

**CANBERRA
YOUTH THEATRE**

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**THE VOICE
OF YOUTH
EXPRESSED
THROUGH
INTELLIGENT AND
CHALLENGING
THEATRE.**

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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Canberra Youth Theatre
acknowledges the Ngunnawal
people as traditional custodians of
the lands on which we collaborate,
share stories, and create art.

We recognise all other First
Nations peoples and families with
connection to the ACT and region.

We pay our respects to their
Elders past, present and emerging.

Sovereignty was never ceded.

ABOUT US

Canberra Youth Theatre is one of Australia's leading youth arts companies.

We amplify the voices of young people — providing a space for them to discover their creative selves. From the first spark of an idea, through to full production, we are committed to creating a canon of new works for young people, driven by an inclusive, youth-led approach.

We specialise in bridging the divide between young people and professional theatre practice by engaging young people as active collaborators in the creation of new works which authentically represent the voice of youth.

We create pathways to professional practice that empower the creative leaders of tomorrow, and provide vital training opportunities for our emerging artists. Our creative engagement programs work to ensure all young people in our region can access the arts, and benefit from its profound social impacts.

Canberra Youth Theatre provides a platform for performers, designers, directors, theatre-makers, playwrights, and cultural leaders to gain invaluable professional experience, develop their craft, and find their own creative voice.

Canberra Youth Theatre is the voice of youth expressed through intelligent and challenging theatre.

VISION

A world where every young person can experience the power of theatre; where art is essential, and fosters an inclusive culture of fearless creative expression, experimentation, and connection.

MISSION

To develop and empower young people in the Canberra region to create transformative artistic experiences.

PURPOSE

To create intelligent and challenging theatre that expresses the voice of youth.

FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

CREATE NEW WORKS

To be a leading theatre company that creates, develops, and promotes new artistic works with young people from across the Canberra region.

PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

To invest in professional artists and create tangible career pathways for emerging talent.

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

To broaden our engagement and deliver opportunities for young people to connect, collaborate, and be creative.

ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

To thrive as a resilient arts organisation, driven by strong leadership and diverse income streams, enabling sustainable growth and investment in our artistic programs.



WE VALUE

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

We create artistic works of a professional standard that are challenging, intelligent and impactful.

We deliver high quality artistic experiences that respond to the needs of young people and strive to showcase the best of what youth theatre can offer.

We make an essential contribution to the cultural vibrancy of the ACT through the creation and presentation of new work, generating opportunities for young and emerging artists.

CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION

We bring together young people, emerging, and professional artists to collaborate, learn new skills, create powerful performances, and build pathways to artistic careers.

We support young people to share their voice and discover their own artistic potential.

We develop creative thinkers, makers, and lovers of art and performance.

We collaborate with artists and organisations to create new opportunities and possibilities for creating theatre.

INNOVATION

We believe the ideas, experiences and perspectives of each generation of young people call for new forms to express them.

We provide a supportive space for young people to take artistic risks and push the boundaries of what theatre can be.

We support the development of bold and challenging work that is relevant to young people, embraces emerging arts practices, and celebrates experimentation.

We inspire our artists and challenge our audience's expectations about what theatre created by young people can achieve.

PATHWAYS

We create access opportunities and pathways to artistic careers, through skills development, mentorships, and professional collaborations.

We build connections between young people, the professional theatre sector, educational institutions, and the wider community.

We believe the experiences and connections made through youth theatre are long-lasting and essential to the development of young people; personally, creatively and professionally.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

We believe theatre should be inclusive, diverse, and accessible to everyone.

We create an environment where young people feel supported and safe, both as individuals and through the expression of their creative ideas.

We work to amplify the voices of young people, making space for them to discover and express their creative selves.

We are committed to fostering inclusiveness and embracing the diversity of all people, including differences in cultural background, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

We believe in the voice and vision of young people, and empower them so they have the agency and confidence to create the positive change they want to see in the world.

We promote youth leadership in our programs and governance, empowering young leaders with the guidance, resources, and support to develop an autonomous artistic practice.

We give young people a platform from which they can grow professionally and continue to contribute to our arts and cultural sector.

We ensure that the voice of young people is involved in our strategic and artistic planning.



2024 AT A GLANCE

25
Professional Artists
Employed

55
Emerging Artists
Supported

2,305
Audience Members

410
Participants

41
Training Programs

486
Workshop Sessions

2
Major Productions

34
Production
Performances

2
New Works Produced

3
Creative
Developments

1
New Works
Commissioned

6
Arts Collaborations

7
Business
Collaborations



OUR TEAM

BOARD

- CHAIR**
PETER HOOLIHAN
- DEPUTY CHAIR**
ADRIANA LAW
- SECRETARY**
CASSANDRA HOOLIHAN
- TREASURER**
ELLEN HARVEY (until April 2024)
LOUISE DAVIDSON (from August 2024)
- AMY CRAWFORD
JOANNA ERSKINE
EMMA MACDONALD
MEL ZIARNO (until April 2024)

STAFF

- ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CEO**
LUKE ROGERS
- ADMINISTRATOR**
HELEN WOJTAS
- CREATIVE LEARNING PRODUCER**
ANNA JOHNSTONE
- MARKETING & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**
CHRISTOPHER CARROLL
- FINANCE & STRATEGY MANAGER**
LOUISE DAVIDSON (until August 2024)

- DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**
CAITLIN BAKER
- WORKSHOPS COORDINATOR**
CHARLOTTE JACKSON
- EDUCATION COORDINATOR**
HANNAH PENGILLY (until July 2024)
- DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR**
CAITLIN HODDER (until March 2024)

- WORKSHOP ARTISTS**
CAITLIN BAKER
JADE BREEN
ELLA BUCKLEY
ASHLEIGH BUTLER
CHRISTOPHER CARROLL
LUCY FERGUSON
JESSI GOODING
QUINN GOODWIN
PATRICK HAESLER
ETHAN HAMILL
ANNA JOHNSTONE
JULIAN LARNACH
CHARLIE LEHMANN
EVA LOXLEY
ASHLEIGH MAYNARD
AMI MCELLE
- AMY ORMAN
LEAH RIDLEY
CHARLOTTE PALMER
JUNIPER POTTER
RACHEL ROBERTSON
DAYNE SPENCER
KARA SPENCER
LILY WELLING
MATT WHITE
- COMMISSIONED WRITER**
SONIA DODD



CHAIR REPORT

2024 was a challenging year for youth theatre. At the end of the year, we published a public statement on the future of the organisation, in which we explained that with our current resources, it is no longer possible for us to provide the breadth of artistic opportunities we have been celebrated for. While we strive to make theatre accessible for young people, the cost of providing quality creative opportunities is not balanced by our income. This is, unfortunately, not a situation unique to Canberra Youth Theatre. During this last year we have seen a number of arts organisations across Australia fold, merge or reduce operations as a result of the discouraging landscape for funding for the arts, and in particular youth arts, a trend which has been ongoing for a number of years now.

As a result, while grateful for the continued support of our sponsors, donors, partners, advocates and the ACT Government, we have announced that Canberra Youth Theatre will not be putting on any productions in 2025, we are limiting the number of workshops offered, consolidating our Emerging Artist program, and have limited employment opportunities outside of our core staff. This has been a heartbreaking decision. However, it is one we have had to make to ensure we can best serve our community, bring our creative ambitions in line with capacity, and safeguard our organisation's future. The Board has sought advice from across the industry, and we believe this decision allows Canberra Youth Theatre the best opportunity to provide continued outstanding artistic opportunities to young people, backed by solid governance.

While these difficult realities must be acknowledged, so must the amazing work that Canberra Youth Theatre and our community have accomplished over this past year be celebrated!

2024 saw the staging of two outstanding new Australian works, both focusing on the authority of our leaders (or lack thereof), and the struggles experienced by young people stepping into the workplace. We were all confronted by the scrutinous eye of the leaders of tomorrow when our workplace was overtaken in *The Department of Responsible Adulting*, where questions were raised as to how well adults were running our world, and were we even cut out for the job? And we experienced the stress of the overworked first job, commingled with the disappointment of a stalling career in the darkly surreal comedy *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* by Honor Webster-Mannison.

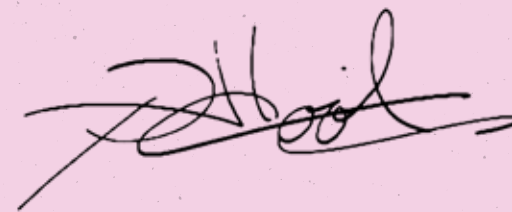
We once again joined forces with internationally-renowned puppeteers Erth at Enlighten Festival, where over 50 Canberra Youth Theatre young artists brought a menagerie of magical creatures to life to thousands of festival-goers. We launched our Open Studio program, offering subsidised space to emerging artists for creative development residencies. We continued to deliver our Emerging Playwright

Commission, developing the 2023 Emerging Playwright Commission, *How to Destroy the Beep Test in Five Days*, by Sonia Dodd, and announced our 2024 winner, Sarah Matthews. We provided hundreds of workshop opportunities, supported 50 emerging artists, collaborated with arts organisations and businesses across Australia, and reached thousands of audience members. We also moved into a new space, B Block at Gorman Arts Centre, a dedicated youth theatre hub which expands our long term vision and potential, and our members voted to update our constitution in line with current best practice for not-for-profit organisations. Not bad for just one year.

All these achievements could not have been possible without the generous support of our community, donors, partners and advocates, and while the current economic situation is a challenge, it is with this continued support that Canberra Youth Theatre is able to rise to the occasion. We have received continued, invaluable support from the ACT Government, Arts Capital, Canberra Theatre Centre, Holding Redlich, Sidestage, Elect Printing, NIDA, and the Jeremy Spencer Broom Legacy. We are immensely grateful for this continued support and the incredible generosity of our donors and supporters.

Lastly, as always, I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of our core staff, without whom we would not be able to provide any of the opportunities we do, the continued leadership and commitment of our Artistic Director & CEO Luke Rogers, his phenomenal team of staff and professional artists, and all our young people, who are the reason and inspiration for everything we do.

See you at the theatre.



PETER HOOLIHAN
Chair of the Board



EXECUTIVE REPORT

It's my pleasure to present Canberra Youth Theatre's 2024 Annual Report.

This year, we focused on creating more space — physically and creatively — for young people to explore, grow, and collaborate. Our move into our dedicated spaces in B Block at Gorman Arts Centre, in partnership with Arts Capital, marked more than a change of address — it signified a bold new chapter.

Our new home has quickly become a creative hub: a rehearsal and workshop studio, a flexible project space for emerging artists, and a communal area for collaboration and conversation. It's a space where young people feel at home, where creative ideas are born and realised.

We launched 2024 with *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* by Honor Webster-Mannison, a darkly surreal and chaotic dive into young people's first experiences in the workplace. In *The Department of Responsible Adulting*, immersive theatre was turned on its head, giving children the power and placing adults at their mercy—an audacious reflection on power, responsibility, and imagination.

Through our Emerging Creatives program with NIDA, emerging artists gained insights and hands-on experience in theatre design and stage management. We introduced Young Critics, nurturing confident young voices in local theatre criticism. Our Writers Ensemble cultivated the seeds of new stories, with support from leading playwrights, while our Emerging Playwright Commission continues to thrive and elevate the contribution of youth theatre to Australian culture.

Our Ensembles workshops provide a journey from foundational skills to advanced performance training, where young people develop their craft in an environment of curiosity and collaboration. We also strengthened our education partnerships, delivering in-school experiences and teacher training programs to expand arts access across Canberra.

2024 brought many artistic wins, but also some difficult decisions. After more than 50 years as a champion for young artists, we faced the harsh reality of dwindling resources, an increase in the cost of living, and systemic inequity in arts funding. In late 2024, we made the strategic decision to pause productions, scale back, and restructure for sustainability.

This isn't retreat — it's recalibration. For a long time, we have self-subsidised accessible programs because we believe in their value and recognise their impact. But without the funding to match, sustainability falters. We're acting now to ensure we can continue — stronger, resilient, and as creatively ambitious as ever.

These changes come at a cost in the short term: fewer productions, fewer opportunities, fewer jobs for artists. For a city aspiring to be an arts capital, this is a moment for reflection and resolve.

We're not stepping away from our artistic and strategic vision — we're evolving. Through renewed programs, mentorships, and collaborations, we'll continue meeting young artists where they are. And with our new spaces at Gorman Arts Centre, we remain open — literally and figuratively — to the next generation of creative minds.

Canberra Youth Theatre is not alone in this. Across Australia, youth arts organisations are battling underfunding, undervaluation, and rising costs. Our sector is too often seen as "less than". Yet our impact is undeniable. Youth arts is where young people find agency, empathy, and community. It's where leadership is nurtured and creativity becomes a way of life. We need structural change: funding models that reflect our cross-sector impact, a national youth arts strategy, and policy that prioritises young voices. Above all, we need belief: in young artists as creators, in the professionals who work with them as a calling, in the vital stories they have to tell.

2025 is our next chapter: a call to community, funders, policymakers, and the arts sector. If we want a vibrant future, we must invest in the artists who are shaping it.

Thank you to our staff, Board, artists, families, donors, sponsors, and audiences. Your support ensures Canberra Youth Theatre remains a powerful advocate for the voice of youth, expressed through bold and intelligent theatre.



LUKE ROGERS
Artistic Director & CEO





WELCOME HOME

THE MOVE TO B BLOCK

In 2024, Canberra Youth Theatre began a transformative new chapter with the relocation to B Block at Gorman Arts Centre: a dedicated youth theatre hub, developed with Arts Capital. This move reflects our long-term vision to create a safe, inclusive, and creative space for Canberra's young artists, and marks a significant milestone in our investment in the next generation of cultural leaders.

Our new home is already enhancing company culture, and fostering a vibrant, youth-led arts community. The space includes a rehearsal and workshop studio, project development rooms for emerging artists, and a shared social area to nurture connection and collaboration. We've also established a performing arts library, offering young creatives access to essential theatre resources. The space also supports self-tape recording for auditions, responding to the growing needs of aspiring professionals.

For the first time in over a decade, Canberra Youth Theatre has unlimited access to a space that can genuinely serve its community, empowering young people to rehearse, create, connect, and thrive. There is space to dream, and a space to make those dreams a reality. We want this space to be a dynamic hub of creativity, community, and possibilities, designed for and driven by young people, with more opportunities than ever to get involved. We are not only building a space, we are building a future for youth-led creativity in the ACT.



The background image is a composite. The top half shows a man in a black cowboy hat, a long black coat, and a red and blue patterned scarf walking from left to right. He is carrying a black bag. The background behind him is a pixelated, low-resolution landscape with orange and yellow mountains, a blue sky with pixelated clouds, and several pixelated trees. The bottom half shows a man in a red short-sleeved button-down shirt and a black cap sitting in a ball pit filled with yellow and blue balls. He is looking towards the camera with his mouth open as if speaking. The background behind him is a plain white wall with a red and blue light wash.

CREATE NEW WORKS

Creating new theatrical work with, by, and for young people is at the core of what we do. Our productions, commissions, and creative development programs are not only platforms for artistic expression – they are pathways for emerging artists to find their voice, build skills, and create work of outstanding quality.

By engaging young people as genuine collaborators in both process and performance, we foster a culture where their contributions are valued, their ideas are nurtured, and their potential as future cultural leaders is realised. Through mentorship, artistic support, and professional opportunities, we are shaping a dynamic landscape of new work that reflects and celebrates the creativity of young people.

