

Gasworks Arts Park



Annual Report 2012

## **Chair's Report**

2012 was a year of expansion, outreach and imaginative invention in the development of program and the articulation of the precinct as a public facility. Each step has enhanced the park, making it a place welcoming to all users, and made special by the experience of the arts.

There have been major new initiatives in programming, central to the long-term goals of the park. We undertook the major initiative of Circus Showdown which served the circus skills community in Melbourne, encouraged the performance of work for which our theatre is particularly suitable and produced a product which gave great pleasure to the public. We also took important first steps towards the Moving Parts seasons in the theatre, which allow us to select professional productions that increase the profile of the theatre and extend and diversify its public.

At the same time, we have had a steady stream of excellent visual arts programming with high-quality and diverse exhibitions enhancing the experience for visitors and patrons alike.

And there has been the pleasure of eating at Priscilla Jones café and appreciating its impact on the park as a place of resort and pleasure.

Staff have improved the facility as an efficient and welcoming place for hire – run with professionalism and friendliness. The place is now better equipped to serve users and public alike.

At the same time as these immediate foci, staff have worked hard on the longer term needs of the park, collaborating with the City of Port Phillip to improve the layout and functionality of the theatre building. We have also invested time and money on other important initiatives such as entry signage at the corner of Graham and Pickles St.

All this and much more is detailed in Tamara Jungwirth's impressive report below.

The Board admires and is most grateful for the work done by Tamara and her excellent team who combine high-level efficiency with a friendly and welcoming style where nothing seems too much trouble. There is a huge amount going on but no one acts as if they are in a flap.

Underlying all the day-to-day business there is a strong sense of strategic development that will energise the park for years to come.

We thank and congratulate staff and celebrate the work of our resident artists and all artists who bring their imagination and skill to the park.

**James McCaughey**  
**Chair**

## **Treasurer's Report**

Gasworks Arts Inc. ended the year showing a loss of \$19,811. It is disappointing as Gasworks had initially made a profit at year end of \$18 456, higher than the budgeted profit of \$11,255, but the annual audit resulted in this profit becoming a loss. The auditors requested some changes to the 2012 Profit and Loss Statement due to Australian Accounting Standards regarding accruals and the timing of transactions.

It is important to note that none of the changes recommended involved any cash transactions; rather they were non-cash items that required adjusting journal entries. A mid-year Financial Review was carried out to ensure each program was on track and modifications were made where necessary. Gasworks programs were on track due to a combination of vigilance in budget management which helped achieve the pre-audit, end-of-year result.

The funding model for Gasworks is from mixed sources, including the Funding Agreement with the City of Port Phillip, tenancy, philanthropic grants, earned income and in-kind product sponsorships. In 2012 the Funding Agreement negotiated the previous year resulted in securing a proportion of Gasworks' annual operations, including salaries, and enabled the delivery of new programs for children and seniors.

Gasworks has a vibrant and complementary tenancy mix of artists and small business operators. The Gatehouse was leased to Hub Productions in January following major renovations to the building. The Priscilla Jones Cafe opened in March and has proved to be popular. The cafe tenant understands the ethos of Gasworks and is involved in many of the arts activities.

In 2012 emphasis was placed on building rapport with current Foundation patrons and working on the annual giving appeal. Continued effort was put into building long-term partnerships with existing contra-deal sponsors and seeking both cash sponsors and new corporate supporters. Core funding priorities were identified to form the basis for action in 2013.

The programming successes in the theatres, exhibition spaces and the park throughout the year resulted in increased attendance numbers compared with previous years. As well there was an increase in income earned from private function hire. These successes not only contribute to earned income, they also raise the profile of Gasworks in the community.

Major renovations to upgrade the performer and public facilities are scheduled for around five months in 2013. Income will be lost as the Studio theatre will be closed for a significant portion of the year. The 2013 budget reflects this decrease.

Despite the final end-of-year result, it is worth noting the solid financial position of Gasworks Arts Inc. in 2012. This can be directly attributed to the City of Port Phillip, who provided the stabilisation for Gasworks' funding base, and to the dedicated and enthusiastic CEO/Director and the staff, who have guided Gasworks Arts Inc. throughout the year.

