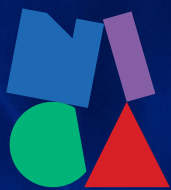


2024

Annual Report



National
Institute of
Circus Arts



**National
Institute of
Circus Arts**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples in Naarm (Melbourne).

NICA humbly acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the traditional Custodians and knowledge-holders of the lands on which we create and learn.

We recognise that sovereignty has never been ceded and we pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend our sincere acknowledgement to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, alumni, partners and visitors, who have contributed to NICA's success, diversity and growth.

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OUR PURPOSE

Vision

NICA is an internationally renowned centre of excellence, providing innovative education, training, performance, research, leadership and talent to the contemporary circus arts industry.

Goals

- Drive excellence and support world-class endeavour and achievement in the education and training of circus artists.
- Establish a strong regional, national and international presence.
- Build a robust and sustainable organisation.
- Build strong relationships with industry and the wider community.
- Develop strong academic foundations that support a research culture and ensure quality in education and training.
- Create real industry pathways to successful career opportunities.

Mission

EXCELLENCE

We strive for seamless, effortless performance. Today is the foundation for excellent outcomes tomorrow.

INNOVATION

At NICA, we reach for the impossible. We research and invent performance possibilities. We reimagine circus traditions.

LEADERSHIP

Our graduates and staff lead, shape, and support Australia's circus arts industry.

WELCOMING

We create avenues for diverse participants to enter and complete our education and performance program. We welcome them.

WONDERMENT

We showcase circus as a significant and unique artform and inspire a new generation of artists and audiences.



About

Masters of putting the credible in the incredible. Setting the standard for the spectacular. We are NICA.

We make the extraordinary world of circus arts a professional reality with world-class training, innovation, research, and development.

It's through these tools that NICA creates truly extraordinary, industry-ready artists.

Previously flying under the flag of Swinburne University of Technology, and now transitioning to the Australian College of the Arts (Collarts), we provide tertiary-level, innovative education, training, performance, research, leadership and talent to the local, national and global circus arts industry.

At NICA, we utilise our world-leading credentials to unlock and bolster pathways to the extraordinary.

We're an authority on the awe-inspiring and set the standard for the spectacular through our seamless blend of accredited training and exceptional talent.

Image: NICA Represents artists Amy Nightingale-Olsen, Sarah Gray and Matt Anderson. Photography Rob Blackburn.

FROM THE CHAIR

Michael O'Shea

I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report for the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA).

Throughout the year, NICA has continued to exemplify the creativity, passion and resilience that define its community. With the ongoing work to transition NICA to the Australian College of the Arts (Collarts), the team remained steadfast in delivering high-quality education while prioritising the wellbeing of students—a balance that speaks volumes about their dedication.

Among the many highlights of 2024, the third-year ensemble production *FAMOUS* was a standout. It was a joy to witness the students' artistry, collaboration and technical skill on full display before an audience of family, peers, alumni, and supporters. The performance was a powerful reminder of the transformative impact of NICA's training.

Throughout 2024, industry engagement and participation remained at the forefront of the student experience, including involvement in numerous festivals, public displays and the various showcase and ensemble performances. All of these performances received rave reviews from industry and media and showcased NICA's unique place in the teaching of circus arts in this country.

The Board has had a busy year as it supported NICA's management team who have progressed a suite of initiatives to ensure that NICA and its activities remain sustainable well into the future. In November 2024, the Board was pleased to formalise NICA's transition from Swinburne University of Technology to Collarts – an agreement that ensured the continuation and long-term stability of this world-class centre of excellence, whilst also securing the future of circus arts in Australia.

Swinburne was proud to be a part of NICA's long and esteemed history and the transition to Collarts was a logical next step in NICA's journey. I look forward to this new era for NICA and the opportunities it will bring for its students. I want to thank NICA's staff for their unwavering passion for their students and the arts, as we worked through this process.

The Board would also like to acknowledge the continued support of the Australian Government's Office for the Arts in ensuring NICA had the support it needed to thrive. I also acknowledge the support of the Victorian Government through the Department of Education and Training, and our valued donors who continue to support NICA through their generosity.

I acknowledge my fellow Board Directors Ms Madelyn Bolch and Mr David McCall and the Company Secretaries Ms Emma Lincoln and Ms Lisian Teh for their support.

Finally, I thank NICA's Director, Ms Simona Jobbagy and the entire team who have once again led and taught with passion and shown dedication to NICA's students through their exceptional delivery of outstanding educational programs.

Michael O'Shea

Former Chair of the NICA Board



Image: Third-year student Gabriel Walker performing in *FAMOUS*. Photography Cameron Grant.

FROM THE CEO

Simona Jobbagy

I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which NICA stands, the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. It is from this land that I am honoured to present NICA's 2024 Annual Report.



The year 2024 brought with it both significant challenges and remarkable achievements for NICA. We began the year buoyed by the strong employment outcomes of our 2023 graduates, a clear testament to the industry-aligned, high-calibre training we provide. Following our 2023 Showcase, four graduates joined Circa for a European tour in 2024, while another three gained employment with Circus Oz on various productions, including a show that premiered at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. One graduate also joined the tour of Strut & Fret's show Blanc de Blanc. Three graduates were employed by NICA Rec to teach in our community programs. The remaining graduates joined NICA Represents—our in-house talent agency—and performed at key events, including Moomba 2024 and several television appearances.

A pivotal development early in the year was the funding uplift granted by the Australian Government's Office for the Arts, following a Financial Sustainability Review initiated in 2023. Conducted by KordaMentha, this was the first such review in over a decade and assessed the long-term viability of the Arts8 training organisations. The resulting funding increase enabled us to grow our workforce and resources and, most importantly, supported our transition planning.

Throughout 2024, NICA's leadership team focused on three strategic priorities: securing a new home for NICA, reaccrediting our VET and Higher Education programs, and delivering on our core objective of providing high-quality accredited training in circus arts.

A key outcome of this work was the establishment of the NICA Transition Working Group—comprising representatives from the Office for the Arts, the Victorian Government, Swinburne University of Technology, and NICA. This collaborative effort ensured the continuity of NICA beyond December 2025. In November, we reached a milestone moment with the transfer of NICA's institutional membership from Swinburne University of Technology to the

Australian College of The Arts (Collarts). This transition included the adoption of a new constitution and the appointment of an independent board, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter and discussions about NICA's future.

We also successfully transitioned the accreditation of our Bachelor of Circus Arts program under Collarts, and took ownership of our Vocational Education programs, previously managed by Swinburne University of Technology.

Although we did not intake a new Bachelor of Circus Arts cohort in 2024, our dedicated staff continued to deliver exceptional learning experiences. Our third-year students participated in an industry immersion at the Adelaide Fringe Festival, gaining firsthand insights into festival operations and working with professional circus companies. They also presented an outstanding ensemble production, *FAMOUS*, directed by Carita Farrer Spencer, to enthusiastic audiences over two weeks at NICA's National Circus Centre.

Students across other year levels also showcased their talents. Highlights included:

- Second-year ensemble performance *FALL WITH ME*
- Certificate IV production *A THEATRE OF MISTAKES* at Gasworks Theatre
- Third-year showcase *FULL DISCLOSURE* at So Soiree Stonnington (Grattan Gardens)

With the 2025 Bachelor of Circus Arts intake confirmed in the second half of the year, our audition process began with a tremendous team effort from our administration, education, and marketing staff, who worked tirelessly to secure a successful intake for 2026.

Our partnerships continued to thrive, particularly with Patrick Studios Australia and Spectrum Dance, where over 200 students graduated from Certificate and Diploma programs in dance and musical



theatre, many securing employment in the industry. Our partnership with Flying Fruit Fly Circus also saw a successful Certificate III cohort and a strong graduate performance.

Community engagement remained a cornerstone of our work. Through our Outreach program, NICA delivered a two-week social circus workshop to Indigenous students at Yiramalay, in partnership with Theatre Kimberley's Sandfly Circus. Our trainers and students also participated in the National Training Project and Mullum Mullum Festival, leading workshops and completing internships.

Another highlight was hosting our inaugural Youth Circus Exchange, welcoming 80+ young artists and staff from six affiliate organisations. This event facilitated professional development, peer learning, and access to specialist training from our experienced staff.

Internationally, we hosted:

- Victorian auditions for Cirque du Soleil
- A week-long specialist training workshop with Japan's Power Arts troupe
- Planning discussions for a 2025–26 educational exchange with the Nanjing Circus Troupe

To support this renewed partnership with Nanjing, NICA representatives attended a Sydney conference featuring key voices from the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian and Chinese embassies, and the Hon. Susan Templeman MP.

We closed the year with our much-loved Youth Circus Finale, delivered by students from our community programs. Both shows played to full houses and were a fitting celebration of a dynamic and successful year.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to NICA's dedicated staff for their passion, professionalism, and commitment to delivering exceptional student experiences. Special recognition goes to our general

and technical production teams, who ensured the smooth operation of the organisation through a particularly demanding year.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our leadership team. Their tireless work and clear vision continue to shape NICA's future and strengthen our reputation as Australia's National Centre of Excellence in circus arts training.

It is both a privilege and a joy to lead this remarkable organisation. I look forward to shaping the next chapter of NICA in 2025 and beyond.

Simona Jobbagy
CEO, NICA

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

January

NICA receives funding from the Federal Government, Office for the Arts, as part of a six-year funding agreement allocated to the Arts8 group in the 2024–2025 Federal Budget.

22 students begin their journey in NICA's Certificate IV in Circus Arts program, while intake for the Bachelor of Circus Arts remains on pause.

February

NICA is represented in the Midsumma Pride March by more than 14 students and staff, in celebration and support of the LGBTQIA+ community.

MARCH



Third-year students attend the Adelaide Fringe Festival as part of the Circus Studies Industry Project, interning with independent artists, front of house, site crew, riggers, and photographers at Gluttony.

April

NICA welcomes back the Na Djinang *Making Tracks* group for a residency training program that includes in-kind use of training spaces, workshops, and skill-building sessions with NICA trainers.

NICA celebrates World Circus Day with all-school workshops led by five Cirque du Soleil cast members from *LUZIA*, including 2017 alum Nelson Smyles.

May

During Reconciliation Week, NICA hosts a Morning Tea for Culture to raise funds for the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).



Two students and two staff travel to Sydney for the annual Arts8 Collaboration, hosted this year by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Representatives from each Arts8 organisation engage in skill-sharing, discussion, and collaboration.

June

Four staff represent NICA at the Lighthouse Project in Sydney, NSW, delivering workshops, running career booths, and showcasing a contemporary Cyr wheel performance by alumni Rowan Thomas to inspire students in performing arts schools.

Third-year student ensemble show *FAMOUS* is directed by Carita Farrer Spencer.

July

NICA secures a new educational partner and begins transitioning to the Australian College of the Arts (Collarts). The Bachelor of Circus Arts degree is officially unpaused.

96 youth circus students from 16 different schools across the country converge at NICA for the Youth Circus Exchange; a three-day program of training, workshops, skills-sharing, and collaboration.

August



NICA is honoured to be part of Viker's special Make-A-Wish request, providing SpiderMan-themed training as part of a larger wish adventure.



NICA and Collarts celebrate their new partnership at the Collarts Winter Warmer event, hosted at NICA.



Special guests from the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China visit NICA for a tour: Consul-General Mr Fang Xinwen, Consul Wang Yani, and Cultural Consul Yijia Wang.

September

Sunrise on 7 films live weather crosses from NICA's facilities in Windsor, featuring interviews with two staff members and four students.



Cirque du Soleil auditions are held in NICA's Sidney Myer Studio, with many familiar faces in attendance including alumni and a third-year student. Notably, 40% of shortlisted auditionees are NICA graduates.



Charlie Burrows, Cirque du Soleil's Senior Casting Advisor, runs mock auditions and movement workshops with the third-year cohort and hosts an Artist in Conversation session with all year levels.

The second-year ensemble production *FALL WITH ME* sells out before the season opens.



Students from the Acrobat Academy Power Arts International (Japan) return to NICA for the first time since 2019 for a week of cross-collaboration, training, and workshops.

October

NICA presents three shows at the Melbourne Fringe Festival: the third-year showcase, the Certificate IV group performance, and *CABARET VERTIGO*; a collaborative piece featuring alumni, students, and industry artists.

As part of NICA's social circus project, trainer Andrea Ousley and two alumni deliver workshops at Yiramalay Studio School, engaging Indigenous students and strengthening ties with Theatre Kimberley, Sandfly Circus, and Studio Schools Australia through cultural exchange and learning on Country.

November



The NICA community mourns the passing of founding trainer Arturo Gomez, whose profound impact shaped the lives of many staff and students. The outpouring of memories and tributes reflects his enduring legacy in Australia's circus arts community.

December

NICA's third-year cohort of twelve students concludes their final show season of *MUSE* and celebrates graduation from the Bachelor of Circus Arts program.



“That was one of the best days of my life. The [students] were so good, we had an absolute blast, they did some things better than I could ever do. I’m so thankful to be able to come back to NICA and do something like this, this place is my home, so to be able to give to the next generation of circus is a very special thing for me.”

Nelson Smyles, 2017 NICA Alumni performing in Cirque du Soleil’s Luzia

In celebration of World Circus Day, NICA welcomed guest artists from Cirque du Soleil's *Luzia* during their Melbourne season. The visit included a special return by 2017 graduate and current *Luzia* cast member, Nelson Smyles, who shared his skills and experiences with current students. A total of 54 students from the Certificate IV, second-year, and third-year cohorts participated in a series of dynamic workshops. Highlights included a hoop diving workshop led by Smyles and specialised sessions in straps, trapeze, and object manipulation delivered by four *Luzia* cast members, offering students a unique day of professional training.



World Circus Day with Cirque du Soleil

Skill-sharing workshops and words of wisdom

Nelson Smyles, one of the hoop divers in *Luzia* who has been with the show since 2017, began doing gymnastics when he was just a kid growing up in Port Macquarie before studying at the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in Melbourne.

“It’ll be awesome for the coaches that coached me at NICA to see what I’ve been up to...” Smyles tells Vogue

Nina Miyashita and Kaila Matthews, Vogue



Nelson Smyles and his NICA trainer, Charlie Cheng, at *Luzia* in Melbourne.



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

In 2024 NICA continued to work with the team at Zilla & Brook Publicity, and we would like to thank them for their fantastic work. Together, our campaigns reached 4,800,096 through traditional media outlets.

2024 Highlights

Alumni in the spotlight

NICA was mentioned in articles by The Australian, ABC News, and Vogue, when 2017 Alumni, Nelson Smyles, was interviewed about his 2024 Australian tour with Cirque du Soleil's *Luzia*.

