

# The Climate Connection: Culture and Environment Roundtable Adelaide

16 February 2022 – 09:30-12:30 (Australia) –  
Online, hosted by The Australia Council +  
Julie's Bicycle for The Climate Connection

**CULTURE and ENVIRONMENT ROUNDTABLE • ADELAIDE • Adelaide Festival • Julie's Bicycle • British Council**



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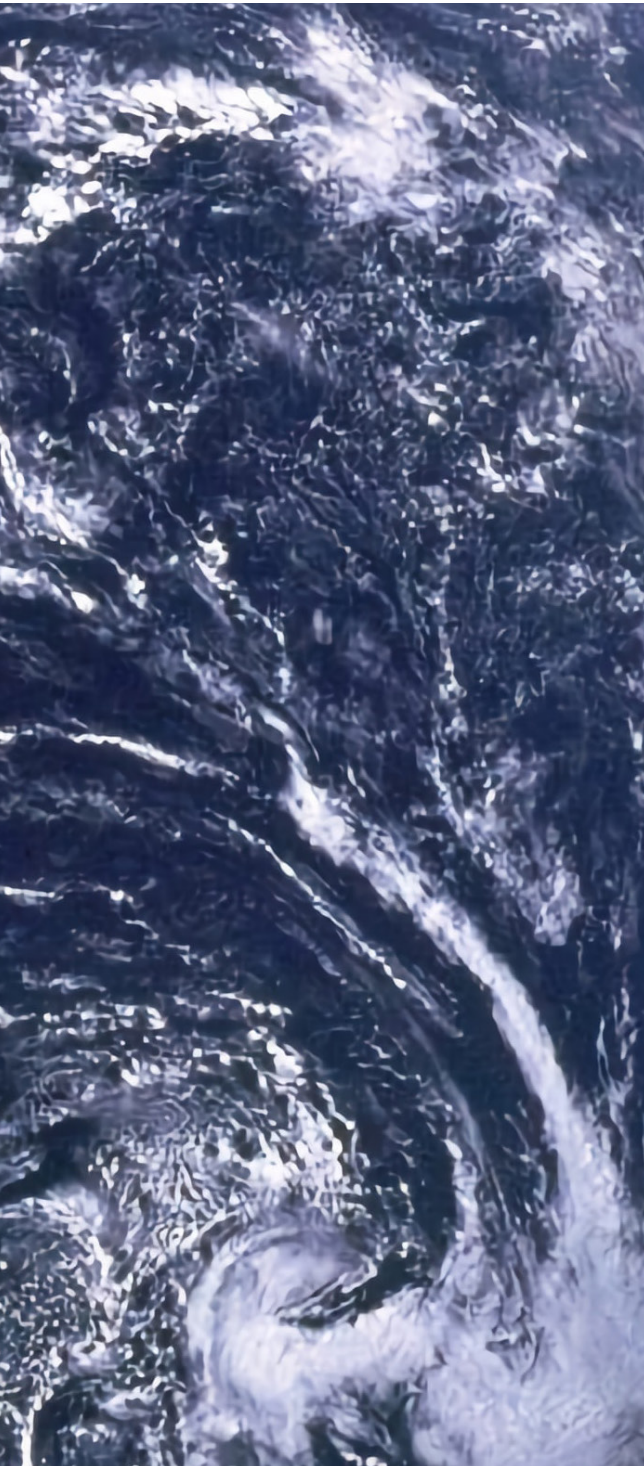


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## Global context

The most important attempt to commit all countries in the world to tackling the climate crisis, the United Nations COP26 climate summit hosted 200 heads of state, ministers, and thousands of delegates, with civil society, including artists and activists, locking arms. These negotiations, taking place in Scotland, were guided by the Sixth IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Assessment Report. The most current and comprehensive report on climate change to date, it was published, co-commissioned, and agreed by the world's 195 national governments, and shows that emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900. This has led to the unprecedented rates of global warming we are seeing today and has locked in climate-related impacts and threats for decades to come. The IPCC authors have synthesised leading research from thousands of sources to inform effective policy decisions. In November they passed the torch to the COP26 negotiating team, who had the vital job of securing ambitious climate action. This torch is now handed over to the COP27 delegates. The Adelaide Culture and Environment Roundtable was held in the lead up to this important and significant event.

