

ANNUAL REVIEW 2014

MILK
CRATE
THEATRE





CONTENTS

<i>About Us</i>	2
<i>Homelessness in Sydney</i>	3
<i>The Ensemble</i>	4
<i>Ensemble Artist Profile: Matthias Nudl</i>	6
<i>The CEO /Artistic Director Report</i>	8
<i>The General Manager Report</i>	10
<i>The Ensemble Report</i>	12
<i>The Chair Report</i>	14
<i>2014 Artistic Program Report</i>	16
<i>Stage Door</i>	18
<i>Main Stage</i>	20
<i>The Milky Way</i>	24
<i>Impact</i>	28
<i>2014 Key Learnings</i>	30
<i>Audiences and Customers</i>	32
<i>Partners and Collaborators</i>	36
<i>Summary of Financial Results</i>	38
<i>Milk Crate Theatre Team</i>	40
<i>Our Supporters</i>	42
<i>Media</i>	43
<i>Support Us</i>	43
<i>Accessibility & Acknowledgement to Country</i>	44
<i>Contact Us</i>	44

ABOUT US

Milk Crate Theatre works with an Ensemble of artists who have experienced homelessness or social marginalisation to create theatre that creates change. We provide a safe, creative space for the Ensemble to build confidence and make positive changes in their lives.

Our work embodies the experiences and artistry of the Ensemble to showcase their uniqueness as contemporary storytellers and to create authentic and transformative theatre that challenges audiences and brings communities together. These stories are brutal yet beautiful, savage yet seductive, tenacious yet tender but most of all they are real: born from the experiences of those who create them.

We believe that by bringing communities together and sharing the real stories of people who have experienced homelessness or social marginalisation, we can inspire action and work towards an inclusive future where everyone feels valued.

CORE VALUES:

AUTHENTICITY EXCELLENCE CREATIVITY INCLUSIVITY

HOMELESSNESS IN SYDNEY

Homelessness is not just 'houselessness'. Experiencing homelessness means not having stable, secure housing or a place to call home. Homelessness comes in many guises and people become homeless for a range of reasons. Informed by this, Milk Crate Theatre works across sectors towards a socially inclusive community. For us, working towards social inclusion means working with people who are at risk. This includes but is not limited to people with experience of health and mental health issues; physical, intellectual or learning disabilities; low incomes; experience of the care and criminal justice systems; substance misuse and abuse; disrupted education; domestic violence and abusive relationships; refugee or asylum seeker status; and Indigenous Australians. Sadly, homelessness is on the rise in Australia. As a result we have seen an increased need for our services from our community partners.

THE ENSEMBLE

The Ensemble cannot be easily categorised or described. As a starting point, the Ensemble self-identify as having a lived experience of homelessness or social marginalisation. They are people who have joined us in an activity and as a result, form part of our creative community.

In 2014, we had 143 Ensemble Artists participate in our programs across workshops, performances and creative developments. They were storytellers, performers and video artists.

They were employed through The Milky Way, our social enterprise. They were students, mentees, conference presenters, representatives at board meetings, audiences, friends and advocates.

99 NEW ENSEMBLE ARTISTS
JOINED MILK CRATE THEATRE
IN 2014

143 ENSEMBLE ARTISTS
PARTICIPATED WITH MILK
CRATE THEATRE IN 2014

41% OF THE ENSEMBLE
ARTISTS ARE MALE AND 59%
ARE FEMALE

74% ATTENDED A MILK CRATE
THEATRE WORKSHOP MORE
THAN 50% OF THE TIME

88% OF THE MILK CRATE
THEATRE FELT THEY HAD
SEEN POSITIVE CHANGES TO
CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE
ENSEMBLE





ENSEMBLE ARTIST PROFILE MATTHIAS NUDDL

I have lived with ADHD and depression since childhood. I struggled at school and became withdrawn and isolated due to constant bullying.

I graduated from UWS Macarthur with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Theatre Studies and Creative Writing. In the second year of university, a lecturer introduced me to the Powerhouse Youth Theatre, a theatre company for people aged 16-25. I participated in six of their shows, including a rock opera based on Hair. I had a very enjoyable time with them and gained skills in improvisation, playbuilding, creating characters and street theatre.

In late 2012 I attended the 25th Anniversary of the Powerhouse Youth Theatre and expressed a desire to a counsellor at Buckingham House that I wanted to get back into theatre. I told her that I wasn't interested in doing obscure shows that were in the public domain, or Shakespeare. I wanted to be part of theatre company that created its own shows from scratch. She told me about Milk Crate Theatre.

I attended the first Milk Crate Theatre workshop at Parramatta Mission in February 2013. I spent the first six months at Milk Crate developing my skills in improvisation at the Parramatta workshops and then the Newtown workshops. This helped me to gain the confidence to put myself forward for *The Things That Are Left Behind* and the *This House Is Mine* creative developments. I recently took part in *The Last Laugh* and wrote the "Comedians Anonymous" sketch that opened the show.

One of my most memorable experiences was being involved in the development of *5-4-3-2-1*. This was a short piece created during the April-May workshops of 2013. It was inspired by the hysteria surrounding the ending of the Mayan Calendar and some of Australia's Least Talented. It featured a bunch of wacky characters like a vampire with a talking towel, a spoon wrestler and a mouse jockey trying to save the world.

I am a struggling artist. I still struggle with depression and the monster inner critic that makes me doubt my ability whenever I put something out there.

Milk Crate Theatre has affected my life in a big way.

Before joining Milk Crate, I considered my ADHD to be a millstone around my neck. Now I have accepted it and embraced the creativity and spontaneity it brings.

I have become more confident and willing to try new things.

I am looking forward to attending Milk Crate's workshops for many long and happy years. I am also going to keep auditioning for any creative developments that may arise in the future.

This is what I would say to someone who was considering taking part in Milk Crate Theatre: Come along to Milk Crate. It will change your life and you will have the most fun while you are doing it.



THE CEO/ ARTISTIC DIRECTOR REPORT

2014 was another packed year for Milk Crate Theatre with more new Ensemble engaging than in any other year. We worked with a diverse range of community, arts and education partners and saw more of the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble take on roles of creative leadership.

A key ongoing project throughout the year was the development of company production *This House Is Mine*. The project saw over 40 Ensemble Artists collaborate to create this work including intensive employment for 12 of them. We are looking forward to presenting this production in partnership with the Darlinghurst Theatre in March 2015.

