

ARMIDALE PLAYHOUSE

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Armidale Playhouse Incorporated

Strategic Plan for Building Restoration

(1st January 2018 to 31st December 2021)

The Armidale Playhouse Incorporated (APH) is a not for profit organisation formed to promote the practice and presentation of performing arts, music, and community arts in regional NSW.

The objectives of the APH are:

- A) To develop and maintain a community theatre for the performance of performing arts, music and community arts
- B) Provide opportunities for theatre and performance rehearsal, with also production training to include areas such as lighting, sound, and costuming.

This strategic plan reflects the intention to relicence the APH by addressing major building works to make a modern, safe, and fully functioning theatre to support its principal objectives. For the APH to redevelop and grow, direction for its efforts and activities is necessary. This three-year strategic plan is to support the specific goal of funding and building restoration. If/when this goal is achieved, a new plan should be developed to guide the operations and ongoing financial support necessary for the APH for the next 50 years and beyond. Should funding still be required for building restoration at the expiry of this current plan (December 2021) then it recommended the plan be reviewed and updated as necessary.

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1. Executive Summary

The APH has existed for 50 years with a principal aim of maintaining a community theatre for the performance of performing arts. However, the APH has been delicensed as an artistic venue for the last 13 years due to building fire and safety issues. In 2014 the APH membership decided to undertake action to identify the building work needed to regain a performance license and create a modern and fully functioning small public theatre for Armidale. This action was also to instigate actions to source funds to cover the costs of building work with this estimated at approximately \$500K. Since 2017, the APH has established subcommittees to support fund raising and building renovation planning. The APH executive has been active in the submission of grant applications (local, state, national) to seek funds to support this major work. In 2018 the APH constitution was also amended to support requirements to facilitate an application for Deductible Gift Status to attract voluntary donations for both building work and ongoing financial support. Accumulated funds and fundraising allowed for a Stage 1 work to be completed at the APH in 2018 comprising mostly relocation and building of new toilets with disability access. This strategic plan is to guide actions to continue to source funding to complete works and maintain the APH in support of its principal objective.

2. SWOT Analysis:

Strengths: The APH has a 50-year history. It is the only 'public' theatre in Armidale and throughout its history has maintained a reputation for quality productions. The APH has a strong and energetic committee with key members elected annually who all work towards improving the Playhouse. The APH is situated on Crown Land and its main tenant, the Armidale Drama and Musical Society (ADMS) has a mutual relationship with the APH given the amalgamation of the societies in 2010. The ADMS currently pays the APH an annual stipend to cover basic costs such as rates, power and water.

Weaknesses: The APH has been unable to provide performance given its poor state of repair with dated facilities and major issues including fire safety, lack of adequate patron and actor facilities. It requires major renovation to meet standards and current building requirements. The theatre and grounds are in need of major construction work including new toilet facilities, front of house facilities, major roof realignment, removal and replacement of exterior walls, technical requirements for lighting and sound, new stage, patron seating, actors dressing and green rooms, disability access, roofing, paved parking spaces.

Opportunities: A renovated and refitted APH can continue to provide a small community theatre that is not compromised with competing demands such as those evident with high school and university theatre spaces.

Threats: There are other theatre spaces in the city (such as TAS Hoskins; UNE Arts Theatre; and the planned theatre at Armidale Secondary College) and these support both local and out-of-area productions. These other theatre spaces do not however provide a threat to the delivery of the performing arts at the APH in Armidale.

3. Mission Statement:

The mission of the APH is to enrich the culture of Armidale by providing a venue for theatrical and other performing arts productions, but also volunteer opportunities, education and training in the performing arts, and to provide a venue for other cultural activities.

4. History:

In the 1960s the Department of Education decided to build a new Drummond School and Professor Maurice Kelly, then president of the Armidale Theatre Club, arranged with the Department to secure the building and relocate it on a block of Crown land, its current site.

The building plans were approved in October 1967 with the official opening on March 29, 1969, with a gala performance of Sheridan's *The Rivals* directed by Gwen Foggon and starring Antony Llewellyn-Jones, later to be a professional and well-known actor in Australian stage and TV.

The APH continued to provide a performance space until 2006 at which time it was delicensed due to inadequate fire and safety requirements. The APH amalgamated with the ADMS but maintained a separate committee to take responsibility of the building and its relationship to the Office of Crown Lands.

