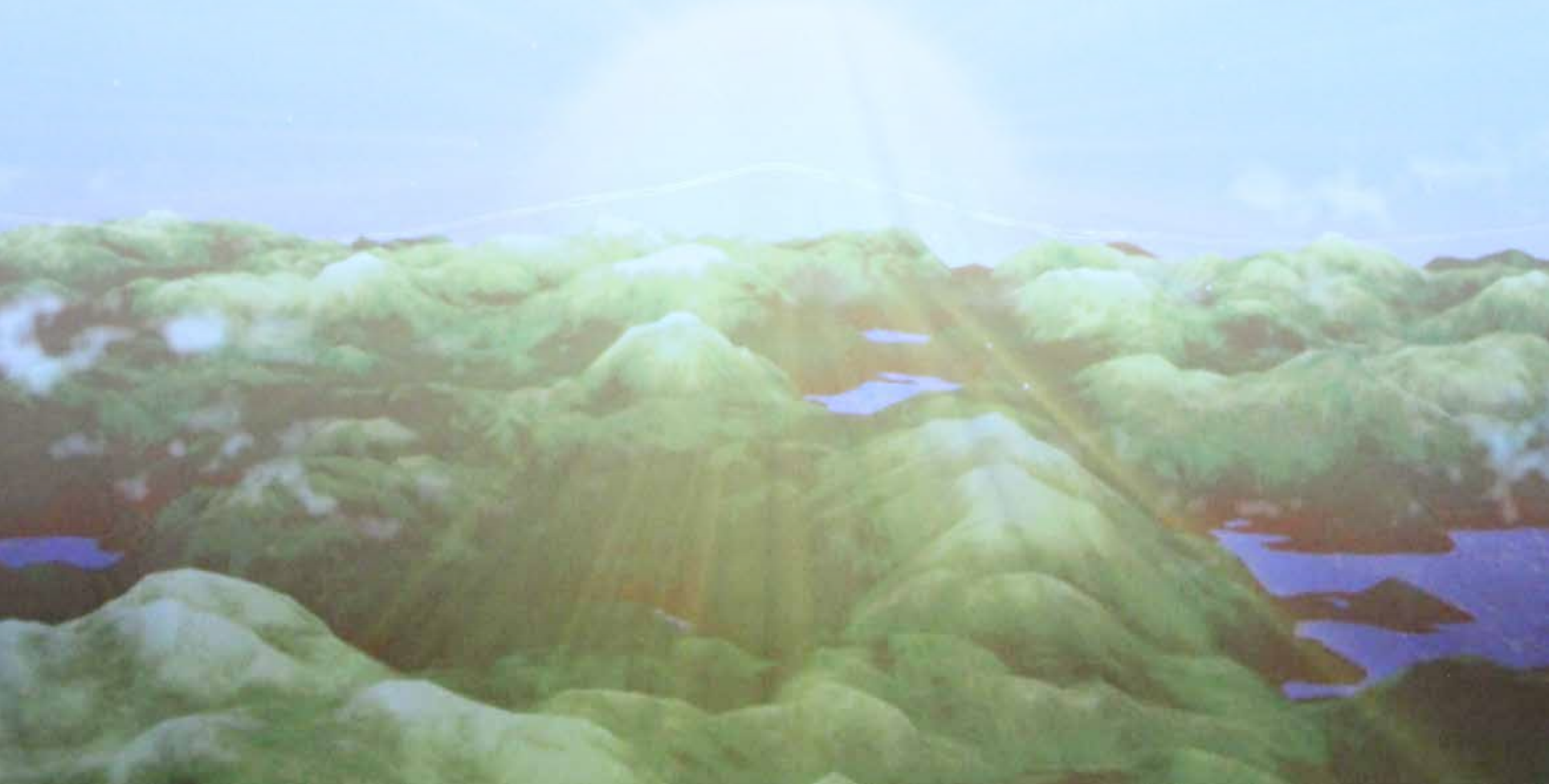




FY2019 Annual Report



Rebus Theatre acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the land where we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the art, culture and community building that Australia's first people have practised for over 60,000 years.



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Who we are

Our Name

A Rebus is a puzzle where pictures are used to represent words - pictures of an eye, a can of soup and the ocean could mean 'I can see'. In Rebus Theatre, we offer a puzzle of pictures and stories surrounding the challenges faced by marginalised members of society, inviting the audience to help us find the solutions.

