



## **Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Financial Year 2024–2025 7 October 2025**

I am pleased to present the Chair's Report for the Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Inc for the 2024–2025 financial year.

This has been a year defined by **renewal, sustainability, community, and inclusivity**. Throughout the year, the Board has focused on strengthening governance and structure, maintaining the valued activities that our Members appreciate, and exploring opportunities for growth and diversification.

### **Board Membership and Governance**

At the start of the financial year, the previous Board initiated a recruitment process to ensure the sustainability of the organisation, support sound decision-making, and share the workload more equitably. As a result, four new Members were appointed at the last AGM: Peter Burdon, Felicity Erne, Kathy Darling Brooks, and myself. We joined five continuing Members, bringing the Board to its full complement of nine in line with the IAF Constitution. Since then, we have farewelled Moira Simpson, Merinda Edwards, and Kathy Darling Brooks. I would like to thank Moira, Merinda and Kathy for their valuable contributions. As of this AGM, the Board comprises six active Members who continue to work with great dedication to support the IAF's mission of **assisting emerging creatives in the first five years of their practice**.

This is very much a **working board**. Members contribute both strategically and operationally, across governance, events, grants, communications, and administration.

The Board meets bimonthly and holds two strategic planning days annually. At our January 2025 planning day, the Board developed a new strategic direction for the organisation, established sub-committees, refined governance practices, and initiated a comprehensive policy review. These priorities were further reviewed and progressed at our July planning day and at our regular meetings throughout the year.

Key achievements this year include:

- Finalisation of the **IAF Strategic Plan 2025–2027**
- Development of an accompanying **Operational Plan**
- Establishment of three key Board sub-committees
- Implementation of a **Board Charter** and supporting governance documents
- A refreshed website, new Instagram account, new logo, and centralised digital recordkeeping system

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## **Strategic Plan 2025–2027**

In May, we were pleased to share a draft of the IAF Strategic Plan 2025–2027 with you and seek consultation – thank you to those of you who sent insightful feedback and support.

The plan has now been ratified by the Board and provides a refreshed **vision, mission, and set of values**, supported by three key strategic goals:

1. **Strengthen governance**
2. **Ensure sustainability**
3. **Support emerging artists**

Our mission remains clear: **to provide financial assistance to artists and build community through the celebration of local artistic talent.**

I would like to express sincere thanks to all Board Members who contributed to the Plan, particularly **Margaret Lynch** for her leadership throughout the strategic planning process and for shaping a document that offers a clear and realistic roadmap for our future.

### **Board Committees**

The IAF now operates with three key committees to support the work of the Board:

#### **Small Grants Sub-Committee**

Chaired by Margaret Lynch, with members Peter Burdon and Associate Professor Gretchen Coombs, this committee continues to provide rigorous oversight of our grants program.

#### **Finance, Risk, Audit & Membership Sub-Committee**

Chaired by Peter Burdon, with Mary Odlum as Treasurer, this committee ensures financial diligence, oversees risk management, and leads membership reporting and strategy. An independent member, Heather Karmel FCPA FAICD, has also been recruited to provide an independent and professional perspective. Heather has a long association with the arts including Business Manager of the National Institute of the Arts at ANU as well as local appointment, including President of the Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus Inc and Treasurer and then Chair Of The Board Of Directors of Nexus Arts.

#### **Events & Communications Sub-Committee**

Chaired jointly by Mary Odlum and Felicity Erne, this committee leads the coordination of events, as well as communications across our website, social media, newsletters, and Member outreach.

We were pleased to welcome **Carolina Cruz** and **Paula Barbato** to this committee earlier in the year following an EOI process. While Paula has since stepped down, Carolina continues to make a valuable contribution.



## Events and Fundraising

The IAF continues to deliver a vibrant calendar of events, which remain essential to both community engagement and fundraising for our grants program.

This year we hosted:

- **Seven film nights**, including our most successful ever at Wallis Mitcham, where over 120 guests attended *The Widow Clicquot*
- **Eight literary dinners**, featuring a diverse and stimulating range of speakers, including:
  - Professor John West-Sooby (*What Have the French Ever Done for Us?*)
  - Professor Enrico Mercuri's contemporary take on *Dante's Inferno*
  - Burt & Burke where we had IAF Members Burt Surmon and Vincent Burke both talk about their books. (May 2025)
  - Chris Finnen with David Sly who interviewed Chris about the book *Finnenisms: Chris Finnen riffs on his 70 years of music*. Chris also played acoustic guitar (November 2024)

We also hosted specific events including:

- Lainie Anderson in conversation with Sandy Verschoor on The Death of Dora Black was the featured speaker at the Booklovers' luncheon Spring event for 2024-2025 (Special Event).
- The Scottish special [event.in](#) July 2024 was very successful. (this was Moira's idea).

We were also honoured to attend events showcasing the work of IAF-supported artists, including:

- **Tutti Arts Choral Takeover**, recipients of the 2023 IAF Sponsored Critics' Circle Innovation Award
- **Brighton Jetty Sculptures Opening Night**
- **Catherine Fitz-Gerald's** visual talk *If Fabrics Could Speak* at Pepper Street Gallery
- Grant recipient, **Lucky Smith** - Art exhibition *Under 30s Eat Free* at The Mill Gallery

A particularly special moment was the launch of our founder and patron **Jessica Dames'** book *Baroota to Burra – In Service to the Arts*, held at Glen Ewin Estate in November.

## Grants

As our Treasurer will outline in her report, this year we awarded:

- **\$38,704** in small grants
  - **7 individual grants**
  - **7 group awards**
- Continued sponsorship of:
  - **Brighton Jetty Sculptures** (\$1,000)
  - **Adelaide Critics Circle Innovation Award** (\$1,000)

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These grants reflect the core purpose of the IAF: to support emerging artists in South Australia during the critical early stages of their careers.

The work of the IAF does garner attention; on 2 April, Mary Odlum and I were honoured to meet with **Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC**, Governor of South Australia, at Government House. We shared highlights from the IAF's recent work, including outcomes from our 2025 Adelaide Fringe grant recipients, and presented the draft Strategic Plan. We also discussed alignment with South Australia's newly launched 10-year cultural policy, *A Place to Create*.

### Thanks and Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all current and past Board Members. Your dedication and hard work have been essential in a year of consolidation and renewal.

To those who support our events:

Cheryl Appelkamp de Valenzuela

Jill Argent

Jenny Dunstan

Marg Jude

Carol Maelzer

Steve Charles

Sherry Proferes

My sincere thanks for the varied and valuable contributions you make – we couldn't do this without you.

To our Members – thank you for your unwavering support, whether through attendance at events, renewing your membership, or making donations. Your belief in the IAF and its mission makes everything we do possible.

The vision of the IAF is for South Australia to be a place where **emerging creatives are empowered to develop their careers and thrive**. A vibrant arts culture enriches all of us, and your support ensures that creatives have a pathway and a potential opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for being part of that vision.

Jane Angel

Chair, Independent Arts Foundation (SA) Inc