The lack of a public theatre in Armidale has led the current committee over the last three years to begin the process of relicensing the APH to provide a small venue for public performance and performance skills development.

5. APH Committee:

There are three formal executive positions that constitute the APH committee. These positions are voted annually at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) that usually occurs in August. These consist of the President, Vice-President, and a Gift Fund Officer to support the Treasurer. The roles of Treasurer and Secretary are undertaken by those officers elected for the ADMS which are voted at a separate AGM held following the APH AGM. The current APH committee is:

President:	Benjamin Thorn
Vice-President:	Gordon Cope
Gift Fund Officer:	Warren Bartik
Treasurer (ADMS):	Greg Quast
Secretary (ADMS):	Stuart Pavel

6. Current Financial Position

Year ending 30/6/2018:	Working account \$ 21,645.33
Year ending 30/6/2019:	Working account \$ 13,503.25
	IBD \$10,000

7. Sub-Committees

In 2018, a Playhouse Restoration Fundraising Sub-Committee was established to support efforts to raise money for building restoration. This sub-committee ran a Dinner and Auction Fundraising evening in June 2018 which raised approximately \$15,000. This sub-committee continues to meet as required to support fundraising activities for the APH. A Building Renovation Subcommittee was also formed in 2016 to direct and plan any renovations to be undertaken at the APH. This sub-committee continues to meet as required.

8. Renovations required

Under advice from architect Antony Deakin, it was determined that renovations to the APH needed to be considered in stages. Stage 1 was to comprise demolition of a major part of front of house to accommodate relocation of new toilet facilities including disability access toilet. Also included were new access points and commencement of a new bio box including electrics. The cost for Stage 1 was just under \$90,000. With funds already accumulated, Stage 1 was commenced in mid-2018 and completed by October that same year. Stage 2 was estimated at around \$200,000 and consists of:

- Major structural work including roof trusses and new roofing

- Extending side wall to accommodate green room and actor change rooms
- Removal and replacement of all exterior wall timber panelling
- Fire and safety fittings
- FOH – box office, patron bar and kitchen facilities
- New staging
- New patron theatre seating
- Disability access
- New electrics and technical equipment throughout

Stage 3 is the finishing of all elements to bring the APH back to a fully functioning community theatre. This final stage is estimated at approximately \$100,000 and includes:

- Painting and finishing of all interior and exterior surfaces
- Paved parking including disability parking
- Exterior landscaping and signage

9. Funding Plan

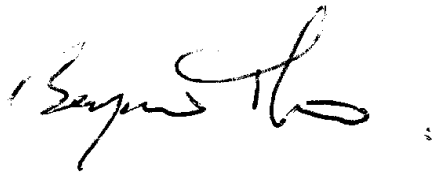
The APH through its executive and membership needs to identify broad ranging strategies that include the identification and procuring of funds to support restoration costs. These should include:

- 9.1. The fundraising sub-committee to continue to plan for annual events such as auctions, dinners, trivia nights to raise money to contribute to the cost of building works and ongoing building maintenance.
- 9.2. The APH executive to continue to identify possible grants to support building renovation with funding submission made and worked on by the executive/ membership as required.
- 9.3. The APH executive consider approaches to philanthropic organisations to support building restoration and other financial/plant equipment required for restoration.
- 9.4. The APH to continue to request the ADMS to supports its basic costs to the sum of \$6000 per year.
- 9.5. The APH executive consider community requests to rent the main floor space for meetings and rehearsal.
- 9.6. The APH via its Gift Fund Officer undertake an application to ROCO for DGR status.
- 9.7. The APH modify its website to accommodate online public donations
- 9.8. If DGR status is successfully obtained, then the APH promote and approach donors to set-up a regular contribution system.
- 9.9. The APH executive approach past and current benefactors who might be willing to contribute either one-off or periodic funds that contribute towards general building costs or for specific projects such as FOH, seating etc.
- 9.10. The APH executive seek sponsorship form local business owners

- 9.11. The APS (ADMS) Treasurer proactively seek out the best interest return for any funds invested for building restoration.
- 9.12. The APH executive approach Armidale local theatre and performance groups to consider a profit % donation to the APH.
- 9.13. The APH executive consider environmentally friendly building restoration features that will have a medium to longer term reduction in running costs and future maintenance.

10. Endorsement

This strategic plan is signed and endorsed by the APH President - Benjamin Thorn.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin Thorn', with a small flourish at the end.

Signed

Dated 20 October 2019