The Wheeler Centre acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respects to the people of the Kulin Nation on whose lands this report was created and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past and present.
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As we look back at the year that was, the highs, the lows, lockdowns, riots and an earthquake, it’s hard to imagine anything else could have been thrown at us in 2021.

Although we shouldered our fair share of challenges, the resilience of the Wheeler Centre team was inspiring and we made it through with good grace. As the saying goes, the show must go on, and like true professionals, no matter the stresses and strains behind the scenes, our staff, partners and stakeholders ensured the show did go on. We programmed 371 speakers across the year, keeping the conversations, stories and ideas flowing across 108 events, three quarters of which were free or low cost.

Like many other arts organisations whose public-facing events and associated revenue streams fell victim to the pandemic, we were compelled to look at new ways to generate income and ensure we remained viable. To that end, we strengthened and enriched our digital offerings. In total, 50% of our events were digital or live-streamed, with personal highlights including Pah!, an event presented in partnership with Melbourne Fringe that brought together emerging and established d/Deaf storytellers, and a new series, Postcards From Abroad, which invited internationally renowned writers directly into our audience members’ homes.

Postcards kicked off with Jonathan Franzen discussing his extraordinary novel Crossroads from his kitchen in California. As part of our commitment to ensuring our events are accessible to regional audiences, we teamed up with the Byron and Newcastle Writers’ Festivals, whose events were impacted by COVID-19, to share this very special conversation. Further Postcards editions included David Sedaris, Fran Lebowitz, Rabih Alameddine and Paul Auster, whose interview was taking place when the Melbourne earthquake struck in September. Despite the earth shaking, host Corrie Perkin didn’t skip a beat. Auster couldn’t believe it when told there’d been a magnitude 5.9 earthquake. Like I said, the show goes on.

We continued strengthening our commitment to the next generation of storytellers with 20 teen, education or youth-specific events. The 2021 Teen Gala provided an inspiring moment as teens read and performed their works on stage in a dazzling display of resilience.

Throughout the challenges of 2021, it was moments like this, sitting in the audience, witnessing the beauty of language and connecting with other readers and writers, that I was reminded just how privileged I am to work with my dedicated colleagues and do the work we do.

An enormous thank you to our fearless Chair, Susan Oliver AM, who will retire in early 2022 after four years at the helm. Susan has been tireless in her support for the Wheeler Centre, and I’m incredibly grateful to her for every shoulder-to-the-wheel moment we shared in 2021. Susan and I were ably supported by our Board of Directors who stood by us throughout the challenges of COVID-19. Not only did we keep the Wheeler Centre on a straight course but we discovered opportunities to enrich our offerings along the way, and I’m incredibly proud of all we’ve achieved this year.

The Wheeler Centre was fortunate to receive strong support from both the Victorian and Australian Governments and we were thrilled to be a recipient of the Australian Government’s COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund, which supported our recovery from the effects of COVID-19. I’d also like to acknowledge the hard work of our colleagues at Creative Victoria, City of Melbourne and the Premier’s office for their unstinting commitment to the Australian cultural community.

This vital financial backing, coupled with the unfailing support of our friends, donors and audiences, ensured our success in another trying but ultimately fulfilling year. It is these groups of supporters that enable the Wheeler Centre to facilitate the engaging and transformative conversations that connect our society and make it stronger. We are indebted to you all.

Caro Llewellyn CEO
In 2021, I was reminded once more of the strength of the Wheeler Centre as we faced yet another difficult year of the pandemic. We were agile in our move to digital formats, an agility tested by the changing rules of lockdown, which limited physical attendance at events. The support of City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and the Australian Government through special support to the creative sector, kept our organisation funded to continue to do what we do best – bring creative thinkers and their ideas to diverse audiences and enable discussion and debate.

Highlights of 2021 were the Postcards From Abroad series that helped shrink borders in a time of being apart, the continuation of our popular Broadly Speaking series, which explores issues through a feminist lens, and a new series partnership with the State Library of Victoria, The Salon Series, which launched with a powerful event during NAIDOC Week that amplified First Nations voices including Professor Larissa Behrendt, Daniel James and Susie Anderson.

We are thankful for the continued support of our generous corporate sponsors and donors, and were particularly excited to commence a website redevelopment project, made possible by the support of the Aesop Foundation 2020 Support Fund.

Next year I will retire as Chair of the Wheeler Centre after four years at the helm. It has been a challenging and fulfilling role during a particularly tough time but I have enjoyed support from a very strong board and know we have the governance and accountability in place that our funding partners and our audiences expect. I am pleased to see CEO Caro Llewellyn build her team and to observe their commitment to furthering the discussion of books, writing and ideas.

It is a privilege to further strengthen the relevance of the Wheeler Centre and deliver programming that inspires curiosity, connection and engagement in a challenging world where we’re all searching for explanations and meaning.

Susan Oliver AM FAICD Chair

2021 was a challenging year and, like all arts organisations, the Wheeler Centre was hit hard by the pandemic and ongoing lockdowns.

Yet the Centre soldiered on and managed to keep the conversation going at a time that Victorians, and audiences beyond the border, most needed to connect.

The Wheeler Centre’s commitment to innovation and ingenuity continued in 2021 with digital events and a breadth of online content including podcasts, blogs and videos keeping audiences engaged with books, writing and ideas.

It was also heartening to see the Wheeler Centre’s industry programs, including writing incubator The Next Chapter, podcast mentoring scheme Signal Boost and the long-running Hot Desk Fellowships for emerging writers, continue during a time when creatives needed our support more than ever.

Tony Wheeler AO Patron
2021 at a Glance

- **Total events**: 108
  - **Live events**: 54
  - **Digital events**: 54
  - **Free or Name Your Price events**: 79%
  - **LGBTQIA+ speakers**: 17%
  - **Regional events**: 11
  - **Events delivered in partnership with other organisations**: 74

- **Total speakers**: 371
  - **First Nations speakers**: 15%
  - **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse speakers**: 33%
  - **LGBTQIA+ speakers**: 17%

- **Emerging writers supported**: 112

- **YouTube views**: 921,336 (representing a watch time of 230,572 hours)
General Programming Highlights

In 2021, the Wheeler Centre hosted 108 events, and employed 371 writers and artists. We engaged 38,675 audience members through a combination of live, digital and hybrid events that spanned a diverse range of styles including panels, conversations, readings and performance.

