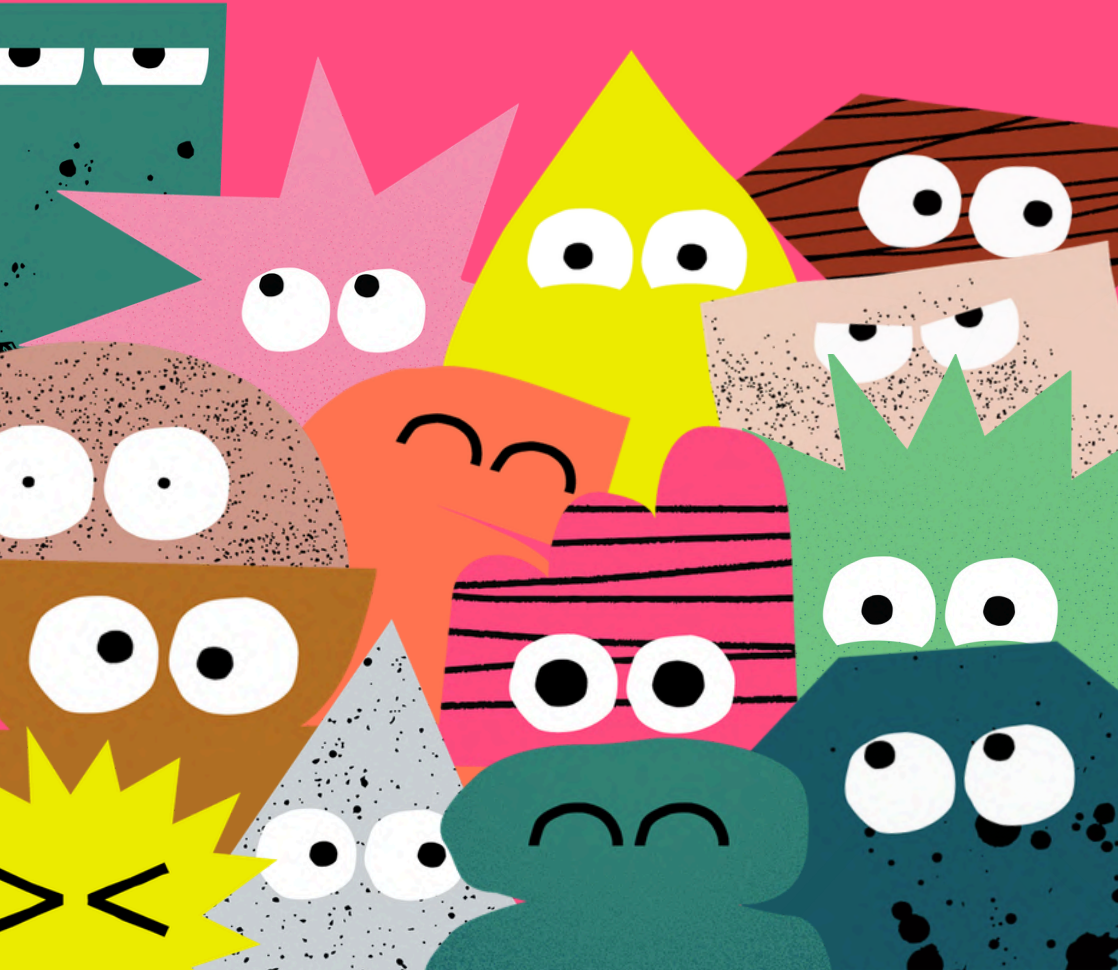


# monkey baa

Annual Report  
2025



# Acknowledgement of Country

Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the custodians of this nation and honours their enduring cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose lands we work, live and share stories.

Monkey Baa tours across many nations. Our offices are in Sydney and Brisbane. We respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Turrbal and Jagera people in Brisbane and its surrounds.

The arts, it has been said,  
cannot change the world,  
but they may change  
human beings who might  
change the world.  
— Maxine Greene

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# Hello!

## Message from the Chair

Monkey Baa Theatre Company continues to demonstrate the power of theatre created specifically for young people.

The artistic achievements of 2025 have been remarkable. Productions such as *Josephine Wants to Dance* and *Yong* continued to connect deeply with audiences across the country. The premiere season of *Where is the Green Sheep?* introduced the youngest theatre audiences to the joy of live performance and reminded us how powerful early creative experiences can be.

These works demonstrate the unique role Monkey Baa plays within the cultural life of Australia. The company creates theatre that respects the intelligence of young people, celebrates imagination and ensures that geography does not determine access to the arts.

