



# BASEMENT THEATRE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2016  
– 2018



## OUR MISSION IS TO:

- **PROVIDE** a platform to foster emerging artists, new work, and innovative presentation
- Actively **RECRUIT** new audiences to arts experiences
- **SUPPORT** a thriving creative ecology in Auckland

## WHAT WE DO

We are the home for Auckland's most adventurous emerging artists. We collaborate with an **artistic mix~tape** of theatre makers, dancers, visual artists, poets, musicians, comedians and everyone in between. We are a safe place to be **experimental**, brave and innovative. We provide an affordable, independent risk-share venue for local talent and fresh work. We are the place to be entertained, **discovered** and inspired.

## THE BASEMENT'S FOUR PILLARS

### 1. SPACE

We provide a platform and venue – including performance and non-performance areas, technical equipment and amenities.

### 2. CONTENT

We programme artistic work – including performances, events, artworks and experiences.

### 3. HUB

We build communities – connecting audiences, artists and supporters, and linking with other hubs to expand artistic networks.

### 4. CRAFT

We develop artists – growing skills, innovation, and professionalism.

## WHAT WE ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF DOING

We provide a multi-purpose, central city, risk-share venue and creative hub where artists can present their work and develop their craft, and audiences can have access to a diverse range of affordable arts experiences.

### ARTISTS

First and foremost we showcase the work of emerging and newly established artists who are seeking to develop a professional creative career.

We also support established artists who are experimenting with new materials, methods and forms; or, where established material is being presented in new and innovative ways.

### AUDIENCES

We seek out new audiences from a diverse range of backgrounds and expose them to arts experiences that are varied, unique and affordable.

### PRODUCERS AND MANAGERS

We support and develop emerging arts managers to experience leading and growing a sustainable organisation.

We work with emerging producers to develop their skills in a low-risk environment.

## OUR KEY GOALS:

### • OUR ARTISTS ARE SUCCESSFUL

Success means all artists achieve at least break-even at the box office, and positive reviews from peers and industry experts.

### • OUR ORGANISATION IS SUSTAINABLE

We continue to expand our operations, while maintaining the finances we need to fulfil our core purpose. We also future-proof our organisation through regular planning and risk-assessment.

### • OUR AUDIENCES ARE ENGAGED AND INSPIRED

Our audience data indicates repeat visits and growing engagement across multiple platforms (e.g. newsletter, social media, events and forums etc).

### • AUCKLAND'S CREATIVE ECOLOGY IS DISTINCTIVE AND RESILIENT

Artists and work showcased at The Basement, continues to have a life (or a career pathway) beyond our walls. All roads can begin at The Basement.



