



**Sydney Writers' Festival Limited**

**A.B.N. 17 079 586 057**

**Annual Financial Report**

**31 December 2023**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
Directors' Report	3 -10
Auditor's Independence Declaration	11
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income	12
Statement of Financial Position	13
Statement of Changes in Equity	14
Statement of Cash Flows	15
Notes to and Forming Part of The Financial Statements	16 - 24
Directors' Declaration	25
Independent Auditor's Report	26 – 27

## SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

#### DIRECTORS

The directors submit the financial report of the company for the financial period ended 31 December 2023.

#### DIRECTORS

The names of directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year are:

<b>Kathy Shand (Chair)</b>	Appointed 9 December 2013 (Chair from 1 January 2023)
<b>Kate Dundas (Deputy Chair)</b>	Appointed 13 December 2022 (Deputy Chair from 1 January 2023)
<b>Su-Ming Wong</b>	Appointed 1 September 2016 (resigned 25 August 2023)
<b>Annabel Crabb</b>	Appointed 21 August 2017
<b>Michael McDaniel</b>	Appointed 13 April 2023
<b>Sheila McGregor</b>	Appointed 18 October 2018
<b>Michael Dagostino</b>	Appointed 11 April 2019
<b>Julianne Shultz</b>	Appointed 26 October 2022
<b>Adrian Kerley</b>	Appointed 14 December 2023
<b>Robert Watkins</b>	Appointed 13 April 2023

#### Kathy Shand

Chair, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Director, SWF Finance Committee  
Member, SWF Nominations Committee  
Director, The Next Generation  
Former Chair, SWF Development Committee  
Former Board Member, State Library of New South Wales Foundation  
Former Board Member, Sydney Jewish Museum  
Former Board Member, Royal Hospital for Women Foundation and the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation  
Judge of the Prime Ministers Literary Awards 2017 / 2018  
Former co-publisher, Australian Jewish News  
Founding Editor, Nine to Five magazine  
Bachelor of Arts and Law; Masters (Int'l Relations) University of Sydney

#### Kate Dundas

Deputy Chair, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Deputy Chair, Australia for UNHCR, 2015 to present  
Board Director, Sydney Festival, 2020 to present  
Executive Mentor, McCarthy Mentoring and independently 2014 to present  
SME/Consultant on a range of Arts & Culture Projects 2020 to present

## SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

#### DIRECTORS (continued)

##### Su-Ming Wong

Former Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Former Chair, SWF Finance Committee  
Co-Founder, CHAMP Ventures P/L  
Former Council Member, UTS  
Director, NICTA and Industry Research & Development Board  
Chair, Access Macquarie Limited  
Director, Asia Society Australia  
Former Director, Australian Museum Foundation Board  
Advisory Council Member, UNSW Business School and China Matters  
Professor of Practice, Australian Business School, UNSW  
Adjunct Professor, University of Western Sydney

##### Annabel Crabb

Director, *Sydney Writers' Festival* Board  
Writer and broadcaster, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*  
Creator and presenter, *Ms Represented*  
Presenter, *Kitchen Cabinet*, *The House with Annabel Crabb*,  
*Back in Time For Dinner*, *Tomorrow Tonight*  
Author, *The Wife Drought*; *Stop at Nothing: The Life and Adventures of Malcolm Turnbull*; *Rise of the Ruddbot*; *Losing It*; *Men at Work: Australia's Parenthood Trap*  
Co-Author, *Special Delivery*, *Special Guest*  
Former journalist and columnist, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, *The Advertiser*  
Former political correspondent, *The Age*, *The Advertiser*  
Co-host, *Chat 10*, *Looks 3* podcast

##### Professor Michael McDaniel AO

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Emeritus Professor and Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement), UTS  
Director, Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, UTS  
Chair, Sydney Opera House Trust  
Former Chair, Bangarra Dance Theatre  
Chair, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
Board Director, Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia)  
Board Director, Australian Major Performing Arts Group  
Trustee, Sydney Living Museums  
Officer, Order of Australia

##### Sheila McGregor

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Consultant, Gilbert+ Tobin  
Chairman, Loreto Kirribilli School  
Non-executive directorship: Crestone Wealth Management Limited, and St Vincent's Health Australia  
BA, LLB, Sydney University

## SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

#### DIRECTORS (continued)

Michael Dagostino

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Director, Museums and Cultural Engagement  
Chau Chak Wing Museum and Seymour Centre, The University of Sydney  
Former Director, Campbelltown Arts Centre  
Former Inaugural Director, Parramatta Artists' Studios  
Former Chair, Artspace  
Former Board Member: Create NSW Visual Arts Board  
Former Member, Ministerial Advisory Panel, NSW State Government

