

LA BOITE

2022 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

At La Boite, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work – the Turrbal and Jagera people. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and their ancient and enduring cultures.

This country was home to storytelling long before La Boite and we are grateful for the privilege of sharing our stories today. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land. We engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, supporting their right to self-determine artistic identity, while promoting artists and emerging talent, audience development and community engagement.

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STATEMENTS

“La Boite is a company that is bringing to life the words many of us have on paper in our strategies and operational plans. They are a company for the world of today and they make theatre that reflects this.”

LOUISE BEZZINA

Artistic Director, Brisbane Festival

Nearly a century of operation requires resilience and ingenuity. Much has changed since its inception in 1925, but La Boite's appetite for development, transformation and renewal remains the same.

La Boite continues to develop artists and audiences who seek to represent and engage in our rich and diverse culture. We exist to push the boundaries of theatre and its form by collaborating with extraordinary people who enrich and diversify the narratives, practices and voices on Australia's main stages.

OUR VISION

To be Australia's most diverse theatre company.

OUR MISSION

To create powerful connections between artists and audiences through stories that entertain, move, empower, surprise and transfix.

WE VALUE

RELATIONSHIPS

La Boite is people-centred, embedding a mindset of thoughtful risk-taking, creativity and innovation while being responsive to our partners' shared strengths and aspirations, and enhancing audience expectations.

RESILIENCE

Through a passionate dedication to diversity, La Boite will thrive with considered, confident and connected strategies that strengthen the company.

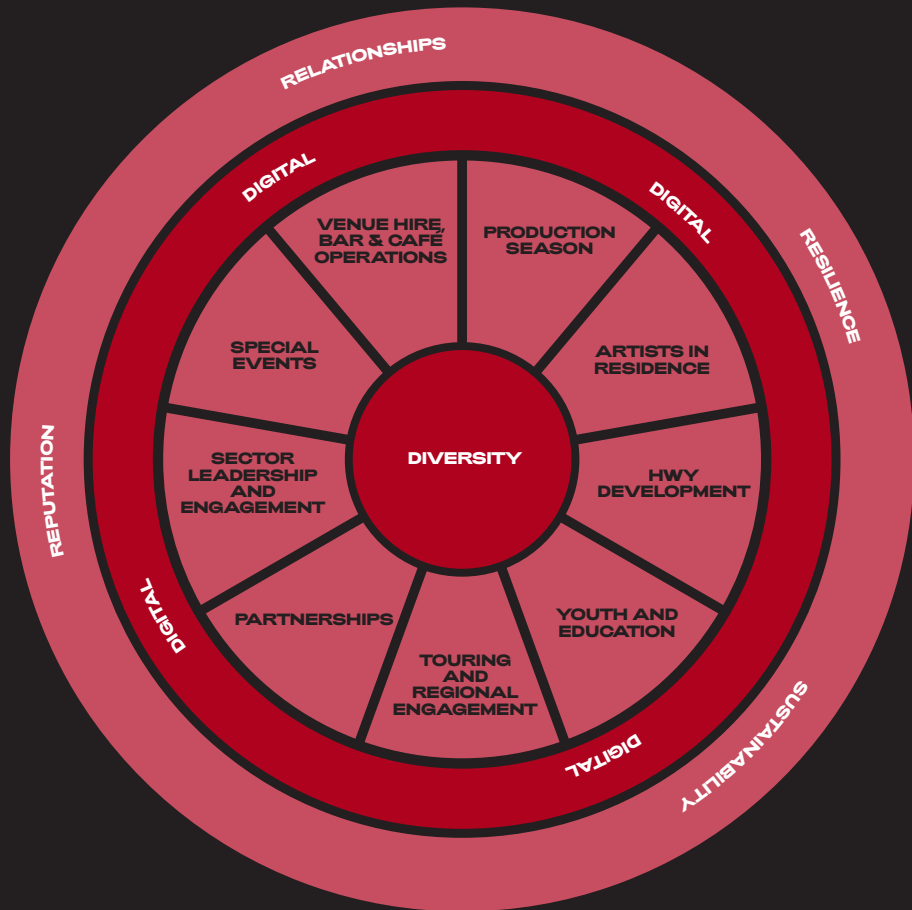
REPUTATION

La Boite will continue to grow and strive for greater profile, cementing its role as a vital cultural hub in Brisbane, Queensland and Australia while also distinguishing itself globally as a passionate and necessary storytelling institution.