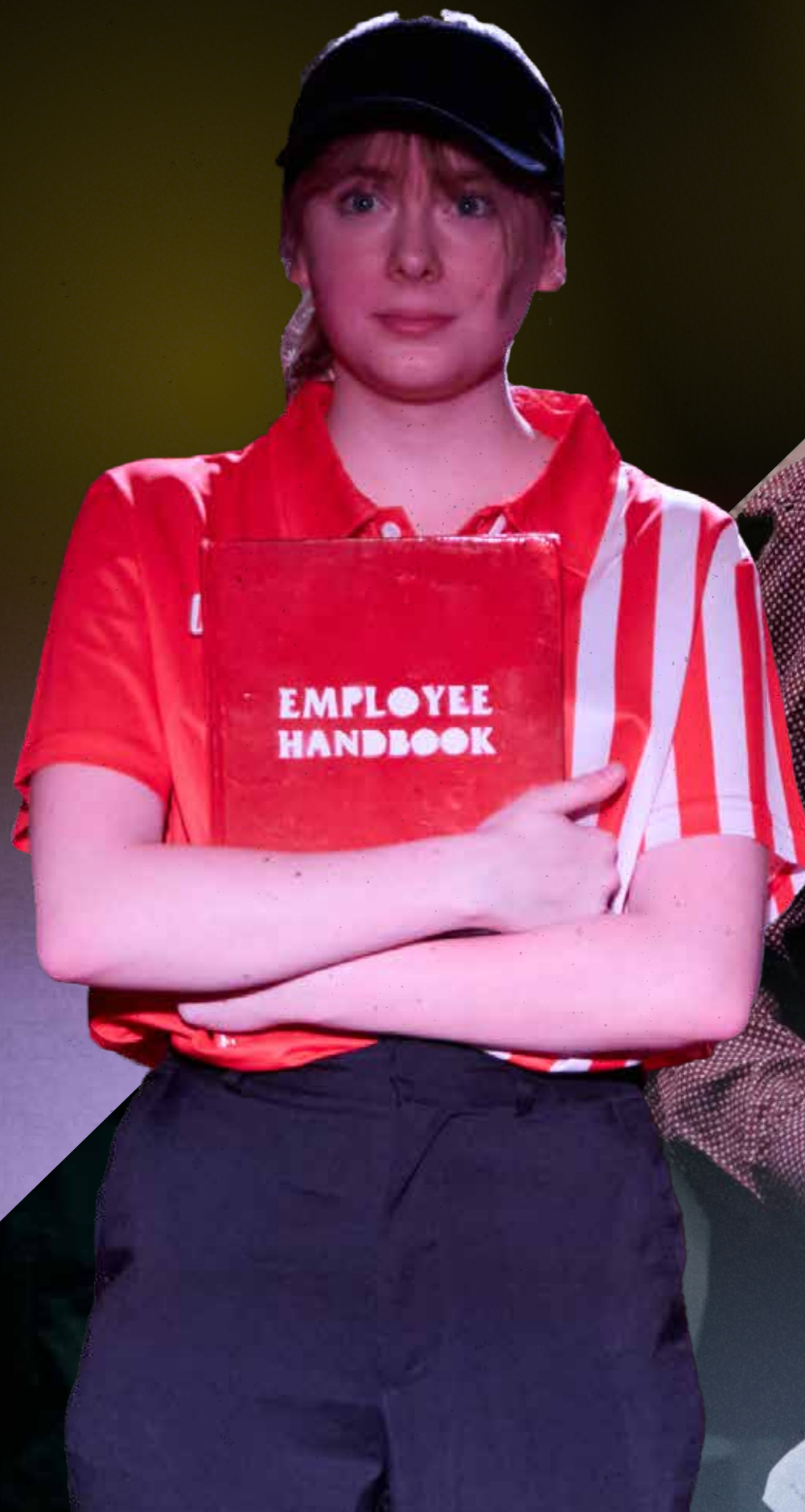
Our focus on creating new works centres around three main activities:
Productions, Commissions, and Creative Developments.

PRODUCTIONS

Our award-winning productions offer young artists the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience in a professional theatre environment, with an open audition process for casting every show, and no financial cost to be involved.

Our production program continues to showcase the best of what youth theatre can offer and challenge audiences' expectations about what theatre created by young people can achieve. We work at the highest professional level when creating work, modelling industry standards and expectations, acknowledging that our young artists and arts workers are capable of excellence regardless of age.

In 2024 we produced two major works that embody our values as an organisation, with young artists at the heart of the creative process.



The impact of Canberra Youth Theatre on my son has been life changing, transforming him into a young person of leadership. His confidence and ability to project reasoned ideas about the world, and lead with passion, perspective and confidence, has soared. Canberra Youth Theatre has transformed him into the best version of himself.

Bernadette Matthew
Parent

WORK, BUT THIS TIME LIKE YOU MEAN IT

BY HONOR WEBSTER-MANNISON

20-29 SEPTEMBER 2024

THE COURTYARD STUDIO
CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE

WORLD PREMIERE

WINNER OF THE 2022 EMERGING PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION

I MIGHT SPEND MY LAST MOMENTS ASKING SOMEONE IF THEY WANT LARGE OR REGULAR CHIPS. I MIGHT DIE IN THIS POLO SHIRT. OH MY GOD I MIGHT DIE IN THIS HAT. THEY WILL FIND MY FOSSILISED REMAINS AND THEN CARBON TEST ME AND FIND OUT THAT I WAS WEARING THIS HAT.

Neon lighting has dried out your eyeballs. The grease has permeated your sneakers. You think you can hear salt. A group of fast food workers are just trying to get through another shift. They're underpaid and overworked and the customers keep coming and time is moving backwards and they need to stop working.

Work, But This Time Like You Mean It is a darkly surreal comedy about young people's first experiences in the workplace. It's about having a good work ethic on less-than-minimum wage. It's about perseverance when you just want to curl up under the counter and cry. It's an unhinged, deep-fryer-dive into deeply human relationships, forged within the most alienating of circumstances.

It's fricken tasty.

CAST

GEORGIE BIANCHINI
TOM BRYSON
HANNAH CORNELIA
KATHLEEN DUNKERLEY
QUINN GOODWIN
MATTHEW HOGAN
STERLING NOTLEY
EMMA PIVA

DIRECTOR
LUKE ROGERS

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER
KATHLEEN KERSHAW

LIGHTING DESIGNER
ETHAN HAMILL

SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER
PATRICK HAESLER

STAGE MANAGER
RHILEY WINNETT

STATISTICS

Audience Numbers	789
Audience Capacity	88%
Performances	10
Professional Artists	4
Young & Emerging Artists	10



HOLDING REDLICH

CANBERRA
THEATRE
CENTRE

REVIEWS

“A sharp-shooting shot at the employment of young people in the fast food industry. Fast is the word. In fact frenetic may be more like it. Under Luke Rogers’ energetic direction, the hard working ensemble explodes with vitality... a very clever, witty, surreal satire... the kind of work that one might expect from a youth theatre concerned about the welfare and rights of its young emerging artists. The company bursts with talent and promise.”

— Peter Wilkins, *Canberra Critics Circle*

“... a madcap, skit-like experience full of joyful comedy that gives cast an opportunity to let their hair down and get a little random... *Work, But This Time Like You Meant It*, was not afraid to turn things inside out and upside down. Once this play made it clear it wasn’t going to follow the rules, there was little choice but to go with it – and let its cast take you on a journey. And it felt about as good as a cheeky bit of fried chicken you weren’t planning on eating, but somehow seemed to hit the spot.”

— Arne Sjostedt, *City News*

AWARDS

THE OVATIONS

Nominations:

- **Outstanding Original Work**
- **Outstanding Youth Performance**
Kathleen Dunkerly
Hannah Cornelia



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Everyone remembers their first job, no matter how much some might want to forget it. It's a rite of passage, simultaneously teaching you important, character-building life lessons, whilst also careening you straight into an existential crisis about the terrifying meaninglessness of life. Namely, seemingly wasting your young life away, one shift at a time, for significantly less than minimum wage.

Winner of Canberra Youth Theatre's 2022 Emerging Playwright Commission, Honor pitched us a darkly surreal comedy about young people's first experiences in the workplace. They delivered an unhinged deep-fryer-dive into deeply human relationships, forged within the most alienating of circumstances. In this 'could be any one of them' fast food restaurant, the days never seem to end, and the work never seems to stop. For these teenagers who are stuck in a work-life timey-wimey loop, bathed in neon light and the all-pervading odour of chip fat, work becomes a place to interrogate big existential questions about ambition, bodily autonomy, personal identity.

Work, But... is a completely unhinged, chaotic exploration of the universal rite of passage of first jobs. Here was an absurd world filled with authority figures, power dynamics, attendance, uniforms and work-ethics, where many of the staff are not yet adults, but through darkly humorous camaraderie, are suddenly expected to be. This production was the culmination of a two-year creative journey between Honor and dozens of emerging artists from Canberra Youth Theatre.



“Work, But This Time Like You Mean It allowed me to combine every aspect of the arts that I love, creating one beautiful, vibrant show. During the rehearsal process, I was encouraged to contribute my own ideas and experiences, as well as listening to everybody else’s. This made the play really satisfying to perform, as it felt important to have our thoughts and feelings physicalised into theatre and shown to so many people. This show led me to not only strengthen skills I already had, but also develop brand new ones. While working on this show, I developed an incredibly strong sense of community. *Work, But...* allowed me to collaborate with like minded people, and because of that I’ve created incredibly close bonds, which I feel is one of the most important parts of the arts.”

Georgie Bianchini
Cast Member

“Being part of Work, But This Time Like You Mean It in 2024 was an unforgettable experience. Set in a fast food restaurant, the show explored the real and often raw struggles that young people face — identity, pressure, purpose, and the expectations placed on us by society. My role as Food Prep placed me right in the chaos of that world, and it allowed me to dive deep into the themes of the show and support the ensemble storytelling. What stood out most was the honesty of the piece and the way it connected with audiences. The experience helped me grow both personally and artistically, deepening my understanding of how theatre can challenge ideas, start conversations, and create change.”

Sterling Notley
Cast Member



THE DEPARTMENT OF RESPONSIBLE ADULTING

CREATED BY CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE



STATISTICS

Audience Numbers	428
Audience Capacity	89%
Performances	24
Professional Artists Employed	3
Young / Emerging Artists	30

18-27 OCTOBER 2024

40 CAMERON AVENUE, BELCONNEN

WORLD PREMIERE

YOUR COFFEE TASTES LIKE MILO.
YOUR MANAGER IS SLEEPING OFF A SUGAR-CRASH.
HOW DID YOUR TIE GET STAPLED TO YOUR DESK?
AND WHY IS EVERYTHING STICKY?

You arrive at work, the same as any other day —
but something's off. Your office, your team, your
department have all been taken over by young people:
welcome to *The Department of Responsible Adulting*.

The leaders of tomorrow have run out of patience and
are running the employee evaluation of a lifetime:
How well do you think you're adulting? Who put you in
charge? What makes you so sure you're even cut out
for the job?

Commandeering a real office space in Canberra,
this site-specific interactive performance reverses
the power dynamic between adult and child, taking
audiences into the belly of a new public service run
entirely by children.

The Department of Responsible Adulting is an
inventive, anarchic, immersive new work created
by Canberra Youth Theatre that will promote
intergenerational conversations and empower young
people. Literally. They have lanyards.

CAST

TED ABRAHAM
HUGO BAASCH
AALIYAH BHADRA
ADELINE BICKLEY
DELILAH COLLINS
MARIANNE COX
EMILIA CZARNOTA
CHLOE DOWLE

CHLOE DUFF
SASKIA FORSYTH-LACRAMPE
NATHANAEL GOMEZ-PRETTY
ZACHARY GOMEZ-PRETTY
CHARLIE JOHNSON
EVA JOVANOVIĆ
LUCY LINDNER
BRYN LLOYD-WHEELER
TERESE MAGUIRE

HUDSON MATTHEW
VIVAN MISHRA
BAILEY MORRIS
HUGO RADNEDGE
MADDIE RADNEDGE
ERIN RILEY
ALEX SALTER
LAURA SALTER
ANJALIA SHARMA

ERINE SIMENEL
KLEIO SLATER
MATILDA SPEERS
EVA SILVER
REUBEN UTLEY
CLEMENTINE WALSH
MAPLE YEO

LEAD ARTISTS

CLAIRE GRANATA
LUKE ROGERS
SOPHIE TALLIS

COSTUME DESIGNER

HELEN WOJTAS

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

RHILEY WINNETT

SPONSORS

CBRE
rf corval



*This project was assisted by the
Australian Government through Creative
Australia, its principal arts investment
and advisory body. This project was a
proud part of ACT Children's Week.*

AUDIENCE RESPONSES

"It made me feel things I wasn't expecting! It's not like sitting in an audience watching, it's more like being watched and evaluated."

"A touching, moving performance that challenged my ideals and the way that I interact with children."

"A terrific example of interactive theatre work and 1:1 performance, challenging audiences as participants and young people to help prepare them for the future... It was also so fun to engage in installation and performance art as an immersive experience."

"An incredibly creative, youth-led immersive experience."

"An immersive and not-so-naïve spoof on public service as imagined by young people exploring the futility of challenging some of the complex issues that currently challenge and impact our way of life."

"An unconventional approach to theatre that brings you in, very funny but even stressful at times, highlighting important issues for children that aren't being addressed by adults but should be. And all done in a fun way."



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The Department for Responsible Adulting (DoRA) was a bold and immersive experience where children flipped the script on traditional power dynamics. *DoRA* placed young people at the helm of a fictional government department, inviting adult participants to engage in a workplace where youthful insight takes centre stage.

This project was not just a performance — it was a platform for generational exchange, civic reflection, and social provocation, delivered through the vibrant and creative voices of over 30 young performers aged 8–14.

DoRA challenged societal norms by giving children the authority to interview, assess, and guide adult participants through a theatrical journey. By positioning young performers as decision-makers and problem-solvers, the project empowered them to explore themes of responsibility, leadership, and voice in a playful, and provocative setting.

One of *DoRA*'s most profound impacts was its ability to spark meaningful conversations between generations. Adults were prompted to listen deeply to the concerns and ideas of young people, creating rare moments of mutual understanding and respect between generations.

Set in a reimagined federal workplace, *DoRA* satirised bureaucratic inertia and adult complacency, where adults were immersed in a world where they were no longer the default authority — a compelling inversion that invited reflection on power, productivity, and purpose.

The Department for Responsible Adulting was more than a theatre production — it was a social experiment, a call to action, and a celebration of youth potential. By reversing the usual flow of authority, it highlighted how much adults can learn from children when we give them the space to lead. It stands as a testament to the power of theatre to not only entertain, but to inspire change.

"The outcome for my child of being involved in this show was an increase in paying attention, acting intelligently, being more reasonable and responsible. Drama in a collective of curious children certainly raised her creative thinking abilities and problem solving skills. It has become a touchstone for whenever we get in a fudge about how to proceed from where we are now."

Frank Lindner
Parent of Cast Member



EMERGING PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION

Over the past four years, our Emerging Playwright Commission, with the generous support of Holding Redlich, has become a celebrated program with local and national impact. The number of submissions has increased annually, with 65 submissions from around the country in 2024.

The Emerging Playwright Commission offers a professional commission to an emerging Australian playwright, to create a new full-length work that brings the voices and stories of youth to the stage. This commission places emerging playwrights at the centre of the creative process, and is specifically designed to springboard writers at a crucial point in their career. It is for emerging Australian playwrights aged under 35 who have created a modest body of work, but have not yet been professionally produced by a major theatre company. The Emerging Playwright Commission not only develops new writers and their works, but stimulates the production of new Australian plays in the ACT.

