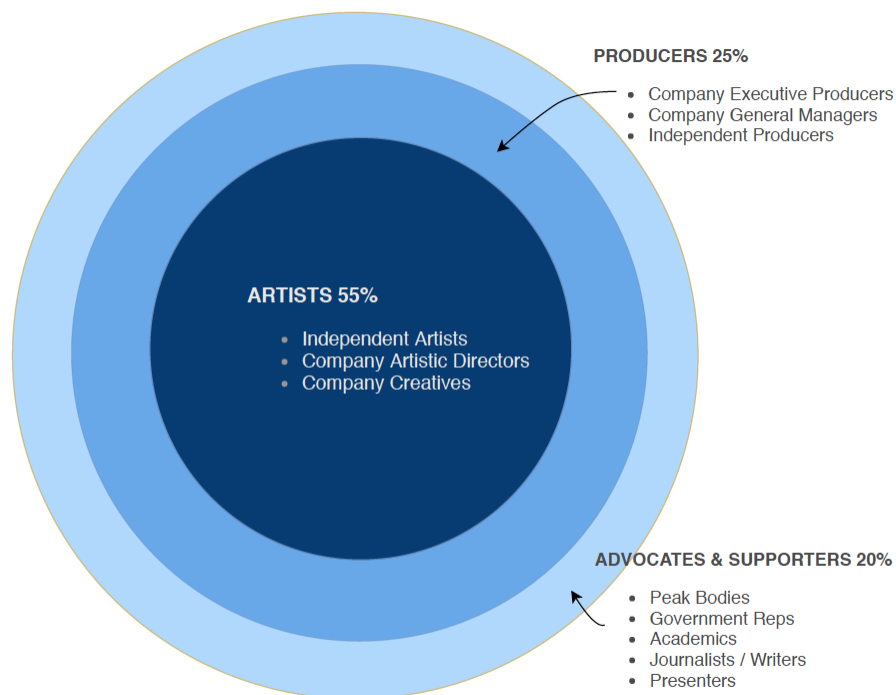


ATF is artist centred

The Australian Theatre Forum is the only national performing arts forum which is specifically designed for artists to be at the centre of conversations, and which has a pro-active strategy to achieve over 50% attendance by artists. This includes a time intensive EOI process for 120 independents, who receive a huge subsidy off their registration fee. In addition, TNA seeks travel support to ensure equity of access for up to half of them (in 2017 56 delegates received funding support).

The ATF then attracts around 25% of those working directly with artists: producers, company executive producers and general managers. The outer cohort of 'advocates and supporters', at 20%, is made up of policy-makers, power brokers and decision makers. It is vital to have this cohort in the national conversation, but it is important that it remains a smaller group.

