

Night Cat Value Statement.

The Night Cat strives to be a safe place where anyone and everyone is welcome. We aim to be a leader in showcasing diversity, artists from marginalised communities and most importantly upholding values of inclusion and equity in the music industry in all areas of our business.

We have done some reflecting and we know that there's room for improvement and we want to make changes so that we are accommodating absolutely everyone we can. Our goal is to be a platform for the incredible and talented musicians of Australia and the rest of the world, and to have audiences feel welcome and inspired to support the talent that we host. The Night Cat is a Melbourne institution and we understand that we are in a position to have a lasting positive impact on the industry and how musicians, staff and audiences experience live music.

We understand that the world is constantly changing and that words aren't enough. We are committed to taking action to ensure we are being the best we can be. If you want to see our progress and our future plans, click the link below to view our Equity Action Plan.

We also want to say a massive thank you to the VMDO and Diversity Arts Australia for including us in the Fair Play program 2021 and allowing us to be a part of and access the incredible workshops and mentors who helped us develop this plan.

This is an ongoing process for us that will span over years. Equity and inclusion is not something that happens overnight and we want to do our part in affecting change in the industry, starting with our venue.

Training

Short term goal: To have clear training processes for new and current staff, including induction/on-boarding and conflict resolution.

Outcome/impact:

All staff will have completed the required amount of training in the necessary areas. They will feel like the venue has equipped them with the necessary skills to handle the regular circumstances that arise. In addition they will understand how to be culturally sensitive to minority groups and how to create an inclusive and equitable environment for everyone. This will help with staff retention and with general staff awareness and attitude.

Actions:

1. Create formalised training/onboarding documents for all staff in the following areas:
 - Bar
 - Bussies
 - Front door
 - Cloak
 - Security
 - Sound Engineering
 - Lighting
 - Management
 - Marketing

New staff will undergo a quiz with a front page that is relevant to each staff member's area that they are hired into. This will come with the OHS handbook as well. (Hard copy and digital copy for them to sign off on).

2. Cultural training for all staff
Share workshops and training sessions with the core team. Decide on a minimum to attend each 6-12 months. Send and flag the training sessions that are priority.
3. Create a document available to all staff so they know who the points of contact are and what area each person deals with. Allowing staff to reach out and be sure they can ask questions or voice issues to correct people.
 - Justin (Venue Owner)
 - Amber (General Manager + Venue Manager)
 - Fran (General manager + Venue Manager)
 - Leesa (Head of Marketing and Promotions)
 - Cindy (Social Media Assistant)
 - Maddy (Junior Booker + Sonic Textures + Marketing)
 - Louie (In House Production)
 - Rhys (In House Lighting and Production)
4. Conflict and communication training
 - Step by step training on what to do when conflict arises.
 - especially for door, floor and bar staff.
 - formal training outsourced for conflict resolution.
5. Training/tools for accessibility practises and on how to engage with more neurodivergent individuals
 - outsourced.
 - communication cards and signage.
 - how to communicate with masks.

People responsible: Fran/Amber/Justin
Resources required: Funding for training

Timeline:

Task 1 - Active. To be completed in 6 weeks Friday 20th August 2021.
Task 2 - Ongoing.
Task 3 - Active. To be completed in 6 weeks Friday 20th August 2021.
Task 4 - within 3 months (end of September)
Task 5 - Ongoing.

Evaluation:

Have a hotline where people can text their thoughts on security guards and the venue.
Have a poster inside that asks people to text and give feedback.
Feedback on cultural training immediately after and 6 months later (what they thought, how effective the training was).

Long term goal:

Complete the rest of the tasks, undergo cultural, communication and accessibility training.

Outcome/impact: All core staff will have an advanced level of understanding and will have undergone the required amount of training and will be more equipped to deal with situations that arise in the venue.

Actions:

1. Relevant staff complete (every 6 months or yearly) a course chosen by the venue that covers cultural awareness and how to interact with diverse cultures appropriately.
2. All managers will undergo a communication/conflict management course.
3. All key staff will undergo training that covers inclusivity when it comes to disability, accessibility and neurodivergent individuals.

People responsible: All core staff.
Resources required: Funding for courses/training.

Timeline: In the next year.

Evaluation:

Staff complete a second set of surveys 6-12 months later to see if there was any impact of this training.
- Looking back over the last 6-12months, did this training impact your work? Did you do anything different, has anything stuck with you or come up in your work since then?

Policies

Short term goal:

To start with a simplified grievance policy and identify the remaining/additional policies to what is listed in step 2.

