

# Youth Creative Council Guidelines

## **Lead the future. Shape our vision. Represent young artists.**

Being on the Youth Creative Council is an opportunity to drive real change in how theatre is made with, by, and for young people.

The Youth Creative Council is a leadership programme for young artists aged 13-25 who want to shape the future of youth theatre in the ACT. Members work directly alongside the Artistic Director & CEO on the decisions that shape our organisation, connecting with young artists across our programs and the broader youth community to ensure their experiences and aspirations are heard and acted upon.

For Council members, the experience develops practical skills in advocacy, governance, strategic planning, and cultural leadership. You'll learn how arts organisations work from the inside, build sector connections, and contribute to conversations that shape the future of arts and culture in the region.

## **What You'll Do**

The Youth Creative Council is made up of 8-12 young people from across the ACT region who are committed to changing the way theatre is made with and for young people.

### **Strategic decision-making**

- Assess works being considered for our artistic program
- Shape programming decisions and organisational priorities
- Contribute to strategic planning and company operations
- Your voice directly influences what happens on our stages and across our community

### **Representative voice and advocacy**

- Channel perspectives from young people across the ACT region into real decisions
- Gather feedback from your peers and advocate for diverse voices
- Ensure we're genuinely serving the youth community
- Represent youth voices in sector forums and government consultations

### **Curating and programming**

- Programme and host Scratch nights throughout the year
- Select artists and shape creative direction for public events
- Champion emerging work and new voices
- Build hands-on experience in curation and event management

## **Community consultation and co-design**

- Consult with the youth community on proposed initiatives
- Co-design programs that respond to what young people need and want
- Shape how we develop and deliver opportunities for emerging artists

## **Governance and professional development**

- Option to observe Board of Directors meetings
- Gain insight into how arts organisations are governed
- Learn how strategic decisions are made at the highest organisational level

## **Professional mentorship and sector connections**

- Work directly with our Artistic Director & CEO, staff, Board members, and artists
- Build relationships with sector leaders and expand your professional network
- Connect with opportunities across the arts industry
- Receive professional references documenting your contributions

# **Expectations**

As a Youth Creative Council member, you are expected to:

- Act as an ambassador for Canberra Youth Theatre
- Help promote our programs, shows, events, and opportunities
- Represent youth voices by offering suggestions and feedback in strategic planning
- Work with others to plan and execute Council-led initiatives
- Attend artistic and advocacy events as representatives of Canberra Youth Theatre
- Build and maintain a safe and positive community of emerging arts leaders
- Advocate for the importance of youth engagement in the arts

# **Opportunities**

- Gain practical skills in advocacy, governance, strategic planning, and cultural leadership
- Develop confidence in articulating your vision and championing change
- Build hands-on curatorial and programming experience
- Become practiced in committee and working group processes
- Develop sector connections and professional networks
- Contribute to policy conversations and cultural change beyond our organisation
- Receive professional references from the Artistic Director & CEO
- Where elected to do so, serve as a Co-Chair of the Council
- Opportunity to attend national youth advocacy events and youth arts forums

## How It Works

### Membership

- 8-12 diverse members aged 13-25
- Open to all Canberra Youth Theatre members
- We're especially keen to hear from young people who experience barriers to accessing the arts

### Meeting Schedule

- Monday 30 March 2026
- Monday 11 May 2026
- Monday 22 June 2026
- Monday 3 August 2026
- Monday 14 September 2026
- Monday 26 October 2026
- Monday 30 November 2026

All meetings start at 6:00pm.

Option to attend Board of Directors meetings as observers (not required). These dates will be communicated separately.

### Meeting Procedures

- Agenda and papers will be shared at least one week before each meeting
- Meetings need at least half of current members plus one to make decisions (this is called a quorum)
- If you can't attend a meeting, let us know in advance at [info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au)
- Members who miss three consecutive meetings without communication may forfeit their position
- Sometimes we'll need to make decisions between meetings via email or online – this is considered normal Council business

### How Council members contribute

- Prepare for meetings by reviewing materials, assessing new works, or gathering community feedback
- Attend regular Council meetings for strategic discussions and decision-making
- Connect with current Canberra Youth Theatre members and seek to represent the breadth of our community
- Optional: Attend Board meetings throughout the year
- Program and host Scratch nights showcasing emerging artists
- Have a presence at Canberra Youth Theatre programs and events wherever possible

## Co-Chairs of the Youth Creative Council

The Youth Creative Council has two **Co-Chairs** who provide peer leadership and share coordination responsibilities.