Figure 1. ATF 2017 delegate breakdown

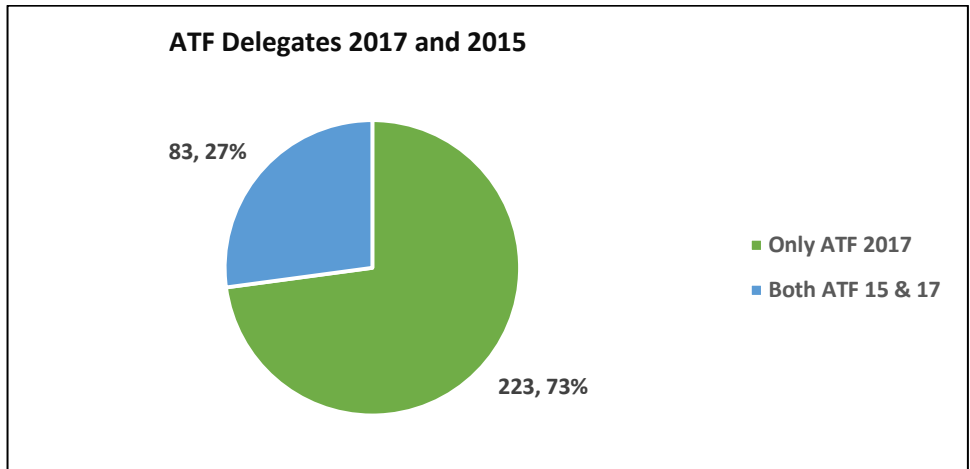


ATF serves a changing cohort of delegates

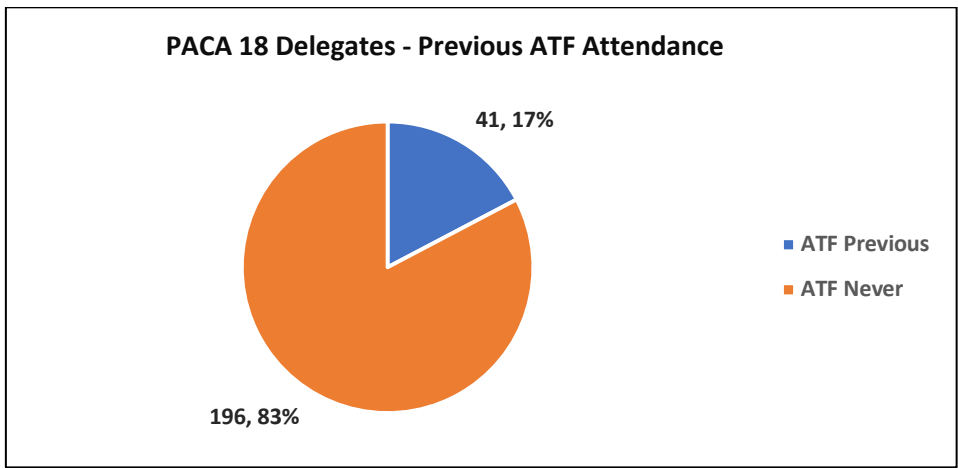
Contrary to common perception, the pool of performing arts conference delegates is large and changing, and there is only a small cross-over of delegates between each ATF and amongst forums such as ATF, PAC Australia and APAM¹. While some cross-over is vital for continuity of knowledge, and for cross pollination between conferences, the ATF provides professional development and networking to a largely *new* cohort each time. TNA believes that true sector development relies on a consciousness to provide opportunities for new people, not just the usual suspects. The following charts show the relative overlap.

¹ We used these forums for comparison as we had access to the delegate lists.

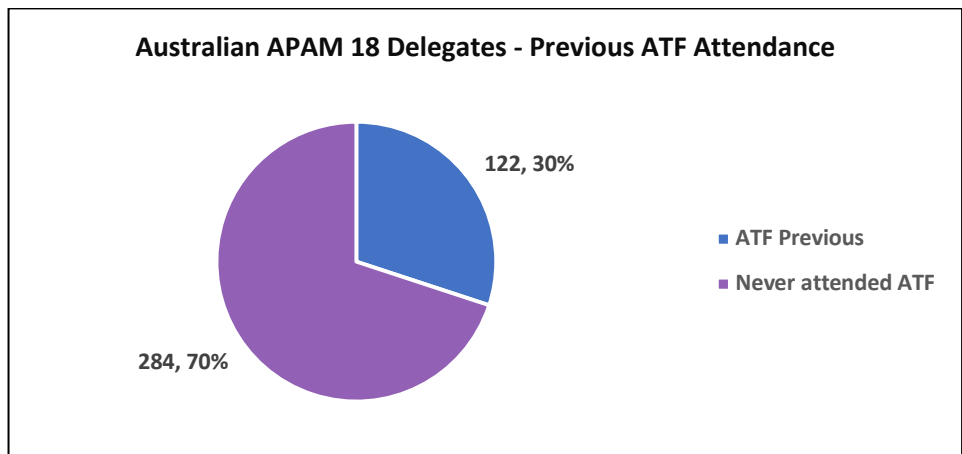
1) **BETWEEN ATFs** - Of the 306 registered delegates at the 2017 ATF, only 27% had attended the 2015 ATF (and a smaller percentage again had attended previous ATFs).