The winner of the 2024 commission was Naarm/Melbourne-based writer Sarah Matthews. Sarah was previously shortlisted for the commission in 2023, and has described the impact of this recognition as giving her the confidence to pursue playwriting as a career, leading her to undertake a Master of Theatre (Writing) at the Victorian College of the Arts. Sarah's play, *The Hit List*, will centre teenage characters, experiences, and language to explore themes of sexism and gender-based violence in Australia. The other finalists were Rebecca Duke and Thea Jade, who are both Canberra Youth Theatre alumni, and we are delighted to see they are flourishing in their playwriting careers.

The 2023 commission, *How to Destroy the Beep Test in Five Days* by Sonia Dodd, was developed this year over two creative developments that engaged 20 participants, leading to a rehearsed reading for an invited audience with a cast of twelve young actors. Creative developments offer a unique access point for young people to participate in the playwriting process, centering young voices, and providing free opportunities for them to get involved.

Excitingly, our commissioned plays are going on to have further lives: in 2024, *You Can't Tell Anyone* was produced by Queensland University of Technology at Kelvin Grove, and *How To Vote!*, commissioned in 2021, had multiple school and university productions; while alumni Mary Rachel Brown's *Rosieville*, commissioned in 2020, won an AWGIE for Theatre for Young Audiences, with a second edition of the script printed by Currency Press. These plays are also being read and studied within schools.



Applications 65

ACT	10
NSW	31
VIC	13
TAS	0
SA	1
WA	2
NT	1
QLD	7

My play, *The Hit List*, interrogates the aftermath of two acts of misogyny that occur during the final days of Year 12 muck-up week. It explores sexism, class, and the differences in how institutions react to incidents based upon the gender of the perpetrators. I hope to create an emotionally complex and nuanced work that challenges our understanding of misogyny in educational environments.

I'm over the moon to have won the Emerging Playwright Commission for 2024. It means the world to me that my first step into a career as a writer will be with Canberra Youth Theatre, as being shortlisted for the commission in 2023 is what gave me the confidence to pursue playwriting in the first place. For the first time, the possibility of writing professionally feels within my reach.

Sarah Matthews

2024 Emerging Playwright Commission Winner



HOLDING REDLICH



HOLDING REDLICH



CANBERRA
YOUTH TRUST



EMERGING PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION

SUBMISSIONS
FROM EVERY STATE
AND TERRITORY

YOUNG PEOPLE DECIDE
SHORTLIST PITCHES

WINNER
ANNOUNCED

DEVELOPED WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE
OVER 12 MONTHS

PROFESSIONALLY
PRODUCED

SCRIPT
PUBLICATION

EMPLOYMENT
OF EMERGING ARTISTS

FUTURE
PRODUCTIONS

SCHOOL
READING LISTS

YOUNG ARTISTS ALL OVER
AUSTRALIA

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The creation and development of new work that places young and emerging artists at its centre is our core priority. We not only support the creation of bold, original plays for young people — we foster collaborative processes that provide accessible, formative experiences for the next generation of theatre-makers.

Creative developments are a vital stage in this process. They create space for experimentation, dialogue, and discovery, offering young people a unique opportunity to actively engage in the evolution of new works. Through creative conversations, workshops, staged readings, and culminating in full productions, young artists gain invaluable insight into the professional theatre-making process while developing their own artistic voice.

This model has meaningfully engaged young people aged 9–25 across all of our programs, empowering them to contribute to the artistic vision from conception to performance. Creative developments not only create new works for our theatre sector — they shape the artists who will lead it.

HOW TO DESTROY THE BEEP TEST IN FIVE DAYS

Playwright	Sonia Dodd
Dates	March – June 2024
Young People Engaged	45
Presentation Date	18 August 2024
Presentation Audience	30

THE DEPARTMENT OF RESPONSIBLE ADULTING

Lead Artists	Claire Granata, Luke Rogers, Sophie Tallis
Dates	April – October 2024
Young People Engaged	43

I had so much fun meeting new people and learning new skills. I loved being a part of the play development process — it made me understand what goes into making a brand new play!

2024 Creative Development Participant



The team at Canberra Youth Theatre led a collaborative environment for my work to formulate, expand and thrive. The development structure — consisting of multiple rounds of drafts, workshops with young people, and constructive feedback from mentors — has significantly enriched the play's journey. This process has honed my playwriting and theatre-making skills, while simultaneously deepening my understanding of how to engage and inspire young people through theatre.

I am incredibly grateful to Canberra Youth Theatre for granting me this chance to collaborate with, and write specifically for, young people. These opportunities are necessary, significant, and critical in the uplifting of emerging artists. It is a chance to allow artists to explore new dimensions of their craft, and reiterates the essential role that Canberra Youth Theatre plays in fostering creativity.

Sonia Dodd

2023 Emerging Playwright Commission Winner

PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

Canberra Youth Theatre is the only company in our region dedicated to the professional development of young and emerging theatre artists.

Professional pathways in the theatre industry are essential for equipping young talent with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive in a competitive, complex field. Without structured support, many young artists face overwhelming challenges in turning their passion for theatre into sustainable careers, and the industry risks losing diverse voices and innovative talents. Creating these pathways is not only about fostering individual success; it's about securing the future of theatre by cultivating the next generation of skilled, inclusive, and dedicated professionals who will keep the art form vibrant and relevant.



EMERGING ARTIST PROGRAMS

Our Emerging Artists programs empower early-career creatives to collaborate within a thriving artistic network and explore pathways into tertiary training and professional practice. Our Emerging Artists programs are heavily subsidised thanks to philanthropic support from the Jeremy Spencer Broom Legacy.

In 2024, we expanded on our range of offerings for Emerging Artists, evolving existing programs and launching new ones to meet the breadth of curiosity among aspiring young professionals aged 16–25.

This included expanding our **Emerging Creatives** program with a partnership with the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), including two Sydney excursions, and deepening the program's focus on the creative possibilities of design and production career pathways.

Writers Ensemble represented a renewed commitment to offer a dedicated program for emerging playwrights. **Young Critics** has quickly established a positive presence in the theatre community, with local venues eager to invite them to shows, and encourage a greater engagement with young voices and young audiences.

Regrettably, due to an insufficient number of enrolments, we decided not to continue with our flagship program for theatre-makers, **Emerge Company**. In terms of the outcome of the devised productions, and the quality of the experience for participants, **Emerge Company** has been a great success over the previous three years; however, it has always been a heavily subsidised program, and as fees for participants increased year-on-year, it has been a struggle to secure enough enrolments. This decision has prompted some reflection as to how Canberra Youth Theatre can genuinely meet the needs of young adults in Canberra, many of whom are deterred by the cost, commitment, and expectation of professional ambition involved in such programs.

The lack of professional opportunities in Canberra, not to mention the lack of an independent theatre scene, suggests an obvious need for a theatre-making incubator like **Emerge Company**, which offers young artists the skills, experience and autonomy to make things happen for themselves — but we must accept that the goals of the program are beyond the scope of most young people in the region. We talk about “creating pathways” for our most driven young artists — but we have to ask the question of ourselves: pathways to what?

As we seek to consolidate and deepen our activity in 2025, we want to lower barriers of cost and commitment, and foster a greater autonomy among our Emerging Artists. By providing space, mentorship, and encouragement for their creative impulses, we are confident that we can continue to provide the platform for the next generation of Canberran artists who will shape Australian theatre.

STATISTICS

Emerging Artists

47



EMERGING ARTIST PROGRAM GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY

THE
JEREMY SPENCER BROOM
LEGACY

A+G
Ainslie and Gorman
Arts Centres

NIDA
National Institute
of Dramatic Art

EMERGING ARTIST SURVEY

Understanding the aspirations, challenges, and desires of young and emerging artists is paramount to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for artistic expression and growth. Canberra Youth Theatre recognises the importance of actively engaging with its community to inform its strategic planning, and enhance the relevance and impact of its programs.

We conducted a survey and produced a preliminary research report, *Young Emerging Artists in Canberra*, that serves as a critical tool in understanding the artistic ambitions of young people, identifying the challenges faced by emerging artists, and shaping our artistic programs and strategic direction in response to these concerns and desires.

The insights gathered from this survey directly informed our decision making for 2025, and helped us to articulate our new key focus areas, highlighting the need for affordable training programs, meaningful professional development opportunities, and the importance of developing and producing new works.



WRITERS ENSEMBLE

Led by professional playwright Julian Larnach (Griffin Theatre Literary Associate, and the writer of our 2022 production, *How to Vote!*), Writers Ensemble powers the voices writing the stories of tomorrow. As with Young Critics, the hybrid model of in-person and video-call sessions allowed us to engage leading playwrights from around the country, while keeping costs affordable (i.e. avoiding the cost of transport and accommodation to bring playwrights in from Sydney, as we have done for Masterclasses in the past). The group included a mix of new participants — who identify as writers rather than performers — as well as several who had previously been part of Emerge Company, and saw Writers Ensemble as a next step in their creative practice.

There were a mix of expectations from participants, some of whom had a clear idea for what they wanted to write and were seeking mentorship for that process, and others who were more interested in building skills and exploring their interests without any definite goal. Participants reported that while the guest sessions provided useful insights into industry pathways, the most meaningful aspect of the program was the sustained mentorship from Julian, and in particular, the one-on-one feedback sessions for their work.

The spirit of the ensemble has continued beyond the program, as several of the participants have since established a regular writers meet-up, to write together and share their work with each other. With this strong uptake for Writers Ensemble, we will continue with the program in 2025, and find ways to support the work of our emerging playwrights to reach the stage.

Lead Artist	Julian Larnach
Guest Artists	Hannah Belanszky Mary Rachel Brown Lewis Treston Matthew Whittet
Ages	16–25
Emerging Artists	13



Being part of the 2024 Writers Ensemble helped me build the community and skills necessary as an emerging writer. The guidance provided by Julian Larnach was invaluable and he gave me practical advice and feedback that I continue to use to create stronger scripts to tell the stories I want to share. The guest presenters gave an amazing insight into the industry and learning from a variety of writers through the program allowed me to shape my own writing routine and process. I loved connecting with other local emerging writers through the ensemble and Canberra Youth Theatre has given me friends and collaborators for many years to come.

Ashleigh Butler

Writers Ensemble Participant



YOUNG CRITICS

Young Critics is for those interested in watching, critically discussing, and reviewing theatre and performance. This program develops the skills and elevates the voices of some of the most passionate young theatre-lovers in our community.

In 2024, Young Critics attended monthly workshops with Artistic Director Luke Rogers, and leading professional critics, including Cassie Tongue, Suzy Wrong, Van Badham, and Elissa Blake. They learned how to critically analyse, discuss, and creatively respond to work, attended a range of performance events across the ACT, and published reviews and responses that critically reflect on theatre-making in Canberra. Our Young Critics are fast becoming sought-after critical voices by local artists and producers, who want them to engage with and share their responses to their work.

Lead Artist	Luke Rogers
Guest Artists	Van Badham
	Elissa Blake
	Cassie Tongue
	Suzy Wrong
Ages	16–25
Emerging Artists	13



Young Critics instilled within me a love for the craft of critical writing. The exposure and access to theatre around Canberra was monumental in being able to develop my creative voice. Anyone who watches theatre has thoughts about it — Young Critics allowed us to develop these thoughts into critical, fleshed-out, and justified opinions. I would highly recommend the program to anyone who is interested — no matter what level of engagement you already have with theatre.

Kathleen Dunkerley
Young Critic



EMERGING CREATIVES

Emerging Creatives is dedicated to all the skills behind the scenes that bring theatre to life. In 2024, Emerging Creatives was delivered in collaboration with the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

In 2024, 13 young artists aged 16–25 participated in the Emerging Creatives program. The program introduced participants to the fundamentals of lighting, sound, set, costumes, props, and stage management through a series of practical workshops led by experienced industry professionals.

In addition to the intensives on fundamentals of the backstage disciplines, participants had the opportunity to have two excursions to the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA). Participants visited NIDA on their open day, as well as a three day excursion during the October production season to visit NIDA's facilities in Sydney, observed NIDA productions, and received guest talks from NIDA staff.

During this trip, participants were taken to two theatre productions: *Flat Earthers* – *The Musical* at Hayes Theatre presented by Griffin Theatre Company, and *Hedda Gabler* at KXT on Broadway. *Flat Earthers* was a hit with the group, showing what can be done with set, lighting and costume in a small black box theatre, while participants were given a back stage tour at KTX on Broadway.

The group were also given the opportunity to shadow creatives on both productions in 2024, and some took the opportunity

to shadow the technical rehearsals for *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It*, seeing the process of bumping into a theatre, coordinating set construction and lighting focus, and assisting on the lighting and sound plotting sessions. This experience allowed them to see practical applications of the theoretical knowledge they had gained through the program.

Outside of a select number of private colleges in the Canberra region, this is the only program that gives participants the opportunity to look at technical disciplines from both the technical and creative aspects, seeing them as artists as well as technicians. The goal of the Emerging Creatives program is to provide the spark for those wanting to pursue further studies in either generalist technical skills, or more specific design for theatre studies at tertiary institutions.

NIDA

National Institute
of Dramatic Art

Lead Artist	Luke Rogers
Guest Artists	Patrick Haesler Ethan Hamill Aislinn King
Ages	16–25
Emerging Artists	13



Emerging Creatives gave me the chance to learn about how much work actually goes into making a show come to life. Conversations with industry professionals really showed me that despite what a lot of people say, there is work and life in this industry, and I got to work as an Assistant Stage Manager on *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It*. While applying to drama schools, it was this experience that I ultimately drew on the most. At the end of the program, Emerging Creatives took us to NIDA for an in depth walkthrough of their Production and Design degrees. This opportunity ultimately led me to choose a path streamlined in Stage Management at WAAPA. The Emerging Creatives program is something I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to do and I'm hopeful that it will guide others to a career in the arts.

Amelia Chittick

Emerging Creatives Participant



MASTER CLASSES

Our Masterclasses provide practical training for emerging artists looking to develop their skills and collaborate with industry professionals in a challenging and supportive environment. In 2024, we ran an Auditions & Monologues masterclass with Luke Rogers.

AUDITIONS & MONOLOGUES

Workshop Artist **Luke Rogers**
Participants **7**

This masterclass was held over two sessions for artists wanting to enhance their skills in performing monologues for auditions. Participants were guided through how to approach a monologue, selecting audition pieces that leave a lasting impression, making strong, active choices that generate electrifying performances, working through audition nerves to perform confidently.



Participating in the Auditions Masterclass entirely reshaped my perspective on auditioning. Luke was able to unpack all of our uncertainties surrounding both sides of the audition process, unmasking topics about what directors are looking for, how to go about picking an audition piece and how to make your audition stand out amongst the rest. We received personal, in-depth feedback that, while directed at a specific monologue, could apply to any audition piece. I also found that simply watching other actors work on their pieces sparked so many ideas and moments of understanding that I could only get from an outside view. I have increased my confidence and ability in auditioning for all kinds of shows that I would not have previously, and I got to meet a wonderful group of creative and supportive people and watch them grow in their abilities too.

Ben Kuen
Participant

SCRATCH

Scratch is an opportunity for emerging artists aged 18–25 to meet and experiment with new material in front of a supportive audience. Held at Smith’s Alternative, these informal events are a showcase for raw, rough, risk-taking works-in-progress. Audiences are then invited to participate in a guided critical response process to offer feedback and insights into the artists’ work.