The Wheeler Centre worked creatively throughout the year in partnership with a broad range of new and existing partners. More than two-thirds of the Centre’s programme was delivered in partnership with other cultural organisations, festivals and community partners. In November, we partnered with Spread the Word, London’s writer development agency, and the Melbourne City of Literature Office to present The Stories We Tell Ourselves, a special initiative as part of the UK/Australia Season.

We continued to prioritise the importance of creating space for First Nations stories and storytelling. In March, thanks to generous support from Creative Partnerships Australia matched by individual donations, we delivered the Di Gribble Argument exploring First Nations responses to climate change. Nearly 500 audience members gathered at Malthouse Outdoor Stage to hear talks responding to three essays by First Nations writers Bruce Pascoe (author of *Dark Emu*), Victor Steffensen (author of *Fire Country*) and Teila Watson (aka Ancestress), offering three different generational perspectives on climate management and caring for Country.

In August, in response to continued lockdowns and border closures, we launched Postcards From Abroad, a new digital conversation series bringing the best and brightest international literary talent to Australian audiences. This series saw international literary luminaries such as Siri Hustvedt, David Sedaris, Fran Lebowitz, Jonathan Franzen and Ruth Ozeki appear in discussion with high-profile local hosts such as Sami Shah, Sarah Krasnostein and Rachael Brown.

We collaborated with Melbourne City Reads to bring readers together and support our incredible literary culture, promoting readership and sales of books by local authors. In monthly events from August to November, authors appeared at the Wheeler Centre (in live, digital and podcast conversations) to discuss their new books. The initiative was supported by the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government and ABC Radio Melbourne.

We delivered exciting COVID-safe programming at a range of outdoor venues across Melbourne, including Malthouse Outdoor Stage, MPavilion, Royal Botanic Gardens and Sidney Myer Music Bowl. While many live events were scheduled for the year, snap lockdowns and the extended June-October lockdown in Melbourne resulted in many shifting to digital formats. Approximately three-quarters of the Wheeler Centre’s programmed events in 2021 were free or Name Your Price. For ticketed events, an uncapped number of free tickets were available for First Nations attendees.

The Wheeler Centre is committed to delivering all live events in fully accessible venues for both artists on stage and audience members. Our 2021 digital offerings created opportunities for engagement from audience members who were otherwise unable to access our events due to geographical, financial and health challenges, or other limitations. We look forward to continuing to offer digitally accessible events into the future.
Regional Programming Highlights

The Wheeler Centre's 2021 Regional Program featured partnerships with Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Warrnambool City Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council and Ballarat Mechanics’ Institute. The programme strengthened deep, reciprocal partnerships across regional Victoria, with events developed through close consultation to meet each partner’s unique needs and resources.

Leveraging the Centre’s unique standing in the Australian literary landscape, the 2021 regional series featured a dynamic and diverse program of conversations, panels and workshops with prominent writers, thinkers and leaders. Ongoing COVID restrictions impacted regional travel, leading the Wheeler Centre and its partners to adapt and pivot to digital programming – enabling us to not only still deliver events in regional Victoria, but to ensure they were made available for audiences around the world to watch and listen. In delivering digital and hybrid events, we ensured wider accessibility and inclusivity for audiences, while also offering regional partners exposure to new modes of working.

With generous support from our funders Creative Victoria and the Robert Salzer Foundation, we presented 11 events, talks, panels and workshops for children and adults across Victoria throughout 2021. The programme engaged 27 writers and speakers, 302 live audience members and 1548 online audience members.

Topical events fostered regional engagement, celebrated local perspectives and encouraged public discourse around relevant social issues. The Access and Beyond series, in partnership with Women's Health Goulburn North East, created a meaningful space for community participation, while interactive workshops with Australian Children's Laureate Ursula Dubosarsky in Hamilton encouraged primary-aged children and teens to find their creative voices and develop literacy and writing skills.

Other highlights included a conversation with renowned economist Ross Garnaut, presented in partnership with Ballarat Mechanics’ Institute; a hilarious and thought-provoking discussion with John Safran, in partnership with Macedon Ranges Shire Council; and an inspiring conversation with teen climate activist Jean Hinchiffe at Warrnambool Art Gallery.

In November, Andrew McDonald and Ben Wood presented their entertaining Real Pigeons live mystery show to a packed house at Warrnambool’s Lighthouse Theatre. After a challenging year, this boisterous and beloved event was a wonderful way to round off 2021 and welcome live audiences back to events.
The voices and experiences of children and teens are a key priority for the Wheeler Centre, and in 2021 we made space for young people both on and off the stage.

Ongoing lockdowns and the shift to online teaching for the majority of the year posed unique challenges as we navigated the switch to online programming alongside the challenge of creating content for time-poor teachers and young people experiencing extreme levels of screen exhaustion. As a result, some programming was rescheduled for 2022 to ensure maximum engagement. The sessions we did deliver were highlights in the Centre’s 2021 programming, bringing teens onto the stage and in front of the camera for audiences across Victoria and Australia, and demonstrating a high level of responsiveness to the needs and expectations of young people.

In 2021, our youth-focused events included partnerships with the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, Australian Poetry, Kill Your Darlings, the Immigration Museum, YIRRAMBOI Festival and Koorie Youth Council. We focused on developing meaningful partnerships with organisations working with young people to collaborate on strategies to reach and engage a broad, diverse audience.

Over the year we delivered 20 events for teens, children and educators, including panels, workshops, and professional development sessions held online, at the Wheeler Centre, and in partner venues in Melbourne and regional Victoria. The programme engaged 42 writers and speakers, including nine paid opportunities for teens to share their writing onstage. One panel was entirely curated by a guest youth programmer, two partner events showcased the brightest youth talent in spoken word and public speaking, and a unique roundtable discussion brought together 11 youth arts organisations to discuss possible collaborations.

