

JUNE 2022



—— NEXUS ARTS ——
STRATEGIC PLAN
—— 2023 — 2026 ——



©NEXUS ARTS

NEXUS ARTS ACKNOWLEDGES THE KAURNA PEOPLE
AS THE OWNERS OF THE LAND WHERE WE LIVE,
LEARN, AND WORK. WE RESPECT THEIR CULTURE &
ELDERS & ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY WAS
NEVER CEDED. WE RECOGNISE THAT VISUAL ARTS,
MUSIC AND STORYTELLING HAVE BEEN CENTRAL
TO ABORIGINAL CULTURES FOR OVER 60,000 YEARS.
WE WORK TO SUPPORT THIS LINEAGE.



JONATHAN KIM, 'RECIPROCITY'
IMAGE CREDIT: AARON SCHUPPAN



VISION



AUSTRALIAN CONTEMPORARY ARTS TRULY REPRESENT OUR INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY, PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH DIVERSITY AND EXCELLENCE OF PRACTICE.

MISSION



NEXUS ARTS FOSTERS CONTEMPORARY INTERCULTURAL CREATIVE PRACTICES, ENGAGING AND DEVELOPING BOTH ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES.



MARYAM RAHMANI, INTERPLAY,
IMAGE CREDIT: MORGAN SETTE

NEXUS ARTS *THE CONTEMPORARY IS INTERCULTURAL*



Nexus Arts are leaders in intercultural artistic practice. We are the only contemporary arts organisation in South Australia with this focus, and have been throughout our nearly 40-year history. Nexus presents contemporary art of the highest quality which explores, promotes and celebrates cultural diversity and interculturalism, creating authentic opportunities for artists from different backgrounds to connect, intersect and collaborate. We foster excellence in contemporary arts by supporting culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations artists with development programs and presentation opportunities, and we do so in a spirit of collaboration and exchange.

Australian contemporary arts do not yet reflect the cultural diversity of our population. The colonial narrative still runs deeply through our cultural institutions, and despite desire for change within the industry, we are yet to see meaningful, sector-wide action to diversify our stages and arts spaces. Nexus works to redress this inequity. Nexus Arts reconceives and recontextualises Australian art, engaging both high-calibre artists and broad audiences to promote its vision that Australian contemporary arts truly representative our intercultural society, promoting social cohesion through diversity and excellence of practice.

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan demonstrates Nexus' commitment to:

- presenting, promoting and supporting high quality contemporary music and visual arts by culturally diverse and First Nations artists;
- commissioning new work exploring intercultural artistic practice;
- developing and nurturing emerging artists;
- inspiring, stimulating and cultivating broad audiences; and
- engaging with diverse partners to work collaboratively in these efforts.

Through 2023-2026, Nexus will continue to act above and beyond the essential principle of greater representation of culturally diverse and First Nations artists on our stages and in our arts spaces; instead operating within an intercultural understanding of Australian contemporary arts, where distinct cultures meaningfully engage with, learn from, and create alongside one another, without relinquishing their individual identities. With a skilled and passionate Board and staff, Nexus is well positioned to achieve its stated goals, consolidating the reputation of the organisation as a leader in intercultural arts creation and presentation at both a state and national level.

VALUES



- PASSION & VISION •
- LEARNING & GROWTH •
- INCLUSION & COHESION •
- RESPECT & COMPASSION •

GOALS



GOAL 1

Produce and present outstanding contemporary art that explores cultural diversity and leads intercultural conversations.

GOAL 2

Support artists and arts workers, providing them with skills development and professional pathways.

GOAL 3

Grow and diversify audiences and build recognition of Nexus as a leading intercultural contemporary arts organisation.

GOAL 4

Ensure operational, financial and governance objectives are met, and consolidate long-term capacity.



ZUHIR NAJI, INTERPLAY,
IMAGE CREDIT: MORGAN SETTE

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT



GLOBAL

FACTOR

A global social climate in which the rise in support for the political far-right, the expansionist actions of powerful nations, and changes to immigration policies, reflect and codify intolerance of migrants and their cultures.

RESPONSE

Nexus' unique intercultural arts program explicitly engages artists and audiences in conversations which strive to counteract these global trends. Our research work equips the sector with the tools to speak directly to Australians from all cultural backgrounds, growing understanding and receptivity.