2) **BETWEEN PAC AUSTRALIA and ATF** - Of the 237 delegates attending PAC Australia's 2018 conference in Karratha, only 41 (17%) had attended *any* previous Australian Theatre Forum.



3) **BETWEEN APAM and ATF** - Of the 406 *Australian* APAM 2018 delegates, 30% had attended any previous ATF.

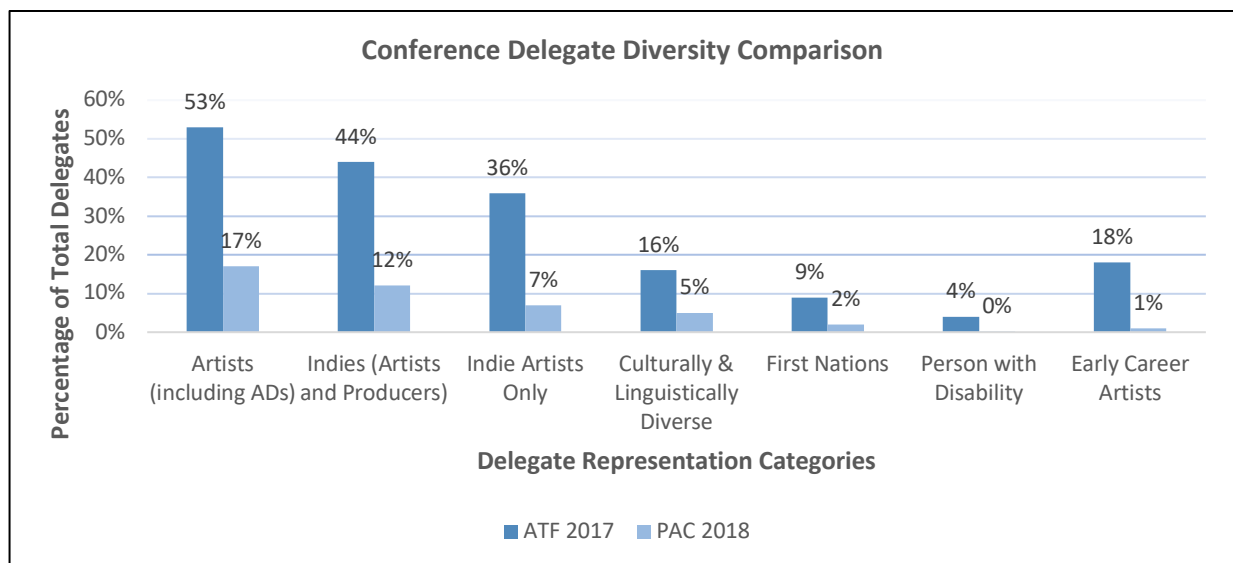


ATF provides dedicated access strategies

TNA implements targeted strategies and applies significant resources to ensure access for independent artists, First Nations delegates, delegates from diverse backgrounds, and delegates with disabilities.

“Seeing the huge variety of people in the room - TNA did a wonderful job of ensuring diversity and inclusion.” Delegate ATF17

Compared to PAC Australia delegates², ATF has a much higher percentage of independent artists and early career artists, First Nations delegates, delegates from diverse backgrounds, and people with disabilities.



a) INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS AND ARTISTS STRATEGY

TNA offers heavily subsidised ticket prices (\$121 in 2017) to 110-120 independents, selected through an EOI process, assessed by a panel in each state/territory for local knowledge. The process prioritises First Nations, cultural diversity, people with disability and regional/remote people.

TNA seeks funding from all state/territory funding agencies to support travel costs (of between \$500-\$1000) for as many independents as possible – in 2017 this was 56 delegates supported by VIC, QLD, NSW and TAS (through TNA) and several others through programs run by the agency itself (WA, NT and ACT).

