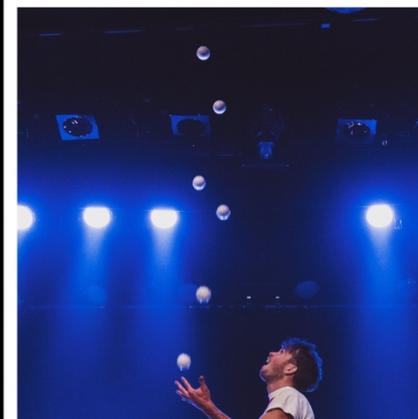
We Support Circus and Physical Theatre Artists in the following ways:

- flexible teaching timetables ensuring artists can participate in developments, perform and go on tour
- Free access to the Freo Big Top for Creative developments and rehearsals
- Use of the Freo Big Top as a 'cabaret' style performance space
- Professional Development workshops in circus skills, directing and creativity

- Support with writing successful grant applications
- Auspice for grant applications
- Advocacy to local and state government for Circus and Physical theatre practitioners by participating on a number of industry committees and think tanks

During Covid19 artists lost their tours and international artists found themselves settled in Perth for longer than expected. CircusWA quickly responded with free access to a two day mental health training, followed by the implementation of an online circus training program to ensure work opportunities remained. Once we re-opened, the Big Top was offered to all artists as free training space.

In early 2020 CircusWA partnered with MAXIMA Circus to devise a Professional and Creative Development program. We look forward to seeing how this partnership grows content and offerings for all artists living and from Western Australia.





Youth Troupes

presented by Act Belong Commit

Through our tiered and integrated annual performance programs, CircusWA is fostering opportunities for future artists to grow and develop here in Western Australia. Young people who display skills, passion and drive to achieve in circus arts are invited to join one of our programs. With additional support from the Dept of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, this year we developed four troupes offering subsidised skills classes, free specialist training, and quality performance experiences.

Rogue Fez Ensemble

Director Giri Mazzella

This clown musical ensemble was first conceived in November 2018 for a one-off show. Recognising the interest, talent and opportunities for such a troupe we committed to its development across this year. Slowly the ensemble grew its unique sound and look through skills in clowning and music. Sadly, with Covid lockdown Director Giri was unable to return to WA to continue the ensemble. In 2020-21 we aim to bring this unique ensemble back into action.

Performance Development Group

Director Ben Kotovski-Steele

This program was developed in 2016 to offer children aged 10yrs+ the opportunity to grow base skills for circus artist. The main focus is on ensemble work and developing the clown, manipulation and partner acrobatics. The underlying aim of the program is to grow students to be self-reliant and motivated so that they arrive at the next troupe ready to cope with increased performance demands.

Colliders

Director Nel Simpson

This was the first year for Colliders, formed to fill the age and skills gap between the younger development group and Sliders. The focus for Colliders has been on continuing to grow ensemble work while understanding 'diversity' in the arts. This Troupe have worked with Sliders on Experience Collider and in response to Covid lockdowns have joined Sliders on their end of year production with Jens Altheimer.

Sliders

Director Rachel Bodenstaff

By receiving a focussed high-level training, the Sliders program prepares students for professional work, or for advanced studies at institutions nationally and internationally. In 2019 the troupe developed Experience Collider with Director Sam Fox and performed at the State Theatre Centre. In early 2020 they began a new work with guest Artistic Director Jens Altheimer. The troupe were also given opportunities to work with Brisbane based C!rca and Perth based MAXIMA Circus with training and performance opportunities.

Supporting Community to Thrive

Through our Healthway's Promotional partnership we have been able to underpin the work we do with their important Act Belong Commit for a healthier WA messaging. At CircusWA the values underpinning this message guide our connections with other organisations and help us determine the scope of these important partnerships. Circus is a truly transformative physical form for engagement and a creative tool for storytelling and we consciously use this for the benefit of our community.