Professor Julianne Schultz AM  
FAHA FRSN

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Professor Emerita Media and Culture, Griffith University  
Author, *The Idea of Australia, Reviving the Fourth Estate, Steel City Blues*  
Librettist, *Black River, Going into Shadows*  
Chair, The Conversation Media Group 2019 to 2023  
Founding Editor and Publisher Griffith Review 2003-2021  
Non-Executive Director, Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2008-2013  
Former General Manager Corporate Strategy and Communications, ABC  
Associate Editor Courier Mail  
Associate Professor Journalism, UTS  
Founding Director, Australian Centre for Independent Journalism  
Former Chair, Australian Film TV and Radio School, Creative Australia  
Reference Group, Queensland Design Council  
Former Non-Executive Director, Grattan Institute, Copyright Agency Ltd

Adrian Kerley

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Chair, SWF Finance Committee  
Chair, PRP Diagnostic Imaging  
Non-executive Director, Payapps Limited  
Non-executive Director, Tally Group  
Non-executive Director, Render Networks  
Executive Director, IFM Investors

Robert Watkins

Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Board  
Director, Sydney Writers' Festival Finance Committee  
Publishing Director, Ultimo Press

## SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

Directors' meetings during the period Name	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Number Attended	Extraordinary Meetings Eligible to Attend	Number Attended
Kathy Shand	6	6	3	2
Kate Dundas	6	5	3	1
Su-Ming Wong	4	2	0	0
Annabel Crabb	6	5	3	2
Julianne Schultz	6	5	3	3
Sheila McGregor	6	4	3	3
Michael Dagostino	6	6	3	3
Michael McDaniel	5	4	3	3
Robert Watkins	5	4	3	3
Adrian Kerley	1	1	0	0

### COMPANY SECRETARY

Brooke Webb was the Company Secretary from 1 January 2023 – December 31, 2023.

### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

Sydney Writers' Festival amplifies the most important voice of our times, transforming the solitary act of reading and writing into live experiences for our communities.

### OPERATING RESULT

The net surplus of the Sydney Writers' Festival for the year ended 31 December 2023 amounted to \$284,990 compared to a deficit of (\$150,722) in 2022. This surplus can be attributed to several factors, including stronger-than-expected box office revenue, which increased by \$476,000, and an expansion of the year-round program with additional commercial events. Additionally, sponsorship contributions grew by \$247,000, and donations also saw a substantial increase over the course of the year. This positive result reflects a broader upward trend in audience engagement and demonstrates the effectiveness of new initiatives and prudent fiscal management. The Create NSW rescue/restart grant of \$132,750 also played a role in offsetting increased costs associated with program delivery.

### REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

#### OVERVIEW

In 2023, it was thrilling to witness a strong resurgence of audiences returning to Sydney Writers' Festival events after three years of major business disruptions and uncertainties for Festivals and live events due to the anxieties surrounding COVID-19. The Sydney Writers' Festival experienced a 29% increase in audience numbers in 2023, with a notable rise in ticket sales and stronger than expected audience attendance at both the Festival and the out-of-season events.

# SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

### REVIEW OF OPERATIONS (continued)

The 2023 Sydney Writers' Festival was the first under the artistic direction of Ann Mossop and centered around the theme "Stories for the Future." This theme represented hope and a new beginning after three years of uncertainty. The program strategy aimed to expand its reach to better engage with the diverse communities of Sydney and New South Wales. To achieve this, the program spotlighted emerging writers and thought leaders from Australia while also incorporating more international authors than in previous years. The program featured live in-conversation sessions on a wide range of topics including food and culture, the environment, farming, science, artificial intelligence, and music, alongside the traditional events that highlight new book releases, journalism, and timely discussions reflecting current global issues.

The Festival took place from May 22nd to May 28th, with a separate program for Primary and Secondary Schools running from Monday May 22nd to Thursday June 1st. Beyond the main Festival, the organisation also produced eight additional events throughout the year, expanding its reach and maintaining engagement beyond the core Festival dates.

During the Festival week, thousands of children enjoyed a wide variety of events catering to all age groups. The All-Day YA and Youth Curators programs took place at Carriageworks, while the School Days program spanned eight days for primary and secondary students. This program included 158 schools and featured events across Sydney, from Sydney Town Hall to Riverside Theatres in Parramatta. A new venue, the Sutherland Pavilion, was also introduced to the schedule.

The Sydney Writers' Festival partnered once again with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) to organise a dedicated day of events tailored for students in years 9 and 10. This collaboration offered an engaging experience, highlighting the Festival's commitment to fostering a love of literature and creativity among young audiences.