## Adelaide Roundtable

This Roundtable was convened by UK non-profit organisation Julie's Bicycle and the Adelaide Festival, in partnership with the British Council and Australia Council for the Arts and as part of the UK/Australia Season. The Roundtable was set up to be a platform for dialogue on culture and climate trends in the lead up to Adelaide Festival's Climate Crisis and the Arts event in Adelaide on Friday 11 March, 2022. The Roundtable brought together key representatives from the South Australian arts and cultural sector to discuss current culture/climate trends, challenges and solutions. This event was an opportunity to come together as an industry to find new perspectives, build partnerships, create a collaborative and supportive space within the sector, and share learnings and resources towards

collective climate action. It also showcased some of the great work already being done to pave a way forward. The Roundtable intended to strengthen relationships and greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 21 per cent with a shift to renewable electricity sources playing a major part. Like many global cities, increases in some emissions sources are associated with growing consumptions and this is a world-wide challenge.

In 2016, the City of Adelaide and the Government of South Australia partnered on a Carbon Neutral Adelaide Action Plan that included 104 actions towards their shared goal. In this time, over 200 organisations have joined the Carbon Neutral Adelaide Partnership and are actively contributing towards reducing emissions and showing leading practice and collaboration. Adelaide Festival is a program ambassador in recognition of being a certified carbon neutral event and their education and advocacy in the community.

The City has been an early advocate of sustainable, low waste events, and has ambitious city-wide goals for best practice waste reduction, recycling, and a shift to a more circular economy. The City of Adelaide is committed to a low carbon future and will continue to lead by example and support the wide range of organisations and individuals who are playing their part.

## The Big Questions

During the Roundtable stakeholders from the intersection of culture and climate were invited to discuss current culture/climate trends, challenges and solutions. These questions included:

- First Nations first: finding ways to listen and learn.
- Collaboration and cooperation: how can we share learnings and resources to work together towards collective climate action?
- The present situation: looking at where we are now, including the great work already being done.
- Our challenges: funding, greenwashing and roadblocks.



Photo © Julia McNab

- Moving forward: setting benchmarks and key goals to imagine a regenerative future.

These were some of the questions roundtable participants were asked to consider.

### Emerging Themes

First Nations First approach, culturally safe spaces, bi-cultural knowledge sharing, financing First Nations consultants, carbon neutrality and offsetting, artistic and community support resources, inclusive communication, development, divestment.

### Insights captured from the discussion:

#### Prioritising First Nations

First Nations leadership, voices, histories and cultures, knowledge systems and decision-making processes in the arts and policy processes through a 'First Nations First' approach are seen as ways to sincerely acknowledge the custodians of Country, break from sustaining colonial methods of practice towards promoting allyship. This can be fostered beyond tokenistic land acknowledgements and through land sovereignty; sincere cultural exchange; nurturing First Nations arts leaders; accessible and culturally safe educational, arts and climate spaces; financially resourcing First Nations consultants and supporting First Nations independent artists with sustainable opportunities. The following ways to prioritise First Nations were identified:

- Inclusion; nurturing and facilitation and education for cultural awareness and language in prioritising First Nations. More leadership and early engagement in this space.
- Change in language, more education and create a culturally safe platform within systems, i.e. include the land that you meet on and speak about country in productions.
- Breaking down barriers to access and prioritise diversity on stage (ability, cultural, sexual, age).
- Need to change the growth mindset in order to address the climate emergency.

- Focus on decolonisation with structures and systems.
- Meaningful collaboration with indigenous food production, priority on local, native, reduce food waste, consultation with land management.

Arts organisations and businesses are asked to consider First Nations First event licences that structure staff training, climate impact frameworks and financial resourcing to reflect Indigenous solidarity with measurable and formalised commitments.

Language inclusivity that offers bicultural names in Indigenous and non-Indigenous language is considered to encourage inclusive and collective action, alongside opening up the heart language of optimism, as opposed to mind language of fear in the face of the climate crisis.

Centralised online directories or resource platforms are desired, such as an arts talent pool of First Nations cultural practitioners could act as a directory for opportunities, as well as to offer guidance and support for practitioners on grant opportunities and writing, community building and taking climate and social action.

The arts is seen as a valuable vehicle for change that must also reach unspecialised audiences; be representative of intersectional cultural, sexual, gender and disability diversities in its programming; and promote good practice in peer learning to advance collective ideas towards climate and social justice.

Financial support for independent artists to sustain their project grant writing processes and to integrate sustainability methods in their work is desired.

