

**Homelessness NSW**

The Australian Council for the Arts

**Support for Funding Application**

Homelessness NSW is a peak not for profit organisation that works with its members to prevent and reduce homelessness across NSW. Our members include small, locally based community organisations, multiservice agencies with a regional reach and large State-wide service providers.

We are pleased to support the application by the Milk Crate Theatre for the Australian Council for the Arts four-year funding program.

Over the years we have developed a close working relationship with Milk Crate Theatre and an understanding of the work they do.

We have seen the evidence that they provide creative opportunities for participants to build confidence, skills and social connection that does help make positive changes in people's lives.

Milk Crate Theatre have developed many relationships with homeless services and currently work across many sectors including, youth, women escaping domestic violence and people with mental health issues. The regard they are held in the sector is testament to the value of their work.

We were very pleased to have them present at our last conference and are currently working with them as part of our consumer engagement strategy. They are specially positioned within the sector to assist with this vital work.

I would be more than pleased to discuss the value of their work.

Regards



Katherine McKernan

CEO

27 March, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Support for Milk Crate Theatre's Application for funding from the Australian Council of the Arts

The Ozanam Learning Centre (OLC) is an initiative of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, Support Services. The OLC is a community centre that provides opportunities for social connections, skill development and community and economic participation for people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness. The OLC provides a holistic service with a range of programs and activities that aims to break the cycle of homelessness by supporting people to achieve their personal goals.

At the OLC we acknowledge that what makes us individuals are our strengths, talents and passions. The relationship with Milk Crate Theatre allows us to make expression and learning through creative and performance art available to people who have or are experiencing homelessness. We have supported the work of Milk Crate Theatre since 2011. This relationship started with Milk Crate Theatre facilitating ad-hoc workshops, which we hosted and promoted through the OLC community and network. Our relationship with Milk Crate Theatre has deepened and we now host their workshops year-round.

The relationship between Milk Crate Theatre and the OLC has been a strong and positive one due to a genuine commitment and belief in the importance of empowering people who may feel disempowered due to mental health issues, housing instability/homelessness and/or drug and alcohol misuse. Milk Crate Theatre does this by providing platforms to people to share their story using the creative process of performance to build confidence, skills and social connections.

The Creative Arts Workshops that Milk Crate Theatre facilitate at the OLC provide opportunities for people to feel heard and celebrated, provides an opportunity to learn in a safe and supported space and the opportunity to work towards personal goals and the empowerment of the community and passion of society being developed through this sharing.

The Ozanam Learning Centre is pleased to support the work of Milk Crate Theatre and their application to the Australian Council of the Arts.

Kind regards,

Clare Wynne  
Acting Senior Operations Manager, Community Development



**evolve**  
**HOUSING  
FOR YOUTH**

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Formerly 'Western Housing for Youth'  
A division of Evolve Housing

To whom it may concern,

Evolve Housing for Youth (EHY), formally Western Housing for Youth Ltd (WHY), is a division of Evolve Housing, a Tier – 1 registered Community Housing Provider (CHP). EHY provides transitional housing support services for young people aged 16 – 25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. EHY is located in Parramatta, Auburn and the Cumberland Local Government areas.

Milk Create Theatre and EHY worked collaboratively together in partnership in 2018. The program allowed for participants to express their creative side and contribute to forming ideas around their personal experiences with anxiety. The facilitators presented a safe environment for people from different cultures, ages, experiences to feel included and encouraged everyone to add ideas. Through the Milk Create Theatre program it provided an opportunity for our young people to gain confidence in a group setting, explore alternative avenues to express themselves and participate in the end of year performance at Parramatta Riverside Theatre.

From the success of 2018, EHY and Milk Create Theatre have recently started a new program for young people to get involved in the creative arts environment and are hoping to have continue success in years to come. One of our young people from last year had such a positive experience that he's returned back and wanting to pursue studying in the creative arts field.

Kind Regards,

Shahn Tupaea

Living Skills/Youth Caseworker

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28 March 2019

Dear Australia Council,

I am writing to you in support of Milk Crate Theatre's application for multi-year funding.