The Sydney Writers' Festival 2023 Live & Local program continued to maintain its presence in communities in every Australian state and territory. A total of 58 regional partners with 96 streaming venues were part of the Live & Local program, building regional audience and programming opportunities across the country. When compared to figures from 2022, this reflects a 26% increase in engagement from venue partners nationally.

In 2023 Live and Local streaming partners grew to 58 partners, this included 43 returning and 15 new partners.

Sydney Writers' Festival maintained its presence in all regional areas as per the 2022 expansion of partners. The program continues to increase satisfaction levels with all partners and audience delivering a high-quality program and service. This year Sydney Writers' Festival streamed an additional day, and a total of 21 sessions, (9 additional sessions from 2022). A continued strategy of retaining existing partners, while engaging with new partners for 2024 will allow the program to continue to grow and increase regional community access to the Sydney Writers' Festival.

The popular Children's Festival of Moving Stories, also known as 'Russ the Story Bus', once again brought children's authors and storytelling to thousands of children in low socio-economic areas in New South Wales. In 2023 Russ the Story Bus expanded its tour, visiting schools in the Greater Sydney region and expanding to include schools and libraries in the Northern Rivers and surrounding communities. The tour commenced in August 2023 and concluded in December 2023. This expansion was a response to the devastation caused by the 2022 Northern Rivers floods, which heavily impacted the region. Homes, schools, and public libraries were inundated, destroying thousands of books. Some school libraries lost over 80% of their collections to water damage. To support the recovery, the organisation proudly donated over 15,000 books to school libraries and classrooms in the Northern Rivers, further meeting the organisation's objectives to rekindle a love of reading among children.

# SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

### REVIEW OF OPERATIONS (continued)

Throughout the tour, Russ brought renowned children's authors and illustrators to speak at 53 schools in Western Sydney and the Northern Rivers Region reaching an estimated number of 12,700 children, making this one of Russ the Bus's largest tours to date.

An improvement to the program in 2023 was that every child in every school got to participate. In previous years, Russ had only visited specific year groups or classes at each school. This year, however, the entire school was included, addressing feedback from prior tours. This change received positive feedback from schools, allowing for multi-stage activities and literacy-based programs following a Russ visit. It also allowed siblings in different year groups to share the experience at home, ensuring that no students missed out just because Russ was parked on their playground. Creating a whole-school excitement around books and reading was a unique and impactful aspect of this year's tour.

### OBJECTIVES

As stated in the Festival's constitution, the core objectives of Sydney Writers' Festival are to:

- plan, organise, administer, and conduct an annual literary Festival.
- provide readers and writers with a forum for intellectual and cultural debate;
- present readings, discussions, interviews, performances, exhibitions and other events which reflect Sydney's and Australia's cultural diversity, and which are responsive to the literary interests of a broad audience;
- raise the level of community awareness of the importance of writers and their work to Australian society;
- foster the development of, and interest in, literature in New South Wales;
- become a festival of international stature which reflects Sydney's position in the Asia Pacific Region and which makes the most of Sydney's natural and cultural environment.

In pursuing these activities, the organisation will ensure the Festival's ongoing financial and operational viability.

In achieving its objectives, the 2023 Festival featured a total of 235 events, of which 147 were paid, ticketed events (including Education events), and 88 were free to the public, accounting for 37% of the Festival. The events were held across six locations in the Greater Sydney area.

In 2023, the organisation introduced a new digital streaming day pass, driven by the need to improve accessibility and allow people who could not physically attend the Festival to participate. This new option also provided an additional revenue stream for the event. The day pass was priced at \$35 and granted live access to the events held in Bay 17, allowing viewers from around the world to watch the sessions live. Thanks to this digital initiative, the Festival reached a previously untapped audience of approximately 400 people, primarily from regional NSW. We plan to further expand and engage this digital audience in the coming years.

In 2023, Sydney Writers' Festival engaged a total attendance of 98,331 people which exceeded budget both across the May Festival as well as through our eight additional author events throughout the year.

- Attendance at PAID Festival events: 52,186 (including comps)
- Free Attendances at All Festival events: 19,212 (inc Regional & Suburban)
- Attendances at Live & Local events/ Digital streaming: 9,562
- Attendances at SWF Out of Season events: 5,231
- Attendances at SWF Children's Festival of Moving Stories: 12,140



# SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

### REVIEW OF OPERATIONS (continued)

#### MARKETING

In addition to the annual Festival, the organisation also produced eight out-of-season events. To boost the visibility of the organisation outside of the Festival campaign, the marketing team launched a targeted campaign that focused on building brand awareness and driving engagement. Efforts included strategic social media promotions, email newsletters, and partnerships with key influencers to generate market presence and attract broader audiences.

