

# Douglas Gautier

Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director  
Adelaide Festival Centre

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Douglas Gautier is CEO & Artistic Director of Adelaide Festival Centre. Since 2006, he has delivered a program-led strategy that has positioned Adelaide Festival Centre as a hub for Asian-Australian cultural engagement.

Douglas' program innovations include the Adelaide Guitar Festival and the OzAsia Festival, which is Australia's premiere international contemporary arts festival focusing on Asia.

Douglas is currently overseeing the redevelopment of the Adelaide Festival Centre. When fully completed in 2018, the festival centre precinct will see the unveiling of a new Festival Theatre entrance with renewed foyers and upgraded facilities; new dining experiences across Adelaide Festival Centre; technical theatre upgrades; a children's arts playground; and a revitalised northern promenade featuring Adelaide's very own Walk of Fame.

Prior to his joining the Adelaide Festival Centre, Douglas was the Director of the Hong Kong Arts Festival, held the posts of Deputy Executive Director of the Hong Kong Tourism Board and Director of Corporate Affairs and Marketing for STAR TV (the Asia-wide satellite television network of Newscorp). He was also the founding Vice-Chairman of the Asian Arts Festival Association and a board member of the Asian Cultural Council (Rockefeller Foundation).

In 2013, Douglas was elected Chair of the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres (AAPPAC). He is also the Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for Arts and Cultural Leadership, a member of the new Australia-Singapore Arts Group, an Executive Councillor of Live Performance Australia, an advisor to the Hong Kong Arts Festival, a Flinders University Councillor, and an adjunct professor of the University of South Australia.

Douglas was a key driver in the successful bid for Adelaide's accreditation as a UNESCO Creative City for Music. In 2016, Douglas was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the arts and the community.

## Responsibilities and Opportunities for Arts and Cultural Institutions in a Multicultural, Creative City

In modern creative cities, arts and cultural institutions have a responsibility to lead and serve their community in the best interest of good civic society. Sometimes, they can be undervalued and considered ‘nice to have’ rather than fundamental to the success of a multicultural city and community. Cultural institutions should place themselves at the heart of their community to ensure their own relevance, further the ambitions of a creative city, and enhance the lives of its inhabitants.

To lead and serve their city, cultural institutions must extend their reach to all areas of their communities and cultivate international networks. They must capitalise on their international connections and reputation; collaborate with all tiers of the education and learning sectors; and nurture relationships with all relevant stakeholders.

Adelaide Festival Centre’s leadership team believes the centre has a significant social responsibility to engage the power of the arts to celebrate and nurture diversity, promote social harmony, and help create a place for Australia in the world. Since 2006, Adelaide Festival Centre has achieved this ambition by focusing on ‘arts for all’ and making multicultural focus a long term strategic goal.

Now, as the institution grows its cultural leadership position within Australia and across the Asia Pacific region, it is connecting with places and people very differently than ever before. Adelaide Festival Centre’s community has changed dramatically since it opened in 1973 and the demands of what is now a multicultural community require a new proactive, dynamic, and strategic set of goals and actions. As a result, the organisation has become a much stronger contributor to social cohesion and civil society.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN A MULTICULTURAL, CREATIVE CITY

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According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, “culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy” (UNESCO, 2001).

In modern creative cities, arts and cultural institutions and organisations have an obligation to lead and serve their communities in the best interest of good civic society. Despite often being undervalued and considered to be “nice to have”, the role of cultural institutions is in fact one of great power and influence. And of course contributing to good civic society is a key responsibility, particularly in modern times when communities are growing more diverse and where the lines and gaps between the constituent parts of these communities are often more obvious and sensitive. Cultural organisations are therefore fundamental to the success of a multicultural city and community and by placing themselves at the heart of their community, these institutions ensure their own relevance, while furthering the ambitions of their creative cities, and, enhancing the lives of their inhabitants.

### Cultural Institutions as Connectors and Collaborators

To lead and serve their cities, cultural institutions must extend their reach to all areas of their communities as well as cultivate international networks and exchange. They must capitalise on their international connections and reputation; collaborate with all tiers of the education and learning sectors; and nurture relationships with all relevant stakeholders. The UNESCO declaration also says “Policies for inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life” (UNESCO, 2001).

