

ST
MARTINS
YOUTH
ARTS
CENTRE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**St Martins acknowledges the
Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands
on which we work, gather and create.**

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

**We embrace listening, learning and collaborating with all
First Nations people.**

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INVESTING, EMBOLDENING, EVOLVING

COMPANY MISSION

St Martins invests in artists and new ideas to create bold, collaborative works with children. We devise high-quality performances, deliver inspiring workshops for young people, and provide spaces that foster creativity for participants, presenters, and audiences.

We champion young voices and play a vital role in Australia's arts sector by training and supporting emerging artists. Our programs shape future audiences and inspire creative thinkers, leaders and innovators across all fields. This commitment runs through our three platforms:

ARTWORKS

Daring collaborations between young people and professional artists for multigenerational audiences.

WORKSHOPS

Creative programs for children and young people across Melbourne, offering safe, inclusive spaces to imagine, grow and perform.

VENUES

A sustainable hub for independent arts performances and community gatherings.

Our creative process explores new narratives and forms, guided by young people and exceptional artists. We strive to be excellent, socially engaged, and inclusive, in all we do.

ARTISTIC MISSION

St Martins creates bold, contemporary artworks with young people alongside some of the nation's leading theatre artists. Together we explore complex ideas and urgent questions, making performances that speak to audiences of all ages.

St Martins is known as one of Australia's most distinctive youth arts organisations. Our productions have received 17 Green Room Award nominations with five wins, alongside Melbourne Fringe and Darwin Fringe accolades.

Our methodology brings together young people (5-18 years old) with professional artists in deep, collaborative processes, producing bold, inclusive, multigenerational works; emotionally truthful theatre, cross-artform works and participatory experiences.

Through our EMBOLDEN program, we create career pathways for 18+ artists. We are always refining our approach to push artistic boundaries and continue to strengthen our reputation as a consultative, joyful partner with diverse organisations.

We seek to set new benchmarks for original works and invite wider audiences into the poignant worlds imagined by young people



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

After many years as Chair of St Martins, it is now time to bid a fond farewell as I hand over the baton to Fiona Symonds. This will therefore be my final annual report and as such I ask for your indulgence as I reflect on my time at St Martins.

BEGINNINGS

I joined St Martins as a director at a time of when there was turmoil at the leadership level including confusion about the appropriate strategic direction for the company. This could have proved disastrous for the future of the company. Fortunately for us and the long term sustainability of St Martins, Arts Victoria (the previous iteration of Creative Victoria) appointed Christopher Bell, leader extraordinaire, to take over the helm as Chair of the Board.

Christopher was the rock we needed to start building the foundations of St Martins again. Under his leadership we re-imagined St Martins, completely changed the relationship between Board and Management, implemented a new management structure and in 2013 created a high-risk artistic strategy to create professional works for adults using the talents of children and teenagers.

In 2016 I was asked to take over from Christopher as Chair. One of my first accomplishments was the recruitment of Nadja Kostich as Artistic Director of St Martins. Nadja immediately set about taking the foundations of our new artistic vision and embedding it into the heart and soul of St Martins.

Artistic Accomplishments

It is important to reflect on just how great St Martins' artistic accomplishments have been since the Board initiated the 2013 high-risk strategic artistic vision given that at least between 2009 to 2013 St Martins' artistic output had been negligible. Set out below are some of the highlights literally for show:

- St Martins and Fraught Outfit production of *The Bacchae*, nominated for six Green Room awards, as well as touring to Tasmania to be part of Dark MOFO;
- Highly successful production of *Gonzo* at the Malthouse;
- Successful tour of *Fitter. Faster. Better* to the Darwin Festival and the Commonwealth Games;
- Nadja's debut production – *For the Ones Who Walk Away* – Melbourne Fringe Festival Award for Best Live Art and the 2019 Green Room Award for Design;
- St Martins/the RABBLE production of *Lone*, critically acclaimed and sold out at the Arthouse and also had considerable interest from interstate festivals to tour;
- *Balit Liwurruk: Strong Girl* in partnership with Worawa Aboriginal College – personally one of my favourites – deservedly garnered six Green Room nominations, receiving two awards for Ensemble and Direction;

- *Us*, showcased during COVID as an online production performed live online each night from the homes of performers;
- *Gene Tree. Listen. Now. Again* in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, won Green Rooms awards for Independent Theatre Best Sound/Composition and Independent Theatre Best Production as well as a nomination for Best Ensemble. In 2025 Gene Tree toured to Darwin in partnership with Corrugated Iron where it won the Darwin Fringe Award for Excellence in Community Arts.

Operational Accomplishments

Since 2016 the Board has worked tirelessly to cement the business of St Martins. We recognised that St Martins ran three businesses: Artistic/Creative Productions, Workshops and Venue. As a Board we are fortunate that through Nadja's leadership and the current St Martins team, we have been able to work well and strategically to consider and grow all three areas of the business.

TIME TO STEP DOWN

When I became a director at St Martins I had a tentative appreciation for the work it did. Over the years, St Martins has embedded itself into my heart as it has grown to become the icon it should be within the youth arts landscape. I have seen how an organisation through the inspiring leadership of Christopher Bell and then Nadja Kostich can create a jewel when we reach for art that inspires imagination free from ideologues with their constrained ideologies. It is now time to step down and hand the baton over to the new Board leadership at St Martins. I know that Fiona Symonds as Chair and Kudzai Mhishi as Deputy have the skills, experience and imagination to take St Martins to the next level.