### Eligibility

- All Youth Creative Council members can nominate for Co-Chair positions
- Co-Chairs must be over the age of 18
- Selection is made collaboratively by Council members
- This is a leadership role requiring additional time beyond regular Council activities

### The Co-Chairs will:

- Coordinate the Youth Creative Council and facilitate meetings
- Act as primary points of contact between the Council, staff, and Board
- Liaise directly with the Artistic Director & CEO on strategic matters
- Represent the Council's voice in organisational conversations
- Coordinate Council communications and projects
- Receive support and mentoring from the Artistic Director & CEO
- Work closely with the staff of the Company

## Minimum Requirements

As a Council member, during your term (March-November), you are required to:

- Attend at least **5 Council meetings** throughout the year
- Actively contribute the voice of youth to the company
- Participate actively in Council projects and initiatives
- Volunteer approximately **3-5 hours per month** to Council-related work (5-7 hours per month if you are a Co-Chair)
- Adhere to Canberra Youth Theatre's Codes of Conduct and Policies

**We know people have school, uni, work and caring responsibilities, so we'll be flexible with time commitments and will work with you to make the schedule manageable.**

If a Council member is inactive for three months without communication, they may forfeit their position, which may then be filled by another member.

## Leave of absence

If you need to step back from the Council temporarily, you can request a leave of absence for up to three months. Just let us know by emailing [info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au) and we'll work with you to make it happen.

## If you need to resign

Life circumstances change, and that's okay. If you need to step down from the Council, please let the Artistic Director & CEO know via email at [info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au). We'd love to hear your feedback about your experience and stay connected with you.

# How We Work Together

## Decision-making

We aim to make decisions by consensus wherever possible – meaning we discuss until everyone feels heard and we find a solution that works. When we can't reach consensus, we'll put it to a vote, with the majority deciding.

If there's a tie, the Co-Chairs will work together to make the call. If you disagree with a decision or need to abstain from voting, you can ask for your position to be noted in the meeting minutes.

## Confidentiality and sharing information

Council meetings involve open, honest conversations where people share ideas that are still developing. To create a safe space for these discussions, what's said in meetings stays confidential unless we explicitly agree it's public information.

This means:

- Draft documents and works-in-progress are confidential
- Meeting discussions and deliberations are confidential
- Once something is finalised and made public, you're welcome to share it
- If you're unsure whether you can share something, ask the Co-Chairs or the Artistic Director & CEO

## Using social media

You're welcome to share your excitement about being on the Council and post about public Canberra Youth Theatre activities. When posting about your Council involvement:

- Make it clear you're sharing your personal perspective, not speaking for the whole Council
- Don't share confidential information or meeting discussions
- Tag @canberrayouththeatre when appropriate
- Remember you're representing Canberra Youth Theatre in the community – be thoughtful and kind

## Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest happens when you (or your close friends/family) might personally benefit from a Council decision. This is natural and happens to everyone – the important thing is being transparent about it.

If a conflict comes up:

- Let the Co-Chairs or staff know before the discussion
- You can still participate in the conversation to share context
- You'll need to abstain from voting on that particular decision
- We'll note this in the minutes

Examples might include: assessing work by a close friend, making decisions that affect an organisation you're involved with, or programming events where you might perform.

## Bringing support

Members are welcome to bring a support person to meetings if that would help you participate fully. This could be a parent/carer, disability support worker, or anyone else who helps you engage.

Support people:

- Are welcome at all meetings (just let us know in advance)
- Must sign a confidentiality agreement
- Can help you share your views or participate in discussions
- Can't vote on your behalf or contribute their own views to Council business
- Won't receive remuneration for attending

## Your Impact

Youth Creative Council members' contributions directly shape our work. We commit to publicly naming your specific contributions and impact each year.

