



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

RIVERSIDE THEATRES OPERATIONS

Meeting Date/Time: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 / 6.00PM AEST

A. CURRENT OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Reopening

- Very positive reactions to our first few events (Mark Vincent / Classical Blockbusters).
- Operational delivery from team has been outstanding. Very positive feedback from clients and patrons, and equally positive feedback from hirers and performers.
- Recent changes we have made to operational setup and service approach are showing benefits in service delivery, customer experience and revenue.

COVID Update

- Latest COVID Safety Plan was released on 18th of October. Includes requirements surrounding double vaccination, ventilation improvements and some minor changes to record keeping.
- Riverside currently operating at 100% capacity with all patrons over 16years requiring double vaccination.
- Riverside has a clear Conditions of Entry including, staying away if feeling ill and getting tested, wearing a mask, checking in, and displaying double vaccination evidence.
- CoP WHS team are still working on updates to the internal COVID case/notification procedures.
- CoP People and Culture and WHS team have drafted a vaccination policy with staff fitting into various categories for the work they perform.
- Most of the Riverside staff are now double vaccinated. Unvaccinated staff members will not be able to work at this stage. CoP Vaccination policy is currently under review.
- For the post Dec 15 / 95% vaccination milestone, Riverside has submitted a recommendation to CoP to maintain mandated vaccination for patrons over 16years of age until the end of January. This is consistent with what many other venues and theatres companies are recommending across industry.
- Staggered return to office to support requirements of marketing and delivering live performances, continuing with daily check-ins to ensure everyone is okay with the transition
- Mike and Craig are still engaged in weekly reopening strategy meetings with the other Community Services managers and lead by Jon Greig.



Venue Operations

- Critical compliance maintenance has been performed in the Riverside and Lennox Theatres on the fly systems and orchestra pit.
- The rough sleeper situation on the front loggia was jointly addressed by the CoP Social & Community Services team, City Safe team, Regulatory and Cleansing team. Actioned a major clean-up of the area and the moving on of rough sleepers who were blocking fire exits and public thoroughfare.
- Council Cleansing Dept is regularly cleaning the loggia early in the mornings and there is a plan to erect some local government act signage within the space.
- The OzHarvest hamper program to which our facilities staff had been redeployed to near the end of lockdown has run its course and will be wrapping up with council involvement soon. Peter Duffy (Facilities Coordinator) and his team did an amazing job in supporting this effort and has been positively acknowledged in several communications from CoP Executive Director Jon Grieg and CEO Brett Newman.
- Bar systems have been restored, cleansed and tested ahead of reopening. Operations team are currently carrying out a detail review of bar sales patterns, products pricing and promotions, and develop a plan for an enhanced offering to drive sales and per capita spend growth.
- FOH Ops team are currently recruiting additional casual staff via the CoP recruitment team to gear up for busy December/January Sydney Festival period.
- Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) has reached Riverside with footpath and repaving. This has caused some issues (including accidental cutting of the main network fibre and working with them on access requirements for the studios). Currently the Riverside customer experience is somewhat compromised due to access restrictions caused by PLR works.

Riverside Presentations

a) Riverside Presentations- 2022 Program

- Mainstage Theatre Season Programmed Jan- June, with Jul- Dec in final stages of confirmation
- Music Program - Actively programming music, especially April - July.

b) Education Youth and Families

- 2022 Education Program (Primary and Secondary) Brochure at Print for release late Nov
- School bookings returning with AT Live's Norm and Ahmed (15-20 Nov)
- Ticket Subsidy Program for 2022 confirmed
- Riverside Educator's Panel
- Spot On(line) Children's Festival successful delivery in September School Holidays
- Youth Engagement- Riverside Upstage Youth Program and Sharp Short Theatre Confirmed for 2022



c) Cinema

- Highlights: Croatian Film Festival (18-21 Nov, some sessions already sold out)
- Exhibition on Screen and Met Opera Return
- Performance and Exhibition on Screen Series Programming 2022 now

d) Digital

- Riverside Digital 2022 Series Concludes on 19 Nov
- Digital strategy - Commencing work for ongoing digital strategy
- Applying for Australia Council Digital Strategist Grant (Due Dec 2021)

e) Access

- Panel Discussion on International Day of People with a Disability 3 December
- Beyond the Square- Contracting new service provider for 2022 program
- Audience Accessibility- Consultation underway with Deaf community to review Auslan delivery for 2022
- Auslan and AD performances confirmed for Mamma Mia and performances in 2022
- Relaxed Performances - 6 confirmed in Education Program. Family program TBC.
- Exploring opportunities for new focused program in Nov 2022