“I was very grateful for the support which meant I could attend. I appreciated the care taken for inclusive process.” ATF17 delegate

TNA employs a part-time staff member to administer this time intensive program – the employee works directly with delegates to ensure that people register, and in the case of some delegates, TNA makes the flight and accommodation bookings directly. We know that

² PAC Australia runs an excellent, highly regarded conference, and has a specific constituency made up largely of presenters and does not necessarily aim to have higher levels of artists or of diversity. The point here is that there are different needs for different sub-sectors.

providing substantive access means providing additional services for some people who experience disadvantage in various forms.

One way to see the Australia Council grant, is that it directly correlates to the subsidy provided to the independents. The unsubsidised ATF cost per person is around \$800 exGST (charged to the top bracket only). As indies pay \$100 exGST, they save \$700 each. 120 indies is a total of \$84000. This is a significant and crucial element of the ATF's success.

b) DISABILITY ACCESS STRATEGY

TNA implements dedicated access services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and people with other disabilities. We work directly with the delegates to ensure all their needs are met, that they are supported by their peers, and we provide dedicated trained ushers to provide better way-finding and navigation.

As well as providing Auslan interpreters for all forum sessions, we work with the Deaf delegates to provide interpreting for some of the external networking opportunities, festival shows etc.

“Staff and volunteers were consistently kind never patronising, making my access complications less consequential, largely overcame the complexities of the spaces” ATF17 delegate

c) LOW PRICES AND ORGANISATIONAL CATEGORY QUOTAS

TNA sets quotas for each of the organisational categories, and applies a scaled discount depending on turnover. The top category – Government Reps and Universities – has an unsubsidised price (the total ATF budget divided by number of delegates). There are then four smaller categories down to small organisations with an annual turnover of less than \$300k. In 2019 the organisational prices will range from \$340pp to \$880pp. We do not maximise registration income – our priority is ensuring that there is a balance of organisational delegates (along with the 120 independent delegates), and we work the budget hard to keep the prices low. There is no conference dinner included in the registration.

Program Aim

To support the performing arts sector to be stronger, more integrated, and more productive by building long-term capacity for better sector communication, in large through to small groups.

TNA will use the platform of the Australian Theatre Forum as a Year 1 springboard for a longer-term strategy across 6 years. The program addresses identified weaknesses from previous ATFs and other arts conferences, and will help us pro-actively shift the ATF model away from panels and speakers towards action-based formats that take advantage of having 350 amazing artists and arts leaders together in real life, in one space.

We anticipate this group providing a legacy for other conferences, for meetings by other peak bodies, funding bodies etc.

Year 1 Program Overview

TNA will run a course for a cohort of performing arts sector leaders to learn some core components of the Lewis Deep Democracy facilitation approach. They will become a pool of Creative Facilitators equipped with fresh tools to effectively read and navigate group dynamics. The course will provide a transformative toolkit and roadmap that leaves a legacy of people who can effectively lead and facilitate group processes. Via a dynamic action-learning cycle the cohort will utilise the tools in the lead up to and then during the ATF and along the way unpack them to get greater understanding of how and why you use them.

Each Creative Facilitator will take on a co-curation role for specific sessions at the ATF, working closely with the Creative Directorate to ensure consistent and complementary content and programming. Following on from Year 1, the Creative Facilitators will be encouraged to mentor others in the sector regarding the facilitation capability that they have developed through participating in the Creative Facilitation Program.

Through the having the creative facilitation pool at 2019 ATF we can monopolise on having artists and arts leaders in one place for three constructive days to hold discussions on themes such as:

- Policy development
- New initiatives that could support the sector and elements/groups within it
- Tackling issues small through to significant that we don't normally get adequate time to and/or are sensitive to discuss
- Deliberating on next steps as a sector
- Showcasing best practice and what's really required to achieve it
- Profiling works in development

All of these themes/sessions and more would be greatly enhanced by high quality facilitation. Having a pool of skilled, confident and confident Creative Facilitators, from within the performing arts sector itself would be a great asset for this ATF and other sector events to come.

