



**CASTLEMAINE
CIRCUS**
INC.

Annual Report 2015



The reception from
the community to
the establishment of
Castlemaine Circus
has been nothing
short of
AMAZING

Castlemaine Circus Inc
ABN: 412 100 97490
Incorporation A0060187U

Board of Governance 2014-2015

Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, Chair
Juliette Anich, Treasurer
Esther Barneveld (2014)
Rachel Quirk (2014)
Suzanne Kalk
Steve Carroll, Castlemaine Secondary
College Representative
Antonella Cassella
Circus Oz Representative

Operations Team

Jane Goodrich, Operations Manager
Mandy Field, Creative Producer
Sam Thomas, Artistic Director

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of Lisa Chesters, Federal MP for Bendigo.*



Chair's report

In October 2013, I was asked to advise on starting up a new community organisation. I shared my knowledge about incorporation law, community engagement and stakeholder buy-in. Then, at the very end of our meeting, a sneaky little invitation: "Will you join our committee?"

At the time I thought, not bloody likely! But then I met the team – Mandy, Jane, Esther and Rachel – and their enthusiasm, energy and expertise was so impressive that I knew I wanted in. Shortly thereafter Sam Thomas joined the crew and with that we had a staggering line-up of talent, skills, experience and – most importantly in any start-up community group – passion.

The company was formed in direct response to a call out from parents wanting local circus training. The demand was already there and our enrolments exceeded expectations from the outset.

Even more exciting has been the reception of the broader circus community who have embraced and encouraged the establishment of a new regional youth circus. We have been mentored and advised by key industry

players including Circus Oz, Spaghetti Circus and NICA (the National Institute of Circus Arts). Our peak body ACAPTA, the Australian Circus and Performing Theatre Association, have been especially encouraging and I want to thank their director Gail Kelly for her amazing support. In March 2015 we partnered with ACAPTA to host a regional Circus Sesh attended by circus professionals from throughout the country. We hope to continue and strengthen this relationship and foresee Castlemaine playing a pivotal role as a regional centre for circus excellence.

Key to this will be securing and occupying a permanent circus space. Our partnership and shared tenancy with the Castlemaine State Festival at the Railway Goods Shed presents a very exciting future. It builds on our successful participation in the 2015 State Festival and will allow tremendous opportunities for further partnerships. We are grateful for the support of the State Festival as lead tenants in this venture, and to their staff and board for the hard work in making this venue a reality.

Many thanks to our other key supporters and funders including the Mount Alexander Shire Council, Castlemaine Lions Club, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) Maldon & District Community Bank and Regional Arts Victoria. A special thanks to my fellow board members and an extra special call-out to Esther Barneveld and Rachel Quirk for their incredible passion in the early start-up days of the Circus. Our parents and families (and our long suffering partners, affectionately known as the Circus Widows) are the backbone of the Circus and without their support and enthusiasm we would not be where we are today.

To our Operations Team, our trainers, our students, and our circus community, my heartfelt thanks and gratitude. It's been an exciting journey to date and the next steps are breathtaking in their possibilities. I'm thrilled to be a part of this great adventure.

**Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns
Chair,
Castlemaine Circus Inc.**

A YEAR IN REVIEW



Community Performances

The Circus receives dozens of requests for community participation and performance. Regrettably we cannot respond and participate in all events and are formulating a policy to align our community engagement with our Strategic goals. We can also provide outreach workshops and have conducted programs at Maldon Preschool and for the Ballarat Salvation Army.

“What I love is the secret how to get the spinning plates going.”

Naomi, 6 yrs

Jane Goodrich Operations Manager

As the “go to girl” for our classes, fundraising and PR, Jane is very much the face of the Castlemaine Circus. She skilfully juggles this role whilst parenting three children, running three (soon to be 4!) markets and dabbling in a wide variety of local community initiatives. Jane is a living embodiment of the maxim that if you want something done....you ask a busy person! That she does it with such calm aplomb and a gracious smile on her face is further testimony to her tremendous organisational skills.