We also released a six-episode mini-series, If You Don’t Laugh You’ll Cry, featuring young comedians, performers and writers sharing hilarious, poignant creative responses to the pressures of lockdown in bite-sized form – recognising that the value for teens engaging with art during that time was about community and connection, more than curriculum.
2021 Events

Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards 2021
1 February 2021
Online

Across the Aisle: A Panel Discussion on Justice and Jurisprudence
7 February 2021
Royal Botanic Gardens

Scalia/Ginsburg: An Opera by Derrick Wang
7 February 2021
Royal Botanic Gardens

The Wheeler Centre Schools Roundtable
12 February 2021
The Wheeler Centre

Maaza Mengiste: The Shadow King
21 February 2021
His Majesty’s Theatre, Perth + Online
Presented in partnership with Perth Festival

Maggie O’Farrell: Hamnet
28 February 2021
Adelaide Writers Week + Online
Presented in partnership with Adelaide Writers Week

William Gibson: The Future is Now
28 February 2021
Adelaide Writers Week + Online
Presented in partnership with Adelaide Writers Week

Anne Applebaum: Twilight of Democracy
3 March 2021
Adelaide Writers Week + Online
Presented in partnership with Adelaide Writers Week

Ear Hustle: Creating Community Beyond Bars
3 March 2021
Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) + Online
Presented in partnership with the Australian International Documentary Conference and ACMI

Evelyn Araluen: Dropbear
12 March 2021
MPavilion Parkade
Presented in partnership with MPavilion

Women at the Edge: Access and Beyond
18 March 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Women’s Health Goulburn North East

No Friend but the Mountains: A Symphonic Song Cycle
21 March 2021
Sidney Myer Music Bowl
Presented in partnership with Zelman Memorial Symphony Orchestra and Arts Centre Melbourne

Sarah Krasnostein: The Believer
24 March 2021
Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria
Presented in partnership with State Library Victoria

The Di Gribble Argument 2021: Brave Old World event series
Brave Old World: Victor Steffensen on The Present
Brave Old World: Teila Watson on The Past
Brave Old World: Bruce Pascoe on The Future
28 March 2021
Malthouse Outdoor Stage
Supported by Creative Partnerships Australia

Paul Kelly: Love is Strong as Death
29 March 2021
Malthouse Outdoor Stage
Presented in partnership with Malthouse Outdoor Stage

Laugh Breaks: Finding the Limelight
7 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Melbourne International Comedy Festival

Very Cheeky Bums with Claire Hooper
12 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre

Next Big Thing: Forever Young
12 April 2021
The Moat
Blaze Your Trail: Youth Activism Workshop with Nevo Zisin
13 April 2021
Warrnambool Art Gallery
Presented in partnership with Warrnambool Art Gallery

Jean Hinchcliffe: Lead the Way
13 April 2021
Warrnambool Art Gallery
Presented in partnership with Warrnambool Art Gallery

Jeez Louise: Transplaining
14 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Melbourne International Comedy Festival

Pill Pop: Growing Up Disabled in Australia
15 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre

Sarah Krasnostein
Books and Ideas at Montalto
16 April 2021
Montalto
Presented in partnership with Montalto

Last Words: Voluntary Assisted Dying
20 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Malthouse Outdoor Stage

We Are Family: Supporting LGBTIQA+ Family Members
21 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Respect Victoria

Take It From Me: Archer Launch Edition
24 April 2021
Malthouse Outdoor Stage
Presented in partnership with Midsumma Festival and Archer

Artist Meets Expert: Futurism
26 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Knowledge Week

Artist Meets Expert: Ecology
27 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Knowledge Week

The 2021 Stella Prize Winner in Conversation
27 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with The Stella Prize

Artist Meets Expert: Death Tech
28 April 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Knowledge Week

Iconic Duos: The Next Chapter Writers and Mentors
30 April 2021
Carriageworks, Elston Room
Presented in partnership with Sydney Writers’ Festival

Mapping Culture: Something Old, Something New
4 May 2021
The Wheeler Centre

Women at the Edge: Disaster and Beyond
4 May 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Women’s Health Goulburn North East

Mapping Culture: Objects of Inspiration
5 May 2021
The Immigration Museum
Presented in partnership with the Immigration Museum

Mapping Culture: Treaty
6 May 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with YIRRAMBOI Festival

Can You Keep a Secret?: Media Rights and the Need to Know
9 May 2021
Ulumbarra Theatre
Presented in partnership with Bendigo Writers Festival
Next Big Thing: Inside Out
10 May 2021
The Moat

Emerging Writers’ Festival Programme Launch: The Words That Shaped Us
11 May 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with the Emerging Writers’ Festival

Young Mob Yarns
13 May 2021
The Wheeler Centre + Online
Presented in partnership with YIRRAMBOI Festival and Koorie Youth Council

Garry Disher
Books and Ideas at Montalto
14 May 2021
Montalto
Presented in partnership with Montalto

On Unity: Refugees, Connection and Community
18 June 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the Refugee Council of Australia

Next Big Thing: Emerging Writers’ Festival edition
21 June 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the Emerging Writers’ Festival

Iconic Duos: The Power of Mentorships
23 June 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the Emerging Writers’ Festival

The Next Chapter: 2021 Lunchtime Q&A
30 June 2021
Online
Supported by the Aesop Foundation

Meaning, Mysticism and Manifestation
Broadly Speaking
6 July 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with The Capitol and RMIT Culture
Supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

The Salon Series: Country and Culture
9 July 2021
Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria + Online
Presented in partnership with State Library Victoria

Next Big Thing: Hot Desk Edition #1
12 July 2021
The Moat

Ahead of the Game: Sport, Storytelling and Symbolism
Broadly Speaking
13 July 2021
The Wheeler Centre
Presented in partnership with Women in Sports Media Forum, with support from Our Watch National Media Engagement Program and Emma Race
Supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

Rage and Dissent
Broadly Speaking
22 July 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with The Capitol and RMIT Culture and supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

Pursuing Justice: Human Rights in an Age of Crisis
26 July 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Free Palestine Melbourne
The Mother Load: Motherhood, Trauma and Resilience
Broadly Speaking
2 August 2021
Podcast
Supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

Parliamentary Privilege: Bias, Boys’ Clubs and Women in Politics
Broadly Speaking
3 August 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with The Capitol and RMIT Culture
Supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

Poetry Month Gala
4 August 2021
The Wheeler Centre + Online
Presented in partnership with Red Room Poetry

Ross Garnaut: Reset
8 August 2021
Podcast
Presented in partnership with Ballaarat Mechanics’ Institute

Allee Richards: Small Joys of Real Life
8 September 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Writers Festival, and supported by the City of Melbourne, Victorian Government and ABC Radio Melbourne

Plain English Speaking Awards: 2021 Victorian State Final
10 August 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

In Our Nature
14 September 2021
Podcast + Online
Presented in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Victoria Nature Festival project partners

The Power of Protest
15 September 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Refugee Action Collective

Ancestral Connections
16 September 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria

Next Big Thing: Becoming and Belonging
27 September 2021
Online

The Gender Binary and Beyond
28 September 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Women’s Health Goulburn North East

Miles Allinson: In Moonland
Melbourne City Reads
29 September 2021
Online
Supported by the City of Melbourne, Victorian Government and ABC Radio Melbourne

Jonathan Franzen: Crossroads
Postcards from Abroad
5 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Byron Writers Festival and Newcastle Writers Festival

