

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY



2024 EDUCATION

IMPACT REPORT

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Youth Scholarship Course Performance
Photo: Tiffany Garvie.

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We'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of our 2024 Education & Families team

Director of Families & Education
Jeremy Rice

Learning Manager
Nick Tranter

Education Content Producer
Emily Doyle

Education Coordinator
Brodi Purtill (until Nov)

Deadly Creatives Project Officer
Emma Holgate (from Nov)

Education Ticketing Officer
Mellita Ilich

Casual Administration
Isabella Recca

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, create and gather.

We pay our respects to all First Nations people, their Elders past and present and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories.

As a Company we remain committed to the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for voice, truth and treaty.

Thank you



Youth Ambassadors
Photo: Emily Doyle.

Reflecting on the full suite of Education activity in 2024, we are extremely proud of the breadth and impact of our work, all of which would not have been possible without your generous support.

Melbourne Theatre Company's Education & Families program provides accessible, meaningful theatre experiences for young people, regardless of their circumstances. Our award-winning programs foster creativity, confidence, and collaboration, with profound impacts on students' lives.

We offer subsidised tickets, travel support, digital resources, workshops, and innovative learning activities, reaching diverse and remote communities through our Education Hub. With donor support, we can expand these initiatives, nurture the next generation of artists and leaders, and adapt to evolving needs.

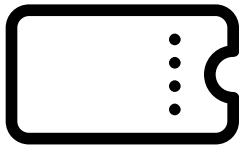
Every young Victorian deserves access to the life-changing benefits of theatre. Our Education & Families program enables students, young people and educators to access high quality arts experiences, provides unique insights into professional theatre making, and supports the development of students' creative practice.

Thank you for enabling such extraordinary achievements in 2024 and ensuring life-changing arts access for thousands of young people. We hope you enjoy reading about the impact of your giving in this report.

Anne-Louise Sarks
Artistic Director and Co-CEO



Education reach



3,576

subsidised school tickets



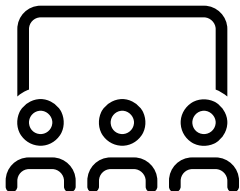
175

Victorian secondary schools engaged in programs



3,475km

travelled on the SLAP. BANG. KISS. National Tour



245

participants in live online events



1,097

IGNITE tickets for disadvantaged schools^



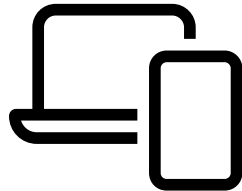
143

schools attended live theatre in Melbourne



390

participants in workshops and engagement programs*



2,868

active users of our digital education resources

DRAMA VICTORIA AWARDS

WINNER
Excellence in the Digital/
Online Delivery of Drama:
Education Hub

WINNER
Reconciliation in
Drama Education:
Deadly Creatives

[^]Disadvantaged schools are ranked 1,000 and below on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

*81% from Communities of Interest - CALD, Disability/Disabled, First Nations, LGBTIQ+, regional communities and disadvantaged schools (per ICSEA ranking).

Education Giving Circle

Dear donors,
Thank you for allowing us all the opportunity to watch, learn, and grow this year! It's been an amazing experience and it couldn't be made possible without your support. THANK YOU!!

Thank you to all our Education Giving Circle Donors.
Because of you we can continue to transform young lives through theatre.

LEADING EDUCATION DONORS

- The Ian Potter Foundation
Gailey Lazarus Foundation
The John and Myriam Wylie Foundation
Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM
Andrew Sisson AO and Tracey Sisson

Anne and Mark Robertson OAM
Linda Herd
Joanna Baevski
Alan and Mary-Louise Archibald Foundation
Anonymous (1)

EDUCATION GIVING CIRCLE DONORS

- Judy Bourke
Deborah Conyngham
Geoff Cosgriff
Ann Darby
Larry Kornhauser OAM and Natalya Gill
Heather and Simon McKeon
The Myer Foundation
Tom and Ruth O'Dea
Christopher Reed

The Robert Salzer Foundation
Ken and Gail Roche
Roslyn and Richard Rogers Family
Gordon and Faye Shinewell
Rob Stewart and Lisa Dowd
The Stirling Family
Ann and Alan Wilkinson
Anonymous (4)

Education productions

Carly Sheppard, *World Problems*.
Photo: Tiffany Garvie.