There is no shortage of creativity among our emerging artists, but the vulnerability of putting their ideas into action feels more acute than ever. This trend underlines the value of opportunities like Scratch, which offers an informal, supportive, low-risk platform to try things out. We had two Scratch nights in 2024, with our highest participation to date.

At its best, Scratch is a real community event that values the journey of the creative process, genuinely elevates the voice of youth, and represents a welcoming, accessible, encouraging environment for emerging artists.

Dates	22 May 27 November
Emerging Artists	24
New Works Presented	10
Audience	58

Emerging Artists	15
Audience Numbers	38
New Works Presented	6



OPEN STUDIO

With our new dedicated rehearsal studio at Gorman Arts Centre, we believe it is our responsibility to provide support and space for local emerging artists to develop their practice with us, and create more opportunities for independent artists seeking to create, rehearse, or develop their own projects. Open Studio is a platform for a new generation of artists to explore, collaborate and take creative risks.

Open Studio underwent a soft launch in 2024, providing in-kind support to emerging artists, through space and support to develop new works, as well as self-tape and audition preparation.

Ongoing, this program will enable us to increase the support we offer to emerging and early career artists, remove some of the financial barriers independent artists face when trying to make the new work viable, contribute to our artistic vibrancy and the development of new work in our region, and strengthen our emerging artist community.

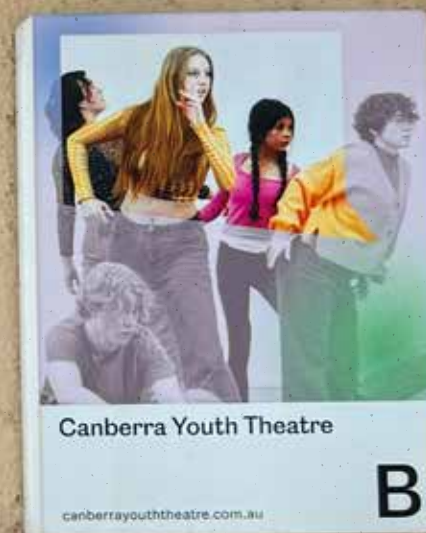


I had never designed or led a creative development before. There were lots of accessibility considerations for this work, and this was a real opportunity for growth for me as an artist and writer. I also have accessibility needs myself, so by doing this at Canberra Youth Theatre where I already feel comfortable, it was a great training ground for me to build up confidence in myself as a lead artist. It was very heart warming for me to connect with other incredibly passionate and generous neurodivergent artists, it very much filled my cup.

Strengthening community through collaboration is a core pillar of my artistic practice, and the Open Studio Program has supported me in providing a space for the young artists involved in the development of my work to connect, create and be heard. Accessibility was a huge consideration in creating a safe and welcoming development space, and that was equally valued by Canberra Youth Theatre.

Thea Jade
Open Studio Artist

Emerging Artists Supported	9
Collectives Supported	2



CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Creative Engagement is one of our key strategic focus areas, connecting our local community and education sector with professional artists through meaningful, inclusive, and impactful programs. This work is grounded in the lived experiences and needs of the communities we serve, creating spaces that invite participation in collaborative, creative processes.

Creative Engagement is a commitment to participatory practice — prioritising positive, tailored experiences that place value on the creative journey as much as the outcome. While we uphold high artistic standards, we celebrate the process as a space for exploration, experimentation, and growth. Creativity becomes a catalyst for high-level learning, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, emotional intelligence, and empathy. Participants develop communication skills, cultivate discipline and time management, and are empowered to innovate within a supportive, reflective environment.

This engagement goes beyond performance. It invites people to connect with theatre in diverse ways — whether through participation, observation, or deeper understanding — reinforcing that everyone has a place within the theatrical experience.

We bring this ethos to life through a range of programs, including our Ensembles workshops, school partnerships, Workshops by Design, professional learning for educators, and public events such as the 12 Hour Theatre Project. Collaborations with local arts organisations, festivals, and community events further extend our reach, enriching Canberra's cultural and educational landscapes. Through these efforts, we aim to nurture a lifelong connection to the arts and create a more inclusive and vibrant creative community.



WORKSHOPS

Canberra Youth Theatre's Workshops program offer a diverse range of training and creative development opportunities for young people, fostering a deep connection between theatre-making and community engagement.

ENSEMBLES

Our Ensembles are at the heart of our commitment to developing the next generation of theatre-makers. More than just weekly drama classes, our Ensembles provided young artists with a space to train, collaborate, and create as part of a dedicated artistic community. With a strong emphasis on industry-led training, ensemble members were encouraged to take creative risks, develop their unique artistic voice, and engage in the full process of theatre-making — from skill development to devising original work. By fostering commitment, curiosity, and collaboration, the Ensembles program not only built performance skills but also cultivated the discipline and passion needed for a future in the arts.

In 2024, we delivered our weekly Ensemble workshops at:

- **Gorman Arts Centre**
- **Belconnen Arts Centre**
- **The Q – Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre**



PRIMARY YEARS 1-6

Our primary workshops focused on creative play, imaginative exploration, and foundational performance skills. Through weekly sessions, participants developed confidence, storytelling abilities, and collaborative problem-solving. Activities introduced young artists to improvisation, characterisation, voice, and movement, all within an environment that encouraged personal expression and ensemble work. Each semester culminated in a short performance for family and friends, allowing young artists to share their devised works and celebrate their creative growth. Workshops were delivered at Gorman Arts Centre, The Q, and Belco Arts.

SECONDARY YEARS 7-12

In response to the evolving needs of our teen participants, 2024 saw a diversified range of workshop offerings across multiple sites. Groupings were adjusted mid-year to better align with participant numbers, skills, and developmental stages — allowing for more tailored, age-appropriate learning experiences. Secondary workshops explored acting, improvisation, collaborative devising, and performance techniques, with a strong focus on script work, physicality, voice, and stagecraft. Participants engaged with classical and contemporary texts, honed their character development skills, and collaborated on original works. Each semester concluded in a 15–20 minute showcase performance, offering young artists the opportunity to present their growth and creative achievements to peers, family, and friends.

STATISTICS

Artists Employed	20
Young Artists	242
Programs	17
Individual Workshops	350
Showing Audiences	423





WHAT OUR
YOUNG
ARTISTS
SAY...

“Thanks for being a part of my life for the past few years. CYT has had a very positive impact on my life through high school and college, the workshops have always been something I looked forward to in the week.”

Year 10–12 Artist

“I loved being a part of my very first CYT workshop! I can't wait to come back next year.”

Year 1–3 Artist

“This workshop helped me with my self image issues and allowed me to make some friends.”

Year 7–9 Artist

“I loved it! Made friends and was the highlight of the week.”

Year 4–6 Artist

HOLIDAY
WORKSHOPS

Holiday programs are one of our greatest entry and engagement points for young people. We offer playful, fun-filled, creative workshops every school holiday for primary-aged, and occasionally for secondary-aged, participants. These programs ignite the imaginations of young people as they create spectacular worlds, tackle big ideas, discover new skills and unleash loads of energy in a collaborative and supportive environment. Designed for young people of all experience levels, these workshops offer a dynamic space to explore acting techniques, develop confidence, and create original work under the guidance of an experienced artist. Each program is crafted to ignite imagination and nurture artistic expression, ensuring that every participant walks away with new skills, friendships, and a deeper love for theatre.

The holiday workshop programs also provide us the opportunity to nurture emerging Workshop Artists, with mentorship, guidance and support led by our Creative Learning Producer Anna Johnstone. In 2024 we identified Jade Breen as a promising emerging Workshop Artist, and offered them tailored training and mentorship. Jade collaborated with Anna on two holiday workshops before successfully stepping into the role of lead artist for two programs. This support acknowledges the vital need for facilitation training, as well as the important distinction between professional theatre-making and the unique skills required to lead engaging, inclusive workshop programs.

JANUARY 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists	10
Attendance at Showing	24

WORLDS APART

To kick off the year, our young artists explored the tallest of trees to bite-sized bees, adventuring into worlds big and small! Their dives into the different worlds that exist within our own, from itty-bitty insects to giant creatures of the deep, existing within reality and across fictional worlds gave them the opportunity to create a unique end of workshop performance, big and small.

Workshop Artist
Rachel Robertson

JANUARY 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **18**
Attendance at
Showing **45**

KIDS RULE THE WORLD

We asked our Young Artists what would happen if they woke up, and all the adults had disappeared. Where had they gone? Who takes control? Are there still rules? What's the first thing you do? Do we celebrate? Or make a plan to get them back? Through these questions, they explored the power of youth and what mischief you can get up to when the adults are gone!

Workshop Artists
Charlotte Palmer & Ami McElle

JANUARY 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 7–9

Young Artists **7**
Attendance at
Showing **14**

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Young Artists investigated elements of verbatim theatre, using interviews, speeches, letters, diary entries, and recordings of real conversations. They applied their artist's eye to the humanity of history, researching, questioning, and gaining a greater understanding of events that spark their interest.

Workshop Artist
Caitlin Baker

JANUARY 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **8**
Attendance at
Showing **22**

GAME ON!

Ready Player One? Our Young Artists were as they let the action begin, diving into the world of games – video and board – and explored what it would be like to be a character in these worlds.

Workshop Artist
Ashleigh Butler



APRIL 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **11**
Attendance at
Showing **18**

MAKE SOME NOISE

We ensnared a gang of intrepid and resourceful Young Artists, who were challenged to cheat death, hatch a plan, and lead their friends to safety. They defied all the odds, planning and executing the perfect escape!

Workshop Artist
Rachel Robertson

APRIL 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **11**
Attendance at
Showing **26**

ACTOR'S TOOLBOX

Actor's Toolbox introduced young artists to all the performance skills that can help us make wonderful, crazy characters, and tell exciting, honest stories. They learnt how voices and bodies help us perform, and figured out how to build their skills in fun and collaborative ways.

Workshop Artist
Lily Welling

JULY 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **13**
Attendance at
Showing **25**

DISCOVERING WORLDS

We stepped back in time, and visited history's biggest moments. Young artists saw the rise and fall of our greatest cities, the creation of our coolest inventions, and the whole scope of human creativity. Their investigation of historical periods allowed them to stretch their skills to inhabit characters from the whole breadth of human history!

Workshop Artist
Ella Buckley

SEPTEMBER 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **16**
Attendance at
Showing **33**

OCTOBER 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **16**
Attendance at
Showing **29**

OCTOBER 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 1–6

Young Artists **21**
Attendance at
Showing **45**

OCTOBER 2024
Gorman Arts Centre
Years 7–10

Young Artists **8**

IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE

We headed into outer space with this spectacular exploration of all things interstellar. Young artists explored questions such as: What might it be like to be an alien? How can we find our way into a nebula? Where can we locate that gooey, gooey space between our stars?

Workshop Artists
Anna Johnstone & Jade Breen

IMAGINE THAT!

All great, big, exciting shows begin with just an idea. Young artists went on a rollercoaster ride from the first spark of an idea, to the final moment of performance. With a focus on collaboration and storytelling, their final performance took us on a crazy imaginative flight.

Workshop Artist
Jade Breen

ONCE UPON A VILLAIN

Young artists explored what makes villains tick – through tragic backstories, dastardly plans and complex antagonists. They stretched their imaginations to understand the motivations that make a great villain, and crafted a short performance piece all about these misunderstood anti-heroes.

Workshop Artists
Jade Breen & Lucy Ferguson

MUSICAL THEATRE MASTERCLASS


Young artists in Years 7–10 who love musical theatre and are ready to burst into song at the drop of a hat came together in this musical theatre crash course led by Amy Orman, exploring all the tips and tricks they need to stand in the spotlight!

Workshop Artists
Amy Orman & Ashley Maynard



EDUCATION

Education is a key strategic priority, developing new programs for schools, growing a dynamic and engaged community of young theatre makers and audiences — all by supporting the education community in the ACT region. Our education programs include Workshops By Design, in-school workshops, and professional development training for teachers. Through genuine collaboration with the education sector, we aim to nurture and develop young artists, deepen the impact of drama education, and grow additional sources of revenue to support the company's artistic programs.



Young Artists	82
Programs	8
Individual Workshops	73
Artists Employed	6
Performances	4
Audiences	93

WORKSHOPS BY DESIGN

Workshops By Design offer students a practical experience of performance and theatre-making through custom-designed workshops within their school environment. Our experienced artists deliver practical, curriculum-aligned workshops across a range of topics and arts practices, either at their school or at Gorman Arts Centre. We deliver high-quality programs for a wide range of ages, year groups and curriculum topics across the Canberra region.

ST JOHN PAUL II COLLEGE
Years 11–12
Participants **5**

NARRABUNDAH COLLEGE
Years 11–12
Participants **26**

HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
Years 3–6
Participants **44**

ST JOHN PAUL II COLLEGE
Years 9–10
Participants **20**

PHYSICAL THEATRE

Workshop Artist Christopher Carroll

A physical theatre workshop, incorporating Lecoq and Viewpoints techniques, to explore approaches that students could embed into their exploration of Samuel Beckett's script, *Quad*.

INTIMACY WORKSHOP

Workshop Artist Luke Rogers

This workshop introduced concepts and techniques of intimacy and consent training in performance, that students could confidently and respectfully apply to specific scenes in their school production.

EXPLORING CHARACTER AND STORYTELLING

Workshop Artist Luke Rogers

Using the illustrated book *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan as inspiration, this workshop used allegory and empathy to explore issues around invasion and colonisation, through image-based storytelling and anthropomorphic animal characterisation.

VERBATIM THEATRE

Workshop Artist Caitlin Baker

This program deepened students completing the Communicating Meaning in Drama unit understanding of verbatim theatre, exploring different verbatim styles and techniques, using current affairs as stimulus for the development of original works, exploring transcripts and audio recordings to create performance, and the creative and social challenges of putting the voices and stories of a community on stage.

PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE SERVICES

We bring our expertise in theatre and creativity to enrich the programs of partner organisations, extending the reach and impact of our work across diverse domains. Through collaboration with other institutions we not only enhance access to arts education more broadly but also diversify our income streams, increasing the sustainability of Canberra Youth Theatre's artistic and educational offerings.

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Our partnership with the University of Canberra's pre-service teachers grew significantly throughout 2024. Over 100 pre-service teachers participated in workshops at Canberra Youth Theatre, allowing us to make a more profound impact on drama education and directly support the next generation of educators. Through this partnership we are not only enriching the skills of future educators, we are fostering a legacy of drama education across Canberra for years to come. Additionally, we welcomed two pre-service teachers from the University of Canberra's Bachelor of Education (Creative Arts) course to observe our ensemble workshop program, deepening our ongoing relationship with the university.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

In 2024, we collaborated with the National Gallery of Australia to explore how theatrical techniques can be integrated into their educational tours, enhancing accessibility for young people who engage through embodied learning. This collaboration is creating new, interactive pathways for young people to connect with art, while strengthening Canberra Youth Theatre's capacity to offer diverse and adaptable educational programs.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In 2024, TQI (ACT) and NESA (NSW) certification enabled us to deliver Teacher Professional Learning. We are developing programs that can be delivered to teachers that cover both ACT and NSW teachers in the same program, increasing the potential audience for each program.



Over the past two years, Canberra Youth Theatre has been an invaluable partner in supporting Education students at the University of Canberra. Through high-quality, hands-on workshops, they have provided students with practical experience in drama pedagogies, equipping them with the skills to create engaging, student-centered learning experiences for young people. In addition to these workshops, Canberra Youth Theatre has hosted Creative Arts Specialist students for internship placements. Our students consistently praise their time with Canberra Youth Theatre, describing it as a transformative experience that deepens their understanding of drama education and strengthens their confidence as educators.

