

# CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**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.**

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# CHAIR REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Canberra Youth Theatre, it is my honour to present our 2025 Annual Report.

Last year, we were candid with our community about the difficult decisions facing this organisation in light of the current cost of living and artistic funding landscape. We scaled back. We made choices that were necessary but painful – we decided not to stage any new productions and adopt a smaller offering within our artistic program. While it was disheartening to have to take a step back from the broad expanse of artistic offerings Canberra Youth Theatre had worked so hard to build, this was an absolutely necessary decision to ensure the organisation could continue to serve our community in the future. It was also, as we said at the time, not retreat but recalibration – a chance to focus on what makes Canberra Youth Theatre unique and serve our brilliant young artists to the best of our capabilities.

The Board's role in that process was one of careful stewardship, ensuring that the decisions made in late 2024 were grounded in sound governance, honest financial assessment, and a clear-eyed view of what the organisation needed to do to survive and, in time, to thrive again. We sought advice from across the sector. We stress-tested our assumptions. And we backed the leadership of our Artistic Director and CEO, Luke Rogers, and our extraordinary team, to chart a course through difficult terrain.

The outcomes of 2025 – a nationally touring production, a Sydney Theatre Award nomination, commissioned works in development, emerging artists building sustainable careers in the ACT – are testament not only to the quality of the artistic program, but to the organisational resilience that made it possible. Good governance is rarely visible when things are going well, but is vital when facing a challenge as we have. What we hope is evident in this report is the result of governance that held steady and is continuing to lead Canberra Youth Theatre through a challenging time.

That said, the Board does not view 2026 as a moment to exhale. The structural challenges that prompted our recalibration have not been resolved.

Financial support for youth arts in Australia remains inadequate, and the gap between what organisations like ours are capable of delivering and what we are resourced to sustain continues to widen. We have four commissioned works ready to move into production. We have emerging artists ready to be employed. We have audiences ready to receive bold, challenging, youth-led theatre. What we need – what the sector needs – is investment that matches that readiness.

The Board remains committed to diversifying Canberra Youth Theatre's income, deepening philanthropic relationships, and loudly advocating at every level for the structural change our sector requires.

We are grateful for the continued support of the ACT Government, Arts Capital, Canberra Theatre Centre, Holding Redlich, the Malcolm Robertson Foundation, the SBW Foundation, Liv Hewson, the Jeremy Spencer Broom Legacy, and the many individual donors and supporters whose generosity has been so prevalent over the last 12 months and who help us deliver genuinely impactful opportunities to our young artists. Your investment in Canberra Youth Theatre is an investment in the cultural future of this city and the future voices of our society.

To Luke and the staff team: the Board's confidence in your leadership is absolute. What you have achieved in 2025 – with the resources available – is extraordinary, and we do not take it for granted. We appreciate the enormous effort that goes into providing amazing opportunities with limited resources, and all the work you are putting into 2026 as well.

And to the young people at the heart of everything Canberra Youth Theatre does: the work you make, the stories you tell, and the artists you are today and will be tomorrow, are why this organisation exists, and why the Board will continue to vigorously fight for its future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hoolihan', written in a cursive style.

**PETER HOOLIHAN**  
CHAIR

April 2026

# EXECUTIVE REPORT

It's my pleasure to present Canberra Youth Theatre's 2025 Annual Report.

2025 was a year that reminded us, again and again, what becomes possible when young people are elevated as legitimate artists in the development of new works, and emerging artists are supported into creative leadership roles. In our rehearsal rooms, workshops, and on stages in Canberra and beyond, young people created work that was urgent, articulate, and deeply connected to their world. They didn't simply participate in theatre — they led it, challenged it, and made it their own. The impact of this lives in the confidence of a young artist finding their voice for the first time. It lives in a new Australian play moving from the page toward the stage. It lives in the growing recognition that Canberra is a place where new theatre works are made, by young people who have something important to say and the craft to say it boldly.

The Sydney season of *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* at the Australian Theatre for Young People's Rebel Theatre was more than a touring engagement — it was a strategic initiative that earned new audiences, critical recognition, and a Sydney Theatre Award nomination for Best Production for Young People, while providing career-defining opportunities for the emerging artists who made the journey. The invitation from ATYP to remount the production confirmed our growing reputation as a producer of high-quality, contemporary youth theatre. That this work was commissioned, developed, and produced here in the ACT, then stood alongside national peers in one of Australia's most significant arts districts, is a direct challenge to the outdated idea that youth theatre is somehow less than. It is not. It is proof that when young artists are supported with professional rigour and genuine creative ambition, the work belongs on any stage in the country — and that Canberra is a city where new Australian theatre is being made.

The creation of new work remains at the heart of everything we do. The 2025 Emerging Playwright Commission was awarded to Sarah Carroll for *Meet You At The Barricade*, a vibrant queer coming-of-age ensemble piece about stan culture, online identity, and the terrifying joy of being fully seen, that opens space for conversations about youth engagement, identity, and belonging.

*The Hit List* by Sarah Matthews moved through intensive creative development with 30 young people at its centre. And with the support of the Malcolm Robertson Foundation, we commenced development on *Wunderkinds* by Rebecca Duke. These are new plays, by emerging playwrights, with bold things to say — works that will expand the canon of Australian youth theatre, and will hopefully soon find their way into production and publication. These are works that deserve to be seen on our stages.

Our Emerging Artist programs continued to change the trajectory of young people's creative lives — and to generate genuine impact for the broader arts sector. For many young people passionate about theatre, the path from training to professional practice can feel unclear, and too many talented artists lose confidence not from lack of ability, but from lack of structured support. That these programs continue to exist at all in 2025 is thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Liv Hewson — a Canberra-born artist who knows exactly what it means to be a young person trying to find their place in this industry, and who has chosen to invest some of their success in the next generation of ACT artists. Across Writers Ensemble, Actors Studio, Open Studio, and Young Critics, emerging artists worked alongside leading practitioners to build craft, resilience, and creative agency in environments that take their work and ambitions seriously. In 2025, many went on to secure places at drama schools and arts training institutions across Australia — a testament to what becomes possible when young artists are genuinely invested in.

Access and inclusion remains paramount to our work. Free and low-cost community programs ensured that financial circumstances didn't determine who got to be part of the work — because the social impact of youth arts only reaches its potential





when participation is genuinely open. Our collaboration with Erth on *The Nature of Things* during the Enlighten Festival drew more than 20,000 visitors to Glebe Park, creating the kind of intergenerational, large-scale cultural experience that places youth arts at the centre of civic life rather than on its margins. Our partnership with the University of Canberra continued the value of artistic practice into future classrooms across the region by supporting pre-service teachers in their arts education training. And the community that makes Canberra Youth Theatre what it is continues to reflect the full diversity of this city, shaping not just who is in the room, but what stories get told there, and how.

This is what a thriving youth arts organisation looks like. And this report would not be honest if it didn't also name clearly what it takes to sustain it.

Without diversified and sustainable funding, Canberra Youth Theatre cannot produce new mainstage work. This is not a creative limitation — it is a resourcing one. The tour of *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* was possible because of years of investment, a completed creative cycle, and specific opportunity funding through the ACT Government. Our new commissions — *Meet You At The Barricade*, *The Hit List*, *Wunderkinds*, and *How To Destroy The Beep Test in Five Days* — are in various stages of development. Some are completed and ready to become productions, with all the employment, mentorship, audience engagement, and long-term educational value that entails. What they need is the funding to get there. And without it, the pipeline that sustains everything else — emerging artists in paid roles, young people in professional rehearsal rooms, new Australian plays finding national stages and publication — begins to diminish.

Canberra Youth Theatre is not alone in this. Across Australia, youth arts organisations are navigating the same terrain: rising costs, constrained funding, and a sector too often treated as supplementary to cultural life rather than foundational to it. But the impact of this work — creative, social, cultural, economic — is undeniable. Youth arts is where young people find agency, voice, and belonging. It is where the next generation of Australian artists, storytellers, and cultural leaders begin. It is where

creativity becomes a way of life, and where the performing arts finds its future.

What is needed now is not incremental change. It is a genuine shift in how youth arts is understood and supported: funding models that reflect long-term creative development, policy that centres young people as cultural contributors, sustained investment in the organisations and practitioners who make this work possible, and a national capital city that is renowned for producing its own new work, rather than presenting others. This work is not optional. It is foundational.

Canberra Youth Theatre has spent more than 50 years demonstrating what becomes possible when young people are resourced, supported, and trusted. We will continue to champion that — fiercely and unapologetically — because we have seen, year after year, what is at stake when we do.

Thank you to our staff, Board, artists, partners, families, donors, and audiences. Your belief in this work makes it possible. Canberra Youth Theatre remains, as it has always been, a place where young people create ambitious theatre, find their voices, and shape the cultural life of the ACT and beyond.



**LUKE ROGERS**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CEO

April 2026

# WHO WE ARE



# OUR STORY

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

From our early beginnings as Canberra Children's Theatre, through the Youth Theatre Workshop years of the 1970s, and the decades more we have spent as the now familiar Canberra Youth Theatre, we have made art, made noise, and made ourselves an integral part of Australia and Canberra's cultural infrastructure.

For many of those years, we have made our home at Gorman Arts Centre, where we have been a resident company since 1981. For over 50 years, we have created work across all of Canberra: in our major theatres, public spaces, and national cultural institutions. Our artists have told stories that have not only been shared nationally and internationally, but that have also joined an Australian canon and been integrated into our national mythos of youth-led storytelling. Through decades of turmoil and many triumphs, our wonderful company has continued to nurture and develop young people, giving them a place to belong, to share their voice, and to inspire audiences of all ages.

We are a home for new works — created in collaboration with young people, emerging artists, and professional creatives — that amplify young voices and tell urgent stories. We strive to be a place where the next generation of Australian artists and audiences can thrive, free from barriers to opportunity, creativity, or artistic innovation. 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 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 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.

Our community continues to thrive throughout the world, as both innovative artists and more broadly, deeply empathetic collaborators. We pass the torch to our young artists, and in doing so foster an environment of professional behaviour, a practice of empathetic witnessing, and a belief in artistic excellence.

From Debra Oswald's now Australian classic *Dags*, and works by writers Tommy Murphy, Mary Rachel Brown, Lachlan Philpott, Angela Betzien, Liv Hewson, Ross Mueller, Emily Sheehan, Jessica Bellamy, Cathy Petocz, Julian Larnach, Joanna Richards, Honor Webster-Mannison and Tasnim Hossain, we have nurtured new voices and commissioned professional artists to create works which authentically represent the young people of Australia.

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 form the future of the Australian arts sector.

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



# OUR VISION

**A world where young people are celebrated as essential artists shaping our cultural future.**

Canberra Youth Theatre aspires to be Australia's leading home for bold new works created in collaboration with young people, emerging artists, and professional creatives – where youth voices wrestle with urgent questions, push creative boundaries, artistic innovation thrives, and the next generation of artists and audiences flourish.

# OUR MISSION

Canberra Youth Theatre empowers young people and emerging artists to create bold new works alongside professional creatives – amplifying youth voices, telling urgent stories, and building the skills and opportunities that transform artists, audiences, and communities.

# OUR VALUES

Our values shape everything we do – on stage, in the rehearsal room, and in our community. They express who we are, fuel our creativity, and inspire us to imagine a more courageous and inclusive future.

## YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD

We centre young people as artists and leaders shaping our culture now.

## CREATIVITY DRIVES US

We nurture imagination, play, and experimentation into ambitious, rigorous creative practice.

## EVERYONE BELONGS

We build inclusive spaces where young people feel safe, seen and valued.

## ART IS ESSENTIAL

Young people create extraordinary art. We champion their work as a vital cultural contribution and essential to a thriving arts sector.

## WE THRIVE TOGETHER

Collaboration between young people, artists, organisations, and communities strengthens our creative sector.

## COURAGE FUELS CHANGE

We embrace risk and urgency as catalysts for artistic and social transformation.

## WE BUILD FOR TOMORROW

We develop creative citizens, future leaders, through ethical and sustainable practice that supports long-term careers and cultural resilience.



# OUR GOALS

## CREATE BOLD, INNOVATIVE THEATRE

We amplify emerging voices and tell urgent stories that spark change.

## DEVELOP TALENT AND PATHWAYS

We nurture the artists, leaders, and storytellers of tomorrow.

## CHAMPION COLLABORATION

We connect people, ideas, and organisations to shape a vibrant arts future.

## EXPAND ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

We make theatre a home for every young person who wants to create, belong, and be heard.

## GROW AUDIENCES AND VISIBILITY

We connect more people to the magic of performance, building sustainable audiences that secure the arts sector's future.

## BE A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION

We strengthen our foundations so creativity can thrive for generations to come.



# OUR WORK

Canberra Youth Theatre is a leading youth theatre company that commissions, develops, produces, and presents bold new Australian works with young people embedded in creative development, decision-making, authorship, and leadership. We build clear pathways for young artists and audiences while integrating artistic creation, professional development, community engagement, collaboration, and sustainable practice to deliver lasting cultural impact in the ACT and nationally.

## CREATE NEW WORKS

*Goal 1. Create Bold, Innovative Theatre*

We commission, develop, and professionally produce ambitious new theatre created with and for young people. Our work amplifies youth voices, supports artistic risk-taking, and contributes to a growing canon of new Australian writing. Through production, publication, and touring, we ensure Canberra-made work reaches national audiences and builds long-term cultural value.

## PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

*Goal 2. Develop Talent and Pathways*

We build clear, visible pathways from participation to professional practice. Through training, mentorship, and paid creative opportunities, we support emerging artists to develop sustainable careers in the ACT. Our programs strengthen the local creative workforce and position Canberra Youth Theatre as both a training ground and employer for the next generation of artists and arts workers.

## CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

*Goal 4. Expand Access and Participation*

Creative engagement is central to our mission. We deliver inclusive workshops, education programs,

and community partnerships that remove financial, cultural, and practical barriers to participation. By creating safe, welcoming spaces for young people to create and belong, we build confident artists, engaged audiences, and lifelong advocates for the arts.

## COLLABORATION & SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

*Goal 3. Champion Collaboration, Goal 5. Grow Audiences and Visibility*

We collaborate across the arts, education, community, and business sectors to strengthen the ACT's creative ecology. Through co-productions, supporting independent artists, and diverse programming, we create opportunities for artists, grow audiences for new work, and position Canberra as a destination for innovative theatre.

## ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Goal 6. Be a Sustainable and Resilient Organisation*

We underpin our artistic and community outcomes with strong governance, diversified income, and people-centred systems. By investing in our staff, infrastructure, partnerships, and financial resilience, we ensure Canberra Youth Theatre remains agile, sustainable, and capable of delivering ambitious work into the future.

## ARTISTIC PROGRAM PILLARS

We run artistic programs that support young people, emerging artists, professional creatives, and the broader community at every stage of their creative journey – from first encounter to professional practice.

Through the dynamic interplay of creation, professional development, and community engagement, we develop the emerging artists and new work that will shape the ACT's theatre sector for years to come. These pillars are designed to function as one interconnected pathway system, not separate program streams. They include:

1. CREATE NEW WORKS
2. PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS
3. CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT



# WHO WE ARE FOR

At Canberra Youth Theatre, young and emerging artists aren't just participants — they're collaborators, creators, and professional practitioners at the centre of everything we do. Our work generates impact far beyond any single artist: it develops the talent our sector relies on, produces bold contemporary work that moves audiences, and strengthens the ACT's entire cultural community.

We're building something interconnected. When we support young artists, we create jobs for professional practitioners, meaningful experiences for families, and pathways into careers across the arts sector. When we partner with schools, we're strengthening youth wellbeing while nurturing the next generation of audiences and arts advocates. When we produce work in venues, we're contributing to the creative economy while ensuring young voices help shape Canberra's cultural story. Our work bridges dreams and careers, community needs and artistic excellence, individual growth and collective energy.

## YOUNG ARTISTS

Young people remain at the heart of everything we do. We create work for, by, and with young people that speaks to the entire community. We serve young people across three developmental stages with clear pathways forward:

**Aspiring artists (ages 7-14)** develop essential creative, critical thinking and collaboration skills through performing arts engagement that benefits all young people, whether or not they pursue further arts training.

**Emerging artists (ages 15-25)** commit to developing their practice, building industry-ready skills while broadening experience through youth theatre, community projects, and educational settings.

**Early-career artists (ages 18-30)** transition into sustainable creative practice, seeking paid opportunities and industry connections to establish professional careers.

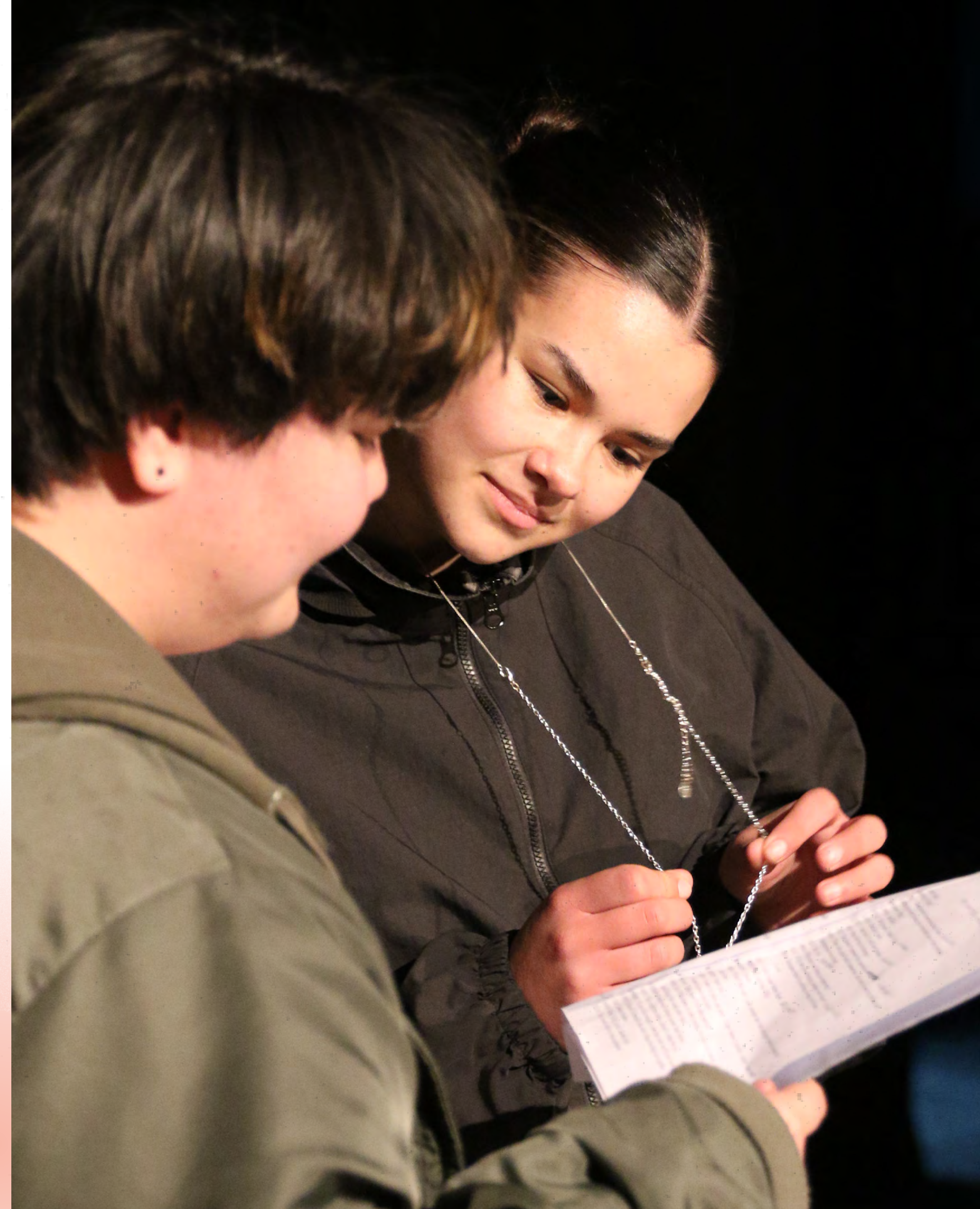
Age ranges overlap, because artistic development is rarely linear and some programs serve artists across multiple stages.

## PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

Each year, freelance theatre practitioners, guest artists, and teaching artists find meaningful employment and the opportunity to nurture emerging talent through Canberra Youth Theatre. The professional artists we employ bring fresh perspectives and creative diversity to our work, ensuring young people learn from a range of voices through masterclasses, mentorship, and direct professional engagement.

## ARTS & CULTURAL SECTOR

Professional companies, venues, national cultural institutions, and tertiary arts schools need talent pipelines, youth engagement strategies, and innovative arts programming. Canberra Youth Theatre develops their future workforce, audiences, and arts advocates. Our alumni feed directly into professional companies and training institutions. We complement formal training with creative development, collaborate on shared resources and programs, and contribute to sector-wide conversations about the value of sustained youth arts investment. Within the national youth arts ecology, we occupy a distinctive position — as both a producing company and a sector leader, sharing practice with peers across Australia and internationally.





## EDUCATION

Our education work strengthens drama pedagogy across the region while opening doors for young people who might not otherwise access professional arts experiences. Workshops By Design delivers curriculum-aligned, artist-led workshops in schools throughout Canberra. Our Teachers' Professional Learning program reaches educators directly — including through our partnership with the University of Canberra, through which over 115 preservice teachers participated in professional development at Canberra Youth Theatre in 2025.

## OUR COMMUNITY

When youth arts thrive in Canberra, everyone benefits — government, community organisations, local businesses, and the city itself.

Young people deserve a say in shaping Canberra's cultural identity. When we invest in youth arts, we're investing in social connection, mental health, and the creative economy that makes Canberra a place where talented people want to stay and build their lives. Canberra's cultural future depends on nurturing the artists, audiences, and advocates growing up here right now — people who need spaces that celebrate their voices, reflect their perspectives, and ensure the stories they're living get told and heard.

We give young people space to take creative risks — to try, sometimes fail, and build the confidence that carries them through every aspect of their lives. These are gathering places that fight isolation, strengthen community bonds, and support young people's wellbeing.

We're not just developing artists — we're producing new Australian work. Original theatre created and performed by young people, work that travels beyond Canberra and changes how the country sees our city. These are our community's stories, told in our voices, reaching national stages.

# 2025

## AT A GLANCE

**758**

Young People

**28**

Emerging Artists

**24**

Artists Employed

**1**

Major Production

**5**

Production Performances

**1**

Creative Development

**2**

New Works Commissioned

**1,470**

Audience Members\*

**38**

Training Programs

**335**

Workshop Sessions

**4**

Arts Collaborations

**4**

Business Collaborations

\* plus the 20,000 people who experienced  
The Nature of Things



# CREATE NEW WORKS



## CREATE NEW WORKS

Canberra Youth Theatre creates bold, innovative theatre at the highest professional level, challenging assumptions about what young artists can achieve. As a leading creator of new works in the ACT, we commission, develop, and produce daring Australian theatre that centres youth voices – bringing together young, emerging and established artists to create acclaimed new writing, devised works, and immersive experiences, across our major theatres, public spaces, and national cultural institutions.

We're a national leader in commissioning and publishing new Australian plays for young people, setting industry standards that provide young artists with real-world experience working alongside industry professionals. Our productions transform Canberra into a cultural destination for new work while cultivating the next generation of cultural leaders and enriching Australia's theatrical landscape.

We are determined to maintain the high standards and professional opportunities that make our work distinctive. We're actively pursuing project funding and alternative revenue streams to expand our capacity and ensure our young artists have the platform they deserve to create, perform, and excel.

As of the end of 2025, we have four compelling works at various stages of development – a testament to our creative momentum and the extraordinary talent we nurture:

*How To Destroy The Beep Test In Five Days* by Sonia Dodd

*The Hit List* by Sarah Matthews

*Wunderkinds* by Rebecca Duke

*Meet You At The Barricade* by Sarah Carroll



### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Productions	1
Commissions	2
Creative Development Projects	2
Artists Employed	12
Young & Emerging Artists	38
Audiences	515
Applications to Emerging Playwright Commission	44

