



CITY OF PARRAMATTA
MINUTE OF THE RIVERSIDE THEATRES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING



Meeting Date/Time: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 / 6.00PM AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time)

Advisory Board:	Rhonda Hawkins AM (Chair)	Jon Grieg	Keiasha Naidoo
Members:	Vyviene Abla	Cr Andrew Jefferies	Vaughan Roles
	Cr Donna Davis	Luke Mackey	Carl Scibberas
	Cr Bob Dwyer	Alan Manly	Dr Jim Taggart OAM (Deputy Chair)

Management	Craig McMaster, Director Riverside Theatres	Sainesh Moss, Business Manager
Attendees:	Mike Brew, Operations Manager Joanne Kee, Exec. Producer NTofP	Catherine Swallow, Program Manager
Apologies:	Henri Marron, Marketing Manager	

	AGENDA ITEM #1: MEETING OPENING
Craig McMaster (Director Riverside)	<p>Acknowledgment of Country Craig McMaster completed the Acknowledgement of Country to the Darug land where the meeting was held.</p> <p>The meeting commenced at 6:10pm.</p>
	AGENDA ITEM #2: Welcome and Apologies
Rhonda Hawkins (Chair)	With quorum present the Chair opened the meeting and noted the apologies.
	AGENDA ITEM #3: Minutes of Meeting 26 June, 2021
Rhonda Hawkins (Chair)	<p>Previously distributed minutes taken as read</p> <p>MOTION: minutes of last meeting were accepted and approved</p>
	AGENDA ITEM #4: Director’s Report
Craig McMaster (Director Riverside)	<p>Craig M opened the meeting by acknowledging it as his first meeting as the Director of Riverside Theatres. Craig thanked everyone for the welcome received over the last couple of months since commencing the role and thanked the Advisory Board for their support.</p> <p>Craig M then provided an Operation Overview/Update, noting the following key items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming Riverside had been closed since July and maintained non-operating status. All management team and staff were currently working from home. The focus around this time is program management and managing reschedules, which are quite significant and on-going.



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- Despite the cancellations and reschedules of program for this calendar year, overall Riverside was tracking well for a strong program for calendar year 2022 and beyond.
- The future venue program compression means the venue has few available dates for most of calendar 2022. This has raised form management’s retention of a significant portion Covid impacted 2021 events being scheduled into next year.
- **Cancellations:**
Riverside did however incur a few large event losses, notably the Packemin season of ‘Wicked the Musical’ which was sold out to >12,000 tickets but was unable be rescheduled in 2022 due to Packemin’s license to present being only available until December 2021m resulting in requirement to refund all ‘Wicked’ sales. A portion of the sales (approx. 1500 tickets) were able to be retained for the Feb 2022 season of ‘Mamma Mia!’, which will go on sale to the general public in a few weeks’ time.
- **Riverside Theatres Digital:**
Continues to be successfully presented, following its launch in 2020. This maintaining of digital content has been an essential component to patron satisfaction and brand presence while the venue has been closed. Craig M thanked and acknowledged the team who had assembled and managed the program very quickly following lockdown being triggered.
- The digital program will be continued in the coming months and will feature ‘SPOT-ON Digital’ children’s festival in the coming weeks. Other schedule screenings include Queensland Orchestra Livestream of Beethoven and Sibelius Musical Masterpieces of 20 September as a partnership agreement. Craig noted that strategically Riverside will continue to explore the development of an ongoing hybridization program to get behind digital as we go into 2023.
- **Commercial Hire**
As noted, ‘Wicked’ was substantial loss to Hires income, however, have been able now able to maintain Kermond Productions ‘Spiegelesque’, which had been originally cancelled. Cumberland Gang Show was also another major hires cancellation. A substantial company of the net impact of these losses will potentially be offset by the Create NSW COVID Support Funding package which is in application at present.
- **National Theatre of Parramatta**
NTofP’s final three shows of 2021 have been rescheduled into 2022. i.e., Guards of the Taj, White Pearl, and the Orange Thrower. White Pearl opened to great responses in Brisbane for Queensland Theatre Company with 4673 in attendance and is scheduled to tour to OzAsia Festival in Adelaide in November.
- It was also noted that NTofP Executive Producer Joanne Kee has been invited back as a member of the Create NSW Theatre Advisory Board. Joanne has also been invited back to the judging panel for the Nick Enright Playwriting Award, part of the State Government creative awards.
- **Operational and Technical Team Update**
The Green Room refresh project has been completed by the in-house team. The project which was done on time and within budget.
- Technical team is busy supporting the Presents team with the upcoming digital productions. Josh Stringer was acknowledged for his above the call efforts in managing the streaming presentations over recent months.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Update Since the lockdown, most of the industry continues to non-operational. Riverside is currently targeting an Oct 25 re-opening. Craig M thanked Executive Director Jon Greig for the significant support for Riverside’s people over recent months. • Re-opening will commence with small format cinema offerings followed by some live presentations. It is expected that by November and into December Riverside will return to offering normal programming, followed by a busy Sydney Festival program in January. • As part of the recent Council Meeting, a Lord Mayoral minutes noted City of Parramatta’s support for the Live Industries Venue & Event Alliance’s #VaxtheNation campaign, widely supported campaign across the industry. Craig M thanked the Lord Mayor for positive initiative forward on behalf of Riverside Theatres and City of Parramatta. • People and Culture Craig McMaster commenced as the Director of Riverside Aug 16,2021. Sainesh Moss as recently commenced (under secondment from the council Finance Team) as Riverside’s Business Manager. Several former casual positions have recently been converted to Temporary Permanent as an outcome of feedback from last year’s employee engagement survey. Currently most Riverside staff are working from home. • Marketing report The marketing report was tabled for review. It was also noted that Henri Marron had tendered his resignation as Marketing Manager. Recruitment has commenced for a replacement Senior Marketing leader With the current lockdown, all major show campaigns have been suspended/cancellation • Create NSW Covid Grants Application update An update was provided regarding the Create NSW Covid Support Grant application. The grants enable applicants to claim a portion of lost box office revenue during the lockdown. The claims will be shared at negotiated percentages with our various presenting or hirer partners based on which party held the biggest box office risk.
Discussion	<p>Luke Mackey commented how challenging all the work is that goes into the Create NSW grant. They also had to do a similar amount of work at State theatre.</p> <p>Jim Taggart thanked Craig for the presentation and mentioned that he has recently spoken on his radio program about the SPOT-ON children’s festival to publicize Riverside. Jim was also pleased to hear that Riverside is booked out for next year and was interested in how the financial performance will look like.</p> <p>Vaughan Roles commented that shows such as Wicked do well and it is unfortunate in relations to licensing that we had to refund. A question was then asked about shows that we run for community value or the arts community and what impact COVID restrictions are having on them. Craig advised that demand has not come back from community hirers at this point, but the future impact is likely to be felt when a lot of programming comes back due to compression from 18 months of programming in a under a year.</p>
Rhonda Hawkins	MOTION: The Director’s report was accepted and approved