In 2014 – 2015 we participated in the following local events

- Australia Day celebrations
- Castlemaine Show Parade
- Harcourt Apple Fest
- Castlemaine Artists Market
- Rotary Truck Show
- Castlemaine Youth Week Awards
- 2 The Xtreme Youth Festival
- Station Y (Mount Alexander Council youth program)
- Castlemaine Children's Literature Festival
- Castlemaine State Festival
- The Village Winter Festival
- Newstead Words in Winter
- Swiss Italian Festa

Enrolments

After a successful pilot program in Term 4, 2013, Castlemaine Circus officially commenced classes in Term 1, 2014 with 47 enrolments and three classes per week. By Term 3, 2014 we had expended to 8 classed with 99 enrolments. We introduced a pre-schooler's class and an adult women's class, which increased our participants' age range from 3 years to 65 years. Currently, Castlemaine Circus offers 9 classes per week to 103 enrolled students.



Mandy Field Creative Producer

Our goal to be driven by our community is very much central to both our achievements to date and our sustainability into the future. We are driven by the goal to remain inclusive and accessible, to ensure that the Castlemaine Circus belongs to and is driven by our community.

In this way we see ourselves as a true community asset. We do this by providing opportunities for young and emerging artists as well as employment for regional artists and trainers. We are able to share equipment and resources, write letters of support and advocacy. We are interested in partnerships with other organisations and participation in local events. These are all ways in which Castlemaine Circus maintains itself embedded in the local community.

We are committed to seeing the Circus thrive for years to come and to growing and supporting a local circus culture. We have seen our first young people head to Melbourne to NICA, pursuing excellence in circus as a career. We have supported our first emerging young trainers to work alongside and learn from experienced trainers. We have celebrated our first professional performance making projects which have seen a group

of dedicated young people receiving direct mentoring and creative guidance in making and performing shows that engaged huge audiences every time.

We launched our community performances for the year at the Castlemaine State Festival with the premiere of “The Future of Things Past”. An enthusiastic Sunday morning audience of approximately 800 people flocked to Castlemaine's Victory Park to our ensemble of emerging circus artists who performed alongside the internationally renowned Chipolatas.

This ensemble also performed to over 1000 people at the Village Winter Festival, partnered with the Thompson's Foundry Band for a performance in Newstead, and teamed up with Daylesford based Sprung Circus for a 2 show season at the Swiss Italian Festa. You can expect to see more from this talented bunch of performers next year.

We are currently designing ongoing projects that engage economically and socially disadvantaged young people, and young people experiencing learning difficulties. There is a mounting body of fascinating research that both qualifies and quantifies circus as

an effective engagement tool that can be applied across social inclusion, participation, physical learning, goal setting, confidence building, and team work.

Our programs foster a culture of support and inclusion, where everyone has the right to belong, work at their own level, and contribute in a meaningful way. Castlemaine Circus is creating an environment within which young people can explore their passions, in a space that they can feel ownership over, facilitated by experienced professional artists and supported by a broad circus community. I am proud to be a part of that community.

Special thanks to my partners in the Operations Team, Sam and Jane who make this extraordinary challenge so very rewarding. To the circus participants and their families, you are what it's all about so thank you for your commitment, your courage and your support. Thanks to the Board of the Circus and especially to Jacqueline as our Chair who has provided endless assistance, advice and encouragement even when she's been on the other side of the globe. Without our incredible circus family behind us, we could never have done it so thank you, one and all.





Sam Thomas Artistic Director

WOW — what a year!

After our initial 12 months operations, which focussed primarily on getting foundational basics in place including our 8 training classes, 2015 kicked off with some great partnerships and performances.