# WORK, BUT THIS TIME LIKE YOU MEAN IT

BY HONOR WEBSTER-MANNISON

15-18 OCTOBER 2025

THE REBEL THEATRE – PIER 2/3, WALSH BAY

**DIRECTOR** LUKE ROGERS

**SET & COSTUME DESIGNER** KATHLEEN KERSHAW

**LIGHTING & VIDEO DESIGNER** ETHAN HAMILL

**SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER** PATRICK HAESLER

**STAGE MANAGER** RHILEY WINNETT

## CAST

GEORGIE BIANCHINI

HANNAH CORNELIA

KATHLEEN DUNKERLEY

QUINN GOODWIN

MATTHEW HOGAN

BLUE HYSLOP

STERLING NOTLEY

EMMA PIVA

Audience Attendance	440
Audience Capacity	63%
Performances	5
Artists Employed	12

## 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.

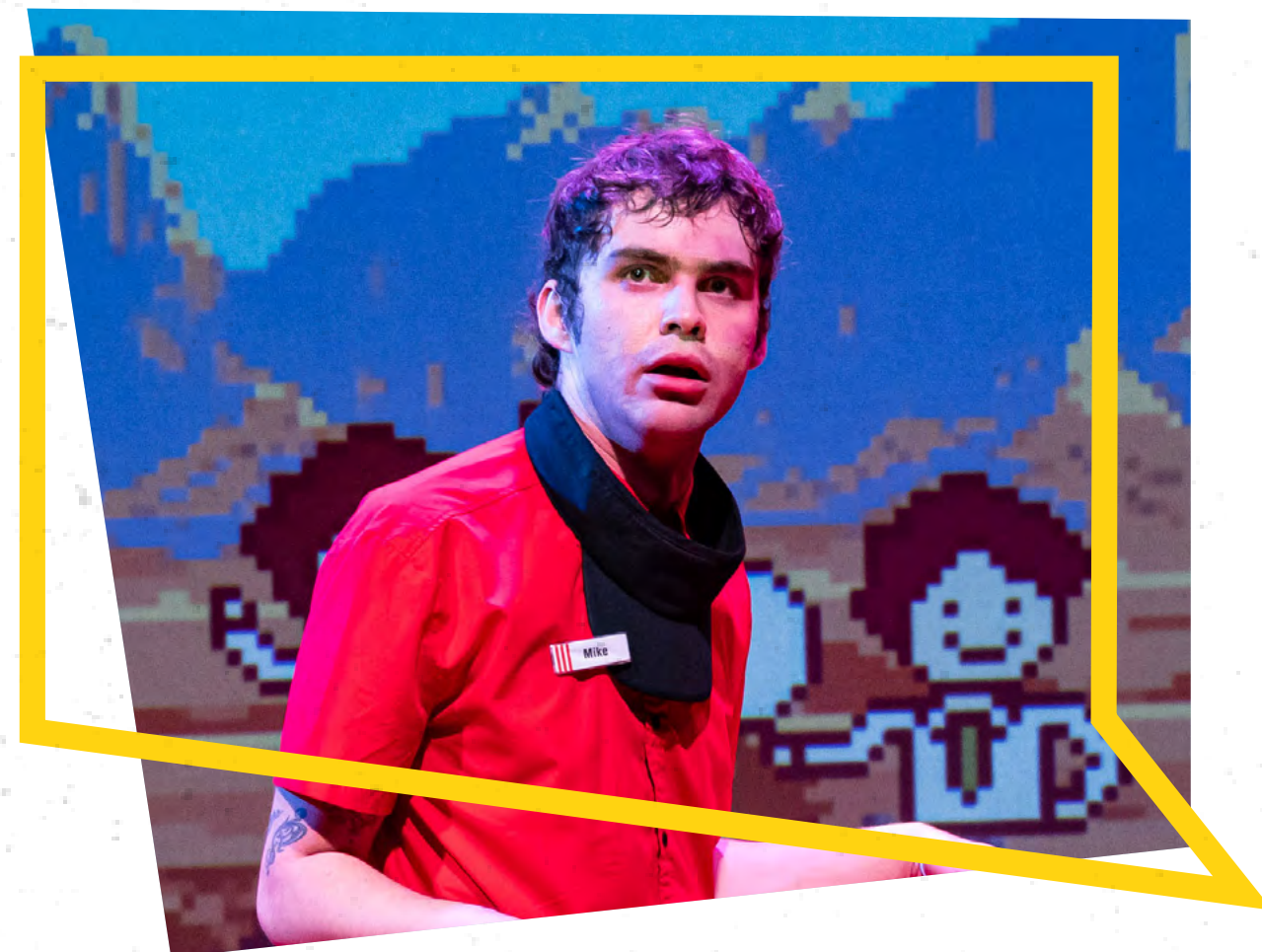
Canberra Youth Theatre toured *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* to the Australian Theatre for Young People's Rebel Theatre in Walsh Bay, following a successful 2024 season at Canberra Theatre Centre. Supported by artsACT Opportunity Funding, this interstate presentation represented a significant achievement for both the organisation and the ACT arts sector. The invitation from ATYP affirmed Canberra Youth Theatre's growing national reputation and demonstrated that exceptional new work can emerge from Canberra and stand alongside Australia's leading companies.

The tour extended the life of this ACT-originated production, showcasing local creative excellence, strengthening national partnerships, and positioning Canberra as a producer (not just a presenter) of high-quality theatre. The project provided professional development for twelve emerging artists, many undertaking their first touring experience. Touring offered a tangible career milestone: presenting work in a nationally recognised arts precinct, connecting with peers, engaging new audiences, and building professional networks. Canberra Youth Theatre's commitment to paying fees, per diems, and royalties ensured the opportunity was ethical, sustainable, and accessible.

Reuniting the original creative team fostered mentorship and deeper collaboration while integrating new talent. Participants developed skills in creative leadership, ensemble practice, and touring logistics, strengthening their capacity for future professional work.

The Sydney season demonstrated the impact of strategic collaboration. It amplified the reach of new work, raised Canberra Youth Theatre's national visibility, and contributed to a sustainable ACT arts ecosystem. By providing career-defining opportunities and positioning Canberra as a generator of high-quality Australian theatre, the tour reinforced the organisation's role as a vital contributor to the nation's arts landscape.

Generous support from Arts ACT Opportunity Funding, Holding Redlich, Liv Hewson, and Australian Theatre for Young People made this tour possible, exemplifying the transformative outcomes achievable through investment, collaboration, and a shared vision.



*Touring Work, But... interstate with Canberra Youth Theatre was a career-defining experience. Performing a Canberra-made work on a Sydney stage, connecting with new audiences, and stepping into the realities of professional touring expanded my confidence and my horizons. It affirmed that work made here matters – and that with the right support, emerging artists can take bold, meaningful steps onto larger stages.*

**BLUE HYSLOP**





## CRITICAL RESPONSE

*"This is the kind of theatre young people should be seeing and making. Smart, subversive, and unafraid to go deep into the fryer, Work, But This Time Like You Mean It doesn't just entertain; it challenges, it mourns, and it demands better. Canberra Youth Theatre has a strong history of producing exceptional new work created by young people for young people. With any luck, this production will tour to more capital cities, reaching the wider audiences it deserves."* – **Theatre Now** ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

*"Directed by Luke Rogers, the production delivers amusement in spades, impressing with its relentless energy and visual exuberance. Set within the bleak confines of a takeout joint, Rogers' staging transforms the banal into the spectacular, revealing the latent drama of labour and exhaustion... [The design] elements generate a rhythm that feels breathless yet purposeful, a choreography of survival rendered with theatrical bravado... A cast of eight delivers the show's discombobulating heart with infectious precision and energy. Their performances are tightly honed, radiating a cohesion and verve that keep the audience engaged from start to finish."* – **Suzy Goes See**

*"This is theatre made by and for young people who refuse to stay quiet about the world they inherit... A discombobulating rollercoaster that will have you walking out saying, 'What in the world did I just watch?' with the biggest smile plastered onto your face."* – **The Scoop**

## AUDIENCE RESPONSE

*"I attend a variety of types of theatre, from the major companies to tiny independents. This was up there with some of my favourite pieces this year and I have never seen such clever stage design before. It was also a brilliant gateway show for my teenage sons."*

*"It was such a fabulous opportunity to see this show at the Rebel Theatre in Sydney. Well done to all that made this possible. Such an amazing showcase of some of Canberra's young talent."*

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Nominated for Best Production for Young People at the 2025 Sydney Theatre Awards



HOLDING REDLICH



# EMERGING PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION

Over the past five 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 44 submissions from around the country in 2025, and over 200 submissions in total since the program's inception.

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.

In 2025, we partnered with the Canberra Writers Festival to present our Emerging Playwright Commission Award as part of the festival's inaugural Kids and Young Adults Day at the National Museum of Australia – a vibrant program of interactive sessions, artist talks, and workshops celebrating reading and storytelling for families and young people.



Canberra  
Writers  
Festival

# EMERGING PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION



Winner	<b>Sarah Carroll</b>
Finalists	<b>Iolanthe Blake Hohenhaus</b>
Applications	<b>44</b>
Young Artists on Assessment Panels	<b>17</b>
Award Event Date	<b>26 October 2025</b>
Award Event Venue	<b>National Museum of Australia</b>
Young Artists Participated in Award Event	<b>17</b>
Audience	<b>50</b>



State	Applications
ACT	<b>9</b>
NSW	<b>18</b>
VIC	<b>7</b>
QLD	<b>4</b>
WA	<b>5</b>
SA	<b>1</b>

**2025 COMMISSION WINNER:**  
**SARAH CARROLL**

The winner of the 2025 commission was Sarah Carroll. Sarah Carroll is an award-winning Pasifika, queer and neurodiverse producer, writer, performer and proud fangirl based on Dharug Land (Western Sydney). They recently worked as a Development Producer at Jessica Magro's Purple Carrot Entertainment through the Screen Australia Enterprise program. Sarah has created two acclaimed solo shows, *Cherry* (Sydney Fringe Award Winner, Hollywood Fringe Nominee) and *Unkissed* (Shopfront – ArtsLab). Their debut play *Fekei* was longlisted for the Gri n Award 2024, commissioned by Midsumma Festival's Queer Imaginings 2025, and will premiere this year at Qtopia Sydney. Sarah has taken part in AFTRS Talent Camp, Midsumma Pathways, Brand X Ground Zero, Antipodes Theatre Winter Lab and Q Theatre Lab. In 2023, they joined Performing Lines NSW's Producers Platform, mentored by Leila Enright. Their writing is published with ACON (Stories Out West) and The Writing Zone. Sarah strives to champion underrepresented voices with lots of sparkle and sass.

Sarah's play, *Meet You At The Barricade*, is a queer coming-of-age stage play about stan culture, digital identity, and the messy magic of finding your people online.

The other finalists were Iolanthe (NSW) and Blake Hohenhaus (VIC).



*I'm still on cloud nine after winning the 2025 Emerging Playwright Commission with Canberra Youth Theatre. Huge love and gratitude to Canberra Youth Theatre for this career-changing opportunity. Thank you Holding Redlich for sponsoring the commission, and big congratulations to the incredible finalists, Iolanthe and Blake Hohenhaus. It's an honour to be alongside such exciting voices and the future of writing for young people is bright. This award has given me a new level of confidence to proudly call myself a writer.*

**SARAH CARROLL**



# CREATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Our 2024 commission, *The Hit List* by Sarah Matthews, was developed this year over two creative developments that engaged 30 participants, leading to a rehearsed reading for an invited audience with a cast of nine 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. 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 commissions, 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.

## THE HIT LIST

Playwright	<b>Sarah Matthews</b>
# Development Sessions	<b>8</b>
Dates	<b>May – November 2025</b>
Young People Engaged	<b>33</b>
Presentation Date	<b>13 December 2025</b>

*It means the world to me that my first step into a career as a writer will be with Canberra Youth Theatre — being shortlisted for the commission in 2023 is what gave me the confidence to pursue playwriting in the first place. This process has not only strengthened my writing but also transformed how I think about theatre's role in empowering young people and challenging the world they live in.*

**SARAH MATTHEWS**



# PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS



# EMERGING ARTIST PROGRAMS



For many young people passionate about the arts, the transition from training to professional practice can feel daunting — pathways are unclear, industry connections are limited, and opportunities to develop skills are often scarce. Too many talented artists lose confidence or abandon their ambitions, not from lack of talent, but from lack of structured support. Without intervention, the industry risks losing the diverse voices and innovative perspectives it needs to stay vibrant and relevant.

Our Emerging Artist Programs exist to change that. Designed for young people aged 16–25, these heavily subsidised programs provide professional mentorship, rigorous skills development, and meaningful industry connections. Across workshops, productions, creative developments, residencies, and one-on-one coaching, participants explore ideas, refine their craft, and build the confidence to step into professional theatre — as well as explore pathways into tertiary training at drama schools and creative institutions across Australia.

2025 was a remarkable year. Many of our emerging artists graced our studio space, honed their skills, and took their next big leap — with a number securing places at leading drama schools and creative institutions. By investing in this next generation, Canberra Youth Theatre is helping to transform the ACT into a genuine centre for emerging arts practice: cultivating bold theatre-makers, building sustainable local careers, and securing Canberra’s role as a dynamic creative hub for Australian theatre.

Our Emerging Artist Programs are made possible thanks to the generous philanthropic support of Liv Hewson.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Emerging Artists	28
Guest Artists Employed	3



*Canberra Youth Theatre’s professional team helped me understand who I am as an individual artist. They created space for me to explore my interests, challenged me with difficult works, and invested genuinely in my dreams. Without that foundation, I wouldn’t be where I am today — training at VCA (Victorian College of the Arts), pursuing my passion, and carrying forward the values and practices that will shape my career. Canberra Youth Theatre is the beating heart of the ACT arts sector.*

**EMILY O’MAHONEY**  
OPEN STUDIO ARTIST

## OPEN STUDIO

Open Studio provides in-kind rehearsal space and mentorship to independent emerging artists, reducing financial barriers and supporting the development of new work.

Delivered in our Studio space at Gorman Arts Centre, residencies offer venue access, mentorship from Canberra Youth Theatre staff, networking opportunities, and guidance with funding applications, enabling artists to focus on creative development while building professional skills. By opening up our space during otherwise unused periods, Open Studio maximises community impact, fostering collaboration between participants across our programs and strengthening Canberra's emerging artist ecosystem.

The program directly supported the development and presentation of new work in 2025, including:

***Saving Face*** by Ella Buckley  
Development reading at The Q (17 October 2025)

***Do I Have Your Attention?*** by Paris Scharkie  
Performances at Canberra Theatre Centre (5–8 November 2025)

***The Cadaver Palaver*** by Christopher Carroll  
Performances at Edinburgh Fringe, Sydney Fringe, and Canberra Theatre Centre.

Through mentorship, access, and practical support, Open Studio helps independent artists realise ambitious projects while fostering connections that enrich Canberra's theatre community.

Open Studio Residences	<b>3</b>
Artists Participated	<b>20</b>
Hours of in-kind space provided	<b>117</b>
Value of in-kind space provided	<b>\$4,680</b>



*As the playwright, performer and co-producer of the project, being supported through Open Studio has been an incredible privilege and an invaluable experience. It was an honour to have so much trust placed in me and my team. I speak on behalf of everyone involved when I say how encouraging it was to be supported and mentored by industry professionals while also being treated professionally ourselves and pushed creatively.*

*This experience has given me so much more confidence in my creative capacity and a much deeper understanding of how to actualise my creative goals. It has truly emboldened and affirmed my further theatrical pursuits. I'm excited by the future potential for this show and grateful to have built such a strong connection with a theatre company that genuinely cares about and strives to provide opportunities, spaces and support to emerging artists.*

**PARIS SCHARKIE**  
OPEN STUDIO ARTIST



## WRITERS ENSEMBLE

Led by award-winning playwright Julian Larnach, Writers Ensemble provided 9 emerging playwrights with structured guidance to transform ideas into compelling stage work. Across the year, participants navigated the full creative journey – from generating ideas and developing characters, to shaping dramatic structure and crafting dialogue – through facilitated sessions, self-directed writing, peer collaboration, and one-on-one script consultations. Playwrights Joanna Erskine and Suzie Miller were online guests, contributing expert insight and advice.