Recognising the limitations of the current website as a marketing tool, the team began developing a new, more user-friendly site in August, designed to enhance the customer experience and provide a more effective platform for event promotion. This new website aims to streamline information delivery, improve ticket sales, and create a dynamic space for year-round engagement that highlights the Festival's diverse programming.

#### **Festival Campaign Highlights**

The 2023 Sydney Writers' Festival marketing campaign spanned 9 weeks, from 16 March to 28 May, the longest in the Festival's history. The campaign's refreshed branding featured a bright blue background with an orange symbol and a prominent logo. Unlike previous years, the brand name "Sydney Writers' Festival" was emphasized, while the theme "Stories for the Future" was secondary. This change improved brand recognition and helped the Festival stand out in a crowded advertising landscape.

#### **Advertising and Publicity**

One of the key approaches for the Sydney Writers' Festival marketing campaign was to boost brand visibility with a strong outdoor presence. This included 136 banners, 40 taxi backs, and a wide array of A3 Café and A0 Street posters distributed throughout Greater Sydney. The Festival's television commercial (TVC) was tailored for various platforms, appearing at Dendy Cinemas and before all Festival events. It also gained over 40,000 organic views on social media, representing a 23% increase compared to 2022.

This year, SWF explored new advertising channels, such as TikTok and podcast ads via the Acast network, reaching a total of 178,974 people. While the TikTok campaign yielded only 9 sales, it provided valuable insights for future marketing efforts. Digital and social media advertising achieved over 4.7 million impressions across various platforms, resulting in 6,095 conversions—a remarkable 239% increase from 2022. The overall social media following grew to 124,600 by May 29, 2023, with LinkedIn and Instagram showing the most notable growth.

Between 15 March and 15 June 2023, the number of media reports mentioning the Festival declined slightly to 1,812, including syndications. This represents a decrease from the previous year's high of 1,940 mentions, which were recorded between 24 March and 5 June 2022. The drop in overall volume was mainly due to a decrease in syndicated mentions across radio and online platforms. However, this decrease in volume was offset by an increase in unique or source reports, indicating that while there were fewer repeat mentions, the Festival garnered more original coverage.

Despite the reduction in total reports, the cumulative potential audience for the 2023 Festival grew significantly to 89.7 million, a notable increase from last year's 68.8 million. This expanded reach, however, was achieved with a slightly lower Advertising Space Rate (ASR) of \$13.6 million, compared to \$13.9 million in 2022. These statistics reflect a shift in the nature of the Festival's media coverage, with a broader audience engagement despite fewer overall mentions.

## **SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

### **DIRECTORS' REPORT**

#### **REVIEW OF OPERATIONS (continued)**

#### **FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP**

Sydney Writers' Festival was successful in securing a grant of \$132,750 from the New South Wales Government's Rescue and Restart program, administered by Create NSW. This grant was crucial in helping to offset the additional costs of hosting the Festival during the continued challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2023, SWF experienced a significant increase in corporate sponsorship, thanks to a new partnership with the University of New South Wales and an increased level of investment from Principal Partner ARA. These achievements were the product of strategic collaboration and concerted efforts between both organisations. This upward trend in sponsorship, along with the remarkable generosity of Major Donors and the successful End of Financial Year Campaign, contributed to a 22% increase in sponsorship and philanthropic support when compared to 2022.

SWF would like to express its heartfelt thanks to all of its supporters for their exceptional generosity. The contributions from patrons, donors, trusts, foundations, and key government funders are what enable Sydney Writers' Festival to continue providing a lively platform to celebrate literature in all its diverse forms.

#### **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN STATE OF AFFAIRS**

There were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the company.

#### **MEMBERS LIABILITY**

As a Company limited by guarantee in accordance with the Company's Constitution, each member of the Company has a maximum liability of \$50.00 in the event of the Company being unable to meet its obligations as and when they fall due. At 31 December 2023 the collective liability of members was \$400 (2022: \$500).

#### **AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION**

The lead auditor's independence declaration for the period ended 31 December 2023 has been received and can be found at page 11 of this report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Kathy Shand  
Chair, Board of Directors  
12 June 2024



# Auditor's Independence Declaration under subdivision 60- C section 60-40 of Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012

To: the Directors of Sydney Writers' Festival Limited

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit for the financial year ended 31 December 2023 there have been:

- i. no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- ii. no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

*KPMG*

KPMG

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warwick Shanks'.

