

APT

AUSTRALIAN PLAYS TRANSFORM

Executive Producer Application Pack



THE CREATION OF A NEW ORGANISATION

In March 2020, the independent REĀ Review into play development in Australia was released. 130 submissions were made by organisations and artists from across Australia.

The Review found that

“Australian work now makes up almost two thirds of all theatre presented on larger stages in Australia, with a marked rise in First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse works... These trends are very recent and there is not a sufficient track record to guarantee this success into the future without ongoing support...”

“This review finds that a new entity is once again required to adapt to a changed and changing funding, production and play development environment... it will better support our artists, our production companies, and ultimately our audiences – better contributing to the commercial viability of our sector and the development of our wider cultural identity.”

The Review’s principal recommendation was that *“Playwriting Australia merge with Australian Plays to establish a new national and efficient long-range play discovery, development, and publishing entity to promote new plays to the arts industry and education sectors.”*

APT is the consolidated entity advocated by the Review. For the first time, a national organisation will be able to travel with playwrights through the life cycle of a work. It will seek new voices for new times, develop plays that change the national story, link them to production, publish them, promote them, and license them for future productions here and globally.



CONTEXT

What's Changing

The world is in flux. It is moving from west to east, from north to south, from men to women and other genders, from white privilege to a new way forward with Black communities and People of Colour, from people without disability to people experiencing disability. And more. For some, we are in an Age of Bewilderment. For others, we are in an Age of Reckoning.

We believe these shifts to be inevitable and positive. The pandemic has accelerated the shifts, widening old cracks and making new ones.

Theatre and the stories it voices have always played an important part in articulating and shaping change for good. APT will be a principal instrument of transformation and better representation, creating space and opportunity for playwrights to be at their best.

The Digital

The pandemic has fast-tracked the world's use of digital tools. In arts and culture everywhere, we have seen artists, arts companies and venues experimenting. Out of this enforced innovation, good ideas have emerged. The good ideas, still being revealed, require development. We will harness these ideas to nourish playwrighting practices, expanding conceptions of 'stages' and audiences.

The Climate

Emboldened by a new trust in science, we will soon return with new urgency to the climate and ecological emergency. Before the pandemic, artists and organisations were already engaged. One of the world's largest theatre companies, the National Theatre in London, has declared a climate emergency with a plan to be carbon neutral across all levels of operation, including how productions are developed, made and toured. Critically, this also includes how plays are commissioned, with plays on climate and ecological concerns to be prominently reflected in their program. Similar trends are obvious around the world, including in Australia.

We will be at the forefront in developing ideas and practices around the growing field of Green Dramaturgy – a toolkit for approaching any play on any subject – at the moment largely absent in Australia.

Australia's Place

Australia is well placed to lead. We sit both east and south, with a unique cultural bridge to west and north. The First Nations peoples of these lands and waters are custodians of the world's oldest continuing culture. Our climate and ecological situation is tellingly accentuated.

The world looks to Australia to help change the story, and even to make a new one. There is a global responsibility.

Australian actors and Australian directors have huge currency in international theatre culture. Most of these actors and all of the directors have emerged from the Australian theatre. Australian playwrights, charged by the new need for new stories, are next in line.



WHAT'S CERTAIN

Australian theatre faces deep uncertainty.

But these things are clear:

- there is a swelling desire for new work (an existing trend boosted by the pandemic);
- these distinctive times require daring Australian stories, particularly from non-dominant voices; and
- in the face of few resources there is a burning need for a national organisation that extends resources to many, helping the sustainability of other organisations and of playwrights' careers.

APT has emerged from a considered consolidation of the influential work done by Playwriting Australia and Australian Plays, with a salute to the successes of predecessor organisations Playworks and the Australian National Playwrights' Centre. But much more than that, it has emerged as a direct response to the present, disruptive times. The past is where lessons are learned; the future is where they are applied.

APT will be fit for purpose. It will be apt.

For the first time, a national body will travel with playwrights through the entire life cycle of a work – from the earliest moment of genesis, to development, to pathways to production, to publication, licensing and out into the world.

This long arc of connection will generate advantage. It will generate new inspiration for fresh voices, for they will more easily be able to see potential long-term outcomes. It will generate new engagement with experienced playwrights, for there will be improved capacity for career shaping. It will generate new dexterity for those taking carriage of publication and licensing, for they will be directly attuned to how the play has come about.