FREMANTLE LONG TABLE DINNER

28 November 2019

When CircusWA installed the Freo Big Top onto Princess May Park, we came to know many of the local homeless community. When we were invited by the National Hotel to join in on their Long Table Dinner event we jumped. The dinner raises much needed funds for Saint Patrick's Community Support Centre and their work with the homeless community. Our involvement allows us to use our skills for social benefit and embed ourselves into the social fabric of Fremantle. This is also a great opportunity for our youth troupe to learn the art of roving and to work alongside industry professionals.

CIRCULATE Y16+

May 2020 - ongoing

This program was devised in 2019 and launched in March 2020 as an inclusion program for young adults (16-25yrs) at risk of, or emerging from homelessness. Working with APM, RUHA, Yshac and Ngatti House we worked to develop an interconnected whole-of-community engagement pathway to support young people transition into meaningful social and work relationships. The

program has been supported by the City of Fremantle. In term two during lockdown, we kickstarted the program via our virtual circus platform. In term three participants moved into the big top as covid restrictions eased.

CIRCULATE YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

ongoing

Across this financial year we have supported Fourteen youth to access circus through nine full scholarships and five bursaries. Currently these are unfunded and while we're restricted with what we can offer, we're proud to have supported these young people to stay engaged and connected at the Freo Big Top.

NDIS PARTICIPANTS

ongoing

With the guidance of DADAA and APM, and the dedication of parents we are slowly developing a process for supporting young people on NDIS plans to access regular classes. Through reports and ongoing advocacy by the families, we are beginning to be acknowledged as a legitimate program to support young people living with disabilities. Across 2019/20 we worked with five young people on NDIS plans



Long Table Dinner: image by Viva Photography



Arts Industry Engagement

CircusWA is committed to offering circus youth and emerging artists opportunities which will support them to grow and develop into awesome humans as well as being equipped to choose a future in performance arts. All of our projects and partnerships are chosen based on the work being intellectually and socially challenging with an openness to diversity and new ways of creating. In 2019 and 2020 we have engaged and worked with DADAA to create a new work called *Experience Collider* (see over page); C!rca to participate in their Perth Festival commissioned *Leviathan*; and MAXIMA Circus to deliver *Professional Developments* for new and emerging artists.

LEVIATHAN by C!rca

Perth Festival Commission

26 February – 1 December 2020

At the end of 2019 we were given the opportunity to work with Brisbane based C!rca contemporary circus company on a new commission for the Perth Festival 2020. We were invited to search for, sign up and support eight young circus students to participate in this new explosive collaborative work.

Committed to supporting the growth and engagement of students across the state and training centres, a large call out was sent through many networks to bring together one of the largest and most comprehensive audition processes CircusWA had ever undertaken. Inside the Big Top were forty students including seven from the wheatbelt and great southern regions. Ten hopefuls from Broome were accommodated in the audition online via zoom – we were then unaware of the impending zoom future that lay ahead of us. While the end result was important, the process and support offered to all the

participants by the panellists and by CircusWA post audition was important in opening up opportunities and connections between these young emerging and hopeful future circus artists. Of the eight chosen one joined us from Broome from January until March.

These students were given the opportunity to join with twelve local professional artists from Co:3 and MAXIMA Circus and begin working alongside C!rca's renowned acrobatic ensemble from early January until end of February for the presentation of *Leviathan* Directed by Yaron Lifschitz. This was an incredible experience for these young performers working from beginning to end on a professional production. The expectations were high, and with the support of all around them they achieved it all.



EXPERIENCE COLLIDER

Co-Produced with DADAA | Directed by Sam Fox

4-6 October 2019

Experience Collider was designed for teenagers with high support needs to engage with and learn skills in circus, dance and music with teen peers from CircusWA's youth troupes. The program ran for 18 months culminating in performances at the State Theatre Centre of WA in October as part of AWESOME Festival 2019.