World Problems

By Emma Mary Hall
Directed by Cassandra Fumi
Cast Carly Sheppard
Southbank Theatre, The Lawler
3—22 May 2024

We presented 23 performances at Southbank Theatre, including three performances with pre-show talks and post-show Q&A sessions with performer Carly Sheppard.

REGIONAL TOUR

We were thrilled to return to regional Victoria with this production in June 2024, visiting students, teachers and the general public at Mildura Arts Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo, The Potato Shed Drysdale and Gippsland Performing Arts Centre in Traralgon. A post-show Q&A was held in each venue, which supported students studying the production as part of their studies in VCE Drama.

LIVESTREAM

We enabled over two hundred isolated students to watch a performance of *World Problems* via a livestream on the Melbourne Theatre Company website.

The livestream was produced in partnership with Arts Centre Melbourne Broadcast & Digital and provided access to students unable to attend theatre due to distance, disability or medical and social factors.

Livestream audiences were able to participate in the post-show Q&A via an online chat window and send virtual applause to the cast and crew.

‘It’s really good that theatre’s coming more regional – it’s really nice to not have to get up early in the morning to travel to Melbourne to watch a show.’

STUDENT, THE POTATO SHED DRYSDALE

Regional Tour supported by
The Gailey Lazarus Foundation

The Gailey Lazarus
Foundation

World Problems livestream upptred by
The Ian Potter Foundation and the Department
of Education, Victoria, through the Strategic
Partnerships Program



Sarah Fitzgerald and Tomáš Kantor,
SLAP. BANG. KISS. Photo: Sarah Walker.



SLAP. BANG. KISS. National tour

By Dan Giovannoni
Directed by Katy Maudlin
Cast Sarah Fitzgerald, Tomáš Kantor and Tsungirai Wachenuka
New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria
30 Jul—11 Sep 2024

Following its sell-out season at Southbank Theatre in 2022, *SLAP. BANG. KISS*. toured to Victoria, Tasmania and NSW over an 8-week period in August and September. Completing 18 performances in 13 locations across the country, Dan Giovannoni’s contemporary three-hander about activism and advocacy continues to inspire young audiences. Select performances were followed by a Q&A session that elicited powerful conversations about race and representation.

3,475kms were driven by the touring team, not including flying miles! Venues included Bunjil Place Narre Warren, The Potato Shed Drysdale, West Gippsland Arts Centre, Paranple Arts Centre Devonport, Portland Arts Centre Portland, Kingston Arts Centre, The Wedge Sale, The Round Nunawading, Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre, Riverlinks Westside Shepparton, Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre, The Cube Wodonga, and Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre. Tour audiences responded with enthusiasm to the storyline set in a country town.

The regional tour aims to provide all students with access to the very best professional theatre and arts education. Our goal is to provide young people with insights into the professional theatre process and inspire and support young people’s creative practice. And the show’s story hasn’t ended yet, with *SLAP. BANG. KISS*. travelling to WA in 2025.

‘I really appreciate the fact that you took your time to come down from Melbourne to perform to everyone in our regional community. Every single part of the story was incredibly powerful.’

STUDENT, THE POTATO SHED DRYSDALE

Enhanced learning

Exploring the Company's expansive costume wardrobe.
Photo: Jacinta Keefe.



When attending a Melbourne Theatre Company performance, students are supported in many ways to promote deeper learning and engagement.

EDUCATION PERFORMANCES

Students gain unique insights into professional theatre through pre-show talks at designated Education performances, which also include post-show Q&As with the cast and creative team. These talks, facilitated by the Learning Manager, directly address the relevant VCE Study Design and are a unique opportunity for students to explore key aspects of the curriculum ahead of seeing a show. 625 students attended pre-show talks in 2024.