Warwick Shanks

Partner

Sydney

12 June 2024

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	Year ended 31 December 2023 \$	Year ended 31 December 2022 \$
Revenue	2	4,900,486	4,266,224
Employee benefits expense		(2,052,568)	(1,880,883)
Festival operating expenses		(2,129,890)	(2,130,954)
Administration expenses		(319,365)	(289,718)
Depreciation and amortisation		(26,300)	(47,722)
Rental expenses		(42,757)	(27,092)
Training expenses		(11,889)	(20,567)
Doubtful debt		-	4,990
Audit and legal expense		(32,727)	(25,000)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax expense</b>		284,990	(150,722)
Income tax expense	1(c)	-	-
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the period</b>		284,990	(150,722)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period</b>		284,990	(150,722)

The above Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	Year ended 31 December 2023 \$	Year ended 31 December 2022 \$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	10	2,166,900	1,997,552
Trade receivables	3	44,596	2,310
Other assets	4	124,745	40,998
<b>Total current assets</b>		2,336,241	2,040,860
<b>Non-Current Asset</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5	35,475	57,642
Intangibles	6	122,400	2,054
<b>Total Non-Current Asset</b>		157,875	59,696
<b>Total Assets</b>		2,494,116	2,100,556
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	7	239,351	167,619
Other liabilities	8	637,961	593,321
Provisions	9	24,934	32,736
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		902,246	793,676
<b>Total liabilities</b>		902,246	793,676
<b>Net assets</b>		1,591,870	1,306,880
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		1,591,870	1,306,880
<b>Total equity</b>		1,591,870	1,306,880

The above Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>Retained earnings</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Balance as at 1 January 2022</b>	1,475,602	1,1475,602
Deficit for the period	(150,722)	(150,722)
Other Comprehensive income for the period	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the period</b>	<u>(150,722)</u>	<u>(150,722)</u>
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2022</b>	<u>1,306,880</u>	<u>1,306,880</u>
Surplus for the period	284,990	284,990
Other Comprehensive income for the period	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive loss for the period</b>	<u>284,990</u>	<u>284,990</u>
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2023</b>	<u>1,591,870</u>	<u>1,591,870</u>

The above Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Note	Year ended 31 December 2023 \$	Year ended 31 December 2022 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers and sponsors		4,796,761	3,926,103
Payments to suppliers and employees		(4,537,317)	(4,080,800)
Interest received		33,253	7,518
<b>Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities</b>		292,697	(146,897)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of IT equipment	5	(3,494)	(8,328)
Purchase of intangibles	6	(122,400)	-
Proceeds from sale of property, plant & equipment		2,545	8,610
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from investing activities</b>		(123,349)	282
<b>Net inflow/(outflow) in cash held</b>		169,348	(146,897)
Cash held at the beginning of the year		1,997,552	2,144,449
<b>Cash held at the end of the year</b>	10	2,166,900	1,997,552

The above Statement of Cash Flows is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**a) Corporate Information**

Sydney Writers Festival is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. The company is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission which holds deductible gift recipient status and is exempt from income tax.

The registered office is Level 3, The Arts Exchange, 10 Hickson Road, The Rocks, NSW 2000

The material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

**b) Basis of preparation**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

*Historical cost convention*

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

*Use of judgements and estimates*

The preparation of financial information requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis of making the judgements. Actual results may differ from these estimates. Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to the estimates are reviewed prospectively.

Significant accounting estimates and judgements used in preparing the financial statements are outlined under each note below.

**c) Revenue recognition**

The Company recognises revenue under AASB 1058 or AASB 15 when appropriate. In cases where there is an 'enforceable' contract with a customer with 'sufficiently specific' performance obligations, the transaction is accounted for under AASB 15 where income is recognised when (or as) the performance obligations are satisfied (i.e. when it transfers control of a product or service to a customer). Revenue is measured based on the consideration to which the Company expects to be entitled in a contract with a customer and excludes amounts collected on behalf of third parties. In other cases, AASB 1058 applies when a not-for-profit entity enters into transactions where the consideration to acquire an asset is significantly less than the fair value of the asset principally to enable the entity to further its objectives and the excess of the asset recognised (at fair value) over any 'related amounts' is recognised as income immediately. The Company recognises revenue from the following major sources:

- (i) Box office tickets and fees: Revenue from box office tickets and fees is initially recognised as deferred income upon sale of tickets to the patrons, once the event that the ticket has been purchased for has occurred ticket sales are recognised as income in the statement of profit & loss and other comprehensive income.



**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**c) Revenue recognition (continued)**

- (ii) Sponsorship and government grants: revenue from sponsorship and government grants are recognised in the Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income when they are controlled. When there are conditions attached to grant revenue relating to the use of those grants for specific purposes it is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as deferred income until such conditions are met or services are provided. Grant income from contracts that do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised under AASB 1058 as income when the Company obtains control over the funds.
- (iii) Donations are recognised as revenue when received.
- (iv) Interest is recognised as revenue on a proportionate basis taking into account interest rates applicable to the financial assets.
- (v) Sponsorship-in-kind is recognised as revenue and an expense when services have been rendered.