Thank You

All there is left for me to do now is thank those whose support has made my time at St Martins memorable, delightful and rewarding:

- Thank you Steve Bradby, Deputy Chair, who literally held my hand through the Chair journey with his measured advice and observations, thus curtailing the more emotional side of my nature;
- Thank you Fiona, Kudz and Arjun Ravi for the great perspectives and contribution you bring to the Board, your continued support and loyalty;
- Thanks to Nadja. It has been an absolute privilege working with you and observing your growth in stature and leadership;
- Thanks to Thomas Caldwell for jumping into the General Manager and then Executive Director role with such aplomb thus stabilising and growing positively the operational side of St Martins;
- To the team at St Martins with whom I have worked closely – Julie Blyth, Hayley Haynes and Agnieszka Majer – you are amazingly strong, resilient and phenomenal in what you have achieved with little resources. It has been a pleasure working with you.

Now, onwards and upwards!

Elise Margow

EXECUTIVE REPORT

2025 was a year of ambition and momentum.

Our workshops and performances reached deeper into communities, removing barriers to participation and our spaces continued to nurture independent emerging and established artists.

We delivered major work across our programs and launched exciting new initiatives.

Our productions of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* in Darwin, EMBOLDEN's *the weather app, on my phone, at a party* and *Speed Dating with Cacti*, led by Mammalian Diving Reflex, were met with outstanding responses from audiences, partners and participants alike, affirming the strength of our artistic vision, the depth of our collaborations, and the calibre of the artists, young people and teams who bring our work to life.

Behind the scenes, 2025 was a year of enormous dedication. Our staff worked with extraordinary care, energy and resilience to meet demanding timelines while upholding the values and quality St Martins is known for. Alongside artistic delivery, we navigated complex conversations about sustainability, from budgeting and future planning to venues, workshop programs and staff wellbeing, all with an eye to ensuring St Martins remains strong and welcoming for years to come. We welcomed Thomas Caldwell as Executive Director and Hayley Haynes as General Manager – Development. Both have been doing a stellar job on behalf of the company. We also farewelled Artistic Associate, Alice Qin and welcomed İbrahim Halaçoğlu into the role.

We made important strides in governance and resourcing. The Board undertook a significant recruitment process at the end of the year, and we are pleased to welcome new members whose expertise will continue to strengthen the organisation. A huge thank you and farewell to our Chair and Deputy, Elise Margow and Steve Bradby, for your generous and longstanding contributions to St Martins. You have left an indelible positive mark on the company.

Throughout the year we submitted multiple grant applications, including a major four-year Creative Victoria application, and thanks to the generosity of our community, delivered a hugely successful Giving Day, that meaningfully expanded St Martins' reach and visibility.

After years of strengthening our team, expanding capacity, and refining our business model, we're moving forward with confidence.

We want to extend our deepest thanks to the families and young people who place their trust in us, our wider community, our incredible staff and artists, and our committed Board. We are also profoundly grateful to our funders and donors, your belief in our work with young people makes it possible.

We forge forward with optimism and purpose; developing our new work *School of War*, launching the second year of EMBOLDEN, and refining our workshops program and venues to ensure they are inspiring, sustainable spaces for children and artists alike.

We invite young participants, artists, partners, supporters, funders, hirers, and audiences to join us as we continue to elevate our artmaking, integrate First Peoples artists and children, and forge interstate and international collaborations.

Together, we're creating a connected, thriving arts sector that celebrates young voices and creativity.

Nadja Kostich
CEO and Artistic Director

and

Thomas Caldwell
Executive Director





ST MARTINS PEOPLE

St Martins acknowledges its bold, talented, dedicated team and thanks all of them for their contribution to the company.

OUR BOARD

Elise Margow – Chairperson
Steve Bradby – Deputy chairperson
Arjun Ravi
Kudzai Mhishi
Fiona Symonds

OUR CORE STAFF

Nadja Kostich – Artistic Director and CEO
Thomas Caldwell – Executive Director
Hayley Haynes – General Manager - Development
Julie Blyth – Venue and Operations Manager
Alice Qin – Artistic Associate (outgoing Sept 2025)
İbrahim Halaçoğlu – Artistic Associate (incoming Sept 2025)
Shayne Cummin – Presenter Services Coordinator
Agnieszka Majer – Workshops and Marketing Coordinator
Aida Innocente – Finance Officer

OUR WORKSHOP ARTISTS

Ahmarnya Price	Harriet Devlin
Alice Ridgway	Kate Cameron
Alonso Pineda	Katrina Cornwell
Amelia Ducker	Leslie McDonald
An Dang	Loukia Vassiliades
Ben Goss	Lyndsay Marsden
Brenna Ternus	Maeve Hook
Brooke Murray	Nicolette Forte
Carol Smith	Sarah Fitzgerald
Cassandra Fumi	Sophia Derkenne
Daniel Newell	Tsungirai Wachenuka
Desiree Katakis	Zadie McCracken