HQ TOURS

This year we welcomed 339 students into Melbourne Theatre Company Headquarters for backstage tours, providing a behind-the-scenes insight into how theatre is made. Tours include visits to set and prop building workshops, an exploration of our costume making department, and highlights pathways into theatre careers that students might not otherwise be aware of.

'Being surrounded by adults and young people who share the same passion as myself reminds me of the beautiful human connection that got me into theatre in the first place. Sharing wonderful and insightful moments with the designers and staff at MTC gives me faith and confidence to take the risk that is pursuing a job in theatre.'

ZOE, YOUTH AMBASSADOR

'Nick delivered an expertly constructed and targeted workshop. The content was explicitly related to the students' course work and the students were able to experience creation of a work and discuss key components such as character development.'

TEACHER, MILDURA

World Problems Livestream.
Photo: Emily Doyle.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

To support student study and achievement, we have continued to expand our Education Hub, a comprehensive suite of curriculum-based digital resources for teachers and students to use in the classroom and at home. These include interactive pre-show resources, two-part education packs, video interviews with cast and creatives and interactive virtual 3D set tours.

New additions to the Education Hub in 2024 include interactive short courses devised in collaboration with Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) lecturers Amy Hume and Colin Sneesby, to develop students' voice and movement skills. In these online digital workshops, concepts are explained by expert facilitators and demonstrated by VCA student participants, allowing students to participate virtually in activities at their own pace.

With 635 new memberships in 2024, we are proud to be building an online community of educators, students and curious theatre-lovers.

MTC DIGITAL THEATRE

The digital recordings of *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* and *Berlin* continued to be popular with schools throughout 2024, with extensive resources in the Education Hub for both shows. With *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* on the VCE Theatre Studies playlist and *Berlin* on the VCE Literature text list, MTC Digital Theatre supports intensive study and exam revision.

'The interactive web page of education resources for *World Problems* is not only really valuable but also really cool. Very contemporary and engaging.'

TEACHER, MELBOURNE

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the support of the Department of Education Training, Victoria, through the Strategic Partnerships Program and the Victorian Challenge and Enrichment



MTC Digital Education is supported by The Ian Potter Foundation



We are delighted to have received a further four year commitment of support from The Ian Potter Foundation for our Digital Education program, reinforcing our shared dedication to empowering educators and students through innovative digital learning.

Enhanced learning



Youth Ambassadors. Photo: Emily Doyle.

IGNITE

At Melbourne Theatre Company, we believe that theatre is for everyone. In 2023, we launched IGNITE – a program to remove financial barriers, give students an experience they’ll never forget and spark a lifelong love of theatre.

Eligible schools can access \$5 IGNITE tickets to Melbourne Theatre Company productions at Southbank Theatre and Arts Centre Melbourne and cash subsidies to assist engaging relief teachers on the day of the excursion. All regional schools can apply for a travel subsidy. Eligibility is determined by a school’s ranking on the Australian government’s Index of Community Socio Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

In 2024, Melbourne Theatre Company distributed over 1,000 subsidised tickets and over \$4,000 in travel and relief teacher subsidies.

GAILEY LAZARUS REGIONAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

To make creative experiences accessible to all students in Victoria, a suite of on-demand workshops is available exclusively to schools in regional Victoria with workshop topics including Acting, The Lifecycle of a Production and Exploring Shakespeare.

Companion workshops to *World Problems* were offered to regional and outer metropolitan schools that were attending the show at their local venue. We also delivered workshops exploring *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* to support its national tour and through MTC Digital Theatre. We ran a series of VR workshops at Swan Hill College with students using VR gaming headsets to meet theatre artists in an online virtual rehearsal room.

In 2024, we reached 166 students through 10 workshops, delivering topics in person and online.

‘We are very grateful for the opportunity to connect with MTC despite our distance (600km) from Melbourne, and that we were able to access it for free. MTC are always thinking of ways to connect to regional areas in their educational programs through performances and teacher training.’