The program nurtured craft, creative confidence, and dramaturgical literacy, encouraging writers to engage with contemporary plays and sustain productive writing practices between sessions. Participants received personalised feedback on works in progress and developed a deeper understanding of professional pathways within the Australian theatre sector.

Writers Ensemble was also made possible thanks to the support of the Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation.



## ACTORS STUDIO

Actors Studio was an intensive training program for emerging performers aged 18–25 led by Luke Rogers. Across the year, participants engaged in rigorous rehearsal-based training that built strong foundational skills in text and character analysis, partnered scene work, improvisation, voice and movement, and audition preparation.

Through weekly ensemble work, individual coaching, and sustained rehearsal practice, 16 actors developed professional-standard preparation habits, expanded their expressive range, and deepened their understanding of the actor/director relationship – all within a supportive and creatively challenging environment. The program culminated in a sharing of scenes to an invited audience, giving participants practical performance experience and material they can take directly into future auditions and productions.

By collaborating with fellow emerging artists, participants not only sharpened their individual capabilities but also strengthened their connection to Canberra's theatre community and their readiness for next-step opportunities in the performing arts.

*Actors Studio is particularly important to me. The people I worked with, the structured training, and professional insight in this course made me feel confident pursuing acting beyond a hobby. I genuinely believe I learned more through this course than I did during two years of drama in year 11 and 12. The experience and community I found at Canberra Youth Theatre, has now led to me being accepted into Western Sydney University and Actors Centre Australia's Bachelor of Performing Arts (Acting).*

**ZARA HUBER**  
ACTORS STUDIO ARTIST



## YOUNG CRITICS

Young Critics is a year-long program for emerging writers and theatre enthusiasts passionate about live performance. 21 participants attended monthly workshops and engaged with over 20 performances across the ACT, developing their skills in critical analysis, reviewing, and arts commentary.

Over the course of 2025, the program produced 37 published reviews and responses, giving participants practical experience in articulating their perspectives while contributing to a growing community of informed theatre discourse. By critically engaging with the work of their peers and professional artists, Young Critics helps elevate discussion around local theatre-making and strengthens Canberra's arts ecosystem.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Our One-on-One Coaching and Self-Tape Studio offered emerging actors personalised support for audition preparation, monologues, and self-taped applications. In a welcoming, professional space, participants explored character, honed performance skills, and received guidance on every take, removing the stress and isolation of solo auditions at home. The program nurtured confidence, creativity, and resilience, equipping actors with practical skills to thrive in drama school and professional pathways — and helping grow Canberra's local talent community.



*Young Critics was a boon for my development as a young artist. It gave me unprecedented access to all kinds of theatre, allowing me the opportunity to refine my tastes as an audience member, develop a clear voice and style as a writer of cultural criticism, and it helped me define the kind of theatre maker I aspire to be.*

**GRACE CASSIDY**  
YOUNG CRITIC



*There is nowhere else in Canberra where I could access the resources and support. When applying to tertiary performing arts programs, Luke Rogers dedicated many hours helping me finalise my applications list for university programs, helped me select monologues for auditions, coached me in my performances, and recorded audition tapes in their new self-tape studio. Without CYT, I wouldn't have known where to begin.*

**LARA CONNOLLY**

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT



# 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.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	
Young People	360
Enrolments	673
Programs	34
Workshop Sessions	309
Employment Opportunities for Guest Artists	29
Guest Artists Employed	14
Audiences	986

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

Through our Creative Engagement projects, we provide free or low cost 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—whether through project funding to Canberra Youth Theatre (such as the 12 Hour Theatre Project), funding received by partner organisations (eg. Erth at Enlighten Festival), or 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 2025, with over 180 participants getting involved across the year. We once again worked with the amazing Erth Visual & Physical company, and were able to offer opportunities with Bell Shakespeare.

## 12 HOUR THEATRE PROJECT

12 April 2025  
Gorman Arts Centre

Returning for its fifth year in 2025, 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 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.

In 2025, we used the 12 Hour Theatre Project to launch our 12in12 giving campaign, encouraging our community to donate on the day, and raise \$12,000. This was a highly successful initiative, and we thank everyone who donated on the day.



Creative Engagement Partners

**ACT Youth Week**  
**Erth Visual and Physical Inc.**  
**Enlighten Festival**  
**Bell Shakespeare**

Young People

**188**

Artists Employed

**5**

Partners

**ACT Youth Week**

Lead Artists

**Jade Breen**  
**Ella Buckley**  
**Lily Welling**

Artists Employed

**5**

Young People

**48**

Audiences

**105**

## THE NATURE OF THINGS

28 February - 10 March 2025  
Glebe Park

For the third consecutive year, Canberra Youth Theatre partnered with internationally acclaimed puppetry company Erth Visual & Physical Inc as part of the Enlighten Festival, delivering a major free public performance in the city centre. In 2025, The Nature of Things transformed Glebe Park into a roving, immersive theatre experience, attracting over 20,000 visitors and activating the precinct with vibrant, large-scale puppetry.

Through this collaboration, 70 young artists trained directly with Erth's professional team, developing advanced puppetry skills before performing alongside them in a high-profile festival context. The project combines artistic excellence with broad public impact – contributing to Canberra's cultural economy, and offering accessible, environmentally themed storytelling for diverse audiences.

This partnership demonstrates the capacity of youth arts to deliver ambitious, city-shaping cultural experiences at scale, to create visually striking and inclusive work that positions Canberra as a dynamic creative destination, and to open pathways between emerging and professional practice.

## ERTH MASTERCLASS

27 September - 12 October 2025  
Gorman Arts Centre

In October we welcomed back renowned Erth puppeteer Scott Wright, one of Australia's most inventive makers and performers, for a series of specialised puppetry masterclasses. These tailored sessions offered young artists the opportunity to extend their creativity and technical ability under the guidance of an industry leader.

Across seven workshop sessions, participants explored a range of puppetry conventions and devising techniques, with a particular focus on manipulation, performance, and the storytelling potential of puppetry. Working with familiar puppets and encountering new forms, young artists expanded their skillset, deepened their collaborative practice, and found new ways to bring characters and worlds to life.

**erth**  
Visual & Physical Inc.





*My young artist loved learning how to work the puppets and being part of a really great ensemble of other young people. She loved the tutors and adult personnel, all of whom she describes in really glowing terms. She had an amazing time and enjoyed every moment and every aspect of the experience.*

*Performing in The Nature of Things was my children's first experience on a public stage, and it was an amazing introduction to the world of performing arts. Participating in a professional puppetry group has been a transformative experience, fostering their confidence, creativity, and teamwork skills. Through hands-on learning, they developed performance techniques and ideas, as well as patience and resilience. Engaging with professional artists exposed them to high artistic standards, allowing them to see the potential of pursuing performing at a professional level while inspiring them to be creative and explore artistic possibilities.*

*She has grown significantly since being part of the Erth event for the past two years. She has been able to foster her creative flair in a supportive and encouraging environment where she has been both challenged and encouraged to grow. Her enthusiasm and dedication were in no small part due to the incredible individuals she has been able to work with. Her confidence has grown as has her love for being part of something bigger, something important, something special and something fun.*

*The community of mentors and youth all working together to bring joy and fascination to adults and kids alike showed me a glimpse of what I want to do as a career. Everyone working on The Nature of Things had so much care and commitment to the craft, and the time taken to teach young people more skills was so amazing.*

*My daughter's confidence and self-esteem have noticeably improved even from this short experience. A member of the audience who I didn't even know commented on how confident she was speaking with them, and this is amazing and so lovely to hear because she doesn't always feel so confident in herself.*

**WHAT OUR  
COMMUNITY  
SAID...**

# BELL SHAKESPEARE MASTERCLASS & SCHOLARSHIP AUDITIONS

**31 August 2025**

With both a workshop on all things *Romeo & Juliet*, and hosting auditions for the 2025 John Bell Scholarship program, it was wonderful to be able to partner with Bell Shakespeare for a second year. Winners of the scholarship spend an incredible week training with Bell Shakespeare at their HQ in Sydney, undertake acting masterclasses with Bell Shakespeare artists, observe rehearsals, receive specialist training, see live theatre, and more.

Emma Piva was one of four winners in 2024, and Wajanoah Donohoe was one of four winners in 2025.



*The auditions for the Bell Shakespeare Scholarship are quite a unique opportunity. The generous time that is allocated to each auditionee is frankly invaluable for young performers, where finding an audience so dedicated to each individual's performance is next to impossible. The auditioners from Bell Shakespeare are incredibly knowledgeable and are so incredibly generous to their auditionees. Likewise the workshop was an incredible experience, it gives a chance for people both experienced and new to Shakespeare to learn a piece of Shakespeare through a collaborative and comedic format.*

**WAJANOAH DONOHOE**  
PARTICIPANT & SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT





<b>NEXT STAGE</b>	
Lead Artists	<b>Christopher Carroll Luke Rogers</b>
Other Artists	<b>Caitlin Baker Rhiley Winnett</b>
Young People	<b>13</b>
Workshop Sessions	<b>42</b>
Audience	<b>136</b>

## **ENSEMBLES**

Workshop Artists	<b>Caitlin Baker Anna Johnstone Amy Kowalczyk Jena Prince Phoebe Silberman Miriam Slater Lily Welling Piumi Wijesundara</b>
Technical Crew	<b>Orlando Dove Elle Newton Disa Swifte Rhiley Winnett</b>
Artists Employed	<b>10</b>
Young People	<b>116</b>
Enrolments	<b>262</b>
Programs	<b>16</b>
Workshop Sessions	<b>187</b>



# **WORKSHOPS**

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

## **NEXT STAGE**

A new offering for 2025, Next Stage was a pre-professional training program for young artists in years 8-10 who are passionate about theatre and ready to refine their skills. The semester-long programs offered a focused, immersive experience designed to deepen participants' understanding of theatre-making. Working under professional theatre-makers, young artists develop their skills in script work; improvisation; creating characters; devising; voice, movement; collaboration; and creative thinking. Participants were given the opportunity to participate more fully in the performance process, with intensive rehearsal days, tech rehearsals and additional performances for family and friends.

## **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 provide 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 are 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 builds performance skills but also cultivates the discipline and passion needed for a future in the arts.

*Another wonderful performance encouraging creativity and confidence. I especially love that they're learning the mechanics of script writing and production. Well done!*

### **PARENT OF A PARTICIPANT**

## 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 2025 we identified Phoebe Silberman as a promising emerging workshop artist, and offered them tailored training and mentorship. Phoebe collaborated with Anna on two holiday workshops before successfully stepping into the role of lead artist for our Year 1-3 ensemble. 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.

Titles of Programs	<b>All Things Big and Small Glimmer and Gloom Wild Things Space Invaders The Wild Within The Archive of Forgotten Things</b>
Workshop Artists	<b>Jade Breen Ella Buckley Anna Johnstone Leah Peel Griffiths Phoebe Silberman Lily Welling</b>
Technical Crew	<b>Rhiley Winnett</b>
Artists Employed	<b>6</b>
Young People	<b>80</b>
Enrolments	<b>124</b>
Programs	<b>6</b>
Workshop Sessions	<b>22</b>

## IN-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

Canberra Youth Theatre delivers engaging after-school drama programs at Red Hill Primary School, offering students 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.

Workshop Artists	<b>Ella Buckley Phoebe Silberman Tobi Odusote</b>
Artists Employed	<b>3</b>
Young People	<b>28</b>
Programs	<b>4</b>
Workshop Sessions	<b>37</b>

*Canberra Youth Theatre provides an invaluable opportunity for young people to develop resilience, creativity, and confidence. Programs like this empower their voices, offering a safe and supportive space for self-expression and connection. Without it, not only are we lesser, but we rob our children of voice.*

### PARENT OF A PARTICIPANT

# EDUCATION

Our education initiatives strengthen drama pedagogy across the region while opening doors for young people who might not otherwise access professional arts experiences.

Workshops By Design offers students practical, curriculum-aligned experiences in performance and theatre-making through artist-led workshops delivered in schools. Our experienced practitioners work across a wide range of year levels, curriculum areas, and arts practices, providing high-quality, hands-on learning experiences for students across the Canberra region. In 2025, we engaged with over 280 primary school students.

A key focus of our Education work is our growing partnership with the University of Canberra's pre-service teacher program. In 2025, 115 pre-service teachers participated in professional development workshops at Canberra Youth Theatre, significantly deepening the impact of drama education across the region. This partnership not only strengthens the skills and confidence of emerging educators, but also builds a long-term legacy, with innovative practices carried into classrooms across Canberra and beyond.

Alongside this, our Teachers' Professional Learning program continues to extend our reach to educators nationally. Presentations at the annual Drama NSW conference regularly reach capacity and are recognised for both artistic innovation and practical classroom application. These sessions share approaches to integrating drama across the curriculum, supporting contemporary teaching practice and strengthening connections within the wider education sector.



*Canberra Youth Theatre has equipped our Education students with practical drama pedagogies for creating engaging, student-centered learning experiences. They have hosted Creative Arts Specialist students for industry placements which students consistently describe as transformative, professionally run, and foundational to their understanding of creative arts pedagogy. Their team fosters a supportive, inclusive environment where, through expert guidance from their professional staff, students build confidence in child-centred drama strategies essential for meaningful teaching. Based on this excellence, I have personally recommended Canberra Youth Theatre to research partners at the National Gallery of Australia and to schools across the ACT seeking expertise in drama education to enrich artistic experiences for young people.*

**NAOMI ZOUWER**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA**

# ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY





## ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Organisational sustainability remains the foundation that underpins all of Canberra Youth Theatre's work. It is the thread that connects our artistic ambitions with the realities of operating in a complex and shifting environment — and our ability to deliver meaningful outcomes for young people depends on it.