VENUE STAFF

Alexander Woollard
Bonnie Blewitt
Ellen Perriment
Ish Ryden
James Dipnall
Merryn Chenoweth
Phoebe Greaves
Tamasin Mummery
Tyson Butler

INTERNS

Erin Quonoey & Miyuki Aoki

OUR COLLABORATORS

We also wish to acknowledge all the artists and contractors we have collaborated with to help deliver our creative productions, workshops and venue operations:

Amy Zhao	Isabella Vadiveloo	Lydia Kuelsen
Appiah Kojo Annan	J David Franzke	Mathew McHugh
Bakri Mahmoud	Jack Willis-Hall	Nadine Lee
Celina Mack	Jackson Reid	Romana Paulson
Daniel Nixon	James Gillot	Sally Crawford
Darren Gill	Jeremy Angerson	Sarah Iman
Elissa Goodrich	Kellie-Anne Kimber	Shane Grant
Emily Barrie	Kris Chainey	Tariro Mavondo
Finn Williams	Lara Week	Tom Holloway
Grace Annan	Lucy Buckley	Xasha Chua-Huggins





PARTNERSHIPS & SUPPORTERS

Throughout the year, we strengthened existing relationships and cultivated new partnerships that deepen the impact of our work.

We began new two-year funding partnerships with Creative Australia and the Department of Education (Victoria) and concluded a four-year funding partnership with Creative Victoria, who at the end of 2025 committed to another two years of funding. We also continued to work with the Melbourne, Stonnington, Greater Dandenong and Darebin city councils.

We increased our philanthropic funding (from foundations and individual giving) by 15.8% from the previous year. We welcomed the ongoing support from the Gailey Lazarus Foundation, Thyne Reid Foundation, Alice Sloan Trust, William Angliss Charitable Fund, Community Bank Caulfield Park and ADFSA – Yarra. We are deeply grateful to the Betty Amsden Foundation, whose support enabled us with funding and mentorship from the brilliant Penny Miles to develop our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, providing a strong foundation for the years ahead.

In a significant moment of recognition, the John Truscott Foundation awarded the John Truscott Prize, in collaboration with St Martins, to Tariro Mavondo for her leadership of EMBOLDEN, our emerging artist pathways program. As a cherished St Martins alumna, Tariro guided participants in forming a new ensemble and devising an original theatre work together; a fitting reflection of the creative legacy John Truscott helped establish at Melbourne Little Theatre, now St Martins Youth Arts Centre.

See full list of 2025 Partners and Supporters on page 34



We also welcomed new partner Cybec Foundation to support the delivery of EMBOLDEN, and the Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group as our first Community Partner. Another significant new partnership is with the Vizard Foundation, who are supporting the development of our relationship with Melbourne Indigenous Transition School, an important step in growing our work with First Peoples.

Our individual donors remain vital to this work; this year we combined our annual supporters celebration with Hatched, our annual showcase, creating a meaningful opportunity to connect supporters directly with the work they help make possible.

Our Giving Day campaign was boosted by the Creative Australia-supported production of the short film ALL IN, raising funds to do revitalise our Rehearsal Room in 2026.



ARTWORKS

GENE TREE: LISTEN. NOW. AGAIN

In partnership with Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, St Martins presented our very first concept tour of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* at the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens in the Darwin Fringe Festival, July 2025. This tour was a triumphant collaboration between young people, artists, educators, families and community, deepening our engagement with First Peoples perspectives and place-based storytelling. An extraordinary cast of 70+ young artists from Corrugated Iron's Company C, students from Ludmilla Primary School and the Darwin Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Program, came together to create a large-scale work that received the Darwin Fringe Festival Award for Excellence in Community Art.

Audiences were deeply moved, describing the work as 'magical, beautiful, wondrous' and 'an impactful, stunning work', while praising the extraordinary scale of what was achieved. The project also offered valuable insights as we look towards future touring opportunities, both nationally and internationally.





THE WEATHER APP, ON MY PHONE, AT A PARTY

The weather app, on my phone, at a party explored the isolation, uncertainty and awkward absurdity of transitioning into adulthood, asking the enduring question ‘Does it get any better?’ Quirky, funny and deeply heartfelt, the work explored what we owe each other, what we owe ourselves, and why those things can feel so often in conflict.

Devised by the EMBOLDEN Ensemble at St Martins Youth Arts Centre and presented in partnership with Melbourne Fringe, October 2025, in the Irene Mitchell Studio, this striking original production was created by young people navigating a pivotal moment of change in their lives. Balancing anxiety with joy, comedy with melancholy, it offered an inspiring display of the creativity, courage and imagination of the next generation of theatre-makers, earning a 5-star review in *the Age*.

SCHOOL OF WAR (DEVELOPMENT)

School of War is an ambitious, searching, and deeply collaborative process sparked by a simple but urgent question: ‘How are young people feeling about their future, and the future of the planet?’ When writer Tom Holloway first approached us with this idea, it resonated immediately with the clarity and determination we hear every day from the young people in our workshops. From there, together with Tom and drum master and choreographer Appiah Annan (Artistic Director of Asanti Dance), we explored these ideas with young artists from across our workshops over more than a dozen sessions in 2025. It grew quickly and organically and continues to evolve. At its heart, *School of War* asks what it might take to truly revolutionise how we live together on this planet.