**d) Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings reflecting the function of the company which incurred the cost.

- (i) Employee benefits expense: expenditure includes wages and salaries for artists, production staff, management and Festival staffing including relevant on-costs;
- (ii) Festival operating expenses including Festival production costs such as venue hire, site set-up costs, artist travel and accommodation as well as marketing and ticketing expenses;
- (iii) Administration expenses: expenditure includes costs incurred in connection with the administration of the company including compliance and office occupancy costs.

**e) Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents in the statement of financial position comprise cash at bank and in hand and short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less where the investment is convertible to known amounts of cash and is subject to insignificant risk of changes in value. For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents consist of cash and cash equivalents as defined above.

Cash at bank earns interest at floating rates based on daily deposit rates. Short-term deposits are made for varying periods of between one day and three months, depending on the company's cash requirements. These deposits earn interest at market rates.

**f) Financial instruments accounting policies**

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument and are measured initially at fair value adjusted by transactions costs, except for those carried at fair value through surplus or deficit, which are measured initially at fair value. Subsequent measurement of financial assets and financial liabilities are described below.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

***f) Financial instruments accounting policies***

Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire, or when the financial asset and all substantial risks and rewards are transferred. A financial liability is derecognised when it is extinguished, discharged, cancelled or expires.

**Classification of Financial Assets**

Except for those trade receivables that do not contain a significant financing component and are measured at the transaction price, all financial assets are initially measured at fair value adjusted for transaction costs (where applicable).

For the purpose of subsequent measurement, financial assets other than those designated and effective as hedging instruments are classified into the following categories upon initial recognition:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)
- equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Company only holds financial assets which are classified as amortised cost. All income and expenses relating to financial assets that are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income are presented within finance costs, finance income or other financial items, except for impairment of trade receivables which is presented within other expenses.

**Subsequent measurement of financial assets**

***Financial assets at amortised cost***

Financial assets are measured at amortised cost if the assets meet the following conditions (and are not designated as FVTPL):

- they are held within a business model whose objective is to hold the financial assets and collect its contractual cash flows.
- the contractual terms of the financial assets give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

After initial recognition, these are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Discounting is omitted where the effect of discounting is immaterial. The Company's cash and cash equivalents, trade and other receivables and other assets fall into this category of financial instruments.

***Impairment of financial assets measured at amortised cost***

Impairment of financial assets is determined on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis for financial assets measured at amortised cost and contract assets arising under AASB 15.

The company has used the simplified approach in AASB 9, which uses an estimation of lifetime expected credit losses. The company has determined the probability of non-payment of the receivable and contract assets and multiplied this by the amount of the expected loss arising from default.

When estimating ECL, the company considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. This includes both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis based on the company's historical experience and informed credit assessment and includes forward looking information.

The amount of impairment is recognised in the results for the year. Once the receivable is determined to be uncollectable then the gross carrying amount is written off against the associated allowance.

## SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

#### NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### **f) Financial instruments accounting policies**

###### *Impairment of non-financial assets*

At each reporting date, the Company reviews the carrying amounts of its non-financial assets to determine whether there is any indication of impairment. If any such indication exists, then the asset's recoverable amount is estimated.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the greater of its value in use and its fair value less costs to sell. Value in use is based on the estimated future cash flows, discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the asset.

An impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss if the carrying amount of an asset exceeds its recoverable amount.

###### *Classification and measurement of financial liabilities*

The Company's financial liabilities include trade and other payables, deferred income and lease liabilities and other deferred income which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Interest expense is recognised in profit or loss. Any gain or loss on recognition is also recognised in profit or loss.

##### **g) Property, plant and equipment**

Property, plant and equipment are brought to account at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation or amortisation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated over their useful lives to the company commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Office equipment and fixtures are depreciated at 20% on a straight-line basis.

###### *Impairment*

Impairment indicators over property, plant and equipment are considered at each reporting date. If indicators exist, then the recoverable amount of the relevant asset / cash-generating unit is determined. The recoverable amount of property, plant and equipment is the higher of fair value less costs of disposal and value in use.

An impairment loss exists when the carrying value of an asset exceeds its estimated recoverable amount. The asset is then written down to its recoverable amount. For plant and equipment, impairment losses are recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

###### *Derecognition and disposal*

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when the item is no longer used in the operations of the company. Any gain or loss arising on derecognition of the asset (calculated as the difference between the net disposal proceeds and the carrying amount of the asset) is included in the result for the year when the asset is derecognised.