It will also generate a new sense of cogency, for the whole life story of these new plays can be lucidly told, helping to give them the best chance of profoundest impact as narratives for the nation, and for the world.

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”

(Arundhati Roy, April 2020)



VISION

A world made more just, curious and enjoyable by Australian plays.

PURPOSE

To write a new script for our world.

VALUES

Story

The engine of every story is change. It is this quality that makes stories such powerful agents of change. Stories are the best tool we have for understanding what it feels like to be someone else. They shape how we understand the world and our ability to change it. They make, prop up, and bring down systems. Playwrights tell stories that enable us to safely have the most difficult conversations. Stories are the glue that can make us unstuck.

First Nations First

We believe that a recognition of the ancient sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is necessary for a full expression of Australia's nationhood. We believe that it's critical that full opportunities be created for all people to encounter, engage with and be transformed by that story. We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural resurgence and self-determination as part of the shaping of our national narrative, and as an example to the world.

Belonging

Diversity is a fact (the numbers), inclusion is a behaviour (we invite you to the table) but belonging is a feeling (I'm at the table and I'm being heard). We believe it's our responsibility to create an environment where people can feel safe to bring their authentic and unique selves to what we do. That involves having an awareness of how the table is built – through our governance, staffing, and the way we create programs. If someone feels they belong, they'll feel OK about speaking the craziest, best idea ever.



PARTNERING

We want organisations to feel they belong, just as much as individuals. We know that we'll achieve more if we partner well – enhancing the agency of organisations that have cultural expertise and growing the capacity of organisations that have limited resources, especially the small-to-medium and independent sector. To partner is to be more fully in the world, and we need to be in the world to change it.

ADVENTURE

We believe that the greatest risk is to take no risk. It is only through risking to go too far that we can discover how far we can truly go. We feel OK about being lost in the right direction.

PLAYFULNESS

Brecht noted that *“from the start it has been the theatre’s business to entertain people... it needs no other passport than fun”*. We believe that the idea that creativity flows from playfulness, long held close in good rehearsal rooms, should flow into all we do and how we celebrate.

DOING THE RIGHT THING

We act with integrity and honesty even when no one is looking. We are transparent, and accountable for all outcomes, good or bad.

“The power of storytelling is exactly this: to bridge the gaps where everything else has crumbled.”
(Paulo Coelho)



GOALS

To seek new voices for new times.

This means being responsible and responsive to the world we live in. With the world in flux, new voices, especially non-dominant voices, need to be identified, nurtured and elevated. If we don't do this, we will be starved.

To develop plays that change the story.

This means giving positive change the best chance. We need to develop plays, from both new and experienced playwrights, that are not only of the times, but shape the times. If we don't do this, we will fall into numbing habit.

To connect plays with production.

This means moving plays from blueprint to organism. Plays we help develop aren't truly alive until they are staged. We need to work in practical partnership with producing organisations, often through co-investment. If we don't do this, the stories are lost.

To proclaim our plays to the world.

This means publishing and licensing Australian plays and being loud about their value. There are growing markets in the professional theatre, community theatre and education sectors around Australia and the world. Expanding, curating and promoting our definitive digital catalogue of 2,650 Australian plays is critical for the potency and sustainability of playwrights' careers and of Australian storytelling. If we don't do this, we restrain our stories.

To create a sustainable organisation.

This means engaging with the demands of financial and organisational health and culture, of the climate and ecological emergency, and of emerging global challenges. If we don't do this, we can't fulfil our purpose.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/CEO POSITION PROFILE

Purpose of position

The Executive Producer is responsible for driving the performance of the company and leading the organisation towards the achievement of its vision, purpose and goals.

Work Type Full time

Location Negotiable

Salary Range An attractive remuneration package will be offered

Reporting line Chair and Board of Directors

Key Interfaces

- Chair and Board of Directors
- National Advisory Panel
- General Manager
- APT staff and consultants
- Playwrights and other artists
- Producing theatre companies
- Funding bodies, donors, sponsors
- Network of partners

About APT

APT is a new organisation, the result of a merger between Playwriting Australia (the national body for the development of Australian playwriting) and Australian Plays (digital publisher and the leading online catalogue of Australian plays). The creation of this consolidated entity was the key recommendation of the independent REA Review into play development in Australia.

For the first time, a national organisation will be able to travel with playwrights through the life cycle of a work. It will seek new voices for new times, develop plays that change the national story, link them to production, publish them, promote them, and license them for future productions here and globally.