The project was recognized as groundbreaking and with a team of researchers from the Telethon Kids Institute a new way of measuring Quality of Life for non-verbal participants was created. A unique report was published in November 2019 outlining this observational research process and outlined the significant positive impacts this project had on all the teenagers involved.

[Link to Showreel](#)

"This project has changed me so much. At first I didn't understand how we would be able to do a show with the DADAA kids. But as the project progressed and I learnt how to communicate without speaking I saw how we were performing in a completely different way to anything I'd done before."

Belle Butler, 15yrs, Colliders

"This project has several implications for teens with high support needs and circus performance more generally. The teenagers with high support needs demonstrated capacity to develop new abilities within a complex creative environment. CircusWA teens experienced growing awareness and understanding of communication and working with teenagers with high support needs, and this social engagement was important to the success of the program. The collaborations of teenagers with high support needs and those from CircusWA in an inclusive performance allowed each performer to challenge the notion of elite models for creativity....This evidence supports the importance of running similar creative projects in the future"

Jenny Downs, Assoc Professor and Author of the Evaluation report

"One day during rehearsals I looked around the cramped tent and noticed a sense of connection. I realised as a team we were working on something greater than all of us. I remember that moment, the moment that told me that art is a communicative tool to teach and inspire; why wouldn't I want to be apart of this."

Dayna Sulaiman, 17, Sliders

Experience Collider rehearsal:
Image by Deborah May



Experience Collider: Image by Deborah May

Showcases & Fundraisers

Friends of the Freo Big Top
5 August 2019

Outside In – Students' Showcase
16 November 2019

Zoomcus – online cabaret
27 June 2020

Central to who CircusWA is and why we exist, is performance and connection to community. Both of these are inextricably linked and do not exist without the other. We support and encourage all students to perform at Student Showcases, as well as invite family and friends to volunteer. Our connections and the embedded meaning of all showcases we undertake, are underpinned by the value our family and friends bring through volunteering at these events. Volunteering for us is not just about supporting the circus to flourish, but to bring people together in a common place and acknowledge the joy of being a community. We believe this is the bedrock of all arts and creativity.



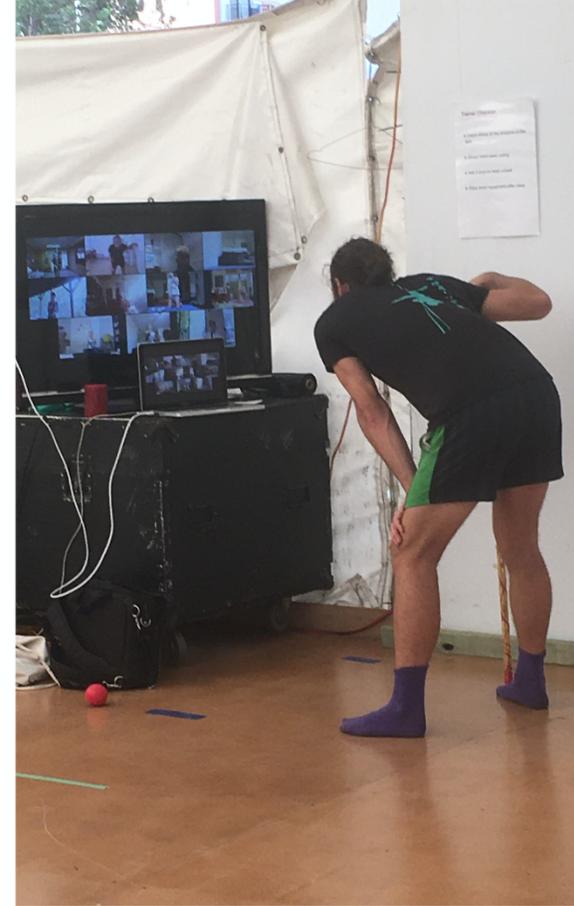
Virtually Circus

As Covid19 closed the Big Top to students, our team gathered in the last remaining days, to quickly develop a new way of delivering classes online. The motivation was to 1) ensure Students had something physical to engage with while in their homes; 2) offer students a sense of routine and connection with their friends and trainers; 3) Maintain a level of strength and skills quality for as many of the students as possible and 3) support Trainers with work when all other work had been cancelled.