There is suggestion that major arts organisations can share resources with smaller organisations and community groups, such as guidance information to create positive environmental impacts, staff time and business referral relationships to renewable energy providers.

Solutions to climate and environmental issues can be complex and collectively sharing knowledge and resources is seen as a way to work positively, while there is desire to shift the language from 'adaptation and mitigation' to 'regeneration' in policy terms and impact assessments.



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## Annex 1 – Keynote Speakers:

### **Karl Telfer, *Cultural Educator: Welcome to Country***

Karl Telfer opened the meeting with an offer of greetings from an outdoor walk on Kurna Land. He described that First Nations communities in the Southern Country have been bringing people together to discuss climate change, culture and community, and placed value in the collective work and knowledge sharing in the arts and climate issues.

### **Alison Tickell, *Director, Julie’s Bicycle: Introduction***

Alison Tickell introduced the Adelaide roundtable as one of a wider series for the international Climate Connection programme led by Julie’s Bicycle and the British Council, which was organised in relation to UNCOP26 and included an extensive research report on international climate and cultural policy. Tickell drew on the global insights raised throughout the programme and highlighted the importance of working with the truths brought to the surface by communities worldwide, who are experiencing the realities of climate change and its associated impacts on the sector and their environments often in the face of top-heavy climate diplomacy that lacks plans for green creative economies. She spoke about the meaningful contributions the arts, creative industries and heritage bring to the climate conversation through rooted cultural values and focus on equitable cultural privileges, while the sector also is successful in embracing interdisciplinary and hyperlocal strategies towards the wider global ambitions of net-zero carbon. Tickell concludes optimistically with a provocation: “Everyone here can interrupt, can restore, champion activism, connection, understanding, and bring joy, kindness and hope. You are already bringing culture into the climate conversation.”

### **Rachel Healy, *Co-artistic Director of Adelaide Festival 2017-2023: Climate Crisis and the Arts***

Rachel Healy presented Adelaide Festival’s journey from recognising the large carbon footprint of the annual event to becoming the first major arts festival in Australia to be certified as a Climate Active carbon neutral event in 2020. She described the processes of measuring carbon emissions through third party assessments, which kickstarted the festival’s material reductions across its offices, catering, transport, staff clothing, marketing materials and energy use. A workforce sustainability committee was set up to localise greener practices across all departments of the festival. Further, they aimed to influence their suppliers, audiences, and volunteers to cut emissions per attendee. While sensitive to the current debates around carbon offsetting and corporate greenwashing, Adelaide Festival offset carbon emissions with donations to the cause. Rachel Healy concluded that achieving carbon neutrality also consists of divesting from fossil fuel funds and Partnering with Reforest to creatively engage audience member with offsetting their performance experience. Overall, it is an ongoing education process through advocacy and influencing the sector, such as through Adelaide Festival’s Green Artist Guide that introduces environmental arts practices.

### **The Rt Hon Sandy Verschoor, *Lord Mayor of Adelaide: Welcome Speech***

Sandy Verschoor spoke about the City of Adelaide as a leader in arts, cultural and environmental leadership for decades, beginning in 1995 towards becoming one of the world’s first carbon neutral cities, a status achieved in 2020. She described her work as Lord Mayor of Adelaide and with the Climate Change Council in “ensuring that environmental leadership is one of the four pillars of the Council and its Strategic Plan.” Verschoor highlighted WOMADelaide festival’s innovative sustainable arts and cultural activities, and noted her previous successes on recyclable and biodegradable waste management strategies for WOMADelaide.

With the Adelaide Festival, it was the carbon neutral ambassador for the City of Adelaide, and partnered with 200 local businesses and organisations to reduce emissions and create a low carbon future. It became an active member of UNESCO's Creative Cities network, aligning the arts and culture with local implementations of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Verschoor placed value in the indigenous knowledge and environmental stewardship of the First Nations peoples, and spoke about the City's partnership with the Kaurna community for the first cultural burn in 200 years in 2021.

**Nancy Bates, *Barkindji Woman*, signer-songwriter. Performance**

A musician and a powerful voice in the mental health space, Nancy Bates uses her songs as a way to share her country, culture and experiences with the world in the hope of making it a better one. She began with a call to remember how colonisation around the world has led to an unlearning of how to be in this world, and that the relationships with First Nation peoples worldwide impacts on global health. Bates stated "You can't love what you don't know," and encouraged learning about the land through the stories of First Nations Peoples. She spoke about the difficult impacts of the pandemic on artists, especially women and First Nations Peoples in the sector, who have been systematically disadvantaged even before the crisis. The song Bates performed is about her connection with country, imploring "every Australian needs to foster a deep connection to the country that they're on, to know whose country they're on, and be proud of that."