This year marked a continued period of consolidation and renewal. Building on the previous year, we focused not only on sustaining the organisation day-to-day, but on refining our vision for the kind of company we want to be, and the impact we seek to have locally and nationally. While many of the challenges we identified last year persist, our response has been grounded in clarity, discipline, and a commitment to long-term resilience.

Financially, the environment remains difficult. Cost-of-living pressures are affecting our participants, families, and audiences, while the broader arts sector continues to recover from recent disruptions. Ongoing capital works across Canberra's cultural infrastructure have also impacted access and operations. At the same time, both government and philanthropic funding landscapes are increasingly constrained. In response, we have continued to prioritise the diversification of income streams — growing own-source revenue through programming and participation, strengthening partnerships, and pursuing project funding opportunities — while maintaining careful oversight of expenditure and identifying efficiencies across the organisation.

At the same time, we are clear that sustainability is not achieved through cost-cutting alone. As a lean organisation, further reduction is neither viable nor desirable. Instead, our focus has been on working more strategically — doing less, better — while identifying

opportunities to grow income in ways that align with our purpose. This includes refining our program model, strengthening evaluation and decision-making frameworks, and ensuring our resources are directed toward the areas of greatest impact.

Investment in people and culture remains central to this work. We have continued to support our staff, artists, and board through professional development and strong governance practices, while maintaining a workplace culture that prioritises wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainability. Creating the conditions for our people to thrive is essential to the longevity and quality of our artistic and community outcomes.

We have also strengthened our systems and infrastructure to support a more resilient organisation. Improvements to planning, financial oversight, and risk management processes have enabled more informed and agile decision-making, while ongoing policy development ensures we remain responsive and accountable across areas including child safety, equity, and environmental responsibility.

Our partnerships and networks continue to play a vital role. We have deepened our engagement with sector peers in the ACT and contributed to collective advocacy efforts, while maintaining connections with national organisations and conversations. Our growing network of alumni, supporters, and advocates remains a powerful contributor to our sustainability and future growth.

While the path ahead remains challenging, we are approaching it with focus and intent. By strengthening our foundations, investing in our people, and remaining adaptable in the face of change, we are positioning Canberra Youth Theatre to be resilient, relevant, and impactful for years to come — and to continue championing a vibrant future for young artists and the youth arts sector.

# GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Canberra Youth Theatre is governed by a skilled Board of Directors working in partnership with the Artistic Director & CEO to provide strategic direction, ensure accountability, and safeguard the organisation's mission to serve young artists across the region.

In 2025, the Board met six times, with additional sessions dedicated to strategic planning. A revenue subcommittee maintained specialised focus on fundraising strategy, donor cultivation, and income diversification throughout the year.

Board members fulfilled their legal and fiduciary obligations — acting in good faith and in the best interests of the organisation — overseeing financial performance, monitoring progress against annual targets, managing organisational risk, and ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and ethical obligations. The Board also maintained its responsibility for safeguarding young people in line with best-practice youth engagement standards, and continued to support and hold accountable the Artistic Director & CEO.

Our Board in 2025 brought together expertise across arts and cultural leadership, finance and audit, legal and regulatory compliance, governance and strategy, education and youth development, fundraising and philanthropy, marketing and communications, and government relations — ensuring Canberra Youth Theatre could navigate complex cross-portfolio partnerships and continue to position itself as essential cultural infrastructure for the ACT.

The Board remained committed to reflecting the diversity of the young people we serve. Appointments continued to be merit-based and made through transparent, fair processes, with an overall target of 50% women and ongoing efforts to increase representation across First Nations leadership, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ lived experience, and disability.





# OUR TEAM

## BOARD

### Chair

Peter Hoolihan

### Deputy Chair

Adriana Law

### Treasurer

Louise Davidson

### Secretary

Jolie Baasch

### Members

Amy Crawford

Joanna Erskine

Emma Macdonald

Ellen Harvey (to May 2025)

Cassandra Hoolihan (to May 2025)

## STAFF

### Artistic Director & CEO

Luke Rogers

### General Manager

Helen Wojtas

### Artistic Associate – Creative Engagement

Anna Johnstone

### Artistic Associate – Development & Communications

Caitlin Baker

### Artistic Associate – Marketing & Pathways

Christopher Carroll (to October 2025)

## WORKSHOP ARTISTS

Jade Breen

Ella Buckley

Leah Peel Griffiths

Amy Kowalczyk

Jessica Knight

Julian Larnach

Tobi Odusote

Jena Prince

Phoebe Silberman

Miriam Slater

Lily Welling

Piumi Wijesundara

## COMMISSIONED WRITERS

Sarah Carroll

Rebecca Duke

Sarah Matthews

## CORE STAFF

Canberra Youth Theatre maintains a strategic core team designed for impact and flexibility. Our lean, multi-skilled structure directs resources toward artist development and program delivery, while retaining capacity to expand as projects and opportunities demand. This positions us for sustainable growth – our core team provides strategic leadership and continuity, while project-based expansion engages specialist artists as needed.

Our team brings deep experience, creative vision, and genuine commitment to young artists and the ACT arts sector. We pursue ambitious goals while staying open to new possibilities and emerging challenges. As a performing arts company, we know creativity takes many forms – and we champion this in our staff, many of whom are practicing artists themselves. We value collaboration deeply and understand firsthand what's needed across the organisation to support artistic excellence.



**LUKE ROGERS**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CEO

1.0 FTE

Luke Rogers is a theatre director, actor, creative leader, and currently the Artistic Director & CEO of Canberra Youth Theatre, dedicated to the development and production of new works, professional pathway opportunities for emerging artists, and advocacy for our youth arts sector.

Directing credits include new plays, devised works, musical theatre, and classics for theatre companies and drama schools across Australia, working with companies such as Griffin Theatre Company, Darlinghurst Theatre Company, ATYP, Seymour Centre, Old Fitz Theatre, Kings Cross Theatre, New Theatre, ACT Hub, and Canberra Youth Theatre. Previous positions have included Artistic Director of Stories Like These, Resident Studio Artist at Griffin Theatre Company, and Theatre Manager of New Theatre.

Luke's professional practice focuses on models of collaboration that privilege young people in the artistic process, authentically elevating emerging artists into creative leadership roles, exploring ethical frameworks for working with young people in contemporary performance, and collaborative partnership models between artists and organisations.

As Theatre Manager of New Theatre (Sydney) for five years, Luke was responsible for delivering all artistic and business operations of one of Australia's longest-running independent theatre companies, including venue operations, company management, and programming across mainstage seasons, independent productions, and venue hires.

Since becoming Artistic Director & CEO of Canberra Youth Theatre in 2019, Luke has led comprehensive organisational transformation focused on sustainability, artistic renewal, and sector impact. His leadership encompasses strategic planning, financial oversight, governance, marketing, and people and culture development. He has enhanced the artistic quality and reputation of its productions, created tangible pathways for artist development, strengthened governance structures, diversified revenue streams, and positioned the company as a national leader in youth arts practice.

Over two decades, Luke has cultivated extensive relationships across Australia's performing arts ecosystem, including enduring partnerships with major performing arts organisations, independent companies, and the national youth arts sector. International experience includes research placements with the National Theatre of Scotland and theatres across the UK and Ireland.



**HELEN WOJTAS**  
GENERAL MANAGER

0.8 FTE

Helen Wojtas is General Manager of Canberra Youth Theatre, where she leads organisational operations, financial management, and strategic administration.

Helen brings substantial management experience from hotel operations across Canberra, Perth, and Melbourne. As manager of a 90-apartment hotel and private accommodation building, she led major operational projects including the implementation of a new booking management system and a building-wide digital security upgrade. This experience equipped her with expertise in stakeholder management, project implementation, and operational systems design—skills she now applies to arts administration.

At Canberra Youth Theatre, Helen ensures robust financial and budgeting systems that provide organisational stability and support strategic growth. She maintains currency in financial management, compliance, and reporting obligations through ongoing professional development, while overseeing the day-to-day operations that enable the organisation's artistic programs to thrive.

Helen's management approach is informed by a deep understanding of the youth arts sector. A product of Canberra's youth arts scene herself—having spent over 15 years with Canberra Youth Orchestra Society—she brings both administrative rigour and sector insight to her leadership role. Her continued involvement as a costume designer and maker, a violist with the National Capital Orchestra, and a circus practitioner ensures she remains connected across the artistic sector she serves.





## ANNA JOHNSTONE

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE –  
CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

0.6 FTE

Anna Johnstone is a theatre director, writer, and creative learning practitioner whose work centres on youth as artists, collaborators, and creative thinkers. Based on Ngunawal Country, her practice spans youth arts, contemporary performance, and arts-education innovation.

Anna began teaching theatre in her mid-teens before being selected as the trainee Theatre & Education Practitioner at the egg, Theatre Royal Bath – one of the world’s leading purpose-built theatres for young audiences. There, she directed, facilitated, designed programs, and built education partnerships, collaborating with companies including the Royal Shakespeare Company, Pins and Needles, and Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. She later became an Associate Artist of the egg, where her formative work with young people and pre-service teachers established the foundation for her ongoing commitment to creative pedagogy and youth-centred practice.

Since returning to Canberra, Anna has directed, devised, and developed new theatrical works across Canberra Youth Theatre, The Street Theatre, Canberra Grammar School, and the Museum of Australian Democracy. Her projects range from intimate youth-led works (*Imagine, Filtered, Buzz, Possibility*) to large-scale community collaborations such as *The People’s House* (MoAD) and the development of *Mud* through The Street Theatre’s Resident Street program.

As a facilitator, Anna is recognised for her innovative approaches to workshop design and creative learning. She blends collaborative devising, play-based inquiry, and creative literacy to support young artists, emerging practitioners, and educators in developing confident, original artistic voices. Her continued work with pre-service teachers focuses on embedding creative pedagogy, collaborative learning, and arts-led approaches in classroom practice. Anna’s work is grounded in ethical, youth-centred collaboration and informed by mentorship from Sue Giles (Polyglot Theatre), whose leadership in child-centred practice continues to shape Anna’s approach to agency, imagination, and artistic integrity.

As Artistic Associate – Creative Engagement at Canberra Youth Theatre, Anna leads programs that bridge artistic practice and education, build creative confidence, and strengthen pathways for the next generation of artists, makers, and creative thinkers.



## CAITLIN BAKER

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE –  
DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

0.8 FTE

Caitlin Baker is a director, theatremaker, dramaturg and arts advocate working and creating on Ngunawal and Ngambri land. At Canberra Youth Theatre, she brings together her commitment to authentic, youth-led storytelling with strategic communications and development work that amplifies the voices of young artists and demonstrates the lasting impact of youth arts engagement.

Caitlin has expanded Canberra Youth Theatre’s social and cultural reach through consistent visual and digital communications, celebrating local artists and using vibrant digital storytelling to articulate social impact. In 2025, she launched the company’s inaugural 12in12 giving day, which exceeded its ambitious fundraising goal and was subsequently shared by Creative Australia as a grassroots success story at industry panels. Drawing on her experience as a Canberra Youth Theatre alumni, resident artist, and workshop participant, Caitlin is building the organisation’s development capacity with a focus on stewardship and long-term donor relationships, driven by the belief that every young artist deserves the opportunities she received.

As a director and dramaturg, Caitlin’s work explores feminist narratives and reinvented classics, interrogating the intersections of politics, sex, and adaptation in contemporary Australia. Recent directorial credits include Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (2025), Karen Vickery’s award-winning translation of Chekhov’s *Seagull* (2024), the world premiere of Joanna Richards’ *You Can’t Tell Anyone* (2023), and the Australian workshop premiere of Sophie McIntosh’s *macbitches* (2023). As a dramaturg, she has worked on *You Can’t Tell Anyone* and Julian Lanarch’s AWGIE-nominated *How to Vote*. She received First Class Honours from the Australian National University for her 2023 thesis on Sarah Kane under Dr Rebecca Clode.

Whatever hat she’s wearing, Caitlin’s work is grounded in the power of story.



## CHRISTOPHER CARROLL

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE –  
MARKETING & PATHWAYS

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.

# BOARD



## PETER HOOLIHAN CHAIR

Joined 2017

*Legal and Corporate, Governance, Canberra Youth Alumni*

Peter Hoolihan is Legal Counsel at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, 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, procurement, environment and planning law. When in private practice, Peter has represented commercial clients, state governments and the Commonwealth of Australia on complex property and facilities arrangements, construction, infrastructure and asset maintenance projects, venue hire and hospitality arrangements, acquisition and disposal of land, and 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.



## JOLIE BAASCH SECRETARY

Joined 2025

*Strategy, Analytics, Management, Government, Not-For-Profit, Private sector*

Jolie Baasch is an experienced strategy, analytics and transformation executive specialising in the intersection of not-for-profit, government and commercial contexts. Jolie has almost 30 years' experience in commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Jolie has held senior executive roles in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors, is recognised as a Top 25 Analytics Leader by the Institute of Analytical Professionals Australia and her work in pioneering the use of artificial intelligence is internationally award winning. Jolie has a Bachelor of Commerce (Statistics), an MBA (Executive), a Master of Social Research Methods, is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and is currently a PhD Candidate (Public Policy) at ANU. Throughout her corporate career, Jolie has remained committed to the performing arts, a passion that was forged through her own participation with Canberra Youth Theatre in her formative years. Jolie returned to Canberra in 2023 to pursue research in the intersection of disability and education policy.