We started with a Valentine's Day Cabaret, transforming the Harcourt Scout Hall into a dreamy romantic cabaret space for 100 of our supporters. A program of internationally acclaimed performers took to the stage, knocking the socks off our audience and setting a very high standard for our productions.

In March we co-hosted a Circus forum with the industry peak body, ACPATA, where 60 circus artists, and practitioners came together to discuss, dissect, celebrate and consider all things circus, including its role as an international language for story telling; the place for circus in education and an all abilities approach to circus. No time was wasted between the forum and our premiere performance for the Castlemaine State Festival where "The Future of Things Past" debuted on 21st March 2015.

This was an opportunity to demonstrate publicly the outcome of the last year

of classes, workshops and training sessions. The theme and styling for the show was a steam punk aesthetic supported by a live drum and bass soundtrack and a positive post-apocalyptic narration containing a reassuring message from the future. "We survived the current global economic crisis through physical resilience, gaining strength and skill through the celebration of circus." This simple theme was embraced by audience and participants alike and the performance created a live, interactive, adrenalin infused experience for everyone present.

The festival performance was also a catalyst for our performance ensemble, a group of committed circus participants who have since performed at a number of community events and festivals. It has been a fantastic journey watching these young performers gain skills and confidence and work effectively as a team.

With 24 years history in the industry, I am fully aware of the tradition and history surrounding this great art. Whilst we honour the roots of traditional circus we should also aspire to create new forms and commit to this with self-confidence. Castlemaine Circus is creating its own style, finding its own

voice. We are developing our own way of working. We are creators of spectacle: incorporating elements of acrobatics, dance, dramatic theatre, puppetry and folk culture whilst working with contemporary visual arts and digital performance tools.

Now contemporary circus has become an open, connective, international art form where skills are explored and experimented with, seeking new directions, dynamics and dimensions. It is an evolving tradition always in transition. Its practitioners are its custodians, creating a common ground for the old school and the new school to exist and intermingle. It moves forward, branching out, whilst acknowledging its history and its roots.

Castlemaine Circus recognises that circus training provides a positive and supportive environment for young people with an emphasis on physical activity, team work, improved co-ordination and strengthened self-confidence. Circus offers interpersonal support, challenge and opportunities for growth. It uses humour and allows participants to communicate feelings with increased confidence and positivity.

**We play for real.
Circus is hyper real.**



OUR TRAINERS



Danica Hilton

Danica performed with Cirque du Soleil for five years in Macau and was performing Teeterboard and Trampoline as well as Aerial Bungees and Aerial Hoop. Prior to this, she was an elite gymnast and trampolinist competing in numerous International and World Competitions. Danica is also a clown and is developing new works in handstand routines. She also specialises in Aerial Silk Loop, delicately balancing in the air, dancing around the suspended silk material, combined with the sudden drop into the hands of gravity. Danica initiated our Circus Fit training classes.

Emilie Bloom

A physical theatre artist, circus practitioner, comedian, playwright and clown – whatever role it is Emilie is guaranteed to put a smile on your face! She has worked with the Melbourne Women's Circus, toured shows in outback Australia and performed in a Cultural Exchange program at London's Circus Space. She is also a Co-Creator and Creative Director of Porcelain Punch, a contemporary vaudeville company who tour works and regularly appear at festivals, cabarets and cultural events throughout the country. Emilie has a fantastic stage presence and makes for a kick-arse MC.



Eric Jarlund

Originally from France, Eric has toured across Australia, New Zealand and France with his original set of juggling tricks and balancing feats. He has performed at prestigious art festivals including the Perigueux Mime Festival and Avignon Festival in France and Melbourne and Adelaide Fringe Festivals.

Trainers

Castlemaine Circus has employed 12 trainers. Keeping in line with our commitment to support local trainers and grow local employment opportunities, eight of our trainers are based in Castlemaine, two in Daylesford and two in Clunes.