**Tiahni Adamson, *State Coordinator for SEED Mob: Climate Justice: Indigenous Youth Climate Network***

Tiahni Adamson is a wildlife conservation biologist, a sea ranger and an activist with SEED, the first Indigenous youth climate network. SEED is run by MOB, Australia's first Indigenous-only non-profit group. It advocates for climate justice centring First Nations peoples, and

current campaigns include No More Handouts to Fossil Fuel Corporations, Don't Frack the NT, and Protect Country. Adamson speaks from her own individual experience with a mission to platform First Nations peoples to gain back independence to their own lives, while utilising First Nations voices, knowledge and power to nurture a sustainable planet. Aboriginal communities are on the frontlines with young people with most at stake, while the loss of sacred burial sites due to rising sea levels is already impacting the emotional wellbeing of First Nations communities. Adamson described how indigenous land-based activities like hunting, gathering and sustaining ecological livelihoods have decreased with the altered seasonal ecological systems due to climate change. There is hope in how Adamson deeply feels the power and history of the Earth surviving changes, just as First Nations peoples have adapted over tens of thousands of years as custodians of the country. She concludes with a call to stand together with First Nations "through unity, togetherness and inclusivity" to fight for sustained life.

**Justyna Jochym, *CEO of Festivals Adelaide: Collaboration & Cooperation***

Justyna Jochym highlighted how Festivals Adelaide, the city's consortium of eleven major arts festivals, supports the sector's work on sustainability as categorised by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She referred to the UN Brundtland Report's stance that environment and development are inseparable strands for sustainability, and described how festivals' diverse functions and activities consistently deliver on this model, across policy areas of education, wellbeing, employment, economic growth, equality, climate action and responsible consumption. Non-profit festivals, in particular, engage in wider educational and community mechanisms that drive sustainability and public benefit. Contributing both locally and globally, Jochym noted successful examples of SDG aligned festivals: Adelaide Festival and WOMADelaide on carbon neutrality; the Dream Big Festival

on overcoming socio-economic and cultural access barriers for children to engage in the arts; Adelaide Fringe's First Nations Collaboration Fund that builds participation and representation, and SALA Festival that generates income opportunities for local artists. For the GISA project, Festival Adelaide has partnered with Green Music Australia, state government and green industries to identify challenges and opportunities to initiate the nation's first cohesive sector specific circular economy. Consisting of a Sector Environmental Sustainability Strategy, 5-year Action Plan, Evaluation Framework, and establishing the Festival City Adelaide Environmental Sustainability Commission, Jochym described it will cater for different levels of sustainability, requirements, capacities and needs, while influencing sector and audience behaviours.

### **Heidi Lenffer, Founding Director & CEO of Future Energy Artists (FEAT): Fuelling the Clean Energy Revolution**

Heidi Lenffer is an artist with the band Cloud Control and founded Future Energy Artists (FEAT) to combine artist-driven intentions, informed by the technological advances in clean energy, to accelerate Australia's green transition. She explained FEAT aims to decarbonise the live events space and enable artists to become

agents of change for their audiences, with environmental media training and marketing tools to promote the cause. Lenffer initiated a Renewables Investment Fund for touring musicians, and artists contributed to building a solar farm in rural southwest Queensland that now powers 11,300 homes. Recognising the financial costs of more sustainable practices can be difficult for low-income artists, Lenffer explained Solar Slice is a 1.5% sustainability surcharge built into ticket pricing that funds sustainability spending in two areas. Firstly, the Partner Eco-Fund supports partners to initiate and develop self-directed sustainability programmes, and pursue the government's Climate Active certification through Endeavour Environmental, a registered carbon offset provider. Secondly, the Clean Energy Project funds a pipeline of projects that would transition the industry, as well as formalising a collective power purchase agreement for venues to commit to using local solar energy. Lenffer summarised that the project Solar Slice brings the music industry together to share decarbonisation knowledge and actions across all stakeholders – from artists, labels, promoters and venues – to streamline decision making processes towards greener practices in the live events sector.