# OUR VALUES

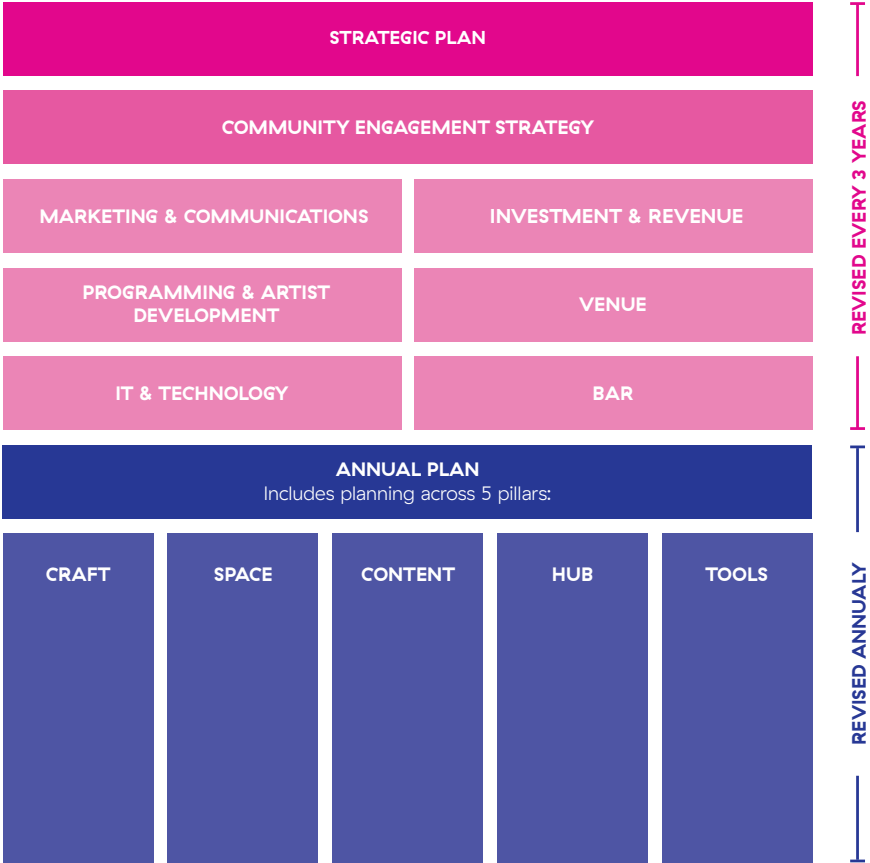
- **We believe arts are vital to life!**
- **Between bangin' art and bangin' profit, we'll choose art every time**
- **We are game changers, and we urge others to change it up too**
- **We go hardout for our artists, audiences and our community**
- **Our powers combined – collaboration smashes competition**
- **We want everyone to feel at home at The Basement**



# STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This framework guides the development of workplans that sit under The Basement's Strategic Plan:

## THE BASEMENT'S PLANNING STRUCTURE



## HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

### ORGANISATIONAL TOOLS AVAILABLE:

#### PEOPLE

- Management team
- Trust board
- Venue staff
- Mentors and advisors

#### MONEY

- Bar revenue
- Box office income
- Corporate partnerships
- Patrons/friends programmes
- Funding relationships (public & private)

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- Industry networks
- Political relationships

#### NAME

- Brand/reputation
- Marketing/social media
- Media relationships
- Visitor services relationships

#### STRATEGY

- Research and data analysis
- Strategic and annual plans
- Local and international benchmarking

#### SYSTEMS/TECHNOLOGY

- Digital/technology
- Organisational systems
- Audience data gathering/CRM

#### GOVERNANCE

- Trust Board
- Stakeholder engagement
- Reference/advisory group
- Risk-share model
- Artist contracts

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Venue and facilities
- Shared spaces/resources

## ORGANISATIONAL TOOLS SWOT

### STRENGTHS:

We are responsive to the needs of our industry – we are constantly assessing the landscape we work in and adapting what we do to fill the gaps we identify.

We have the right people on board the bus – our management team, staff and Trust board members are all passionate and committed people with a diverse skill set and solid networks. We are a desirable place to work and are always attracting new talent to our team.

### WEAKNESSES:

Time and growth management – we are not effectively managing the time of our staff and may not be accurately judging what amount of activities are achievable relative to the number of people in our team.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

We are ready to lead the way – our strategic planning and responsiveness has put us in the position of being ready to take on a leadership role within our industry that could attract greater resources for what we do.

### THREATS:

A changing landscape could mean the loss of key revenue streams – if we can't help to advocate for the value of the arts and our industry, we could be affected by increasing cutbacks to arts funding. Equally, changes in the hospitality landscape – especially liquor licensing could threaten our bar income.