Mara Macs

Mara has been working as a circus trainer for nearly 20 years, with extensive experience in the Castlemaine/Daylesford region. Mara is a dedicated and active community member coordinating and organising community events, festivals, and performances in particular involving young people and their engagement in these events with circus.



Ivo Iliev

Born in Bulgaria, Ivo is a world champion acrobat who has worked in the biggest and best institutions in Australia including Circus Oz, National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA), the South Australian Circus Centre, several dance schools and gymnastic clubs in Melbourne. He is a charismatic teacher who makes disciplined training fun and his coaching skills have created many medal winning champions. Having developed his coaching skills of over 25 years into the world of acrobatics and its varied genres, he has the ability to break down a high level skill to one that is achievable.



Sam Thomas

Sam has spent many years touring with The Chipolatas and working as artistic director, creative producer and a performer. His repertoire includes a wide range of educational projects, prioritising the passing on of skills to new generations.

Sam's work focuses on traditional street theatre, combining it with contemporary movement, original live music, circus imagery and classic comedy.



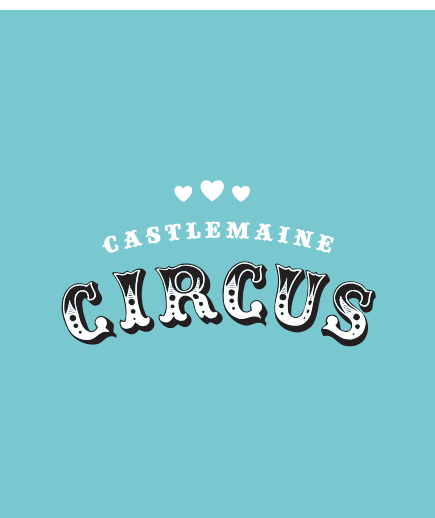
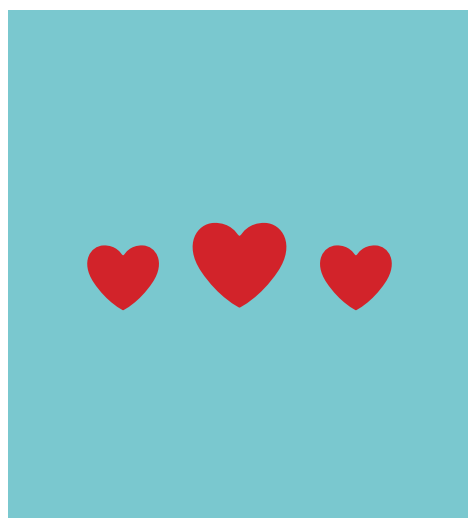
Margaret Kirby

A physical theatre artist, circus Margaret has 35 years' experience in acrobatics, gymnastics and circus instructing. She has performed and taught with Circus Oz and the Women's Circus. Specialising in trapeze, Margaret has co-devised aerial performances for international festivals and events. Margaret has taught hundreds of students aged 3 – 83! She is a Graduate of VCA in Performing Arts. A stickler for technique, Margaret also believes 'wherever you are at is perfect'. Margaret is teaching our Circus Fit classes covering body conditioning, pair work, handstands, balances, flexibility and basic tumbling. This class is also tailored to participants' preferences.



Mandy Field

Mandy is a cross art form performance maker and creative producer. She has focused on creating community based outcomes that reflect local identity and place, working with young people from regional communities across Australia. Drawing on a synthesis of physical theatre, visual theatre and interactive video to create engaging experiences for participants and audiences. She has trained extensively in Butoh and Dance Theatre in Japan; Physical Theatre and Circus with the Angry Mime, Spaghetti Circus, Theatre of the Ordinary and Visual Theatre.



Michelle Heaven

Michelle Heaven is a contemporary dancer and choreographer who is reknown for her attention to detail, subtlety and mystery as a performer and maker. She is a Graduate of VCA. Michelle has worked with leading choreographers, dancers and directors from throughout Australia and now teaches dance at Castlemaine's leading dance and movement school, Over the Moon. Michelle also creates her own work within the mediums of dance movement, puppetry and film and has staged critically and publically acclaimed works at the Castlemaine State Festival including the sold out IN PLAN (2015).