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	AGENDA ITEM #5 Finance & Results
Sainesh Moss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sainesh M updated the board with the financial performance result for financial year 2020/21. The financial year begun with a lockdown which impacted revenue generation considerably. The top priority in finance was re-forecasting and assessing the fully year budget impact. As part of re-forecasting, we are looking into costs and revenue and any other new initiative be it revenue generation or cost reduction. • Core KPI's in finance were presented. Considering the circumstances, Riverside is performing well against forecast in FY21/22 like it did in FY20/21. A copy of the finance update presentation is appended.
	AGENDA ITEM # 6 Program Update
Catherine Swallow (Programming Manager Presents) & Joanne Kee (Exec. Producer NTofP)	<p>Program Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine S gave an overview of presentations and upcoming program for Riverside. Including the running a digital program through lockdown with the Friday Night Lives and Q&A programs. Catherine advised Riverside is currently working with interstate colleagues on regional arts and Fringe festivals, and that SPOT ON Digital Festival would be starting soon. • Other major shows for the 2022 calendar year are 'Mamma Mia!', 'Freud's Last Session', 'Blue Bones' and of return of 'The Wharf Revue; the Australian Premiere 'Ghost Stories', a Packemin musical (TBA), 'Ulster American' and 'Jane Eyre'. Music highlights for 2022 include 'Songs From The Heart', 'Mozart's Clarinet' and for Children and young people – 'Alphabetical Sydney: All Aboard', 'Girls with Altitude', 'Robot Song' and 'Erth's Prehistoric World'. • Catherine also updated on Sydney Festival and the shows that are coming, starting with A Chorus Line at Riverside and The Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner in Lennox, kids show Zoom, and Katie Noonan: The Sweetest Taboo, which was due to open in November, but due to Covid this will within Sydney Festival. • Joanne K updated on National Theatre of Parramatta noting they have the archival content available for Stolen and since this performed well last year there was demand for this again this year. Take Two went online last week for a younger audience. Continuing with Zombie Thoughts we now have an education pack for making the app. Finally staging the nation podcast ongoing series. • Joanne updated on Sydney Festival for NTofP, including Rich Kids of Tehran (digital interactive performance) plus a digital first 'Things Hidden Since the Foundation of Time', both co-productions with the UK-based Javaad Alipoor company. • NTofP will also have shows brought forward from 2021 into 2022 including 'Guards at the Taj', 'Orange Thrower' and 'White Pearl'. With both Orange Thrower and White Pearl NTofP will be doing a lot of community engagement and activations.
	AGENDA ITEM # 7 Program Update