**Fran Church**  
**Treasurer**

## Director & CEO's Report

### Program

Program highlights in 2012 began with Backyard Cinema, when hundreds of people (and a few dogs too) saw Red Dog outdoors just after it won the AFI award for best picture. Our children's holiday program went from strength to strength, and Roald Dahl favourite James and the Giant Peach sold out four times. Towards winter our new showcase, Circus Showdown was an Australian first and sold out nearly every night. The Spring Music Festival in the park was hugely enjoyable and appreciated by audiences who came with their picnics to enjoy a series of free Sunday concerts. By the end of the year we had launched the beginning of our adult theatre season, Moving Parts, with a much larger program of work booked for 2013.

A summary of program strands is as follows:

Regular Strands	New in 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Backyard Cinema</li><li>• Childrens Holiday program</li><li>• Morning Music</li><li>• Midsumma</li><li>• Melbourne Comedy Festival</li><li>• Melbourne Fringe</li><li>• Spring Music Festival</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gasworks Circus Showdown</li><li>• Moving Parts</li></ul>

### *Visual Arts*

The 2012 exhibition calendar yielded 38 weeks of venue hire for the Angela Robarts-Bird gallery and also 38 weeks of venue hire for the Foyer Gallery. There were 3 very successful exhibitions with an indigenous focus:

- Rynelle Walker's sell out show for Midsumma 2012, 'The Decision is Yours'.
- 'Ngarleyekwerleng' - My Grandfathers Country' by Raymond Walters Japanangka (May).
- Catherine Van Wilgenburg's 'The Treaty' was programmed during NAIDOC week in July; this artist is a Sulman Prize Finalist.

Other highlights included first time exhibitor Sally De Cardy selling 90% of her exhibition in the first week and Helen Cornell's small ceramic objects selling approximately \$2000 from an exhibition where the average price was \$150.

The Foyer Gallery hosted several high profile, community exhibitions including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons showing their unforgettable Hiroshima Peace Museum anniversary retrospective, which garnered nationwide media attention.

An open studio evening for our resident artists was held on November 15 which attracted approximately 100 people and was very well received by the artists and visitors. One of the guests was so excited about the experience, that they booked an exhibition in the ARB Gallery at for late

2013. Several resident artists departed in the latter part of 2012; this level of turnover is consistent with previous years.

- Liz Low from Ceramics was replaced by Dani Bryant
- Gary Willis from Visual Arts, whose space is to be advertised in mid- January 2013
- Jamieson Miller from the Sculpture Studio, who space is to be advertised in mid- January 2013

The Gasworks Arts Tours provided approx 450 students and other visitors with a guided experience of the precinct including behind the scenes access to resident artists and their studios. To further develop the experience, merchandise concepts were developed for the 2013 tours. To date we have sourced branded pens and tote bags, and are in the final stages of developing information collateral to be included in the tote bags.

#### *Farmers Market*

2012 saw the Gasworks Market win the prestigious ABC Taste award for most outstanding Farmers Market in Australia. It has been a great boost to the stallholders and the popularity of the market as a destination for people interested in slow food/organic/farmers culture.

Bendigo Bank donated a new BBQ which adds life to the centre of the market. We have also purchased a stunning new red 3x3 marquee and a new red roof for the 4.5x3 marquee, as well as some outdoor furniture, for our al fresco diners.

#### *Total attendance*

The total attendance at arts park activities across all categories was 175,395 which represents a 35% increase over 2011.

#### Marketing

Our marketing outputs encompassed improved hard copy marketing collateral to support our programming strands, and bolstered our online presence with the appointment of a Digital Marketing Co-ordinator. Our website continued to improve with the introduction of video content, and our Facebook page attracted over 1,000 likes. We were a test venue for ShowDates, a new Iphone app being developed by the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres to promote theatre in Victoria. At the end of the year, we began work on a printed visitor's guide which will contain a fold out map of the park. This will be available from reception, the theatre foyer, the cafe and from artists' studios. Media coverage through the efforts of our publicist was substantial.

#### Partnerships

Fruitful and collaborative partnerships were ongoing with Cayzer, Artshub, and the Bendigo Bank. New sponsors Brown Brothers commenced at the end of the year, which was a very exciting development.