Key competencies and capabilities

To be successful in the role, you will need to:

- Have a developed capacity to lead and manage an organisation in a highly complex environment.
- Be able to conceive, identify, develop and deliver a future life for the work of a playwright, identifying and matching talent with opportunity.
- Have detailed knowledge of producing companies, contexts, market conditions, audiences, requirements and challenges, together with solid relationships within festivals and the presenting networks.



- Be able to broker creative relationships through a sound knowledge of playwrights, their work, and their collaborators.
- Have the commercial skill to optimise the returns on play publication and licensing, including into the education and community sectors, and internationally.
- Have the respect of your peers, and established relationships that you can call upon.
- Have a high level of cultural awareness and demonstrated cultural competencies.
- Have an understanding and appreciation of power-dynamics, white privilege and working within a colonised context.
- Have experience in developing and maintaining partnerships based on mutual respect and benefit.
- Have a focus on income streams, with established skills and interest in building relationships with philanthropists.
- Have a high-level understanding of budget development, management and reporting.
- Have experience in meeting regulatory, compliance and reporting obligations.
- Be able to inspire and lead a team into opportunity and growth.

The Executive Producer could be a playwright, director or other artist but might also be a creative programmer, producer or administrator who knows and admires the field.

Key accountabilities

Direction and strategy

- In conjunction with the APT Board, continue to develop the organisation's strategic plan including vision, purpose and goals.
- Take the operational lead on establishing and implementing strategic objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Monitor and evaluate operational activities, and ensure that KPIs are achieved.

Programming and program management

- Devise (through collaboration with partner organisations and APT staff) and then direct an annual program that drives the development, diversity and sustainability of Australian playwriting in accordance with the organisation's business plan.
- Build, develop and maintain partnerships that optimise the achievement of APT's goals, reach and impact.

Stakeholder relationships

Establish, develop and maintain productive relationships with:

- Government arts and creative agencies and other funding bodies.
- Playwrights and other theatre artists.
- Third-party publishers.
- Theatre companies and other producing and commissioning organisations
- Donors and philanthropic foundations.
- Other agencies involved in the development, publication & promotion of Australian plays & playwriting.



Marketing, publicity and public relations

- Represent APT to media, other arts organisations and major stakeholders, including at conferences, seminars and other industry events.
- Work with the General Manager and marketing team on the development and implementation of APT's branding, marketing and promotional strategies.

Fundraising, sponsorship and income generation

- In collaboration with the General Manager, develop annual and three-year budgets and long-term strategies for whole-of-organisation funding.
- Oversee submissions, reporting and acquittals for government funding bodies.
- Identify and assist with philanthropic and sponsorship opportunities and donor relations.

Financial Management

- Assist in the development of detailed annual budgets in a consultative framework with the General Manager.
- Monitor and manage budgets for delivery of programs within time frames and financial constraints.
- Final responsibility for budget management.
- Review the preparation of statutory financial statements.

Management and Board reporting

- On-going development of the company's operational infrastructure and capacity.
- Maintain clear and productive communication between the company and the Board.
- Prepare timely reporting for Board meetings, identifying key issues, successes and challenges.
- Be ultimately responsible for the effective implementation and management of all organisational policies including WHS policies and procedures in the workplace and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Team management

- Maintain a safe, productive and harmonious workplace within a strong team focused environment where feedback and guidance is provided constructively and ambition and aspiration is supported and encouraged.
- Negotiate the recruitment and termination of employees and contracted creatives and consultants.
- Conduct annual salary negotiations as required.
- Ensure the provision of relevant professional development and training opportunities.
- Maintain and develop an organisational culture that attracts, rewards and retains high calibre staff from a diversity of backgrounds.

APT is an inclusive employer.

First Nations, CALD, people living with disability and LGBTQIA+ candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.



HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are advised to carefully read the Position Profile, the APT Statement of Vision, Purpose and Goals, and as background the independent [REĀ Review](#) into play development in Australia. Recent updates on the progress towards APT can be found on the websites of both [Australian Plays](#) and [Playwriting Australia](#).

To apply, please submit a cover letter, current CV and no more than 4 pages expressing your reasons for applying for the role, and the vision, skills and experience that you would bring to this important new organisation. Please send your application as one single PDF document.

Applications are due by 5pm AEDT on Monday 22 February, emailed to EP@apt.org.au