

# THEATRE KIMBERLEY



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## ANNUAL REPORT

# 2017



[www.theatrekimberley.org.au](http://www.theatrekimberley.org.au)

All this could not happen without you. A very big THANK YOU...

**Theatre Kimberley Board of Directors May 2017 - 2018**

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**Mira Holzmann**  
**Chair of TK 2012 - 2018**

2017, was a momentous year of change for Theatre Kimberley. There have been key changes in the staffing structure to ensure our programming is moving forward in a sustainable way. After the resignation of long-term CEO and Artistic Director, Gwen Knox, the board appointed Meredith Bell as full-time Artistic Director, and Jael Johnson as Business Manager 3 days/week. They are supported by the Executive Subcommittee through regular meetings.

During a strategic planning workshop in August 2017, board and staff members reviewed the Business Plan, 2015 – 2020 and identified the following areas of priority action: annual planning including a revised staff structure, improved governance, measuring the impact of Theatre Kimberley's programs, building on relationships with funders and partners, and improving advocacy for the organisation.

In line with good financial governance, Theatre Kimberley is working towards 20% operational reserves. The board has committed to the development of a new business plan in 2018, focusing on improved sustainability and artistic direction.

On a personal note, writing this report evokes a range of mixed feelings. After six years of serving as the Chair of Theatre Kimberley, I have decided to leave the position. I am confident that the organisation is stronger than ever. I would like to thank all the fantastic people I have worked with during that time, and the trust they have placed in me. It was an incredible opportunity which I thoroughly enjoyed and relished the chance to hone my leadership skills. I am happy to support the organisation in other ways and wish you all the very best for the future.



**Meredith Bell,**  
**Artistic Director**

Welcome to TK's Annual Report for 2017! It's been an exciting year of change, with new voices joining our team as staff, board and artists. Jael and I are supported by fantastic part-time staff: Julie Borsboom, our finance dynamite, and more recently Pia Davids, as an arts and admin assistant. I'd like to thank our Board, who have provided extensive support during this time of change. Enormous thanks goes to Gwen Knox, who has provided ongoing support and mentorship since her departure from TK as long-term AD/CEO. She also continues to work as a contract artist for the company, which ensures continuity of excellence in her speciality areas.

Many thanks go to our generous supporters, without whom our programming would not be possible. Financial funding is as greatly appreciated as it is essential. Without fantastic volunteers, we would also be lost. I would like to thank the many dozens of volunteers who worked with us in 2017, assisting with numerous jobs on productions and at fundraisers. While 2017 was a year of transition, we enjoyed fantastic artistic outcomes in our projects and resulting productions. I am excited to share these with you in the pages that follow.



**Jael Johnson,**  
**Business Manager**

A huge thank you to everyone that supported Theatre Kimberley in 2017. In our first post-Gwen year we continued to wow audiences, inspire and up-skill Kimberley kids, employ local people and make a modest surplus!

We have set aside some of this surplus as operational reserves with a target of 20% reserved by 2021. There are significant challenges ahead - in 2018, we lose significant funding for operational and staff expenses, and which looks unlikely to be offered again. TK needs to address this shortfall - we need to reduce our reliance on any single source of income, and instead diversify how we make money.

One of my roles in 2018, will be to coordinate a substantial application due early 2019, to Culture and the Arts WA (formerly DCA) for their multi-year operational funding. This funding round is highly competitive and requires a new business plan and a highly developed artistic program.

Although we are small in number, the TK staff is a dynamic, flexible and capable team that is very much looking forward to continuing to offer Broome and the Kimberley exciting performances and arts opportunities.

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM 2017

## Theatre Kimberley Major Projects & Productions

Our dynamic programs are built on a foundation of great collaborations and partnerships – with educational institutes, individual artists, community groups and our shire. With the resources these partnerships provide, we work to build greater arts engagement for the Kimberley. Importantly, we increase arts training wherever we go, in order to multiply arts experiences for all.

## CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS

We enjoyed another great year of partnership with the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA), with a NICA artist exchange to Broome and Yiramalay. 2017 was the third year in a row that NICA brought advanced circus arts students to the Kimberley on an exchange program led by Andrea Ousley, NICA Social Circus Coordinator. We love Andrea's enthusiastic support for our programs and our local young artists, whether they are in Broome, visiting NICA or studying there, but I think the relationship has been assisted by the fact that Andrea considers Broome to be her spiritual home! Visiting NICA students and instructors provide excellent additional instruction and inspiration for our students. Importantly, these visits connect our young people to other emerging artists in the industry. In recent years (both before and since this partnership), increasing numbers of our Sandfly graduates have gone on to study at NICA. Two are currently part of the Bachelor of Circus Arts program.



Yiramalay finale show - performers enter on the boardwalk, photo M Bell



Puppeteers Karen Hethey and Bernadette Trench-Thiedeman participate in creative development for *Two Rivers Talking*, photo by M Bell

Ongoing collaborations with our professional artist network are essential to our successes. It is valuable to bring professional artists to Broome, but additionally, great professional relationships have been forged between visiting artists that we have brought here to work together. In 2017, we had an extended residency for Anni Davey, her third with the Sandflies. During her time in Broome (August-October), Anni directed the major Sandfly Circus production, emceed our *Bust Out Cabaret*, and then took an adaptation of the Sandfly production to Mandurah. Catherine Daniel, who has worked on numerous Sandfly and Dragonfly Outreach projects, also had extended work with us this year. Other repeat artists were puppeteer Karen Hethey and choreographer Lena Johns, who worked alongside Gwen and KEEP Project Manager Bernadette Trench-Thiedeman in the "Two Rivers Talking" project.

Partnerships have also continued to develop with the Shire of Broome in several ways. TK was allocated new storage spaces for our property, which had previously shared a shed with Shinju Matsuri. Though the move required a great amount of work and time, the new arrangement represents a more formal storage hire situation, and the storage location is more convenient to our circus activities at Broome Recreation & Aquatic Centre (BRAC). BRAC continues to host our circus activities and our major annual production. 2017 was our eighth year of BRAC being the Sandfly Circus home base. We also continue to work with the Shire via events at the Broome Civic Centre. For the first time, the Shire purchased *Bust Out Cabaret*, and plans are in place to do this again in 2018.

Our partnerships with Kimberley schools and communities are integral to our remote Dragonfly Outreach Program. With Dragonfly projects, we usually hold arts residencies in the remote community's schools, because they can provide workshop space and accommodation, which would otherwise be challenging to access. In some cases, we work directly with community locals. In 2017, we had great puppetry, dance and circus projects with Wananami Remote Community School, Derby District High School (primary only), Yiramalay Studio School, and Pandanus Park Community. Having a continuous relationship with remote schools makes for more efficient and effective planning and project outcomes. However, it can be challenging to maintain these relationships due to distance, high staff turnover in remote schools, and limited funding.

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM 2017

## ARTS TRAINING IN THE KIMBERLEY

In all our projects, we continue to provide training to build local capacity in the arts. This is important work for Theatre Kimberley in order to retain skills and talent for future artistic work. We also see it as an important contribution to the reputation of Broome and the Kimberley, as a place of rich artistic and cultural traditions, and a place where arts expression is highly valued.

We were delighted that Sandfly graduate Rachel Sawyer, took a gap year before university to spend time working with us. In January, she secured her qualification in basic rigging in Perth, and returned home to follow up certification with on-the-job experience. With project funding from Culture & the Arts WA (formerly DCA) and the Australia Council, we were able to provide her with a valuable mentorship working with experienced aerial directors, Anni Davey and Catherine Daniel. (Rachel's writes about this later in this report). The mentorship included work in different venues – from Mandurah to an outdoor performance space on the remote Gibb River Road – where Rachel could apply both her circus arts knowledge with her technical knowledge, supported by circus rigging experts.