SUSTAINABILITY

La Boite will strengthen its sustainability and independence through commercial growth, enabling increased artistic and audience development.

WHAT WE DO?



PRODUCTION SEASON

In each annual season, work will be programmed with a careful mix of both risk-taking critical new works, and more commercial, box-office focused productions that consider existing audiences.

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Through its rigorous development pipeline, La Boite supports artists with bespoke 12- to 24-month programs designed to develop their specific work and processes. This includes commissions, creative developments and ongoing investment through extended sector collaboration to create new works.

HWY DEVELOPMENT

La Boite supports artist and audience development through the HWY Development program, which includes a series of public showings of work in developments by local and nationally significant artists, workshops and masterclasses, critical discourse and extended activity throughout the year.

YOUTH & EDUCATION

La Boite's programs align with the Queensland and National Drama Curriculums and provides educational and training experiences for school students, teachers and emerging artists, making our annual Youth & Education offerings both relevant and responsive.

TOURING AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

By delivering regional and national touring productions, direct transfers, as well as securing co-productions of new works, La Boite strategically aligns itself with like-minded companies and organisations to expand regionally and consolidate audience engagement.

PARTNERSHIPS

By developing valuable and engaged partnerships that focus on special projects and productions, La Boite cultivates deep connections and collaborations through reciprocity, access, integration and ongoing conversations about the value of the arts.

SECTOR LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

La Boite's Board and management will continue to advocate for the company and the wider arts sector across local, state, national and international platforms. This includes leadership and participation at arts markets, forums, assessment panels, mentorship opportunities and extracurricular artistic engagements.

SPECIAL EVENTS

As part of La Boite's Place-making Strategy, La Boite will curate a program of community engagement activities and multi-artform public programming within our precinct. Collaborating and engaging with communities is integral to the works we present and develop in our annual program.

VENUE HIRE, BAR & CAFE OPERATIONS

Since its 2017 renovation, the La Boite Espresso Bar has expanded its offering to service audiences and the local community. La Boite can cater to many different events and functions in both our Roundhouse Theatre, La Boite Studio, bar and foyer areas.

DIGITAL

As we enter our second century of operations, La Boite focuses on ensuring that digital touchpoints exist in all we do to enhance our physical interactions. La Boite embraces and adopts technology with purpose, in the pursuit of operational excellence and our commitment to accessibility for artists, audiences and communities.

CONTEXT

In its inner-city Kelvin Grove setting, La Boite is Australia's longest continuously running theatre company, celebrating 100 years of continual operation in 2025. Nearly a century of existence takes both resilience and ingenuity; at La Boite, we are responding to changes in society by reflecting its diversity on our stages. We are home to the iconic 400-seat Roundhouse Theatre, **the country's only purpose-built theatre-in-the-round.**

As Brisbane's second tier theatre company, La Boite is a vital part of the city's theatre ecology and wider cultural landscape, occupying the space between independent practice and the state's largest theatre company, Queensland Theatre.

La Boite plays a crucial role in the local, state and national arts sector as **an incubator and producer** of risky, innovative, and critical new work. La Boite is committed to local artists and provides a critical pipeline of new work across the performing arts sector in Queensland. La Boite strives to **redress the imbalance of representation** on our stages by focusing on artists, voices, and stories that have existed on the fringes without a significant platform.

In 2019, of the artists that La Boite engaged, 51% were women and 45% were culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or First Nations People. In addition, over 20% of our audience identified as CALD or First Nations People. With diversity now entrenched in La Boite's identity, the company's next phase is to continue our journey of representation and diversity across all levels of the organisation.