'He was finishing his Bachelor of Circus Arts at NICA when out of the blue he received an email from Cirque du Soleil' - Wiriya Sati, ABC News

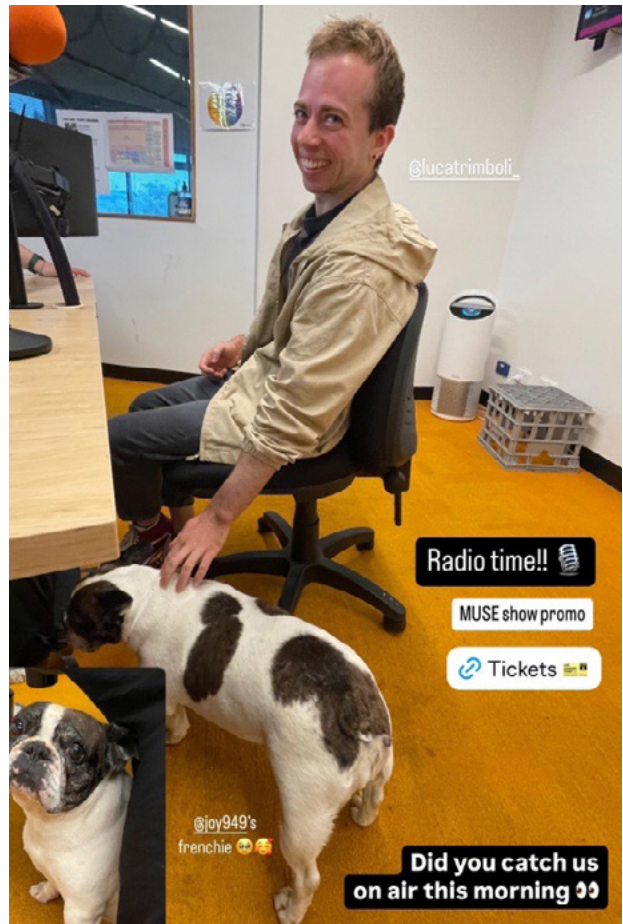
Sunrise on 7

On 4 September, Sunrise on 7 spent the morning at NICA filming their live weather crosses from inside our beautiful facilities in Windsor. The morning included interviews with NICA's Acting Head of Circus Studies, Tegan Carmichael; Circus Trainer, Earl Shatford; and students Holly Jobson, Merlene Hutt, Taliesha Hall-Hunyh and Talia Sofizade.



Channel Nine covers Fringe

During the Melbourne Fringe Festival, NICA students and alumni were asked to appear on Channel Nine's media coverage of the event, which aired on the *Today Show* on Sunday 6 October.



FAMOUS

- JOY FM interviews third-year student, Taylor Vogt, about the process of creative development for *Famous* (17 May).
- ABC Statewide speaks to third-year student, Merlene Hutt, about the show, and life as a soon to be graduate of NICA (25 May).
- David Hunt from Arts Hunter films an interview with costume designer, Savanna Wegman, and Set Designer and NICA Alumni, Tim Ruddy (27 May).
- 3MBS Arts Weekly interviews Director, Carita Farrer Spencer (1 June).
- Herald Sun publishes the *Famous* poster image on Friday 31 May 2024.

Digital Marketing, Social Media & Publicity:

231 Traditional media mentions

100,384 Website traffic per month

20,647 Total social media followers:

- Facebook: 10,767 (2.72% increase)
- Instagram: 8310 (20% increase)
- YouTube: 1.23k (8.85% increase)
- TikTok: 340

- 3WBC Big Life Conversation chats with third-year student, Zaelea Nolte, about the exciting things audiences can expect to see in the show (3 June).
- Triple R radio speaks to Director, Carita Farrer Spencer, who drops tantalising breadcrumbs about the show, leaving listeners intrigued (13 June).

Fall With Me

- *Fall With Me* Set Designer, Rachel 'Stoz' Stone appears live on Casey Radio and paints a picture of the show's scenic design (23 August).
- 3CR Saturday Breakfast Show hosts Director and NICA Performance Studies Coordinator, Katie Cawthorne (31 August).
- Second-year students, Lachlan MacDonald and Taliesha Hall-Huynh, conduct a live, in-studio interview with JOY FM radio, where they provide behind the scenes insight into the casts rehearsal journey (6 September).
- Katie Cawthorne and second-year student, Bridie Callahan, unpack the creative concept of *Fall With Me* live on air with David Astle for ABC 774 Evenings (12 September).

MUSE

- Annie McLoughlin from 3CR rings up third-year student Zaelea Nolte to discuss her NICA journey nearing its end, and the soon-to-premiere graduate showcase, *MUSE* (20 November).
- Third-year students Luca Trimboli and Merlene Hutt drum up excitement for *MUSE* amongst JOY FM radios listening audience (26 November).

- Richard Watts from 3RRR speaks to NICA's Acting Head of Circus Studies and *MUSE* Curator, Tegan Carmichael, along with third-year students Gabriel Walker and Rose Symons. The soon-to-be graduates share their post-NICA plans for the future (28 November).
- ABC774 Evenings hosts Tegan Carmichael, and third-year student, Tyson Wallent, who have an illuminating conversation about life as a circus student and emerging artist (28 November).
- Third-year student, Gabriel Walker, has an entertaining and thought-provoking discussion with 3WBC Big Life Conversations (2 December).

NICA in the news

When it was announced that NICA's Bachelor course would be un-paused in partnership with the Australian College of The Arts (Collarts), the news was celebrated widely throughout the online circus industry and several media outlets picked up the story, including the Herald Sun, Australian Associated Press (Liz Hobday), Arts Hub, Australian Art Review, Melbourne Observer, and ABC Radio National.

'For those who shudder at the thought of a desk job, a degree in Circus Arts is back on the table as the Australian College of the Arts (Collarts) partners with NICA'

Australian Arts Review

'Acrobatic hopefuls flip into circus degree restart'

Liz Hobday, Australian Associated Press

'Aspiring acrobats will soon have the chance to stray from traditional desk jobs and instead fulfil their dream of running away with the circus'

Lauren Hutchinson, Herald Sun

UN-PAUSED - NICA's Bachelor Course flips into a new future with COLLARTS

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NICA
Ed



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Bachelor of Circus Arts

Due to NICA's transition to another partner provider, entry into the Bachelor of Circus Arts was on pause for 2024. 33 students continued their studies as part of the Bachelor of Circus Arts at NICA in 2025.

Industry Immersions

Throughout the year our Bachelor of Circus Arts students participated in a range of industry immersions to help them learn first-hand from seasoned performers and experience life as a circus artist in the industry for themselves. This included our Artist in Conversation Series bringing in a variety of practicing artists to discuss their areas of specialisation and work in the performing arts, masterclass workshops to extend student skills, NICA's Residency project that allowed students to watch as practicing artists created and refined new and established work within the training space and Artistic Consultants that worked with students individually to refine their circus acts in preparation for entry into the industry.

Second-year students, Dakota Barr, Saskia Gallasch and Holly Jobson were successful in obtaining an internship at the National Circus Festival held in September at the Mullumbimby Showgrounds. These students, with the support of Felicia O'Brien, NICA Circus Trainer, were fully immersed in the event, assisting with the training program and performances across a range of venues.

The third-year students also embarked on the Circus Studies Industry Project unit to undertake work integrated learning as part of an ongoing partnership with Gluttony at the Adelaide Fringe Festival. This involved various roles, such as marketing, technical show support and stage management, within the festival with guidance and mentorship from Gluttony staff. Students were able to experience life as fringe artists, by presenting their individual acts onsite in a Gluttony Venue and helping with the bump out of the festival site.

World Circus Day

- NICA welcomed guest artists from Cirque du Soleil's Touring show *Luzia* visited NICA while performing in Melbourne to talk to and train with our Certificate IV, second-year and third-year students. We welcomed back into the space 2017 Graduate, and current cast member of *Luzia*, Nelson Smyles who was overjoyed to be back and share his skills with the current students.
- A total of 54 students participated in the event and the different circus skill workshops held throughout the day.

- Specialty Highlights included Hoop Diving workshop with Alumni, Nelson Smyles, as well as workshops with four specialist cast members from *Luzia* in Straps, Trapeze and manipulation.

In May, the Arts8 training organisations gathered for the annual Arts8 Collaboration. This initiative continues to spark artistic overlap, conversation, and inspiration between the Arts8.

Hosted in 2024 by AFTRS across three days at their studio in The Entertainment Quarter, Moore Park, NSW. NICA second-year students Shianne Crampton and Jamison Travers were accompanied by NICA's Circus Trainer Mirielle Goyette to attend and collaborate with the other students and creative leads culminating in a short performance after the 3-day workshops. NICA's Director Simona Jobbagy also attended the group's final collaborative performance.

Youth Circus Exchange

In July, NICA welcomed emerging circus artists from across the country for the Youth Circus Exchange, a dynamic three-day program of workshops, training, and creative collaboration. The event concluded with a cabaret-style showing at Circus Nexus, showcasing the talent of Australia's next generation of circus performers. The program brought together 82 youth circus participants from across Victoria, New South Wales, the ACT, and Queensland, with representation from affiliate schools including Circarts, Circus Monoxide, Warehouse Circus, Circus Nexus, Ruccis, and others. The NICA campus came alive with energy as young artists shared skills, explored creative ideas, and forged new connections. It was equally valuable for circus coaches, who exchanged knowledge and reflected together on the future of youth circus, and how to nurture it through training, innovation, and national collaboration.

Other Initiatives

In 2024, NICA was blessed with four *Wet Paint* performances with over 30 acts from students spanning all year levels from Certificate IV through to final year Bachelor degree. *Wet Paint* provides a safe and supportive performance environment for students and staff to present and trial new acts and presentations and gain performance experience and feedback.

In July we had the return of NICA's *Cabaret Vertigo*, that combined student, alumni and industry acts into a public performance. This show sold out within 36 hours and allowed students to step from the internal *Wet Paint* performances into a live industry event. Student performers included Marina



Image: Second-year student Sammy George at the Cirque du Soleil X NICA World Circus Day Workshop. Photography: Cameron Grant.

Borges (Certificate IV student), Taliesha Hall-Huynh (second-year student), and third-year students Luca Trimboli and Ty Wallent. Alumni acts featured Turcia Circus (Amy Stone, Christina Goodwin, Celso March), Gravity Dolls (Tim Ruddy, Harlow Carey), Hana Fiesta, and Haley Mills. The evening was hosted by the inimitable Valerie Hex. The return of NICA's Cabaret was so successful that it moved offsite to the Circus Oz Hub as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

In September we welcomed Cirque du Soleil back into the training space to host their circus auditions in the Sidney Myer Studio space. Over 40% of the successful short-listed applicants invited to attend the audition were made up of NICA Alumni and also included one current student. Auditionees participated in performance and movement workshops as well as presenting their individual acts to the casting panel. In addition to the open audition, a closed audition for our current third-year students was held to allow them to present their work and receive feedback on preparing their materials as part of Cirque du Soleil casting.

At a Glance

Total graduates across all academic programs:

12 Bachelor of Circus Arts graduates 2024

18 Certificate IV in Circus Arts graduates 2024

13 Certificate III in Circus Arts graduates 2024

163 Graduates across Certificate II, III and IV in Dance and Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance)

26 Graduates across Certificate IV and Diploma of Musical Theatre

CERTIFICATE IV IN CIRCUS ARTS

In 2024, we welcomed 22 new enrolments into the Certificate IV in Circus Arts program. Of these students, 18 successfully completed the course, with 8 of them progressing into the first year of the Bachelor of Circus Arts program in 2025.

The Certificate IV students participated in a range of enriching workshops and off-site experiences throughout the year. Highlights included a large-scale workshop event with Cirque du Soleil on World Circus Day, and two clowning workshops with Cirque performer Beto, focused on discovering creativity through play. Students also took part in an acrobatics session with O471 Acro Physical Theatre (Taiwan), and two workshops with André Augustus. These opportunities allowed students to explore diverse techniques, artistic perspectives, and performance cultures.

Artists in Conversation sessions featured an impressive line-up, including James Kingsford Smith, Cirque du Soleil cast members Nelson, Shens, Sarah, and Beto, as well as artists from the Taiwanese circus company. Students also heard from Cody Harrington, Suzanne Pereira, and Sam Daly with the cast of *SKINSHIP*. These candid discussions offered insight into international touring, production-making, Fringe festivals, and life as an independent artist.

In October, the Certificate IV students presented their show *A THEATRE OF MISTAKES* at Gasworks Arts Park as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival; their first time performing offsite. In addition to the performance, students participated in new activities such as a professional photoshoot and flyering at the Gasworks Farmers Market, adding valuable promotional experience to their training.

Throughout the year, students explored different movement styles in dedicated workshops, including Tap with Eden Read, Fosse with Donna Dunmire, Charleston with Jenny Patrone, and Break with Gerard Veltre. They also engaged in new creative workshops during specialty class, learning a variety of act creation tools such as Laban effort qualities, music mapping, authenticity in performance, and abstracting lines.

Students continued to utilise NICA's *Wet Paint* platform to trial new work and receive peer feedback. Highlights included a group 80s dance act performed by the entire cohort in Term 1, hosted by Aurora Coulter as MC; individual works from Marie Ramseier, Jaslyn Potter, Marina Borges, and Jaran Latona-Phasuk in Term 2; and a collaborative piece by Nina and Imogen Smith in Term 4.

Some students also took part in external performance opportunities. Marina Borges



performed her silks act at *Cabaret Vertigo* during Melbourne Fringe, and several students including Jaran Latona-Phasuk, Marina Borges, Chloe Zannidakis, and Holly Muir, performed at the NICA X Collarts Winter Warmer event. The Certificate IV students also participated in creative collaborations with Collarts students and NICA Certificate IV graduate Maddie Hewitt, who captured photographs and video content for student portfolios.

The 2024 Certificate IV cohort demonstrated remarkable creativity and dedication to developing strong foundational and professional skills. The group represented a wide range of ages and backgrounds, coming together as a cohesive and supportive ensemble by the year's end.

Image: Certificate IV students performing in *A THEATRE OF MISTAKES*.
Photography Rob Blackburn.



Auditions

Auditions were held at NICA from 23 - 26 September. A total of 14 auditionees participated in the first half of the week, with 17 more attending in the latter half. Each applicant took part in a two-day audition, assessed by a panel comprising Acting Head of Circus Studies Tegan Carmichael, Second-Year Coordinator Alexander Gullan, Performance Studies Coordinator Katie Cawthorne, and Movement Convenor Linda Sastradipradja. Throughout the audition days, students also worked with a range of NICA Ed trainers who facilitated various sessions. In addition to in-person auditions, 11 applicants submitted video auditions.

Number of applicants:
Certificate IV: 33
Bachelor: 54

Number of applicants that progressed to audition: 42

Number of total auditionees from each state:

ACT: 1
NSW: 7
NT: 1
QLD: 6
VIC: 18
TAS: 2
SA: 2
WA: 2
NZ: 3
INT: 0

With the transition from Swinburne University of Technology to the Australian College of The Arts (Collarts) still in progress, many audition hopefuls did not complete their application to study in 2025 through the Swinburne University of Technology portal. This unfortunate timing of transition created confusion and like 2023, many reported they would refrain from applying to study until the courses were presented with the new educational provider.