Our History

We began in 2013 as participants in a community project to promote disability awareness and provide performance opportunities for actors with disabilities in the arts sector. This program was led by NICAN and funded by an ACT Government Innovations Grant.

In July 2014 after huge success, the members of the group came together as a separate entity and called ourselves Rebus Theatre. We incorporated as a not-for-profit association in early 2015 and have since expanded in both our mission and operations to develop and deliver a wide range of exciting projects including classes, workplace training, and creative projects addressing various social issues in our community.

Our mission

Rebus is a mixed ability company using theatre and other arts to stimulate healing and provoke social and environmental change. We work with people who have experienced marginalisation to create innovative, powerful performance in diverse contexts.

Our vision

A sustainable and ethical society that is inclusive, creative, compassionate and accessible to everyone.

Our Board



Simone Penkethman - President

Simone joined the Rebus Board in October 2016 and has been President since early 2017. She has a strong history and wealth of experience in the Arts and Community sectors in Canberra. Simone was an active musician, theatre practitioner and producer through the nineties and naughties. She worked as an artist and arts manager in a variety of community cultural development roles. In recent years, she has been a communications professional in community and government organisations, retaining her ties to the arts community through her work on arts boards and through her membership of Canberra Critic's Circle.

Simone's unique and valuable perspective, keen business sense, and knowledge of governance systems and protocol have been invaluable to the company over her tenure on the board. Her stalwart leadership and guidance has helped us through a time of much change and growth and the Rebus management team would like to thank Simone for her sage advice and ongoing support for Rebus' vision.

Craig Wallace - Vice-President

Craig has been involved in Rebus from the very beginning through his work at Nican, a disability information and referral service that acquired the initial funding for the project that led to our development as a company. He joined the Rebus board in October 2016 and took on the role of Vice President in 2017.

Craig also works as the Policy Manager at ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) and has led work on policy, campaigns and advocacy around housing, income support and employment, urban planning, transport, citizen engagement and investments in quality services for the Canberra community.

With a background in the Australian Public Service including housing policy, leading a community housing association, working in a business chamber and as the President of a national peak disability rights body, Craig is passionate about social justice, human rights and the importance of affordable and accessible housing. Craig has a disability and uses a wheelchair.





Noonee Doronila - Treasurer

Noonee joined the Rebus Board in October 2016 taking up the position of Treasurer. She has served on a number of local boards and committee's including the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, the Performing Arts Advisory Committee, the ACT Cultural Council and the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Committee.

Noonee is a Filipino Australian multicultural artist and has a 30-year career in social work with the Australian Public Service. Since moving to Canberra in 1996, Noonee has been involved in workshops for the development and production of plays, poetry publications and performance poetry focussing on issues of migration and cross-cultural identity.

Noonee has also written several plays and edited two community poetry books. She was a recipient of an Asialink Literature Residency in the Philippines. In 2007, she was an International Women's Day awardee by the ACT Government, for her contribution to multicultural arts. She is also a recipient of the Canberra Critics Circle Award 2007 for Theatre for writing and directing "Manila Takeaway". In 2015, she was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to the community through social welfare and cultural organizations.

Daniel Savage - Board Member

Daniel joined the Rebus Board in June 2019. Daniel has been a practicing visual artist based in Canberra for over a decade, exhibiting nationally and has developed a reputation for creating dynamic, engaging, and conceptually rigorous work. His practice is often self-referential, employing his individual experience of disability as a point of difference to engage audiences in exploring and reassessing established ideas and preconceptions that exist within society.

Daniel is also an active advocate for disability access, inclusion, and representation in the arts, having worked alongside major arts festivals, organisations and institutions to increase awareness and engagement.

He brings to the board his extensive knowledge of art and disability, his broad connections within both the contemporary art and disability community, and his passion for developing the skills, reputation and critical discourse of artists with disabilities.





Evelyne Meier - Board Member

Evelyne joined the Board unofficially in November 2018 and as an official director in February 2019. Evelyne loves art as a communication medium be this design, dance or theatre. She has experienced the impact of theatre in changing people's attitude when she was director of the Australian Institute of Family Centred Care.