2020 was one of the most challenging and disruptive of La Boite's 95-year history. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic La Boite was forced to cancel the 2020 season however, never closed the doors to artists and creatives. La Boite focused on and **prioritised innovation, sector sustainability and growth** and of the 252 people engaged in 2020; 70% were artists, 60% women or female identifying, 20% First Nations People and 30% Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

La Boite's creative vision aligns demographically with **Brisbane's increasing cultural diversity.** The Brisbane population is growing at a rate of 2% per year¹ with a marked increase in Queensland's immigration intake from non-English speaking nations since 2005, predominately from India, China, South Africa, the Philippines and South Korea². Queensland has a higher proportion of

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (4%) compared to Australia (2.4%) and La Boite continues its ongoing commitment to enabling self determined pathways for First Nations people, stories and presentations on our stages. With theatre and dance representing some of the highest growth areas in public participation in the arts³, La Boite's dedication to progressive representation and diversity means it is well-positioned to be making theatre that is both bold and relevant.

La Boite will be moving forward with a strong, deliberate focus on its audience, addressing challenges of relevancy, box office targets, return visitation and cultivating the symbiotic relationship between the work that we make and the individuals who engage with it. La Boite boasts a strong, youthful audience base (**over 40% of our audience is under 30; over 30% high school-age**). This demographic is the future of arts patronage and requires consistent guidance, investment and authentic engagement. In future planning and campaigns, the company will bring artists and audiences together through dialogue and curated opportunities to engage deeper with the work. As we deliver this strategy, we will undertake rigorous research to inform future planning and programming.

La Boite is operationally funded by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Federal Government through the Australia Council for the Arts. In 2017, La Boite was successful in securing three-year organisational funding from Brisbane City Council for the first time in the company's history.

That same year, La Boite secured funds from Queensland University of Technology (QUT), owners of the Roundhouse Theatre, to undertake major capital works valued at \$1.5 million to renovate the foyer and bar areas and upgrade the theatre's lighting gantry. These local, state and federal support networks further highlight our vital place in the cultural fabric of Brisbane.

The renovation of the La Boite Espresso Bar has introduced another revenue stream to achieve (over time) a more self-sufficient funding model, including venue hire for events, and bar and cafe operations. More importantly, it is anticipated that these branches of the business will foster our commitment to new work and diversity through community and sector connectedness and better audience experiences.

1. <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/about-council/governance-and-strategy/business-in-brisbane/business-opportunities/brisbane-community-profiles>
2. <https://www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/multicultural-affairs/multicultural-communities/multicultural-diversity-figures.html>
3. Australia Council, National Arts Participation Survey 2016

ARTISTIC VISION

“I love La Boite because of their true commitment to being inclusive, dynamic, local and relevant. By wanting to bring diverse stories to their stage they created the platform for me, a mature Chinese woman, to finally have a real voice. They gave me an opportunity which relaunched my entire acting career. Supported my needs for being a working mother of two young ones and have become like my second family. Thank you La Boite! ”

**HSIAO-LING TANG,
SINGLE ASIAN FEMALE (2017 - ONGOING)
#35REASONS**

Our artistic vision and our business strategy are deeply interconnected. The following principles guide our artistic rationale and drive our ongoing assessment of our artistic and cultural vibrancy. A holistic approach to our strategic plan will drive every aspect of the company.

La Boite will continue to **champion diversity** with ongoing and meaningful development and **representation of gender, First Nations, CALD, LGBTIQ+, d/Deaf and/or disabled artists** and their work. This involves the programming of critical artists, companies, stories, and storytellers that produce vital theatre that connects with audiences on a personal, political, and global level. La Boite invests in artists, companies, and new theatre forms that sit at the forefront of contemporary theatre practice. The connectedness, relevance, and cultural significance of these narratives will articulate a vision for a future of arts practice in Brisbane and beyond.

We will **unify artists, audiences and communities** through a shared journey of development, creation, and delivery of high-calibre theatre works. Alongside the commitment to diversity and representation on our stages, La Boite will invest in the growth of audiences and deeply understand and align with the overarching vision for the company and its ongoing contribution to the sector.

The company will act as **a vital incubator for the seeding and development of new work** within the Brisbane and Queensland sector through the delivery of a comprehensive annual Artist Development program which includes Artists in Residence, Assistant Creatives, HWY and more.