AUDITIONS MASTERCLASS

Number of participants: 8

Number of participants that had a successful audition: 5

The Audition Masterclass was held at NICA on June 22 and was facilitated by the NICA Ed Team. Participants had the opportunity to work with Acting Head of Circus Tegan Carmichael, Movement Convenor Linda Sastradipradja, and NICA Ed trainers Marco Paoletti and Jon Griffingham. The masterclass included a variety of activities designed to help participants prepare for auditions, such as a performance and movement workshop, a circus skills workshop, a viewing of the third-year ensemble show *Famous*, and a Q&A session covering NICA's auditions and accredited courses. There were eight participants in total, five of whom later successfully auditioned for NICA and were accepted into an accredited program.



Image: Second-year student Taliesha Hall-Huynh.
Photography Rob Blackburn.

Presentation Day 2024

The NICA Presentation Day on 9 December 2024, marked a triumphant celebration of resilience and accomplishment amidst the challenges inherent in the journey of becoming a circus artist. It was a momentous occasion, bringing together NICA's dedicated staff, talented students, and esteemed guests to honour and bid farewell to the remarkable graduates of 2024.

The ceremony opened with an address from NICA's Director, Simona Jobbagy, setting the tone for a day of reflection and recognition. This was followed by an inspiring manipulation act by 2013 alumnus Richard Sullivan, who then shared a refreshingly honest and insightful reflection on life after NICA. He spoke about the evolving mindset and shifting attitudes graduates often experience as they navigate the many pathways beyond their training,

ultimately gaining a resilient perspective grounded in both gratitude and grit.

Keeping with tradition, third-year graduate Tyson Wallent shared candid insights and reflections on behalf of the graduating cohort, offering a poignant glimpse into their collective experience and growth throughout their time at NICA.

We were honoured to have Madelyn Bolch, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Vocational Education and Training, Swinburne University of Technology attend the ceremony. Together with NICA's staff, they took to the stage to bestow industry awards recognising academic and artistic excellence, as well as commendable effort.

Congratulations to the following outstanding students who received awards at Presentation Day:

2024 Theatre Network Australia (TNA) award: Jesse Holden

Awarded to a third-year student who would benefit from TNA membership and mentorship.

The Certificate IV Academic Excellence Award: Holly Muir

Awarded to the Highest Achiever in Certificate IV in Circus Arts that upholds the values of NICA.

The Senior Educator Award: Aurora Coulter

This award recognises a student within all NICA programs that is an excellent team player, boosts the group dynamics, excels in the face of challenges and upholds a sense of fun and enjoyment within the circus learning process.

The Second-Year NICA Academic Excellence Award: Georgia Pozorski

Awarded to the Highest Achiever in second-year Bachelor of Circus Arts that upholds the values of NICA.

The Third-Year NICA Excellence Award: Tyson Wallent

Awarded to the Highest Achiever in third-year Bachelor of Circus Arts that upholds the values of NICA.

The Kostya Ibraguimov Memorial Award: Dakoda Barr

Awarded to a student who has demonstrated perseverance and striving for excellence.

The NICA Artistic Excellence Award: Zealea Nolte

Recognises commitment and drive in the pursuit of excellence and artistic endeavour.

The NICA Dux Award: Luca Trimboli

Awarded to the Highest Achiever across the three years of the Bachelor of Circus Arts program.

The Sir Rupert Hamer Award: Jaran Latona-Phasuk

Awarded to a student that has demonstrated hard work and will benefit from participation in an industry experience. In honour of Sir Rupert Hamer, founding Chair of NICA and former Premier of Victoria and Minister for the Arts.



NICA Performs

Throughout 2024 NICA's performances enjoyed unprecedented ticket sales and glowing feedback from audiences across the season.



Image: Second-year ensemble students Christina Godwin and Jamison Travers perform in *FALL WITH ME*.
Photographer Cameron Grant.

Image: Third-year ensemble student Taylor Vogt performing in *FAMOUS*. Photographer Cameron Grant.

Building on the success of NICA's 2023 performance season, 2024 saw another year of groundbreaking ticket sales and attendance levels.

FAMOUS

THIRD-YEAR ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

June 2024

NICA National Circus Centre

Directed by Carita Farrer-Spencer

NICA's third-year students open the 2024 performance season with a lively tale on the perils of fame.

FAMOUS delivered a fresh take on circus comedy, testing the theatrical strengths of NICA's third-year cohort with great success. The ensemble portrayed the dark side of reality for the rich and famous through slapstick, contemporary circus, and dramatic storytelling.

The creative team:

Set design by NICA alum, Tim Ruddy; costume design by Savanna Wegman with assistance from Melbourne Polytechnic Costume Design students; lighting design by Spencer Herd; and sound design by Darius Kedros.

Season:

Nine performances, with two of them sold out.

Live audience:

1192

REVIEWS:

"There was a lot to love about the performances"

Jen, Weekend Notes

"Famous is mesmeric storytelling that leaves you walking out with no small amount of wonder."

David Collins, Australian Arts Review



AUDIENCE QUOTES:

"Well-polished show."

"An amazing evening of entertainment."

"We're so lucky to have an institution of your calibre in our city!"





Image: Alumni Haley Mills performing in *CABARET VERTIGO* at NICA. Photography Daniel Rabin.



REVIEWS

“It was raw and real, and maybe a little risky, creating that particular form of excitement we find when high-quality skills are given centre stage.”

Jason Whyte, Australian Arts Review

Audience Quotes

“We had to keep reminding ourselves that it was a 2nd year production - stunning performance!”

“It was an extremely high standard and feel like NICA is at the top of their game.”

“Congrats to the cast and crew and the director in particular for one of the most enjoyable and engaging shows I’ve seen for some time.”

CABARET VERTIGO

STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND INDUSTRY SHOW

July 2024

NICA’s Movement Studio

CABARET VERTIGO returns after years in hibernation.

NICA students, alumni and industry shared the stage to test new acts in a very special pilot project. The unique cabaret was programmed to support artists of the circus community, with 100% of ticket sales going directly to the performers.

Season:

One show only! Sold out in 36 hours.

Live audience:

78

FALL WITH ME

SECOND-YEAR ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

September 2024

NICA National Circus Centre

Directed by Katie Cawthorne

Assistant Direction by Alexander Gullan

NICA’s second-year ensemble exceeded sales and attendance expectations, hitting over 99% capacity and selling out five of six shows.

A conceptually driven narrative, *FALL WITH ME* was inspired by the scientific discovery that theatre has the power to synchronise the heartbeats of its audience members. Director Katie Cawthorne sought to create a space that allowed audiences to let down their guard and experience the power of performance to its fullest extent.

The creative team:

Set design by Rachel ‘Stoz’ Stone; costume design by Ki Martin with assistance from Melbourne Polytechnic Costume Design students; lighting design by Kris Chainey; and sound design by Jesse Vivante with vocals and lyrics by Luna May.

Season:

Six performances, with five of them sold out.

Live audience:

982

Image: Second-year students Sammy George and Bridie Callahan - *FALL WITH ME* show poster. Photography Cameron Grant.

CABARET VERTIGO

MELBOURNE FRINGE FESTIVAL SHOW

October 2024

Circus Oz

By NICA alumni, students & industry

Produced by Christina Cox

NICA alumni, students and industry take over Circus Oz for the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

A charming lineup of emerging artists and seasoned pros take on the iconic landmark of Circus Oz for an intoxicating evening of circus and live music.

Season:

Six performances

Live audience:

368



Image: Alumni Amy Stone performing in CABARET VERTIGO at CircusOz. Photography Alex Burris.

A THEATRE OF MISTAKES

CERTIFICATE IV ENSEMBLE FRINGE SHOW

October 2024

Gasworks Theatre

Directed by Linda Sastradipradja

Certificate IV students delighted audiences at Gasworks Arts Park with crowd-pleaser, *A THEATRE OF MISTAKES*.

NICA's Certificate IV students presented their performance studies project within the Melbourne Fringe Festival programme – an assessment piece that is ordinarily performed in-house at NICA. The quirky, and tastefully off-beat production became a happy collision of circus skills and poignant performance.

Season:

Three performances.

Live audience:

411



AUDIENCE REVIEW

“Sensational teamwork and cohesion. No flat spots and many sublime and wow moments! Talented performers with a sense of theatre, circus and fun. Bravo!”

Image: Certificate IV student Aurora Coulter performing in *A THEATRE OF MISTAKES*. Photography Rob Blackburn



Image: Alumni Jeff Young performs in CABARET VERTIGO at Circus Oz. Photography Alex Burris.

FULL DISCLOSURE

THIRD YEAR FRINGE SHOW

October 2024

**The Ukiyo, So Soiree Fringe Garden
Directed by Martine Howard and Katie
Cawthorne**

Third-year students performed their solo acts to eager festivalgoers in *FULL DISCLOSURE*.

NICA returned to The Ukiyo for the 2024 Melbourne Fringe Festival. Glowing reviews and word-of-mouth drove audiences to fill out the seating bank.

Season:

Three performances.

Live audience:

266



Image: Third-year students, *FULL DISCLOSURE*.
Photography Cameron Grant.

MUSE

THIRD YEAR SHOWCASE

December 2024

**NICA National Circus Centre
Curated by Tegan Carmichael**

The 2024 graduating class honoured their NICA journey in an extraordinary, uplifting, and at times nostalgic final showcase.

MUSE was a celebration of the third years crossing the threshold from student to emerging artist. The class presented twelve self-directed acts, devised with guidance from the artistic consultants, and Acting Head of Circus Studies, Tegan Carmichael. Audiences were afforded a glimpse into the source of an artist’s inspiration whilst encouraged to find their own.

Season:

Six performances, with four of them sold out.

Live audience:

955

AUDIENCE QUOTES

“It was utterly spectacular”

“One of the highest quality NICA shows in recent years.”



Image: Third-year student Tyson Wallent performing in *MUSE*.
Photography Cameron Grant.



Image: Third-year student Gemma Jackson performing in *FULL DISCLOSURE*. Photography Rob Blackburn.



NICA Connects creates meaningful opportunities for students and industry through mentorship, Artist in Conversation sessions, NICA's Residency program and other initiatives.



Image: Alumni Tim Rutty and Harlow Carey performing in CABARET VERTIGO at NICA. Photography Daniel Rabin.

Artists in Conversation

In 2024, NICA hosted eleven Artists in Conversation sessions, giving students valuable opportunities to hear firsthand from a diverse range of industry professionals about their careers, creative processes, and the realities of working in the performing arts.

Highlights included:

- **Suzanne Pereira**, speaking about the very first NICA project and the importance of diversity and inclusion in the arts. Suzanne, a leader in creative and cultural strategy, shared insights from her work across a range of high-impact artistic projects and companies.
- **Linda Sastradipradja and Helene Embling**, who reflected on their experience at the Spanish dance festival *Deltebre Dansa*, and discussed cross-artform collaborations and creative opportunities across Europe.
- **Na Djinang Circus**, who shared their process for developing new work, giving students a close look at how independent companies create original Australian circus.
- **Hannah Flanagan**, offering candid insights into life as an independent artist, including the challenges and rewards of building a sustainable creative practice.
- **Charlie Burrows**, Cirque du Soleil's Senior Casting Advisor, who provided guidance on auditioning for the company, shared what touring life is really like, and offered practical advice for thriving in the global circus industry.
- **Highwire Entertainment**, presented by NICA alumni **James Bartlet, Emily Loe, and Matt Anderson**, who discussed their process of creating new shows for young audiences. They also introduced their latest work *Mission to the Moon*, which fuses circus, theatre, and space science.
- **Nelson Smyles, Beto, Sarah, and Shens** — performers from Cirque du Soleil's *Luzia* — who spoke about their experiences as touring artists and the diverse career pathways that led them to the world stage.
- **André Augustus** from *Gravity & Other Myths*, discussed his life as a touring ensemble artist and performed a special guest appearance in the student-led *WetPaint* show.

In addition to the conversation series, both Certificate IV and Bachelor students attended a private guided tour of **Gasworks Arts Park**, offering them an insider's look at one of Melbourne's key independent performance venues.



Images top to bottom: Artists in Conversation with Charlie Burrows, Senior Casting Director Cirque du Soleil. Certificate IV and third-year students excursion to Gasworks Arts Park. Workshop with Charlie Burrows, Senior Casting Director Cirque du Soleil, and third-year students.

Outreach Programs

In 2024, NICA trainer Marco Paoletti led a *Train-the-Trainer* program aimed at upskilling artists from diverse communities, with a focus on Latin American participants. Ten trainers took part, learning to teach juggling, juggle board, and rolla bolla across three priority areas: the elderly, disengaged youth, and people with disabilities. The program culminated in a practical placement with Prahran Rhythmic Gymnastics, where participants delivered circus-based sessions to approximately 40 individuals. The experience was well received, sparking interest in further circus training, including aerials, and also included sessions with adults exploring more advanced object manipulation techniques.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP: 2024 Adelaide Project

Continuing as an official part of NICA's Bachelor of Circus Arts program, the Circus Studies Industry Project unit allows third-year students the chance to undertake work integrated learning in partnership with Gluttony at the Adelaide Fringe Festival. Students immerse themselves in a significant arts and cultural festival and gain practical experience working alongside professionals in Front of House, Production, Site and Operations, as well as independent circus artists and producers. 17 industry mentors were assigned throughout the project in 2024.

Additional outcome from Adelaide Fringe

An additional outcome of this year's immersion, the third-year students met the Taiwanese performance troupe, 0471 Acro Physical Theatre, which resulted in them visiting NICA to collaborate on a full day of skills workshops with all our students.

NICA's Residency Project

NICA's Residency Project returned in July, allowing NICA to open its doors and offer circus-specific training space to industry professionals, free of charge. Applicants who were creating new acts or various stages of show creation were selected to develop these new works in the NICA space and allow students to share and learn from the different processes and experiences of practising creative artists. Throughout the second half of the year, we had six different resident groups working on a variety of projects alongside our student training. At the end of each groups residency they presented their work as a test run to a student audience and gained valuable feedback as part of the work's development.

Alumni Reunion

A joyful reunion took place at the end-of-year Showcase in December, with nine graduates from the Class of 2014 returning to NICA in person to celebrate a decade since their graduation.



Images top to bottom: Pyramid of 2014 graduates with Debra Batton. Head First acrobats Thomas Gorham and Cal Harris in NICA's Residency project.