Outcome/impact: Educate staff, support them, be more inclusive to ESL staff, show them the pathway if they need it.

Actions:

1. Fran to research. Go back to the original employesure doc. and simplify and ensure grievance policy allows for the following:
 - Easy for staff with ESL.
 - Easy to know who to talk to (have multiple options of who to talk to).
 - Details about who is best to talk to for what issue.
 - Set boundaries for staff behaviour to patrons, in response to patrons and amongst the team.
 - A guide on how to behave in certain scenarios.
 - Appropriate behaviour in the workplace.
 - Examples of responses to bigotted/bullying/racist behaviour.
 - Where to seek support in the case of a traumatic event (in and out of the business).
 - Drafted grievance policy goes out to staff for feedback, asking them whether it is easy to read, easy to action, would they use it.
 - Collate feedback, re draft based on feedback, send out again to show feedback was acted on and gather final comments.
 - Send out the final policy to all staff.

2. Have other staff identify any further areas for policies in addition to the following:
 - Employment and hiring policy.
 - Disability/accessibility policy. Inclusive of the nearest defibrillator. Mention of a stage ramp being something we want to add as well as disabled toilets once we have the funds. Go Fund Me for accessibility renovations or event fundraisers.
 - Green policy. Inclusive of our dedication to becoming a more environmentally friendly and sustainable business. Paper straws, pasta straws, charge a dollar for plastic straws and all money goes to Sea Shepherd. Reusable water bottles for artist riders - go plastic free. Plastic free water bottles for patrons as well - to research further. Using recycled paper in the office. Paperless for accounts and artist worksheets. Recycling and rubbish bins in the green room and office. Environmentally friendly merch. No printing stage times in the green room or front door. All on whiteboards.
 - Marketing/promotions Policy.
Fair marketing and promotions across all acts, being inclusive to all peoples - captioning, signage that's easy to read, image descriptions, accessible images for vision impaired.
 - Engagement Policy.
Always paying people fairly for their time. Showing respect for their processes.

People responsible: Fran and Justin

Resources required: Existing Employsure doc & examples of other policies to compare.

Timeline: Grievance policy to be drafted and written by end of August & identify further policies needed.

Evaluation: Feedback whilst writing the grievance policy.

Long term goal:

To cover all policies with detail and liaise with Employsure for simplified versions. All easy to understand and easily accessible. Flesh out the policies in step 2 that have been identified as areas of impact.

Outcome/impact: No stone is left unturned. There is an answer for everything and it's all easily accessible by all staff. Every rule is transparent and when broken, reasonable action is taken that is outlined clearly in these documents.

Actions:

1. Written and published copies of the following policies:
 - Employment and hiring policy.
 - Disability/accessibility policy.
 - Green policy - our dedication to becoming a more environmentally friendly and sustainable business.
 - Firing or dismissing staff.
 - Marketing/promotions Policy.
 - Engagement Policy.

2. Which policies do employsure have expertise in writing?

3. Find relevant consultants for the policies that Employsure does not specialise in - environmental activist/first nations consultant etc.

People responsible: Fran, Amber, Justin, Leesa

Resources required: Other policy examples to draw from. Policy template. Fresh eyes to check over these once they are written.

Timeline: End of the year/early next year 2022.

Evaluation: Whether more serious incidents are occurring? Are people using this to de-escalate?

Are people using these policies long term? Do they remember where to find them?

Leadership

Short term goal: The aim of this plan is to ensure all staff are supported and respected by the entire leadership and able to speak up and share their understanding of issues and workplace culture.

Outcome/impact: Marginalised individuals within the workplace will feel more understood and comfortable in speaking up when issues arise. Potential problems are identified early and staff can address them before they escalate. Staff are able to support each other to learn more about one another and improve their understanding of equity.

Actions:

1. Gather info on how performing artists feel currently about leadership via an anonymous survey and curate plan in alignment with these results.
2. Define/create a summary of what a healthy workplace is (core team) - based on our prior understanding and the survey results. Each core staff member will write their opinion on the following and then will bring it to the team for final approval.
 - each core staff member to articulate what a healthy workplace looks like to them?
 - what kind of space do you want to work in, what do you want to be creating?
 - what do you think should never happen in a workplace?
 - what should be avoided if it can be?
3. Are there common threads in the answers? Highlight these and start with these as starting points for foundations.
 - all agree that these things need to be included, these things need to be avoided.
 - what did we disagree with? Think of examples of these. How can we compromise.
 - what things should we make a priority in this particular workplace.
4. Write out a final statement of what a healthy workplace looks like to The Night Cat collectively. Explain the major parts of this and why they are important. (this statement can be included on every new employee induction and in booking summary when booking new acts).
5. Implement necessary changes if needed - once foundations are agreed upon.