Fiercely local and outward-looking. La Boite will continue to grow its significant legacy as a local theatre company. As a producing house, we champion and develop our local artists and value their wisdom and essential contribution. La Boite will continue to foster artistic growth and the company’s impact and outreach on a local, national, and international scale.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES TOGETHER

We will develop daring and passionate artists and audiences through a shared journey.

La Boite will;

- incorporate equally both artists and audiences when curating and producing theatre and live performance;
- grow shared pathways, open digital resources and collaborate with local artistic leaders and institutions to better work collaboratively;
- build an audience development strategy that focusses on diverse communities that translates complimentary ticket holders to ticket buyers over a period of time;
- develop HWY into a program of year round events that educate and engage audiences on a deeper level through the delivery of critical discourse through our works-in-development and main stage seasons;
- execute a clear brand awareness campaign that engenders understanding of La Boite, its history, location, artistic vision and its role within the community;
- implement a touring strategy that secures sustainable and smart national tours and deliberate transfers of popular new works;
- produce and deliver a Youth & Education program that is reflective of the needs of institutions, educators and students while also developing the sector's future actors, practitioners and audiences.

CREATE

We will create new and impactful theatre and experiences.

La Boite will;

- create cutting-edge work with diverse communities that is transformative and enables people to thrive;
- present a standard of work that is notable for its ambition, excellence and artistic quality;
- produce and present work against a framework that ranges in scale and suitability for various sites including our Roundhouse Theatre, La Boite Studio and outdoor surrounds;
- foster an Artist in Residence and rolling HWY program that effectively supports and delivers aspirational and outstanding work that pushes the boundaries of contemporary theatre practice in Brisbane and Australia;
- introduce, in collaboration with our partner QUT, a successful, curated and shared place-making strategy and program that enhances and extends our precinct long-term.
- produce high quality digital content that supports and compliments our theatre and live programs

GOALS & STRATEGIES

LEADERSHIP

We will develop, nurture and lead partnerships and leadership frameworks.

La Boite will;

- grow our deeply-engaged relationships with partners who connect us to the community;
- develop new voices for the stage;
- enact a living Cultural Competency Framework that enables La Boite to develop, present, co-produce and lead ground-breaking diverse work and restructure the organisation to make space for the required cultural changes;
- contribute to and attend national and international events to reinforce La Boite's profile and reputation while building opportunities;
- advocate for our own artists as well as the broader sector through representation, participation and ongoing sector development;
- enhance diversity within the Board, staff and artists through dynamic succession and recruitment.