Media in Exile: Press Freedoms and Myanmar
6 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Amnesty International and Free Media Myanmar
Future Voices: Decolonising Australian Media
Broadly Speaking
7 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Our Watch and supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and family and Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

Fringe Debate: Break the Internet
11 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Fringe

Pah! Deaf Storytelling Night
12 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Melbourne Fringe with the support of City of Melbourne Arts Grant

Jonathan Safran: Puff Piece
13 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Macedon Ranges Shire Council

David Sedaris: A Carnival of Snackery
Postcards from Abroad
14 October 2021
Online

Next Big Thing: Now and Then
18 October 2021
Online

Present Sense: The Problem of Consciousness
20 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Melbourne-Monash Consciousness Research

The 143-Storey Treehouse with Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton
23 October 2021
Online

Fran Lebowitz
Postcards From Abroad
25 October 2021
Online

Emily Bitto: Wild Abandon
Melbourne City Reads
26 October 2021
Online
Supported by the City of Melbourne, Victorian Government and ABC Radio Melbourne

Write for Your Life! with Ursula Dubosarsky (two sessions)
26 October 2021
Online

Rewriting Masculinity: Larrikins, Power and Accountability
27 October 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Our Watch

Rabih Alameddine: The Wrong End of the Telescope
Postcards From Abroad
28 October 2021
Online

Paul Auster: Burning Boy
Postcards From Abroad
3 November 2021
Online

OutLoud Poetry Slam Final
4 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Australian Poetry

Ruth Ozeki: The Book of Form and Emptiness
Postcards From Abroad
9 November 2021
Online

Aural Events: Best of Australian Poetry
10 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Australian Poetry

Professional Development for Secondary Educators: Words and Pictures
11 November 2021
Online
Teen Gala
11 November 2021
The Wheeler Centre + Online

Tony Birch
Books and Ideas at Montalto
12 November 2021
Montalto
Presented in partnership with Montalto

Together in Literature: 100 Years of PEN International
15 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with PEN Melbourne and supported by the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund

State of the (Writing) Nation: Alice Pung
16 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Writers Victoria

Islands in the Stream
17 November 2021
Online

Melbourne Asia Game Changers
18 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Asia Society Australia and the City of Melbourne

Real Pigeons: Writing and Illustration Workshop
19 November 2021
Hamilton Performing Arts Centre
Presented in partnership with Hamilton Performing Arts Centre

Real Pigeons Spy High
20 November 2021
Lighthouse Theatre, Warrnambool
Presented in partnership with Lighthouse Theatre

My Mirka
22 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with Jewish Museum of Australia

Maxine Beneba Clarke: How Decent Folk Behave
Melbourne City Reads
24 November 2021
The Wheeler Centre + online
Supported by the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government and ABC Radio Melbourne

Next Big Thing: Small Press Network Book of the Year Award Edition
26 November 2021
Online
Presented in partnership with the Small Press Network

Next Big Thing: Hot Desk Edition #2
29 November 2021
The Moat
Supported by Readings Foundation

The Stories We Tell Ourselves video series
Maame Blue & Mykaela Saunders
Burhana Islam & Jasmin McGaughey
Alex Falase-Koya & Alice Boyle
MC Angel aka Shauna O’Briain & Rafeif Ismail
Elle McNicol & Cath Moore
Sareeta Domingo & Maxine Beneba Clarke
29 November 2021
Online

New Narratives, New Structures: Fiction
The Stories We Tell Ourselves
30 November 2021
Online

New Narratives, New Structures: Children’s and YA
The Stories We Tell Ourselves
1 December 2021
Online

Richard Price and Lorraine Adams
Postcards From Abroad
2 December 2021
Online

Siri Hustvedt: Mothers, Fathers, and Others
Postcards From Abroad
7 December 2021
Online
2021 marked the third intake of writers under the Wheeler Centre’s mentorship programme for emerging literary talent, The Next Chapter. Made possible by the support of the Aesop Foundation, 2021 represented the fourth year of this longstanding funding partnership that has allowed the Centre to connect with 40 participants across the 2018, 2019 and 2020 cohorts. Thank you also to George and Rosa Morstyn for your generous annual donation towards supporting this landmark programme.

Ten outstanding new writers were provided with a funding stipend of $15,000 each and were matched with a prominent Australian writer as their mentor. The writers selected in 2020 for the 2021 Next Chapter scheme were:

- Sharlene Allsopp (mentor: Mirandi Riwoe)
- Bigoa Chuol (mentor: Maxine Beneba Clarke)
- Hasib Hourani (mentor: Evelyn Araluen)
- Allanah Hunt (mentor: Claire Christian)
- Angelina Hurley (mentor: Shane Maloney)
- Tim Loveday (mentor: Anna Krien)
- Khin Myint (mentor: Kristina Olsson)
- Mia Nie (mentor: Sarah Howell)
- Oliver Reeson (mentor: Maria Tumarkin)
- Jonathan Slottje (mentor: Bruce Pascoe)

The support provided by The Next Chapter scheme is critical in allowing participants the time and space to write, and offering them valuable insight and practical advice for navigating the publishing industry. The Wheeler Centre is proud that this commitment to new writing saw the negotiation, marketing and eventual publication of two titles in 2021 and one scheduled for publication in 2022:

- **Born Into This** by Adam Thompson (University of Queensland Press), published February 2021.
- **Dropbear** by Evelyn Araluen (University of Queensland Press), published March 2021.
- **Sadvertising** by Ennis C´ehic (Penguin Random House), scheduled for release in early 2022.

By connecting Next Chapter writers directly with publishers, this important initiative is not only directly supporting emerging writers, but is also delivering on a key element of the Wheeler Centre’s strategy: to support and connect the Australian publishing industry. The Next Chapter is currently in discussion with publishers regarding a number of new manuscripts by writers from the scheme’s second and third year.

In April, a partnership with the Sydney Writers’ Festival saw Next Chapter writers featured as part of an Iconic Duos panel event and in May we opened application dates for our 2021 intake of Next Chapter writers.

In total, 679 applications for the fourth year of the Next Chapter scheme were received, a seven percent increase on 2020’s 633 entries. This was a welcome outcome in yet another year of uncertainty and instability, and reiterated the importance of the scheme’s assistance to writers experiencing various pressures, only heightened during the pandemic.