LOCAL

FACTOR

A local social climate where bipartisan support for offshore detention policies has contributed to an othering of refugees, and anti-immigration views regularly gain mainstream media coverage.

An overall reduction in arts funding and the absence of a federal arts policy have resulted in the perspective that the arts are not a viable and valuable career nationally.

Australian artists leaving the industry in a post-COVID environment, after years where their value and purpose was undermined by federal policies and while cost of living pressures continue to increase.

The ongoing impacts of COVID-19, including the effect on mental health of artists, arts workers, and the broader community.

RESPONSE

Nexus advocates for social cohesion through our sector-leading intercultural programming. Our promotion of an intercultural vision of Australian contemporary arts and interrogation of current societal tensions seeks to provide constructive commentary within and against this climate.

Nexus places artists at its core, seeking to assert their value and reassure them of their place. This is vital, ongoing work. We collaborate with local and national partners in advocacy, research and development, ensuring the ongoing case for the arts is made at state and federal levels.

Nexus supports and nurtures artists and arts workers. We provide pathways into industry for arts workers, and our artist services ensure artists feel valued and supported. Our organisational values place these outcomes at the fore.



— ORGANISATIONAL —

FACTOR

Funding instability, with project funding supplementing core programs. Reliance on project funding to fund primary organisational activity compromises our ability to plan and communicate future programs.

Staffing levels do not meet organisational need or match our output.

Increased demand for our work and services, while staffing capacity remains relatively static.

Below benchmark staff salaries, meaning our succession planning is compromised.

The potential for burnout in our staff due to the above issues.

Instability regarding our physical home, the Lion Arts Precinct, and the investment it requires to fulfil its role as the West End arts hub.

RESPONSE

Our unique position in the local and national sector is a strength that we will continue to leverage, to ensure that the arts and their audiences truly reflect contemporary Australia.

Nexus continues to advocate for the important work we perform, and to build income to improve capacity. We continue to diversify income streams, develop our brand recognition to attract private sector sponsorship, and enhance our business practice. Greater Government investment will be key to our success.

Nexus continues to advocate for investment in the Lion Arts Precinct, including the immediate need for an accessible toilet within the precinct.

ARTISTIC RATIONALE



NEXUS ARTS PROMOTES INTERCULTURAL ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Exploring, supporting, and celebrating cultural diversity is at the heart of all Nexus programs and projects. Nexus advocates for increased representation of diverse cultures in contemporary arts practice, aiming towards an Australia in which the diversity within our art spaces reflects the cultural composition of our society. Beyond this principle of true representation, Nexus creates and presents intercultural work that explores genuine interaction and exchange, laying foundations for greater social cohesion. Intercultural communication promotes learning and discovery, and challenges preconceptions. By focusing on the mutual exchange of ideas between cultures, interculturalism moves beyond the embracing of multiculturalism to forge deeper, reciprocal relationships. Nexus are leaders in intercultural contemporary arts in Australia.

NEXUS ARTS SUPPORTS AND DEVELOPS ARTISTS

Nexus works with artists to develop their practice and build audiences for their work. We deliver targeted artist development programs focusing on artistic, mentoring, marketing, business, and career development. Nexus' staff provide genuine and meaningful support for artists, leveraging industry experience and extensive contacts to develop artists' networks and build connections to broader industry. Nexus recognises the importance of support at all stages of artists' careers, offering valuable opportunities which enable artists to continually explore, experiment and create, with a view to sustainable and viable practice.

NEXUS ARTS RECOGNISES FIRST NATIONS ARTS AND ARTISTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO INTERCULTURAL ARTS PRACTICE

First Nations arts are crucial and central to an intercultural understanding of Australian contemporary arts. Nexus recognises First Nations arts and artists as occupying a fundamental place at the heart of our culture, and strives to nurture, respect and cultivate the relationship between broader contemporary arts and First Nations cultural expressions. First Nations artistic practice is integral to our mission.

We recognise that Australian arts and cultural institutions must undergo a process of decolonisation in order to move towards reconciliation. We acknowledge the work to be undertaken, and we commit to ongoing and considered learning and listening.