2024 GRADUATE DESTINATIONS

Where in the world are **our graduates?**

Grads performing in Australia:



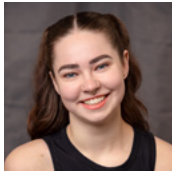
Anaïs Stewart

- Accepted into the 2025 Legs On The Wall Leg Up Program
- Currently performing with CIRCA Contemporary Circus



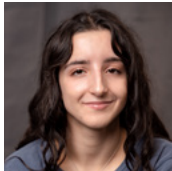
Gabriel Walker

- Participated in skill-sharing workshops with Circus Oz
- Working as a trainer at Circus Nexus
- Planning a 2025 Melbourne Fringe season with Jasmin Tait & Luca Trimboli
- Performing *Ched & Charles*, a duo show with Luca Trimboli, as part of Nexus's July 2025 school holidays program



Gemma Jackson

- Participated in skill-sharing workshops with Circus Oz
- Signed with NICA Represents agency



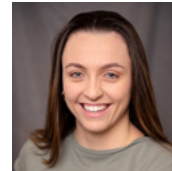
Jasmine Poniris

- Currently travelling and training



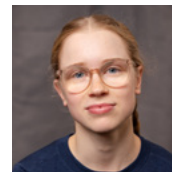
Luca Trimboli

- Accepted into the 2025 Legs On The Wall Leg Up Program
- Planning a 2025 Melbourne Fringe season with Gabriel Walker & Jasmin Tait
- Performing *Ched & Charles*, a duo show with Gabriel Walker, in Nexus's July 2025 school holidays program



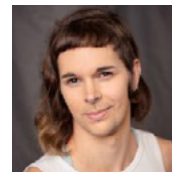
Merlene Hutt

- Performed at various gigs nationwide, including with the Crack Up Sisters in regional Queensland
- Served as Acting Head Circus Trainer at Corrugated Iron Youth Arts
- Attending MICC (International Market of Contemporary Circus) in Montreal



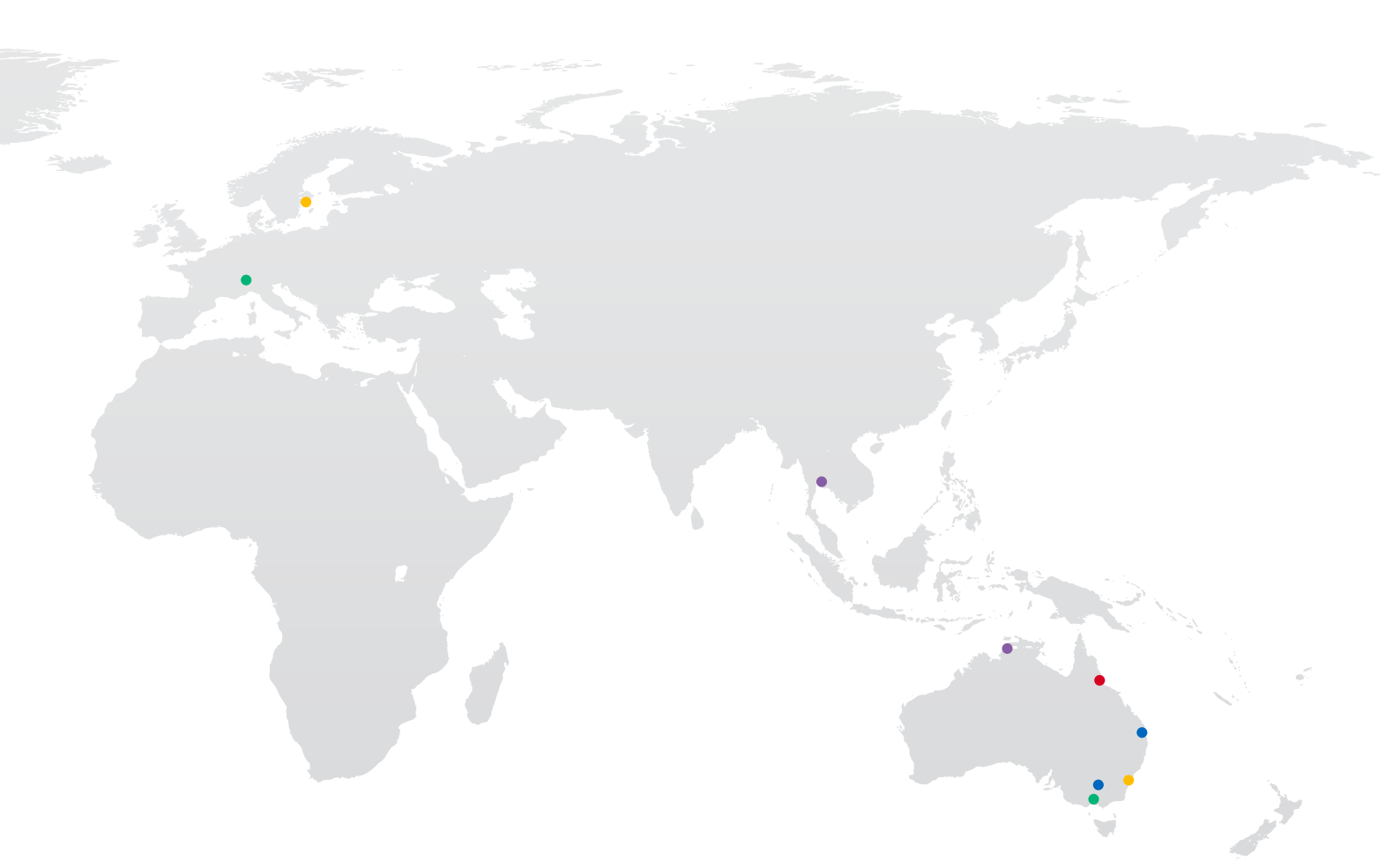
Rose Symons

- Contracted with CIRCA Contemporary Circus, performing in *Dido and Aeneas* at the Sydney Opera House

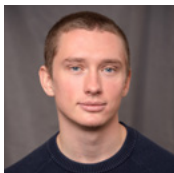


Taylor Vogt

- Signed with NICA Represents
- Featured performer at Prahran Market's Sinners Roast event



Graduates performing internationally:



Jesse Holden

- Recipient of the TNA Graduate Award
- Participated in Circus Oz skill-sharing workshops
- Currently performing aboard MSC World America, touring the Caribbean



Zaelea Nolte

- Completed a short course and a six-week artistic research residency at Stockholm University of the Arts, focusing on durational circus as a visual and conceptual practice
- Worked on the *Cycle* project with Jessica McCrindle in residency at Circus Oz and Flying Fruit Fly Circus
- Currently interning on the production team at the Berlin Circus Festival
- Applying for performance research fellowships



Jasmin Tait

- Specialist training in Montreal
- Performing at *Oscillante* (Turin, Italy) with NICA trainer Felicia O'Brien, at a festival focused on swinging aerial disciplines
- Planning a 2025 Melbourne Fringe season with Gabriel Walker & Luca Trimboli

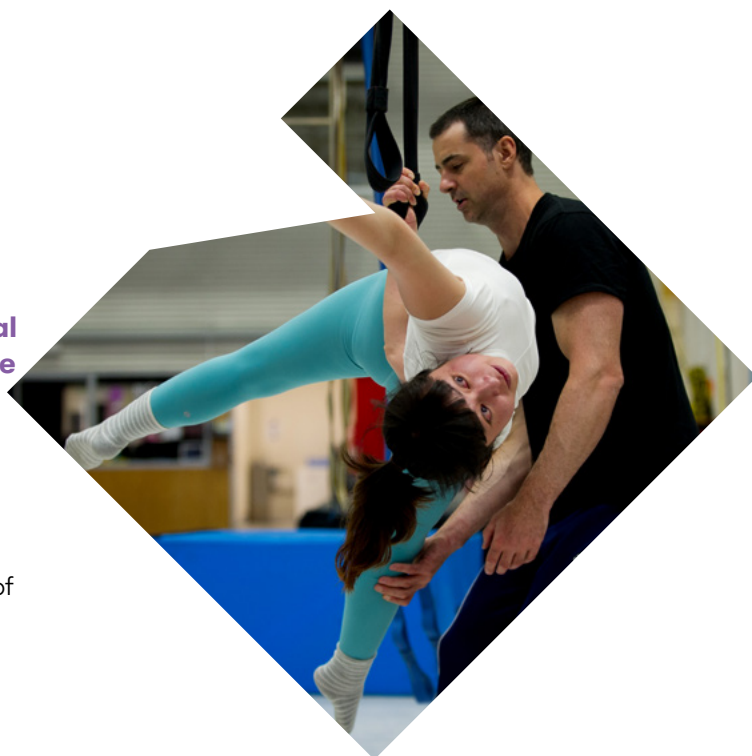


NICA
Rec



NICA Rec is dedicated to delivering exceptional and memorable circus experiences to everyone who enters our doors, whether for a fun and engaging birthday party, professional-level training, or ongoing circus classes.

We strive to create an inclusive environment where people of all ages and backgrounds can develop their skills, express their creativity, and experience the thrill of circus artistry in a supportive, professional setting.

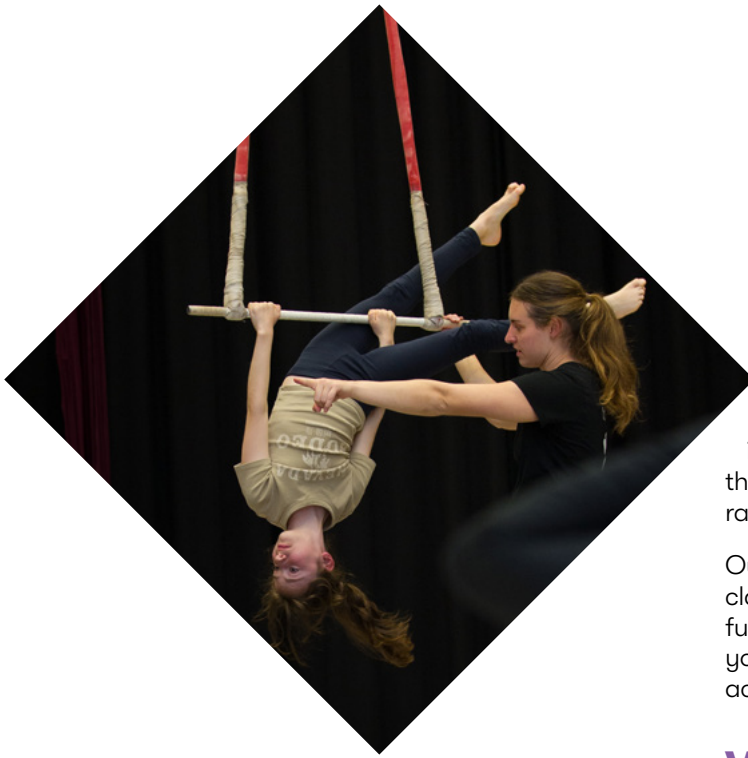


2024 Attendance

NICA Rec Program	Sessions delivered	Unique student total	Total attendance
Workshops	17	676	676
Birthday Parties	43	725	725
Come & Try Circus Day	43	200	267
Holiday Programs	94	1042	1446
Open Training	78	81	234
Alumni Training	120	36	265
Student Training	78	39	215
Private Tuition	54	32	129
Term Class Programs	1,351	547	11,988
Total	1,861	3,378	15,945

Gender Ratio (Classes and Holiday Programs)

Gender	Count	%
Female	1,323	76%
Male	387	22%
Other	21	1%



NICA Rec Circus Trainers

NICA Rec programs are delivered by a dynamic team of current NICA students, alumni, and industry professionals who are dedicated to sharing their passion, skills, and expertise with participants ranging from 5 to 75 years old.

Our trainers bring a wealth of experience to every class, offering instruction that spans from the fundamentals of tumbling and juggling for our youngest participants, to advanced aerials and acrobatics at a high-performance level.

2024 Classes and Holiday Programs Age Groups

Age Group	Number	%
5 - 6yrs	144	8%
7-12yrs	1,048	61%
13-17yrs	138	8%
18-23yrs	69	4%
24-32yrs	173	10%
33-40yrs	101	6%
41-50yrs	44	3%
51yrs +	14	1%
Total	1,731	

Casual Rec Teaching Staff throughout 2024 was made up of:

Gender	%
NICA Students	29%
NICA Alumni	42%
Industry	29%

Workshop engagements

In 2024, NICA delivered enriching circus experiences to a diverse range of stakeholders, offering everything from introductory workshops for primary school-aged children to advanced skill-building sessions for dance and performing arts students. NICA Rec continues to expand its reach into local metropolitan, Victorian, and national communities by providing access to its expert teaching staff and world-class facilities. This ongoing commitment ensures that more individuals and groups benefit from high-quality circus training and development opportunities.

Corporate workshops

ASCENT Creative (10 pax)

Schools

The King David School (48 pax), Concordia College Queensland (40 pax)

Performing Arts/Dance schools

Beverley Mary School of Dance, Western Australia (32 pax), Woodleigh School Dance Camp (16 pax), Parkdale Secondary College (16 pax)

City of Stonnington

Roola Boola Children's Arts Festival (50 pax), The Hub (32 pax)

Holiday Program Providers

Community OSH (91 pax), Leapkids OSH (190 pax)

Charities

Mirabel Foundation (32 pax)

International engagement - Powerarts Japan

NICA had the pleasure of hosting a delegation of 11 acrobatics students from Powerarts, Osaka, Japan, in September, for an intensive week of circus training. The students, ranging in age from 12 to 24, participated in a series of training sessions alongside NICA students and trainers, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, they attended the second-year student show, *Fall with Me*, to complete their experience.

Several of the Japanese students have expressed interest in auditioning for future entry into NICA, and Powerarts is already planning to bring a larger group of students to NICA for training in 2025.

Social Circus Conference, New Zealand/Aotearoa

The Commercial Operations Manager attended the 2024 Social Circus Conference from 21 - 23 March in Auckland, New Zealand. Hosted by NICA's trans-Tasman partners, Circability and funded by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, this conference brought together social circus facilitators, circus schools, funding bodies and local circus historians. Discussions included the history, impact and outcomes of circus arts in community circus and social circus settings, the future and sustainability of circus as a tool for social change and the difficulties in getting circus recognised as a legitimate activity for healing and connecting communities.

Venue hire

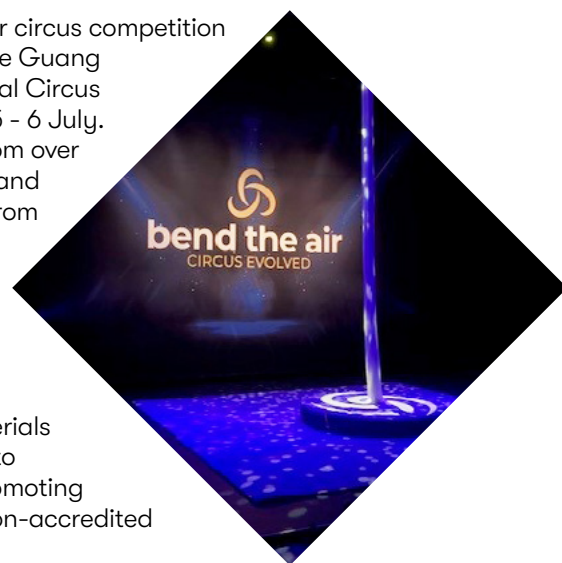
NICA actively engages with the wider community by offering studio hire on a weekly basis to local arts and community organisations. These include groups such as the JuggleLab Community Juggling Group, Miss Ginger's Dance School, Prahran Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, and professional tap dance instructors. Each of these organisations brings its own unique contributions to NICA, enriching our diverse and welcoming community.