The 2021 intake of writers for the 2022 Next Chapter scheme were announced by a judging panel comprising Claire G Coleman, Jeanine Leane, Fiona Wright and Arnold Zable at a special Wheeler Centre event in December. They are:

- Jumaana Abdu (NSW)
- Jose da Costa (WA)
- Josie/Jocelyn Deane (VIC)
- Monikka Elijah (NSW)
- Tristen Harwood (VIC)
- Brooke Maddison (QLD)
- Luke Patterson (NSW)
- Micaela Sahhar (VIC)
- Mykaela Saunders (QLD)
- Anne-Marie Te Whiu (NSW)

We look forward to welcoming and working with these talented writers in 2022.
The Wheeler Centre’s podcast development programme, Signal Boost, continued to deliver benefits for participants and mentors alike. We are grateful to the Ian Potter Foundation for its ongoing investment and belief in this project.

In 2021, ten outstanding emerging podcasters were recruited and matched with experienced industry mentors. The 2021-22 Signal Boost participants and mentors comprised:

Kirby Fenwick (mentor: Gab Burke)
Michael Hartup (mentor: James Parkinson)
Eric Jiang (mentor: Xen Nhà)
Daizy Maan (mentor: Bethany Atkinson-Quinton)
Maya Pask (mentor: Johanna Bell)
Elise Romaszko (mentor: Sarah Mashman)
Najma Sambul (mentors: Allison Chan and Karishma Luthria)
Carly Stone (mentor: Michelle Macklem)
Faith Tabalujan (mentor: Jo Lauder)

Participants were able to access workshops to develop their audio skills and a total of six workshops were delivered with industry guests including Guardian Australia’s Ellen Leabeater and Audiocraft’s Selena Shannon on topics such as interviewing, constructing audio narratives, and editing and mixing. A further six workshops were delivered by the Wheeler Centre’s Senior Audio Producer Maddy Macquine. As part of the Wheeler Centre’s investment into the programme, each participant received an equipment pack containing $1500 worth of audio equipment and tools, including microphones and headphones.

While some outcomes of the programme were impacted by COVID-related delays to equipment delivery and illness among participants and facilitators, the programme remains on track for completion by the end of May 2022. In 2022, the participants will have the opportunity to attend further workshops and produce paid audio works for the Wheeler Centre’s podcast platform.

Previous Signal Boost participants continue to benefit from the support and mentoring they received through the programme. Karishma Luthria (2020) published the work she was producing during her time in Signal Boost, Australia’s caste divide, on Radio National’s Earshot program, and has since joined Guardian Australia as a podcast producer.

Maddison Miller’s (2020) Signal Boost project, Yilbarra Nanga, is currently being exhibited at the University of Melbourne and in 2021 Miller joined the Wheeler Centre for In Our Nature, a panel discussion for the Victoria Nature Festival exploring the many different ways we can reconnect with nature and advocate for its care.

Cherie Minniecon (2020) and her mentor Timmeh Ball took part in an engaging panel discussion presented in partnership with the Emerging Writers’ Festival, Iconic Duos: The Power of Creative Mentorships, about the critical support mentors provide to emerging podcasters.

In a year that posed many challenges, Signal Boost participants rose to the occasion and took advantage of the opportunities on offer to advance their audio careers. The Wheeler Centre is proud to connect with these emerging podcasters and work alongside them for this professional development programme.

Hot Desk Fellowships

After the Wheeler Centre’s 2020 Hot Desk Fellows were unable to make use of their desk spaces for a full year due to lockdowns, the opportunity was renewed for those same writers in 2021. Thank you to the Readings Foundation, whose ongoing support made these 2020-21 fellowships possible.

In the first half of the year, the Centre welcomed the first intake of seven writers to their desks for a ten-week stint. The second and third intakes were impacted due to subsequent lockdowns and restrictions, but all writers ultimately will have completed their residencies by early 2022.

In response to these challenges, the program focused on other components of the fellowship, including building opportunities for digital connection. With some recipients located in regional areas or interstate, the creation of an online channel as a space for informal conversation between the fellows helped the cohorts remain connected.

Hot Desk Fellowship recipients also have the opportunity to appear in the Wheeler Centre’s programme, sharing readings of their work as part of the Next Big Thing event series. Across two events, the 2020–21 Fellows shared powerful readings of screenplays, comics, fiction, non-fiction and poetry. At these events, the recipients were able to finally meet in-person, connect with the previous fellows and share their work with live audiences after two years of digital-only connections.

The Hot Desk Fellowships will return in 2022 for their tenth year, with 21 fellowships to be offered thanks to the generous support of the Readings Foundation and the Just Pretending theatre group.
Our supporters

Donors

The Wheeler Centre is indebted to the generosity of individual donors whose annual contributions lay the foundations for the work that we do. Thank you for your generous investment in future-proofing our organisation, as we create a more sustainable and impactful model to best serve the community through the celebration of books, writing and ideas.

Stories have the ability to inspire change, create understanding and enrich our lives. By donating to the Wheeler Centre in 2021, donors enabled us to share the stories and conversations that matter to Australia and the world.

Thanks to a number of significant and generous contributions, the Centre was able to raise $123,225 in donations. The 2021 annual tax appeal coincided with Melbourne’s return to another lengthy COVID-19 lockdown and, once again, our donors rose to the occasion. A donation video featuring the Centre’s patrons Maureen and Tony Wheeler AO and a range of Australia’s leading writers and industry leaders – including Evelyn Araluen, Andrew Denton, Mark Rubbo, Christos Tsolkas and others – was produced to celebrate the importance of giving to the Wheeler Centre with the aim of reaching our community at home. The campaign surpassed its target, raising $50,638 and resulted in many new donors giving at our newest giving level: ‘Supporter’.

In March 2021, the Wheeler Centre delivered the Di Gribble Argument, commissioning essays from three First Nations writers on the topic of climate change and caring for Country, which culminated in a full day of events at Malthouse Outdoor Stage. Thanks to Creative Partnerships Australia Plus 1 Grant, we were able to match $50,000 in individual donations, doubling the impact of their gifts to enable this exciting project. Thank you to all the donors who contributed to this important program.

We wish to thank our Game Changers whose ongoing generosity, vision and commitment to the Centre is unparalleled. Thanks to George and Rosa Morstyn, for their sustained support of The Next Chapter writers’ scheme in 2021, as well as their generous contribution towards Wheeler Teens programming, which saw the conceptualisation of a series of three events on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM) set to be delivered in early 2022. Thanks to Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family for their generous contribution towards the Broadly Speaking series, which celebrates female writers, stories and perspectives. Across 2020-21, 12 digital events featured brilliant local and international feminist thinkers and engaged thousands of audience members worldwide.

Finally, thank you to our Conversation Starters who give consistently year-on-year and whose ongoing support, advocacy and engagement in our work is deeply felt across the organisation.