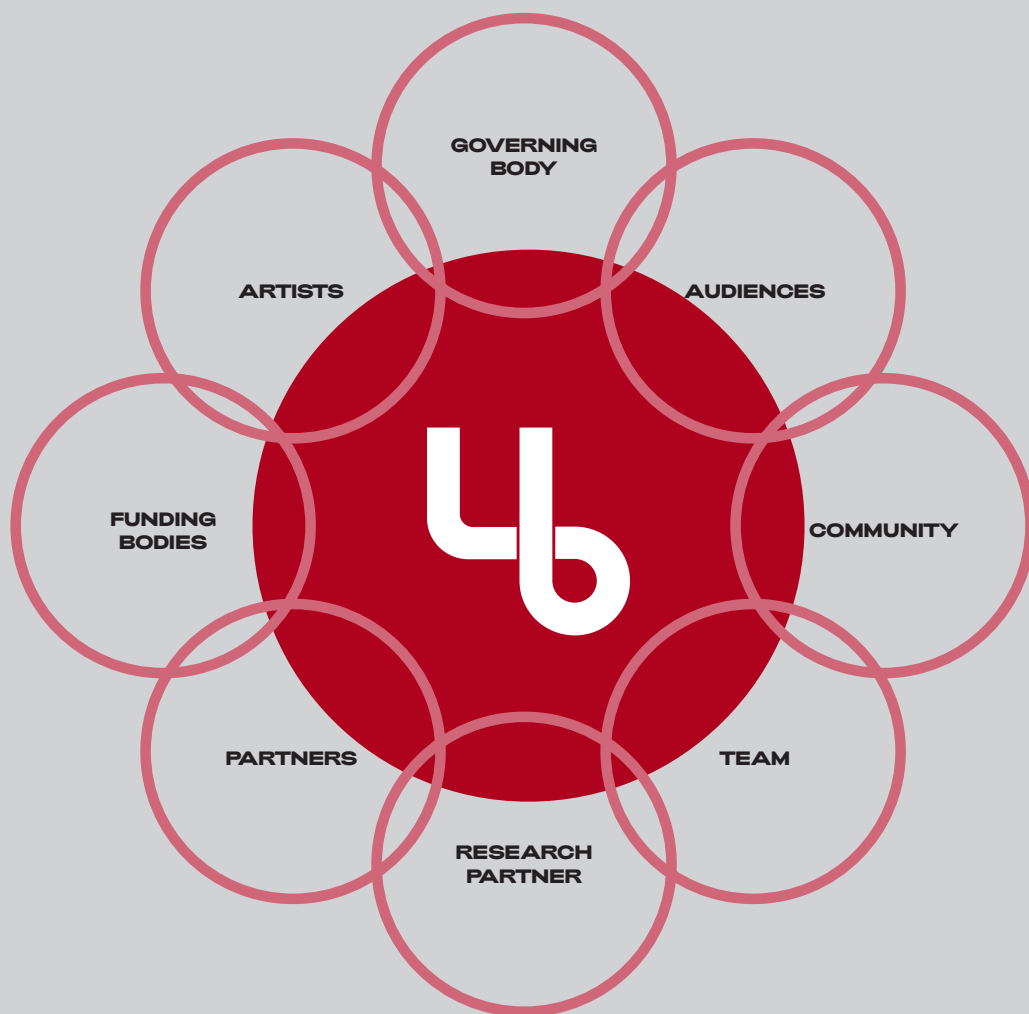
FIT FOR THE FUTURE

We will become future-fit, investing in the right research and technology while diversifying revenue streams.

La Boite will;

- integrate digital technology into all areas of our business resulting in fundamental changes to how La Boite operates and how we deliver value to our stakeholders;
- further diversify revenue streams through growth in our venue's activities including the bar, cafe, functions and venue hire;
- build reserves to 15% - 20% of expenditure, while committing to an annual spend of no less than 3% - 5% of surplus for the development of new work through our artist in development programs;
- create a sponsorship strategy that aligns with the La Boite brand, program and business model for local and national partners;
- introduce and deliver an ongoing Capital Campaign to invest in equipment and technology;
- build a longitudinal evaluation to research our impact and align our programs with the needs and interests of our audiences and partners so we can better understand and respond to the ever-changing influences, interests and expectations of our audience (current, emerging and untapped);
- nurture our organisational culture to be healthy, safe and sustainable;
- build sustainable work practises including, carbon offsetting and reducing energy consumption (recycling sets, green riders etc);
- create an Artistic Development Reserve, allocating up to 3% - 5% of surplus ensuring a commitment to the development of new Australian stories.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES



GOVERNING BODY

The Board work with the CEO to develop and implement strategies and supporting policies to enable the company to fulfil the objectives set out in the organisation's constitution and strategic plan.

AUDIENCES

Our growing and diverse audience aligns with La Boite's values, celebrating the development of new work. They reflect the diversity of our program and remain passionate about theatre and its forms, inviting them to a theatre that places their voices and stories on stage. La Boite will increase return visitation and continue to service and engage our strong youthful audience. We will continue to work with local and interstate partners to ensure our work reaches diverse audiences locally and nationally through touring and co-productions.

COMMUNITY

We witness the transformative storytelling that can happen in communities and we want to make stories that reflect diverse voices, share our values and align with our goals, passions and ambitions. Our community is broad and diverse; urban and regional, individuals of all ages and genders, First Nations, LGBTQI+, CALD, d/Deaf and/or disabled and the wider arts sector.

TEAM

The La Boite team respectfully and generously combine their efforts, skills, resources and arts-sector knowledge to deliver our goals.

RESEARCH PARTNER

Patternmakers, a research agency specialising in culture, creativity and community, will provide a Research Framework and Data Roadmap for La Boite. Areas of investigation include audience development, best practice for engaging with diverse communities, and a dynamic place-making strategy as well as informing La Boite's internal decisions regarding external stakeholder needs.