Student support

NICA provided support to second-year Bachelor student, Sammy George by offering free training space for his training group SKIPZ to prepare for the 2024 National Rope Skipping Championships. Sammy and his group successfully qualified for 14 individual and group events and will be attending the 2025 World Jump Rope Championships in Kawasaki, Japan, in July 2025.

Bend The Air circus competition

The Bend the Air circus competition took place in the Guang Rong Lu National Circus Centre across 5 - 6 July. Competitors from over 30 circus, pole and aerial schools from around Victoria and interstate participated in this inclusive, professionally run event. NICA marketing materials were available to competitors promoting credited and non-accredited courses.



Youth Circus Finale CurveBall!

The NICA Rec Youth Circus Finale serves as a celebratory conclusion to the year for the young participants of Term 4's children's and teen classes. On Saturday, 14 December, two performances showcased 14 different classes and featured 130 enthusiastic students. Each act was thoughtfully developed by NICA's circus trainers in collaboration with their students, resulting in a vibrant and engaging experience suitable for all ages.

This year's youth shows were hosted by Nina and Imogen Smith, local identical twins who embarked on their NICA journey at the age of five, participating in the school holiday program which ignited their passion for circus arts. They began with the NICAmites (5-6 years) class, later advancing through the NICAdets (7-12 years) program, and eventually progressing into the accelerated teen programs within NICA Rec. Realizing that circus was more than just a hobby, they auditioned and were accepted into NICA's accredited programs. After completing their Certificate IV in 2024, Nina and Imogen are poised to begin their first year of the Bachelor of Circus Arts program in 2025.

NICA Rec Accelerated Teen classes

A standout feature of the Youth Circus Finale shows are the performances of the NICA Rec Accelerated Teen Classes, including Teen Circus Dynamics, Teen Tumbling and Acrobatics, and Accelerated Aerialteens. These advanced programs are designed to support teenagers in their pursuit of entry into NICA's Certificate IV and Bachelor programs. Taught by NICA alumni and third-year Bachelor students, these classes not only provide rigorous preparation for successful auditions but also offer comprehensive training in tumbling, acrobatics, aerials, and collaborative group work.

In December 2024, NICA proudly celebrated the graduation of 2 former Rec students from its Bachelor program, while another 3 Rec students successfully completed their second year.

Social Circus

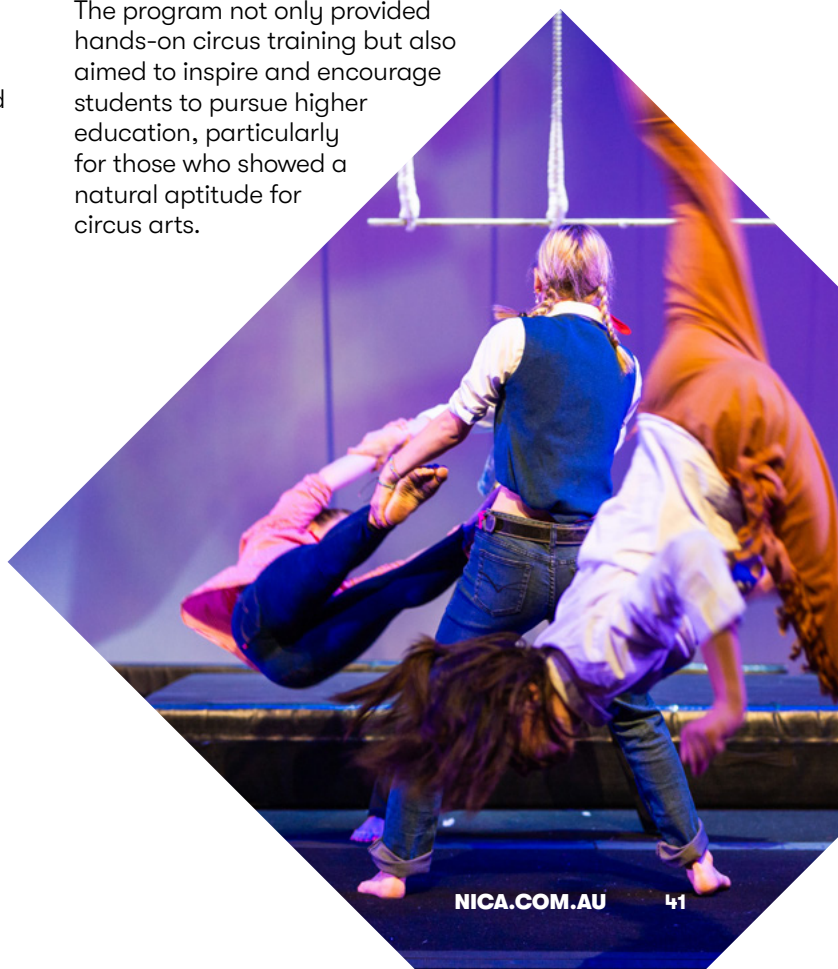
Circus arts is recognised for its ability to empower those that engage with it. These activities are well documented in building trust, increasing confidence, encouraging personal development, social inclusion, and enhancing self-expression.

NICA's Social Circus projects focus on how we connect with communities far and wide to increase the accessibility of circus arts at a non-professional level.

Indigenous Project - Yiramalay WA

In October, NICA sent three circus trainers to the Yiramalay Studio School in Western Australia, where they worked with local Indigenous students in Years 10-12 from 14 - 25 October. In partnership with Sandfly Circus and Theatre Kimberley WA, this outreach program was designed to engage young people from this remote community, offering them an introduction to circus and physical theatre.

The program not only provided hands-on circus training but also aimed to inspire and encourage students to pursue higher education, particularly for those who showed a natural aptitude for circus arts.





NICA Represents



Image: NICA Trainer Lauren Skopal performing in *CABARET VERTIGO* at Circus Oz.
Photography Alex Burris.

2024 was a transitional year for NICA Represents with a renewed focus on business development and diversification.

NICA Represents focused energy on three main areas: bolstering the business's brand, product, and bottom line to ensure the agency's viability into the future; building relationships with a diverse range of new clients to secure work opportunities for artists; and reconnecting with existing and lost clients to nurture long-standing, valuable partnerships.

Working towards a sustainable growth model hinging on diversified bookings and varied performance opportunities for artists, NICA Represents worked collaboratively with all other NICA departments to undertake thoughtful planning and resource allocation, executing several stand-out projects throughout the year.



Performance opportunities for NICA Represents artists

Casting: advertising, TV and stage

In 2024, casting opportunities perfectly suited to circus artists were in abundance. Appearing in the NICA Represents inbox were advertising briefs calling for “competent jugglers with modeling experience”; a “28 to 35 year old woman who can perform an effortless backbend under a limbo pole”; a TV producer in search of an acrobat capable of lifting ABC TV *Spicks and Specks*’ host Adam Hills, in a comedic contemporary dance sequence; and even the prestigious Opera Australia seeking “physically agile performers with strong comedic, movement and clowning skills” to perform in *The Barber of Seville* at the Sydney Opera House. Naturally, many NICA Represents artists were keen to throw their hats in the ring and audition for these fun roles.

Of these opportunities, five artists received callbacks resulting in three casting offers. NICA Represents artist Louis Green appeared on TV screens and social media feeds nationwide juggling mini frypans in a Kmart TV commercial. Louis was also seen dancing to Kate Bush’s *Running Up That Hill* with Adam Hills on ABC TV *Spicks and Specks*. In late 2024, NICA Represents artist Jeff Young successfully auditioned for and was offered an acting role in Opera Australia’s 2025 season of *The Barber of Seville*.

Multinational vitamin company VOOST’s 2021 TV commercial featuring NICA Represents artist Will Anton has consistently rolled over usage year on year. 2024 was no exception, with a further 12-month rollover confirmed until April 2025.

Cruise ship contracts

Ryan Darwin's contract with Celebrity Cruises Inc. aboard cruise ship, *Celebrity Edge*, continued into mid-2024, with Ryan performing aerial rope, Washington Trapeze and juggling.

Corporate events

Corporate events comprised a significant proportion (30%) of NICA Represents bookings in 2024. Clients were diverse, from VIP client, Crown Melbourne, to well-resourced organisations such as SportsBet, and charity One In Five.

As a result of NICA Represents' concerted effort to market to event managers via a targeted campaign, event managers and production companies booking on behalf of corporate clients also represented a significant number of confirmed gigs for artists:

- Think Business Events for international medical conference IFSO
- Evie Creative Events for Anytime Fitness
- IMAGINATION on behalf of Telstra
- Connect Entertainment for Melbourne International Film Festival
- Kermond Creative for AMWAY

Several corporate bookings involved interstate travel, allowing Melbourne-based NICA Represents artists to showcase their skills to new audiences who may not ordinarily be exposed to circus performance.

Community and private events

Community events comprised 20% of NICA Represents' confirmed bookings in 2024, Moomba being the largest and most important booking in the NICA Represents calendar as it constitutes 30% of the year's total individual artist bookings.

In 2024, the Moomba Parade was cancelled due to extreme heat two days before it was scheduled to go ahead, meaning 16 booked artists were unable to work on that day. Despite the parade cancellation, City of Melbourne honoured the artists' agreed fees for costume fittings and rehearsals, maintaining the artists' goodwill towards the festival.

The cancellation of the 2024 Moomba Parade was an unusual and unfortunate instance of force majeure however, the strong relationship between City of Melbourne, NICA Represents and NICA Represents artists was preserved due to all parties working towards a fair and mutually beneficial outcome, despite the circumstances.

Thankfully, many other community events went

ahead in 2024, with artists performing a variety of roving circus skills for the general public. These included juggling, portable aerials, fan dancing, hula hoops, unicycle, stilt walking and acrobatics. NICA Represents artists performed at:

- Midsumma Festival
- *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* movie night – City of Stonnington
- Mother's Day celebration – Toorak Road Business Association
- Blind Creek Re-naturalisation Project opening celebration – Melbourne Water
- New Year's Eve celebration in Daylesford

Events booked by private businesses or individuals are a growth area for NICA Represents, with 17% of bookings confirmed by private clients in 2024. Recognising *value-adding* as an important selling proposition for private clients, NICA Represents worked with NICA Recreation to develop an entertainment package that could be offered to families who have booked children's birthday party at NICA. The entertainment package includes a roving performance, a feature act and an artist meet-and-greet, and was successfully trialed at two NICA birthday parties. There is great potential to further develop entertainment packages for private clients in the future.



Cabaret Vertigo

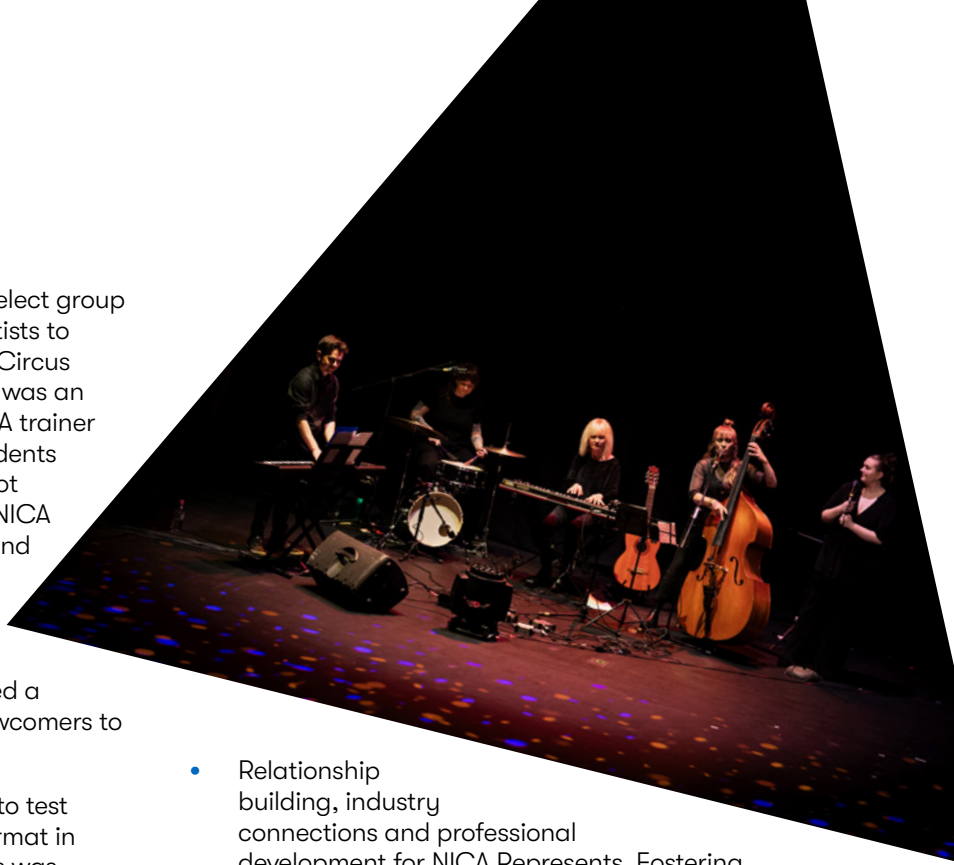
In October, NICA Represents engaged a select group of students, staff and NICA Represents artists to perform in *Cabaret Vertigo*, presented at Circus Oz, as part of Melbourne Fringe. The cast was an eclectic and talented group including NICA trainer Lauren Skopal (Miss Skopalova), NICA students Marina Borges, Taliesha Hall-Huynh (Merlot Minx), Luca Trimboli and Ty Wallent, and NICA Represents artists Jeff Young, Sam Daly and Amy Stone.

Accompanied by a live band led by NICA alumni Andi Cooper, and MC'd by Minnie Andrews, *Cabaret Vertigo* presented a rare opportunity for professionals and newcomers to perform together on the Circus Oz stage.

Cabaret Vertigo was also an opportunity to test the commercial viability of the cabaret format in an external setting. While a very small loss was recorded in the budget, *Cabaret Vertigo* proved that future iterations of a NICA cabaret, presented either internally or externally, can be refined into a financially viable offering.

