

LA MAMA'S IMPACT SURVEY: SUMMARY

In response to Australia Council's decision to cut funding to La Mama after 50 continuous years, we decided to conduct a survey. The survey involved 2,565 participants. Here are the key findings:

- 99.1%** agreed or strongly agreed that the federal government should provide the Australia Council of the Arts with a recovery package to ensure the survival of La Mama and other small to medium arts organisations.
- 99.42%** of audience participants highly valued their La Mama experience.
- 97.37%** value the opportunity La Mama gives the community to engage in the arts.
- 99.59%** of people value the support La Mama gives artists in the community.

When asked if there was anything else participants would like to communicate an overwhelming 1,395 people left an outpour of support. Here are just few examples that we thought best captured the overall sentiments:

'La Mama theatre is the beating heart of independent theatre in this city and country. It is a more than an organisation or a company, it is a community of artists and audiences. La Mama forges connections between people and art. It breaks down barriers and embraces. La Mama lives and breathes. It welcomes. It dreams. It is completely iconic but the most important thing about La Mama is that it's alive with ideas, conversation, inspiration, inclusivity, talent, dedication, kindness and passion. La Mama is more than a theatre, it is the birthplace of so much that we celebrate artistically. Through the art created and the conversations generated, we understand and see so much more about who we are as a society and a culture. We gain perspective, question, debate, reflect and appreciate. La Mama is home to so many artists and audiences. It's a genuine community and its value to our culture is profound.'

'La Mama not only provides professional opportunities, training, and employment to people involved in the creative arts sector. It also makes their important, thought-provoking performances more accessible to the general public. La Mama takes this responsibility to social equity very seriously, including bringing performances to school children throughout Melbourne and across the state. For decades, La Mama's commitment to touring, and to community development, has enabled school children and community groups across Victoria to participate in the creative arts, and to think more fulsomely and productively about matters of social justice. La Mama supports the telling of local stories, of little known stories, of stories of minority and marginalised individuals and groups.'

'La Mama is the heart, soul and lifeblood of Australian theatre. For the last five decades it has nurtured and supported our performers, playwrights and production teams. It has been absolutely essential for the creative arts community. There are new generations of creative artists as well as well established artists all working together in this vital theatre. The future of Australian Theatre is at stake. This greatly loved theatre is vital for the survival of theatre in this country.'

'It would be like ripping the theatre heart straight out of Melbourne. Whether you know it or not your life has been impacted by La Mama. Whether it is you as an artist or even those sitting in their couch saying ooh I like that actor...they most probably had a start on the stage in this wondrous place. It is like the Aunt you know is always there. It's the foundation of what we do and who we are. It holds the artists of past and present together and its survival will ensure ours as a community.'

'La Mama has been an inspirational arts institution that has weathered many storms and challenges (re fire, etc.). The values it stands for must be upheld if we are to have a healthy society coming out of isolation, into celebration, professional employment for artists of many kinds, into political and ethical discourse, and as visionaries for a vibrant, new world post c-19 when we will need to challenge constraints of power and uphold and expand human rights.'

'La Mama and its community injects a creative and artistic element into the life of many Australians, whether in Melbourne or elsewhere in our country and abroad. It contributes to a culture of creativity felt throughout society Every dollar spent on La Mama is returned in the income it generates in other businesses, but mostly in the talent which is developed and which sustains us as a thinking, feeling, creative society in every sphere.'

'La Mama provides access for literally hundreds of artists every year. It has pioneered accessible and diverse theatre practice, has been at the forefront of presenting Indigenous voices, has been the ultimate playwrights' theatre, and has made connections to schools, community, other theatre companies and theatre training courses. It is not just a company - it is indispensable cultural infrastructure.'

'I have been going to La Mama shows since I was a child - it was one of my first experiences of theatre and has been a place where I consistently go to to experience a whole range of shows. My memories of all the shows that I've seen there are so interwoven with my memories of my life that I can't imagine a Melbourne without it.'

'La Mama theatre has provided opportunities to some of Australia's most renowned and successful writers, directors and actors early in their career, and continues to do so. However, it not only provides opportunities for diverse playwrights, directors and actors to develop and hone their craft, but also supports poets and musicians through La Mama Poetica and La Mama Musica. It deserves continued funding from the Australia Council, as an important and irreplaceable artistic institution in Melbourne and the country's cultural life.'

'My current solo theatre show, Happy-Go-Wrong, would not have had the incredible reach and critical success it has had without La Mama. This now, multiple award-winning show (and twice Green Room Award-nominated) exists as it does because of La Mama's early support of it via its excellent Explorations program. This show has gone on to tour even internationally and has given a creative and important voice to people living with chronic illness and disability.'

'I have had a reciprocal relationship with La Mama through our regional remote venue in Gippsland. La Mama gives artist "on the ground freedom to create". This mentality is a vital stepping stone in a society of manufactured entertainment. La Mama is essential to Melbourne but also provides a critical support service to regional areas of Victoria.'

'I work in the tourism industry and as a result get to understand firsthand why visitors, both domestic and international, are attracted to Melbourne. At face value Melbourne looks very generic. It is only when a visitor gets under the skin of the city, down at the street level, they start to get drawn to it and start to love it. Resoundingly it is the diversity of community, food and diversity of culture and, the Melbournians passion for these things that they fall in love with. This took a long time to build, but can be eroded away quite quickly if we discard institutions like La Mama. Now, more than ever, we need to support La Mama.'

'Melbourne's arts scene is unique. What makes it so is a heady mix of eclectic innovative passionate and insanely talented artists, designers, musicians, composers, actors, Cabaret performers, puppeteers, acrobats, poets, rappers, singers and more. They need a home, one they embraces their passion individuality and vision. La Mama is that place and if the Australia Council is true to their vision of enriching the cultural life of this country they would support La Mama.'

To describe La Mama, a few words in particular kept coming up. This is how frequently those words were used: Community - 520, Important - 340, Vital - 254 , Essential - 162, integral - 122, La Mama as the Heart of Melbourne/theatre/ community - 114, Unique - 106, Icon - 84, Crucial - 82, Critical - 68, Home - 60.

To view the 1,395 responses in full, please [click here](#).