Donations of every size make an impact and help to keep the conversations going. We thank all of you who contributed throughout the year whose names are not listed. Thank you for being a part of our unique story and helping us to support Australia’s writers and storytellers to share theirs.

Patrons

Maureen Wheeler AO
Tony Wheeler AO

Game Changers $25,000+

Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family
George and Rosa Morstyn

Conversation Starters $5000+

Anonymous
The Gantner Family
Jennifer Gilchrist
Elke Gjergja
The Hudson Family
Chaman Sidhu
Brigitte Smith
Wendy Whelan
Count Charitable Foundation – Saward Dawson and Staff

Enquiring Minds $1000+

David Bardas
Dr Steve Connors
Glenda De Marinis
Carrillo Gantner AC and Ziyin Gantner
Ron Rowley
Keith Richards OAM
Janet Whiting AM and Phil Lukies

Supporters $500+

Dr Marianne Broadbent
Michael Cowen
June Corry
Jenni Koch
Lu Lin
Elizabeth Loftus
Gwenllyn McIntosh
Susan Oliver AM
Julie Pinkham
Victoria Ponsford
Prof. Steven Williams
Sarah Yeomans
Michael and Radhika Santhanam-Martin
Government Partners

The Wheeler Centre acknowledges the incredible support received in 2021 from our major government funders Creative Victoria, the Australian Office for the Arts and the City of Melbourne. Their adaptability and generosity boosted our resilience as we responded to the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.

Most notably, the Wheeler Centre was successful in its ambitious $500,000 application to the Australian Government’s COVID-19 Sustainability Fund in January 2021. This national funding scheme offered crucial core funding to offset the financial losses incurred from COVID-19, allowing us to further invest in digital capacity building efforts to deliver high-quality digital-first and hybrid (live and digital) programming throughout the year without compromising our commitment to present at least 70% free and low-cost content to audience members.

Creative Victoria’s Strategic Investment Fund Round 4 funding in 2021, paired with major contributions from Rounds 1 and 2 funding in 2020, have offered invaluable support across the past two years and cemented Creative Victoria as the Wheeler Centre’s most significant funding body.

In 2021, the Wheeler Centre again delivered the Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards on behalf of the Hon. Minister Danny Pearson MP and the Hon. Premier Daniel Andrews, with support from Creative Victoria.

A successful new application to Creative Victoria’s 2022-23 Regional Touring Grant in 2021 will see the Wheeler Centre extending on its programming and impact within regional Victoria, working meaningfully with existing partners, including Warrnambool City Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Women’s Health Goulburn North East, Ballarat Mechanics’ Institute and Castlemaine State Festival.

Finally, at the close of 2021, the Wheeler Centre successfully reapplied for multi-year Creative Victoria Funding through the 2022-25 Creative Enterprise Program, ensuring that we continue to receive crucial core funding year-on-year.

In 2021, the Wheeler Centre continued to receive multi-year funding through the City of Melbourne’s Triennial Arts Programme 2021-24 and we thank the City of Melbourne and Lord Mayor Sally Capp for their ongoing support.

Corporate Partners

Corporate Partnerships form a major strategic growth area for the Wheeler Centre and we acknowledge the incredible existing partnerships we hold with Montalto, Sofitel on Collins, Shiff & Company, JBWere, Meltwater, RTR Productions, Two Birds Brewing and St. Ali Coffee Roasters. Over the past two years, these partners have felt the challenges of COVID-19 in myriad ways and we have valued their ongoing loyalty and support as we work together across industries to build back the City of Melbourne and deepen the value of our partnerships.

In 2021, the Wheeler Centre established a new corporate partnership with one of Australia’s premier law firms MinterEllison that will see the Centre delivering a series of three live, bespoke talks for staff across their national offices in the first quarter of 2022. Hosted by long-time Wheeler Centre collaborator Sally Warhaft on the topic of ‘Creating Change’, this mini conversation series is the beginning of what is sure to be an exciting and enriching new partnership with many opportunities for collaboration ahead.
Trusts and Foundations

Trusts and Foundations represent 15% of the Wheeler Centre’s total annual fundraising efforts, with major investments from our multi-year partnerships enabling us to support writers and artists to develop and share their unique stories.

In 2021, the Aesop Foundation supported a fourth year of The Next Chapter writers’ scheme, continuing to offer unique mentorship, training, and funding to support ten budding Australian writers from diverse or underrepresented backgrounds. Over the life of the scheme to date, we’ve seen a number of publication outcomes for Next Chapter fellows which – while not the aim – speaks to the career-altering nature of what we are offering these incredible emerging writers. In 2021, exciting highlights included the publication of Evelyn Araluen’s poetry collection, *Dropbear*, in March, as well as *Born Into This* by Adam Thompson, published by University of Queensland Press in February. In addition to this, Ennis Cehic’s short story collection, *Sadvertising*, is set to be released by Penguin Random House in early 2022.

A major gift of $200,000 from the Aesop Foundation’s 2020 Support Fund has enabled the Wheeler Centre to engage in a new website redevelopment project that will be launched in 2022. By allowing us to modernise our website, this funding will make our events and online content more streamlined and accessible. Thank you to the Aesop Foundation for your incredible and sustained support.

The Ian Potter Foundation’s generous multi-year support of the Signal Boost podcast programme has seen a second cohort of ten aspiring podcasters participate in an intensive six-month mentorship and professional development programme, led by some of Australia’s most celebrated audio experts. This forms the second successful year in our exciting three-year relationship with the Ian Potter Foundation.

The Readings Foundation generously supported the Hot Desk Fellowships for its tenth year, offering 21 writers a stipend and desk space to write within the Wheeler Centre building. We thank the Readings Foundation and Mark Rubbo OAM for their ongoing commitment to this life-changing programme, which has seen the Wheeler Centre support more than 200 emerging writers over the past decade.

In a new multi-year partnership with the E. W. Cole Foundation, the Wheeler Centre will launch a new series of annual lectures honouring the life and legacy of the Melbourne literary icon. Set to commence in 2021, the inaugural lecture was postponed to 2022 in response to COVID-19 lockdowns and we thank the E. W. Cole Foundation for their ongoing adaptability and generosity as we look forward to launching this exciting event series next year.

Finally, in 2021, trusts and foundations enabled the delivery of a number of key Wheeler Centre programmes, including the Wheeler Kids regional programme, with support from the Robert Salzer Foundation, the Di Gribble Argument through the generosity of Creative Partnerships Australia, and the Broadly Speaking feminist conversation series with support from Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

We would like to extend an enormous thanks to all the trusts and foundations whose contributions sustain our ambitions and enable us to dream big.
Thank you to our partners

The Wheeler Centre is deeply grateful to new and existing partners and the many cultural partners, booksellers and publishers we collaborated with across the year to promote books, writing and ideas.