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<p>Jon Greig (Exec Director Community Services)</p> <p>And Mike Brew (Operation Manager)</p>	<p>Council and COVID Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jon G gave an update on Council’s response to COVID lockdown and community impact. Covid management is requiring a significant amount of Council time and focus, with Parramatta being one of the 12 LGA’s of concern. Local Emergency Management Plan has put in place at Rydalmere Operational Centre. Food emergency center was set up in Dundas for food hampers. Council’s crisis management team is stood back up. There is a substantial focus and concern for people’s wellbeing and community care.• Mike B provided a Riverside Theatre COVID update and current plans. Currently operating under Covid Plan version 8.1 as release in August. The NSW government has released a new clause around ventilation in the theatres. Plans will be updated accordingly to reflect this and any other new requirements. Riverside and City of Parramatta are also strongly encouraging staff to get to vaccination as soon as possible in readiness for return to work in Oct/Nov.• Craig M added that at this time there is no definitive position on mandatory vaccination. Based on everything telegraphed by the Premier to access venues and to working venues we it is expected to be highly likely the public health order will require double dose vaccination for access to venues. Once this is clarified we will be implemented it based on Council’s guidance and policy.• Jon added the vaccination requirements are already playing out in real time, e.g., for Childcare Centre workers who currently need to provide evidence of one vaccination and negative test result if working outside of the local government area.
AGENDA ITEM # 8 Draft Advisory Board Terms of Reference	
<p>Rhonda Hawkins (Chair)</p>	<p>Draft Advisory Board Terms of Reference <i>Review, discussion of the distributed revised terms.</i></p> <p>MOTION: Draft 2021 Riverside Advisory Board Terms of Reference was approved and recommended to be presented to Council / Governance for review.</p>
AGENDA ITEM # 9 Riverside Re-development Concept Proposal	
<p>Craig McMaster (Director Riverside Theatres)</p>	<p>Riverside Re-development Concept Proposal and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Craig M updated the Advisory Board on the Riverside redevelopment concept proposal. It was acknowledged that a genesis for the riverside redevelopment was the ‘reimagining Riverside’ document put together by the advisory board in 2018.• The concept proposal key points were presented. Craig explained that the concept is aimed to come in within the budget target of \$140-150M, and in line with the goals and aspirations of reimagining Riverside. The aim is for the final version of development to be put forward to council for endorsement and budget allocation in the fourth quarter of Calendar 2022.• Once a scheme is fully endorsed by Council, full design process will be commission in Q2 of Calendar 2022, with a goal to have designed completed by Q3 Calendar



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	<p>2022 (approximately a year out from closing the venue in Aug/Sept 2023). The target is for the venue to re-open in late 2025. So far, all consultants and schemes stakeholders have endorsed the concept as it stands, and due to not excavating underground carparking costs have been contained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate next steps are meetings and briefings with consultants to continue to reference design validation work, functional brief, and cost planning, with a goal of having this completed by the end of mid-November 2021.• MOTION: Call for the Advisory Board to Support the 2021 Redevelopment Concept Scheme The Riverside Advisory Board acknowledged their support for the 2021 Redevelopment Concept Scheme passed their endorsement for the proposal as presented.
Discussion	<p>Advisory Board members Keiasha N and Carl S asked about losing of the courtyard area.</p> <p>Craig M commented that operational the space has pain points and limitations from a weather, access, and fire egress perspective, often creating more challenges than it solves. The vision for the theatre is to be transparent and permeable with the exterior surrounds to create a feeling of connecting the theatre interior with outside areas.</p> <p>Keiasha N asked about the commercial aspect and in particular proposed café and the options for this to be a restaurant. It was clarified that due to space and location the scope of this café will be contained to casual dining only. Corporate clients catering requirements will be fulfilled by this café as well, with the support of external caterers for major functions.</p> <p>Carl added that the café will be an asset to artists working at Riverside.</p> <p>Luke complemented the concept and the opportunity for businesses to use the space.</p> <p>Keiasha asked if multicultural and mixed abilities needs are considered in the design. Craig said this has been a core focus of all iterations and is well documented in the functional brief.</p>
Rhonda Hawkins (Chair)	<p>General Business</p> <p>The Chair called on the Advisory Board to raise any additional or general business to discuss. There being none, the Chair called the meeting to a close.</p>
	<p>CLOSE OF MEETING - 8:06pm</p>