NEXUS ARTS FOSTERS CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Nexus champions artistic excellence, working with artists at all career stages who are of the highest calibre and at the forefront of their fields. An expectation of excellence is vital in delivering strong communication of our core message: that Australian contemporary arts are intercultural, and that absolutely no compromise in quality is made by centring programming on artists of culturally diverse and First Nations backgrounds. Artistic excellence is fostered through high-quality presentation opportunities, development programs aimed at equipping artists with tools for success, and partnerships which assist artists to move beyond Nexus programs to other prominent platforms.

NEXUS ARTS ENGAGES, STIMULATES AND CULTIVATES AUDIENCES

Audiences are central to Nexus' activities. Nexus provides SA arts consumers with year-round access to high quality intercultural music and visual arts, inspiring and stimulating audiences through compelling and challenging programming. Nexus provides opportunities for audiences to grow through artistic experiences which further their understanding of diverse cultures and promote an intercultural Australia. Following the major research project undertaken from 2019 to 2021, Nexus launched the toolkit *You're Welcome: A Guide for Arts Organisations to Increase Cultural Diversity in our Audiences*, supporting arts organisations to better understand underrepresented audience segments and implement engagement strategies. Nexus is a safe and welcoming environment, which we communicate to new audiences by employing targeted strategies backed by this research, including marketing in multiple languages. In 2022, we launched our new website with high accessibility and translation features, enabling us to share content broadly and directly.

NEXUS ARTS COMMISSIONS NEW WORK AND SUPPORTS ARTISTIC RISK-TAKING

Commissioning work is fundamental to Nexus' programs. Nexus invests in artists and in arts creation by providing supported development opportunities for artists to make new work, and by presenting a program of these and other premieres across our venues. Commissioning new work for interested audiences who embrace diverse experiences encourages artistic risk-taking, which is a key precursor to growth and development. Nexus fosters a culture of --

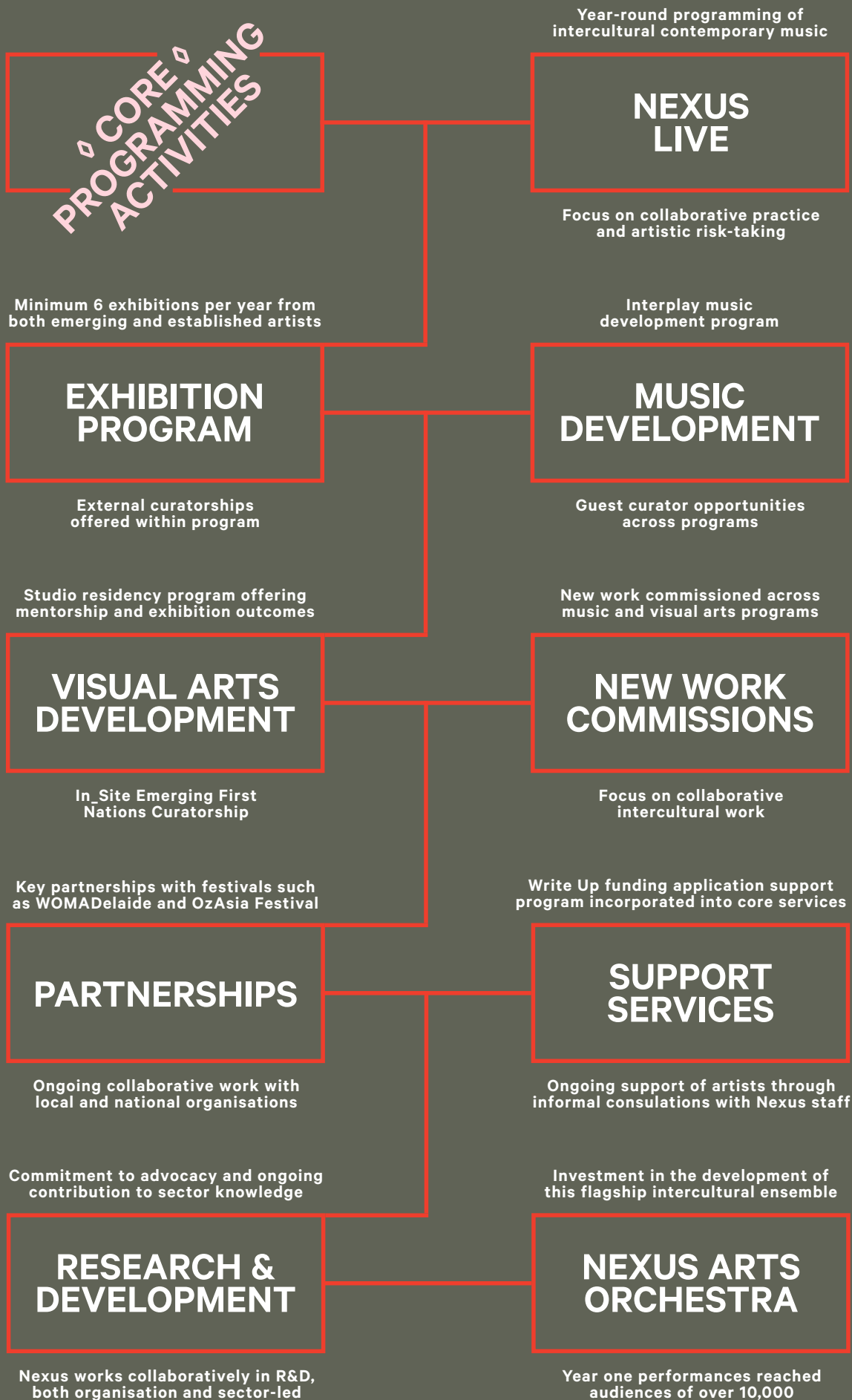
openness to experimentation in its audiences, allowing artists to embrace risk in a supportive environment.

