



## Building Brisbane's Creative Economy

**DATE & TIME:** Tuesday 23 July 2019, 5:30pm – 7:45pm

**VENUE:** Queensland Ballet, West End

**MODERATOR** **Barton Green**, Executive Director, Three Plus

**PANEL SPEAKERS:** **Julieanne Alroe**, Chair of Infrastructure Australia, Chair of Queensland Ballet, Advisory Board member with the Committee for Brisbane

**Rebecca Lamoin**, Director, Public Engagement and Learning, Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC)

**Sam Hussey**, CEO, Lightweave

On Tuesday 23 July, Committee for Brisbane members and guests were treated to an exclusive rehearsal performance of *Le Corsaire* by the Queensland Ballet. The event's theme was 'Building Brisbane's Creative Economy', a topic the Committee for Brisbane has been exploring over the past few years, and a short panel discussion took place with moderator Barton Green and speakers Julieanne Alroe, Rebecca Lamoin and Sam Hussey discussing the importance and future of the arts to Brisbane and to Queensland.

### How important is arts and culture to society? Is it a just a 'nice to have' or is it more than that?

Rebecca Lamoin described the significant role arts and culture play within societies as, "*the ways that we are able to explore who we are as humans and as individuals, and to explore one another and the world*". She stressed how important arts and culture are in bringing people together to engage in critical thinking, to debate, and to exchange ideas, particularly at this moment in history when "*arguably so many of those foundational institutions of who we are, are either failing or mistrusted*", including the media, organised religion and representative democracy.

Sam Hussey also stressed the (often overlooked) importance the arts can have on the economy citing the Brisbane Festival, with around one million attendees every year, and what it has and continues to do for the city. The value of the arts and culture is not always evident from straightforward economic metrics of how many tickets have been sold or what value comes from the dollar spend, and this makes it hard to stress how much more than a 'nice to have' arts and culture are to our cities and societies.

### How can we best encourage, support and harness Brisbane's creative industries to drive significant economic and employment growth for SEQ?

In describing the state of the arts, Julieanne Alroe noted, "*the story we're telling here in Queensland is one of excellence, and increasing excellence*", and that there are four critical components to ensuring Brisbane builds on these strengths to ensure a continuing and vibrant arts culture:

- A supportive regulatory and compliance or civic framework that allows the arts to grow. In particular, the Committee for Brisbane and the music industry have been, and continue to be, very active in advocating for more supportive night-time economy regulations to foster and support our music scene.



- Infrastructure and places to perform. The immense creativity that comes out of the places we already have shows the importance of good facilities. The recently opened Fortitude Music Hall, the posited Brisbane Live venue, and the new theatre proposed at QPAC to support the Queensland Ballet are all positive steps to delivering new infrastructure to support the arts in Queensland.
- Leadership. As Julieanne stressed, *“we need leadership in this space, we need people like ourselves saying – this is important. And saying to our governments that this is important”*.
- Funding. Be it federal money, philanthropy or corporate sponsorship, *“the hard numbers are unfortunately still the hard numbers”*: To fill theatres, support artists, deliver facilities and build on the immense creative potential we have here, it takes energy and it takes money. Julieanne noted Australia’s smaller cities, including Brisbane, have not got their share of funding available at the federal level and a shared voice to lobby and advocate politically is imperative.

**Lightweave specialises in augmented reality, virtual reality and new technology and its website describes the company as making “dreams a reality through the use of ground-breaking technology”. What could that mean for our arts and cultural sector? What could they learn from Lightweave?**

Sam Hussey, CEO of Brisbane-based Lightweave, describes the value of immersive technology as *“extended storytelling”*, highlighting its potential to capture amazing performances and travel with them, taking them regionally, interstate and abroad. Using a VR headset, a person can be a part of the audience, *“sitting right in the middle of the performance, lucky enough to watch it”*. The technology has the potential to share these experiences and tell a story to people who may not previously have had any understanding or placed any value on the arts.

Even when it’s used as a marketing tool, the storytelling potential remains. For the Brisbane Festival, Lightweave was engaged to develop a marketing experience that went beyond traditional printed material. They used augmented reality to tell more of the story – people could scan a poster or the festival program to be shown a trailer for the performance or supporting reviews and interviews, which then linked through to ticket purchasing.

While the use of new technologies as a replacement for streaming services has predominantly been focused on sport to date, the potential for its use within the arts is increasing, with immersive tech *“forever growing and forever becoming cheaper and cheaper”*. And companies like Lightweave have the capacity and the capability to do this with the arts, *“to come and say let’s test this and let’s experiment”*.

**QPAC is Queensland’s premier venue for the performing arts, with more than 1,300 performances and 1.5 million visitors each year. How does QPAC contribute broadly to arts and culture and creativity in Queensland?**

QPAC is much more than a venue, it’s a state body with the mandate to reach five million people around Queensland. As Rebecca articulated, *“the boring answer is that our legislation says we have to do three things: we’re a presenter of artistic programs, a leader in arts learning, and the manager of our venue”*. What that looks like is advocacy, collaboration, capacity building, risk taking and leadership. QPAC as a venue brings major performances from around the globe to Queensland, but it also produces its own work, it collaborates and co-produces work with a range of bodies, and it invests in works to make sure they come here.

Rebecca described the contribution QPAC has for Queensland as being at *“an individual, personal level for those in Brisbane and across the state...but also the value we’re trying to build in the communities we’re working with as well”*.