Also in 2014 we introduced a range of new workshop modules including Soft Echo (exploring sound) and The Art of Comedy that led to performance *The Last Laugh* performed at the Newtown Neighborhood Centre and 107 Projects. The presentation of *You Are Here*, a forum theatre production that saw four Ensemble Artists perform (including in the role of the Joker), was presented at our community venues and also at the Riverside Theatres, Parramatta. This production further extended our reach in the education market with increased audiences of young people.

An exciting extension of the Stage Door workshop program saw us develop a pilot workshop hub specifically for young people at risk of and experiencing homelessness. This program, called Spilt Milk, was made possible through new partnerships with services working specifically in this area and will develop into a dedicated workshop program in 2015.

Artistically we furthered our work in film and media by producing new short film *Time Capsule* as well as providing more intensive opportunities for the Ensemble to engage in film production processes as part of *This House Is Mine*.

Our social enterprise, The Milky Way, continued to draw new audiences and customers through partnerships with the Parramatta Interagency Group and the Salvation Army. The leadership of the Ensemble within the organisation was

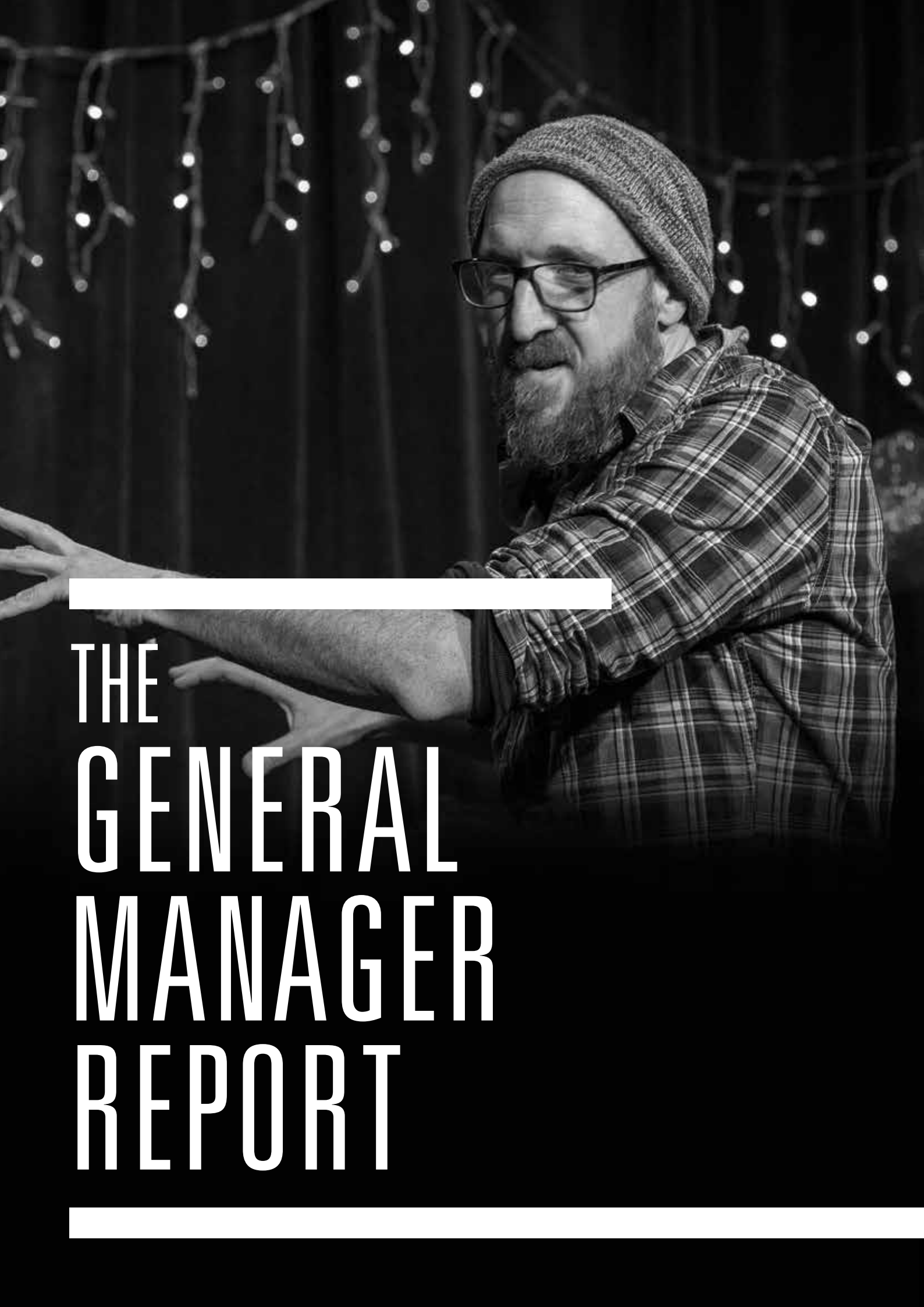
extended through the establishment of a peer elected Artistic Steering Committee and Ensemble Representative Committee. These groups will collaborate with staff to feed into artistic programming decisions and governance processes.

Overall the year feels like one of confident stretching and expanding, of consolidating what we know and learning through experimenting and natural growth. These achievements have been made possible by the guidance and expertise of inaugural Chair, Angus White. Over the four years that Angus has been leading our organisation he has guided the company through periods of change, learning, growth and maturity, to bring us to this point where we can confidently look to the future with a clear sense of being informed by our history and growth. I am grateful to Angus for everything he has contributed and know that his legacy within the organisation will be felt for years to come.

Thanks must always go to our community, arts and education partners who support us to deliver our programs, to our Associate Artists who lend us their expertise and ensure we are delivering best practice CACD outcomes, to our staff and Board and to our funders and donors, without whom we would simply not exist.

As always, I end my report with a heartfelt acknowledgement to our community of artists. The Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble have again impressed me with their capacity for resilience, artistry and authenticity. I have again been honored to create work with you and celebrate your achievements and skills. To the 143 individuals who worked with us in 2014, a sincere thank you to each and every single one of you for your individuality and unique creative contributions to our company and community.

MAREE FREEMAN
CEO / Artistic Director



THE GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

I joined Milk Crate Theatre in June this year as General Manager on a 10-month contract maternity leave cover. It has been an exciting year and I am thrilled to be working with such an inspiring creative team and the Ensemble Artists. To me the work of Milk Crate Theatre is raw, real and urgent. Its contemporary presentation of real people telling real stories about immediate social realities is compelling.

I want to acknowledge the work of our staff in our busy office, of which we welcomed Annie Muskin as Administration & Marketing Coordinator and Goldele Rayment as Artistic Program Coordinator and of course we farewelled our amazing CEO / General Manager, Siena Balakrishnan. I would like to thank each of our 16 passionate volunteers, our three talented interns and our six Directors, especially our Chair, Angus White, for their contributions and commitment throughout 2014.