TEACHER, MILDURA

IGNITE is supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty and The Gailey Lazarus Foundation

The Gailey Lazarus Foundation



Students participating in a workshop in the Lawler Theatre. Photo: Nick Tranter.

VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Since 2021, Melbourne Theatre Company has partnered with the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS) to deliver a semester-long course for 20 Year 11 Theatre Arts students that complements and enhances the study of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies.

The 2024 course was led by Sarah Fitzgerald (*SLAP. BANG. KISS.*) and Melbourne Theatre Company Education Coordinator Brodi Purtill.

Guest artists included actors, directors, designers and other creatives from Melbourne Theatre Company productions, many of whom also teach at the Victorian College of the Arts.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL VICTORIA

Melbourne Theatre Company has been working with Virtual School Victoria, the key provider of distance education statewide, since 2017 to deliver an innovative Year 8 Drama course over terms three and four. In 2024, over 100 students worked with guest artists such as playwright Madelaine Nunn, director Morgan Rose and designer Justin Gardam to create an original online performance *In & Out of Worlds*.

WESTERN PORT SECONDARY COLLEGE

In 2024, we began a new partnership with Western Port Secondary College providing disadvantaged students access to professional theatre, many for the first time. A cross-year cohort of students viewed *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* on MTC Digital Theatre and participated in drama workshops using the resources in the Education Hub. In 2025, the program will include Rosebud Secondary College, with students from both schools attending our shows at Southbank Theatre and Arts Centre Melbourne.



Read more about our partnership with VCASS
mtc.com.au/vcass-report →

Read more about our partnership with Virtual School Victoria
mtc.com.au/vsv-report →

A partnership with Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School



A partnership with Virtual School Victoria



Partnership with Western Port Secondary School supported by



Engagement programs

Deadly Creatives. Photo: Sapphic Flicks.



Our engagement programs are tailored opportunities for young people to collaborate with their peers in performing arts activities, enrich their study, and overcome barriers to their participation.

DEADLY CREATIVES

Deadly Creatives is a bespoke, multi-year creative learning and professional development program. It has been designed specifically to provide emerging First Nations artists with the skills, support, experience, networks and professional ongoing employment needed to build sustainable arts careers.

In 2024, Deadly Creatives transitioned from volunteer participants to paid creative artists, developing two scripts for performance: *Peggy Sue* by Amelia Jean O’Leary and Emma Salmon, and *Wiran’s Dream* by Brodie Murray. Deadly Creatives will present these plays in a double bill at Southbank Theatre, The Lawler as part of YIRRAMBOI First Nations arts festival in May 2025.

Ella Clarke-King participated in a mentorship offered by First Nations video production company Sapphic Flicks, and Emma Salmon undertook a secondment with lighting, set and sound designers for Ilbijerri Theatre Company’s *Blak In The Room* season of plays at Southbank Theatre.

Ella and Emma participated in dramaturgy and creative development workshops in December with established First Nations theatre makers such as Kamarra Bell-Wykes (Assistant Director, 37).



Watch a trailer for Deadly Creatives

mtc.com.au/deadly-creatives-trailer →

Deadly Creatives is supported by



YIRRAMBOI
WILIN.

Participants of the *Dramaturgy – I get it now!* workshop with instructor Mark Wilson (centre). Photo: Emily Doyle.



TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As part of the national tour of *SLAP. BANG. KISS.*, Tour Manager Bernard Sam ran a professional development workshop for teachers in Wagga Wagga. Teachers investigated a script excerpt from the play and participated in activities that mirror the rehearsal process at Melbourne Theatre Company.

In December, we offered a teacher professional development workshop, *Dramaturgy – I get it now!* with Mark Wilson, as part of the 2024 Drama Victoria Conference at the University of Melbourne. 31 teachers from across Victoria participated in the workshop and were thrilled to gain new creative techniques and methods to engage their students in more dynamic and expressive ways.