I first came into contact with Milk Crate in 2016 as an associate artist for the Theatre of the Oppressed New York City (TONYC) International Residency with TOYNC Artistic Director, Katy Rubin. In late 2016 I was invited to facilitate as a lead artist in Milk Crate's community workshop series.

Since 2016 I have been a regular lead artist facilitator within their community creative workshop series delivering workshops at Parramatta Mission and Redfern Community Centre working with Milk Crate and Domestic Violence Service NSW creating a Women's Hub for those in the community who identify as female and with a lived experience of domestic violence. In 2017 I was invited to facilitate/direct a new Milk Crate Theatre production, That's The Spirit. The work was presented to Milk Crate community in free performances, as well as presented to high school students as part of Riverside Theatre's Education Program.

I regularly attend their artist feedback sessions and strategic planning days participated in their 2018 Scratch Night at the Eternity Theatre, as well as volunteering to deliver a series of workshops in Parramatta.

I value my working relationship with Milk Crate Theatre, and I am wholeheartedly invested in their vision and their community of artists. I have been able to witness and experience first hand the valuable contribution that they are making in changing people's lives, offering personal empowerment, social connection, skills development, and unique artistic expression. I feel valued and trusted as an artist, and thus able to create creative spaces for participants that encourage mutual respect, learning, and artistic growth.

What Milk Crate are able to achieve in both scope and ambition, with limited funds, modest resources, and a small team of highly motivated and dedicated staff, is nothing short of amazing.

With ongoing support, more time could be spent building on the potent internal mentoring programs they have successfully delivered, such as Headway, which has provided Milk Crate ensemble members with extraordinary up-skilling and bespoke creative trajectories that they would not be able to access anywhere else in the professional industry. It is these significant opportunities, and more, that could be afforded to more members in the future multi-year funding is available. Supporting Milk Crate Theatre is an investment in positive change, artistic rigor, and cultural diversity.

Multi-year funding would allow Milk Crate to be sustainable and effective moving forwards. They would be able to continue their robust advocacy through their responsive community engagement, raise awareness in the general public arena, as well as develop philanthropic contacts, consolidate strategic corporate partnerships and extend upon their culturally diverse creative community programs.

I am honored that I have been invited to contribute to Milk Crate's ongoing vital community creative engagement.

I look forward to hearing about the success of Milk Crate Theatre's application.

Yours sincerely,



Kay Armstrong

31 March 2019

Australia Council for the Arts  
372 Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

### **Milk Crate Theatre – multi-year funding**

I write to express my support for Milk Crate Theatre's expression of interest in multi-year funding from the Australia Council for the Arts.

As the convenor of Theatre and Performance Studies in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales, I am especially concerned that Milk Crate Theatre's vibrant, adventurous and socially-engaged arts practice continues to thrive.

Milk Crate Theatre has an extraordinary track record in community arts and cultural development. The company draws on international best practice to transform the prospects for people who have experienced homelessness. It runs arts-training workshops, creative developments that lead to new productions, and a unique pathway program for artists emerging into professional practice.

Milk Crate Theatre is exemplary in the way that it draws on resources and capacities across the arts, education and social sectors to deliver outcomes of artistic value and lasting benefit to the community. Participants across Milk Crate Theatre's programs report increases in self-confidence, growing social connection, and development in artistic practice and life skills.

Milk Crate Theatre's socially-engaged artistic practice is vital for the ecology of the arts in Australia. As an educator who teaches the next generation of performance-makers and spectators, I am particularly impressed with the way Milk Crate Theatre creates pathways for emerging artists. Multi-year funding will enable Milk Crate to create artistic opportunities for emerging artists whose development falls outside conventional training programs.

Milk Create Theatre has diversified its program in recent years. At the same time as attracting major project funding for an ambitious new work, the company has extended its engagement with a wide range of community partners and augmented its resources through commissions and fee-for-service workshops.

I commend Milk Crate Theatre to the Australia Council in their expression of interest in multi-year funding. And I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about my support.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jonathan Bollen  
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