This year we proudly launched our individual giving program, Friends of Milk Crate Theatre. The donations we receive from Friends of Milk Crate Theatre play a critical role in helping us achieve our vision of creating social inclusion. Each year the company will provide unique opportunities for dedicated individual donors who are passionate about changing the story of homelessness to engage with the Company.

Throughout 2014, we have maintained strong relationships with many of our longer term individual donors, and philanthropic and government partners. In particular, Australia Council for the Arts, Arts NSW, City of Sydney, Marrickville Council, Macquarie Foundation, Westpac Foundation, Perpetual, Nelson Meers Foundation, Thyne Reid Foundation, Roberston Family Foundation, The Funding Network, The Mundango Charitable Trust, James N Kirby Foundation, Hunter Hall, Sydney University Medicine Revue, W & A Johnson Family Foundation, Street Smart and The Permsew Foundation. We are hugely grateful for this support.

With in-kind support from marketing consultancy Boccalatte and Public Relations firm Avviso, we were able to deliver an engaging Marketing & PR campaign ensuring that we attract the widest possible audience for our company production *This House is Mine*. Additionally, I would like to thank our creative partners Patrick Boland, Cindy Rodriquez and Gillian Thomas for their ongoing involvement with the company.

Measuring our impact is important to us and in 2014 we conducted rigorous evaluation and data analysis of our impact with the Ensemble, audiences, community partners and our Associate Artists. In addition to this, we undertook a research project on the process and impact of our Main Stage company production *This House Is Mine* with our research partners, the University of Western Sydney and the Australian Catholic University.

In 2014 we delivered an inspirational and robust artistic program with expenses totalling \$546,742 and built on our reserves with an operating profit of \$32,228. This provides a strong foundation as we go into the presentation of our Main Stage Company Production *This House Is Mine* at Darlinghurst Theatre Company.

Maree and I say a huge thank you to our extraordinary team and Ensemble Artists and to everyone involved with Milk Crate Theatre in 2014.

CATHY MURDOCH
General Manager



THE ENSEMBLE REPORT

2014 has been an exciting year for the Ensemble. The year began with a creative development project for the company production *This House Is Mine*.

New skills were acquired in producing stimulus materials, working in silhouettes, operating a sound recorder, video cameras and lighting. This project was very successful with a showing of the work at Carriageworks where powerful scenes were enacted that drew the audience's attention.

Later in the year competitive auditions were held and two teams were selected: one to work on the audio-visual content and the other to perform on stage. The video team collaborated with Sarah to produce the projected content, while the performance team worked intensively on script development. People are passionate about the script and certainly feel a sense of investment in the work, particularly as it may represent aspects in their own lives. Everyone enjoyed the process and are looking forward to the challenges of rehearsals and performance.

Earlier in the year, *You Are Here* allowed four Ensemble Artists to perform in a Community Show and take their work to the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta as well as to new audiences through the Salvation Army Social Justice Conference.

Following this, *The Last Laugh* workshops and performance encouraged many to let their silly and comic sides flourish and many enjoyed the change from exploring their difficult and sometimes disadvantaged lives. The Jokers group provided a lot of fun, laughter, growth, and risk-taking for those involved. Throughout all the workshops, comedic and writing skills were honed and developed.

Throughout the year the Parramatta workshop group experimented with many new techniques from miming, zany language and play, and economy of time and movement.

They also put together *Time Capsule*, a moving and engaging piece of work. The Newtown and City groups devised a comic performance involving slapstick and exaggeration and the Bondi group were a successful outreach group who also performed with Milk Crate Theatre this year.

Important changes were made in 2014 to give the Ensemble more formal input into artistic programming as well as leadership within the organisation. An Artistic Steering Committee and three Ensemble Representatives were elected and the year also saw Ensemble Artist Goldele Rayment become a permanent staff member: a heartening example of the opportunities that the company can give.

2014 has been a splendid year for the Ensemble, allowing for all levels of engagement from casual fun to committed professionalism. 2015 promises to be even better.

STEPHANIE BROWN, JOHN MCDONNELL
AND CHRIS BARWICK

Ensemble Representatives



THE CHAIR REPORT

Milk Crate Theatre has thrived under the leadership of CEO / Artistic Director Maree Freeman. 2014 saw highly engaged productions and events at various venues across Sydney, with tremendous contributions from a diverse Ensemble together with the talented artistic team and Associated Artists.

Beyond the arts, the past year has seen further development in the Ensemble driving changes beyond the stage. Elected committee members are involved in future artistic planning and company governance.

Natalie Devlin resigned in April, and the Board thanks Natalie for her contributions and guidance at a significant time of growth for the company. Following her leave of absence, Liz Giles tendered her resignation due to her continued work in Africa. We thank Liz for her involvement as a Director and her expertise in understanding the issues and complexities around homelessness.

A Board Review took place through People for Purpose as a first step to recruiting a Chair successor to the Founding Chair, Angus White who will retire from the Board at the April 2015 AGM.

Judith Bowtell was appointed to the Board. Her experience in policy development and managing strategic initiatives and programs is invaluable to the company.

John S W Bell was appointed at the end of the year as the Chair-elect to transition into the role in early 2015. John brings strategic leadership from both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors.

I'd like to extend a very warm thank you to Siena Balakrishnan for her dedicated services as co-CEO / General Manager and wish her every success in her pending work in New York in a similar company.

Thank you Maree for your outstanding contributions throughout the year. It is a pleasure to work along side you and all the staff.

Sincere thanks to my fellow Directors Victoria, Lenore, Michael and Judith for their efforts, skills and great spirit in the way we all go about our roles in ensuring this company continues to strive to be a great one.

Milk Crate Theatre is grateful for all our supporters, funders and volunteers. We are a community organisation that relies on community support. Thank you for your generosity which we hope you feel goes a long way as we create social inclusion with authentic stories through the arts.

I wish the company a very successful year ahead, starting with an outstanding production of *This House Is Mine* at Eternity Playhouse.