The *Two Rivers Talking* project also provided mentorship and training opportunities for emerging Derby-based artists. Two young Indigenous women assisted the artists in the puppet making, show development and performance elements of the project. As available, these and/or other emerging West Kimberley artists will be mentored to join the crew of *Song of the Mardoowarra* in 2018.

Six of our young Sandfly teens assisted on a Dragonfly Outreach project. These youth assisted adult trainers at Wanunami School (Mt Barnett Station on the Gibb River Road) and performed with the students in the finale show. Over the years, Theatre Kimberley has found this to be a great model for leadership development. Our young artists learn from the extended contact with the lead resident artists, cement their skills knowledge through their teaching, and build valuable teaching and leadership skills. On top of all this, they had a fantastic time and are enthusiastic about more Theatre Kimberley adventures!

### March 2017 | Circus Arts at Yiramalay (Leopold Downs Station, Kimberley)

Theatre Kimberley provided a two-week Dragonfly Outreach project at Yiramalay Studio School consisting of daily workshops for all students in numerous areas of circus arts. Yiramalay is a boarding school for Indigenous Kimberley students in school years 10-12, founded by Bunuba leaders in collaboration with Wesley College in Melbourne. Lead artist Catherine Daniel was assisted on the project by Sandfly graduate Rachel Sawyer. The residency also included an exchange with our partners at NICA. Two NICA circus arts bachelor students (including Broome's own Georgia Deguara) accompanied social circus instructor Andrea Ousley, to provide additional instruction as part of their annual cultural exchange with Theatre Kimberley. The finale was an evening performance for the community.



Trainer Rachel Sawyer looks on as Yiramalay girls participate in their first acrobalance class, photo M Bell

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM 2017

## July 2017 | *Two Rivers Talking* – Puppetry in Derby and Pandanus Park Community

Primary school students participated in an exciting puppetry residency at Pandanus Park (60 km from Derby) over the July holidays which continued at Derby District High School in the first two weeks of term. *Two Rivers Talking* focuses on the importance of the health of the Fitzroy River, and students explored ways that they could look after it. The Derby and Pandanus Park projects culminated in a performance for families in each location, in which all participants performed with the puppets they had made. The children negotiated the script outcomes, some of which have been included in the final script for a puppet show now in development titled *Song of the Mardoowarra* written by Gwen Knox. Gwen coordinated the project and was joined by puppeteers Karen Hethey and Bernadette Trench-Thiedeman, and Belgium-based choreographer, Lena John Gomez. Lena added Bollywood-style dance instruction to the project, which proved very popular with the students and audience alike. Further creative development sessions for the developing work took place in Broome following the finale performance in Derby.

## August 2017 | *Bust Out Cabaret*



Bust Out 2017 cast and crew, photo by Ramala Chrystal

For a third year in a row, Broome was treated to Anni Davey's magic touch as visiting emcee and performer for our annual adults-only cabaret. It was a great weekend with fantastic ticket sales, and our first *Bust Out* show to be purchased by the Shire of Broome. Performers included Broome's own Georgia Deguara, who took a break from her circus arts studies at NICA to perform for the two shows. For the first time, we welcomed Cirque du Soleil artist Daniel Price, who wowed audiences with his roue cyr wheel act. The talented and energetic dancers from *Studio 34* rocked the house with a handful of new acts including a new *Pearlesque Belles* performance as well as new solo and small ensemble acts.



Steele Harris-Walker as the Tin Man, photo by Pam Jennings

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM 2017

September 2017 | Sandfly Circus Show *Come Fly With Us*

Five of our senior Sandfly youth worked with highly acclaimed director, Anni Davey, to create a new and exciting circus work for Broome audiences. The teens developed the theme through the year, and ideas were refined for an intensive show development in third term.

For the first time the creative team created a traverse stage in BRAC – a 14 metre long airstrip, from which to launch our own airline, none other than 'Sandfly Air!' With commercial air travel being quite topical this year, it was nice to poke fun at all the conventions of flight. Our cabin crew, flight guests, security crew and ground crew entertained with amazing tricks and beautiful ensemble pieces.