Further positive outcomes of *Cabaret Vertigo* include:

- Exceeding ticket sales goal with 368 tickets sold across *Cabaret Vertigo*'s season.
- Paying artists and technical crew over \$7000 total in artist fees (profit share) and wages.
- Reaching new audiences with a social media marketing campaign concentrated on patrons geographically located in Melbourne's inner north – the suburbs surrounding Circus Oz.
- A review in *Australian Arts Review* by Jason Whyte: *"The opening of a brisk hoop routine by NICA trainer Miss Skopalova in a silver bodysuit illustrated the style of slick and sexy action on offer here. Other highlights across the hour included impressive strength and some unusual twists from final-year student Luca Trimboli on straps. Also, Ty Wallent's high-intensity diabolo act used technology to create a punchy and visually arresting slant on the artform."*
- A successful collaboration with NICA's newest partner, Collarts, with seven Collarts Technical Production students undertaking professional placements in stage management, front-of-house management, and social media content capture. To quote one Collarts placement student: *"To say I was blessed and honoured to work with the cast and crew of this show as well as being able to watch the show every night would be an understatement... I saw and met everyone at their best and am still processing the fact I was cool enough to be part of something so beautiful."*



- Relationship building, industry connections and professional development for NICA Represents. Fostering a deeper understanding of live performance, technical production, and the specificities of staging circus acts that will benefit NICA Represents in the future.

NICA engagements

In 2024, NICA's internal events provided NICA Represents artists with opportunities to return to the Guang Rong Lu National Circus Centre stage as professional performers, inspiring staff, students and special guests of NICA with stunning acts.

In August, **Michael McDonald** performed a beautiful dance trapeze act at the NICA x COLLARTS Winter Warmer event and in December, **Richard Sullivan** returned on Presentation Day to address the graduating class of 2024 with an inspirational speech, and to perform a thrilling juggling act.

In December, NICA Represents artists were also engaged to perform in NICA Represents' updated branding shoot for 2024/25. Footage captured of **Sam Daly**, **Richard Sullivan**, **Michael McDonald**, **Daniel Price** and **Grace Robins** will appear in NICA Represents' digital marketing campaigns, and special promotional packages for VIP clients throughout 2025.

Total income:
\$123,099

ARTISTS:

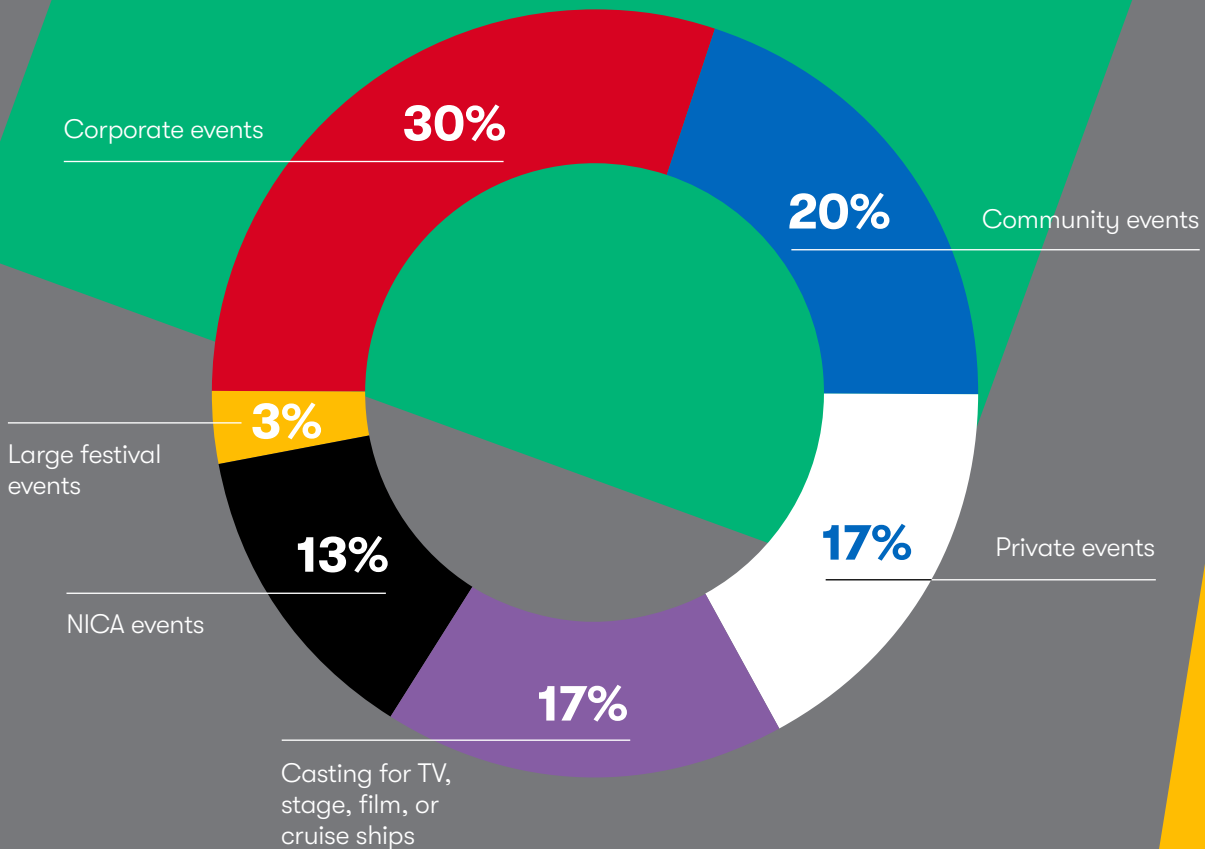
70 Artist Hires

54 Individual artists

OUR GIGS IN 2024

Total Gigs: 30

Type of bookings:



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



DANCE & MUSICAL THEATRE

In 2024, NICA's accredited dance and musical theatre programs continued to lead the way in performing arts education. With strong industry connections and a proven track record of graduate success, enrolments remained strong with 189 students across the various programs.

A major milestone this year was the graduation of the first cohort from the Dual Diploma program, where students earned both the CUA50220 Diploma of Musical Theatre and the CUA51520 Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance).

Delivered over two years, this rigorous training is designed to develop students as 'triple threats' with intensive focus on voice, acting, and dance technique.

Graduation outcomes included:

- 6 students completed the Dual Diploma
- 20 completed the CUA4+0520 Certificate IV in Musical Theatre
- 38 completed the CUA4+0120 Certificate IV in Dance
- 59 completed the CUA30120 Certificate III in Dance
- 60 completed the CUA20120 Certificate II in Dance

Graduate employment outcomes remained consistently high, with both recent and established alumni securing roles as performers, dancers, and choreographers in musicals, theatre companies, cruise lines, cabaret venues, touring productions, and corporate entertainment. These strong results highlight the quality of training that prepares students for long-term careers in the performing arts.

Throughout the year, Patrick School of the Arts and Spectrum Dance Studios presented a range of performances that showcased student talent in venues both large and small. These varied experiences were designed to provide students with practical performance opportunities and exposure to different audience settings in preparation for professional work.



PATRICK SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

2024 was a year of creative growth, performance excellence, and professional engagement across all Patrick School of the Arts programs. Students benefited from regular masterclasses with leading industry professionals, helping them stay current with choreography trends and bridging the gap between training and professional work. A strong emphasis was also placed on involving alumni as mentors and guest artists, creating a rich environment for skill development and networking.

The year's performance calendar was packed with highlights, including a first-term showcase, two major musicals (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Sweet Charity*), two original works (*Electric Cherry* and *King of the Moon*), a vocal showcase, and a student-devised cabaret evening.

Externally, students performed at high-profile events such as the Victorian Dance Festival and corporate functions for clients including TEG, Amy Vaughan Creative, Mike Snell Entertainment, Australian Dance Sport, J Smith Productions, Waacky Creative, Southern Beat Entertainment, Crown Casino, Virgin Australia, the KPMG Ball, and RMIT Graduation Ceremonies.

Students also participated in industry-led workshops with esteemed guest artists such as David Sirianni (*Moulin Rouge! The Musical*), Stephen Tannos (*Cats, Fame*), and James Maxfield (*Hamilton, Wicked, Follies*), bringing real-world expertise directly into the studio and enriching student learning.

SPECTRUM DANCE STUDIOS

Spectrum Dance Studios specialises in delivering broad, industry-relevant training that equips students and graduates with the skills to sustain long-term careers in the performing arts.

Beyond technical development, Spectrum offers comprehensive professional development including resume-building workshops, audition preparation masterclasses, technical panels, and networking events. These experiences give students valuable insights into industry expectations and provide a supportive space to practice professional skills.

Spectrum graduates continued to find success across diverse performance sectors, including TV commercials, cruise lines, and cabaret venues. Notable alumni appearances included the Australian tour of *MJ The Musical*, the international production of *The Lord of the Rings* musical, Universal Studios Japan, and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines. Alumni also featured in major public and corporate events such as the Australian Grand Prix, Shared Tables, Lions Club International, and regional arts festivals.



CERTIFICATE III IN CIRCUS ARTS

Flying Fruit Fly Circus

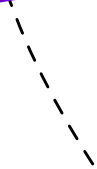
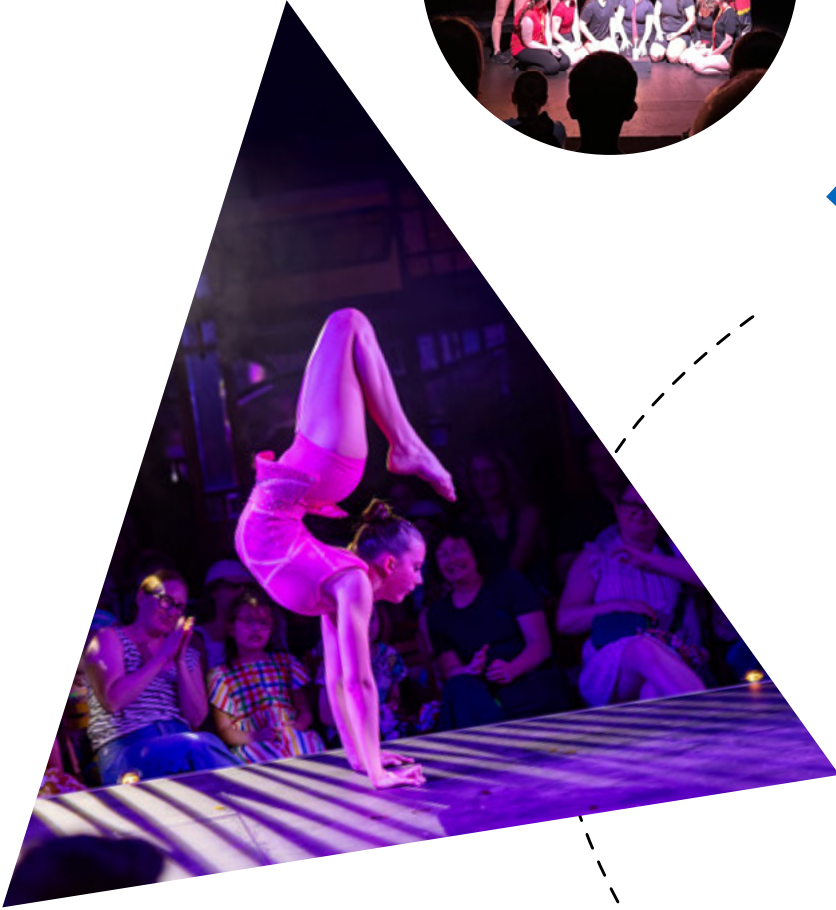
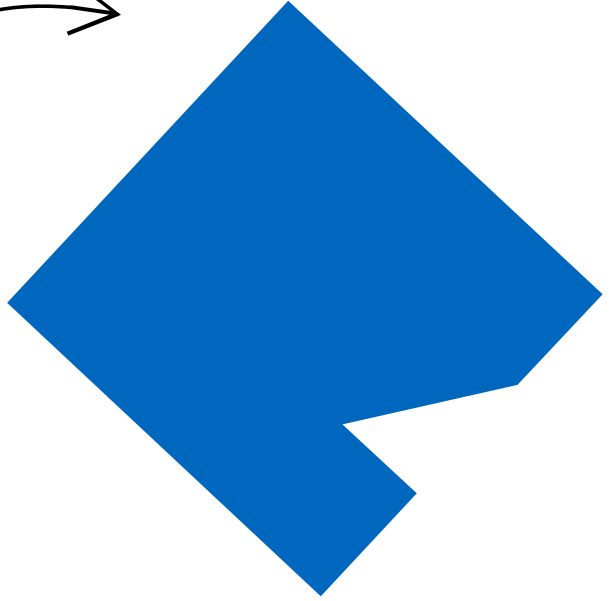
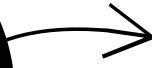
In 2024, we continued to offer the Certificate III in Circus Arts in partnership with Wodonga Senior Secondary College and the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. This program allows students recognition of the high level of training they complete at the Flying Fruit Fly Circus as part of their secondary school studies with an accredited award. The program provides enhanced work integrated learning and the flexibility for students to undertake their studies while gaining practical experience around their touring schedules. The course is delivered over two years and in 2024, the Certificate III in Circus Arts transitioned from a Year 11/12 to a Year 10/11 delivery model.

In 2024, there were 24 enrolments undertaking the first and second year of the program with 11 new students entering the first year of the program and 13 continuing students successfully completing the qualification.

Program highlights included major performance opportunities: *TEMPO* toured 13 regional venues; *BIG SKY* was presented at the Sydney Opera House; and *LIVE & FAMOUS* was staged at Carriageworks in Sydney.

Throughout the year, students engaged with a range of industry professionals, including international aerial duo Toni Guttierrez and Asvin Lopez, Master Showman Shep Huntly, and Casus artists Natano Fa'anana, Jesse Scott, and Lachy MacAuley.