To be presented in early 2027

SPEED DATING WITH CACTI

Our Congress ensemble collaborated with internationally acclaimed company Mammalian Diving Reflex (Toronto–Berlin–Melbourne) on the development of *Speed Dating with Cacti*, exploring bold and unexpected ways of making art and connection. The process gave our young artists, and several younger workshop participants who later joined the cast, valuable insight into the company’s globally recognised approach of using art as ‘social acupuncture’ and transforming everyday encounters into extraordinary performances. The work premiered at Melbourne Fringe, October 2025, in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, delighting audiences and critics alike.

HATCHED:

WHAT’S WORTH FIGHTING FOR?

Hatched is St Martins’ annual showcase of new work created by young artists in collaboration with professional theatre and performance makers. Developed through our workshop program, *Hatched* gives participants the opportunity to take creative risks, explore bold ideas, and bring their unique voices to the stage.

Our 2025 *Hatched*, November 2025, was a joyful celebration of what happens when young people are given space to imagine, experiment and create together. Our Teens and Cross Age Studio workshop participants took to the stage in our Irene Mitchell Studio with a series of bold, funny and thoughtful devised performances, on the theme of ‘What’s worth fighting for?’ This theme linked our workshops program with the development of our next major production, allowing more young people across the company to contribute their voices and ideas.

EMBOLDEN

EMBOLDEN was designed as a professional development program by St Martins to fill a gap in the industry as well as to respond to a need expressed by young aspiring artists aged between 18 and 25. 2025 saw the completion of Year 1 of the three-year program.

Led by Tariro Mavondo, the first iteration of the program had 10 participants who had little to no industry experience and wanted to enhance their craft while gaining experience and skills in other components of devising and producing a show. The program consisted of three skill building and development phases and an additional phase that involved the production and presentation of a new work: the weather app, on my phone, at a party.

The participants were involved and engaged in multiple aspects of theatre making taking on multiple pivotal roles in the project. *The weather app, on my phone, at a party* involved a director, a cowriter and six performers who contributed to at least one other creative component of the work (including writing, dramaturgy, set and costume design, lighting, and sound design).

EMBOLDEN delivered significant artistic and personal outcomes for participating young artists, with the cohort successfully devising and presenting an original work from scratch. Participants reported substantial growth in performance confidence, creative agency, and their ability to articulate boundaries, advocate for themselves, and understand how the professional theatre industry operates. The scale of skill development and the achievement of making new work within a professional context was immense, particularly for artists early in their careers.