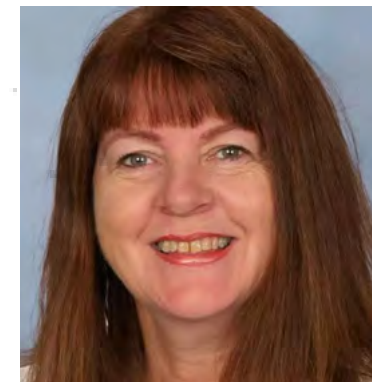


## ADRIANA LAW DEPUTY CHAIR

Joined 2022

*Marketing, Communications, Digital Content Technology*

Adriana Law is a marketing consultant, specialising in marketing technology 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 (and medium). 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.

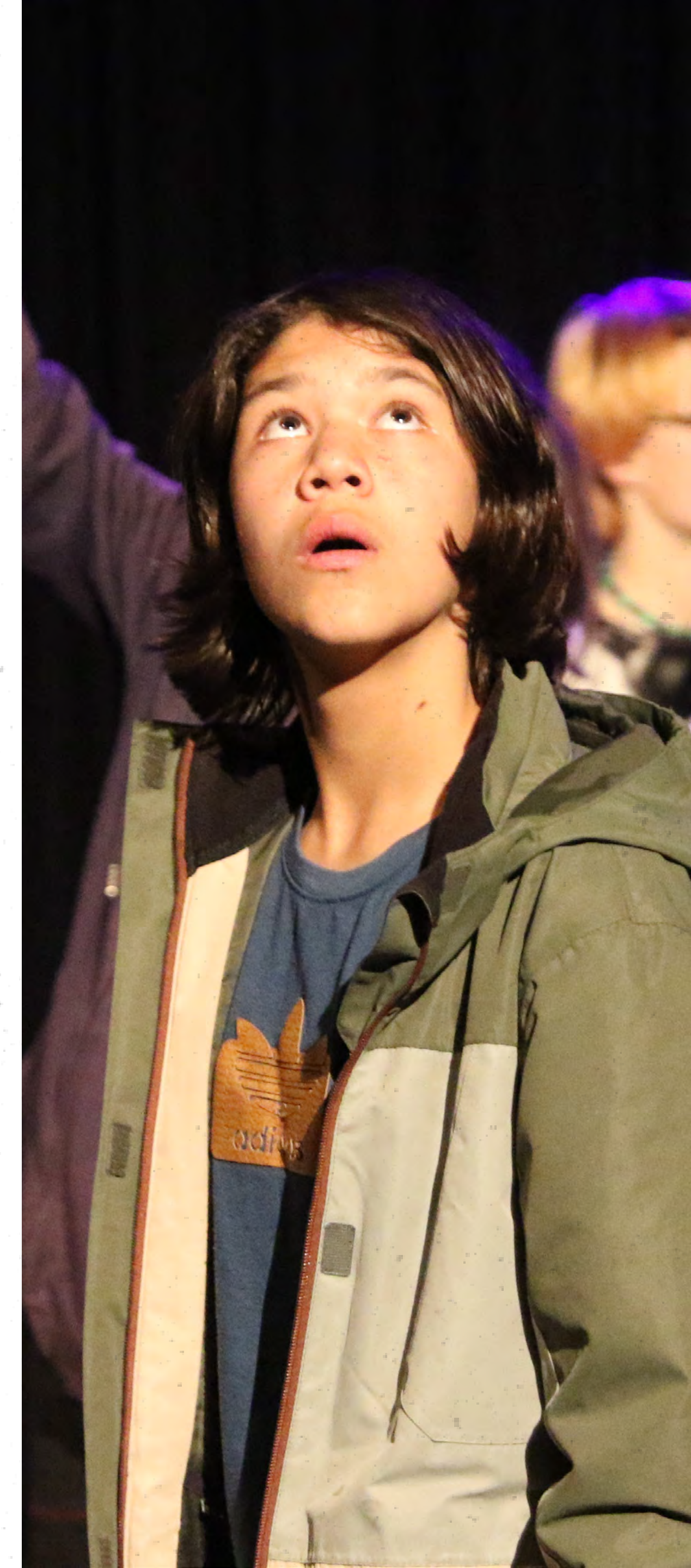


## LOUISE DAVIDSON TREASURER

Joined 2024

*Finance, Governance, Private sector, Government, Risk Management, Corporate Leadership*

With a career spanning over three decades in Canberra, Louise has developed a robust foundation in management, executive, and consultancy roles across the not-for-profit, corporate, and public sectors. Her expertise encompasses working with national cultural institutions, education providers, multinational corporations, and marginalized young people. One of her notable achievements is managing the architectural design and construction of the Treasures and Exhibition Gallery at the National Library of Australia, showcasing her exceptional leadership skills. Louise holds formal qualifications in multiple fields, including Business, Human Resource Management, Governance and Risk Management showcasing her versatility and expertise. Louise's passion for theatre and working with young people led her to join the Canberra Youth Theatre in 2022. In 2025, she took on the role of Treasurer on the theatre's board. Throughout her career, Louise has found immense personal satisfaction in contributing to the development of future leaders across various fields.





## AMY CRAWFORD MEMBER

Joined 2023

*Governance, Public Service, Performing Arts*

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 2016. This connection continues through her two children, who have been actively involved with Canberra Youth Theatre since 2019.



## JOANNA ERSKINE MEMBER

Joined 2023

*Arts Education, Performing Arts, Strategy Development*

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.



## EMMA MACDONALD MEMBER

Joined 2024

*Marketing, Communications, Digital Content Technology*

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.

# ACCESS & INCLUSION

All young people have the right to access arts and creativity. At Canberra Youth Theatre, our commitment to access and inclusion ensures that young artists can participate fully, feel valued, and have their voices heard — regardless of background, identity, ability, or circumstance.

In 2025, this commitment continued to shape every aspect of our work, from program design and delivery to partnerships, staffing, and organisational culture.

## REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

We recognise that barriers to participation take many forms — geographic distance, cost, disability access, cultural and linguistic differences, and social or emotional factors. Access considerations are embedded across all stages of our programs, so that participation is not only possible, but meaningful and well-supported. In 2025, we:

- Provided transparent information about what participation involves — including time commitments, creative expectations, and our collaborative creative culture — so young people and their families could make informed decisions about working with us
- Offered six bursaries and \$21,000 in subsidies, and flexible payment options across a range of programs
- Sought additional funding to expand our access initiatives

Demand for financial support remains high, reinforcing the importance of sustained investment in equitable participation.

## INCLUSIVE PROGRAM DESIGN

Our programs are designed to support multiple ways of learning, creating, and expressing. In practice, this means:

- Embedding flexible and responsive approaches to facilitation
- Incorporating participant feedback into program development
- Ensuring that young people's lived experience informs creative outcomes and organisational priorities

We continue to see strong evidence that when young people feel safe, supported, and represented, their creative confidence and capacity grows.

## PARTNERSHIPS & SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Access and inclusion are strengthened through collaboration, knowledge sharing and sector engagement. We:

- Partnered with organisations and artists who share our commitment to equitable access and inclusive practice, such as Bell Shakespeare and Erth.
- Contributed to sector development through professional learning, teacher engagement and knowledge sharing opportunities
- Invested in ongoing professional development to strengthen inclusive practice across our team

This work positions Canberra Youth Theatre as an active contributor to a more inclusive and accessible arts sector.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Through this work, Canberra Youth Theatre provides a consistently welcoming and inclusive environment for young people. Participants report feeling safe to express themselves, take creative risks, and connect meaningfully with others.

This sense of trust enables deeper engagement, supports creative confidence, and underpins sustained participation across our programs. It remains central to our practice and drives our ongoing commitment to access and inclusion.

## A LIVING COMMITMENT

We recognise that inclusive practice requires ongoing reflection, learning, and responsiveness.

At Canberra Youth Theatre, access and inclusion are embedded in how we design and deliver our programs. We continue to refine our approach through listening to participants, reflecting on our practice, and adapting our work to support meaningful participation.

This commitment drives our ongoing work to strengthen pathways into the arts and ensure more young people can participate, create, and contribute.



# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

2025 proved to be a challenging, but also rewarding year, for our communications and branding priorities, as we juggled an interstate tour, and a new slate of emerging artist programs, alongside our usual creative engagement strategies.

A key milestone was the Sydney return season of *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* at the Rebel Theatre, presented with ATYP. Building on the campaign from the world premiere season, we extended the production's distinctive, anarchic marketing across social channels, supported by a video trailer from Dark Horse, publicity by Kabuku PR, and an education pack developed in collaboration with Australian Plays Transform. *Work, But...* received critical acclaim from Sydney critics and young people alike. Prominent critic Suzy Goes See noted the production's "infectious precision and energy," while Theatre Now's 4.5 star review stated "this is the kind of theatre young people should be seeing and making." More than just a touring opportunity, this was a powerful advocacy exercise – a new play commissioned, developed, and produced in the ACT progressing to a national platform and reaching new audiences.

Building off our 2024 announcement regarding the consolidation of our activities, and the subsequent support of alumni Liv Hewson, 2025 marked the launch of a full suite of Emerging Artists programs. Increased financial support and subsidised program fees directly addressed barriers identified in the previous year's marketing report, resulting in strong engagement with pathway-focused communications. Actors Studio and Young Critics achieved high enrolments, while Writers Ensemble maintained strong participation.

We continued to platform our collaborations with other local and national arts organisations, including Bell Shakespeare and Erth, while celebrating the success of our alumni in the local theatre scene, and national arts sector. With the inclusion of a schools show in our Sydney tour, as well as an organisational presence at Drama NSW and at the University of Canberra, we also continue to expand our educational audiences – identifying schools as a primary area for potential growth.

Audience reach grew steadily across all major channels, with Young Critics reviews emerging as a key driver of social media engagement. While email subscriptions declined slightly, this reflects a targeted effort to remove inactive accounts. Instagram remained our strongest platform, leading both audience growth and engagement, consistent with our youth audience. Top-performing content included Liv Hewson's endorsement, Emerging Playwright Commission announcements, and tour-related material. Engagement trends indicate a clear preference for celebratory and storytelling content over direct sales messaging, informing future strategy.

We ended the year by launching a new partnership with the Canberra Writers Festival, elevating the announcement of our Emerging Playwright Commission. This enabled us to not only platform sections of work from our finalists, and increase our engagement of young artists in the selection process, but also invite the public to celebrate our commitment to the commissioning, development, and production of new works. An audience of young people, important sector figures, and community members proved the success of this venture. The partnership with Canberra Writers Festival will continue in 2026.

2025 also highlighted operational challenges. The reduction of the core team placed increased pressure on communications capacity. Streamlining workflows and refining public-facing storytelling will be key priorities in 2026. Expanding reach beyond digital platforms also presents an opportunity, with a likely return to targeted print collateral for Canberra audiences.

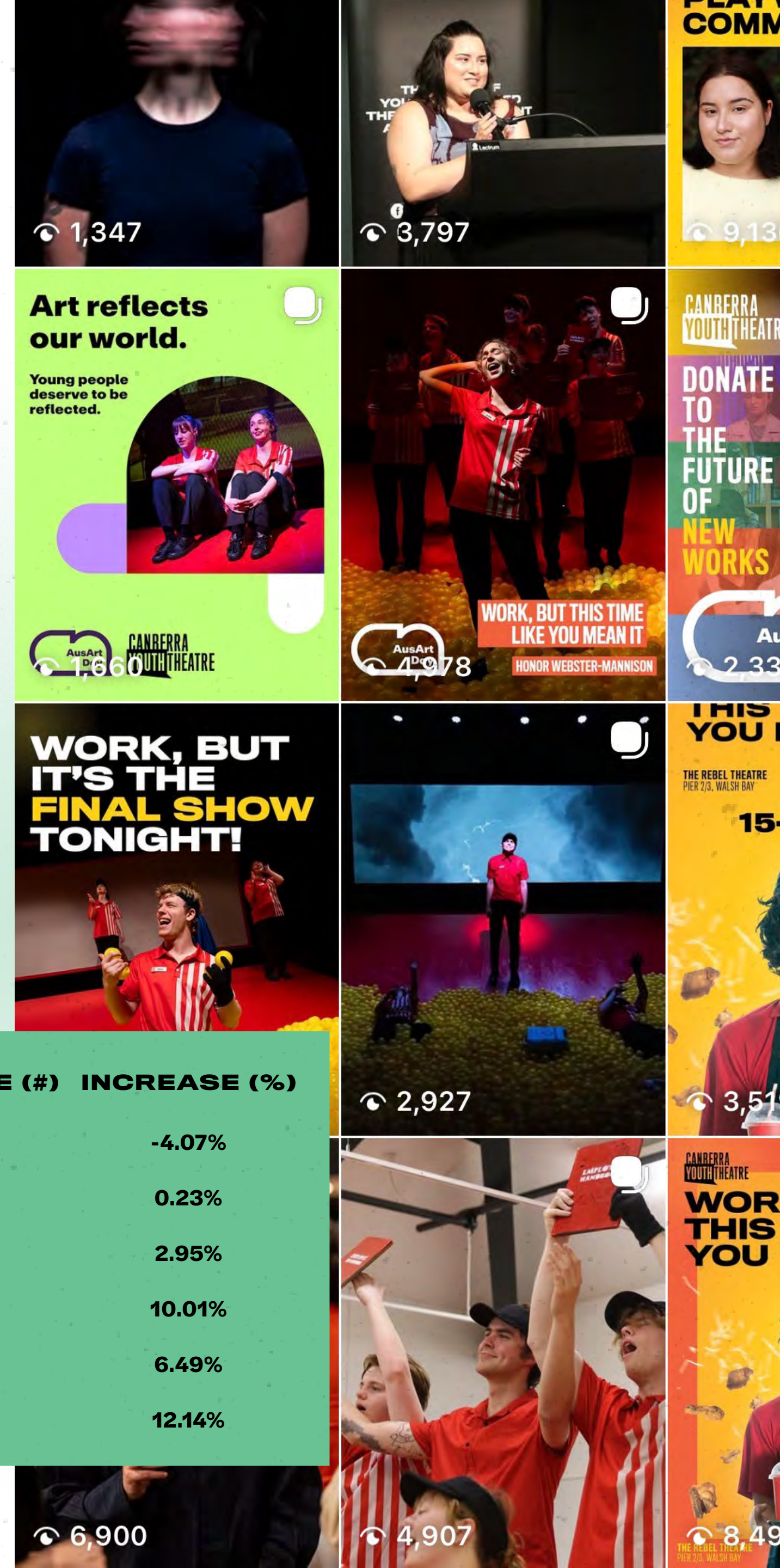
Overall, 2025 strengthened Canberra Youth Theatre's national profile through touring and commissioning. In 2026, the focus will be on consolidating this momentum through clear, sustainable storytelling and deeper engagement with our community and alumni.