People responsible: Core team.

Resources required:

Timeline: By the end of 2021.

Evaluation: Two focus groups. Core staff - do we still agree on this statement, have we been living up to it? Is there more work that needs doing?
Performing artists focus group - do you see The Night Cat living up to this and where do we fall short? (include with the artist audit)

Long term goal: Training for people in leadership roles i.e managers. How to be accountable and how to be a great leader in the workplace.

Outcome/impact:

Managers feel more confident in their ability, strive to be better leaders and are held accountable. Staff have an understanding of the work that is done by other staff/managers, they understand the impact of that work, creating space for respect.

Actions:

1. Seek out managerial/leadership training. (At least one a year)
 - both within the industry or outside of the industry.
 - ask the VMDO who could be viable for this?
 - look at it from a wider arts POV.
 - Arts Centre? What are larger organisations currently doing and what is working for them?
2. Seek out mentors in the industry who we look up to and request a mentor session
 - what would we like to talk to each of these people about?
 - informal context with consultation payments

Some of our heroes include:

Corinne Wilke - Artist Relations. What is it like for artists entering the venue? How to make them feel welcomed and safe.

Charlotte Abrams - Management/artist experience

Sarah Guppy - Publicity

Sarah Hamilton - Digital/Women in the workplace

Johann Poniac - Label/artist experience/management/creative implementation

Neil Morris - First Nation consulting/Artist experience

VMDO mentor UK session (fair play) - Women in the workplace/accountability

Eliza Hull - Accessibility

Paige X Cho - Digital space

FLOSSY - WIP Project

Annette Tripodi - Equitable booking

People responsible: Justin, Leesa, Fran, Amber.

Resources required: Funding for training and for mentor's time.

Timeline: One training session in the next year and one a year consistently. Plus mentor sessions when they are available.

Evaluation:

Whether we were able to find something that is relevant to the industry but still formalised. Whether implementing this worked or made a difference. Do you feel like a better leader? Explain what a great leader is? Have there been instances where people brought stuff up and the manager was able to be accountable and address what happened.

Employment

Short term goal:

Have a diverse collection of employees in terms of culture, gender, disability, education.
Have a better pathway to ensure we can find these people.

Outcome/impact: Our team will be more diverse and have input from voices that aren't currently being heard.

Actions:

1. To review how much EAP has been implemented and decide whether we are a safe and welcoming place for potential marginalised staff members.
2. Find out where to advertise so that the reach is outside of our current community. Ensure that we can interview with awareness and staff are ready to take on new staff members with sensitivity and cultural understanding.
3. Create a checklist to ensure the job has been advertised across several ethnic community radio/newspapers/websites etc.
4. Create a template for job hiring that speaks to the diversity that we seek.
5. Make it clear that equal preference is given to first nations/CALD/disabled candidates.
6. Interview with the awareness of preconceived bias and be sure to ask questions that are culturally sensitive.

People responsible: Fran, Amber, Justin

Resources required: Money for advertising, Checklist, Template.

Timeline: Commenced January 2021 and a work in progress.

Evaluation:

What actions did we accomplish?

What was the impact, negative/positive?

How many applications did we get during this time.

Get feedback - how did they hear about the opportunity and how did they find the application impact/interview process?

Long term goal: To have a diverse team that feels safe to speak up and contribute to venue decisions. For people to feel comfortable enough to share their lived experience with the team and let it inform future diversity decisions.

Outcome/impact: The ability to be certain that no group is being excluded and that everyone is fairly spoken for. For everyone to feel safe and for the work environment to be one of utter inclusion, equity and positivity.

Actions:

1. Survey the team in 12-18 months time and review whether we have achieved what we set out to do.

People responsible: Core team.

Resources required: Survey.

Timeline: 1-3 years.

Evaluation:

How many marginalised staff have we hired? How many applied and interviewed. Survey of current marginalised staff and how they function/feel in the workplace. Looking at retention rates in different areas of the venue? Who's stayed the longest. Is retention affected by any of the issues we are trying to eliminate?

Engagement (collaboration and consultation)

Short term goal:

To create connections and reach out for collaborations with businesses run by marginalised people for all areas of the venue and begin to build relationships.

Once relationships are established, create a list to recommend to artists who play at the night club to further encourage the workflow and relationships for poster design, prices, examples Invisible.thedrum.