**f) Report from Riverside Educator's Panel Meeting by Amy Matthews
*Term 4, 2021 - Thursday November 4***

- Excellent turn out for first in-person meeting back after lockdown- attended by 11 out of 15 members and 9 staff members.
- 2022 Education Program: Very positive comments about the 2022 program in general.
- NTofP Program: Joanne Kee presented the NTofP program. Comments were positive and excited about the fantastic new work on offer.
- Content considerations- 'Nothing': Erin Taylor- director of NTofP show 'Nothing' came to ask members about difficult content considerations. Some excellent feedback given on focussing on craft and not content.
- 2022 Education Brochure: Amy Matthews presented the 2022 Education Brochure design and program. Brochure comments from members- positive about changes made including only producing 1 brochure (K-12), presenting shows chronologically by term, contents table with year group and genre info and addition of QR code.
- Excursions in 2022: General positive feeling about being able to attend excursions in 2022 with good COVID planning. Vaccination policies a bit of a concern for younger students.



g) Finance Overview

- Full presentation provided for in agenda from Sainesh Moss, Business Manager

h) Commercial Hires

- 2022 Hires and co-presents program very strong, including previously discussed 'A Chorus Line' and other Sydney Festival shows, Mamma Mia, Wharf Revue and Ghost Stories, plus increase d music activity with SoundWest, The Whitlams etc.
- Hirers very pleased with results achieved from Covid support grants with many recognising Riverside's contribution to their grant success (eg Cumberland Gang Show).
- Currently working on revised rate card and updated Hiring Agreement for 2022.

i) **NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA**



- A playwriting partnership was launched with Australian Plays Transforms for new writers.
- White Pearl continued its tour with 5 shows presented at the OzAsia Festival in Adelaide to critical acclaim. Nearly 1100 people attended a performance.
- Postponed seasons are now rescheduled for STC Wharf, Riverside and Canberra Theatre for 2022 beginning at STC in March.
- Submitted Crown Packer Foundation acquittal for year 2021.
- Submitted a RISE funding application for a national tour in 2023.
- Stolen Digital (archival version) has sold 104 schools sessions.
- We are at final contracting stage with Sydney Festival for two shows in 2022 produced in association with the Javaad Alipoor Company.
- Two Creative Hello events have been hosted, one for dramaturgical skills with Courtney Stewart and the other for networking for playwrights.
- Hosted a creative development for A Practical Guide to Self Defence, a collaboration with Merrigong Theatre.
- Joanne was selected for the Australia Council, Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement mentorship. This comprises 8 participants from around Australia.
- Joanne was a speaker at the Women's Club, Meet the Artist Program in a line-up with Sydney Festival Director and actor Kate Fitzpatrick.



B. PEOPLE AND CULTURE UPDATE

- All major venues in NSW have reopened and operating at 100%
- Many major venues maintaining position of vaccination required for entry (above and beyond post 95% PHO requirement).
- This guidance is consistent with industry information that I've been provided by various commercial producers and promoters and arts companies.
- Likely QR code checkin will be maintain for theatres, pubs and clubs.
- No other major changes in industry standards envisaged

C. PEOPLE AND CULTURE UPDATE

- Welcome to our new Marketing Manager (Sophie Anderson) who commenced 22 November. Sophie has an extensive arts marketing and management background and comes to us from her position as Senior Marketing Manager for Michael Cassel Group.
- Casual positions identified as desirable to convert to permanent have all been actioned. These roles were identified as requiring action following the 2020 Staff Engagement survey results.
- 4 long serving casual staff have now been confirmed on temporary permanent roles.
- Employee Engagement Action Plan has been developed and is in process of implementation.

D. MARKETING UPDATE

- New team to be in place for January 2022, next Recruitment to be Digital Marketing Producer; Marketing & Communication Officer and Marketing Assistant
- Around 10,000 quarterly brochures to land in mailboxes in early December to promote shows in December, January, February, March. QR code on each page to track sales from brochure
- Weekly EDM announcements of shows for 2021; 2022 Riverside presents program; announcement of 2022 Education program; National Theatre of Parramatta 2022 season
- Spot (Online) Children Festival rolled out across PR, web, EDM and digital advertising
- Monitoring customer satisfaction for digital shows through survey system, last digital mid-November
- Education Brochure to launch for 2022 season to be sent to 7,000 schools
- New Patron Visit email created and to be implemented for first live performance
- First Reopening Performances invitations sent out to engage patrons to return to the theatre. Announcement of Sydney Festival performances at Riverside, largest Sydney Festival at Riverside