## TOTAL USERS / FOLLOWERS

# 29,374

+ 304  
+ 1.02%

PLATFORM	TOTAL USERS	INCREASE (#)	INCREASE (%)
Email Newsletter	2,704	-110	-4.07%
Website	20,972	48	0.23%
Facebook	3,352	99	2.95%
Instagram	2,367	237	10.01%
YouTube	77	5	6.49%
LinkedIn	206	25	12.14%



# PHILANTHROPY & SPONSORSHIP

Our development, partnerships and philanthropic activities in 2025 built on the outpouring of community support in 2024 to diversify and increase revenue. The focus was on streamlining fundraising structures and continuing to secure private support and sponsorship.

The need identified in 2024 — to seek and grow ongoing philanthropic support — remained pressing in 2025. Sponsorships, donations and philanthropic income increased by nearly 40% compared to 2024, largely due to Liv Hewson's generous support for our emerging artists. This growth is proportionally consistent with 2023 and 2024, comprising just under 14% of total revenue. As noted in last year's Philanthropy and Sponsorship report, development planning indicates this income should grow to approximately 30% of overall revenue, with the greatest opportunities in corporate philanthropy and major individual donors. While this 30% target is recommended, it is not necessarily reflected across other ACT arts organisations and may represent a broader sector challenge.

2025 marked the launch of our annual giving day, 12 IN 12. Aligned with our *12 Hour Theatre Project*, it serves as both a community-focused giving initiative and an early launch for our end-of-financial-year campaign. It addresses previous concerns about a digital-only EOFY campaign by reintroducing face-to-face engagement with donors and supporters — something diminished by the reduction in public productions.

Across 12 hours, we raised \$13,230 — exceeding our \$12,000 goal — and engaged 68 donors, the majority

of whom were new supporters. Donor data revealed two key insights. First, larger contributions (above \$2,500) are more likely to come from businesses and corporate donors than individuals. Second, giving days are particularly effective for engaging alumni and the broader local arts sector, with many new donors drawn from the past two decades of Canberra Youth Theatre alumni. Future iterations should more deliberately engage these legacy communities.

The campaign narrative centred on access and barriers to creative engagement. A key challenge for future iterations will be broadening the focus to include underfunded areas such as new work production and core operational costs.

Beyond meeting its target, 12 IN 12 established a repeatable and effective model for fundraising. It enables an earlier start to EOFY campaigns, differentiates our approach through in-person engagement, and supports clearer impact storytelling. Notably, many existing donors now use 12 IN 12 as their primary annual contribution point, making it central to both donor stewardship and acquisition. With this model established, organisational focus can increasingly shift to corporate sponsorship across the remainder of the financial year.

Following the campaign's success, Caitlin Baker was invited to present at a national Creative Australia webinar for arts organisation staff interested in the 2025 Giving Day to the Arts, sharing insights from the 12 IN 12 strategy.

The online donation platform GiveNow continues to strengthen our fundraising processes, enabling one-

off, and recurring donations. Integration with Apple Pay and tap-point terminals has further streamlined the giving experience.

The Jeremy Spencer Broom Legacy continued to play a significant role in funding our programs, with a shift in focus from Emerging Artists to Creative Engagement. This partnership reflects a strong and evolving philanthropic relationship, sustained through consistent and personally meaningful stewardship, with plans to continue beyond its original timeframe. Similarly, our relationship with Holding Redlich remains vital to supporting new work, with the renewal of their sponsorship extending the Emerging Playwright Commission for a further three years.

A successful application to the Malcolm Robertson Foundation enabled the commissioning of Rebecca Duke's new work, *Wunderkinds*, with development continuing into 2026.

In 2026, our focus will shift primarily to securing corporate support and sponsorship for core costs and new work. Producing commissioned works will continue to rely on project funding or significant external support. Our ongoing commitment to storytelling, impact communication and youth arts advocacy will underpin efforts to build meaningful partnerships with businesses and across the broader sector.



# PAYING IT BACK



**I WOULDN'T BE IN  
THE POSITION I'M IN  
NOW WITHOUT WHAT I  
LEARNED AT CANBERRA  
YOUTH THEATRE.  
LIV HEWSON**

For over fifty years, thousands of young people have come through Canberra Youth Theatre to tell their stories, find their people, and launch their artistic careers. Many return years later with their own children, creating family legacies woven into Canberra's creative history.

Sometimes, those who began here choose to give back. After we announced in 2024 that we would pause some of our programs due to financial pressures to refocus as a company – a challenge shared across the entire arts sector – we saw unprecedented community support. Among those who reached out was one of our alumni, Liv Hewson.

Liv is one of Canberra's most successful artistic exports, best known for *Yellowjackets* (Paramount+ with Showtime), and appearing in the Australian comedy crime mystery *He Had It Coming*. Now based in the USA, Liv credits Canberra Youth Theatre as the foundation of their creative career and is "paying it back" with a philanthropic gift of \$100,000 over five years to directly subsidise programs and opportunities for emerging artists, such as this production tour.

Due to their generosity, we can continue to support our emerging artists for the next five years. Liv's story reminds us how important supporting the young artists of today is, for the arts sector of tomorrow.

## THIS IS LIV'S STORY:

I didn't go to university, I went to Canberra Youth Theatre. I was taught a lot of theory, and theatrical technique, but always in an environment that encouraged myself and my peers to put what we were learning to practical use. We were empowered to learn by doing. We were given tools and trusted that we could use them. The work we were doing was woven into the arts scene of the city. As artists, we were taken seriously.

The experiences and opportunities I had at Canberra Youth Theatre form the baseline of my professional training. Being able to provide some support to the company now, with resources that I've accrued through work as an actor, is quite full circle and very important to me. In 2013, I was part of a CYT production that toured to Sydney and Melbourne. It was my first touring theatrical experience, and an incredibly formative professional one. It's an honour to bolster the kind of programming now that I benefited from in my personal and professional development.

Youth arts programs are an integral part of the arts culture in their cities, and they're an integral part of the arts culture in Australia at large. We use the term 'emerging artists' a lot – artists emerge from where they're trained, and they emerge by making art. That training and those opportunities need to be available.

When I was young, hungry and had no idea where to start, there was a theatre company in my hometown that was made for people just like me. I would not be where I am today without the training I received at CYT. It's only fair that I use the position I'm in now to help look after the place that I came from. There are young people like me in Canberra now who need it. Where do we expect the artists of the future to emerge from if we don't support their development now?



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Canberra Youth Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our partners who were key to the success of our work throughout 2025.