WE ARE NICA



NICA Board

CHAIR

Mr Michael O'Shea (until November)
Bill Sweeney – Interim (from November)

DIRECTOR

Mr David McCall (until November)
Sam Jacob (from November)

DIRECTOR

Ms Madelyn Bolch (until November)

COMPANY SECRETARY

Lisian Teh (until November)
Garima Sharma (until November)

NICA Executive

NICA DIRECTOR

Simona Jobbagy

OPERATIONS MANAGER – People & Culture

Emily O'Connor

OPERATIONS MANAGER – Facilities & Resources

Sonya Curry (until March)

OPERATIONS MANAGER – Facilities & Resources

Franx Ann (from April)

OPERATIONS MANAGER – Commercial

Paula McKaskill

SENIOR FINANCE OFFICER

Faye Stathakis

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Karen Leskiw

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Josephine Byrt

NICA Performs

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Scott Grayland

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES COORDINATOR & RIGGER

Kaleb Hawkins

VENUE SUPERVISOR & RIGGER

Kyle Raftery

NICA Represents

NICA REPRESENTS AGENT

Samuel Boyd (until March)
Christina Cox (from March)

NICA Connects

ALUMNI, INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATORS

Natalie Frijia
Paul Kooperman (from August)

NICA Marketing

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Halina Powierza (from September)

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Halina Powierza (until August)
Rosa Quinton (from August)

NICA Admin

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR

Anne Young

NICA RECREATION ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANTS

Jessie Shook
Emil Gross (until February)
Meagan Kenny

DANCE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Jenny Vanderhorst

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANTS

Sebastien Pasche
Ali Metcalf (until August)
Timmy Foley (from August)

NICA Ed

HEAD OF CIRCUS STUDIES

Tegan Carmichael – Acting (from June)
James Brown (until July)

SENIOR EDUCATOR – ACADEMIC

Tegan Carmichael (until June)
Valentina La Piana

PERFORMANCE STUDIES COORDINATOR

Katie Cawthorne

THIRD-YEAR COORDINATOR

Martine Howard

SECOND-YEAR COORDINATOR

Alexander Gullan

CERTIFICATE IV COORDINATOR

Hannah Trott

MOVEMENT TEACHER & CONVENOR

Linda Sastradipradja

Circus Teachers

Earl Shatford

Emily Hughes

Felicia (Flee) O'Brien

Gang (Charlie) Cheng

Helene Embling

Jian Nie

Jon Griffingham

Lauren Skopal

Marco Paoletti

Mireille (Mimi) Goyette

Rong Lu

Vasily Ivanov

Sessional Circus Trainers

Brett Franzl

Nathan Jones

Staniforth Ricketson

Will Anton

Specialist Teachers

BUSINESS STUDIES

Lauren Eisinger

CIRCUS HISTORY (HE)

Antonella Casella

NICA Medical

GP

Dr Suleiman Halabi

HEAD PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Dr David Munro

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS AND S&C COACHES

Cat King

Emily Irvine



Image: Third-year student Merlene Hutt performing in *FAMOUS*. Photography Cameron Grant.

OUR SUPPORTERS



Australian Government

The National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) is supported by the Australian Government. It also has a number of partners who support the organisation in various ways. We would like to acknowledge the continuing support of the following companies and entities.



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications
Office for the Arts



NICA also thanks **The Sun Foundation** and the **Urquart Charitable Fund** for their generous support in 2024 and the donations received through our online fundraising appeal.

Image: Third-year student Gabriel Walker performing in *MUSE*.
Photography Cameron Grant.



FINANCE & OPERATIONS REPORT

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited

ABN 80 084 913 235

**Financial Report
31 December 2024**



National Institute of Circus Arts Limited

Directors' report

31 December 2024

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the Company for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Directors

The following persons were directors of the Company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

Bill Paul Sweeney (appointed on 22 November 2024)
Sam Jacob (appointed on 22 November 2024)
Jonathan Patrick Burke (appointed on 10 December 2024)
Collette Brennan (appointed on 10 December 2024)
Darcy Ray Grant (appointed on 10 December 2024)
Jill Smith (appointed on 20 March 2025)
Michael O'Shea (resigned on 20 November 2024)
Madelyn Bolch (resigned on 20 November 2024)
David McCall (resigned on 20 November 2024)

Objectives

The objectives of the Company are to provide quality education and training in circus arts and physical theatre and thereby enhance the cultural development of the Australian arts industry.

Strategy for achieving the objectives

NICA's core programs are the Certificate III and IV in Circus Arts, and a three-year Bachelor Degree in Circus Arts, which equips graduates with the skills to establish successful careers in the national and international circus arts industry. The Company's community and commercial activities increase community, industry and stakeholder awareness of circus arts. NICA is committed to the growth of the industry by identifying new markets and developing strategic partnerships which will enhance opportunities for performance and circus innovation.

NICA also has a talent agency, NICA Represents, which connects NICA graduates to employment opportunity locally and internationally.

NICA's commercial offerings, private events and recreational classes remain in demand and well-attended throughout 2024. 3,379 participants of all ages (from 5 years old to adults) participated in short courses, holiday programs and workshops during the year.

Principal activities

The Company provides training in circus arts. It was incorporated on 27 October 1998 and commenced operations in 1999. It is a company limited by guarantee.

Information on members

Name:	William Paul Sweeney
Title:	Acting Interim Chair
Expertise:	Education Management, Accounting
Name:	Sam Jacob
Title:	Ex-officio Director
Expertise:	Educational Leadership, Business
Name:	Jonathan Patrick Burke
Title:	Non-executive Director
Expertise:	Law
Name:	Collette Brennan
Title:	Non-executive Director
Expertise:	Arts Administration
Name:	Darcy Ray Grant
Title:	Non-executive Director
Expertise:	Industry (Contemporary Circus, International Touring)

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited

Directors' report

31 December 2024

Name: Jill Smith
Title: Non-executive Director, Government Nominee
Expertise: Arts Administration, Fundraising, Industry and Federal and State Arts Board Experience

Company secretary

Peter Barnard (appointed on 22 November 2024)
Garima Sharma (appointed on 08 August 2024; resigned on 20 November 2024)
Lisian The (resigned on 07 August 2024)

Meetings of directors

The number of meetings of the Company's Board of Directors ('the Board') held during the year ended 31 December 2024, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

	Full Board	
	Attended	Held
Bill Paul Sweeney (appointed on 22 November 2024)	1	4
Sam Jacob (appointed on 22 November 2024)	1	4
Jonathan Patrick Burke (appointed on 10 December 2024)	1	4
Collette Brennan (appointed on 10 December 2024)	1	4
Darcy Ray Grant (appointed on 10 December 2024)	1	4
Jill Smith (appointed on 20 March 2025)	-	4
Michael O'Shea (resigned on 20 November 2024)	3	4
Madelyn Bolch (resigned on 20 November 2024)	3	4
David McCall (resigned on 20 November 2024)	3	4

Held: represents the number of meetings held during the time the director held office.

In 2024, there was only 1 meeting with the new board on 10 December which was attended by: Bill Sweeney, Sam Jacob, Jonathan Burke, Collette Brennan, Darcy Grant, Peter Barnard, Jason Nell.

Contributions on winding up


The liability of the members of the Company is limited. Each member of the Company undertakes to contribute to the property of the Company in the event of it being wound up while membership continues or within one year after ceasing to be a Member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Company (contracted before cessation of membership) and the costs, charges and expenses for winding up and for adjustment of the rights of contributories among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00)

Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration is set out immediately after this directors' report.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of directors, pursuant to section 298(2)(a) of the Corporations Act 2001.

On behalf of the directors


William Paul Sweeney
Acting Interim Chair
5/8/2025
Melbourne, Victoria

RSM Australia Partners

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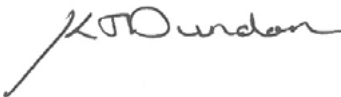
AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of National Institute of Circus Arts Limited for the year ended 31 December 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- (i) the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Rsm

RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K J Dundon".

K J DUNDON
Partner

Dated: 5 August 2025
Melbourne, Victoria

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National Institute of Circus Arts Limited

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31 December 2024

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General information

The financial statements cover National Institute of Circus Arts Limited as an individual entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is National Institute of Circus Arts Limited's functional and presentation currency.

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited is a not-for-profit unlisted public company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia, established on 27 October 1998 pursuant to the general authority contained in the *Swinburne University of Technology Act 1992*, superseded by the *Swinburne University of Technology Act 2010* (as amended).

On 16 July 2024, the Company entered into a transfer deed with Swinburne University of Technology ('University') and Australian College of the Arts Pty Ltd (trading as Collarts Institute of Higher Education) ('Collarts') to allow Collarts to take over the Company from the University, among other things effective 21 November 2024. Accordingly, Collarts is the new parent company and educational partner of the Company effective 21 November 2024.

The Company's registered office and principal place of business are:

39-59 Green St
Prahran, Victoria 3181

A description of the nature of the Company's operations and its principal activities are included in the directors' report, which is not part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue, in accordance with a resolution of directors, on 5 August 2025. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statements.

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue and other income	3	7,798,026	6,314,041
Expenses from continuing operations			
Employee benefits expense	4	(4,447,610)	(4,969,180)
Contract teaching		(803,617)	(677,903)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(564,824)	(546,727)
Professional service fee		(363,711)	(582,387)
Repairs and maintenance		(204,146)	(188,247)
Promotions and marketing		(125,337)	(129,878)
Communications		(95,349)	(111,838)
Finance costs	4	(15,109)	(30,021)
Other expenses		(535,500)	(492,542)
Total expenses		<u>(7,155,203)</u>	<u>(7,728,723)</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		642,823	(1,414,682)
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u><u>642,823</u></u>	<u><u>(1,414,682)</u></u>

The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Statement of financial position
As at 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,749,136	1,068,497
Receivables	6	822,779	280,131
Other current assets	7	214,323	203,702
Total current assets		<u>2,786,238</u>	<u>1,552,330</u>
Non-current assets			
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	8	729,809	1,166,535
Property, plant and equipment	9	496,721	550,677
Right-of-use assets	10	466,365	932,729
Intangible assets	11	30,104	35,499
Total non-current assets		<u>1,722,999</u>	<u>2,685,440</u>
Total assets		<u>4,509,237</u>	<u>4,237,770</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	12	645,803	589,493
Income in advance	13	12,943	11,599
Lease liabilities	14	485,000	469,891
Employee benefits	15	399,178	342,031
Total current liabilities		<u>1,542,924</u>	<u>1,413,014</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	14	-	485,000
Employee benefits	15	29,798	46,064
Total non-current liabilities		<u>29,798</u>	<u>531,064</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,572,722</u>	<u>1,944,078</u>
Net assets		<u>2,936,515</u>	<u>2,293,692</u>
Equity			
Retained surpluses		<u>2,936,515</u>	<u>2,293,692</u>
Total equity		<u>2,936,515</u>	<u>2,293,692</u>

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Statement of changes in equity
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Retained surpluses \$
Balance at 1 January 2023	3,708,374
Deficit for the year	<u>(1,414,682)</u>
Balance at 31 December 2023	<u><u>2,293,692</u></u>
	Retained surpluses \$
Balance at 1 January 2024	2,293,692
Surplus for the year	<u>642,823</u>
Balance at 31 December 2024	<u><u>2,936,515</u></u>

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from student fees and other customers (inclusive of GST)		1,510,516	3,383,836
Grants received (inclusive of GST)		5,568,425	3,218,771
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		<u>(6,655,921)</u>	<u>(7,339,549)</u>
		423,020	(736,942)
Dividends received		2,296	91,089
Interest received		5,484	5,646
Other revenue		311,529	616,161
Interest and other finance costs paid		<u>(15,109)</u>	<u>(30,021)</u>
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	19	<u>727,220</u>	<u>(54,067)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment	9	(39,109)	(89,616)
Proceeds from disposal of financial assets		<u>462,419</u>	<u>738,194</u>
Net cash from investing activities		<u>423,310</u>	<u>648,578</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		<u>(469,891)</u>	<u>(454,979)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(469,891)</u>	<u>(454,979)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		680,639	139,532
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		<u>1,068,497</u>	<u>928,965</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	5	<u><u>1,749,136</u></u>	<u><u>1,068,497</u></u>

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

Note 1. Material accounting policy information

The accounting policies that are material to the Company are set out below. The accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the previous financial year, unless otherwise stated.

New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The Company has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

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*, as appropriate for not-for profit oriented entities.

Historical cost convention

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

Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 2.

Revenue recognition

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable. The Company recognises revenue under the principles of *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*, where the amount of revenue can be reliably measured; it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Company; and specific criteria have been met for each of the Company's activities as described below. In some cases, the criteria may not be met until consideration is received because this is when the receipt becomes probable. Where *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers* does not apply, the Company considers whether *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* is applicable. The Company bases its estimates on historical results, taking into consideration the type of customer, the type of transaction and the specifics of each arrangement. The main sources of funding and the relevant notes are as follows:

Fees and charges

Fees and charges are recorded at fair value and include amounts received or receivable in respect of course delivery and other non-course activities. Fees and charges relating to courses are recognised in line with teaching delivery. Where teaching has not been conducted, those amounts are held as income in advance. Fees and charges for non-course activities are recognised when the service is provided.

Government grants

The Company receives the following forms of Government assistance: Commonwealth Grants, Scholarships and Other revenue. Government assistance revenue is recognised at fair value where the Company obtains control of the right to the revenue; it is probable that economic benefits will flow to the Company; and it can be reliably measured.

State and Local Government financial assistance is recognised as revenue at the fair value of the consideration received when the Company obtains control of the right to receive the grant; it is probable that economic benefits will flow to the Company; and it can be reliably measured.

Donations, scholarships and sponsorships

Donations, scholarships and sponsorships are recognised when the Company has unconditional right to receive the relevant consideration.

Interest income

Interest income is recognised on an accrual basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

Other revenue

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Income tax

As the Company is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

Current and non-current classification

Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when: it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the Company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period; or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when: it is either expected to be settled in the Company's normal operating cycle; it is held primarily for the purpose of trading; it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period; or there is no right at the end of the reporting period to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any allowance for expected credit losses. Trade receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

The Company has applied the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses, which uses a lifetime expected loss allowance. To measure the expected credit losses, trade receivables have been grouped based on days overdue.

Investments and other financial assets

Investments and other financial assets are initially measured at fair value. Transaction costs are included as part of the initial measurement, except for financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Such assets are subsequently measured at either amortised cost or fair value depending on their classification. Classification is determined based on both the business model within which such assets are held and the contractual cash flow characteristics of the financial asset unless an accounting mismatch is being avoided.

Financial assets are derecognised when the rights to receive cash flows have expired or have been transferred and the Company has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership. When there is no reasonable expectation of recovering part or all of a financial asset, its carrying value is written off.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

Financial assets not measured at amortised cost or at fair value through other comprehensive income are classified as financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Typically, such financial assets will be either: (i) held for trading, where they are acquired for the purpose of selling in the short-term with an intention of making a profit, or a derivative; or (ii) designated as such upon initial recognition where permitted. Fair value movements are recognised in profit or loss.

Impairment of financial assets

The Company recognises a loss allowance for expected credit losses on financial assets which are either measured at amortised cost or fair value through other comprehensive income. The measurement of the loss allowance depends upon the Company's assessment at the end of each reporting period as to whether the financial instrument's credit risk has increased significantly since initial recognition, based on reasonable and supportable information that is available, without undue cost or effort to obtain.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Where there has not been a significant increase in exposure to credit risk since initial recognition, a 12-month expected credit loss allowance is estimated. This represents a portion of the asset's lifetime expected credit losses that is attributable to a default event that is possible within the next 12 months. Where a financial asset has become credit impaired or where it is determined that credit risk has increased significantly, the loss allowance is based on the asset's lifetime expected credit losses. The amount of expected credit loss recognised is measured on the basis of the probability weighted present value of anticipated cash shortfalls over the life of the instrument discounted at the original effective interest rate.

For financial assets mandatorily measured at fair value through other comprehensive income, the loss allowance is recognised in other comprehensive income with a corresponding expense through profit or loss. In all other cases, the loss allowance reduces the asset's carrying value with a corresponding expense through profit or loss.

Property, plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land and work-in-progress) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Equipment	3-15 years
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The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the Company. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss.