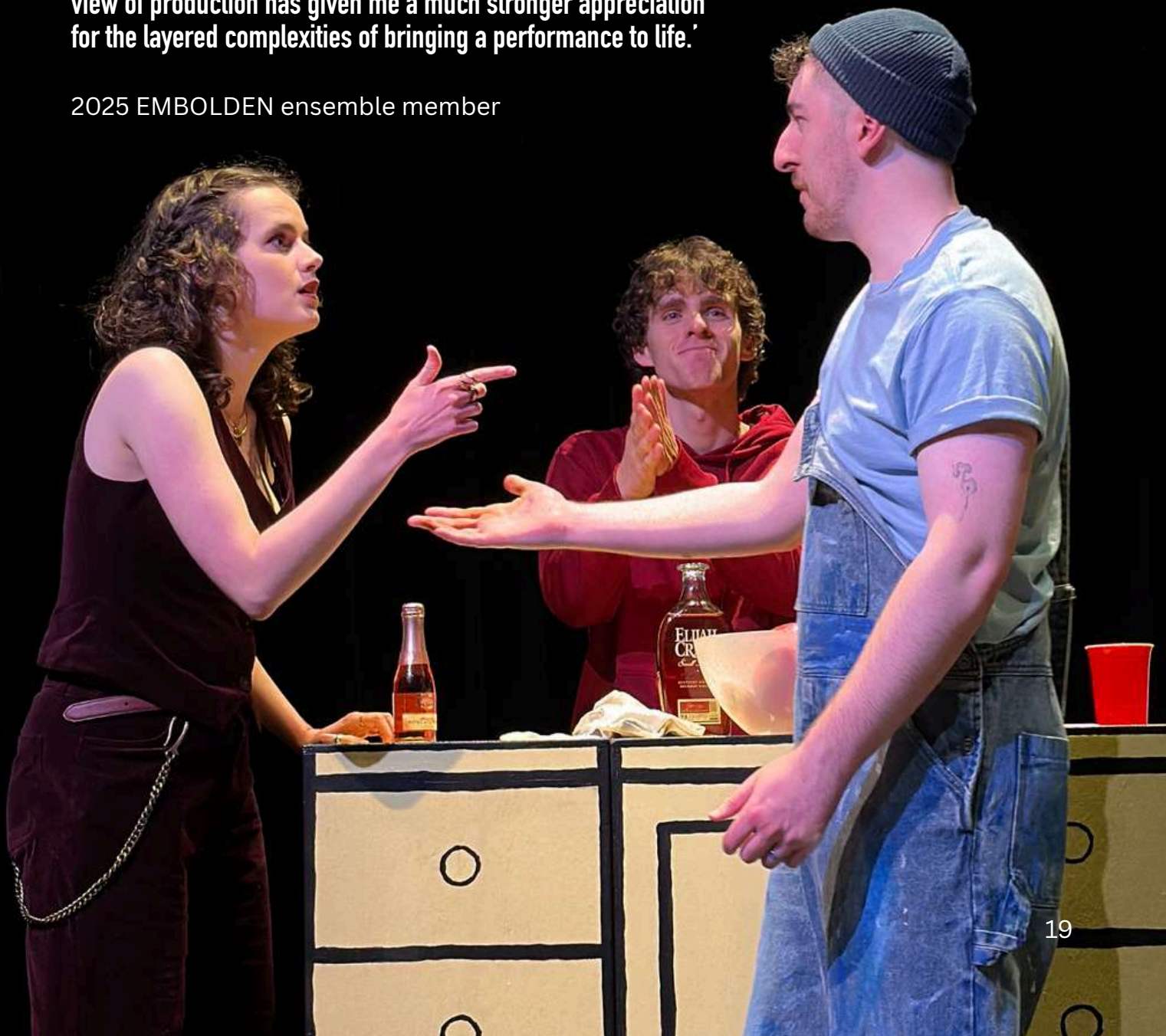


'I am incredibly grateful for the community it has enabled me to form in Melbourne, and for how respectful and accommodating the entire team was. EMBOLDEN provided me with my first experience of a fully safe, judgement-free performing arts environment . . . this process taught me how to make my own choices and how to be adaptable to changes not just in direction/acting choices, but in storylines, themes, and arcs as well.'

2025 EMBOLDEN ensemble member

'The program provided a practical and in-depth understanding of the entire theatre creative cycle. I learned how each phase is strategically directed, starting from the initial stages of brainstorming notions and conceptual ideas all the way through to the detailed, technical aspects, such as refining the lighting presence and overall sensory design. This complete view of production has given me a much stronger appreciation for the layered complexities of bringing a performance to life.'

2025 EMBOLDEN ensemble member





WORKSHOPS

SOUTH YARRA & NORTHCOTE

At St Martins young people don't just learn about theatre, they make it. Our flagship workshop program for young people aged 5–18 continued throughout the school year in 2025 at South Yarra and Northcote High School, bringing together practicing artists and young participants in a unique, energising theatre-making experience. Across each term, young people developed performance skills, creative confidence and a sense of belonging within a vibrant, inclusive community where their ideas genuinely shaped the work.

Devising sits at the heart of everything we do. Rather than working from a script, participants collaboratively created original theatre through scenes, movement, choreography, characters and imagined worlds built from shared ideas and experiences. Our model of two professional artists facilitating each workshop – a lead artist and an artist focused on inclusion – continued to ensure all participants felt supported, valued and able to take creative risks. Across the year, workshops explored the themes *Micro MACRO: Playing with Scale* and *What's Worth Fighting For?* inspiring imaginative and socially engaged creative outcomes.



'At St Martins, I've built connections with new people, making me feel like I belong.'

Teens workshop participant

'I'm grateful for all that St Martins has done for my child. It really has been lifechanging.'

Parent of workshop participant



'My child has had an absolutely brilliant time being involved with St Martins. It has contributed immensely to their confidence, helped them feel more connected to others, and helped them think outside the box.'

Parent of workshop participant

'Last term I was really shy and it was hard for me to work in a team, but this has made me WAY more confident.'