Best wishes,

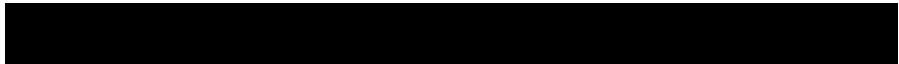
ANGUS WHITE

Chair 2010 to 2015



THE ARTISTIC PROGRAM REPORT

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre had 143 Ensemble Artists participate in the annual program, with increased overall attendance rates from 2013 with 88% of people attending more than 50% of the time. We had 1891 attendances in a creative activity by a single Ensemble Artist and delivered 238 creative opportunities (for example a workshop, rehearsal or performance). We partnered with 15 community partners, 10 arts and cultural partners, five education partners and three social enterprise customers during the year. We employed 17 Associate Artists and 12 Ensemble Artists. We presented 10 performances to 1406 audience members. We successfully delivered three programs; Stage Door, Main Stage and The Milky Way alongside our organisational priorities of research, evaluation and organisational development.



STAGE DOOR

Stage Door is our inclusive workshop program. In 2014 it provided opportunities to develop theatre and life skills including actor training, imaginative play, ensemble building, literacy, comedic relief, social networking, personal development, general fitness, self awareness, mental health and wellbeing. Projects in 2014 were our Hub Workshops (Sydney City, Newtown and Parramatta), Outreach Workshops, Digital Workshops, Mentorships, Street Salons, Street Library, an Auditioning Master Class, a Joking Master Class, Edge of Your Seat and Cuppa Time.

MAIN STAGE

Main Stage is our performance program. In 2014 the program was open to Ensemble Artists who had shown a commitment and desire to expand upon their creative skills through performances at community services, in arts venues and for the general public. Projects in 2014 were *Stories From The Suitcase*, *You Are Here*, *The Last Laugh*, *This House Is Mine* *Creative Development*, *Time Capsule* and the *2014 Christmas Party*.

THE MILKY WAY

The Milky Way is our social enterprise. In 2014 it provided meaningful employment opportunities to Ensemble Artists at the same time as services for customers in two key areas: performances and films. Customers are able to provide creative and socially responsible products to their stakeholders.

STAGE DOOR

"I THINK A LOT MORE ABOUT MY HEALTH AND I AM ALWAYS THINKING CREATIVELY. I HAVE LEARNED TO FIT IN WORK AND PLAY REMARKABLY AND I HAVE MET SOME BEAUTIFUL FRIENDS."

- ENSEMBLE ARTIST



WORKSHOPS

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre offered 125 workshop opportunities at our hubs in Sydney City, Parramatta and Newtown. In addition, Milk Crate Theatre piloted a youth program, Spilt Milk, in partnership with the Come In Youth Resource Centre, as well as delivering outreach workshops for individuals with specific needs at We Help Ourselves (WHOS), Bondi Anglicare and Sisters of Charity.

Our comprehensive training modules continued to provide structure to our programs. In 2014 we also integrated filmmaking workshops to provide opportunities for the Ensemble to continue to learn about film and media production increasing overall accessibility and creativity within our programs.

We worked with 126 Ensemble Artists in our workshop program (this is an increase of 29% from 2013), many of whom went on to take part in our Main Stage and The Milky Way programs. Despite our programs being facilitated as 'drop in drop out', 74% of Ensemble Artists who attended a workshop had an attendance rate above 50% (this is an increase of 6% from 2013).

STREET SALONS

Four Street Salons (our play-reading literacy program) were delivered in partnership with the Surry Hills and Parramatta Libraries and saw 23 Ensemble Artists delve into a range of classics and Australian plays.

EDGE OF YOUR SEAT

Through the Edge of Your Seat program, 36 Ensemble Artists saw some of the best theatre Sydney had to offer, including performances at Griffin Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company and the Riverside Theatres.

MAIN STAGE



2014 saw Milk Crate Theatre continue to integrate new media further into our creative process, as well as create new approaches to developing and showcasing the diversity of work generated.

35 Ensemble Artists auditioned to take part in a main stage performance; 36 took part in a creative development; 11 took part in a rehearsal process; 36 took part in a Main Stage performance and 94% of the artists who took part in Main Stage rehearsal or creative development process had an attendance rate of above 70%.

COMMUNITY SHOWS

Our award winning community shows provide a deeper engagement for Ensemble Artists to perform, write, dramaturge and emcee. In 2014 we presented two shows: *You Are Here* and *The Last Laugh*, offering 119 intensive creative engagements to 24 Ensemble Artists.

Our Community Shows engaged diverse audiences with problem solving complex social issues using a Boal-inspired forum theatre process. Issues included homelessness, youth in crisis, alcohol and gambling addiction, fear of intimacy, crime, street violence and sleeping rough.

2014 also saw the Community Show program deliver one production, *The Last Laugh*, which acted as a bridge between the Stage Door and Main Stage program, creating increased opportunities for creative leadership within the Ensemble.

The Last Laugh was presented as a comedy show and provided the Ensemble with a new way to speak about their lived experiences from an angle of fun, comedy and playfulness. Quantitative and qualitative data gained from the evaluation of this project specifically indicates that having opportunities for the Ensemble to create work not from an 'issues first' position is an extremely valuable and enjoyable experience for all involved.

MAIN STAGE

Our first Community Show *You Are Here*, was directed by Sarah Emery, written by Maree Freeman, and performed by Stephanie Brown, Carla Cameron, Michael Godlee, Gracie Partridge, Beck Ronkson, Graeme Rhodes, Graham Stoney and Sarah Woods.

Our second Community Show *The Last Laugh* was performed by Chris Barwick, Cherie Barnes, Julie Brenner, Stephanie Brown, Veronica Flynn, Michel Foster, Michael Godlee, Idaho, Eylie Jones, Adam Jones, Kath, Badai Maftuh-Flynn, Kerrie Marshall, John McDonnell, Moose, Matthias Nudl, Ralph Shaw, Graham Stoney, Michael Streeter and Michael Wilson.

The Community Shows toured across Sydney to community venues: The Wayside Chapel, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, The Salvation Army; and to arts venues: 107 Projects and Riverside Theatres.

100% of those who participated in the projects stated they enjoyed the experience. 85% said the project helped them make positive connections to the wider community.

100% of the Ensemble felt welcome, 89% felt safe and 89% felt valued. 95% said the projects helped them make friends and social connections with the Ensemble, 90% said the projects improved their mental health and 90% said the projects improved their sense of wellbeing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT: THIS HOUSE IS MINE

In January and February 2014 we ran a creative development introducing Video Design Consultant Sean Bacon and Director Christabel Sved to the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble to experiment with how video projection, script and performance could all contribute to the creation of the Milk Crate Theatre 2015 Company Production. The Creative Development for *This House Is Mine* resulted in a presentation at Carriageworks, showcasing the work of the following Ensemble artists: Angelina Baris Aydin, Chris Barwick, Gordon Broomham, Stephanie Brown, Graeme Buttriss, Carla Cameron, Flor Garcia, Rick 'Pee Wee' Geoff, Michael Godlee, Lisa Griffiths, Jon Horsley, Eugenia Langley, Leanda, John McDonnell, Fabiola Meza, Jasmine Noreen, Matthias Nudl, Goldele Rayment, Joasia Redestowicz, Squizzy Rider, Graham Stoney and Michael Wilson.