Process

TNA will run an EOI process to select 8-10 people from around Australia to participate in the Facilitation Program. We will work with consultant Facilitation Trainer Pru Gell to train the Facilitators, and to oversee the facilitation of sessions at the ATF, providing a consistent facilitation/coordination approach across the three days. The Program will prioritise creative leaders who are First Nations, CaLD and those with disabilities. Participants travel and accommodation costs will be covered.

The program has four key elements:

- **stage 1** is a two-day face to face program;
- **stage 2** is an online coaching program across the 5 months, with 'buddy trios' set-up for peer learning (ideally participants are applying the tools in their own contexts throughout this period and even facilitating a local arts forum);
- **stage 3** is a one-day polishing session immediately prior to ATF; and
- **stage 4** is the implementation of the creative facilitation at the ATF, overseen by Pru Gell who will run 'huddles' to support the Creative Facilitators throughout the 3 days.

The Creative Facilitators will be paid fees as part of ATF, in recognition of their contributions.

Why utilise the Lewis Deep Democracy approach to facilitation

Applying the Lewis Deep Democracy facilitation tools at the ATF will support the conference participants to have robust, inclusive and engaging conversations. Born out of South Africa's transformation from apartheid to democracy, the Lewis Deep Democracy approach provides a unique roadmap for people who lead and facilitate group processes. It is used in the business, community, social movement, public, start-up and education sectors in over 20 countries. The method is based on Process Orientated Psychology and provides a mindset shift on how to read group dynamics. It allows people to see the behaviours, norms and patterns in the system that could be creating challenges rather than seeing the source of problem/s as just being 'difficult people'.

The methodology is **deep** in that the tools are all designed to support the exchange of ideas by surfacing the range of values, beliefs, and attitudes that inform and enrich individual and group processes. It is '**democratic**' in that it emphasises that every voice matters and that organisations, groups and individuals thrive when majority *and* minority voices are genuinely valued and included.

The core tools that the cohort will learn are:

- **Check-in** (Lewis Deep Democracy style)
- **4 Steps:** Etiquette for running meetings (for two or more people) so that everyone feels heard & supports buy-in & follow through on decisions made
- **Soft Shoe Shuffle:** Engaging way to run large group discussions (up to approximately 200 people) that efficiently and effectively enables a wide range of people and views to be heard
- **Debate:** Can be used to resolve tension in an engaging & energising way and can be used for coaching and feedback, especially for difficult conversations
- **Argument:** A dynamic way to resolve tension & conflict
- **Communication Vices:** Suite of six antidotes to common communication practices that can create/support effective discussions
- **Check-out** (Lewis Deep Democracy style)

Mental Wellbeing and Self Care: "The most useful outcome for me and my practice is my emotional health. I opened my heart and said the truth of what I was feeling/thinking. It was a very cathartic experience and yet it was nothing new. The forum provided the opportunity to bring it all to the surface. The ATF improved the way I approach my practice and myself." - *Aanisa Vylet, NSW*
"The first keynote session got me thinking about how tired I am. I called my Dad up and made plans to go for a bushwalk the next week. I am slowly making a self-care plan that prioritises culture and connection to country and addressing our company's culture of being busy." - *Alison Murphy-Oates, NSW*

Dismantling Privilege and Sector Responsibility: "It was ultimately useful to be so forcefully made conscious of my position of privilege in the industry; it has left me with a very lasting feeling that I think will be working through me for some time." - *Julian Hobba, Artistic Director, Blue Room Theatre, WA*
"I am entering my work with more questions, rigour and consideration of my responsibilities to the larger sector." - *Merlynn Tong, QLD*