As the Chief Executive Officer & Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival Centre, I believe that our organisation has significant social responsibility to engage the power of the arts to celebrate and nurture diversity, to promote social harmony and to help create a reputation for Australia as a place that respects and welcomes people from many cultures. This objective is important, especially for Australia’s



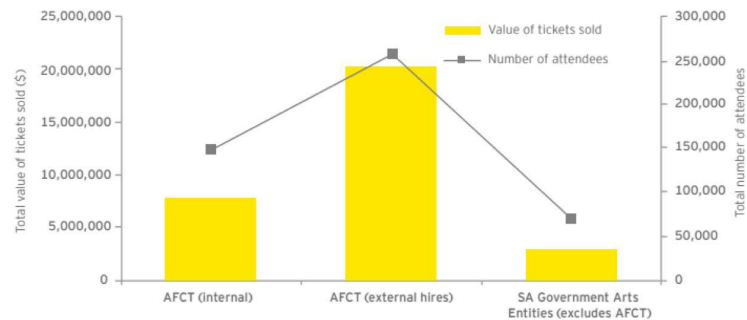
Adelaide Festival Centre by day. Image courtesy of Trentino.

position as a positive and cooperative member of the Asia-Pacific region. Since 2006, Adelaide Festival Centre has worked towards this goal by focusing on 'arts for all' and making a multicultural focus the central part of its long term strategic plans.

Now, as the organisation extends its cultural leadership position throughout Australia and across the Asia-Pacific region, it is connecting with places and people that were previously outside its cultural scope. Adelaide Festival Centre's local audiences have changed dramatically since the centre opened in 1973 and the demands of what is now, a multicultural community in our city and state require a new proactive, dynamic, and strategic set of goals

and actions. As a result, the organisation has become a much stronger contributor to social cohesion and civil society.

The Adelaide Festival Centre (AFC) functions as Adelaide's premier performing arts centre and is operated by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust (AFCT). The AFCT runs a range of activities within its broader role of promoting and hosting the performing arts in South Australia. During 2015-16, the AFCT sold approximately \$31 million in tickets to over 505,000 attendees. Performances comprise internally produced, as well as third party productions. The genre of shows include theatre, opera, dance, ballet and musical performances.



The number and value of tickets sold in 2015-2016 by the AFCT and the South Australia Government Arts Entities. Image courtesy of Ernst & Young – Adelaide Festival Centre: Economic Contribution Report (2017).

## Bringing Australia to the Asia-Pacific Region and the Region to Australia

The Festival Centre's intercultural collaborations and connections are fundamental to its success. We are adapting to and supporting Australia's fast changing communities. One of our key platforms for this approach has been our OzAsia Festival which is now 11 years old and remains the pre-eminent platform for Asia -

Australia Cultural engagement in our country. This festival celebrates Australia's connections with the cultures of the Asia-Pacific and also the growing presence and importance of Asian communities in Australia. The centre has used performing arts, literature, film and visual arts to assist local Australian-Asian communities to connect to the Arts in South Australia and help improve Australians' understanding of Asian culture, traditions and language.



OzAsia Moon Lantern Festival 2017. Image courtesy of Adelaide Festival Centre.



OzAsia Moon Lantern Parade. Image courtesy of Adelaide Festival Centre.

Another example of these international collaborations is the Australia Singapore Arts Group (ASAG). Jointly set up by the Australian and Singapore governments to promote sustainable artistic and cultural activities between the two countries, ASAG's key ambitions provide the framework for meaningful intercultural collaboration, and specifically seek to encourage:

- Capacity building, including artistic exchange and talent development programmes.
- Exchange of professional expertise and information.
- Training and professional development including cultural exchange programmes.
- Fostering conditions for the exchange of practitioners.
- Exhibitions development.
- Cultivating audiences and expanding markets within the region for art and culture.
- Showcasing Singaporean and Australian art and culture.
- Collaborative projects across art forms.

The ASAG has proven immensely rewarding for both Australia and Singapore. This kind of collaboration has potential not only for the two countries involved but for other communities and countries in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in South East Asia.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity states that, "the process of globalisation creates conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilisations" (UNESCO, 2001).

The important conversations we are having about the role of cultural institutions and organisations will continue to evolve as we reflect on our ability to influence, lead, and to honour our obligations and responsibilities. By working together to deliver inclusive arts and cultural experiences, cultural institutions can support the ambitions of their creative cities, serve the best interests of their growing multicultural communities, and promote understanding and collaboration across our Asia Pacific region.

## Bibliography

1. "UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity", UNESCO Doc. 31C/Res 25, Annex 1 (2001). Nov 2011, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13179&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).