She was keen to engage with people who are promoting social change, advocate for people with disabilities and are inclusive.

Evelyne has served on several boards. Her background spans nursing, international banking, government, education and the not for profit sector. She has a strong governance, grants and policy background and would like to apply these skills at Rebus.

Emma Gibson - Secretary to March 2019

Emma joined the board in October 2016 and became secretary in early 2017. She moved on from the board in March 2019.

Emma is a writer, theatre-maker and poet with a focus on place-based work. Emma has participated in artist residencies, workshops and festivals internationally and, as a playwright, has been performed across Australia and in Iceland, Sweden, the UK and Ireland and the USA.



Mili Dukic - Acting Secretary from March 2019

Mili joined the Rebus Board in May 2018. Mili has over 20 years' experience in human resources in both the corporate and the not-for-profit community sector particularly with local disability support and aged cared organisations. This together with extensive executive and administration experience gives Mili an exceptional ability to build excellent relationships at all levels.

Mili also previously held the role of Executive Manager with the Board of the Community Banks in Canberra, which returned profits to the community through local sponsorships and charity events, bringing together community leaders and businesses. Mili is passionate about supporting the development of community services with likeminded and meaningful organisations that make it possible for people to feel engaged and connected in the community.

President's Report

Reflecting on my third and final year as president of the board of Rebus Theatre Inc, I see 2019 as a year of growth, consolidation and maturation.

Rebus' early values, business goals and social priorities provide sound foundations that underpin the company's growth.

Through their tireless work and sensitive engagement, the Rebus management team has built a fully formed business, employing artists with and without disability, with a growing reputation, audience, and clientele across community, government and the arts.

Rebus is a true social enterprise, providing training, work experience and employment pathways in the performing arts for people living with disability.

In December 2018, Rebus won the ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Award for excellence in championing human rights. The citation referred to Rebus' 'Open Doors Open Minds' project, noting that:

"It celebrates people with disability as the experts in their own inclusion."

This annual report shows a significant output that is all the more impressive when one takes into account the time spent by the management team in developing collaborative partnerships and securing funding.

Rebus is moving into a new phase. I know I speak for the entire board in thanking Cara Matthews for her diligent administration and creative brilliance as Rebus' Creative Director. We wish her every success in her new endeavours.

I acknowledge the departure of Secretary Emma Gibson in March. Emma's networks and expertise across several sectors, including arts and government, proved invaluable to growth of Rebus.

I also acknowledge the departure of Vice President, Craig Wallace. Craig was an active supporter at Rebus' inception and his insight into the national disability landscape was integral to developing Rebus' strategic direction. Like me, Craig will remain a lifelong friend of Rebus.

I thank the board and the management team for their support of my leadership for the past three years and I look forward to seeing their future work.

Simone Penkethman



Management Report

2018-19 was an ambitious year for Rebus, with a huge increase in both income and output. It saw us expand our previous work and venture into new areas, both artistically and thematically. It also saw us bring on several new employees and forge new partnerships.

Some achievements of particular note are the development and delivery of Access All Areas: Health and Moving Climates, both of which saw us expand into new and exciting areas, and the recognition of our work at the ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards, with Rebus receiving the award for 'Excellence in Championing Human Rights' and the 'Chief Minister's Award for Excellence'.

That we couldn't have done this without the support of our volunteer board is an understatement. We have flourished and thrived with the constant support and guidance that they provide. We extend a heartfelt thanks to all, and in particular to former secretary, Emma Gibson, who resigned from the board in March of 2019. We would also like to thank all of our associate artists, actors, volunteer and partner organisations for the work they've done this year. We are incredibly proud of everything that we have all accomplished and look forward to continuing our mission in the future.

Finally, we are saying goodbye to a key member of our management team, co-founder and Creative Producer, Cara Matthews. Cara has been with Rebus from the start, we would never have come as far as we have without her, and she will be deeply missed.