##### **h) Intangibles**

Intangible assets consist of website development costs paid to third parties. Items are measured at cost, less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortisation of intangible assets is calculated to write off the cost of the items over their estimated useful lives. Intangible assets are currently amortised at 20% on a straight-line basis.

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

**NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

***j) Employee entitlements***

Liabilities for short-term employee entitlements expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date are recognised at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Liabilities for non-accumulating sick leave are recognised when the leave is taken and are measured at the rates paid or payable. The liability for long-term benefits is measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to anticipated future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on corporate bonds with terms to maturity and currencies that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

The company pays contributions to certain defined contribution superannuation plans. Contributions are recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income when they are due. The company has no obligation to pay further contributions to these plans if the plans do not hold sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in current and prior periods.

***j) Deferred Income***

The liability for deferred income (income in advance) is the unutilised amounts of grants received on the condition that specified services are delivered or conditions are fulfilled. The services are usually provided or the conditions usually fulfilled within twelve (12) months of receipt of the grant. Where the amount received is in respect of services to be provided over a period that exceeds twelve (12) months after the reporting date or the conditions will only be satisfied more than twelve (12) months after the reporting date, the liability is presented as non-current.

Where money was received for a grant that contains a 'termination of convenience clause', funds are recognised as deferred income and amortised to revenue as and when the expenditure is incurred.

***k) Income tax***

The entity makes no provision for income tax as it claims exemption under the provisions of Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

The entity makes no provision for income tax as it claims exemption under the provisions of Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

***(m) Goods and Service Tax***

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the assets or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Statement of Financial Position are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the Statement of Cash Flows on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

**NOTE 1 – SUMMARY OF MATERIAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

***n) Significant management judgement in applying accounting policies***

When preparing the financial statements, management undertakes a number of judgements, estimates and assumptions about the recognition and measurement of assets, liabilities, income and expenses.

Information about estimates and assumptions that have the most significant effect on recognition and measurement of assets, liabilities, income and expenses is provided below. Actual results may be substantially different.

***Revenue recognition***

To determine if a grant contract should be accounted for under AASB 1058 or AASB 15, the Company has to determine if the contract is 'enforceable' and contains 'sufficiently specific' performance obligations. When assessing if the performance obligations are 'sufficiently specific', the Company has applied significant judgement in this regard by performing a detailed analysis of the terms and conditions contained in the grant contracts, review of accompanying documentation (e.g. grant application forms and accompanying documentation) and holding discussions with relevant parties. Income recognition from grants received by the Company has been appropriately accounted for under AASB 1058 or AASB 15 based on the assessment performed.

	<b>Year ended 31 December 2023 \$</b>	<b>Year ended 31 December 2022 \$</b>
<b>NOTE 2 – REVENUE</b>		
Box office sales	1,457,855	981,242
Ticketing income	75,287	40,620
Co-production events	53,325	43,638
Commission received	51,777	44,986
Private donations	1,357,024	1,300,337
Sponsorship received	647,109	400,312
Interest received	33,253	7,518
Other income	58,383	66,074
<b>Government grants received</b>		
City of Sydney	370,000	370,000
Create NSW	525,000	870,000
Create NSW Rescue Restart Stage 1	132,750	-
Australia Council	98,723	98,497
Local Government	40,000	40,000
International funding bodies	-	3,000
	4,900,486	4,266,224

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>31 December 2023</b>	<b>31 December 2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>NOTE 3 – TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES</b>		
<b><u>Current</u></b>		
Trade receivables	44,596	2,310
	44,596	2,310

Trade receivables are generally set by contracts. These receivables are assessed for recoverability and a provision for impairment is recognised when there is objective evidence that an individual trade receivable is impaired. Trade receivables for a total amount of \$nil as at 31 December 2023 have been provided for.

**NOTE 4 – OTHER ASSETS**

<b><u>Current</u></b>		
Prepayments	69,645	26,915
Other assets	55,100	14,083
	124,745	40,998

	<b>31 December 2023</b>	<b>31 December 2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>NOTE 5 – PROPERTY, PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>		
<b><u>Non-current</u></b>		
Office equipment – at cost	330,213	329,901
Accumulated depreciation	(294,738)	(272,259)
Total property, plant and equipment	35,475	57,642

**Movements during the period:**

**Office Equipment**

Balance at the beginning of the period	57,642	88,916
Additions	3,494	8,328
Disposal	(1,416)	(4,666)
Depreciation expense for the period	(24,245)	(34,937)
Balance at the end of the period	35,475	57,642