STORIES FROM THE SUITCASE

Stories From The Suitcase was a showing of short films *The Things That Are Left Behind* and *Homefull* at the Big Issue Street Soccer Festival with introduction by Maree Freeman, CEO / Artistic Director and Ensemble Artists Chris Barwick and Lisa Griffiths.



THE MILKY WAY

The Milky Way is Milk Crate Theatre's social enterprise that provides customers the opportunity to purchase theatre performances or short films. Offering direct employment opportunities to the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble, The Milky Way's products provide new ways for customers to educate, inspire, learn or deliver in the areas of corporate social responsibility.

In 2014 we delivered three activities to customers across the not-for-profit, arts and education sectors. These activities included:

12 ENSEMBLE ARTISTS WERE EMPLOYED

27 UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAID EMPLOYMENT WERE OFFERED

FOUR ENSEMBLE ARTISTS WERE EMPLOYED IN MORE THAN ONE ACTIVITY

SHORT FILM: HOMEFULL

Short film piece *Homefull* was created by seven Ensemble Artists in 2013 and explored the concept of home. This work was purchased by the Parramatta Interagency for their Homelessness Mental Health and Incarceration Issues Forum. The work was presented to 60 conference delegates with an introduction from the company. This project was profitable and had positive outcomes for the Ensemble and the customer.

"Homefull is a wonderful film and it gave us all the opportunity to hear from homeless people / people who have been homeless their experiences and their understanding. It was a privilege to be able to show it... the feedback from people who attended was very positive."

– Maggie Kyle

Conference Manager and Community Capacity Building Officer, Parramatta City Council

PERFORMANCE: YOU ARE HERE AT RIVERSIDE THEATRES

Milk Crate Theatre's community show *You Are Here* had a three-performance season at Riverside Theatres in Parramatta in April. The project provided an employment opportunity for four Ensemble Artists. In total, 223 high school students from across Sydney experienced the show and participated in the interactive elements of the piece, exploring youth homelessness in the community. Two school shows sold out, with the third near capacity. The project received positive feedback from both schools students and teachers alike.

PERFORMANCE: YOU ARE HERE AT SALVATION ARMY

You Are Here was purchased by the Salvation Army for their Social Justice Conference with 75 young people engaging with the work in this capacity. The project provided an employment opportunity for four Ensemble Artists. The project was hugely successful, receiving extremely positive feedback from the Ensemble and customer.

"I think that the show isn't something the students will forget for a long time to come meaning that the messages around homelessness and social marginalisation will also stay with them. I think the interactive component was perfect for their age group and provided a very strong platform for discussion and learning. Your scenarios are very powerful because they could happen to anyone but they are not things we often stop to really think about at all, let alone develop understanding of how to effectively respond to issues in our society. I liked that you didn't sugar coat things either and you created a very honest experience with them."

– The Salvation Army

"IT WAS GOOD TO GET
AWAY FROM DIFFICULT
SITUATIONS AT HOME AND
DO SOMETHING CREATIVE."

- ENSEMBLE ARTIST

"THE ABILITY TO FEEL
MORE COMFORTABLE IN
SPEAKING IN PUBLIC AND
RE-ENGAGING WITH THE
THEATRE COMMUNITY HAS
BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE"

- ENSEMBLE ARTIST

"HELPS ME TO NOT STRESS, IT IS MY ESCAPE FROM STRESS.
BE MORE FREE TO BE MYSELF AND NOT HIDE. I CAN EXPRESS
MYSELF AND SEND MY MESSAGE."

- ENSEMBLE ARTIST



IMPACT

We define success in relation to transformation, be it incremental or substantial, within the Ensemble, community partners, our audiences and the wider community. Each year, through our evaluation process, we uncover several 'Key Learnings'. These are described in detail in the following pages.

Milk Crate Theatre utilises the creative process to promote and advocate for social inclusion and a better understanding of people experiencing homelessness or social marginalisation.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
TOTAL NUMBER OF ENSEMBLE ARTISTS INVOLVED IN THE ANNUAL ARTISTIC PROGRAM	168	179	123	143
% OF ENSEMBLE WHO FELT THEY HAD SEEN POSITIVE CHANGES TO MENTAL HEALTH	-	68%	85%	84%
TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW ENSEMBLE PARTICIPATING IN A WORKSHOP	68	127	85	99
TOTAL NUMBER OF WELFARE PARTNERSHIPS	10	13	13	16
TOTAL NUMBER OF ENSEMBLE INVOLVED IN A MAIN STAGE PERFORMANCE	2	11	34	36
TOTAL NUMBER OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS (APPROX)	1000	1505	1604	1406
% OF ALL THE AUDIENCES WHO ENJOYED THE EXPERIENCE	-	90%	98.9%	96.5%
AVG ATTENDANCE RATE OVER A WORKSHOP SERIES	56% ATTENDED MORE THAN 66%	48% ATTENDED MORE THAN 50%	66% ATTENDED MORE THAN 50%	74% ATTENDED MORE THAN 50%
% OF ENSEMBLE WHO FELT THEY HAD SEEN POSITIVE CHANGES TO CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE ENSEMBLE	-	72%	80%	88%



2014 KEY LEARNINGS

Milk Crate Theatre uses an evaluation strategy to provide a responsive, individualised and strengths-based approach to monitoring, evaluating and making improvements.

Throughout the year, individual programs are evaluated and in November 2014 we conducted an annual evaluation across our artistic programs to gain feedback from the Ensemble, our Associate Artists and our community partners.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Qualitative data indicates that social and personal growth outcomes are high on the agenda and a key reason why people choose to engage with Milk Crate Theatre activities. The opportunity to participate in a positive activity while building new significant creative relationships has great meaning for the Ensemble. This supports research that suggests that an experience of homelessness is synonymous with the break down of personal and community connections and increased isolation. Milk Crate Theatre provides a positive, safe and challenging space for people to rebuild their social and community connections while learning new skills and doing something creative.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES ARE KEY

Throughout 2014 the Ensemble have identified how important the opportunity to perform is to the process of personal growth and change. As the culmination of the work done in rehearsals and workshops, the opportunity to 'tell my story' to a wider audience is a pivotal moment in the journey an artist makes within Milk Crate Theatre. The act of our community coming together to celebrate and showcase the work of the Ensemble is truly significant and a key part of the journey of creating greater well-being, confidence and happiness in those who participate.