Riggers Catherine Daniel and Hayden Love assisted Anni to enable dozens of our kids to perform aerial acts throughout the show. Trainee rigger Rachel Sawyer, Rhiannon Leraci, and other fantastic volunteer crew, also assisted and offered support for some hilarious and high flying harness acts.

Rich with comedic material and clever uses of the apparatus, *Come Fly With Us* was a show with many highlights.



Clockwise from top left: Aerial clowns Anna Thorn (L) and Tully McDonald give the audience a rain shower as 'Cloud 8' and 'Cloud 9'; Jackai Fagence (L), Kail Mukerjie, Finley Eastwood and Will Collins dazzle the audience with their wheeled dexterity as baggage handlers; Sibylle Wenger wows the audience with her chairs act; stilts-strapped Sandfly Air flight attendants guide the plane along the tarmac; Asha Vincent (top) and Nellie Finch provide in-flight entertainment with a double trapeze act.

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM 2017

## October 2017 | Sandfly Circus Show *Come Fly With Us*

A select group of young circus artists presented a 40-minute adaptation of *Come Fly With Us* at the Regional Arts Summit in Mandurah. The project was funded by the Regional Arts Fund via Country Arts WA, with additional funding from Culture & the Arts WA and the Australia Council. Theatre Kimberley was able to bring a total of 14 youth plus three adult cast and crew. The show was very well received by the regional arts community at the Summit.

This trip provided a great learning experience for the kids and gave them insight into taking a show on tour – they experienced a completely different theatre space and worked with a different backstage crew. With the cast arriving Wednesday night, and performing on Friday, they also learned how quickly touring ensembles need to adapt to their new surroundings and get on with the show!



The entire cast of *Come Fly With Us* take a bow at the Regional Arts Summit in Mandurah, photo by Adam Wayre

## October/November 2017 | Circus Arts Outreach at Kupungarri Community/Mt Barnett (Gibb River Road)

Theatre Kimberley worked with all the students at Wananami School at Kupungarri Community (at Mt Barnett) on a circus arts project in Term 4. Wananami School also includes students from the remote communities of Dodnun and Imintji. For the first week, lead artist Catherine Daniel, and assistant Rachel Sawyer taught all the students in different blocks through the school day introducing many skill areas – such as unicycle, mini-tramp, trapeze, hula hoops and tissu. After one week of skills development, the TK team was joined by additional teaching support, including Sandfly circus emerging trainers. The young Sandflies assisted trainers in circus instruction and helped put together a show. The whole community was invited, and families were bussed in from the outlying communities to see their kids shine. School staff were delighted by the turnout, and the production was popular with everyone.



Wananami principal Heather Bentham enthusiastically addresses the school and audience after the Wananami show, photo by M Bell



Young participants prepare for Wananami circus show, photo by M Bell

# Rachel becomes a Rigger...

My name is Rachel Sawyer and I have been involved with Theatre Kimberley and the Sandfly Circus, since 2010. A huge passion of mine was aerials such as silk, lyra, trapeze and cloud swing. From a young age, I aspired to someday be able to rig the aerials for myself so I didn't need to wait six months or a whole year for a rigger to fly to Broome.

As I gained more experience in circus and aerials, I became even more eager to become a rigger, as I wanted to learn more about the apparatus. At the age of 16-17 yrs, I began to look into the rigging course itself, but to my dismay you had to be over the age of 18.

With my mum's help, two days after my 18th birthday in January 2017, I booked to do my dogging course, followed by my basic rigging. I completed my training at SITE Skills in Belmont with about eight highly qualified men from mining and building industries, me being the youngest by around 20 years.

Eager to put my new skills to the test, I was up for any and all rigging work available with Theatre Kimberley. Early in 2017, I had my first taste of rigging in the 'real world' with Catherine Daniel. We took down every aerial in the BRAC, inspected it fully and then hung it back up. I learnt more about circus rigging from this experience than I had in my entire course.