Anna Johnstone is a highly-skilled artist who fosters a supportive and inclusive environment for University of Canberra pre-service teachers. Through her expert guidance, students build confidence in using child-centred drama strategies, equipping them with essential tools for engaging and meaningful teaching. Her approach to drama education and creative thinking is truly impressive. Recognising her expertise, I have personally recommended her to my research partners in Education at the National Gallery of Australia as well as to local schools in Canberra.

Naomi Zouwer
Lecturer in Teacher Education
University of Canberra

**University of
Canberra**
Pre-service Teachers
Participants **120**

**National Gallery of
Australia**
Ages 18 +
Participants **28**

DRAMA NSW
Primary & High School
Teachers
Participants **14**

DEVISING IN AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Workshop Artist Anna Johnstone

This professional learning workshop offered educators a hands-on introduction to collaborative theatre-making through physicality, voice, movement, and thematic exploration. Designed for teachers of Years K–12, the session equipped participants with a comprehensive toolkit of adaptable devising exercises, enhancing both beginner and advanced classroom practice. The workshop strengthened teacher capability, built creative confidence, and empowered educators to integrate original, student-led theatrical creation into their pedagogy. Participants reported increased confidence in managing classroom dynamics and tailoring content to diverse learning needs, supporting positive engagement and enriching arts education delivery across school settings.

EMBODIED LEARNING IN GALLERY SPACES

Workshop Artist Anna Johnstone

A workshop with the National Gallery of Australia's education team, exploring embodied learning processes using drama activities in an art gallery context. Educators highlighted the workshop's reinforcement of the value of play in learning, noting an increased confidence in using physical, movement-based strategies to engage students with creative content. Participants reported gaining practical techniques for managing group movement through gallery spaces and activating transitional areas to maintain engagement. Several educators expressed a newfound confidence in incorporating performative elements in their teaching, crediting the safe and supportive environment created during the session.

DRAMA NSW CONFERENCE

Workshop Artist Anna Johnstone & Luke Rogers

This professional learning session guided teachers through the devising process, using movement as a springboard for creativity and student agency in performance-making. The workshop explored practical strategies to support student-led creation, especially for those who may be hesitant or new to drama. Teachers engaged with physical theatre tools to develop narrative, explore dramatic themes, and foster collaborative environments where diverse ideas could be shaped into cohesive performance work. This session equipped educators with accessible, adaptable techniques to cultivate artistic confidence, encourage expressive movement, and honour the unique creative voice of each student.



IN-SCHOOLS PROGRAM

We work with primary schools to provide engaging after-school drama programs for young people, offering them the opportunity to engage in high-quality drama workshops within their own school communities. Students can develop performance skills, build confidence, and collaborate creatively through these one-hour programs that nurture young performers at all levels, fostering a love of theatre and a strong sense of ensemble. By bringing professional theatre training directly into schools, we're ensuring that more young people have access to enriching creative experiences that inspire and empower them.

Schools Red Hill Primary School, Telopea Park School

Workshop Artists Ella Buckley, Charlie Lehmann, Quinn Goodwin

Support Artists Juniper Potter, Matt White

Young Artists	34
Programs	5
Individual Workshops	50
Artists Employed	6
Performances	5
Audiences	141



COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Through our community projects, we provide free access to creative opportunities for young people who may otherwise face financial barriers to participation. These initiatives also create unique opportunities to collaborate across age groups, perform in public spaces, and alongside professional companies.

Community engagement activities like these are offered free-of-charge, made possible through various forms of support — project funding (Pride Foundation workshop, 12 Hour Theatre Project), funding received by partner organisations (ERTH at Enlighten Festival), and in-kind contributions of time, expertise, or space. We are committed to continuing and expanding these opportunities, as they consistently provide joyful, enriching experiences for participants, facilitators, and partner companies alike.

We ran five community engagement projects in 2024, with over 130 participants getting involved across the year. We once again worked with the amazing Erth Visual & Physical company, and were able to offer opportunities with both Monkey Baa and Bell Shakespeare.



THE 12 HOUR THEATRE PROJECT

APRIL 2024

Lead Facilitators

Jade Breen

Ella Buckley

Teagan Matthews

Participants

55

Ages

7-25

New Engagements

23

Audience

108

CANBERRA AND REGION
**HERITAGE
FESTIVAL:**
CONNECTIONS | 2024

ACTYW
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
YOUTH WEEK

Returning for its fourth year in 2024, our 12 Hour Theatre Project invited young people aged 7-25 to come together for a collaborative experience where they devise, rehearse, produce, and perform an original piece of theatre in just 12 hours. This free event was part of the 2024 Heritage Festival and ACT Youth Week, and fosters community building by bringing together young artists of all ages, providing a unique opportunity for collaboration that is often absent in their usual artistic and social environments, where they typically work with peers of their own age group.

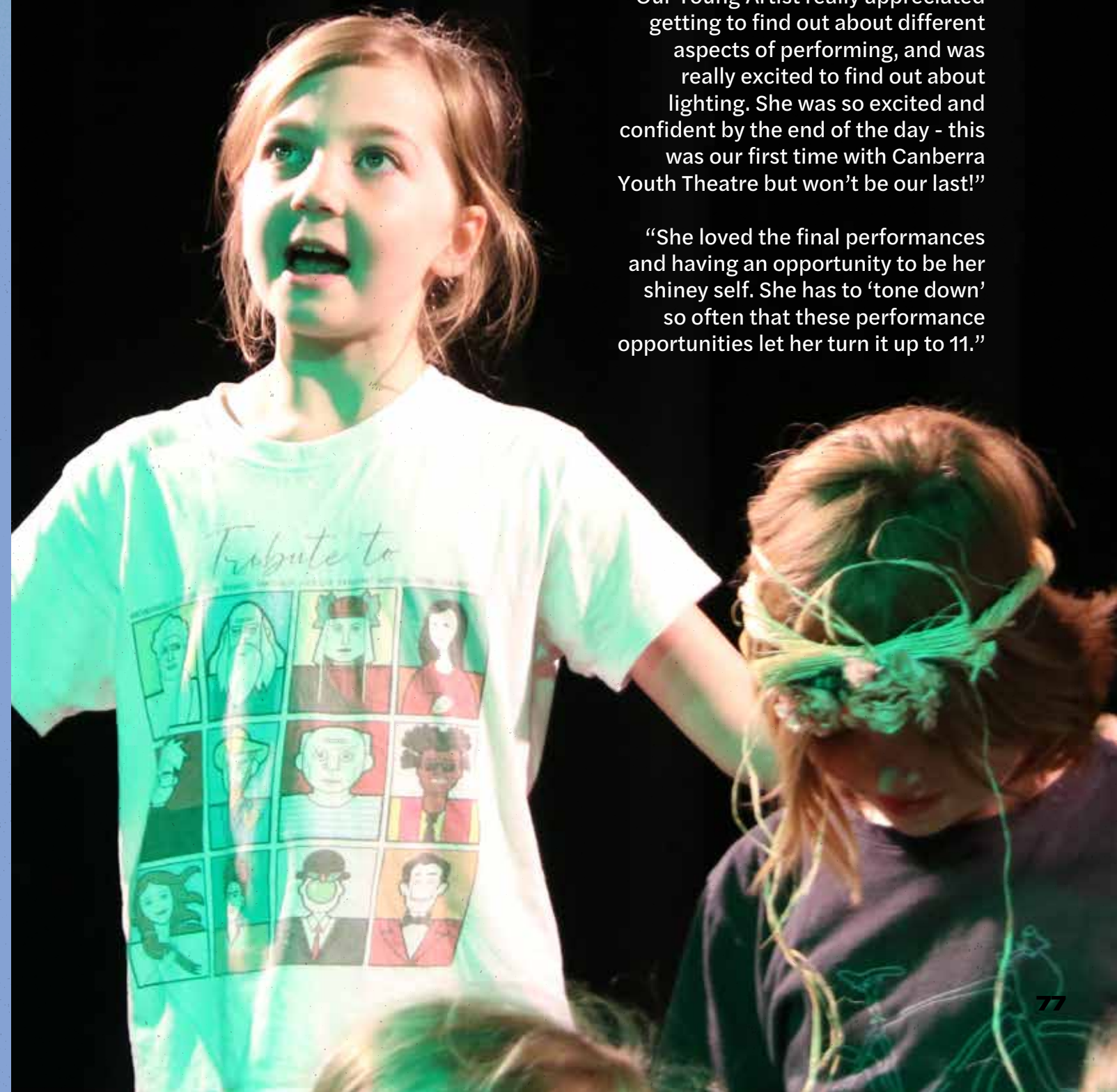


YOUNG ARTIST STATEMENTS

"My little person had an incredible experience getting to learn and grow in such a safe and inclusive space. She enjoyed every minute of it. To be able to work as a team with strangers who became friends is a learning experience that is hard to achieve anywhere else. Thank you for making this happen for her."

"Our Young Artist really appreciated getting to find out about different aspects of performing, and was really excited to find out about lighting. She was so excited and confident by the end of the day - this was our first time with Canberra Youth Theatre but won't be our last!"

"She loved the final performances and having an opportunity to be her shiney self. She has to 'tone down' so often that these performance opportunities let her turn it up to 11."



THE NATURE OF THINGS

March 2023

Lead Facilitators
Emerging Artists
Participants
Year Group Ages

Erth
6
52
7-25



For the second year in a row, Canberra Youth Theatre collaborated with the internationally acclaimed puppetry company, Erth, on their puppetry-based, community performance project, *Before Us*. Our artists received training in puppetry from the team at Erth, and were tasked with bringing their extraordinary dinosaur puppets to life in a roving performance as part of Enlighten Festival.

YOUNG ARTIST STATEMENTS

"Both my tweens LOVED the roving performance as well as learning the new technical skill of puppeteering. The joy on their faces when they realised they had brought joy and wonder to others (small children in particular) by bringing the puppets to life made a deep impression on them and a greater understanding of the power of performance. The performance high they experienced each night lasted for days! They can't wait to work with Erth again!"

"Working with Erth was fantastic. The team was wonderful and I loved being able to meet new friends and have fun with kids both my age and younger. I am so so glad that Canberra Youth Theatre provides us with opportunities like this, and I would 100% do it again."

"My young artist loved and truly flourished through her participation in this amazing opportunity. Her sense of self, independence, leadership and sense of fun were all challenged and developed. She met new people and made firm friends. Having never participated in a roving performance before, she was excellently led and supported by both the CYT and Erth community to grow as a performer, developing new skills and strengthening her confidence. Her participation was expertly guided by the talented team mentors and co-puppeters. This has been an amazing experience, one she will never forget. We look forward to the opportunity to participate next year - and to bringing joy and wonder to audiences again."



This opportunity was such a gift to all of our participants of all ages, getting to meet others in the performing arts communities and inspiring them to learn new skills and be bold with what they want to learn more about. Everyone was granted more opportunities to work with and experience larger puppets and work among the Erth team to be just as important. All participants left with feelings of inclusion, and gratitude with a large group of new skills they can continue to develop in life.

Rhiley Winnett
Stage Manager

PRIDE WORKSHOP

14 APRIL 2024

Lead Facilitators

**Jade Breen
Rachel Roberston
Darcey Hoyle**

Participants
Years

**9
7-12**

IN COLLABORATION WITH



Young artists who self identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community participated in a one day workshop, thanks to Pride Foundation Australia. In this workshop, participants delved deep into the hero's journey and celebrated all the things that make us and them proud. Through collaborative devising, discussion, and skill building, participants explored the joy of LGBTQIA+ storytelling and theatre.



THE PEASANT PRINCE WORKSHOP

30 AUGUST 2024

Lead Facilitators

**Monkey Baa
Theatre Company**

Participants
Ages

**22
7-12**

IN COLLABORATION WITH

*monkey theatre
baa co.*

In this 60-minute workshop, the cast of Monkey Baa's *The Peasant Prince* led participants on a creative exploration, using movement, storytelling, and reflective prompts to engage with the themes of the production. The session concluded with a Q&A, offering insight into the creative process behind the show. Participants also received complimentary tickets to attend a performance, deepening their connection to the material and experience.



BELL SHAKESPEARE WORKSHOP

14 APRIL 2024

Lead Facilitators

**Thomas Charles
Jade Breen**

Participants

27

School Years

9–12

IN COLLABORATION WITH

**BELL
SHAKESPEARE**

In the lead up to auditions for the John Bell Scholarship, hosted by Canberra Youth Theatre, young artists had the opportunity to take part in a free workshop with Bell Shakespeare, diving into the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This dynamic session equipped young artists with exciting techniques and hands-on exercises to confidently tackle Shakespeare's text, making the words come to life in fresh and engaging ways.

MUSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP

14 APRIL 2024

Lead Facilitators

**Amy Orman,
Ashley Maynard**

Participants

27

School Years

7–10

IN COLLABORATION WITH

QPRC 

Delivered as part of the Queanbeyan and Palerang Regional Council's April holiday program, this workshop gave young artists a full-day experience exploring musical theatre, singing, dancing and performance.

The workshop was an incredible experience. From the moment the workshop began, the room was filled with a sense of play, creativity, and exploration. The engaging and accessible retelling of Shakespeare's classic made it easy for everyone to connect with the text. We each had our own opportunities to make bold acting choices, whether that be as a king, a fairy or piece of shrubbery! I was captivated for the whole session and it helped me navigate the complexities of the play – an experience that not only deepened my understanding for school assessments but also sparked excitement for my own audition with Bell Shakespeare that led to my amazing opportunity of being selected as a recipient of the John Bell Scholarship.