CHALLENGE EQUALS CHANGE

Personal and community change is central to the Milk Crate Theatre's mission and purpose. The Ensemble identifies how important challenge is to personal growth and long-lasting positive change. Common ways of describing the relationship between challenge and change are: 'got me out of my comfort zone', 'motivated me to attend regularly', 'encouraged me to socialise and get along with others', 'inspired me to see myself differently'. Using an individualised approach to working with each Ensemble Artist, Milk Crate Theatre promotes change in every participant through creating challenge in a safe environment.



COMMUNITY SHOWS

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre held two community shows with a total audience of 429 people. A total of 128 people attended the Wayside Chapel shows in Potts Point; 181 attended the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre shows in Newtown; 120 attended shows at 107 Projects in Redfern.

Of all audience members surveyed, 94% enjoyed the performances (with 4% not answering the question).

Of the audiences who attended You Are Here, 98% said that the shows had provided them with the opportunity to engage with issues about homelessness and social marginalisation.

THE CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR THIS HOUSE IS MINE

The Creative Development for *This House Is Mine* showcased the development of Milk Crate Theatre's 2015 company production. The audience for this presentation was a curated one of arts and community peers, selected to provide feedback on the work in development.

'...it was amazing! To see the production at such an early stage, and then follow the discussion around all the directions it could go in, as well as hearing the Ensemble's experiences first hand was very powerful and really opened my eyes'.

– Audience member

'It was so thought-provoking and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was also great to see so many people there, and such a mixed audience!'

– Audience member

AUDIENCE & CUSTOMERS

In 2014 we had an overall audience attendance of 1406. Of these audience members, 429 people attended our community shows *You Are Here* and comedy show *The Last Laugh*; 108 attended our creative development for *This House Is Mine*; 242 attended *Stories From The Suitcase*; 67 attended the *2014 Christmas Party*; 215 attended conferences and events where Milk Crate Theatre presented its work; and 345 attended Social Enterprise events.

STORIES FROM THE SUITCASE

We presented two films at The Big Issues's Street Soccer Festival. The event was staged on the floating pitch that was erected for the football matches on Darling Harbour. It provided lunchtime entertainment for the audience watching the game as well as the invited guests for the event. The two showings saw a strong representation of Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble, family and friends and The Big Issue community; as well as a strong representation of new audiences who were attending the festival.

THE MILKY WAY

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre worked with three customers and delivered three social enterprise offerings to a total audience attendance of 345.

98% of audience members surveyed said that they enjoyed the experience; and 100% stated that their engagement with the program enabled them to engage with issues about homelessness or social marginalisation.

You Are Here was performed at the Riverside Theatre for secondary school students. The production saw a total audience attendance of 223 school students. Feedback from students around the impact of the performance included *'It in a way opened my eyes to a unique situation that as a student who attends a school in the city, am constantly exposed to and yet more often, if always, ignore'*.

You Are Here was also performed as part of the Salvation Army's youth conference to an audience of 75 school students. Feedback from students around the impact of the performance included *'the key impact of the show on me was the issues of homelessness and how big and hard it can be. The issues that face young people and how we can make a change.'*

The digital work *Homefull* was screened at the Homelessness Mental Health and Incarceration Issues Forum in April 2014 to an audience of 60 people.

"THAT IT ASKED YOU TO RETHINK YOUR OWN REACTIONS. CHALLENGED AND ENLIGHTENED THE AUDIENCE. WHEN I WALK OUT TONIGHT I WILL BE MORE AWARE OF MY SURROUNDINGS AND THE ABILITY TO HELP OR TO ENGAGE WITH THE ISSUES AT HAND"

- AUDIENCE MEMBER

"I FOUND IT MOVING - AND WHILE I AM AWARE OF SOME OF THE ISSUES, IT IS NOT A TOPIC THAT IS OUT IN PUBLIC AWARENESS. I THINK THIS HELPS TO MAKE US UNDERSTANDING"

- AUDIENCE MEMBER

"SMALL THINGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

- AUDIENCE MEMBER

"THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP SOMEONE IN NEED, EVEN IN A SMALL WAY. IT'S MADE ME REALISE THAT I SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE IMPACT I CAN MAKE. ALSO EMPHASISED THAT ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN LIFE AND YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT BE IN A SIMILAR SITUATIONS."

- AUDIENCE MEMBER



PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Milk Crate Theatre is a unique theatre company as it collaborates with arts companies, education institutions and community organisations to generate the work that we create and the programs that we run. In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre continued to team with a dynamic mix of community, education and arts partners.

ARTS AND CULTURAL PARTNERS

We are committed to artistic excellence and appreciate that this comes through strong creative partnerships. Our 2014 arts partners included 107 Projects, Accessible Arts, Carriageworks, Currency Press, Darlinghurst Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre Company, Parramatta Library, Riverside Theatres, Surry Hills Library and Sydney Theatre Company.

ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

The Associate Artists who work with us bring a unique and invaluable skill set. They are people who are highly trained arts practitioners with a passion for community development. The work that we make is a testament to the skills of the Associate Artists as they collaborate with the Ensemble to develop and create the stories that we tell. Associate Artists learn and gain valuable skills and experience from the process of working with Milk Crate Theatre and the Ensemble. In 2014 we worked with 17 Associate Artists.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Milk Crate Theatre works across the City, Inner West, Eastern Suburbs and Western Sydney. We engage the Ensemble through the support of a network of community services dedicated to delivering services to those who have experienced homelessness or marginalisation. 2014 partners included: Anglicare Bondi, Come-In Youth Centre, Edward Eagar Lodge, Glebe House, Holroyd Youth Services, Homeless Connect, Mission Australia Centre, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Ozanam Learning Centre (Matthew Talbot), Parramatta Interagency Group, Parramatta Mission, Sisters of Charity, St Vincent de Paul, The Wayside Chapel, The Big Issue and We Help Our Selves.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

Milk Crate Theatre partners with leading education and research institutions to offer opportunities for Ensemble and to develop and disseminate new research projects. 2014 partners included: NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art), University of Western Sydney, Australian Catholic University, Drama NSW and the Department of Education and Communities.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL RESULTS

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre delivered an operating surplus of \$32,228. Total revenue was \$579,030 and total expenses were \$546,742.

WHERE DO OUR FUNDS GO?