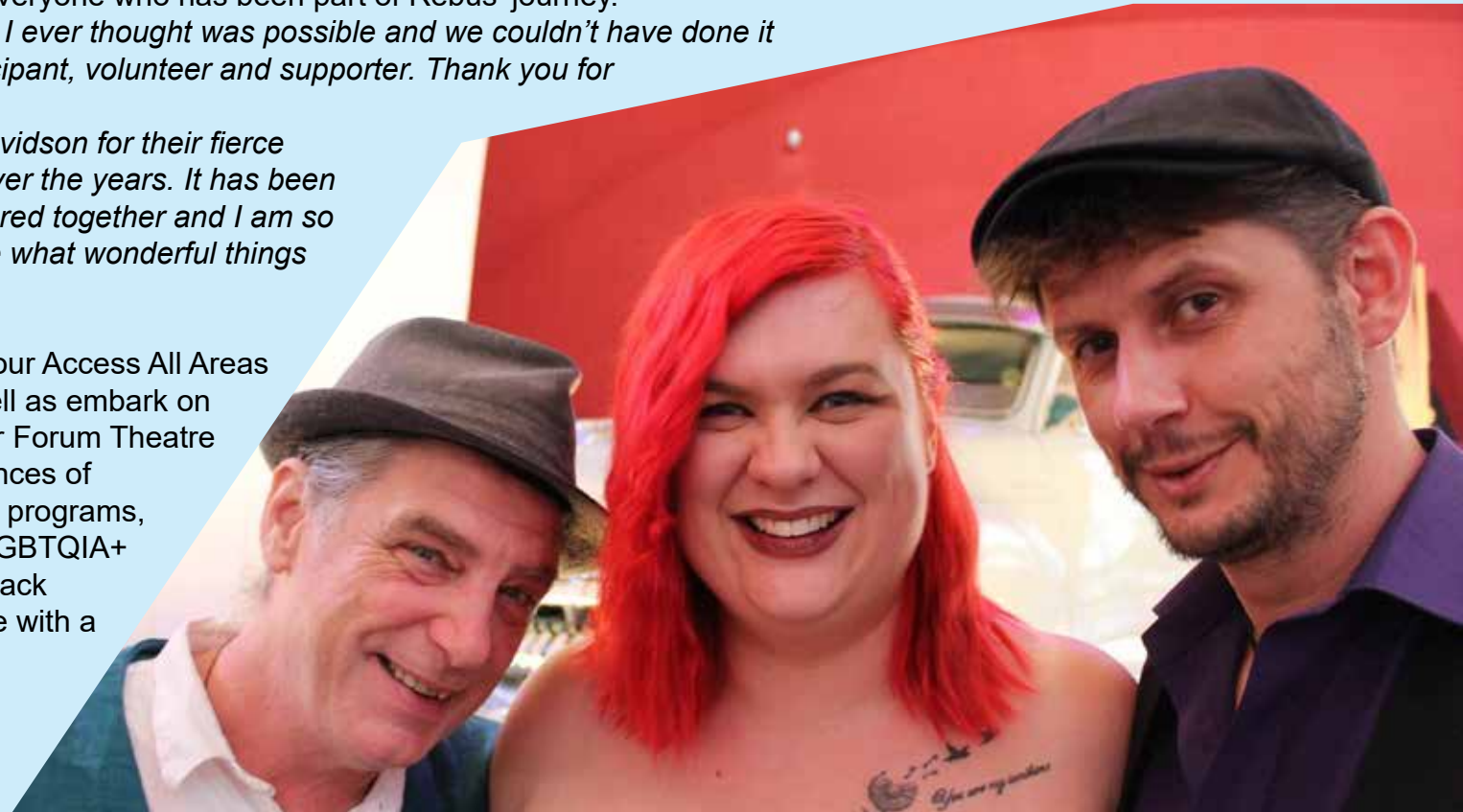
Cara wishes to pass on her heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been part of Rebus' journey.

"We have done more with this organisation than I ever thought was possible and we couldn't have done it without every member, partner, employee, participant, volunteer and supporter. Thank you for going on this journey with us.

I also want to thank Ben Drysdale and Robin Davidson for their fierce support, commitment, dedication and passion over the years. It has been a rollercoaster of a journey that we have weathered together and I am so proud of what we have built. I cannot wait to see what wonderful things you do next"

Looking to 2019-20, we are excited to continue our Access All Areas project focusing on Justice and Transport, as well as embark on our second season of Bridges or Barricades, our Forum Theatre project in schools about young people's experiences of conflict. We will also design and deliver two new programs, namely, Acting Out, a youth theatre project for LGBTQIA+ youth, and Speaking Role, a project using Playback Theatre to enhance employment skills for people with a communication disability.

