Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting
Independent Arts Foundation (SA)
Financial Year 2025–2026
19 October 2026

I am pleased to present the Chair's Report for the Independent Arts Foundation (SA) for the 2025–2026 financial year.

This has been a year of **consolidation, renewal and growing organisational maturity**. The Board has continued to strengthen the Foundation's governance, planning and sustainability while maintaining its focus on supporting emerging South Australian creatives and delivering the events and activities valued by our Members.

Board Membership and Governance
At last year's Annual General Meeting, **Samela Harris** and **Tracey Korsten** were elected to the IAF Board. One of these appointments filled the vacancy created by the earlier resignation of **Kathy Darling Brookes**. Unfortunately, ill health meant that Tracey was able to participate in only a small number of meetings before resigning, leaving the Board with two vacancies at the beginning of 2026.

The Board approached recruitment carefully, considering the skills, experience and committee capability needed to support the Foundation's future priorities. In March, we invited expressions of interest from within the membership as well as externally through several social media channels. We were encouraged by both the number and quality of applications received, and a panel was established to interview a shortlist.

Following interviews, the Board selected **Imogen Hindson** and **Donna Montes** to fill the two vacancies, with their terms commencing on 1 June 2026. Their collective experience spans governance, fundraising, donor stewardship, government relations, policy, law and communications. They have already brought valuable insight, energy and commitment to the Board.

The IAF Board remains very much a **working board**, with Members contributing strategically and operationally across governance, grants, events, communications, finance, membership and administration.

As is our usual practice, the Board held two planning days during the year, in February and June. These sessions provided valuable opportunities to step back from immediate operational demands, review progress, consider priorities and plan collectively. Over the

course of the year, the Board has consolidated and is working productively and collegially together.

During 2026, the Board also moved from bimonthly to monthly meetings, with the arrangement to be reviewed following the AGM. This has enabled the Board to give significant matters appropriate consideration while encouraging committees to progress detailed work between meetings.

The Board continued to strengthen the Foundation's governance and organisational foundations. Key advancements during the year included:

- **finalisation and implementation of the Operational Plan**
- **development and refinement of a Marketing Plan**
- consideration of membership categories, benefits and associated fees
- continued development of the Foundation's **risk management framework, including risks and mitigations**
- completion of an **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission self-evaluation** and identification of priorities for further improvement
- further development of committee terms of reference and supporting governance documents
- initial work on a more strategic approach to sponsorships, partnerships and donor engagement
- continued strengthening of IAF branding and communications across social media to extend the Foundation's reach.

Together, this work reflects a Board that is becoming increasingly systematic in how it plans, governs and evaluates the Foundation's activities, while remaining practical, responsive and connected to our purpose.

It has also been encouraging to see continuing interest in IAF membership and generous support through donations. This engagement demonstrates the strength of the community surrounding the Foundation and provides a sound base for future membership and supporter initiatives.

We continue to be guided by the **IAF Strategic Plan 2025–2027** and its three strategic goals:

- **Strengthen governance**
- **Ensure sustainability**
- **Support emerging artists**

Our mission remains clear: **to provide financial assistance to creatives and build community through the celebration of local artistic talent**.

Looking ahead, **Margaret Lynch** will conclude her leadership of the Grants Committee following the completion of Round 2, 2026, while remaining a valued member of the Board until her term concludes at the 2027 Annual General Meeting. Margaret has brought great care, rigour and commitment to the grants program, and I formally thank her for the considerable time, judgement and expertise she has contributed as Chair of the Committee.

The Board is considering arrangements for the leadership of the Grants Committee from 2027, with a focus on ensuring an orderly transition and maintaining the integrity and continuity of the grants program. Following a period of considerable renewal, our hope is that the Board can now enjoy greater continuity and stability as we progress the Foundation's strategic priorities.

Board Committees
The Foundation's three Board committees continue to provide focused oversight and practical support for its work.

Grants Committee
Chaired by Margaret Lynch, with members Peter Burdon and Associate Professor Gretchen Coombs,Adelaide University, the Grants Committee oversees the assessment and administration of the grants program. The Committee continues to bring care, expertise and rigour to the allocation of support to emerging creatives.

Finance, Risk, Audit & Membership Committee
Chaired by Peter Burdon, with Mary Odlum as Treasurer and external member Heather Karmel, the Finance, Risk, Audit & Membership Committee supports sound financial management, oversees risk and contributes to membership reporting and strategy.