## GOVERNMENT PARTNER

Supported by



## CREATIVE PARTNERS



Ainslie and Gorman  
Arts Centres



## PROGRAM PARTNERS



HOLDING REDLICH



SEABORN BROUGHTON &  
WALFORD FOUNDATION  
Supporting the Performing Arts

## PRODUCTION SPONSORS



## MAJOR DONORS

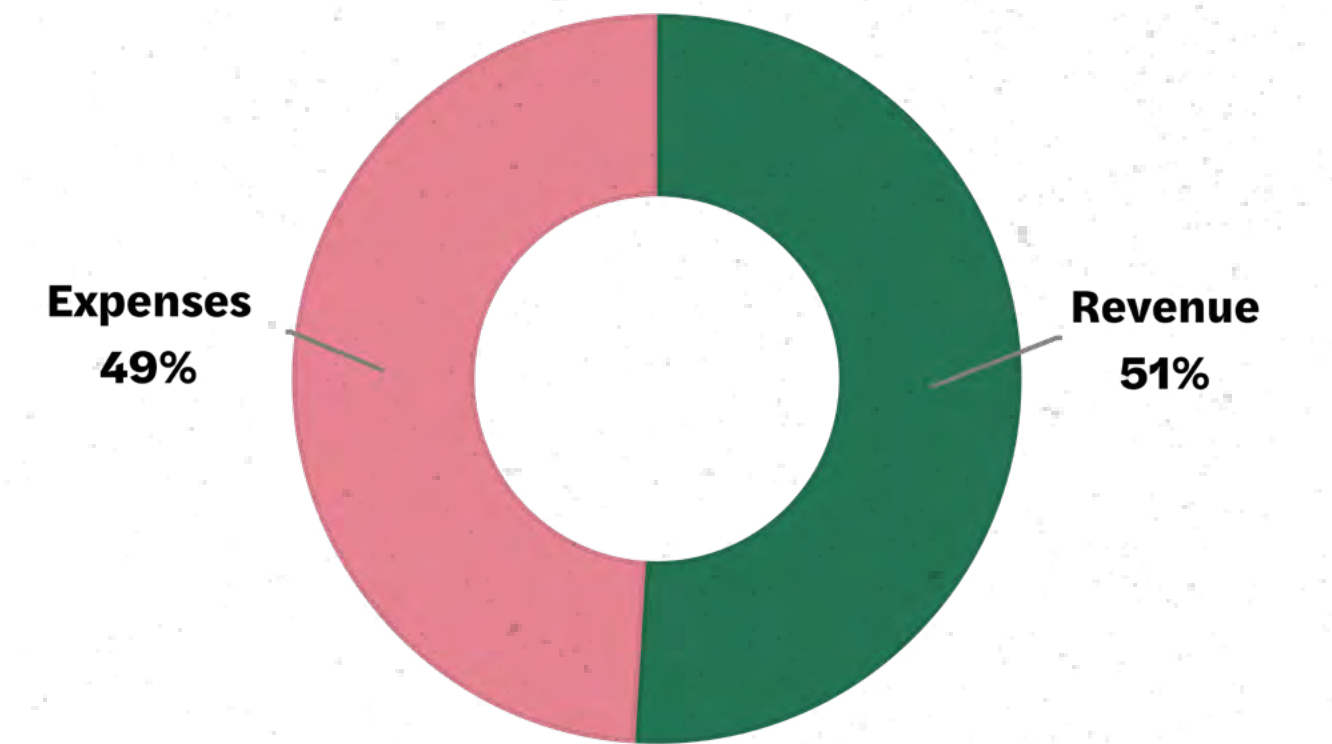
LIV HEWSON

THE JEREMY SPENCER BROOM LEGACY

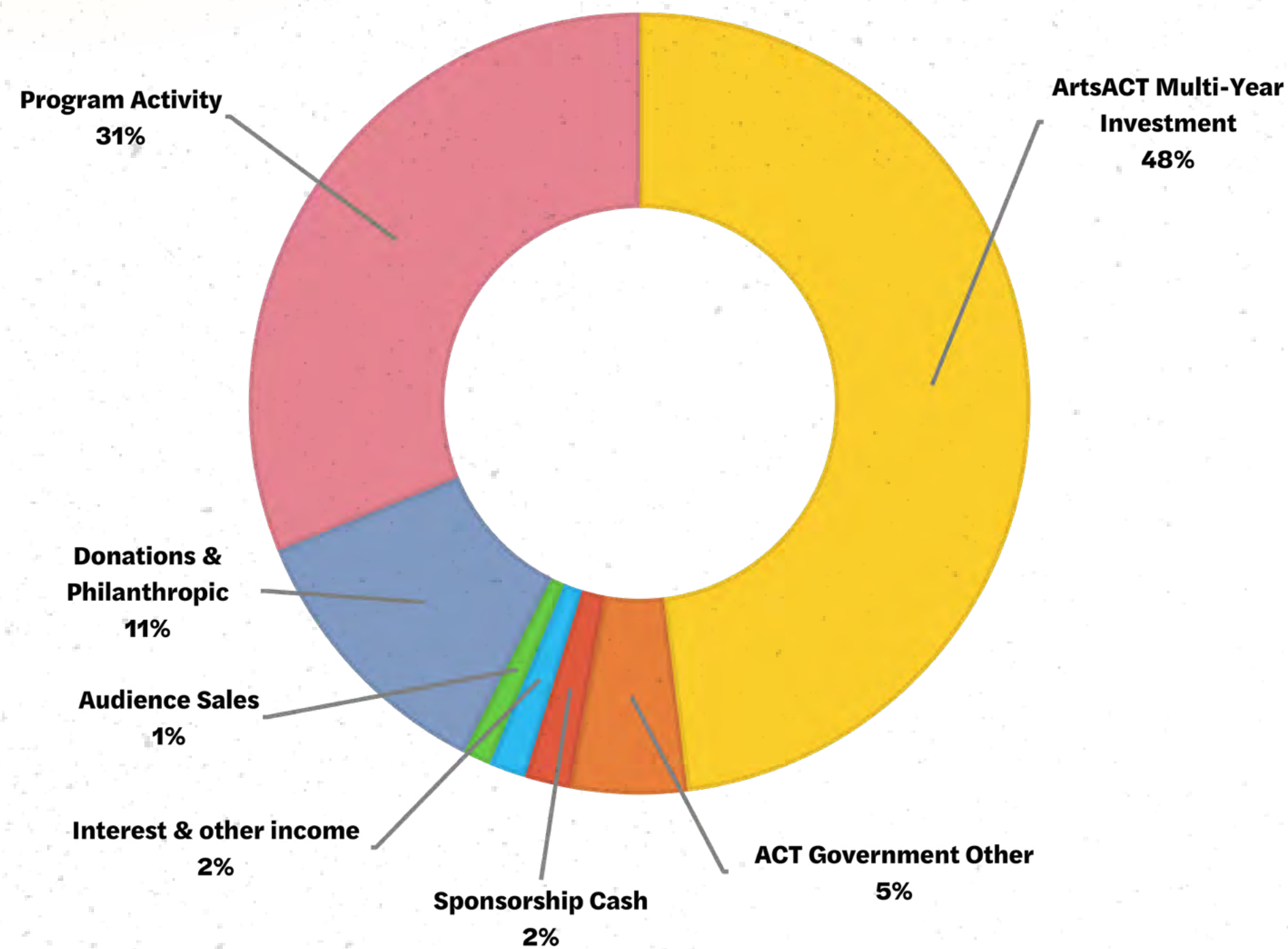


# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

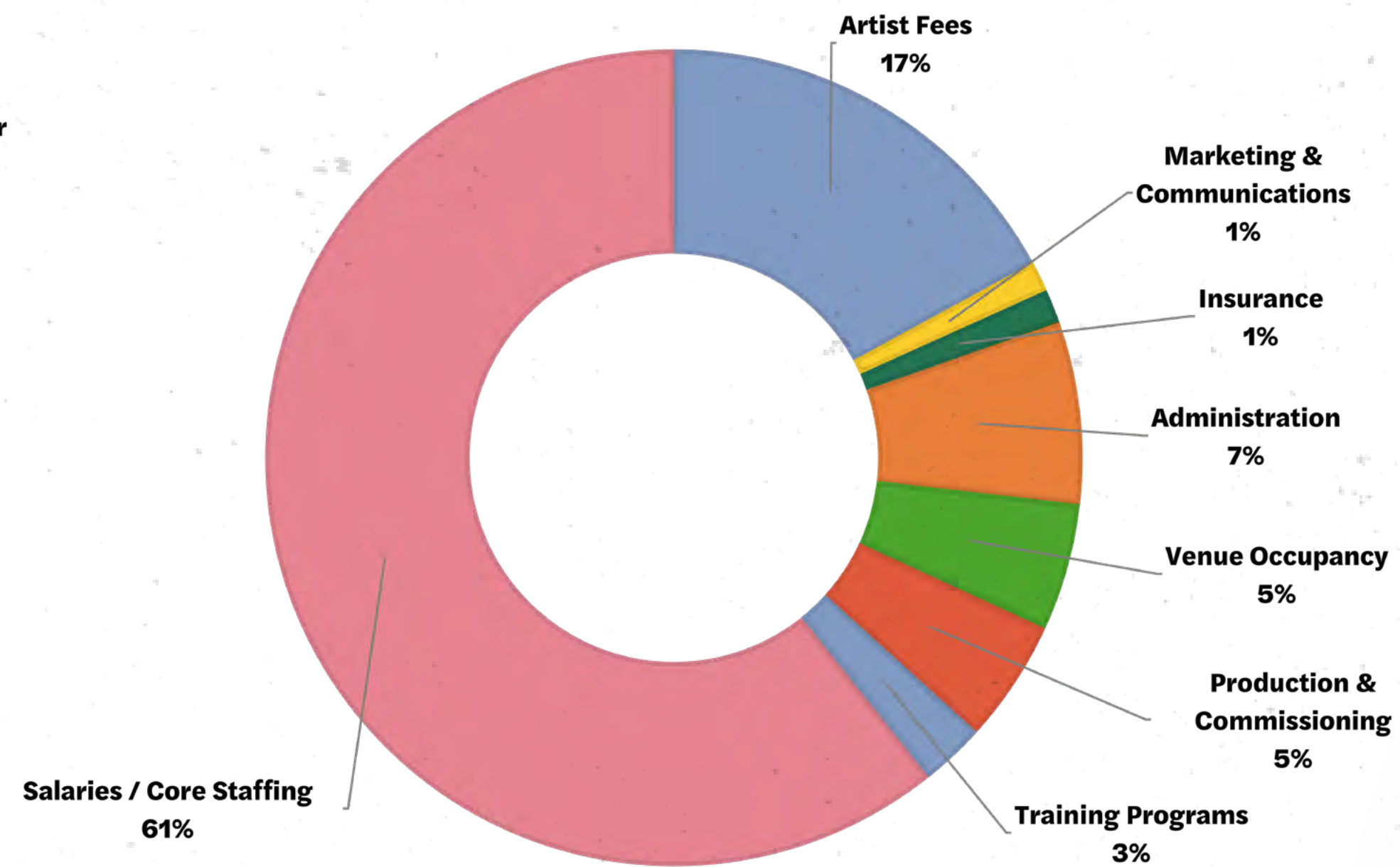
## Revenue vs Expenses



## Revenue 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 2025.

## REVENUE

Revenue decreased in 2025 to \$656,034 (2024: \$680,753). The income received from Fees and Services decreased to \$204,297 (2024: \$220,086) and income from the ACT Government contributed \$315,188 (2024: \$314,229) through our Arts Organisation Investment Funding grant, \$30,000 through opportunity funding for the *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It* tour, and \$1,500 for the 12 Hour Theatre Project as part of Youth Week, totaling \$346,688.

We continued in 2025 to focus on diversifying Canberra Youth Theatre income through Sponsorship, Donations and Philanthropic initiatives totalling \$87,479. This was an increase from the previous year (2024: \$62,998). Audience sales were \$7,542 (2024: \$27,576) with only one production in 2025 compared to two in 2024.

Other income decreased in 2025 to \$10,028 (2024: \$25,448).

## EXPENSES

Expenses decreased in 2025 to \$631,533 (2024: \$728,152). This decrease is attributed to Employee Benefits totalling \$392,345 (2024: \$424,965), Artistic Program totalling \$50,887 (2024: \$116,102), and Training Services \$93,698 (2024: \$98,695). The Training Services decrease was largely due to Core staff delivering weekly workshop programs, which is not sustainable long term, and we have worked to reduce the overall number of programs they will deliver in 2026.

Employee benefits decreased to \$392,345 (2024: \$424,965). Rent and Running Costs in 2025 were \$37,060 (2024: \$36,459) and IT and

Communication \$10,389 (2023: \$12,012). Other expenses remained relatively stable throughout 2025. The decrease in employee benefits is the result of a downsizing of the Core staff team, to 3.6 FTE at the beginning of 2025, ending the year at 3.2 FTE.

In 2022 we implemented the straight-line depreciation method. The depreciation expense for 2025 is \$323 (2023: \$2,294), and our non-current assets have a written down value of \$0 (2024: \$323).

The financial outcome for 2025 was a surplus of \$24,501 compared to 2024 with a deficit of \$47,399.

## FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2025, Canberra Youth Theatre was in a good financial position with short-term liquidity, cash reserves (total current assets increased in 2025 to \$312,596; 2024: \$248,170), and low levels of debt (total liabilities \$115,942; 2024: \$76,338).

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 2025 are reported as \$196,654 (2024: \$172,153).

## OUTLOOK

The Board has spent the last three years carefully considering and strategising options for sustained growth, prompted by the lack of increased funding from the ACT Government Arts Organisation Investment and the absence of operational funding from the Federal Government via Creative Australia. Recognising the critical need to invest in programs and staff, the Board aimed to stimulate activity and

boost revenue through growth in own-source income. In 2025, efforts to diversify Canberra Youth Theatre's income through Sponsorship, Donations, and Philanthropic initiatives resulted in a 38% increase from the previous year.

In 2026, the Board remains firmly committed to empowering management to navigate financial constraints while preserving Canberra Youth Theatre's strong financial foundation. Concurrently, strategic investments will continue in our Core staff, the delivery of the Artistic Program, and the provision of exceptional services that benefit young people across Canberra and its regions. This vision seeks to increase participation, focus on the development and production of new work, ensure financial sustainability, and establish a meaningful legacy for Canberra Youth Theatre.

The focused strategic investment approach in 2026, will enable staff to dedicate their efforts to identifying growth opportunities and developing ongoing strategies for youth theatre, as we await the outcome of the ACT Government Arts Investment Funding application. The funding outcome notification is due in July 2026.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Davidson'.

**LOUISE DAVIDSON**  
TREASURER

April 2026

**CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025  
ABN: 99470855403**

**CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED  
ABN: 99470855403  
FINANCIAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

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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 2025.

**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 2025
Adriana Law	Deputy Chair	AGM 2025
Cassandra Hoolihan	Secretary	TO APR 2025
Jolie Baasch	Secretary	AGM 2025
Ellen Harvey	Treasurer	TO APR 2025
Louise Davidson	Treasurer	AGM 2025
Amy Crawford	Member	AGM 2025
Joanna Erskine	Member	AGM 2025
Ellen Harvey	Member	FROM APR 2024 TO APR 2025
Emma MacDonald	Member	AGM 2025

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.

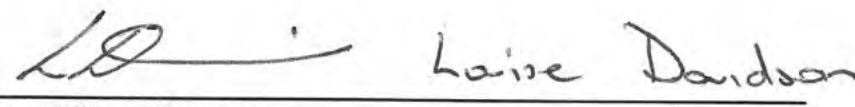
**Significant Changes**


No significant change in these activities occurred during the year.

**Operating Result**

The **surplus** for the year ended 31 December 2025 amounted to \$24,501 (2024: deficit of \$47,399).

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

Dated this 23 day of February 2026.

**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 2025 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 2025 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

1<sup>st</sup> February 2026  
Canberra, ACT

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED  
ABN: 99470855403

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Audience Sales	7,542	27,576
Fees and Services	204,297	220,086
Sponsorship	12,500	30,936
Donations and Philanthropic Funding	74,979	32,062
Grants		
- ArtsACT	315,188	314,229
- Other Grants	31,500	30,416
Other Income and Interest	10,028	25,448
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>656,034</b>	<b>680,753</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee benefits	392,345	424,965
Artist Program	50,887	116,102
Bookkeeping and Audit	9,650	7,440
Training Services	93,698	98,695
IT & Communication	10,389	12,012
Depreciation expenses	323	2,294
Banking Fees	2,460	2,250
Rent and Running Costs	37,060	36,459
Insurances	8,305	7,579
Marketing Promo Documentation	7,571	4,441
Office Consumables/Resources	18,845	15,915
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>631,533</b>	<b>728,152</b>
<b>Net surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>24,501</b>	<b>(47,399)</b>

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED  
ABN: 99470855403

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank	94,581	57,145
Term Deposit	192,691	164,760
Petty Cash	174	180
Prepayments	18,582	19,516
Rental Bond	6,568	6,568
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>312,596</b>	<b>248,170</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Office Equipment at Cost	23,861	23,861
Less Provisions for Depreciation	(23,538)	(23,538)
Creative Equipment at Cost	3,000	3,000
Less Provisions for Depreciation	(3,000)	(3,000)
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>312,596</b>	<b>248,493</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Sundry Creditors	30,505	24,366
Provision for Employee Entitlements	69,787	42,967
Fees/Grants Received in Advance	15,650	9,006
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>115,942</b>	<b>76,339</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>196,654</b>	<b>172,153</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>		
Members Funds at the Beginning of Year	172,153	219,552
Retained earnings	24,501	(47,399)
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>196,654</b>	<b>172,153</b>

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED  
ABN: 99470855403

CASHFLOW STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts in the course of operations	647,000	661,237
Interest received	9,755	12,469
Payments in the course of operations	(591,395)	(755,722)
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>	<b>65,360</b>	<b>(82,016)</b>
<b>Increase in Investing Activities</b>		
Purchase of plant and equipment	-	-
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year</b>	<b>65,360</b>	<b>304,102</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>287,446</b>	<b>222,086</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Cash at Bank	94,581	57,145
Term Deposit	192,691	164,760
Petty Cash	174	44
	<b>287,446</b>	<b>222,086</b>

**CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**  
**ABN: 99470855403**

**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:

<b>Class of Fixed Asset</b>	<b>Rates</b>
Plant & Equipment	25%
Theatre Equipment	30%

**CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**  
**ABN: 99470855403**

**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 2025 was \$315,188 (2024: \$314,229).

CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY INCORPORATED  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025  
ABN: 99470855403

*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 2025 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:

 Laize Daudson

Committee Member

Dated this 23 day of February 2026

# CANBERRA YOUTH THEATRE

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

GORMAN ARTS CENTRE  
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02 6248 5057  
[INFO@CANBERRAYOUTHTHEATRE.COM.AU](mailto:INFO@CANBERRAYOUTHTHEATRE.COM.AU)