9-12s workshop participant

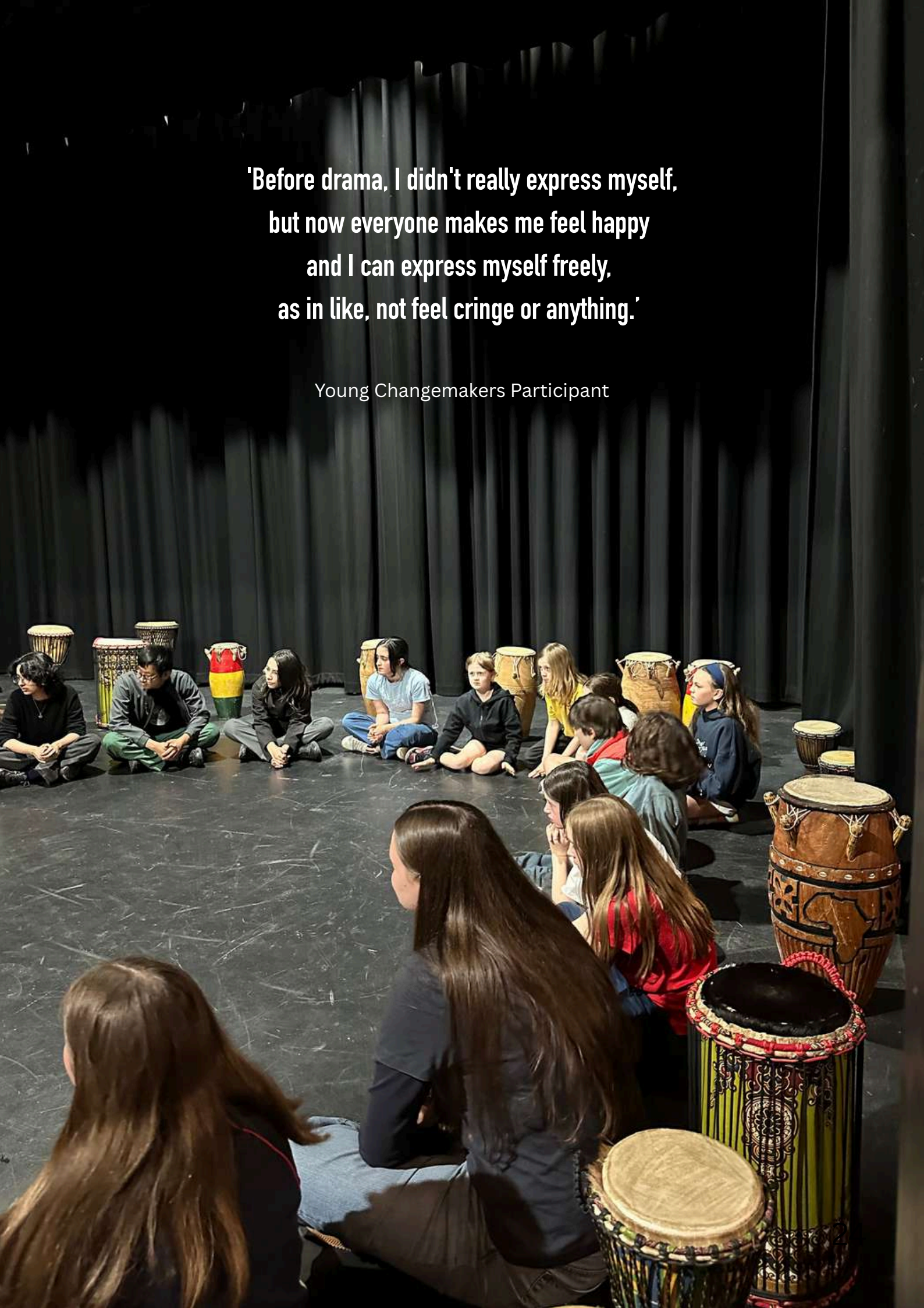


'St Martins has offered my child a chance to be their authentic self and meet other likeminded young people. It has given them a community and a place to have fun and feel safe. We are so thankful for this. It has been wonderful to see them smile again and feel connected to others while developing their skills and talents.'

Parent of workshop participant

**'Before drama, I didn't really express myself,
but now everyone makes me feel happy
and I can express myself freely,
as in like, not feel cringe or anything.'**

Young Changemakers Participant



YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS

Young Changemakers is St Martins' suite of free, inclusive and integrated pathway programs, designed to create long-term opportunities for young people to develop as artists, thinkers and future leaders. It allows young people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with the arts to experience the social, cognitive and cultural benefits that come from creative expression. Delivered across multiple years and sites, the program plays a vital role in strengthening and empowering local communities through creativity, connection and access.

In 2025, Young Changemakers delivered free weekly workshops at Dandenong Primary School, Stevensville Primary School in St Albans and the Horace Petty Estate in Prahran, alongside Congress, St Martins' creative think-tank, performance outcomes throughout the year and the annual showcase, *Hatched*. The consistency and quality of these experiences continued to build participants' self-confidence, creative skills and sense of belonging, while providing a springboard into more ambitious artistic opportunities and performance-making.



DANDENONG PRIMARY SCHOOL

We delivered weekly 2-hour drama workshops to students aged 9-12, most of whom come from migrant and refugee communities. Led by St Martin's workshops artists, the students at Dandenong Primary School devised a performance that they presented at school assembly at the end of term 4. The improvement in skills and confidence was best reflected by a group of students who began the year being incredibly shy and experiencing stage fright even in front of their peers. At the end of the year, they reported now having a sense of belonging that allows them to overcome shyness, and they all felt they had overcome their stage fright to different degrees, which was also evident by them successfully performing at their school assembly to a full hall of all grades plus teachers. As one of those students said: 'Before drama, I didn't really express myself, but now everyone makes me feel happy and I can express myself freely, as in like, not feel cringe or anything.'

STEVENSVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

For our second year at Stevensville Primary School, where we also delivered weekly 2-hours workshops, our workshop artists continued to note an increase of confidence among the students as they were much more willing to perform for each other and try out different modes of self-expression. During the end-of-year feedback session, students expressed how they initially felt they could not perform or act, and that when they tried the results were 'bad'. However, due to the workshops they were able to see that their performances had improved, with many students feeling that they had learned new creative expression skills. Students then spoke about being able to act, which they had not been able to do before. Workshops artists confirmed that there was meaningful improvement among the students and encouraged the students to recognise what they had learned and achieved.





THE HUB at the HORACE PETTY ESTATE

This aspect of our Young Changemakers program is specifically tailored for socioeconomically disadvantaged children aged 5-15 living at Horace Petty Estate, who face some of the most difficult barriers to participating in the arts and are frequently challenging to engage. As well as the weekly two-hour workshops we deliver annually, 2025 ended with an end-of-year performance outcome titled *Game Over*, which the children presented to their families on site at the estate. It was a wonderful end to the year where we have seen attendance and regularity of participating children grow, and an increase in active listening and engagement. Many children were, for the first time, able to express themselves creatively, which generated a lot of pride and excitement from their families and friends.