**The teachers
are berserkers,
they ain't no
common workers.**

Ezra, age 12



“Makinti’s confidence has really grown from her involvement with circus. The physical and creativity are great, but it’s the feeling of belonging and connection which are just as important. I couldn’t believe her confidence in joining the crew and ecstatically flying down the street in the show parade with the circus crew- amazing for a sometimes shy, anxious kid. All the trainers are great and bring their own unique energy, I feel Makinti is so lucky to get to be involved with such a diverse and interesting bunch of role models.

It’s awesome that the little kids get to see local shows with the big kids in the performance ensemble too, Makinti was so inspired after seeing them at the Hepburn fiesta. Circus class brings a bit of extra magic to our week!

Mollie Kerby, parent



“Since my children joined Castlemaine Circus at the beginning of the year I have witnessed a unique and overwhelming positive development in both of them. For my son it has harnessed his energy and channelled it into character development, performance and comedy. My daughter has become more outgoing and confident. We all really love the atmosphere that has been created at circus, my children have a sense of belonging and want to be involved in not just the classes but also the wide variety of extra activities on offer.

As a parent it is really reassuring to know your kids are not just having fun but they’re also being cared for. In terms of skill development my kids have become more coordinated and focused, they work hard to master new skills at home and in the class. The teachers have continually been encouraging and positive, often working very closely with them so they can achieve their best. Mostly though we just love that the kids feel they can be themselves and have a great time. They are taught to appreciate the talents they have in a safe and respectful environment. Ultimately that’s what any parent wants for their child.”

Emma Nelms, parent



“Circus has been a fantastic experience for my daughter. The circus teachers do an amazing job teaching the kids respect for one another and helping build children’s self-esteem and personal expression, all whilst the kids are having lots of fun!

It has been amazing seeing my daughter develop fantastic life skills including group interaction and public performance. Circus is an overwhelmingly positive experience for her which is wonderful to see.”

Claire Maher, parent



Where to from here?

After an extraordinary 12 months establishing our operational base, the Castlemaine Circus is set to SOAR in 2016. We are launching our very first social circus community engagement project, are expanding our board of governance and volunteer base and ... drum roll please ... will be working towards securing a dedicated circus venue.

ATOPIA

With funding and support from Punctum Inc, Creative Victoria and the Federal Regional Arts Fund, Castlemaine Circus is developing a new performance work entitled “Atopia”.

Atopia involves an initial series of workshops teaching local young people circus arts and physical performance, visual theatre and storytelling, technical design and video-making, led by a team of local professional artists. In 2016 this project will work to develop site specific responses

The project is a partnership with the Meeting Place Koori Cultural Program, the Maldon Neighbourhood House’s Young West Program, Curly Roost Refugee Support, and young and emerging artists from the Castlemaine Circus School.

In 2016 the developed works will be presented in site specific locations throughout Mount Alexander Shire.

THE RAILWAY GOODS SHED

With the amazing support and encouragement of the Castlemaine State Festival, our dream of securing a dedicated circus space has become a reality.

From January 2016 we have the great fortune of occupying the historic Castlemaine Railway Goods Shed with the Castlemaine State Festival as the lead tenant and a number of other community partners working to create a dynamic and vibrant cultural precinct.

This opportunity presents extraordinary potential for the Circus, providing a permanent training space, a flexible performance venue and the opportunity to explore partnerships and creative relationships with other arts and youth focused organisations.

We are indebted to the Castlemaine State Festival for their vision and commitment to growing artistic opportunities in our region. We are excited about the potential synergies and partnerships this venue presents for young people, artists and the circus industry in Central Victoria and beyond.