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## Annex 2 – Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Karl Telfer	Yelleka
Tiahni Adamson	SEED Mob
Heidi Lenffer	FEAT.
Justyna Jochym	Festivals Adelaide
Sandy Verschoor	Adelaide City Council
Kate Larsen	Facilitator
Alison Tickell	Julie's Bicycle
Nancy Bates	Singer Songwriter
Boram Lee	University of South Australia
Teena Munn	Patch Theatre
Sarah Brunns	KESAB
Ben Brooker	Writers and Theatre maker
Christie Anthoney	City of Adelaide
Rachel Healy	Adelaide Festival
Jessica Wundke	SA Government
Sera Waters	SA artists for Climate Action
Dwayne Coulthard	SAHMRI
Kate Moskwa	Sala Festival
Chloe Smith	Adelaide Fringe
Lachlan Turner	Freelance production manager
Pippa Bailey	Cultural Gardeners
Alex Sinclair	Adelaide Festival Centre
Julie Ryan	SA Film
Jennifer Layther	SA Government
Zoe Freney	SA artist for Climate Action
Laura Vozzo	SA Government
Alison Currie	Artist
Elizabeth McCall	ASO
Simon Bryant	Chef and speaker
Rebecca Pearce	Slingsby
Jo Dyer	Adelaide Festival
Trish Hansen	Urban Mind
Julian Hobba	State Theatre Company
Tully Barnett	Flinders university
Jade Lillie	Australia Council
Sophie Shnapp	Julie's Bicycle



## About the Partners:

### British Council

British Council is the UK's international organisation responsible for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We connect, build understanding and trust between the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. Last year, we communicated face-to-face with more than 80 million people, and over 791 million people online, through our radio and TV programs and our print publications. Founded in 1934, the British Council is a charity and public organization that has become a legal entity with the Royal Charter. 15 percent of our revenue is covered by the UK government.

### Julie's Bicycle

Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, JB has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on. JB works with cultural policymakers to create structural change at a local, national and international level. JB's freely available resources are the most comprehensive library of good environmental practice for culture anywhere, co-created with the thousands of artists, cultural workers, and creative organisations we have worked with. We exist at the heart of a thriving informal network of organisations and individuals who share our vision across the world, using our 14 years of experience to support others on their journey, and helping to catalyse new projects at the intersection of culture and climate. Find out more: [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

### The Australia Council

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts investment, development and advisory body. We champion

and invest in arts and creativity to benefit all Australians.

- We invest in artists and organisations through peer assessed grants, fellowships and awards that enable art to be created and experienced.
- We deliver strategic sector development initiatives that build industry capacity, networks and digital mobility and increase markets and audiences for Australian creative work.
- We advocate for the social, cultural and economic value of arts and creativity.
- We provide advice to the government on matters connected with the arts.
- We manage Government-directed initiatives and frameworks in support of the arts.
- We conduct research and analysis that deepens understanding of the role and value of arts and creativity.
- We collaborate with state, territory and local governments.
- We partner with others to increase investment in and support for creativity.

### About Adelaide Festival

Adelaide Festival commissions and champions Australia's most innovative new work along with presenting some of the world's great companies and artists. Adelaide Festival is committed to reducing the event's impact on the environment and are proud to be the first major arts festival in Australia to be certified carbon neutral. In 2022, Adelaide Festival presented Climate Crisis and the Arts, a free, one-day event with panel discussions, performances, conversations and more with a focus on science, the arts and creative climate action.

### The Climate Connection

The Climate Connection is the British Council's global platform for dialogue, cooperation and action against climate change. It connects millions of people from the UK and the rest of the world through collaborative and creative solutions to the climate crisis.

## Why?

International cooperation through cultural relations is key to addressing shared development solutions. By encouraging cross-sectoral, inter-generational and international collaboration, and bringing in new voices across the arts, education and English, the Climate Connection will enable more innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to our shared climate crisis. Through this approach, the Climate Connection will make climate action as inclusive as possible, by strengthening cooperation between the UK and the world, and across all parts of society, to enable everyone to contribute to a better future for our planet.

Photo © Adelaide Festival





Julie's Bicycle  
CREATIVE • CLIMATE • ACTION

ADELAIDE  
FESTIVAL **AF**  
4 - 20 Mar 2022

A decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping white hexagonal outlines. The top hexagon is the largest and most prominent, with two smaller ones overlapping it from the left and bottom-left.

**The Climate Connection**

Find us:

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