In August, I was given the opportunity to do the rigging for the *Bust Out Cabaret* with help from Anni Davey, whose vast knowledge of circus and aerials taught me heaps - including how to rig a harness system for her 'moonwalk' down a vertical wall.

The next rigging opportunity I had was the annual Sandfly circus show in September. This was an amazing experience, as I learned so much from Hayden Love and Catherine Daniel, and it came with all the pressures of a real rigging situation. In October, I attended the Dragonfly Outreach program at Wananami community with Catherine. This experience was also very useful as we needed to use beam clamps to rig all aerials; something I hadn't even heard of previously.

My last major rigging experience was in Mandurah for the 2017 WA Regional Arts Conference. This was with Nel Simpson in the amazing Mandurah performing arts theatre. The complication with this rigging is that the rigging points were 16 m in the air, compared to the 7m high roof I was used to, To counteract this problem Anni and Nel decided to hang a truss from chain blocks.

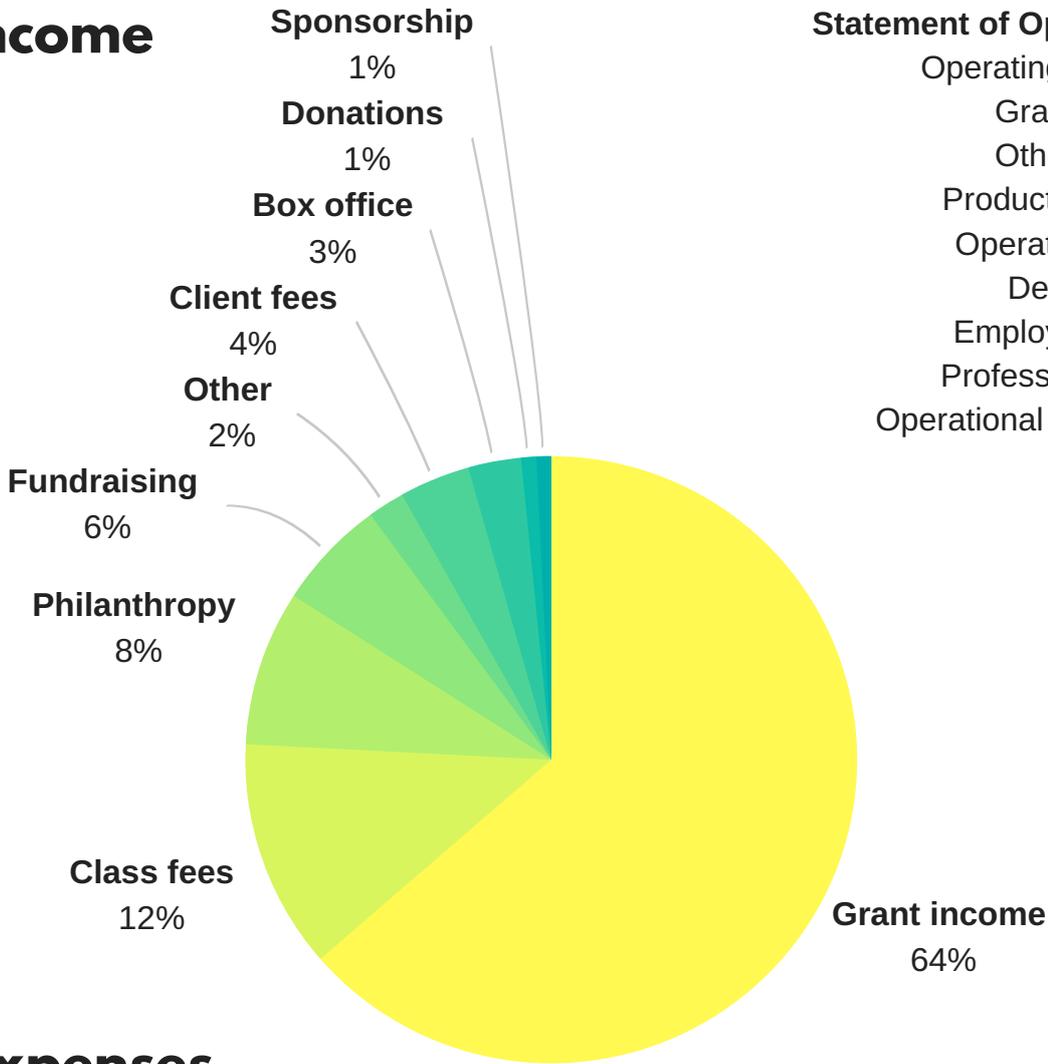
Overall, I have learned so much from the opportunities given to me by Theatre Kimberley since obtaining my rigging ticket. In real life situations, rigging is not just black and white. Every space comes with its own individual pros and cons and being a rigger is not just about hanging things in the air, but about finding safe solutions to all problems that may arise