Emma Piva

Recipient of the John Bell Scholarship

ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

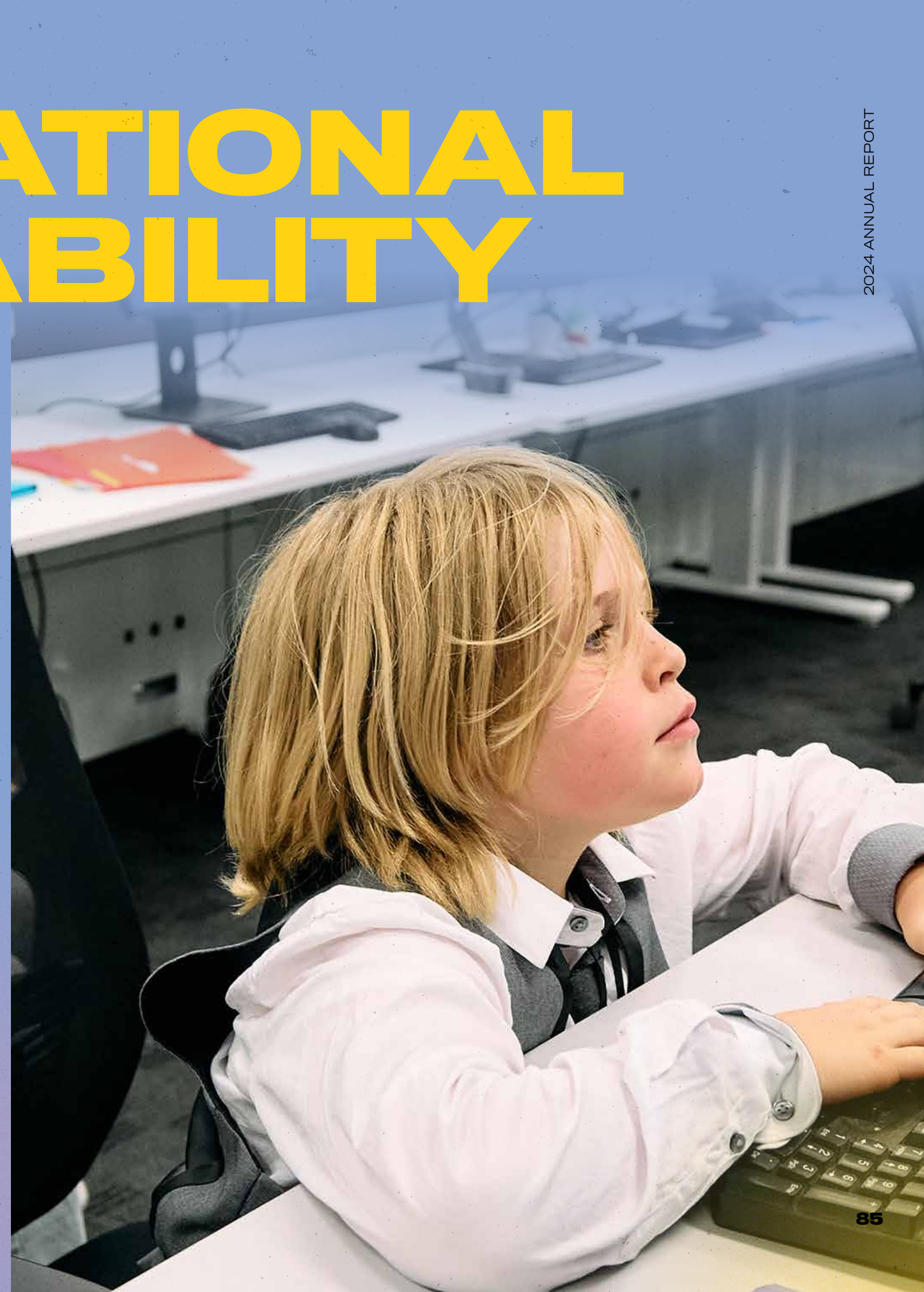
Organisational Sustainability is the foundation that supports all of Canberra Youth Theatre's artistic focus areas. It is the thread that runs through everything we do — from the stories we tell to the communities we serve — and our ability to achieve the goals in our strategic planning depends on it.

2024 was the beginning of a period of consolidation and renewal — to address not only how we sustain the company today, but renew our vision for the kind of organisation we want to become, and the impact we want to have on our young people, the ACT, and the national youth arts sector.

Financially, we're realistic: this next chapter will be challenging. The cost-of-living crisis is affecting young people, families, and audiences alike. Our sector is still recovering from disruption, and major capital works across Canberra's arts centres will continue to affect our operations. At the same time, we know government and philanthropic support will be under pressure. In response, we'll be exploring many opportunities for diversification of revenue, carefully managing our resources, and seeking cost savings wherever we can.

But sustainability isn't just about numbers. It's about people and processes. It's about creating a stable, supportive environment where our staff, artists, and young people can thrive. We are a lean organisation that punches above its weight, and further downsizing is not sustainable. Our challenge isn't just to cut costs — it's to find new ways to grow our income while staying true to our purpose. At the same time, we'll be focusing on strengthening the way we work, doing less better, and ensuring we're in the best possible position to deliver on our ambitions in the long term.

Through all of this, we will continue to advocate for the youth arts sector, both locally and nationally, and remain committed to creating a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive future for Canberra Youth Theatre.



GOVERNANCE

The Canberra Youth Theatre Board recognises that good corporate governance promotes accountability of board members and management to improve transparency, disclosure, compliance, performance and act as a primary force behind reputation management. The Board of Canberra Youth Theatre have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities, particularly their legal and fiduciary obligations to act in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation.

Canberra Youth Theatre’s systems of governance are designed to provide strategic guidance, ensure effective monitoring and review, to guarantee the organisation achieves its purpose, along with enhanced overall performance.

Appointments made to the Board seek to ensure that collectively, there is the appropriate skill level and experience to fulfil its responsibilities. The skills of the board members are within the areas of the arts, finance, legal, governance, strategy, education, fundraising, communication and marketing.

The Canberra Youth Theatre Board, in conjunction with the Artistic Director & CEO, is responsible for determining the long-term strategic directions, ratifying performance indicators, and reviewing performance against annual performance targets.

NAME	ROLE	JOINED	SKILLS AND EXPERTISE
Peter Hoolihan	Chair	2017	Legal and Corporate Governance, Canberra Youth Theatre Alumni
Adriana Law	Deputy Chair	2022	Marketing, Communications, Digital Content Technology
Cassandra Hoolihan	Secretary (From April 2023 to April 2024; Reappointed September 2024)	2021	Education, Youth Arts, Canberra Youth Theatre Alumni
Ellen Harvey	Treasurer (to April 2024)	2022	Finance, Cultural Leadership, Human Resources Management
Louise Davidson	Treasurer (from September 2024)	2024	Finance, Governance, Risk Management and Corporate Leadership
Amy Crawford	Member	2023	Governance, Public Service, Performing Arts
Joanna Erskine	Member	2023	Arts Education, Performing Arts, Strategy Development & Events
Emma Macdonald	Member	2024	Marketing, Communications, Digital Content Technology, Private Sector
Mel Ziarno (Resigned 2024)	Member (From April 2023 to August)	2023	Strategy, Change and Risk Management, Government, NFP, Private sector and Philanthropy

ACCESS & INCLUSION

Canberra Youth Theatre continued to increase its organisational knowledge and capacity to support access and inclusion within our programs. Unfortunately, without dedicated bursary funding through grants or philanthropic donations, we were unable to offer a significant number of scholarships or bursary places in 2024.

Instead, we were able to support three self-referred young artists who had previously engaged with us in 2023. We have identified a bursary fund as a specific need for our community, to allow participants to engage with our programs by removing financial barriers to participation.

Our Workshop Artists have identified a need for greater knowledge and support around best practices for working with neurodiverse participants, and we responded by offering resources and individualised support on a case-by-case basis. Building on this, we have identified it as a key area for improvement and prioritisation in 2025.

IDENTIFIER	PARTICIPANTS	STAFF & ARTISTS
First Nations	7	1
Culturally or Linguistically Diverse (CALD)	45	3
Languages other than English spoken at home	28	0
Disability	8	4
Neurodivergent	56	16
LGBTQIA+	Not Collected	17

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Canberra Youth Theatre has been deeply involved in sector engagement across several key focus areas:

- Education within the ACT region
- Youth Arts at both national and international levels
- The Arts sector more broadly within the ACT

EDUCATION

Canberra Youth Theatre continues to build meaningful connections with the education sector, sharing our expertise in youth-focused theatre practice with emerging and established educators.

In Term 1, Anna Johnstone delivered four workshops for approximately 50 pre-service teachers from the University of Canberra. Held at our Studio, these workshops focused on Devising in an Educational Context, giving future educators hands-on experience in using collaborative theatre-making techniques in the classroom. Additionally, we hosted two interns from the University of Canberra's Primary Creative Specialist Teacher (Arts) program. These interns shadowed our Workshop Artists throughout the term, actively participating in weekly sessions and exploring how we design and deliver impactful drama experiences for young people.

In May, Anna Johnstone and Luke Rogers represented Canberra Youth

Theatre at the Drama NSW conference Inward Journeys, Outward Stories in Sydney. Together, they delivered a workshop titled *The Power of Play in Movement to Ignite the Spark of Performance Art in Every Student*. This session equipped teachers with practical strategies to begin the devising process, use movement as a tool for creative exploration, and maintain artistic integrity while fostering young people's agency and collaboration. Anna and Luke also attended sessions led by educators and arts professionals, further expanding our network of education contacts across the ACT and New South Wales.

In Term 3, Anna returned to the University of Canberra to deliver an additional five workshops for another group of approximately 40 pre-service teachers. These sessions built on the foundations established earlier in the year, taking participants deeper into devising processes and offering further insight into applying theatre-making principles in educational settings.

Through these engagements, we continue to advocate for the value of drama education, support the development of confident arts educators, and share our commitment to empowering young people through performance.

YOUTH ARTS

In January and February 2024, Luke Rogers travelled to Scotland as part of his Master of Fine Arts in Creative Leadership through NIDA, and as the recipient of the Freddie J Gibson Fellowship to explore youth arts practices across the UK and Ireland. During this international professional development experience, Luke collaborated with the National Theatre of Scotland and met with a range of youth arts organisations across Scotland, Ireland, and London, to explore how these companies operate, advocate for, and engage young people through the arts. These conversations provided valuable insights into international best practices and sparked bold new ideas for how Canberra Youth Theatre can better serve young people — both locally and on a national scale.

Back in Australia, Luke continued to strengthen his peer networks across the country, engaging with other youth arts leaders to share knowledge, challenges, and strategic approaches. Through these ongoing relationships, Canberra Youth Theatre remains an active voice in national conversations around youth arts, ensuring we continue to advocate for sector-wide recognition, funding, and support. These connections also help position the company as a sector leader — committed to evolving best practices in how we support young artists, collaborate with our community, and lead with purpose.



STAFF & BOARD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GET HEARD. MAKE IMPACT – THE ART AND SCIENCE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Staff Member **Caitlin Baker**
Delivered by **Elm Communications**

Caitlin Baker attended strategic communication planning training focused on developing effective, measurable messaging strategies for our fundraising activities. She explored how to distribute complex messages about youth arts engagement across multiple channels, and applied these learnings to design our giving campaigns.

DISABILITY CONFIDENCE TRAINING

Staff Member **Helen Wojtas**
Delivered by **Accessible Arts**

This online training introduced the basics of accessibility for both visible and invisible disabilities, including legislation, language when talking to or about people with disabilities, and ways to accommodate.

This webinar provided a solid foundation for our ongoing access and inclusion work. Canberra Youth Theatre continues to be committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment, and having a strong foundation as in the Disability Confidence Training allows us to best serve our community.

FIRST AID TRAINING

Staff Member **All Staff**
Delivered by **Canberra First Aid**

To enhance our organisational capacity, all staff members attended a first aid course. Previously, only core staff members were First Aid qualified, but having Workshop Artists also hold first aid qualifications allows organisational flexibility, and is industry best practice.



BOARD



PETER HOOLIHAN Chair

Peter Hoolihan is a solicitor with Maddocks admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the ACT and the High Court of Australia. Peter has practiced across a number of legal areas, with expertise in property, construction, environment and planning law. Peter has represented commercial clients, state governments and the Commonwealth of Australia on complex leasing arrangements, construction and infrastructure projects, acquisition and disposal of land and property procurement processes around the country. Peter has also practiced in corporate governance, intellectual property and business transactions including for multiple not-for-profit and charitable organisations. Peter has a background in the creative arts, performance and drama having studied these at university and has been involved in multiple productions both on stage and off (including with Canberra Youth Theatre). His connection with Canberra Youth Theatre goes back to 2013 when his wife, Cassandra, worked and trained with the company. He has been an avid supporter since.



ADRIANA LAW Deputy Chair

Adriana Law is a marketing consultant, specialising in marketing technology, project management, and customer experience. Adriana, a lapsed musician, has worked in the arts and not-for-profit sector for more than 20 years: in administration, front of house, and back of house; for venues and production houses, big and small. She has held roles in marketing, ticketing, and technology at Canberra Theatre Centre, Opera Australia, Sydney Opera House, Bell Shakespeare, Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Symphony, and more.



CASSANDRA HOOLIHAN Secretary

Cassandra Hoolihan is an experienced secondary teacher in the ACT, specialising in Drama, Dance and English. She is currently the Coordinator of Arts at Caroline Chisholm School. In her role as a teacher, Cassandra has directed, stage managed and choreographed many events, including musicals, plays, talent nights and dance festivals. Cassandra has a background in the performing arts as an actor and performer. She has performed with companies in Newcastle (Tantrum Youth Arts, Newcastle Theatre Company, Stooged Theatre) and Canberra (Canberra



LOUISE DAVIDSON Treasurer

Louise has spent most of her 30 years in Canberra in a variety of management, executive and consultancy roles in the not for profit, corporate and public sectors. Working for national cultural institutions, education, multinational corporations and disadvantaged and marginalised young people. A significant achievement during her career was the project management of the architectural design and construction of the internationally regarded Treasures and Exhibition Gallery at the National Library of Australia. Louise also had responsibility for all facets of Project Management of major projects within the not for profit sector, including the construction of performing arts facilities, science laboratories and academic resource centres. Louise has formal qualifications in Finance, Risk Management and Governance, Business and Human Resources Management. Louise commenced at Canberra Youth Theatre in 2022 combining her love of theatre and enjoyment of working with young people. Through her career she has obtained immense personal satisfaction from the contributions that she has made to the development of our future leaders in a wide variety of fields.



AMY CRAWFORD Member

Amy Crawford joined the Canberra Youth Theatre Board in 2023. Amy is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Local Government Association. Amy was previously a Senior Adviser to the federal Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories and has over twenty years' experience in the Australian Public Service. Over her career, Amy has worked on a wide range of policy areas such as the arts, social policy, early childhood, telecommunications, immigration, and regional development portfolios. Amy has a Bachelor of Arts (Media/Communications), a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Amy has strong connections to the creative community in Canberra having performed in a range of local productions and having founded Lightbulb Improv in



JOANNA ERSKINE Member

Joanna Erskine is an award-winning playwright, producer, speaker, teacher and arts education specialist. She is the Head of Education at Bell Shakespeare, where she has worked in education for 16+ years. As both artist and arts manager, Joanna was supported and inspired by youth arts as her career developed, and she is thrilled to join the Canberra Youth Theatre Board. A graduate of the NIDA Playwright's Studio, Joanna's writing career was kickstarted when she won the Sydney Theatre Company Young Playwrights Award at the age of 18. Joanna is a two-time winner of the Silver Gull Play Award, Lysicrates Prize finalist, and founder and director of Storytellers Festival, a showcase and celebration of unproduced Australian writing, held annually at Kings Cross Theatre (KXT). Joanna's plays have been staged at the Old Fitzroy Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Pier 2/3, KXT, ATYP, NIDA, Old 505 Theatre, Legs on The Wall, Slide Bar, Bondi Pavilion, and in hundreds of schools around Australia. A former high school teacher, Joanna is passionate about writing for, and working with, young audiences and has written extensively for Bell Shakespeare, Camp Quality and Poetry In Action. Her popular monologue BOOT is performed by Year 12 students each year. It was originally produced by ATYP, published by Currency Press, and commissioned for film screening at film festivals internationally.



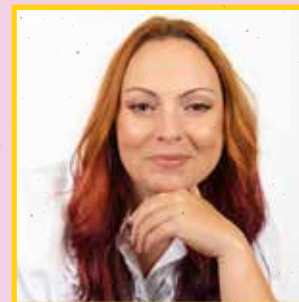
ELLEN HARVEY Treasurer

Ellen Harvey is Director of Digital Content for the ACT Government. She has a Master of Fine Arts in Cultural Leadership, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Production, and a Graduate Diploma of Book Editing and Publishing. Ellen has previously been in the executive and leadership teams of National Young Writers Festival, ACT Writers Centre, Scrapbook Creations (Universal Magazines), and Canberra Writers Festival. She has worked with Penguin Books, Random House Australia, and Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres. Ellen is a passionate advocate for accessibility, inclusion and diversity, with a particular interest in equitable communications.