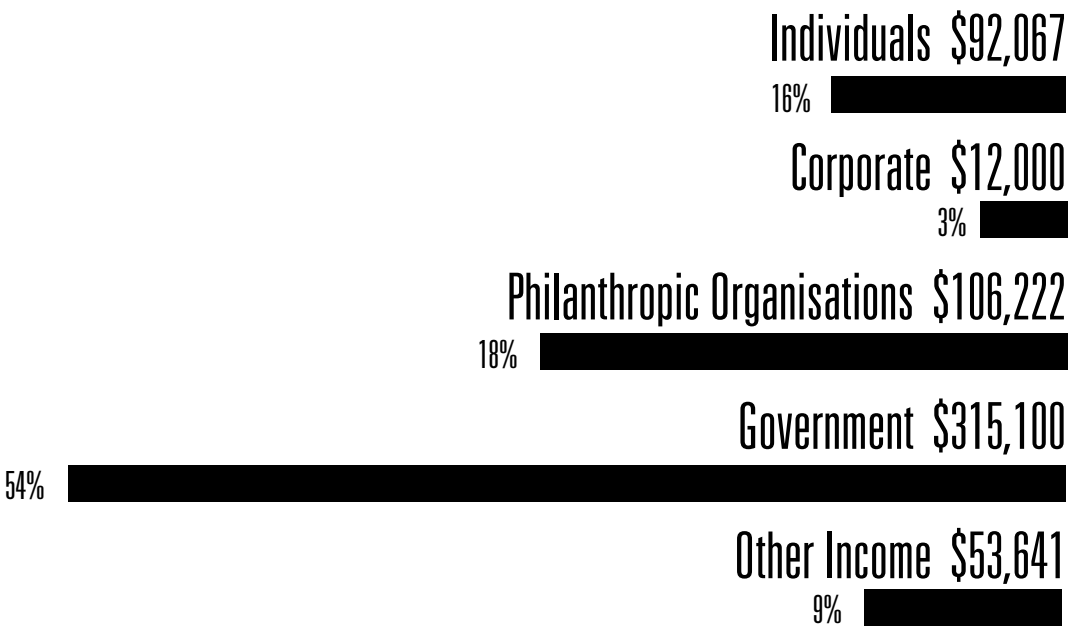
INCOME	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	%
Individuals	\$51,490	\$54,156	\$64,509	\$65,403	\$92,067	^41%
Philanthropic	\$136,500	\$382,045	\$202,266	\$176,451	\$106,222	-39%
Corporate	\$0	\$38,103	\$13,836	\$8,278	\$12,000	^46%
Government	\$95,560	\$138,227	\$232,674	\$270,386	\$315,100	^17%
Other Income	\$5,500	\$11,696	\$30,161	\$23,578	\$53,641	^127%
TOTAL INCOME	\$289,050	\$624,227	\$543,446	\$544,096	\$579,030	^6%

WHERE DO OUR FUNDS GO?

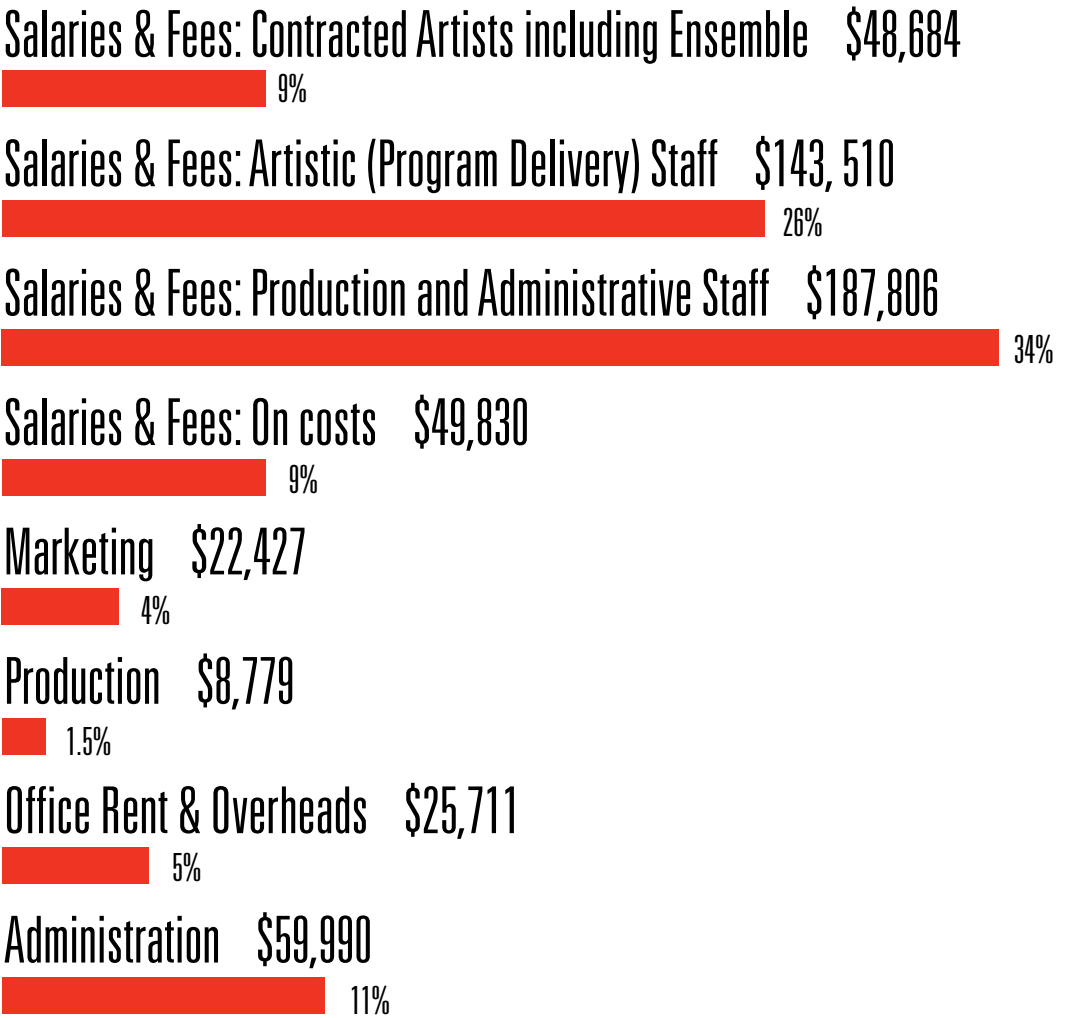
Milk Crate Theatre’s spending focused on the delivery of its artistic program with a majority of costs attributed to salaries and wages including the payment of artists, arts workers, core artistic staff and the Ensemble.

Funds specifically allocated to program delivery totaled \$486,752 with \$59,990 provided to core organisational administration costs.