Ben Drysdale, Robin Davidson and Cara Matthews



Unintended

FY19 was an exciting year for Rebus' workplace training team. We presented Unintended, our session around mental health and disability in the workplace, to over 250 people in one week!

First, we presented the session to the Federal Department of Education, which was also live-streamed to their locations interstate. We also presented to over 180 people at the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS) EL2 conference, which took place over two days.

These were the last performances for two of our original cast, Meredyth Pettit and John Rogers. They have been invaluable to Rebus as a company and we wish them all the best with their future ventures.

"I felt connected and empowered from seeing how saying "stop" and speaking up and can make a difference"(Attendee at Department of Education session)

"Attendees were part of the solution, that was and is a great idea" (Attendee at Department of Education session)



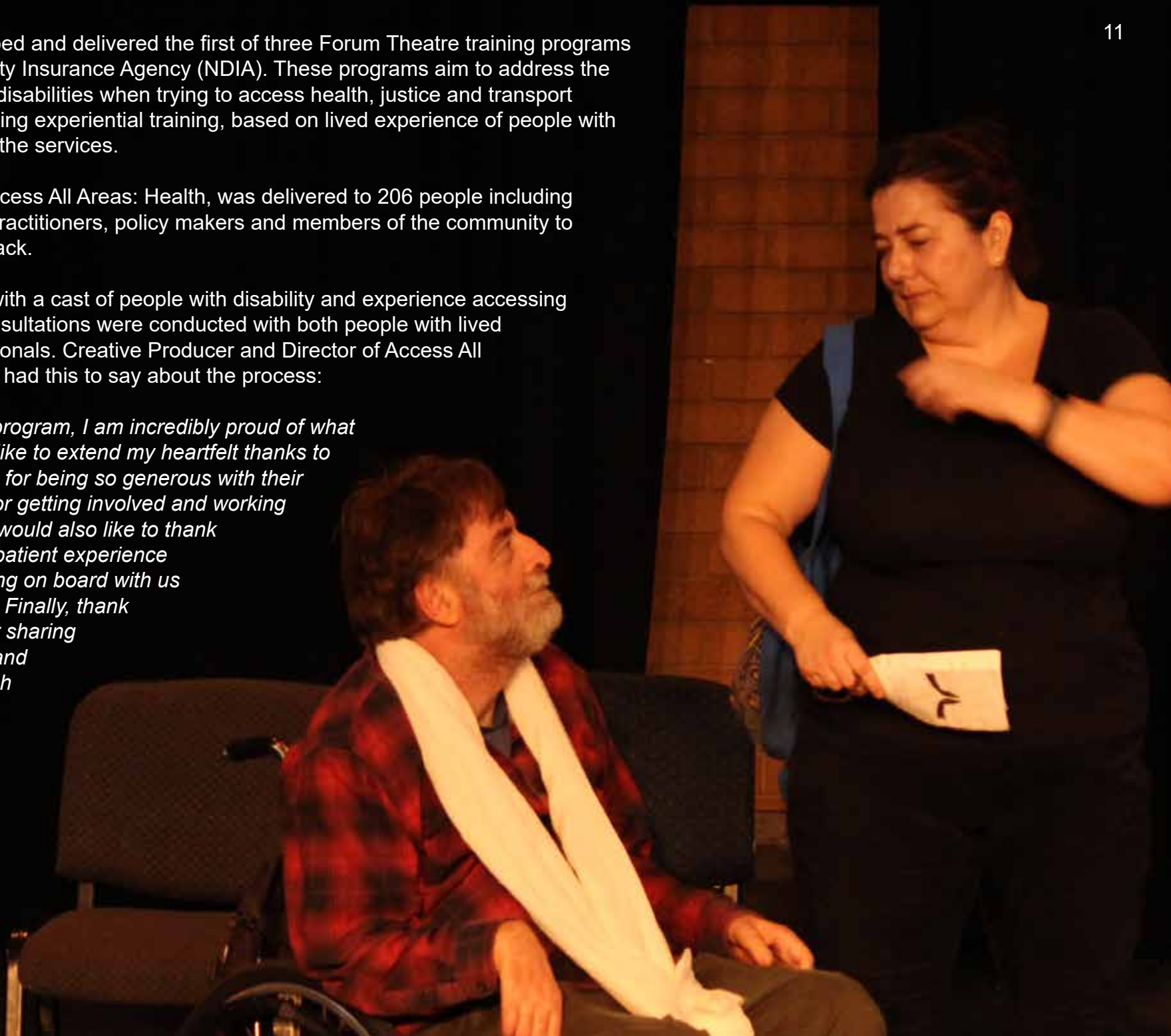
Access All Areas

In March 2019, Rebus developed and delivered the first of three Forum Theatre training programs funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). These programs aim to address the challenges facing people with disabilities when trying to access health, justice and transport services respectively by providing experiential training, based on lived experience of people with disabilities, to professionals in the services.

The first of these programs, Access All Areas: Health, was delivered to 206 people including doctors, nurses, allied health practitioners, policy makers and members of the community to overwhelmingly positive feedback.

This program was developed with a cast of people with disability and experience accessing the health system. Several consultations were conducted with both people with lived experience and health professionals. Creative Producer and Director of Access All Areas: Health, Cara Matthews, had this to say about the process:

“As a first-time director of this program, I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the consultation participants for being so generous with their stories, and to the audiences for getting involved and working with us to make a difference. I would also like to thank the Canberra Health Services patient experience team for so passionately jumping on board with us and organising these sessions. Finally, thank you to my unbelievable cast for sharing their experiences, trusting me and the process, and delivering such passionate and thoughtful performances.”



Moving Climates

Moving Climates was a cross-disciplinary artistic response to the inner world of scientists working on climate change, in which an actor, a dancer, a digital artist and two composer/musicians created scenes in response to interviews. We held three public showings of the 'work-in-progress' performance as part of National Science Week.

The performances were very well attended with near sell-out crowds on two out of the three shows. The Q & A sessions after the shows sparked deep discussions and indicated that the work was important and had impact. There was great interest from interviewees and audience members alike to see the work continue.