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>31 December 2023</b>	<b>31 December 2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>NOTE 6 – INTANGIBLE ASSETS</b>		
<b><u>Non-current</u></b>		
Website costs – at cost	359,276	236,876
Accumulated amortisation	(236,876)	(234,822)
Total intangible assets	122,400	2,054
 <b>Movements during the period:</b>		
<b><u>Website costs</u></b>		
Balance at the beginning of the period	2,054	18,784
Additions	122,400	-
Amortisation expense for the period	(2,054)	(16,730)
Balance at the end of the period	122,400	2,054
 <b>NOTE 7 – TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES</b>		
<b><u>Current (unsecured)</u></b>		
Trade payables	51,261	183,842
Other payables and accruals	173,622	27,484
GST Payable	14,468	(43,707)
	239,351	167,619
 <b>NOTE 8 – OTHER LIABILITIES</b>		
Deferred income	337,961	494,598
Grants in advance	300,000	98,723
	637,961	593,321
 <b>NOTE 9 – PROVISIONS</b>		
<b><u>Current</u></b>		
Provision for employee entitlements	24,934	32,736
Aggregate employee entitlements	24,934	32,736

**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	<b>31 December 2023</b>	<b>31 December 2022</b>
	\$	\$

**NOTE 10 – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS**

Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the statement of financial position as follows:

Cash on hand and at bank	<u>2,166,900</u>	<u>1,997,552</u>
	<u>2,166,900</u>	<u>1,997,552</u>

**NOTE 11 – REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS**

Audit of the financial statements	<u>35,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
-----------------------------------	---------------	---------------

**NOTE 12 – REMUNERATION OF DIRECTORS AND KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL**

Remuneration of key management personnel	<u>389,150</u>	<u>330,214</u>
--	----------------	----------------

During the period, directors did not receive any remuneration or other benefits from the company. Directors made donations to the organisation 2023 \$73,500 (2022: \$77,591)

**NOTE 13 – CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

There are no contingent liabilities at 31 December 2023 (2022: \$Nil)

**NOTE 14 – EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO REPORTING DATE**

There have been no other significant events occurring after the reporting period which may affect either the Company's operations or results of those operations or the Company's state of affairs.



**SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL LIMITED**

**DIRECTORS' DECLARATION**

In the opinion of the Directors of Sydney Writers' Festival Limited declare that:

- a) the financial statements and notes of Sydney Writers Festival Limited are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits commission Act 2012, including
  - i giving a true and fair view of its financial position as at 31 December 2023 and of its performance for the period ended on that date; and
  - ii Complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures (including Australian Accounting Interpretations); and
- b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that Sydney Writers Festival Limited the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.



.....  
Kathy Shand  
Director



.....  
Adrian Kerley  
Director

Date: 12 June 2024



# Independent Auditor's Report

To the Directors of Sydney Writers' Festival Limited

## Opinion

We have audited the **Financial Report**, of Sydney Writers' Festival Limited (the Company).

In our opinion, the accompanying Financial Report of the Company is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012*, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- complying with *Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures Framework* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

The **Financial Report** comprises:

- Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023.
- Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, Statement of changes in equity, and Statement of cash flows for the year then ended.
- Notes including a summary of significant accounting policies.
- Directors' declaration of the Company.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with *Australian Auditing Standards*. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report* section of our report.

We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *ACNC Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the Financial Report in Australia. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.



## Other information

Other Information is financial and non-financial information in Sydney Writers' Festival Limited's annual reporting which is provided in addition to the Financial Report and the Auditor's Report. The Directors are responsible for the Other Information.

The Other Information we obtained prior to the date of this Auditor's Report was the Director's Report.

Our opinion on the Financial Report does not cover the Other Information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the Financial Report, our responsibility is to read the Other Information. In doing so, we consider whether the Other Information is materially inconsistent with the Financial Report or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

We are required to report if we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this Other Information, and based on the work we have performed on the Other Information that we obtained prior to the date of this Auditor's Report we have nothing to report.

## Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for:

- Preparing the Financial Report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures Framework and the ACNC.
- Implementing necessary internal control to enable the preparation of a Financial Report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- Assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern and whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate. This includes disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report

Our objective is:

- to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with *Australian Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. They are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this Financial Report.



As part of an audit in accordance with *Australian Auditing Standards*, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

1. Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Financial Report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
2. Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the Audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered Company's internal control.
3. Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
4. Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditor's Report to the related disclosures in the Financial Report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditor's Report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
5. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the Financial Report, including the disclosures, and whether the Financial Report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Directors of the registered Company regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report is located at the *Auditing and Assurance Standards Board* website at: [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). This description forms part of our Auditor's Report.

Kfma

KPMG

Warwick Shanks

Partner

Sydney

12 June 2024