CONGRESS

Throughout the year we ran our weekly free creative think tank for young people from all our workshops, who are invited to develop ideas to investigate, deepen and create St Martin's' major artistic outcomes. In 2025 the Congress ensemble worked with the world-renowned international company Mammalian Diving Reflex, who present at festivals around the world, to make *Speed Dating with Cacti*, an interactive work presented by Melbourne Fringe and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. This was a terrific experience for our young people to collaborate with and learn from new artists, work with new ideas and rise to new challenges.

INCLUSION & ACCESS

At St Martins, we are committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, ability or circumstance, can access and participate fully in our programs. Through affordable access and considered support, we continue to remove barriers to participation for young people, artists and audiences.

In 2025, St Martins delivered over 500 workshops through Young Changemakers, Congress and our weekly drama programs across South Yarra and Northcote, supporting young people to build confidence, creativity and connection. We engaged 9,850 audience members through performances in our venues and beyond, while our spaces enabled 16,688 venue activations for artists, makers and producers to create and share new work. Across our programs, productions and venues, we also generated 1,786 employment opportunities for artists and arts workers.

Increasing equitable access remained a key priority. We provided 22 access scholarships, ensuring more young people could participate in workshops, and continued to deliver free Young Changemakers programs for children facing barriers at the Prahran Housing Estate, Dandenong Primary School and Stevensville Primary School. We also supported 30+ mentorship opportunities through EMBOLDEN, internships, work experience and venue training.

Accessibility also remained central to our work through Auslan interpreted performances of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* and *the weather app, on my phone, at a party*, alongside low sensory performances and Pay As You Can ticketing across all performances. We strengthened our organisational capacity through trauma-informed training for staff and artists, improved our Venue Access Guides, and raised \$13,500 towards venue upgrades to improve rehearsal room acoustics for neurodivergent participants and hearing-impaired members of our community.



VENUE

In 2025 St Martins continues to thrive as a cultural hub for our community, with our venues alive year-round through a rich diversity of activity; from sword skills to ballet, Pilates to belly dancing, opera and comedy. We provided new opportunities for paid work for production staff by expanding our team of casual front of house staff and theatre technician contractors.

In the Irene Mitchell Studio, we welcomed an exciting mix of returning residents and independent artists, including Asanti Dance Theatre, Bluefire Belly, Lyster Opera, Melbourne Girls Grammar, Miss Ginger's Dance School, Showfit, Stage School Australia and Virtual School Victoria. During the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the Irene Mitchell Studio hosted the International Comedy Club Taipei, presenting work in Taiwanese and bringing new audiences through our doors.

Regular hirers and independent theatre makers continued to animate our spaces with bold and varied practice. JMC Academy brought a vibrant suite of musical theatre works to the stage, while we were delighted to welcome back Threadbare, an independent work by Tomas Parrish-Chynoweth previously presented in development at St Martins featuring our very own workshop artist Sarah Fitzgerald.

Planet 21 shared a joyous celebration of creativity and self-expression by dancers with Down Syndrome, 23rd Theatre Company presented a 'perfect' crime with Rope and the collaborative and experimental group Dog Rose Theatre Company presented their new work, Morning.

This year we also farewelled the extraordinary Miss Penelope of South Yarra Ballet School and acknowledge her longstanding contribution to the life of our precinct.

Looking ahead, we launched a campaign to upgrade our Rehearsal Room, to improve acoustics, lighting control and flexibility to better equip the space for creative and community needs. We are looking forward to commencing work in 2026.





MARKETING

We continued to grow and diversify our multigenerational audiences through targeted marketing campaigns, our fortnightly e-newsletters, and ongoing engagement across social media platforms, strengthening connections with both existing and emerging communities.

The launch of the first year of EMBOLDEN prompted us to expand our communications strategy and deepen our reach with 18–25-year-old audiences. This broadened approach not only increased our organisational capacity but also created meaningful opportunities for mentoring, professional development and skills-building for young creatives. The visibility generated through the program also translated into strong engagement, with a number of young people inspired to apply for EMBOLDEN 2026.

Throughout the year, we continued to refine and strengthen our suite of marketing and storytelling assets, enabling us to communicate the impact of our work with greater clarity, consistency and reach. This included the production of a beautiful documentary film capturing *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* in Darwin, creating a lasting record of the project's artistic and community impact while providing valuable content for future advocacy, promotion and fundraising.

As part of our ALL IN fundraising campaign for AusArts Day, supported by Creative Australia, we produced a playful and engaging campaign video featuring young people from our workshop programs. Showcasing the energy, creativity and sense of belonging that define St Martins, the video successfully supported the campaign while also creating a versatile promotional asset that can continue to champion the organisation, its programs and its young artists into the future.





PIGGY
BANK
TRICKERY



CLEO

8

PASCAL

2

FINANCIALS

The operating surplus of the company was 52% higher than it was in 2024, representing a continuation of St Martins' financial recovery, closing the year with a positive net asset position having fully absorbed the accumulated deficit that arose in 2023.

Total revenue grew by 10%, driven principally by a significant increase in federal government funding. State government support remained stable and local council grants grew modestly. Philanthropic income performed strongly, with trust income rising by 17% and personal donations also growing. This reflects the continued effectiveness of St Martins' fundraising relationships.