Outcome/impact: Build connections with visual artists and potentially have them do more work for design more often once a relationship is formed.

Actions:

1. Research and start a database.
2. Gather prices.
3. Review and add names once every 6 months.
4. Mention artists who created the posters on socials for further support and promotion.
5. Social activation based on poster designers.

People responsible: Leesa

Resources required: List, paid promotion for social activations.

Timeline: Over the next 12 months.

Start list on 12th July - Find 10 people

Each fortnight add another 5

Evaluation:

Are people wanting to be on the list?

How often do these people get work?

How often are we recommending people on the list?

Long term goal:

Hold events that seek out collaboration with consultants from communities First Nations, Latin, POC, Asian, Greek, Israeli, disabled, etc. to create value on either side and build connections. More specifically, hold mini festivals in line with this and as discussed in team meetings with the intention that this will be a regular occurrence and not a one time thing. Make a note of when NAIDOC week is and how to program with this in mind.

Outcome/impact: Building relationships with underrepresented communities and to support local marginalised communities in the arts sector that we are also a part of. Allowing audiences to get a taste of the other incredible music that Melbourne has to offer. Being able to tap on these relationships when ready to recruit from these communities.

Actions:

1. Research different communities to identify areas of interest in terms of genre.
2. Start on ideas for new shows & grant research.
3. Set dates for the mini festival.
4. Book artists.
5. Promote the show.
6. Book the next round of artists.

7. Review the process, ticket sales and promotional success.

People responsible: Booking team & Marketing team & Amber for grants

Resources required:

Timeline: Next three months for research and then putting on shows by the end of the year?

1st August - overview of funding and grant opportunities

1st Sept - initial ideas and concepts for shows to consider and communities to approach

Jan/Feb 2022 - shows.

Evaluation:

Review first mini festival process and success. Ask artists, staff and punters for feedback.

Financial audit.

Marketing

Short term goal:

To build relationships outside of our current ones, especially with media that represent marginalised groups who play and attend the venue. To also ensure that public facing marketing assets represent our Equity Action Plan and our healthy workplace statement.

Outcome/impact: Wider reach for the venue and artists playing. The Night Cat is better positioned to hold a wider range of events. Make sure the messages we are currently stating are fair, aware and equitable. Learn which platforms are the best way to reach marginalised communities.

Actions:

1. Reach out to ethnic radio, start to build a POC database and build relationships.
 - Email radio stations with promo for relevant shows. Pitch to them for interviews.
 - have ipads in the green room with a quick survey for artists to complete.
2. Review existing Night Cat Public facing marketing and make amendments.
 - Tell people on our website about how the venue is accessible.
 - Are there steps anywhere, are there ramps anywhere.
 - Widths of doorways.
 - Can you reserve a seating area when you're mobility challenged but not in a wheelchair.
 - Encourage punters to call or email to reserve accessible seating.
 - Flat floor, slight bump on the dance floor.
 - On the FAQ section, don't use wheelchair friendly - be specific as it's not true that it's wheelchair friendly yet.
 - Add an acknowledgement of country.
 - Add policies as they are completed.
 - Alt text for images (screen readers)In the code.
 - Image description is for socials. Can add alt. Text on FB too.
 - Twitter should be in alt. Text because the text is shorter.
 - Images on the website could have image descriptions, but logo may have alt. text.
 - Add a statement about tolerance for behaviour on the website.- zero tolerance policy.

People responsible: Leesa

Resources required:

Timeline: from now onwards.

Evaluation:

How much promo are we getting from those radio stations? Is it impacting who attends the shows and who interacts online?

Review Night Cat's online presence in 12 months and ask - are there any accessibility hurdles left? Have these practises been an ongoing practise of the work?

Long term goal:

Have a formed personal relationship with specific communities and know who to contact for what show and best practices for inclusive marketing (disabled and POC communities).

Outcome/impact: Mutual give and take, friendship, strong relationship that's lasting and consistent. No one feels excluded and this works towards mending The Night cat reputation.

Actions:

1. Have a solid list of primary contacts.
2. Have those contacts willing to help when necessary.
3. Service those relationships with meetings/coffees/tickets to shows.
4. Developing a document for best practises for inclusive marketing.

People responsible: Leesa

Resources required:

Timeline: 12-24 months.

Evaluation:

Be able to reference who these primary contacts are.

Name what they've done, what we've done for them. What effect they've had on the venue.

Refer back to the doc. Update and see if we have upheld all the things that were written.

If someone took over the marketing of this role, would this plan and the training documents be enough for them to know what to do going forward?