Sandfly Circus Show 2017, Rachel Sawyer (L) and Hayley Tucker (R) perform a double tissu routine, photo by Julia Rau

# THEATRE KIMBERLEY FINANCES 2017

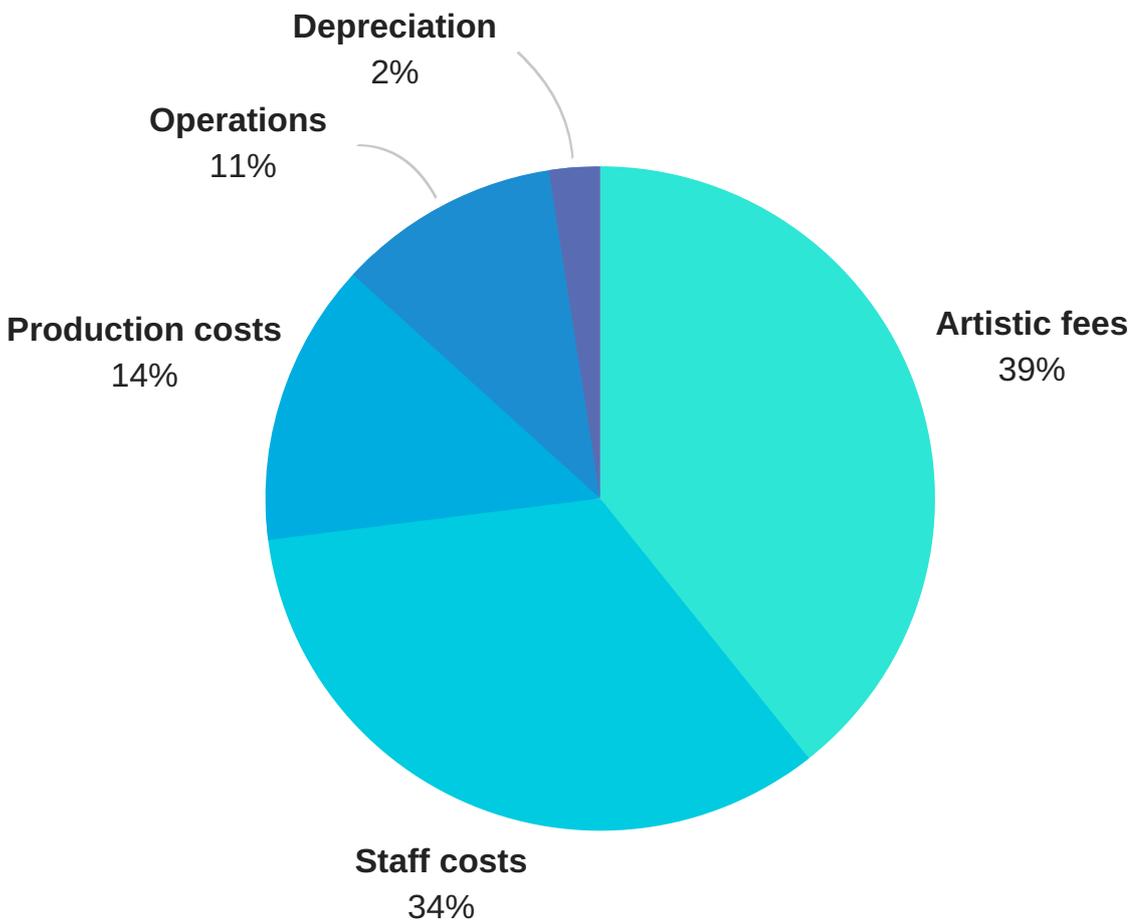
## Income



## Statement of Operations

Operating revenue	\$101,272
Grant income	\$292,170
Other income	\$14,393
Production Costs	\$50,371
Operating Costs	\$39,386
Depreciation	\$9,069
Employee Costs	\$123,355
Professional fees	\$143,812
Operational Reserves	\$12,500
Surplus	\$29,342