Right-of-use assets

A right-of-use asset is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for, as applicable, any lease payments made at or before the commencement date net of any lease incentives received, any initial direct costs incurred, and, except where included in the cost of inventories, an estimate of costs expected to be incurred for dismantling and removing the underlying asset, and restoring the site or asset.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the asset, whichever is the shorter. Where the Company expects to obtain ownership of the leased asset at the end of the lease term, the depreciation is over its estimated useful life. Right-of use assets are subject to impairment or adjusted for any remeasurement of lease liabilities.

The Company has elected not to recognise a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability for short-term leases with terms of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets. Lease payments on these assets are expensed to profit or loss as incurred.

Intangible assets

The Company capitalises the costs of development activities or purchase of products related to the provision or enhancement of large core systems as intangible assets.

Costs associated with maintaining software programs are recognised as an expense as incurred. Development costs that are directly attributable to the design development and testing of identifiable software products controlled by the Company are recognised as intangible assets when the following criteria are met:

- it is technically feasible to complete the software so that it will be available for use
- management intends to complete the software and use it
- there is an ability to use the software
- it can be demonstrated how the software will generate probable future economic benefits
- adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use the software are available
- the expenditure attributable to the software during its development can be reliably measured

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Finite life intangible assets are subsequently measured at cost less amortisation and any impairment. The gains or losses recognised in profit or loss arising from the derecognition of intangible assets are measured as the difference between net disposal proceeds and the carrying amount of the intangible asset. The method and useful lives of finite life intangible assets are reviewed annually. Changes in the expected pattern of consumption or useful life are accounted for prospectively by changing the amortisation method or period.

Development costs, software and licenses

Significant costs associated with development costs, software and licenses are deferred and amortised on a straight-line basis from the point at which the asset is ready for use. The amortisation rate is set at 12.5% per annum.

Impairment of non-financial assets

Non-financial assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value-in-use. The value-in-use is the present value of the estimated future cash flows relating to the asset using a pre-tax discount rate specific to the asset or cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. Assets that do not have independent cash flows are grouped together to form a cash-generating unit.

Trade and other payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Company prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Income in advance

Income in advance represent the Company's obligation to transfer goods or services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when the Company recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before the Company has transferred the goods or services to the customer.

Lease liabilities

A lease liability is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the lease payments to be made over the term of the lease, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the Company's incremental borrowing rate. Lease payments comprise of fixed payments less any lease incentives receivable, variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, amounts expected to be paid under residual value guarantees, exercise price of a purchase option when the exercise of the option is reasonably certain to occur, and any anticipated termination penalties. The variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The carrying amounts are remeasured if there is a change in the following: future lease payments arising from a change in an index or a rate used; residual guarantee; lease term; certainty of a purchase option and termination penalties. When a lease liability is remeasured, an adjustment is made to the corresponding right-of use asset, or to profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset is fully written down.

Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Other long-term employee benefits

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at 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 expected 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 national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Defined contribution superannuation expense

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Fair value measurement

When an asset or liability, financial or non-financial, is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is based on the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date; and assumes that the transaction will take place either: in the principal market; or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming they act in their economic best interests. For non-financial assets, the fair value measurement is based on its highest and best use. Valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, are used, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified and repositioned for consistency with current year disclosures and presentation. Further, disclosure information differs from prior year financial statements as it was prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, and interpretations, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, *Swinburne University of Technology Act 2010* (as amended) the *Financial Management Act 1994* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* while the current year 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*, as appropriate for not-for profit oriented entities.

Note 2. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions that are likely to affect the current or future financial years.

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 3. Revenue and other income

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Revenue</i>		
Commonwealth government grants	4,425,000	2,616,250
Fees and charges	1,885,943	2,146,384
Victorian government grants	1,134,926	789,704
Other operating revenue	269,301	538,367
	<u>7,715,170</u>	<u>6,090,705</u>
<i>Other income</i>		
Donations, scholarships and sponsorships	49,383	89,263
Unrealised gains on financial assets at FV through P&L	18,103	20,859
Dividends	9,886	107,568
Interest income	5,484	5,646
	<u>82,856</u>	<u>223,336</u>
Revenue and other income	<u><u>7,798,026</u></u>	<u><u>6,314,041</u></u>

Disaggregation of revenue

The disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers is as follows:

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Timing of revenue recognition</i>		
Services transferred over time	7,598,096	5,982,747
Services transferred at a point in time	117,074	107,958
	<u>7,715,170</u>	<u>6,090,705</u>

Revenue is derived entirely from Australia.

Note 4. Expenses

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Surplus/(deficit) includes the following specific expenses:		
<i>Employee benefits expense</i>		
Defined contribution superannuation expense	394,550	465,883
Other employee benefits	4,053,060	4,503,297
	<u>4,447,610</u>	<u>4,969,180</u>
<i>Depreciation and amortisation expense</i>		
Property plant and equipment	93,065	74,967
Intangible assets	5,395	5,394
Right-of-use assets	466,364	466,364
	<u>564,824</u>	<u>546,725</u>
<i>Finance costs</i>		
Interest and finance charges paid/payable on lease liabilities	<u>15,109</u>	<u>30,021</u>

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 5. Cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash at bank and on hand	<u>1,749,136</u>	<u>1,068,497</u>

Bank accounts consist of an investment account, a high-interest bearing account, operating accounts and Public Fund account all of which generate interest. The Public Fund is a specific purpose account, approved for the purpose of holding donations. Interest on average credit balances in the bank are calculated at the prevailing bank rate at 0.33% (2023: 1.08%).

The Company has no credit stand-by arrangements or loan facilities at 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2023.

Note 6. Receivables

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Receivables	812,984	281,466
Less: Allowance for expected credit losses	<u>9,795</u>	<u>(1,335)</u>
	<u>822,779</u>	<u>280,131</u>

Note 7. Other current assets

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Prepayments	118,030	132,567
Accrued revenue	84,106	51,603
GST receivables	<u>12,187</u>	<u>19,532</u>
	<u>214,323</u>	<u>203,702</u>

Note 8. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Unit trusts	<u>729,809</u>	<u>1,166,535</u>

All listed securities are in the name of the Company. Listed securities are unit trusts invested across a balanced portfolio consisting mainly of Australian and global equities, fixed interest and cash. The fair value of listed securities is based on quoted market prices at the balance date. The quoted market price used for financial assets held by the Company is the current bid price; the appropriate quoted market price for financial liabilities is the current ask price

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Leasehold improvements - at cost	30,975	-
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(9,119)	-
	<u>21,856</u>	<u>-</u>
Equipment - at cost	1,439,294	1,355,354
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(964,429)	(880,462)
	<u>474,865</u>	<u>474,892</u>
Work-in-progress - at cost	-	75,785
	<u>496,721</u>	<u>550,677</u>

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Leasehold improvements \$	Equipment \$	Work-in- progress \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 January 2024	-	474,892	75,785	550,677
Additions	-	39,109	-	39,109
Transfers in/(out)	30,975	44,810	(75,785)	-
Depreciation expense	(9,119)	(83,946)	-	(93,065)
Balance at 31 December 2024	<u>21,856</u>	<u>474,865</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>496,721</u>

Note 10. Right-of-use assets

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Buildings - right-of-use	1,437,957	1,437,957
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(971,592)	(505,228)
	<u>466,365</u>	<u>932,729</u>

The Company leases buildings under agreements of between 2 to 5 years with, in some cases, options to extend. The leases have various escalation clauses. On renewal, the terms of the leases are renegotiated.

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Buildings \$
Balance at 1 January 2024	932,729
Depreciation expense	(466,364)
Balance at 31 December 2024	<u>466,365</u>

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 11. Intangible assets

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Non-current assets</i>		
Development costs, software and licenses - at cost	43,154	43,154
Less: Accumulated amortisation	<u>(13,050)</u>	<u>(7,655)</u>
	<u><u>30,104</u></u>	<u><u>35,499</u></u>

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Development costs, software and licenses \$
Balance at 1 January 2024	35,499
Amortisation expense	<u>(5,395)</u>
Balance at 31 December 2024	<u><u>30,104</u></u>

Note 12. Trade and other payables

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Trade payables	76,625	88,272
PAYG payable	63,774	259,292
Superannuation liability payable	128,351	29,909
Accruals	<u>377,053</u>	<u>212,020</u>
	<u><u>645,803</u></u>	<u><u>589,493</u></u>

Note 13. Income in advance

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Income received in advance from Swinburne University of Technology	4,214	11,369
Government grants	100	100
Other income received in advance	<u>8,629</u>	<u>130</u>
	<u><u>12,943</u></u>	<u><u>11,599</u></u>

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 14. Lease liabilities

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Lease liability	485,000	469,891
<i>Non-current liabilities</i>		
Lease liability	-	485,000
	<u>485,000</u>	<u>954,891</u>
<i>Future lease payments</i>		
Future lease payments are due as follows:		
Within one year	485,000	485,000
One to five years	-	485,000
	<u>485,000</u>	<u>970,000</u>

Note 15. Employee benefits

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Annual leave	233,048	194,422
Long service leave	166,130	147,609
	<u>399,178</u>	<u>342,031</u>
<i>Non-current liabilities</i>		
Long service leave	29,798	46,064
	<u>428,976</u>	<u>388,095</u>

Note 16. Related party transactions

Parent entity

On 16 July 2024, the Company entered into a transfer deed with Swinburne University of Technology ('University') and Australian College of the Arts Pty Ltd (trading as Collarts Institute of Higher Education) ('Collarts') to allow Collarts to take over the Company from the University, among other things effective 21 November 2024. Accordingly, Collarts is the new parent company and educational partner of the Company effective 21 November 2024.

As at, and during the financial year ended 31 December 2023, the parent entity of the Company was Swinburne University of Technology.

Key management personnel

Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 17.

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 16. Related party transactions (continued)

Transactions with related parties

The following transactions occurred with related parties:

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Payment for goods and services:		
Expenditure paid to Swinburne University of Technology ⁽¹⁾	145,056	155,904
Lease expenditure paid to Swinburne University of Technology ⁽¹⁾	13,850	30,021
Expenditure paid to Collarts Institute of Higher Education ⁽²⁾	3,846	-
	<u>3,846</u>	<u>-</u>

⁽¹⁾ Includes transactions with Swinburne from 1 January 2024 to 21 November 2024.

⁽²⁾ Includes transactions with Collarts from 21 November 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Receivable from and payable to related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the reporting date in relation to transactions with related parties:

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Receivables:		
Amount receivable from Swinburne University of Technology	331,942	193,206
Payables:		
Amount payable to Swinburne University of Technology	-	11,369
Lease payable to Swinburne University of Technology	-	954,891
	<u>-</u>	<u>954,891</u>

Loans to/from related parties

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Terms and conditions

All transactions were made on normal commercial terms and conditions and at market rates.

Note 17. Key management personnel disclosures

Compensation

The aggregate compensation made to directors and other members of key management personnel of the Company is set out below:

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Aggregate compensation	<u>1,224,975</u>	<u>1,504,006</u>

- Remuneration to directors and other members of key management personnel of the Company for the period from 1 January 2024 to 21 November 2024 was paid by the ultimate parent entity, Swinburne University of Technology, under the oversight of its Board.
- Remuneration to directors and other members of key management personnel of the Company (comprising the new board of directors) from the period from 22 November 2024 to 31 December 2024 was paid by the Company.

The above disclosure includes the total remuneration received by each responsible persons for the years ended 2024 and 2023. No allocation has been made to apportion the responsible persons remuneration for their contribution as a director of the Company.

National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Notes to the financial statements
31 December 2024

Note 18. Remuneration of auditors

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<i>Audit of financial statements</i>		
Victorian Auditor General's Office	21,100	21,100
RSM Australia	15,000	-
	<u>36,100</u>	<u>21,100</u>
<i>Other non-assurance services</i>		
RSM Australia	6,500	-
	<u>42,600</u>	<u>21,100</u>

Note 19. Reconciliation of surplus/(deficit) to net cash from/(used in) operating activities

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	642,823	(1,414,682)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation and amortisation	564,824	546,727
Provision for expected credit losses	(11,130)	(1,335)
Dividends and distributions received and reinvested	(7,590)	(4,822)
Unrealised (gains)/losses on financial assets at FV through P&L	(18,103)	(20,859)
Change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Increase in receivables	(531,518)	(35,752)
Decrease/(increase) in other current assets	(10,621)	752,874
Increase in trade and other payables	56,310	301,179
Increase/(decrease) in income in advance	1,344	(198,652)
Increase in employee benefits	40,881	21,255
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	<u>727,220</u>	<u>(54,067)</u>

Note 20. Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

The Company had no contingent liabilities and contingent assets as at 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2023.

Note 21. Commitments

The Company had no capital commitments as at 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2023.

Note 22. Economic dependency

The Company's main source of funding is grant revenue from the Federal Government, Office For The Arts. A new six year funding agreement (2023-2029) was signed in October this year between NICA and the Federal Government. Following the financial sustainability review conducted by the Office For the Arts for consideration in the May 2024 budget, NICA hopes to receive a funding uplift to assist with the financial challenges brought on by increased operational costs and having to pay commercial rent.

Note 23. Events after the reporting period

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 31 December 2024 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Company's operations, the results of those operations, or the Company's state of affairs in future financial years.


National Institute of Circus Arts Limited
Directors' declaration
31 December 2024

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2024 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of directors.

On behalf of the directors


Bill Paul Sweeney
Acting Interim Chair
5/18/2025
Melbourne, Victoria

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of National Institute of Circus Arts Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of National Institute of Circus Arts Limited (the registered entity), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of the registered entity has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act), including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 31 December 2024 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. 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 registered entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD

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Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

The directors of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The directors are responsible for overseeing the registered entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are 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 the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and 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.

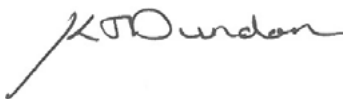
A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Independence

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the responsible entities of the registered entity, would be in the same terms if given to the responsible entities as at the time of this auditor's report.

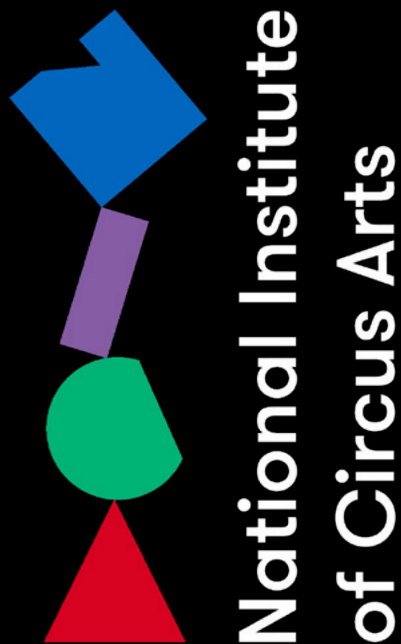


RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS



K J DUNDON

Dated: 8 August 2025
Melbourne, Victoria



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