WORK EXPERIENCE

We hosted 18 students for in-person high school work experience in 2024.

Our work experience placements offer high school students the opportunity to shadow the stage management team to see how a professional rehearsal room operates. A typical week includes attending production meetings, notating blocking, sourcing props and assisting the stage manager as required.

‘I loved the practical application of skills and exploring ways to bring it into the classroom. It was good to look closely at the script and deconstruct it. It will help me block scenes for school shows.’

TEACHER, WAGGA WAGGA

Work Experience is supported by the Education Giving Circle

Engagement programs



Youth Ambassadors. Photo: Emily Doyle.

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

In this yearlong program, a select group of Year 11 students from across Victoria develop their theatre skills through attending productions and in-person seminars with artists and staff such as Set and Costume Designer Kat Chan (*English*), Stage Manager Jess Keepence (*Topdog/Underdog*), Lighting Designer Harrie Hogan (*World Problems*), Technical Manager Allan Hiron and Melbourne Theatre Company Artistic Director Anne-Louise Sarkis.

The 16 Youth Ambassadors included students travelling from Ballarat, Wangaratta and Warrnambool, nine students from government schools, six students from regional or outer metropolitan schools, three students from disadvantaged schools, two students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and two students who identify as having a disability.

‘I always look forward to the upcoming meetings, especially the performance and the opportunity to meet with industry creatives beforehand and learn how they are involved in the creation of the play.’
AMELIE, YOUTH AMBASSADORR

‘The Youth Ambassadors program has shown me how diverse working in the arts can be. All the guest speakers have demonstrated to me how many minds and creative collaborations are needed to produce a show and how there is no set path into the industry.’

TOM, YOUTH AMBASSADOR

Youth Ambassadors are supported by the Education Giving Circle.



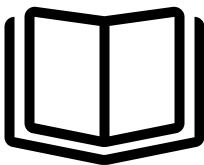
Youth Scholarship Course Performance. Photo: Tiffany Garvie.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE

Targeted for young people aged 14–16 years with limited access to the arts, the course enables participants to develop their creative skills and work collaboratively with like-minded peers. Teaching Artists Katrina Cornwell and Morgan Rose, with Wellbeing Artist Sarah Hosford and Associate Teaching Artist Sarah Fitzgerald (*SLAP. BANG. KISS.*) facilitated the program. Guest artists included Set & Costume Designer Dann Barber (*World Problems*), Voice & Text Coach Matt Furlani and Choreographer Amelia Jean O’Leary (*World Problems*).

In May 2024 we also ran our inaugural ‘second act’ of the course for the 2023 participants. This reunion event included a tour of our production headquarters, a drama workshop and a performance of *World Problems* at Southbank Theatre. Dinner was provided and the students from regional Victoria were provided accommodation thanks to our partners at Quest Southbank.

‘A massive thank you to the education team for the program you provided this week. I can honestly say I have not seen our child this happy. Today’s performance was amazing. So deeply touching and reflective. It was so lovely to see these kids that I’ve heard so much about, up there together. The connections our child has made and their self-growth/belief are definitely the biggest wins.’
PARENT OF YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE PARTICIPANT



Read more about the impact of the Youth Scholarship Course
mtc.com.au/youth-scholarship-report →

‘The experience was great, the people were all so kind, talented and supportive. The team was great at making everyone feel comfortable throughout the week. I’m really looking forward to the reunion next year.’

GABBY, YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE PARTICIPANT

Youth Scholarship Course is supported by the Newsboys Foundation and Accommodation Partner Quest Southbank

NEWSBOYS
FOUNDATION

QUEST
SOUTHBANK

2025 events

THE ROBOT DOG DONOR NIGHT

TUE 18 MAR 2025

YOUTH AMBASSADOR DONOR NIGHT

TUE 9 SEP 2025

YOUNG ARTISTS WEEK

29 SEP—3 OCT 2025

(PRESENTATION 3 OCT)



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mtc.com.au/discover-more/education

PHOTO CREDITS

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