## Expenses



# TREASURER'S REPORT Robyn Stacey, Treasurer

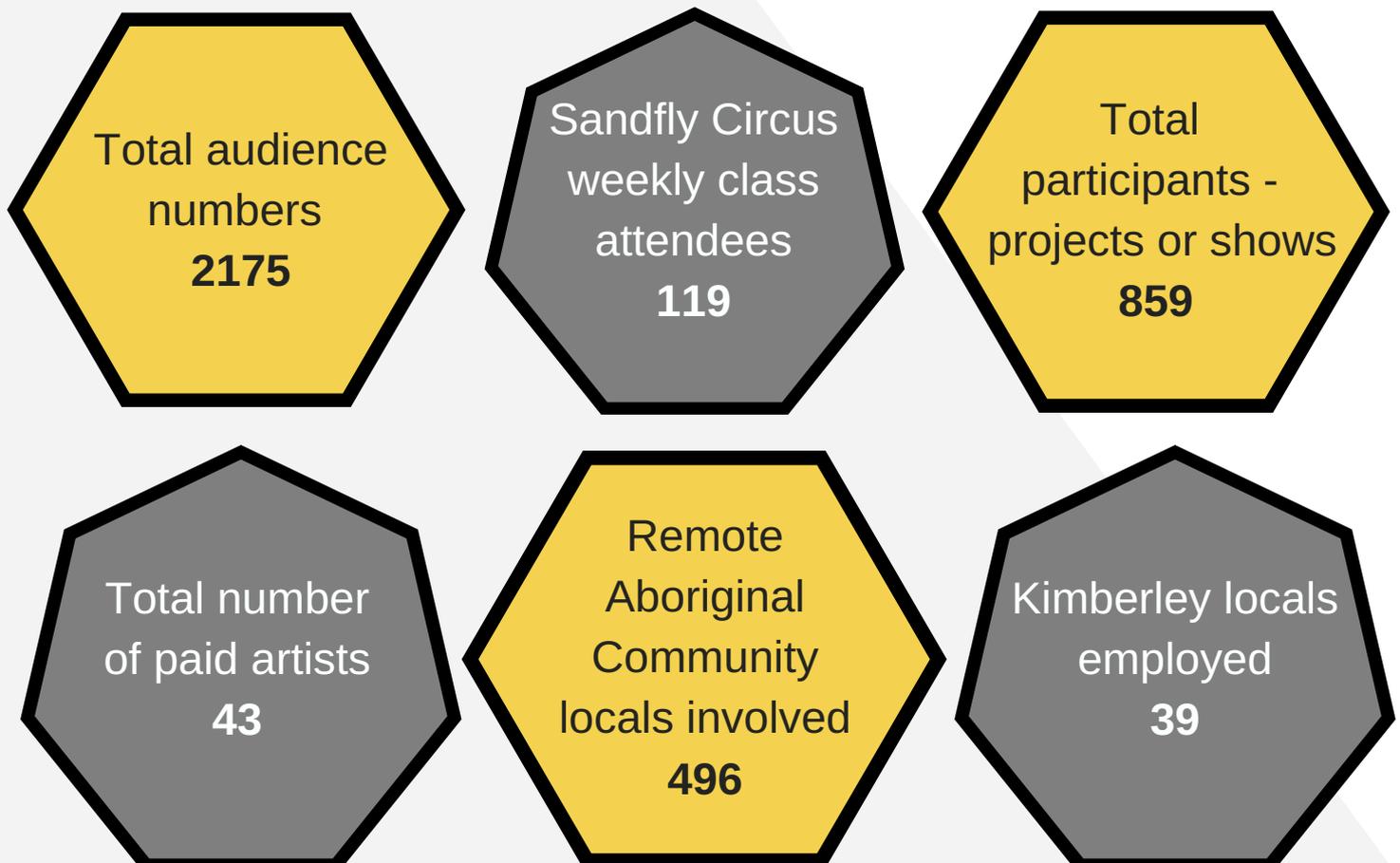
Theatre Kimberley, like many Not-for-Profit organisations, faces financial pressure due to a decrease in the amount of Government funding available. Dwindling funding amounts mean, that as well as less money being available, what is offered is increasingly competitive to secure. Despite this, in 2017, Theatre Kimberley managed to make a modest surplus of \$29,342 whilst continuing to run its Kimberley programmes, and entertain audiences in the Kimberley and the South West.