Women, Arts and Leadership: "It was an absolute honour to be able to co-facilitate the Working Group on Women, Arts and Leadership at the 2017 Australian Theatre Forum. The experience gave me the confidence to engage with women at the national level who are pioneers, leaders and dedicated change makers in performing arts, who had gathered from across the continent. Out of our 2-hour session, Women Arts Leaders Australia (WALA) was born. I learned so much from listening to the women who shared their presence, feedback and ideas on the day. Since then, we have had a handful of virtual and IRL meet-ups to continue supporting each other in our work." - *Rani Pramesti, VIC*

Queer Voices: "Thankyou for adding a queer voice to the forum! It was refreshing to hear our voices being heard within the overall context of theatre practice in this country, especially in light of the current political climate!" - *Peter Kift, Yirra Yaakin, WA*

Theatre for Young Audiences: "Having the opportunity to speak about impact and definition and value in the context of children's theatre was so excellent. The conversation around this was interesting and placed kids at the heart of the general industry concerns as a powerful sector with lots to contribute." - *Sue Giles, Polyglot, VIC*

Environmental Sustainability: "As a provocateur in the discussion about sustainable practice - I have developed a plan of action - with clear outcome possibilities by the next ATF - this can have very long term positive consequences for our industry. Being at the ATF was crucial to this process." - *Dagmara Gieysztor, VIC*

Audience Diversification and Development: "A useful outcome for me and my practice was Hilary Glow's chart on audience development. Hilary and the other panelists talked through their research and analysis of the successes and challenges of audience development at the 2017 AsiaTOPA Festival, with particular reference to the Harlow Model (2014) for breaking down the 9 key practices in audience development work. This was useful, applied research and a useful analysis framework that I've been able to share with my colleagues and use as a point of discussion for our own approaches to audience development. We've been drawing on it in programming conversations, and I've been drawing on it personally in my own work as dramaturg. I really appreciate the ATF as a space for this kind of focussed sharing of research, conceptual models and recent case studies, and the opportunity to hear from experts in the field to help catalyse our planning." - *Mark Pritchard, Malthouse Theatre, VIC*

First Nations Voices:

(Responses from First Nations Delegates – Unedited)

What were the overall highlights for you?

- That First Nations artists were in every conversation
- First nations voices throughout the programme not just in First Nations sections. This is because an Indigenous person was in a lead position. This is how the sector can shift.
- Never have I attended a national event of this nature that gave justice to the 'unheard'. For the ATF team to be brave and bold enough to deliver this event was incredibly inspiring and it gave the feeling of liberation and empowerment.
- The closed First Nations session. Jacob Boehme's keynote.
- The unapologetic presence of CALD, ATSI, disabled and queer artists in every conversation. I think it made many participants feel "othered" but these are the ways we move forward
- A chance to put a face to names of people I have been emailing with, an opportunity for us all to come together and acknowledge what has happened over the past two years also: smart move finishing at 3pm each day so 'other business' could be done.
- The over arching highlights were the fact that there were First Nations participants in every seminar and were forthright in being safe to discuss important issues pertinent to them and through this the wider performance sector. How we as a force within the sector can connect.
- Loved Linda Kennedy's presentation and also the Councillor (in wheel chair - sorry can't remember her name)
- Having Aboriginal delegates representing a few nations come together to share experiences in the sector and having open and honest discussions. Having a united voice whom spoke truthfully and openly with the intention to formalize solutions.
- The careful privileging of other voices, provision of spaces for vulnerable groups to meet and talk privately, a strong ethos of care as primary aesthetic. Brilliant exercise in listening.
- Highlights for me were; keynote speeches and how they were divided up and responded to, Kelly Vincent's pep talk, Cultural Values and Measuring Our Worth sessions....and the rooftop bar catch ups and new conversations.
- Informal networking. Black curation. Nadine's MCing.
- The honesty that people approached conversations with, the generosity of people in sharing their stories and opinions.
- Seeing such a strong presence of First Nations artists, as well as being able to see how we fit into the larger picture. It was fantastic to make so many connections across the sector.