REVENUE SOURCE



EXPENSE TYPES



THE MILK CRATE THEATRE TEAM

BOARD

Angus White (Chair)
Michael Sirmai (Treasurer)
Judith Bowtell
Natalie Devlin (until April '14)
Elizabeth Giles (until Oct '14)
Lenore Robertson
Victoria Turner

STAFF

Maree Freeman
CEO / Artistic Director
Siena Balakrishnan
CEO / General Manager
(on maternity leave from June 2014)
Cathy Murdoch
General Manager
Sarah Emery
Associate Director
Kate McBride
Creative Producer
Annie Muskin
Administration and Marketing Coordinator
Goldele Rayment
Artistic Programs Coordinator

ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

Sean Bacon, Sean Barker, Maurie Barlin, Pat Boland, Ross Graham, Tom Hogan, Sharon Jacobs, Michael Moebus, Hugh O'Connor, Kevin Ng, Michael Piggott, Paige Rattray, Graeme Rhodes, Hannah Strout, Cristabel Sved, Kip Williams, Sarah Woods

VOLUNTEERS

Laura Edwards, Gabby Florek, Joanne Franklin, Anne Lau, Iona Rennie, Jarrah Sexton, Tim Tari, Heather Tralaggan, Lisa Walton, Ellen Williams, Christie Woodhouse

ENSEMBLE ARTISTS

Abbey Woods, Adam Jones, Addulkareem Khairi, Adel Alkhameis, Agna, Alan, Alan Jones, Alan Weinstein, Ali, Alla, Amami Salen, Amber, Amy, Angelina Baris Aydin, Ann Tabuteau, Anne, Badai Maftuh-Flynn, Barbara Pashut, Bettina, Bozica Predijevic, Bree, Carla Cameron, Charles, Cherie Barnes, Chris Barwick, Church, Corin, Dane Charnas, Niven, Danielle, Dean Nicholas, Deanna Mercadal, Deb Atkins, Deb Williams, Donnie, Doug, Elf, Ella Turner, Emilie, Esther Braddy, Eugenia Langley, Eylie Jones, Fabiola Meza, Fafa Alfalahi, Flor Garcia, Gavin Strode, Georgina Woods, Gerald Goldrick, Gillian, Goldele Rayment, Gordon Broomham, Graeme Buttriss, Graham Stoney, Gretta Northey, Haha Alkahameis, Hasan Alshammri, Heeam Hamil, Idaho Dali, Inaam Al-chalabi, Indi Busby, Ingrid, Isabelle, Jade, Jamie, Janine, Jarrod, Jennifer, Jenny Mai, Jess, Jessica G, Jessica R, Jessie, Joasia Redestowicz, John McDonnell, John Williams, Jon Horsley, Julie Brenner, Julz Noreen, Kath, Kath Wyth, Kathy, Kerrie Marshall, Kevin, Leanda, Lena Keysecker, Lisa Griffiths, Liz, Marg, Margot Lichtenstein, Marie Liebeskind, Matthias Nudl, Melissa, Michael, Michael Fox, Michael Gersar, Michael Godlee, Michael Streeter, Michael Wilson, Michel Foster, Michelle Ingram, Moose, Naser Alzuhairy, Natai, Natalie, Nicko, Omar, Osman Mesie, Owen Gill, Pam Morris, Patricia, Patty Buckingham, Pauline, Prea, Rach Williams, Ralph Shaw, Ray Morgan, Rick (Pee Wee) Geoff, Rob, Rob Weston, Rouina Kpann, Sally, Sara Sata, Sergio, Shalui Amin, Silva Nouh, Soliel, Squizzy Rider, Stephanie Brown, Tamara Kendall, Tim Tari, Tom, Veronica Flynn, Vikki, Vince Kardone, Wayne, Wayne Schmidt And Zane.

OUR SUPPORTERS

FOUNDATIONS







Funded by the Linnell/Hughes Trust managed by Perpetual



























GOVERNMENT






This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body







COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS




2014 FRIENDS OF MILK CRATE THEATRE

Anonymous x 3	Ann & Paul Hine	Michael Sirmai
Maree Freeman	Eugenia Langley	Victoria Turner
Mark & Patricia Grolman	Melinda Muth	Sally and Geoffrey White

MEDIA

In 2014 Milk Crate Theatre was featured in the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Brag, FBI – Out of the Box, Stage Whispers, Artshub, City Hub, Sydney City News, Inner West Independent, 2SER ‘Stages’, Concrete Playground, 2SER ‘So Hot Right Now’ and LOTL. Further, Milk Crate Theatre’s social platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Vimeo and Youtube continued to attract large numbers of new followers. We presented at a number of public events including the Arts Activated Conference and the 6th Annual International Arts and Health Conference.

SUPPORT US

Each year Milk Crate Theatre works with over 250 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We use a fun and creative approach to build confidence and social connection; to support people to make plans; explore possibilities for education or employment and ultimately to help people move away from homelessness. Over 95% of our work is generously funded through donations and grants.

We rely on the generosity of individuals, charitable trusts and foundations and businesses that believe in our mission of creating social inclusion. There is a range of ways you can support us:

Friends of Milk Crate Theatre: Is an annual program of dedicated individual donors who are passionate about changing the story of homelessness. Donations of \$250 and over are acknowledged on our website, annual program and annual review.

Charitable Trusts, Corporate Donations and Foundations: We are generously supported by Charitable Trusts, Corporate Donations and Foundations to deliver key Milk Crate Theatre activities.

By supporting Milk Crate Theatre, you play a vital role in helping us achieve our vision of creating social inclusion. If you would like to join Friends of Milk Crate Theatre today, you can do so through our secure online giving payment page: milkcratetheatre.com/donate-now

To support Milk Crate Theatre through your Charitable Trust or Foundation, please contact Kate McBride, Creative Producer kate@milkcratetheatre.com or call 02 9331 0555.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

Milk Crate Theatre acknowledges and respects the Indigenous Peoples of Australia. We respectfully recognise that our activities take place on the land traditionally owned by the Gadagal people of the Eora nation and the Darug people.

ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to making our programs accessible to our community and wherever possible we will make arrangements to meet your access requirements. Please contact us for more information and to let us know your access needs.

Assistance for people with disabilities

Information can be provided in alternative formats upon request (i.e. large print and electronic).

To contact the National Relay Service, call: Type and Read, Type and Listen, or Speak and Read: 133 677 Speak and Listen (speech to speech relay): 1300 555 727

For interpreting assistance in languages other than English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National: 131 450 and indicate which language you wish to use.

CONTACT US

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