We were very fortunate in 2012 to benefit from the support of two professional facilitators. Helen Woods from the Strategy Team led our Park Ideas Workshop with local stakeholders and the City of

Port Phillip, while Colin Beattie from Somersault Consulting facilitated our staff planning day. These partnerships added substance and rigour to our planning processes through the year.

In the theatres a number of fruitful partnerships continued, with new relationships also being strengthened. St Michaels Grammar School first hired our theatre in 2008, and have been a regular client ever since, this year taking 3 separate weeks of hire. The organiser, Christopher McGillen, said after their final hire in 2012:

*Thanks for everything this year (as always), 2012 marked our five year association with Gasworks, it has been a very positive association from our point of view; I have estimated that there would have been over 450 student performers and technicians that have been through Gasworks!*

Other continuing regular hirers were The King David School, The Space Dance and Arts Centre, comedian Nathan Valvo, and APO Arts Academy. New/emerging companies included Frank Theatre and The Artisan Collective. We also partnered with the new Albert Park College, offering our theatre at a reduced rate of hire for their end of term assemblies in terms 2 and 3.

Relationships were strengthened through programming partnerships with Regional Arts Victoria who are a great supporter of children's theatre, and also La Mama who have established a touring arm. Missy Higgins filmed her new video Unashamed Desire here in this theatre, which went on to have over 365,000 views on YouTube and the album won the Aria award for Best Adult Contemporary Album.

#### Administration and Equipment

Our operations were boosted by some new equipment in 2013. Our Patrons and Friends Foundation gifted a reconditioned baby grand piano for use in the theatre, while also investing in the fabrication and installation of a new display case in the park to showcase the work of our resident artists. For our theatre terrace we were able to provide our patrons with some outdoor furniture to make their visit more comfortable. New portable signage on wheels proved very useful during Farmers Markets and School Holiday programs.

For staff we carried out a staged professional development program, which included first aid training, rigging training and fire services and evacuation training. We migrated our IT support agreement to a new company, IT Conexxion, who then installed a new server to support our finance and events booking systems.

Work to extend our liquor licence into our theatres progressed, with a planning permit being successfully obtained from the City of Port Phillip. This work will form the basis to an application to Liquor Licensing Victoria in 2013.

Work also progressed in the areas of theatre equipment and ticketing services as follows:

- A new ticket scanner enabled us to introduce print at home ticketing
- A new ticketing software module was adopted to enable reserved theatre seating
- We upgraded the cash register and coffee machine in the bar
- A new sound system in the theatre foyer enabled announcements and background music
- Updates to theatre lighting and cabling were made throughout the year

## Buildings and Grounds

Much work was successfully completed in 2012 to improve the buildings and grounds, and to plan for future renovation and development:

- Early in the year Gatehouse was renovated including air conditioning, carpet, painting and a new kitchenette. A post production company Hub Productions took up residency in January and have worked collaboratively with our marketing team all year with photographic and video documentation and promotions.
- March saw the opening of our new cafe, Priscilla Jones @ Gasworks. This met with immediate success, which has continued throughout 2012. The realisation of a cafe with fresh and appealing mid-priced food and a pleasant ambiance has been a significant and essential element in creating an arts hub which is a meeting place for the community.
- During the year, the patched and fraying carpet in the theatre foyer was replaced by red foyer carpet with a sketched botanical theme. This project was realised by Melbourne company, Rugs Carpet and Design.
- Midyear, Gasworks initiated a Blue Sky ideas workshop with council and local stakeholders facilitated by Helen Woods from the Strategy Team. This was a good backgrounder for council staff who then formed a consultative reference group to consider forward directions for park layout and landscaping. This group was convened and met once before Christmas in 2012.
- The installation of new park signage was the culmination of over a year's work. It was designed collaboratively, then installed and funded by council. This signage included building signage, maps at main park entrances, and light pole directional signage. Secondly the surrounding road signage was updated to the current royal blue and white template for destination signage. The only element which remains to be updated is the brown Vic Roads sign on Beach Road at Pickles St.

For some time we have been collaborating with the City of Port Phillip in the development of long range architectural plans for the theatre buildings. This has been articulated in a number of stages. For the first stage of work, Gasworks staff joined City of Port Phillip staff and H2O Architects on the Capital Works Reference Committee. The group met for most of the year with the final design being completed by early December and tender documents ready for issue in February 2013.

**Tamara Jungwirth**  
**Director & CEO**

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