EMMA MACDONALD Member

Emma Macdonald OAM is a multi-award winning journalist, speaker and maternal health advocate. In the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 2022 Emma was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to journalism and women. Emma began her career at the Australian Financial Review before moving to the Canberra Times where she spent 23 years covering federal politics from the Press Gallery, rising to become Bureau Chief. In 2016 Emma became the Associate Editor of online media platform HerCanberra. Emma has won numerous awards for her work – these include two Walkley Awards (1993, 2003) and selection as a national Walkley finalist (2001). She was awarded the John Douglas British Prize for Journalism in 1998, and in 2002 was awarded a Vincent Fairfax Ethics in Leadership Fellowship. She was highly commended for her political journalism through the Paul Lyneham Press Gallery Journalism Award in 2002 and was recognised as a University of Canberra Distinguished Alumni in 2011. She has been published widely, from The Times (UK) to the Business Standard (India), to Cosmopolitan Magazine. She is dedicated to promoting women in media – becoming Convener of Women in Media Canberra in 2015. In this role, Emma hosts regular live broadcast National Press Club addresses and founded the Caroline Jones Women in Media Young Journalists Award which is now in its seventh year. Emma has also been a Walkley Award judge across various categories and has mentored a series of journalists throughout her career. A mother of two, Emma co-founded the maternal health charity Send Hope Not Flowers in 2010, shortly after the birth of her daughter. She won an ACT Telstra Businesswoman of the Year Award for Send Hope's work in 2016 which has raised more than one million dollars for safe birth programs and maternal health training across nine developing countries.



MEL ZIARNO Member

Mel Ziarno is an experienced change manager, stakeholder engagement specialist and executive advisor with a passion for unusual or high-stake business transformations and industry-wide change challenges. Mel has over 10 years experience in general management and senior executive roles, specialising in governance and risk, policy and advocacy, stakeholder engagement, strategy and commercialising new business models. Mel has led change and engagement projects within government, industry peak bodies, NFPs, the community sector and the private sector. With a background in photography, publishing and writing (travel, creative, technical), and as a facilitator of creative workshops in Boardrooms and school rooms, Mel champions the power of the spoken and written word.

STAFF



LUKE ROGERS Artistic Director & CEO

1.0 FTE

Luke Rogers is a theatre director, actor, producer, and the Artistic Director & CEO of Canberra Youth Theatre. Luke holds a MFA Cultural Leadership (2024) and a GradDip of Dramatic Arts - Directing (2012) from NIDA, and a BA Performance from Theatre Nepean (UWS, 2002). As part of his MFA in Cultural Leadership, Luke undertook an international research placement with National Theatre of Scotland, and was awarded the Freddie J Gibson Fellowship to explore youth arts practices across the UK and Ireland.

Luke's directing credits include new plays, devised works, musical theatre, and classics for theatre companies and drama schools across Australia. Luke regularly sits on industry panels and advisory groups for government, advocacy organisations and peak bodies. Other positions have included Artistic Director of Stories Like These, Resident Studio Artist at Griffin Theatre Company, Theatre Manager of New Theatre, and Artistic Director of The Spare Room. Luke's artistic practice focuses on the role of young people as legitimate creative agents in the development of new works, elevating emerging artists into creative leadership roles, and exploring how care is maintained, creativity nurtured, and leadership enabled with artistic process.

Directing credits include: *The Department of Responsible Adulthood*, *Work But This Time Like You Mean It*, *Rosieville*, *The Trials*, *How To Vote*, *Dags*, *Two Twenty Somethings*, *Decide Never To Be Stressed About Anything Ever Again*, *Ever*, *Little Girls Alone in the Woods*, *Normal*, *Possibility*, *Collapse* (Canberra Youth Theatre); *Mary Stuart*, *Collected Stories* (Chaika Theatre / ACT Hub); *In Real Life* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Blink*, *MinusOneSister*, *Fireface*, *The Last Five Years*, *The Carnivores* (Stories Like These); *Play House* (NIDA); *The Pillowman*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Don Juan in Soho*, *Art is a Weapon*, *After The End*, *Blasted* (New Theatre); *100 Reasons For War*, *Love and Information*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Shakespeare's Women*, *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* (AFTT); *Lysistrata*, *The Burial At Thebes*, *Pool (No Water)*, *4.48 Psychosis*, *Eyes To The Floor* (Sydney Theatre School); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mr Marmalade* (CQUniversity); *Macbeth*, *Cyberbible*, *Embers* (AIM Dramatic Arts); and *Two Weeks With The Queen* (Mountains Youth Theatre).



HELEN WOJTAS Administrator

0.8 FTE

Helen Wojtas joined the Canberra Youth Theatre team in January 2020 as the Program Administrator. She comes from a background of hotel administration, and is a professional costumier, graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2015. Helen also holds a BA (Honours) (Gender, Sexuality and Culture) (ANU 2010) and a BSc (Psychology) (ANU 2011). In 2023, Helen moved into the role of Administrator, having completed her Master of Business Administration (Arts and Cultural Management) through Deakin University the year before.

Helen spent her childhood immersed in the youth arts scene in Canberra, as a member of Canberra Youth Music (formerly the Canberra Youth Orchestra Society, now Music for Canberra) between 1993 and 2010. She found her experience within the Canberra youth arts scene invaluable, and understands the importance of providing the next generation of Young Artists with the experiences within the arts.

Helen continues to be involved in the Canberra arts scene, as a member of a circus training school, and a violist within the National Capital Orchestra, and as a costumier for theatre, dance, opera and circus in Canberra and Sydney. Helen is passionate about youth arts, and brings her unique skill set of administration and experience in the theatre industry to Canberra Youth Theatre.



ANNA JOHNSTONE Creative Learning Producer

0.6 FTE

Anna Johnstone is a theatre director and performing arts educator working in Ngunnawal Country (Canberra), where she is committed to bridging creativity and education through collaboration with teachers and young artists.

Anna began her career at the egg in Bath, UK — a purpose-built theatre dedicated to young audiences and emerging artists. From 2009 to 2012, she held a range of roles there including director, teaching artist, and education officer. During this time, she collaborated with acclaimed UK theatre-makers such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, Emma Earle (Pins and Needles), and the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. She directed and co-directed several productions with the Theatre Royal Bath's Young Company (*Beasts and Beauties*, *Oliver Twist*, *Graveyard*), and supported others as assistant director (*Life Savings*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Treasure Island*). As a lead artist in the School Without Walls project (2011–2012), she pioneered the integration of learning and creative practice during a six-week primary school residency. In 2012, Anna was

named an Associate Artist of the egg.

Since returning to Canberra, Anna has directed and devised numerous new works, including *Imagine*, *Filtered*, *Buzz*, and *Possibility* for Canberra Youth Theatre; *Boring!* and *The Best Ever Sleepover* for Canberra Grammar School; and the creative development of *This Rough Magic* for The Street Theatre. In 2020, she was appointed an Associate Artist of The Street Theatre, where she began developing *Hatchlings* – a new work for young audiences exploring unexpected friendship.

Anna directed *The People's House* at MOAD Canberra in 2023, and participated in the 2024 Resident Street program. She currently serves as the Creative Learning Producer at Canberra Youth Theatre, where she continues to champion arts-led education and youth-led creation.

CHRISTOPHER CARROLL Marketing & Engagement Manager

0.6 FTE

Like many theatre-makers, Christopher Carroll has sharpened his communication skills through a travelled career of telling stories that matter, through promoting his own work with his company, Bare Witness, and advocating for the value of the arts. He fiercely believes that theatre is for everyone – they just don't know it yet.

Some of Christopher's early theatre experiences in his native Ireland came through Dublin Youth Theatre and Roundabout Youth Theatre, companies that are renowned for radical, confronting productions that stand up and stand apart in a city with strong theatrical traditions. Having followed the path from youth theatre to professional training and a fulfilling career in the arts, he can speak to the life-changing impact of those formative experiences, and the important role of youth arts in the cultural landscape, not only for the future, but in the here and now.

Christopher has also worked with us since 2018 as a Workshop Artist, with a particular focus on our professional pathways programs. As an active arts practitioner and educator, he has been privileged to guide many young people through Canberra Youth Theatre and witness their development into confident, conscientious, expressive young artists – so naturally, he's eager to get the message out there about how great they are.



CAITLIN BAKER Development & Communications Coordinator

0.6 FTE

Caitlin Baker first encountered Canberra Youth Theatre as a workshop participant at 16 years old, and has since worked her way through the ranks of participating artist, Workshop Artist, Resident Artist, production Director – all the way to her current position of Communications and Development Coordinator.

As a long time member of the Canberra Youth Theatre community, Caitlin is a staunch advocate for both the arts and young people, and is determined to help young people access the same opportunities in the arts that have helped her become the artist she is today. She is deeply dedicated to increasing the diversity and reach of local performance works and artists. Alongside this work, Caitlin also lives and works on Ngannawal and Ngambri land as an actor, director and dramaturg, championing storytelling in every aspect of her life. You might have seen her work in Canberra Youth Theatre shows *How to Vote*, *Carpe DM*, *You Can't Tell Anyone*, as well as productions of *The Boys*, and *Lord of the Flies* around Canberra.

In her journey as an artist, Caitlin has become deeply attuned to how important digital communication is to sharing the value of the arts, and reaching those whose stories deserve to be told. Her passion for advocacy informs her work with Canberra Youth Theatre, and drives her desire to help ensure every young Canberran has access to the arts. Caitlin views her work engaging with development and philanthropy as an opportunity to articulate the profound value of youth arts, and find like-minded community members who can help make this happen.



CHARLOTTE JACKSON Workshops Coordinator

0.5 FTE

As a dancer, actor and musical theatre performer, Charlotte Jackson is deeply passionate about the performing arts, and the invaluable opportunity it gives young performers to express themselves and amplify their voice within their community. Charlotte developed her skills in administration, communication and organisation from her background working as a receptionist for a sports rehab clinic. She also teaches for Footsteps, an international company that teaches a dance curriculum program in primary schools, giving her invaluable experience working and communicating with both adults and young artists. Charlotte is an advocate for young people, taking part in the Minister for Education's Student Executive Team. Drawing from her experience as school



HANNAH PENGILLY

Education Coordinator

0.2 FTE

Hannah Pengilly is an enthusiastic educator and creative, currently pursuing a Bachelor of Secondary Studies and a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Canberra. Hannah's educational journey is grounded in a deep passion for creative learning and a lifelong involvement in dance and theatre, driving her commitment to shaping the next generation of artists and innovators. Over the last three years, she has contributed to the local high school community in Canberra as an Arts Assistant, fostering artistic growth among students. Beyond local borders, Hannah has collaborated internationally with Apple Education for two years, advocating for the creative integration of technology in educational and artistic settings. As Canberra Youth Theatre's Education Coordinator, Hannah plays a pivotal role in building and nurturing relationships with schools in the ACT and surrounding regions.



CAITLIN HODDER

Development Coordinator

0.4 FTE

Caitlin Hodder holds a Bachelor of Arts – Drama and English (ANU), which included six months studying theatre and visual arts at the State University of New York (Stonybrook), as well as a Diploma of Costume for Performance (TAFE).

After a decade of working both in Sydney and internationally, Caitlin recently returned to Canberra with her young daughter to be closer to family and hone her skills in the not-for-profit sector. Caitlin draws on her experience in the grants and fundraising space as Associate Producer for WestWords Centre for Writing. She is also an experienced costume designer and set costumer. In 2020-21 Caitlin was appointed resident Assistant Costume Designer at the Berliner Ensemble (Berlin). Further costuming credits include: *Glass Onion*, *Christmas Women* (Netflix); *Without Remorse*, *Dreamfactory*, *Girl in the Spider's Web* (Film Service Babelsberg); *Wunderschön* (HellingerDoll); *Proof* (Freefall Productions); *Deutschland 86* (UFA Fiction); *Ku'damm 59* (UFA Fiction); *Highly Sprung* (Legs on the Wall); *Carmen* (Opera Australia); *Dance Academy: The Comeback* (Werner Films); *The Young Pretender* (Sydney Fringe); *Rumors* (Epicentre Theatre Company); *Twelfth Night* (BEST Company); and *Aunty Mame* (Free Rain Theatre).

OUR PARTNERS

Canberra Youth Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our partners who are key to the success of our work.

GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Supported by



CREATIVE PARTNERS



PROGRAM PARTNERS



PRODUCTION SPONSORS



MAJOR DONORS



MARKETING & ENGAGEMENT

We can reflect on two very successful productions this year, with *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* achieving our best performance at the box office in recent years. The distinct style and setting of the show lent itself to an off-beat, anarchic marketing campaign that was fun, pulp, provocative, and a great hook for young adult audiences. Marketing for the show was supported with dedicated additional staffing in Linda Chen, who generated eye-catching video content.

For *The Department of Responsible Adulthood*, the challenges of managing a large group of young participants was balanced with the high level of engagement, as over 30 young people had the opportunity to devise and perform in a new work. The large cast of young participants also made for a guaranteed audience of family and friends, that offset the difficulties of trying to sell a new work in an unfamiliar location in Belconnen. As a result, audience numbers exceeded expectations and extra shows were added.

As we enter into 2025, a year with no full productions, and in a market that prioritises performance outcomes over skills-building, we must consider how we can still offer ways for our community to get involved in live performance. It is instructive that our third-highest performing page on our website is Auditions. Engagement in free, low-commitment opportunities, such as weekend Creative Developments,

are consistently high, and in our Emerging Artist Survey this year, the biggest prohibitive factor reported was financial cost. The ongoing subsidising of Emerging Artist programs therefore feels necessary, but at the same time, feeds into the wider problem in Australian culture, whereby the true value (or cost) of art is not recognised.

Internally, we feel the need to create clearer pathways within the organisation. With a radical commitment of care, attention, and responsiveness to each young artist, there is potential for greater retention of participants in our workshops, so that as they grow up, they aspire to, and naturally feed into our Emerging Artist programs.

The public announcement about consolidating our activities made an impact in local and national media, and among the wider arts industry, prompting an outpouring of public support. The announcement has been a platform for advocacy and fundraising for the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

With this consolidation of activities, we made the decision not to have a Season Launch, and instead, ended the year with a 'Wrap-Party' that celebrated the achievements of the past year, reunited casts and colleagues, and acted as a joyous occasion to bring our community together.

MARKETING STATISTICS



3,170
FOLLOWERS

114

NEW FOLLOWERS
+3.47%



2,184
FOLLOWERS

166

NEW FOLLOWERS
+7.6%



181

FOLLOWERS

20

NEW FOLLOWERS
+12.4%



2,814
SUBSCRIBERS

265

NEW SUBSCRIBERS
+9.4%



72

SUBSCRIBERS

2

NEW SUBSCRIBERS
+2.7%

**TOTAL INCREASE IN
AUDIENCE: +7.1%**

% = GROWTH COMPARED TO 2023

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

Our development, partnerships and philanthropic activities in 2024 worked to diversify and increase revenue, with a focus upon fostering alumni relationships, and securing recurring donor support.

2024 identified a pressing need for Canberra Youth Theatre to actively seek philanthropic support, in order to continue to deliver programs like full scale productions, and bursary positions. In 2024, just under 15% of income came from fundraising, grants, and sponsorship agreements. This is relatively on par with 2023, with a decrease in sponsorship funding picked up by the other two sources. Development planning has identified the need for this income to increase to approximately 30% of overall income, with the largest opportunities for growth identified through corporate philanthropy and generous individual donors.

At the end of the 2024 financial year we transitioned away from the Producer's Circle initiative. While this came with a smaller initial donation pool, we were pleased to retain the majority of our valued supporters through ongoing regular donations and direct contributions, reflecting continued commitment to our work.