The contribution and commitment of the Wheeler Centre’s generous supporters enables us to champion writers, support the literary sector and elevate public conversation locally and internationally. In 2021, more than ever, we are indebted to the support and partnerships of the following organisations.

---

**Government**

Creative Victoria

City of Literature

Melbourne City of Literature

Australian Government

City of Melbourne

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**Trusts and Foundations**

the Aesop Foundation

Ian Potter Foundation

Foundation

COPYRIGHTAGENCY

Creative partnerships

Australia

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**Corporate Partners**

Shiff & Company

JBWere

MinterEllison

Montalto

Meltwater

RTB Productions

Two Birds

ST. ALi
Programme Partners

VARUNA, The National Writers’ House
SYDNEY WRITERS’ FESTIVAL
PERTH FESTIVAL
MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL
THE CAPITOL
AIDC

ADELAIDE WRITERS’ WEEK
MELBOURNE COMEDY AND FESTIVAL
MPAVILION
STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA
Respect Victoria
midsumma festival

STELLA
IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
YIRRAMBOI MORROW
pen

Regional Partners

BALLARAT MECHANIC INSTITUTE
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
WARENAABOUL
WAG
LIGHTHOUSE THEATRE
women’s health

Accessibility and Inclusion Partners

Australian Poetry
Emerging Writers’ Festival
Help for Young Writers
Melbourne Writers’ Festival
SPNVictoria

Resident Organisations

20
The Wheeler Centre’s vision to inspire curiosity, connection and engagement applies equally to our people and culture. In a year that provided seemingly endless challenges to Melbourne’s cultural community, we were guided by our core principles such as focusing on people and building a culture that listens.

CEO Caro Llewellyn and her leadership team continued to focus on supporting the people who make up our wider community, staff and audiences alike, through various stages of the pandemic. Continuing flexibility allowed events to be produced in online, hybrid and in-person formats, sometimes with changes at very short notice. Support was also extended to our resident organisations and their people.

Given the challenging external environment, it was pleasing that we were able to progress several of the people and culture strategies laid out in our three-year strategic plan.

An evolved organisation design was implemented along with improved ways of working that foster increased collaboration, as well as role and workflow clarity between functional areas such as programming, production, marketing and development. We advanced our people and culture framework with the introduction of an internal Human Resources role, the implementation of a Human Resources information system that enables insights and process efficiencies, and foundational work on simplifying and consolidating people and culture related policies.

Importantly, in a year that saw significant recruitment, we were guided by our Equity Action Plan to adopt new hiring practices to support a diverse and inclusive environment. The results are already encouraging and I look forward to seeing these continue to bear fruit in future years.

Everything we achieved in 2021 for our audiences, resident organisations and partners was made possible by our people. Thank you to everyone for their passion, agility and hard work that enables the ongoing success of the Wheeler Centre.

Chaman Sidhu People and Culture Chair
Our Board
Susan Oliver AM – Chair
Rebecca Batties
Marcus Fazio
John Gibbins
Will Hayward (until November)
Corrie Perkin
Julie Pinkham
Adrian Sculthorpe
Chaman Sidhu

Our Staff
CEO – Caro Llewellyn
Head of Programming – Veronica Sullivan
Head of Marketing and Communications – Emily Harms
(upto June)
Head of Digital and Marketing – Daniel Coghlan
(from October)
Head of Development – Romy Ladowsky
Head of Special Projects – Sophie Black
Head of Production and Relationships – Gabrielle Ryan
Head of Finance – Melanie Lin
Executive Assistant – Sally Rosevear
Programming Producer – Lauren Taylor
Programming Administrator – Christa Jonathan
(upto August), Diem Nguyen (from July)
Youth Programming Manager – Bec Kavanagh
Youth Programming Coordinator – Alice Glenn (from July)
Communications Specialist – Lise Leitner (until July)
Marketing and Communications Coordinator – Oliver Reeson (from July)
Website and Content Producer – Keshia Contini
(upto June)
Digital Coordinator – Nadiah Abdulrahim (from September)
Marketing Manager – Shannon Hick (until October),
Peter Ritchie (from August)
Development Coordinator – Brigid Reid
Ticketing and CRM Coordinator – Claire Flynn
(upto November)
Audio Producer – Bethany Atkinson-Quinton
(upto March)
Senior Audio Producer – Maddy Macquine (from May)
Events Manager – Mia McAuslan (until March),
Andrew Mabbott-Tighe (from March)
Production Manager – Johnboy Davidson (until May),
Simon Cotter (from June)
Technical Coordinator – Jose Eveline
Venue and Office Coordinator – Harry Reid (until May),
Oliver Reeson (May to June), Isabel Frias (from May),
Joshua Barnes (from June)
Accounts – Sam Ryan

Casual Front and Back of House Team
Millie Baylis
Anastasha Boado
Anne Bravos
Bridget Caldwell-Bright
Faith Everard
Isabel Frias
Zoe Kaser
Charlie Kerekes
Doni Marmer
Leah Jing McIntosh
Luke Meehan
Adalya Nash Hussein
Diem Nguyen
Sarah Occhina
Xanthea O’Connor
Danny Silva Soberano
Cher Tan
Aisha Trambas
Inez Trambas
Folole Tupuola
Nevo Zisin
Message from our Audit and Risk Committee Chair

In 2021, the pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the Victorian arts community. The Wheeler Centre continued to innovate and manage its operations through the impacts of the pandemic. With the assistance of COVID-19 assisted government grants, the Centre was able to retain our staff and restructure our programs through the management of costs and a successful transition to digital events and online content.

John Gibbins Audit and Risk Committee Chair

Operating Activities

The Wheeler Centre has continued to be significantly impacted by COVID-19. The number of live events in 2021 were still 71% below pre-pandemic level due to snap lockdowns and capacity restrictions. As a result of these significantly compressed activities, box office revenue and venue hire revenue were 66% below 2019 levels, at $352,000 (2019: $1.026 million).

In recognition of the impact of closing the Centre to live audiences, the Wheeler Centre was provided with Creative Victoria’s Strategic Investment Funds Stage 4 and Australian Government’s COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund to support its operations and adapt new operating models through a comprehensive strategic review. The Wheeler Centre sought to reduce expenditure as far as possible, whilst maintain staff at the same level as 2020. Apart from employee expenses, all other operating expenses reflected a reduction of 72% on pre-pandemic level. The Wheeler Centre also provided rent relief to support the six literature organisations and the Moat Café residing in the building to assist them through the pandemic.