Inclusive Drama at The Hub in Phillip

13

We were able to achieve our goal of increasing our weekly classes to two per week at the beginning of 2019, bringing the performance tally to 6 shows this year. The classes, run by Heidi Silberman and Ali Clinch on Mondays and Wednesdays, guide participants through the process of writing, rehearsing, and performing a play each term. The participants choose the themes they want to address, and develop character and story ideas which are put together into a script by Heidi and Ali. Lead Teaching Artist Heidi described what happens in a blog post for Clickability.com.

"I write a draft of the first few scenes and they run through it the next week. They correct it, make suggestions and come up with better lines. I continue scribbling. Each week the story builds, Ali builds in music and sound effects, the students bring props and costume items, we explore their characters in more depth.

And something else happens too, the student who didn't speak a word for the first six weeks now ad libs a line here and there. The young man whose anxiety can be debilitating some weeks takes on his role with vigour and nerves seem to disappear. The woman who loves acting and watches every musical that comes to town takes ownership of the stage. Parents and carers laugh and cheer throughout the performance and tell us afterwards how wonderful these classes are and how much they have done for the class members.

When the performance is finished the audience applauds and the cast take their bow. Their hard work has paid off, the show was a success and nothing will erase the smiles from their faces."

Each term the class also learns a song that is performed before their play on the last day of term. Plays developed by the participants this year included Pig Pimples and the Misunderstanding, The Wild West, Crime City, and The Mystery of Mrs Claus.

Image by Cara Matthews



Rebus completed another round of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Arts for Resilience, Recovery, Teamwork and Skills (ARRTS) program. This four-week program is run twice a year for Defence personnel who have experienced physical and/or psychological injury during their service.

After four weeks of actor training, text analysis, mask work, physical theatre, and singing, our Acting and Performance group delivered a powerful and moving show in the end of program concert. This was Rebus' fifth ARRTS program, and it gets more rewarding every time. We once again had an amazing ensemble of actors who soaked up so much material throughout the program. Participants worked together to devise an eclectic performance – including songs and scenes from J.R.R. Tolkien, Shakespeare, Commedia dell'arte masks and self-devised work that made audiences laugh, cry, and everything in between.

Image by Australian Defence Force



Periphery

Over the weekend of October 19-21 our Creative Producer and Communications Manager had the immense pleasure of taking part in 'Periphery', a three-day conference/festival about theatre for social change in Goulburn.