NEXUS ARTS WORKS COLLABORATIVELY

Collaboration is key to Nexus' operations: between artists, within projects, with communities, and across organisations. We are proponents of courageous intercultural collaboration and encourage artistic risk-taking in practice and in the development of new work. We bring together artists from different cultural and artistic backgrounds to work collaboratively, and our programs strive to create inspiring contrasts and complements between genres and disciplines. By encouraging experimentation and learning, Nexus contributes to a broader and deeper discussion of identity, arts and culture.

Nexus works with communities to welcome audiences, engage with diverse cultural populations, and signal the organisation's standing as a safe intercultural space. We partner with local and national organisations to bolster the ecology of the sector and to create meaningful relationships, drawing on individual and particular capacities of these organisations to complement Nexus' strengths.







TAILOR WINSTON, 'NEST'
IMAGE CREDIT: MORGAN SETTE

ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION



NEXUS ARTS BOARD

The Nexus Arts Board is an experienced and dynamic group of individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds. With skills in finance, academia, law, and the arts, the Board oversees governance, compliance, and risk management. It guides the organisation's strategic direction and supports the staff leadership team.

At time of writing, 67% of members identify as culturally diverse, well above the sector average of 10% (Diversity Arts Australia's 'Shifting the Balance' report, 2019). The Nexus Arts Board prioritises diversity and will continue to lead in this metric, ensuring our leadership reflects our intercultural vision, benefitting both the organisation and the sector.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL ADVISORY GROUP

In 2021, Nexus formed the Artistic and Cultural Advisory Group: an advisory group of artists from culturally diverse and First Nations backgrounds and those working interculturally, who provide artistic guidance and cultural reference to the organisation. Meeting twice yearly, the members of the Group are based both locally and nationally, ensuring broad representation, local sector knowledge, and access to important national networks. Membership is for two years.

The purpose of the Advisory Group is to provide artistic guidance, ensure artistic cultural protocols are met, and strengthen networks between Nexus and leading Australian artists working interculturally. It is an important mechanism to support the CEO and Artistic Director and the organisational succession plan.

STAFF TEAM

Our team comprises passionate and dedicated arts professionals, and includes pathway positions for emerging leaders. Nexus strives to nurture the next generation of arts leaders, and to ensure that this cohort better represents the diversity of our Australian society. Our staffing structure includes an Access Coordinator identified position for a person with disability, and staff members from culturally diverse backgrounds for the talent, drive, and variety of perspectives they contribute.

The 10 staff members in 2022 comprise a full-time equivalent of only 3.9FTE, highlighting the organisation's limited capacity. To continue to flourish, this must be built over the period covered by this Strategic Plan, and will be achieved with greater Government investment, development activities, and a revitalised membership program promoting private donations.





WWW.NEXUSARTS.ORG.AU