Events & Communications Committee
Jointly chaired by Mary Odlum and Felicity Erné, the Events & Communications Committee coordinates the Foundation's events and communications across our website, social media, newsletters and Member outreach. Its work has been central to strengthening the consistency and reach of IAF communications during the year. Committee members comprise Samela Harris, IAF Board member, in addition to Mary and Felicity and also IAF members Megan Phelps and Cheryl Appelkamp de Valenzuela. We are also grateful to have the participation of external Committee members, Caroline Cruz and Beck Rouse.

I thank all committee members, including our external committee members, for the considerable work they undertake between Board meetings. This committee structure has

helped the Board distribute responsibilities effectively, draw on specialist expertise and maintain appropriate oversight of the Foundation's principal activities.

Events and Fundraising

The Foundation's events continue to play an important dual role: bringing our community together and generating essential funds for the grants program. The commitment of the volunteers, speakers, venues, partners and supporters involved in these activities remains central to their success.

Alongside the popular film nights and literary dinners enjoyed by Members throughout the year, three major events were particularly noteworthy.

Feelin' Groovy: The Songs of Simon and Garfunkel, held in the auditorium at Living Choice, was our first major sold out fundraiser of the year. It brought Members and supporters together to enjoy an engaging musical performance while raising funds that directly support emerging creatives.

Our sold-out literary lunch with **Jane Caro**, in conversation with **Sandy Verschoor,** focused on Jane's most recent thriller, *Lyrebird*. The strong attendance demonstrated the appetite among our Members and supporters for lively literary discussion.

The first week of March was especially busy following a last-minute addition to the literary calendar. In the wake of the cancellation of Adelaide Writers' Week, the IAF responded quickly and, in collaboration with producer **Joanne Hartstone**, showcased South Australian literary talent through a successful **Writers & Poets event in the Treasury garden** on King William Street.

Together, these events demonstrate the continuing enthusiasm of our Members and the public for experiences that bring people together around outstanding artistic and literary talent while generating practical support for emerging South Australian creatives.

Grants

The grants program remains at the heart of the Independent Arts Foundation's purpose. Through this program, we provide practical support to emerging creatives during the important early years of their practice and help strengthen South Australia's arts community.

Interest in the grants program was particularly strong during the year. By May, 26 applications had been received for the first 2026 round, including ten applications from

groups and sixteen from individual creatives. The volume of interest required the Grants Committee to extend the assessment period so that every application could receive thorough consideration.
The Treasurer will report separately on the grants awarded during the year. Each award reflects the IAF's commitment to backing local creatives at a formative stage of their practice and helping promising work reach audiences and communities.

The IAF also continued its support for **Brighton Jetty Sculptures** for another year, extending a valued partnership that creates opportunities for South Australian artists and helps bring their work to a broad community audience. Additionally, the IAF continues to sponsor the Adelaide Critics' Circle Award for Innovation. This year, The Little Machine, a space for contemporary and experimental art, was the recipient of the $1000 award.

Thanks and Acknowledgements
I extend my sincere thanks to every Board Member for their dedication, sound judgement and willingness to contribute. The progress made this year reflects a shared commitment to the Foundation and to the creatives and communities we serve.

The achievements outlined in this report have required a significant amount of work, much of it undertaken quietly between meetings. I am grateful for the generosity, professionalism and collegiality with which Board and committee members have approached that work.

I also thank all those who support our events and activities, whether by donating their time, raffle prizes or other resources, assisting with organisation or attending our events. Your generosity, practical assistance and enthusiasm make an enormous difference to the Foundation's capacity to raise funds and maintain a strong community around our work.

My particular thanks go to:

Cheryl Appelkamp de Valenzuela
Jill Argent
Kathy Darling-Brookes
Jenny Dunstan
Marg Jude
Carol Maelzer
Sherry Proferes

To our Members, thank you for your continuing support through attendance at events, membership renewals, donations and advocacy. Your belief in the Independent Arts Foundation and its mission makes our work possible.

The vision of the IAF is for South Australia to be a place where **emerging creatives are empowered to develop their careers and thrive**. A vibrant arts culture enriches all of us, and your support helps create pathways and opportunities for artists to succeed.

Thank you for being part of that vision.