A two-week free trial period gave us the opportunity to test the required pedagogy for online classes and ensure we developed the correct health and safety procedures to protect our students from harm. The outcome was a highly successful 11-week program delivered online in term two. With the support of Job Keeper we were able to offer all classes at a very subsidised rate which ensured access for all. Two laptops were donated by community members and these were given to scholarship students to ensure they could also access the program.

The Trainers grew in proficiency and skills and students became more adept at engaging with the online process. By the end of term two we had created five videos with the youth troupes – one being a commissioned work for the Perth Heritage Festival – Uglie Land. In addition we hosted 'zoomcus', an online live feed cabaret.

While Virtual Circus was a great tool, everyone agreed at the end of 13 weeks that circus is a physical art and better learned in the Freo Big Top.



Trainers 2019-20

SPECIALIST SKILLS

Rachel Handelman
Sarah Healy
Rachel Bodenstaff
Nathan (Nat) Kell
Isaac Salter
Simon Wood
Aidan Bayliss
Ella Hetherington
Ben Kotovski-Steele
Jeromy Zwick
Liisa Naykki
Jess Smart
Nel Simpson
Elke Uhd
Ella Norton
Eve Everard
Luke Forester
Brenna Day
Sarah Green

Aerials (silk, rope)
Hoops, Aerials, Fire, Contortion, Clown
Duo Aerials, Table Sliding, partner acro
Chinese Pole, Acrobatics, Handstand
Teeterboard, Chinese Pole, Acrobatics
Aerials (rope, silk, Straps), Acro Dance
Rolla Bolla, unicycle, Fire, Acrobatics
Clown, Performance, Hoops
Aerials, Manipulation, Partner Acrobatics
Juggling, Manipulation, Skip rope
Tightwire, Skip rope
Aerials, Partner Acrobatics
Aerials, Stilts
Cyr Wheel, Aerials, Acrobatics
Aerials, Diabolo,
Tightwire, Hoops, Trapeze
Juggling, Manipulation
Aerials (trapeze and Lyra)
Aerials



SUPPORT TRAINERS

Gaea Anastas
Genevieve Moran
Jennie Friesan

TRAINEES

Siena Gauci
Freyja Hochapfel-Wilkes
Belle Butler
Isaac Campbell



Income Statement

for the year 30th June 2020

	2020	2019
INCOME		
Revenue	363,788	378,588
JobKeeper Payments	87,000	0
Cashflow Boost	10,000	0
Total Income	460,788	378,588
EXPENDITURE		
Cost of sales- Contractors, trainers	213,721	232,064
Admin and Office expense	39,129	32,898
Advertising and Marketing	14,537	6,688
Finance Cost	1,519	1,160
Staff cost	139,970	132,533
Depreciation	3,750	3,890
Total Expenses	412,626	409,233
SURPLUS/(LOSS) FOR YEAR	48,162	(30,645)

Balance Sheet

for the year 30th June 2020

	30 Jun 2020	30 Jun 2019
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Trade and Other receivables	11,631	5,111
Cash and Cash equivalents	82,672	4,333
Total Current-Assets	94,303	9,444
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	58,017	57,464
Total Non-Current Assets	58,017	57,264
Total Assets	152,320	66,908
LIABILITIES		
Total Current Liabilities	99,484	62,946
NET ASSETS	52,836	3,962



2019-20 Board Members

Gavin Corfield (Chair)

Paul Ingleson (Treasurer)

Tom Watkins (Secretary)

Pam Nairn

Rebecca Maddern

Kim Flintoff

Andrea Rowe



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**



Delivering the NDIS in your community



Community grants:



THANK
YOU



Friends of the Freo Big Top:
image by Jordan Pursey