Total income in 2017 was \$407,835, 16% less than in 2016 (\$490,887). However, in 2017, TK did not produce *Worn Art Revamped* - which meant we also had fewer expenses. In 2017, our overall expenses were 21% less than they were in 2016. (\$365,993 in 2017, compared to \$466,033 in 2016).

Artistic fees continue to be TK's biggest expense which is unavoidable given the high costs associated with bringing professional artists to the Kimberley, taking Kimberley artists elsewhere, and the high costs of running programs and projects in remote Aboriginal communities.

TK faces significant financial challenges in 2018, with the end of three grants which allow for staff and operational costs. TK will need to work innovatively to secure increased income from a more diverse mix of sources including local sponsorship, philanthropic support, and fundraising. In mid-2019, TK will also apply to Culture and the Arts for their three-year Organisation Investment Program which is highly competitive. If TK is successful, the grant will provide financial security for the organisation and its staff, which will allow TK to keep diversifying how it raises money. This will ensure Theatre Kimberley's financial sustainability and viability in the future, and allow it to continue to offer strong artistic programming and productions, and enrich peoples lives.

## THEATRE KIMBERLEY IMPACT SUMMARY



# THEATRE KIMBERLEY - 2018

**It's going to be another big year for Theatre Kimberley.**

At our 2018 AGM in May, our Chair for the past six years, Mira Holzmann is leaving the TK board.

A very heartfelt thank you, Mira, for all your hard work and dedication to TK during a period of great change for the organisation. **Very best of luck with your next adventure!**

2018 will see TK once again involve hundreds of Broome locals and entertain visitors in five large public performances. These include new partnerships and performances with Casus Circus (QLD) and host the Pitts Family Circus (NSW).

Our Dragonfly Outreach program will continue to take circus and other performing arts opportunities to remote Kimberley Aboriginal communities.

If you'd like to know more about our programs or productions and how **you** can get involved, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

**Please come to our shows!**

You will have a lot of fun AND support a Broome arts organisation that produces professional performances that are inspired by life in the Kimberley!

Donations and memberships are always appreciated. TK has tax-deductible status.

[www.theatrekimberley.org.au](http://www.theatrekimberley.org.au)

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August  
10- 11  
BUST OUT  
CABARET  
Civic Centre

August 31 -  
1 September  
SANDFLY  
CIRCUS  
SHOW  
BRAC

November  
2- 3  
WORN ART  
REVAMPED  
Civic Centre

Sandfly Circus performers before their performance at the Chinatown Christmas party Dec 17