Organised by Goulburn's 'Lieder Theatre', 'Periphery' was a meeting of creative and socially conscious minds from across New South Wales and indeed, the world, with Polish company 'Teatr Brama' coming as part of their 'Caravan Next' project.

The Rebus team took part in a panel discussion about theatre for social change, and did a presentation about the many ways we use theatre for social impact. There was also pitches by other artists and organisations, master classes run by 'Teatr Brama', as well as three theatre shows including 'Lieder Theatre's' Monochrome, 'Teatr Brama's' Ghost Dance: Impressions, and a piece devised by the two companies in the week leading up to the event.

It is difficult to explain the sense of community that was developed over such a small period of time with people from so many different places and backgrounds. This was due in part to the amazing community surrounding 'Lieder Theatre', the generous and open nature of the artists from 'Teatr Brama', and just a result of what happens when you get a group of people passionate about art and social change together to share their ideas.

Professional Development

This year Rebus put a focus on creative and professional development, with Cara Matthews and Ben Drysdale attending short training courses with Free Theatre in Melbourne, and Robin Davidson spending three months in full time training in the Pedagogy of Movement Theatre with Giovanni Fusetti in Italy.

Rebus will continue to place high importance on Professional Development into the New Year, with the implementation of the Organisational Capacity building funding we received from the National Disability Insurance Agency's Disabled People and Family Organisation Funding.

Partnerships & Events

Awards

In December 2018, at the ACT Chief minister's awards, we were unbelievably honoured to have received the 'Excellence in Championing Human Rights' Award, and the 'Chief Minister's Award for Excellence' for our 'Open Doors Open Minds' project.

All the other finalists do such amazing work that we really couldn't believe it! We'd like to thank the National Disability Insurance Agency's Information Linkages, and Capacity Building program for funding this project, our board for guiding us through the last few years, and all our actors, associate artists and community participants that make what we do so special. Humble thanks to the ACT Inclusion Council for the awards, Icon Water and The Chief Minister Andrew Barr for sponsoring our categories, and Clubs ACT for supporting the whole night. Congratulations to all the other winners and finalists!

Treasurer's Report

FY19 was a year of growth for Rebus, with our income increasing to \$403,097, compared to the \$211,469 of FY18.