Strategies to promote and improve efficiencies in the Workshops Program remain a management priority for 2026. Venue rental income was broadly in line with the prior year, maintaining the strong growth achieved following the refurbishment of the Irene Mitchell Theatre in 2023.

Total expenses increased by 9%, broadly consistent with the growth in revenue. While the recovery of St Martins' balance sheet is a significant milestone, past government support cannot be assumed into the future and our strategy to grow philanthropic, corporate, and non-government revenue streams remains central to long-term financial sustainability.



**STATEMENT OF SURPLUS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2025**

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
REVENUE			
Grant income :			
Government	2 & 11	606,394	500,022
Philanthropic trusts		189,252	161,750
Private donations		26,883	24,924
Total grant and donation income		<u>822,529</u>	<u>686,696</u>
Other income	2	430,182	445,144
Maintenance Subsidy - Creative Victoria		3,545	2,997
Total revenue		<u>1,256,256</u>	<u>1,134,837</u>
EXPENSES			
Administration	3 & 7	682,154	589,228
Production		450,789	424,287
Marketing and sponsorship		21,647	29,911
Venue		60,808	64,001
Maintenance		3,545	2,997
Total expenses		<u>1,218,943</u>	<u>1,110,424</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>37,313</u>	<u>24,413</u>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u>37,313</u>	<u>24,413</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the members of the entity		<u>37,313</u>	<u>24,413</u>

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	419,279	413,112
Accounts receivable and other debtors	5	2,856	52,270
Other current assets	6	26,387	23,687
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>448,522</u>	<u>489,069</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	131,687	151,931
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>131,687</u>	<u>151,931</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>580,209</u>	<u>641,000</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable and other payable	8	67,781	74,215
Employee provisions	9	55,110	59,647
Contract liabilities : income in advance	10	314,263	383,062
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>437,154</u>	<u>516,924</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Capital grants	11	108,473	126,807
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>108,473</u>	<u>126,807</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>545,627</u>	<u>643,731</u>
NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)		<u>34,582</u>	<u>(2,731)</u>
EQUITY			
Retained surplus (Accumulated losses)		34,582	(2,731)
TOTAL EQUITY (DEFICIT)		<u>34,582</u>	<u>(2,731)</u>

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025**

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
		Note
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Commonwealth, State and local government grants	611,373	577,231
Receipts from donations and bequests	216,135	186,674
Receipts from earned artist income, venue hire, merchandise sales and other income	455,654	531,109
Interest received	24	109
Payments to suppliers and employees	<u>(1,273,920)</u>	<u>(1,161,162)</u>
Net cash generated from operating activities	<u>9,266</u>	<u>133,961</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payment for plant and equipment	<u>(3,099)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(3,099)</u>	<u>-</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net increase in cash held	6,167	133,961
Cash on hand at beginning of the financial year	413,112	279,151
Cash on hand at end of the financial year	<u>419,279</u>	<u>413,112</u>

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025**

	Retained surplus	Total
	\$	\$
Balance (deficit) as at 1st January 2024	(27,144)	(27,144)
Surplus for the year attributable to the members of the entity	24,413	24,413
Balance (deficit) as at 31st December 2024	<u>(2,731)</u>	<u>(2,731)</u>
Surplus for the year attributable to the members of the entity	37,313	37,313
Balance as at 31st December 2025	<u>34,582</u>	<u>34,582</u>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St Martins is proud to work alongside a dedicated community of supporters and partners who make our work possible. We thank and celebrate the generosity of our community, trusts & foundations, government and presenting partners.

COMMUNITY

Visionaries

Michael Kantor

Transformers

Fiona Symonds, George Morstyn,
Janet Whiting AM & Phillip Lukies, Lynne Haultain,
Michael Butcher, Simon Bedford, Anonymous

Makers

Alison Richards, Elise Margow,
Grant & Helen Caldwell, James Henry
Syme, June Wilson,
Steven Bradby, Anonymous

Adventurers

Ann Fuller, David Chong, David Muir, Ellen Williamson,
Freda Erlich, Lauren Zoric, Meaghan Bare, Paul McSweeney,
Rhiannon Tate, Rod Jacobs, Simon Abrahams, Virginia
Bonollo, Anonymous (2)

Champions

Alan Pearce, Alexander Reichenfeld, Alix McManus, Ben Ruse, Cat Sewell, Elizabeth White,
Emilie Collyer, Fay Bock, Fionna Oliver-Taylor, Jeremy Angerson, Jo Roberts, John Russo,
Karen Meehan, Karin McLean, Kim Durban, Luca Benes, Myfanwy Clark, Nicholas Crowe,
Phoebe Bond, Rachel Burke, Rinske Ginsberg, Robyn Harper, Roslyn Varley, Ruth Caldwell,
Stephanie Neuman, Tom Gutteridge, Tomasz Woźniak, Valeri Mayer, Valerie Wilson,
Vanessa Petrie, Anonymous (5)

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Foundation

JOHN TRUSCOTT
FOUNDATION

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Vizard
FOUNDATION

THE WILLIAM ANGLISE
CHARITABLE FUND

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Foundation

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FOUNDATION

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FESTIVAL

DARWIN
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group



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