What was the most useful outcome for you and your practice?

- Seeing what the industry needs from First Nations artists
- My practice is positively redefined within the sector, every time I get the opportunity to connect with First Nations Theatre Practitioners and 'co-conspirators'. Positively uplifted and a better sense of connection and unity.
- Hopefully the connections made in the First Nation's session will lead to greater conversation and connection to work.
- Independent artist/arts worker can be challenged with isolation and exhaustion due to the work hours and hunting for support and resources. I had many discussions that shared information, contacts and advice; an opportunity that I would not have normally had if I had not attended the ATF.
- The first keynote session got me thinking about how tired I am. I called my Dad up and made plans to go for a bushwalk the next week. I am slowly making a self-care plan that prioritises culture and connection to country and addressing our company's culture of being busy.
- We are becoming a force to be reckoned with that is able to share the load and pass the baton to ensure we are all being heard but that we are also able to take periods of respite from fighting the fight.

- I really appreciate the ATF being so welcoming for the [redacted] Producers and giving them a genuine opportunity to observe and assist the forum. There is a lot about the sector that can only be understood by 'being there and seeing it'.
- An opportunity to see who is current, who is for and against and who I may potentially want to work with and trust in.
- A meeting of people ideas and possibility setting up future talks. A sense of curiosity about incredible people across Australia and conversation within our commonality and difference. And those inexplicable shocks of recognition that lead to new collaborations
- Being reminded that we are a community & staying connected makes us stronger & more able.
- An opportunity to share and articulate the work that is happening in tiny pockets of the sector to explore and implement experimental, creative, decolonised forms of leadership and company structures.
- Closer relationships with industry peers, ideas for working better in the future, and a few great new networks to be a part of.
- Witnessing resistance to our presence, but then witnessing the wall break down and new dialogues being formed.

What would you like to see included in the forum next time?

- I would like a substantive dialogue about forms emerging and challenging inheritors of privilege that has excluded the foment of voices of a new society trying to emerge that challenge the hierarchies of progress and its colonising blankets.
- A standard (and) culturally-safe space for our First Nations Theatre Practitioners and Animateurs to connect throughout the hectic seminars of an ATF.
- First Nations gathering point before the forum begins.
- More on 'writing'. Different disciplines such as lighting and sound design, eg 5 sound designers describing their process and demonstrating their solutions and how they came about them. Same with set design & lighting. Even a speed dating event between practitioners from different disciplines.
- That First Nation's people can meet first.
- It would be wonderful to give the panel sessions a bit more time and space. Some of the subject matter is extremely complex and 60 minutes felt inadequate when dealing with such large groups of people. Furthermore, it would be wonderful to potentially see an Action Plan session on the last day.
- more independents being given the opportunity to have discussions with organizations and funding bodies, allocated time for networking, cultural education local areas a day where Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island delegates immerse themselves in local areas being hosted by the locals.
- Direct impacts of previous ATFs on practices. Setting actions to address issues and the sector being held accountable for delivering on them. A buddy program for delegates to meet each other. Presentations from artists/companies talking about their biggest fuck ups.
- A shift to more action. I want the final day spent working together exclusively toward resolutions and actions which working groups present to the industry and take responsibility for delivering by next forum. ATF is a unique opportunity for us to take initiative and drive the sector cooperatively
- More practice led workshops - ie make something talk about it. more practise based sessions.
- I'd LOVE another day where we talk about nothing else but specific actions we need to take back and work on over the next two years. There was great discussion, but not a lot of action.
- A dedicated focus on making work- how are we addressing the need to find and support new ways of making work, how are we addressing the need for mainstream organisations to stop taking black philanthropic and government funding that should be going to black companies.
- More time between sessions to be able to reflect.