PARTNERS

La Boite creates and seeks engaged relationships with all sponsors, donors and partners that have aligned values and an interest in building reciprocity. Long term corporate partners, including Brisbane Airport Corporation, deepen their partnership through alignment with innovative projects and programs while community partners such as Multicultural Australia and Screen Queensland support La Boite in connecting with targeted and aligned communities.

La Boite pursues development and production partnerships with the local and national arts sector, particularly the independent and small- to medium-sector, including Dead Puppet Society, Digi Youth Arts and Playlab, with major partnerships including Brisbane Festival, Opera Queensland, QPAC, HOTA, Arts Centre Melbourne, and Australian Plays Transform (APT).

FUNDING BODIES

La Boite's primary funding bodies include the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, the Federal Government through Australia Council for the Arts as well as Brisbane City Council.

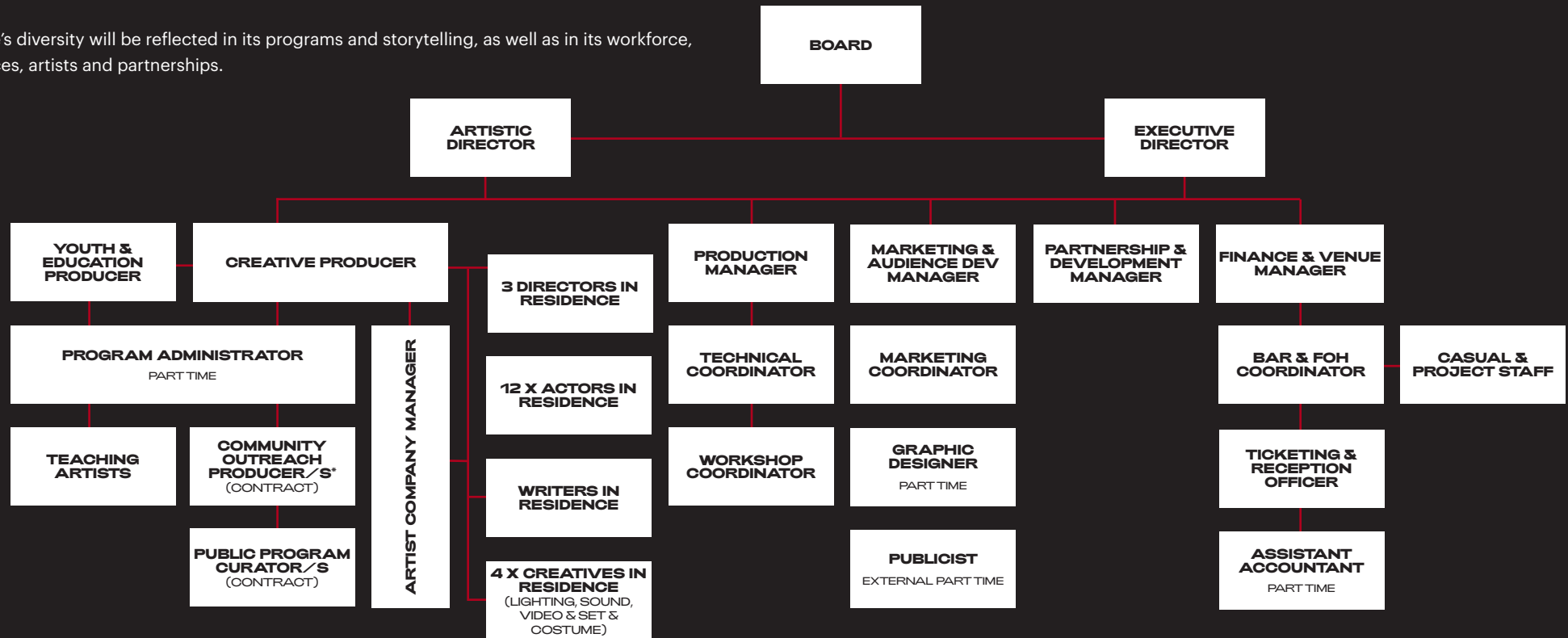
ARTISTS

The performing arts sector is a diverse stakeholder. La Boite works with local Brisbane and Queensland makers, while also connecting and collaborating with national and international artists and organisations. La Boite's diverse storytellers represent the community in which we live, bringing to life the urgent and necessary stories not limited by form or style. In 2019, 47% of all artistic engagements went to CALD or First Nations artists.