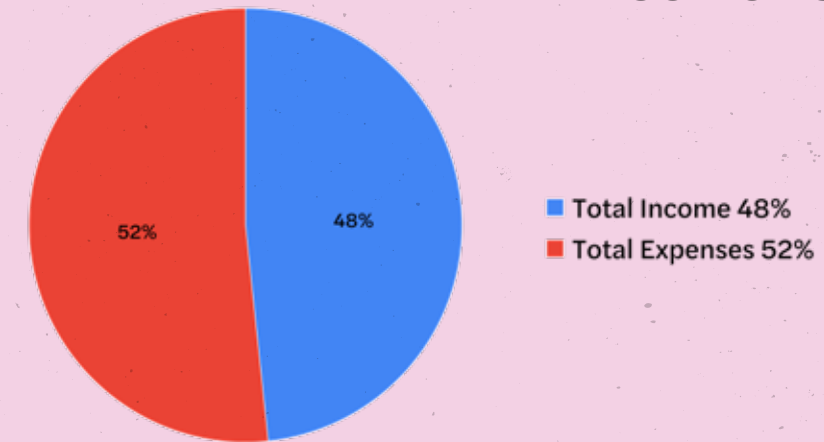
The end of 2024 marked a direct donation request to our community in the wake of public communications regarding the future of Canberra Youth Theatre. This was our first opportunity to trial GiveNow as a platform, and marked a steep increase in donations. The final three months of the year brought in \$8,336.58 in donations from 16 donors – the majority of whom are new donors. Alumni Liv Hewson, star of the Paramount+ with Showtime series *Yellowjackets*, and upcoming Australian comedy *He Had It Coming*, committed to a major ongoing contribution.

The Jeremy Spencer Broom Legacy continued to make a profound impact towards funding our Emerging Artist Programs, and modelled a productive and positive philanthropic relationship. It is due to this relationship that our Emerging Artist Program was able to run successfully in 2024.

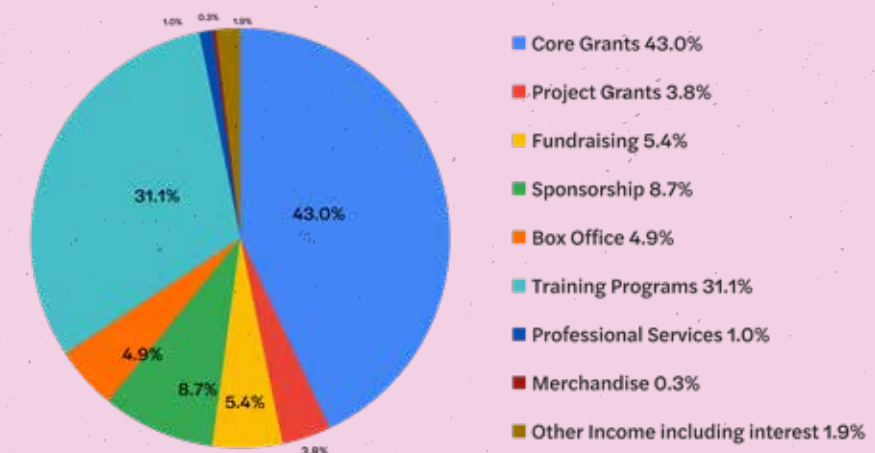
Our philanthropic and fundraising strategy has opened the door to more specific fundraising events, and a concerted effort towards fostering business support in 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT

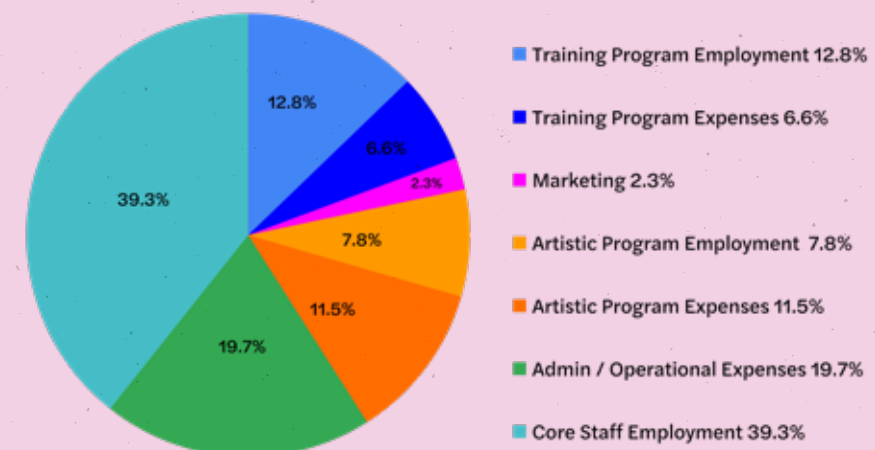
Income vs Expenses



Income Breakdown



Expenses Breakdown



TREASURER REPORT

As Treasurer of Canberra Youth Theatre, I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.

Revenue

Revenue decreased in 2024 to \$680,753 (2023: \$698,058). The income received from Fees and Services increased to \$220,086 (2023: \$217,152) and income from the ACT Government artsAct grant funding contributed \$314,229 (2023: \$300,000).

We continued in 2024 to focus on diversifying Canberra Youth Theatre income through Sponsorship, Donations, and Philanthropic initiatives totalling \$62,998. This was a decrease from the previous year (2023: \$98,417). Audience sales were \$27,576 (2023: \$34,101) with only two productions in 2024 compared to three in 2023.

Other income increased in 2024 to \$25,448 (2023: \$21,979).

Expenses

Expenses decreased in 2024 to \$728,152 (2023: \$746,464). This decrease is attributed to the Artistic Program totalling \$116,102 (2023: \$143,624), Training Services \$98,695 (2023: \$151,852), Insurance Costs \$7,579 (2023: \$8,736), and Marketing and Promotion \$4,441 (2023: \$17,357).

Employee benefits increased to \$424,965 (2023: \$365,282). Rent and Running Costs in 2024 were \$36,459 (2023: \$20,779) and IT and Communication \$12,012 (2023: \$8,943). Other expenses remained relatively stable throughout 2024.

In 2022 we implemented the straight-line depreciation method. The depreciation expense for 2024 is \$2,294 (2023: \$2,561), and our non-current assets have a written down value of \$323 (2023: \$2,617).

The financial outcome for 2024 was a deficit of \$47,399 compared to 2023 with a deficit of \$48,396.

Financial Position

As at 31 December 2024, Canberra Youth Theatre was in a good financial position with short-term liquidity, cash reserves (total current assets decreased in 2024 to \$248,170; 2023: \$310,670), and low levels of debt (total liabilities \$76,339; 2023: \$93,735).

Canberra Youth Theatre is well-positioned to meet its short-term commitments and continue being financially viable for the medium term. The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, which assumes that Canberra Youth Theatre will be able to meet its debts as and when they fall due. The retained earnings at the end of 2024 are reported as \$172,153 (2023: \$219,552).

Outlook

The Board has over the last two years contemplated and strategised options for sustained growth as a consequence of failure to attain an increase in ACT Government Arts Organisation Investment funding or the return of operational funding from the Federal Government through Creative Australia, acknowledging that there is an imperative to invest in programs and staff to stimulate activity and increase our revenue through growth in own source income.

In 2024, the Board committed to supporting management to strike a balance between managing financial constraints and protecting the strength of Canberra Youth Theatre's financial position, while continuing to invest in the development of our core staff, the delivery of the Artistic Program, and the provision of our quality services throughout Canberra and the regions.

The Board was enthusiastic about the growth opportunities for 2024, and considered this to be the right approach to deliver long-term benefits to young people across the ACT and ultimately increase participation, help secure financial longevity, and provide a legacy for Canberra Youth Theatre. Despite this rigorous approach, commitment from staff and the Board, the implemented strategies did not equate to a growth in own source income.

As we strive to provide certainty for Canberra Youth Theatre's future, in 2025 we will offer a limited Artistic Program to allow staff to focus on identifying growth opportunities, and strategise on the ongoing approach to take the company through the next 5 years.

Mid-Year Budget to Audit Result

The Board approved a deficit budget in 2024 of \$115,226; this was revised at the mid-year point to a deficit of \$130,149. The actual outcome was a deficit of \$47,399.

Actual Revenue Compared to Budget

The actual revenue result for 2024 was \$680,752 compared to the Mid-Year Budget (MYB) of \$634,722 (\$46,030 over MYB).

The artsACT grant received was \$314,229 (MYB: \$304,500), Box Office \$27,576 (MYB: \$15,000), Participation Fees \$219,858 (MYR: \$196,395), Other Income \$12,469 (MYB: \$4,800).

Actual Expenses Compared to Budget

The actual expenses results for 2024 was \$728,150 compared to the Mid-Year Budget of \$764,871 (\$36,721 under MYR).

The Artistic Program result was in excess of MYR \$116,102 compared to \$97,591. Workshop Artists staffing expenses were over budget; \$465,955 compared to \$419,677.

Marketing Expenses were under budget \$4,441 compared to MYB \$21,150 and Total Operating Expenses \$508,912 compared to MYB \$528,676.

The financial outcome for 2024 was a deficit of \$47,399 compared to the predicted MYR deficit of \$130,149.



LOUISE DAVIDSON
Treasurer



CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
ABN: 99470855403**

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
ABN: 99470855403
FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
ABN: 99470855403
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Your Committee members submit the financial report of Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.

Board Committee members

The names of Committee members of Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Name	Role	Date of Appointment
Peter Hoolihan	Chair	AGM 2024
Adriana Law	Deputy Chair	AGM 2024
Cassandra Hoolihan	Secretary	JAN – APR 2024.REAPPOINTED SEP 2024
Mel Ziarno	Secretary	APR - AUG 2024
Ellen Harvey	Treasurer	TO APRIL 2024
Louise Davidson	Treasurer	FROM SEP 2024
Amy Crawford	Member	AGM 2024
Joanna Erskine	Member	AGM 2024
Ellen Harvey	Member	FROM APR 2024
Emma MacDonald	Member	FROM APR 2024

Committee members have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Principal Activities

The principal activity of Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated during the financial year was to promote and create theatre with young people that is inspirational, enriching, empowering and innovative.

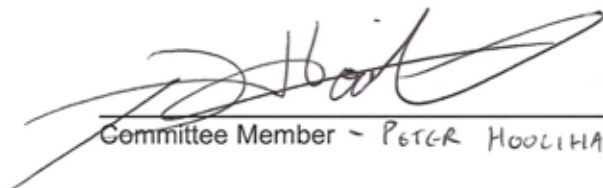
Significant Changes

No significant change in these activities occurred during the year.

Operating Result

The deficit for the year ended 31 December 2024 amounted to \$47,399 (2023: deficit of \$48,396).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee.


Committee Member - PETER HOOLIHAN


Committee Member
Louise Davidson

Dated this 17 day of MARCH 2025
2024.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
ABN: 99470855403

Scope

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 including the statement of financial position, statement of comprehensive income and statement of cash flows for the year then ended a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information and the statement by Members of the Committee.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* (ACT) and are appropriate to meet the needs of members. The committee's responsibilities also include designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the organisation's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I followed applicable independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is a general-purpose financial report and has been prepared by the Committee to satisfy the requirements of the reporting obligations to the Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated and to meet the needs of members. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
ABN: 99470855403

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated as at 31 December 2024 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the *Associations Incorporated Act (1991)*.



David Perceval
Fellow of the Institute of Chartered
Accounts of Australia
ICAA Member #45109

5th March 2025
Canberra, ACT

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue		
Audience Sales	27,576	34,101
Fees and Services	220,086	217,152
Sponsorship	30,936	60,701
Donations and Philanthropic Funding	32,062	37,716
Grants		
- ArtsACT	314,229	300,000
- Other Grants	30,416	26,409
Other Income and Interest	25,448	21,979
Total Revenue	680,753	698,058
Expenses		
Employee benefits	424,965	365,282
Artist Program	116,102	143,624
Bookkeeping and Audit	7,440	9,010
Training Services	98,695	151,852
IT & Communication	12,012	8,943
Depreciation expenses	2,294	2,561
Banking Fees	2,250	2,976
Rent and Running Costs	36,459	20,779
Insurances	7,579	8,736
Marketing Promo Documentation	4,441	17,357
Office Consumables/Resources	15,915	15,334
Total Expenses	728,152	746,454
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	(47,399)	(48,396)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	57,145	51,126
Term Deposit	164,760	252,932
Petty Cash	180	44
Prepayments	19,516	-
Rental Bond	6,568	6,568
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	248,170	310,670
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Office Equipment at Cost	23,861	23,861
Less Provisions for Depreciation	(23,538)	(21,244)
Creative Equipment at Cost	3,000	3,000
Less Provisions for Depreciation	(3,000)	(3,000)
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	323	2,617
TOTAL ASSETS	248,493	313,287
LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors	24,366	12,361
Provision for Employee Entitlements	42,967	25,169
Fees/Grants Received in Advance	9,006	56,205
TOTAL LIABILITIES	76,339	93,735
NET ASSETS	172,153	219,552
REPRESENTED BY:		
Members Funds at the Beginning of Year	219,552	267,948
Retained earnings	(47,399)	(48,396)
MEMBERS FUNDS AT END OF YEAR	172,153	219,552

CASHFLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts in the course of operations	661,237	686,578
Interest received	12,469	13,058
Payments in the course of operations	(755,722)	(720,726)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(82,016)	(21,090)
 Increase in Investing Activities		
Purchase of plant and equipment	-	-
Net cash outflow from investing activities	-	-
 Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	304,102	325,192
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	222,086	304,102
 Represented by:		
Cash at Bank	57,145	51,126
Term Deposit	164,760	252,932
Petty Cash	44	44
	222,086	304,102

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations and the *Associations Incorporations Act (ACT) 1991*.

The financial report covers the Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated as an individual entity. The Association as an association incorporated in the ACT under the *Association Incorporation Act 1991*.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the economic entity in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

Basis of Preparation

Reporting Basis and Conventions

The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis and is based on historical costs modified by the revaluation of selected non - current assets, and financial assets and financial liabilities for which the fair value basis of accounting has been applied.

Accounting Policies

a. Income tax

No provision has been made for income tax as the Association is exempt from taxation under Section 50-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

b. Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Where an asset is acquired at no cost, the cost is its fair value as at the date of acquisition

The carrying amount of the assets is reviewed annually by directors to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows is discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

c. Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its useful lives to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciating rates used for each class are:

Class of Fixed Asset	Rates
Plant & Equipment	25%
Theatre Equipment	30%

d. Financial Instruments

Recognition

Financial instruments are initially measured at cost on trade date, which includes transaction costs, when the related contractual rights or obligations exist.

e. Impairment of Assets

At each reporting date, the Association reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the group estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

f. Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus related on-costs. Employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits.

g. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result, and that outflow can be reliably measured.

h. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the balance sheet.

Cash flows are included in the Statement of Cash Flows on a gross basis. The GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

i. Revenue

Grants & Fees

Government grants and fees are recognised as income on the basis over the periods necessary to match them with the related costs.

The revenue recognised for the ArtsACT grant for 2023 was \$314,229 (2023: \$300,000).

Donations

Donations revenues are recognised when they are received.

Interest revenue

Interest is recognised on an accrual basis.

j. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the cash flow statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

In the opinion of the committee the financial report

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated as at 31 December 2024 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Canberra Youth Theatre Company Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Committee Member
Louise Danden

Dated this 17th day of March 2025

CANBERRA
YOUTH THEATRE

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