CIRCUS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

In 2016 Castlemaine Circus will be providing weekly circus training to year 9 students at the Castlemaine Secondary College. We are also conducting a series of in-school programs with the Violet Street Primary School in Bendigo.

We are establishing a working group to explore other educational and pathway training with an eye to being able to offer VET courses in circus skills. With our new location adjacent to the Castlemaine Railway Station we are hoping to attract students from around the state, making Castlemaine Central Victoria’s home of Circus.

Balance Sheet

As of June 2015

Assets		
General Cheque Account	\$3,330.59	
Trade Debtors	\$3,003.00	
Total Assets		\$6,333.59
Liabilities		
Trade Creditors	\$981.60	
Total Liabilities		\$981.60
Net Assets		\$5,351.99
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$12,353.29	
Current Earnings	-\$7,001.30	
Total Equity		\$5,351.99

Profit & Loss

July 2014 through June 2015

Income		
Term One Fees	\$10,663.00	
Term Two Fees	\$12,926.00	
Term Three Fees	\$12,163.00	
Term Four Fees	\$12,235.00	
Workshops	\$3,270.00	
Performances	\$2,300.00	
Grants	\$7,200.00	
Fundraising	\$5,154.34	
Donation	\$40.00	
Total Income		\$65,951.34
Cost Of Sales		
Total Cost Of Sales		\$0.00
Gross Profit		\$65,951.34
Expenses		
Administration		
Administration	\$8,220.00	
Office Supplies	\$106.00	
Telephone	\$15.00	
Bookkeeping	\$1,465.00	
Insurance	\$345.40	
Memberships	\$465.00	
OHS	\$24.80	
Advertising and PR	\$1,705.84	
Meeting Costs	\$44.00	
Classes		
Trainer Fees	\$37,365.00	
Venue Rental	\$8,680.00	
Equipment	\$1,130.00	
Other Events		
Costs of Fundraisers	\$249.53	
Costs of Workshops	\$2,118.33	
Costs of Performances	\$2,797.04	
Professional Development	\$2,589.10	
Total Expenses		\$67,320.04
Net Profit (Loss)		-\$1,368.70



THANK YOU

SPECIAL THANK YOU to local businesses who supported our Valentine's Day Cabaret, sausage sizzles and numerous food stalls throughout the year including: Castlemaine Fresh, Harvest Fruit and Vegetables, The Food Garden, The Dot Produce and Take Away, Madder's IGA, Mulberry's Deli, the Newnorthern, Togs Café, Castlemaine Central Wine Store, Sprout Bakery, Deb Lea Bakery & Café, Taradale Wine and Produce Store, Castlemaine Fitness, Maxi IGA, Bakers Delight.

THANK YOU to Lizzie Geddes from Chops for Tea and Doug Falconer from Falconer Business Services for their design and branding assistance.

THANK YOU to Natalie Moxham and Dale Needham for facilitating our Strategic Planning process and helping to make our vision a reality.

THANK YOU to the Castlemaine State Festival, ACAPTA and Cirque du Soleil for providing prizes for our Valentines raffle.

THANK YOU to ACAPTA (Australian Circus and Physical Theatre Association), Westside Circus, Spaghetti Circus, Flying Fruit Fly Circus and Circus Oz for their ongoing industry and peer support and encouragement and for sharing resources and materials.

THANK YOU to Phil McConachie & Ronnie Moule from the Castlemaine Woollen Mill for their support, encouragement and understanding as we explored potential circus venues. What an amazing space, what an incredible couple!

THANK YOU to all our amazing circus families who contribute above and beyond! You support the circus and our children, nurturing, encouraging, engaging and assisting in ways too innumerable to mention. But know this – without you, we couldn't exist. And never forget – we REALLY appreciate everything you do. Thank you.

Our supporters and funders





Castlemaine Circus Inc. provides inclusive, accessible and non-competitive circus training and performance opportunities.

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