In 2021, recurrent funding from the Creative Victoria was $1.54 million and recurrent funding from the City of Melbourne was $50,000 (2020: $1.6 million). Total non-recurrent funding for the 2021 period was $967,000 (2020: $623,000), largely consisting of additional funding support due to the pandemic.

Non-Operating Activities: The Wheeler Endowment Fund

The Wheeler Endowment Fund funded by a gift from the Planet Wheeler Foundation has been placed into a separate reserve. The endowment is managed by an independent investment fund manager. The Deed governing this gift provides that it should be used for the development and provision of high-quality, additional programming.

The value of the Wheeler Endowment Fund has recovered from $9.91 million to $10.94 million assisted by no withdrawals made in 2021.

The Wheeler Endowment Fund recorded investment income of $452,950 less investment expenses of $57,119 resulting in net investment income of $395,831.

The value of the fund’s investment portfolio increased by $720,903. The increase of $720,903 plus the net investment income of $395,831 contributed to the comprehensive income of $1,565,245 for the year.

Auspice Agreements

City of Literature Office

The Wheeler Centre has a long-standing memorandum of understanding with Creative Victoria and Melbourne City Council to support the City of Literature Office (the Office) and the position of the Office Director. The memorandum of understanding stipulates Creative Victoria and Melbourne City Council have agreed to provide financial support for the operation of the Office and the employment of the Director with the Wheeler Centre providing in-kind assistance to support the Office. All income and expenditure of the Office is administered through the Wheeler Centre.

The City of Literature Office’s grants received from Creative Victoria and Melbourne City Council are first recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until the funds are used for the operation of the Office, at which point the Wheeler Centre’s performance obligation is fulfilled.

Blak & Bright

Blak & Bright is a four-day First Nations Literary Festival based in Melbourne celebrating the diverse expressions of First Nations writers. In September 2021, the Wheeler Centre entered an auspice agreement with Blak & Bright. Grants and donations received for Blak & Bright are first recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until the funds are used for the operations of Blak & Bright. The Wheeler Centre provided both in-kind support and financial support to Blak & Bright.
**Operations**

The Centre’s operating revenue (excluding investment movement and depreciation) was $497,675 in 2021.

The operating revenue consisted of a capital grant of $200,000 for the Wheeler Centre’s website redevelopment project. The cost of the redevelopment project was recognised as an asset.

The net income from the Wheeler Endowment investments was a surplus of $1.12 million. This consisted of investment income of $456,521 plus the net gain in the value of the endowment of $720,903 less investment expenses of $57,119.

**Balance Sheet**

Net assets of the Wheeler Centre amount to $11,281,253 (2020: $9,716,011), of which $10,940,902 relates to the Wheeler Endowment Fund.

Financial assets decreased by 22% to $1.83 million and total liabilities decreased by 37% to $1.63 million driven predominantly by a reduction in income in advance and long-service leave liabilities.

Cash and Cash Equivalents as of 31 December 2021 was $1,658,147, however of the $1,658,147 held in cash and cash equivalents, $1,197,493 are restricted funds for City of Literature office, Blak & Bright and other future programs that cannot be used to support the Wheeler Centre’s core operating activities.
## Summary of Results 2021

### Financial Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Performance</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET INCOME FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OPERATING REVENUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Victoria – Multi-Year Organisation Grant</td>
<td>1,541,600</td>
<td>1,541,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Victoria – Premier's Literary Award Grant</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
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<td>Creative Victoria – Regional Tour Grant</td>
<td>37,804</td>
<td>13,476</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Victoria – Strategic Investment Fund Stage 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>207,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Victoria – Strategic Investment Fund Stage 2</td>
<td>55,625</td>
<td>59,375</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Victoria – Strategic Investment Fund Stage 4</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Melbourne – Multi-Year Organisation Grant</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia Council for the Arts – Multi-Year Organisation Grant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>103,030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Grant COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Government Grants</td>
<td>9,091</td>
<td>102,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event &amp; Resources Income</td>
<td>352,320</td>
<td>179,767</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorship &amp; Donations</td>
<td>161,386</td>
<td>130,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution from Foundation Funds</td>
<td>616,745</td>
<td>281,755</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>3,106</td>
<td>21,488</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenue</strong></td>
<td>3,692,677</td>
<td>2,941,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPERATING EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Expenses</td>
<td>(1,895,929)</td>
<td>(1,893,312)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Generated Expenses</td>
<td>(295,422)</td>
<td>(227,598)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prize Money</td>
<td>(375,500)</td>
<td>(403,750)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing and Promotion Expenses</td>
<td>(110,256)</td>
<td>(57,837)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Publishing Expenses</td>
<td>(70,621)</td>
<td>(32,730)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td>(131,307)</td>
<td>(208,201)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Expenses</td>
<td>(315,967)</td>
<td>(247,768)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td>(3,195,003)</td>
<td>(3,071,196)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income from Operating Activities</strong></td>
<td>497,675</td>
<td>(129,971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET INCOME FROM NON-OPERATING ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Received in the Bank</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>4,471</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Philanthropic Funds Flow</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wheeler Endowment Investment Portfolio Movement (Restricted)</td>
<td>1,116,734</td>
<td>182,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution to Operating Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(188,902)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Philanthropic Funds Flow</strong></td>
<td>1,120,305</td>
<td>(6,037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Income from Non-Operating Activities</strong></td>
<td>1,120,305</td>
<td>(1,296)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET RESULT FROM AUPLICATE PROJECTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>City of Literature Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants – City of Literature Office</td>
<td>257,329</td>
<td>292,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project expenditure – City of Literature Office</td>
<td>(257,329)</td>
<td>(292,422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blak &amp; Bright</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Grants – Blak &amp; Bright</td>
<td>71,525</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution from Foundation Funds – Blak &amp; Bright</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project expenditure – Blak &amp; Bright</td>
<td>(72,725)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net result from Auspice Projects</strong></td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net result from transactions before depreciation</strong></td>
<td>1,617,979</td>
<td>(131,267)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Depreciation and amortisation</strong></td>
<td>(52,737)</td>
<td>(112,012)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net result from transactions after depreciation</strong></td>
<td>1,565,242</td>
<td>(243,278)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMPREHENSIVE RESULT</strong></td>
<td>1,565,242</td>
<td>(243,278)</td>
</tr>
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</table>