As a Council member, your work will:

- Select work for our artistic program by assessing works being considered
- Represent youth voices in policy conversations and advocacy initiatives
- Co-design new programs responding to community needs
- Guide company operations and how we serve young artists
- Program Scratch nights curating regular emerging artist showcases
- Shape organisational planning and strategic direction

All members receive a **professional reference** from the Artistic Director & CEO at completion, documenting your leadership, curatorial work, and contributions to the organisation.

## Applications

Any member of Canberra Youth Theatre aged 13-25 is invited to apply for the Youth Creative Council.

**You don't need any formal experience in theatre or leadership to apply.** Curiosity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to work collaboratively are what matter most.

**To apply:**

1. Complete the Expression of Interest form by Tuesday 10 March 2026
2. Your application will be considered by our team
3. Outcomes will be sent to all applicants by Monday 16 March 2026
4. The Council begins on Monday 30 March 2026

If you have any questions about the Youth Creative Council or the application process, please email [info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au)

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## Other Questions

**Do I need theatre experience?**

No. If you care about making theatre and the creative arts accessible and responsive to young people, we want to hear from you. You don't need to be "already in theatre" – thoughtfulness, curiosity, and willingness to collaborate are what matter most.

**What's the actual time commitment?**

3-5 hours per month including in-person meetings every 6 weeks (Monday evenings, 6-8pm) and preparation for assessing new works, consulting with young people, or gathering feedback. You can also choose to attend Board of Directors meetings as an observer. The schedule is designed around school, work, study, and caring responsibilities, and we'll be flexible to make it manageable.

**What are Co-Chairs?**

Two Council members who provide peer leadership and liaise directly with the Artistic Director & CEO. All members can nominate for these roles, with selection made collaboratively.

**Can I attend Board of Directors meetings?**

Yes. Youth Creative Council members are welcome to attend as observers throughout the year. It's optional and based on your interest – an opportunity for governance experience at the highest organisational level, not a requirement of participation. Attendance will be limited for each meeting.

**What are Scratch nights?**

Regular events showcasing works-in-development, experiments, and emerging artists. As Youth Creative Council members, you'll curate and programme them – selecting artists, shaping creative direction, and hosting the events.

**What decisions do I actually get to make?**

You'll assess new works being considered for our artistic program, consult with the youth community on proposed initiatives, contribute to organisational planning, guide community partnerships, and program Scratch nights. You'll also contribute to policy conversations and sector advocacy on behalf of young artists. These aren't hypothetical – you'll have meaningful influence over what happens at Canberra Youth Theatre, with your voice directly shaping the decisions that matter.

**How do Youth Creative Council members represent the youth community?**

You serve as a council of representatives for the entire youth community at Canberra Youth Theatre – gathering feedback from your peers, advocating for diverse voices, and ensuring young people's perspectives shape our decisions. You're not just speaking for yourself, you're channeling the voices of young artists across the ACT and amplifying them on a national stage. We aim to create opportunities for Council members to represent ACT youth voices at national youth advocacy events, youth arts forums, and sector conferences, connecting our community to broader conversations about the future of arts and young people across Australia.

**Will I get a reference?**

Yes. All Youth Creative Council members receive a professional reference from the Artistic Director & CEO at completion, documenting your leadership, curatorial work, and contributions to the organisation.

**What if I need support to participate?**

We're committed to accessibility. Let us know in your application if you need support like accessibility accommodations or flexible arrangements, and we'll work with you. If the online form isn't accessible for you, you can record video responses or contact us directly at [info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au](mailto:info@canberrayouththeatre.com.au)

**What if I have a conflict of interest?**

Just let the Co-Chairs or staff know before the discussion. You can still participate in the conversation to share context, but you'll need to abstain from voting on that particular decision. This is completely normal and happens to everyone at some point.

**What can I share publicly about Council discussions?**

You're welcome to share your excitement about being on the Council and post about public Canberra Youth Theatre activities. Meeting discussions and draft documents are confidential until they're finalised and made public. When in doubt, check with the Co-Chairs or staff before sharing.

**Can I bring someone to support me at meetings?**

Absolutely. You're welcome to bring a support person to meetings – just let us know in advance. They'll need to sign a confidentiality agreement, but they can help you participate fully in discussions.