OUR TEAM

La Boite is committed to building workplace diversity, access and inclusion. Diversity is central to innovation, and access and inclusion are key to unlocking its potential. Diversity can include factors including cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location and life experiences.

La Boite's diversity will be reflected in its programs and storytelling, as well as in its workforce, audiences, artists and partnerships.



La Boite's Artist Company 2021 -2022 is a progressive and diverse collective of professional actors and theatre-makers who have been handpicked to lead La Boite's mainstage season, artist development programs and youth and education offerings over the next 18-months. Beyond 2022 La Boite will continue to support Artist Leadership through an In-Residence model.

Organisational structure as of February 2021

GOVERNANCE

BOARD RECRUITING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

La Boite Theatre Ltd is a charity and public company limited by guarantee. Its Board of directors has oversight of the organisation and reports to members at annual general meetings. Board members retire after three years and, if eligible and nominated, may be re-elected.

Succession plans have been developed with three new members joining the Board in 2020, with specific alignment to the goals set out in our Strategic Plan including but not limited to the development of a CCF and our *Place-making Strategy*. The La Boite Board meet bi-monthly and Board sub-committees are established to ensure adequate governance and to assist the executive team achieve the company's goals.

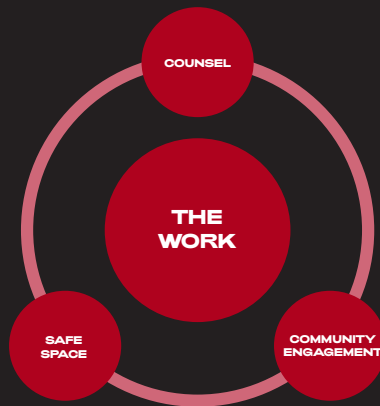
Board sub-committees include the:

- Financial & Risk Committee (meet 5 x times per year)
- Philanthropy & Fundraising Committee (meet 3 x per year)
- Marketing Committee (meet 3 x per year)
- Cultural Counsel/s (meet as required)

CULTURAL COUNSEL FRAMEWORK

La Boite will build on its trusted long-term engagement model and extend its experience working with diverse communities. To ensure that the work being made is best-placed to serve its community, the artists and our audiences, La Boite is committed to a Cultural Counsel Framework (CCF) that is built on three interdependent domains;

1. Counsel
2. Safe Spaces
3. Community Engagement



As part of its CCF, La Boite ensures that, depending on the specifics of the work or project, counsel will be sought from those best-placed at that point in time to contribute, leading to a genuinely inclusive engagement and operation.

STAFF RECRUITING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

La Boite's people-centred strategy places equal importance on its wide-ranging group of stakeholders, including but not limited to artists, audiences, partners, the local and national sector and the diverse communities La Boite engages with annually.

The Executive and Board are committed to building professional development opportunities through training, conferences and mentoring for all staff, and to continue to cultivate an environment that fosters teamwork and job satisfaction.

La Boite is committed to ensuring safe spaces and working practices across the organisation. Through strategic leadership, a zero tolerance policy, and ongoing cultural change, the company continues to support working spaces that are free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, and all other abuses of power. These values are deeply embedded within the creative spaces, artistic practices, reporting structures, and workplace culture of the organisation.

As part of our broader program of special events that align with our Place-making Strategy, La Boite plans to recruit specialised Public Program Curators (contract), who curate events and experiences each quarter that align with the program and themes of both QUT and La Boite activities.

Most importantly, with all recruitment La Boite will proactively seek out diverse candidates across staff, volunteers and artists, not always relying on those who might not have the confidence, the connections, the communication skills or previous experience to apply for a role. Just as we nurture the creation of new works through artists in residence, La Boite will nurture new staff.