## GENERAL SWOT

	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
SPACE	We offer a variety of flexi-form spaces that provide an intimate theatre experience	The studio suffers from noise interference from the carpark and The Classic	Relocating to a fit-for-purpose space would allow us to continue to grow and serve our community into the future	A catastrophic event that requires us to move before we are ready
HUB	We have a strong core of loyal supporters	We lack the tools to effectively understand and engage with our audience and community	There is a growing momentum in Auckland around cultural activity	There is a large amount of competition for the leisure time of our audiences
CONTENT	We have a full programme with a large amount of content across the year	There is a homogeneity of story and form across our content	Auckland has a diverse and highly creative pool of talent	For many, a creative career in NZ is unsustainable, causing a decline in the talent available
CRAFT	We offer an active artist development programme and affordable venue arrangement	Due to a lack of resource, our development of artists is selective rather than comprehensive	Creating relationships within our industry to support the future life of work and artists	There is a lack of pathways for creative careers meaning many do not continue to develop their experience



There are four pillars of work at The Basement, under each of these we have set two focus areas for strategic development. Each focus area contains a priority in the short, medium, and long term.

**SHORT = end of 2016**

**MEDIUM = end of 2017**

**LONG = end of 2018**



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2016 – 2018

## CRAFT

### ARTIST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

#### SHORT

Maintain (not expand) current artist development activities (e.g. Young & Hungry, Playscience, Breakfast Plays, Producer's Development Initiative, Play Chats, Touring Programme, Budget Mentoring and other artist meetings).

#### MED

Look to expand existing programme to benefit more artists and companies.

#### LONG

Look to expand the range of programmes and the artist development team delivering that programme.

### PREMIER DEVELOPMENT SPACE

#### SHORT

Establish The Basement as a premier development space in Australasia through research and benchmarking.

#### MED

Research and benchmark our positioning relative to international venues and their development programmes.

#### LONG:

Identify and develop a plan to become a world leader in artist development in the emerging performing arts.

## CRAFT: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### RE-EVALUATING THE YOUNG & HUNGRY PROGRAMME

#### SHORT

Design an alternative programme/s that meets the same key outcomes as Young & Hungry, as well as being responsive to current industry needs and gaps, and undertake a feasibility assessment around the immediate implementation of this programme.

#### MED

Evaluate the success of the pilot programme in comparison to Young and Hungry outcomes and industry gaps, and make refinements to the model.

#### LONG

Expand the programme to include more participants and disciplines and ensure all involved are appropriately remunerated for their time.



## SPACE

### DISABLED ACCESS

#### SHORT

Work with Council and funders to install a level changer at the entrance and adapt bathroom provisions to comply.

#### MED

Work with community organisations and artists around catering to disabled audiences through programming and systems.

#### LONG

Disabled artists and audiences can use the space as easily as an able-bodied person and are aware of our programme and facilities as it relates to them.

### ALTERNATIVE SPACE

#### SHORT

Create relationships with Council and commercial property managers to explore CBD options for alternative spaces to be used either: in the event of a crisis; as an additional performance space to add to our offering; and/or as a future, purpose-built opportunity for relocation.

#### MED

Make a plan for acquiring a desired space.

#### LONG

Formally secure the opportunity to relocate to a new venue when needed; and open and operationalise any additional spaces already secured.

## CONTENT

### PROGRAMMING STRATEGY

#### SHORT

Maintain (not expand) current programming approach and develop a strategy that documents what we are delivering and how.

#### MED

Implement a strategy to continue to increase diversity (cultural, artistic, geographic) in our programme.

#### LONG

Grow our programming team and resources to continue to expand the reach and offering of our programme.

### COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMING RELATIONSHIPS

#### SHORT

Investigate potential collaborations with organisations to identify and access opportunities for practitioners within our community.

#### MED

Formalise a few key relationships that directly contribute to our programme and activities.

#### LONG:

Have a network of strong relationships into key organisations and diverse communities that represent ongoing symbiotic exchanges.

## HUB

### AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

#### SHORT

Launch a new website that provides a seamless booking experience and effectively engages potential audiences.

#### MED

Hone our front of house systems across box office, bar, ushering so that it is an efficient, slick and friendly experience.