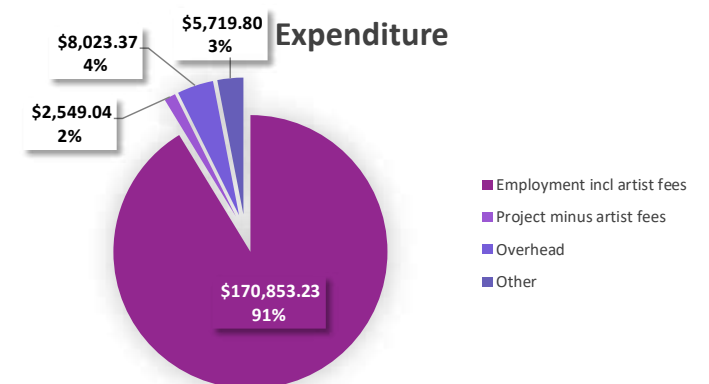
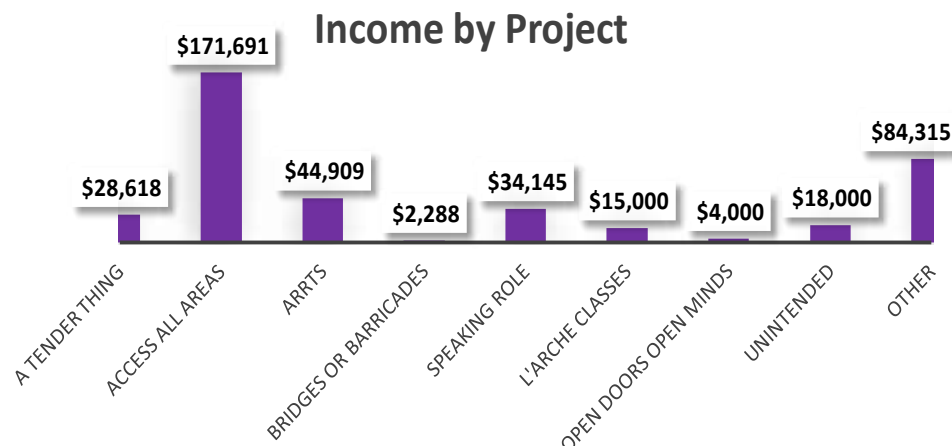
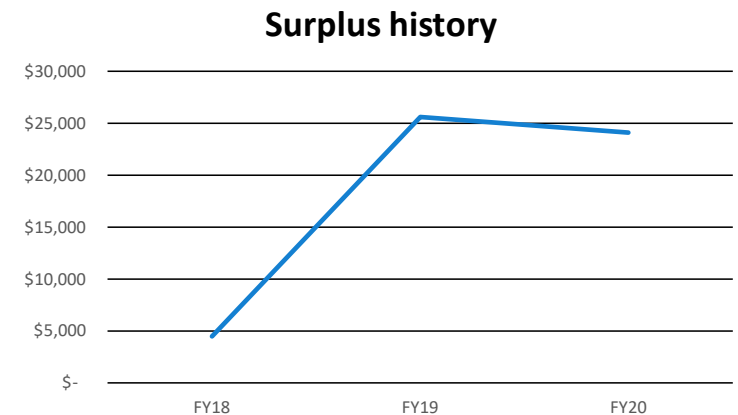
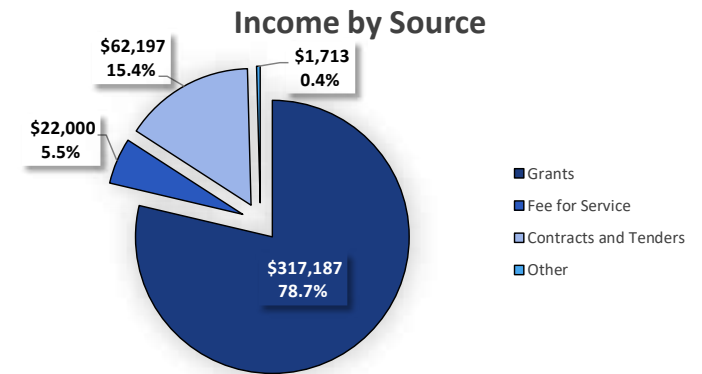
Rebus is entirely project funded which results in its income cycle depending on contract milestone payments. In FY19, Rebus' main source of income was the National Disability Insurance Agency, through both the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC), and their Disable People and Family organisations (DPFO) individual and organisational capacity building programs.

Unfortunately, Rebus' part in the Arts for Recovery Resilience Teamwork and Skills (ARRTS) program funded by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) was suspended and future funding is not expected at this time. The financial repercussions for FY19 were not so significant and due to extra funding secured during the year, the repercussions for the FY20 budget have been minimal as well, with a small decrease in our surplus of approximately \$1500.

The focus for FY20 will be to look for more sustainable funding opportunities, with long-term funding and sponsorship as options that will be explored.

I would like to thank the management team, and particularly Cara Matthews for ensuring that Rebus Theatre Inc's financial records are accurate, transparent and up to date. Cara's commitment to integrity of our financial records and reporting has been an asset to the ongoing financial stability and viability of Rebus Theatre Inc.

Rebus Theatre Incorporated is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).



Acknowledgments

Staff

Management Team

Cara Matthews
Ben Drysdale
Robin Davidson

Associate Artists

Ali Clinch
Heidi Silberman
Sammy Moynihan
Ruth O'Brien

Artists

Alison Plevvey
John Carolan
Adam Thomas
Michelle McDonald
Dougie Herd
Michelle McDonald
Lucy Raffaele
Joel Swadling
Meredyth Pettit
John Rogers
Katie Senior

Grants and funding

Moving Climates funded by Arts ACT
Access All Areas funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency
Organisational Capacity Building Funded by National Disability Insurance Agency
Speaking Role funded by National Disability Insurance Agency
A Tender Thing funded by Arts ACT

Supporting organisations

Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres
Ashurst

Partnerships

L'Arche Genesaret and The Hub in Phillip
Gingerbooks Pty Ltd
Cleanstar Australia
Multicultural Youth Services
AIDS Action Council

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Alison Proctor
Office for Disability
Kate Diggle



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