#### LONG

Provide an exciting and unique food option and specialised hosting experience that makes us into a destination hospitality venue that reflects our creative identity.

### COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

#### SHORT

Continue to update (through surveying and ticketing data) our current audience analysis and review existing community engagement strategy.

#### MED

Carry out relationship mapping and engagement analysis, as well as documenting and communicating this to our community.

#### LONG

Implement a database management system that supports effective targeting and reporting on our community, that is updated through regular data collection.

## HUB: COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

#### SHORT

Maintain relationships with existing school partners and continue to refine delivery of programme.

#### MED

Access greater resources to expand the programme to include more students or schools.

#### LONG

Continue to grow fundraising to include more shows in both the onsite and offsite programme, as well as making the fundraising model more sophisticated to access different types of support opportunities (e.g. Private school buddy system).

### CHRISTMAS SEASON

#### SHORT

Continue the success of the 2015 season – hitting our fundraising target, working with a trusted creative team, and producing an artistically strong result.

#### MED

Collaborate with another trusted producing company in a joint Christmas season that meets the same outcomes and enhances our reputation by association.

#### LONG

Continue the above model with a support partner on board that allows us to eliminate the financial risk associated with the project.



## TOOLS

### REVIEW THE RISK-SHARE MODEL

#### SHORT

Trial new risk-share arrangements with selected hirers to decrease our risk where appropriate, and identify the criteria for who the model applies to.

#### MED

Implement a system of venue hire deals that are more responsive to the nature of the hirer and reduce risk overall for the venue.

### MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR BAR AS A REVENUE STREAM

#### SHORT

Acknowledge the importance of our bar revenue as an independent and reliable contributor to our operating expenses, with huge potential for growth, and create a strategy to further leverage that opportunity, supported by consultation from a hospitality business expert.

#### MED

Seek a partnership to provide a unique and affordable dinner and dessert food offering that is compatible with the constraints of the space.

#### LONG

Establish a programme of regular entertainment in the bar area that is complementary to the theatre programming, aligns with the values of our venue and is managed independently.

### CREATE AN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS WHICH ARE EASILY TRANSFERABLE

#### SHORT

Finalise job descriptions and a reporting structure for all positions in the team and establish a professional and communicative team culture.

#### MED

Review our current organisational structure (roles and responsibilities) and arrive at a structure that is responsive to the current needs and demands of the organisation (e.g. time budgeting and team size), and which will provide a strong foundation for the future.

#### LONG

To complete a comprehensive 'Basement Manual' containing all operational systems, human resource structures and organisational strategies, which can effectively support a transition in management.

### EMPOWER OUR TRUST BOARD TO BETTER ACCESS NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

#### SHORT

Board to introduce friends and potential supporters to the organisation and encourage them to attend social events and productions.

#### MED

Set fundraising goals that involve actions from the Board.

#### LONG

The Board will actively assist the management team in identifying prospects and work with them to leverage board involvement with the aim of maximising our chance of engaging new individual, corporate or funding bodies.

### MAINTAINING FUNDING RELATIONSHIPS AND ACCESSING MINOR GRANTS

#### SHORT

Create a timeline of relevant small grant deadlines and match this with Basement fundraising priorities.

#### MED

Complete a compelling package of document templates and collateral (e.g. videos) that can be used in pitching for support.

#### LONG

Deliver a programme of fundraising events and communications that return a high degree of support.

### SET UP A FORMAL REWARDS STRUCTURE TO VALUE OUR PEOPLE

#### SHORT

Create a schedule of performance reviews and rewards, so that through either wage increases or non-financial benefits, we continue to review and improve how we value our human resources in line with their professional growth.

#### MED

Design an innovative leave system that supports all members of our team to be practicing artists alongside their careers with The Basement.

#### LONG

Establish a formalised system of professional development that produces industry leaders of an international standard (e.g. mentoring, leadership training, conferences and relationships).