The Board has worked closely with the leadership team to strengthen the foundations of the company while supporting a clear long term direction.

Strong governance, thoughtful planning and disciplined growth remain central to how Monkey Baa approaches the future. This year also marked an important step in strengthening our community of supporters.

We welcomed the founding members of two new donor circles: the Brisbane Memory Makers and the Theatre Unlimited Donor Circle. These individuals share a belief that theatre can create lasting memories and meaningful impact in the lives of young people.

On behalf of the Board, I extend sincere thanks to the artists, staff, partners, donors and supporters who make this work possible. Their dedication ensures that Monkey Baa continues to grow as both a cultural organisation and a force for positive impact in the lives of young people.



**Professor Judith McLean**  
Chair of the Board

# From the Executive Director

2025 has been a year of consolidation and preparation for Monkey Baa.

As the organisation continues to expand its cultural and social impact, the focus this year has been on strengthening internal systems, refining our strategic direction and ensuring the company is well positioned for the years ahead.

Across the country, our productions reached more than 53,000 young people. For many, this was their first experience of live theatre. Each performance represents a moment where imagination is sparked, confidence grows and a connection with storytelling begins. Expanding access to these experiences remains a central priority.

Through Theatre Unlimited, Monkey Baa continued to deepen partnerships with charities, schools and community organisations. These collaborations enabled the company to provide free tickets, transport support and targeted access initiatives for young people who might otherwise never enter a theatre.

Operating without a permanent theatre space required the company to rethink how touring and production are supported. Establishing a warehouse facility in Western Sydney has strengthened our touring capacity and provided a central home for sets and technical resources.

At the same time, relocating our office to the Arts Exchange in The Rocks has connected Monkey Baa with a vibrant community of arts organisations and created new opportunities for collaboration. Alongside these operational changes, the organisation continued developing its impact framework. Strengthening how Monkey Baa measures access, participation and audience experience is helping the company better understand the outcomes of its work and communicate its value more clearly.

The continued growth of Monkey Baa is made possible through the dedication of many people.

I extend sincere thanks to our artists, staff, board members, presenters, donors and partners across Australia. Their commitment ensures that theatre remains a vital part of young people's lives and that creative experiences are shared as widely as possible.



**Kevin du Preez**  
Executive Director

# From the Artistic Director

This year affirmed a simple truth for me: theatre has the power to travel across time, place, and generations.

We were proud to remount and tour two powerful works from our repertoire: *Josephine Wants to Dance* and *Yong*. Returning to these productions reminded us why they remain such vital parts of our artistic story.

Our tour of *Josephine Wants to Dance* once again filled theatres with energy, humour, and a joyful message of perseverance. For many young audiences particularly in regional communities; it offered a rare opportunity to experience professional theatre close to home.

*Yong* proved equally powerful. Its exploration of heritage, identity, and belonging resonated deeply with audiences, sparking thoughtful conversations long after the curtain call. In regional centres especially, the work created space for deep reflection of history, connection, and shared storytelling.

Alongside these remounts, we continued our commitment to new work.

Our adaptation of *Where Is the Green Sheep?*, created with some incredible young people at Bankstown West Public School and a stellar creative team, welcomed our youngest audiences into the theatre with imagination, music, and play. Bringing this beloved story to the stage reaffirmed the importance of early creative experiences and the joy of discovering theatre for the very first time.

At the other end of the spectrum, *Detention* explored the complex terrain of consequence, identity, and connection. Created for older audiences, the work opened space for challenging ideas and courageous conversation.

Together, these four productions reflect our belief that theatre for young people matters deeply in the present, offering space for joy, reflection, and connection right now. I am deeply grateful to the artists, staff, presenters, educators, and supporters who make this work possible. Their dedication ensures each season is not simply a program of shows, but a sustained commitment to community.



**Eva Di Cesare**  
Artistic Director

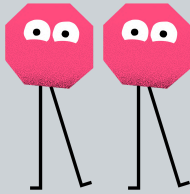
# A snapshot of 2025

a year of creation, deepening  
and planning



49  
communities visited

218  
Performances

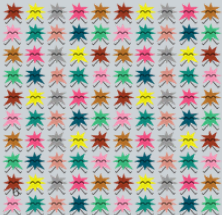


2  
New works created

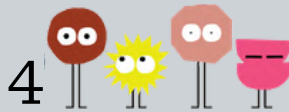


400+

tickets distributed  
through theatre  
unlimited



104 000  
website visits



4  
Productions presented



9  
Social impact  
partners

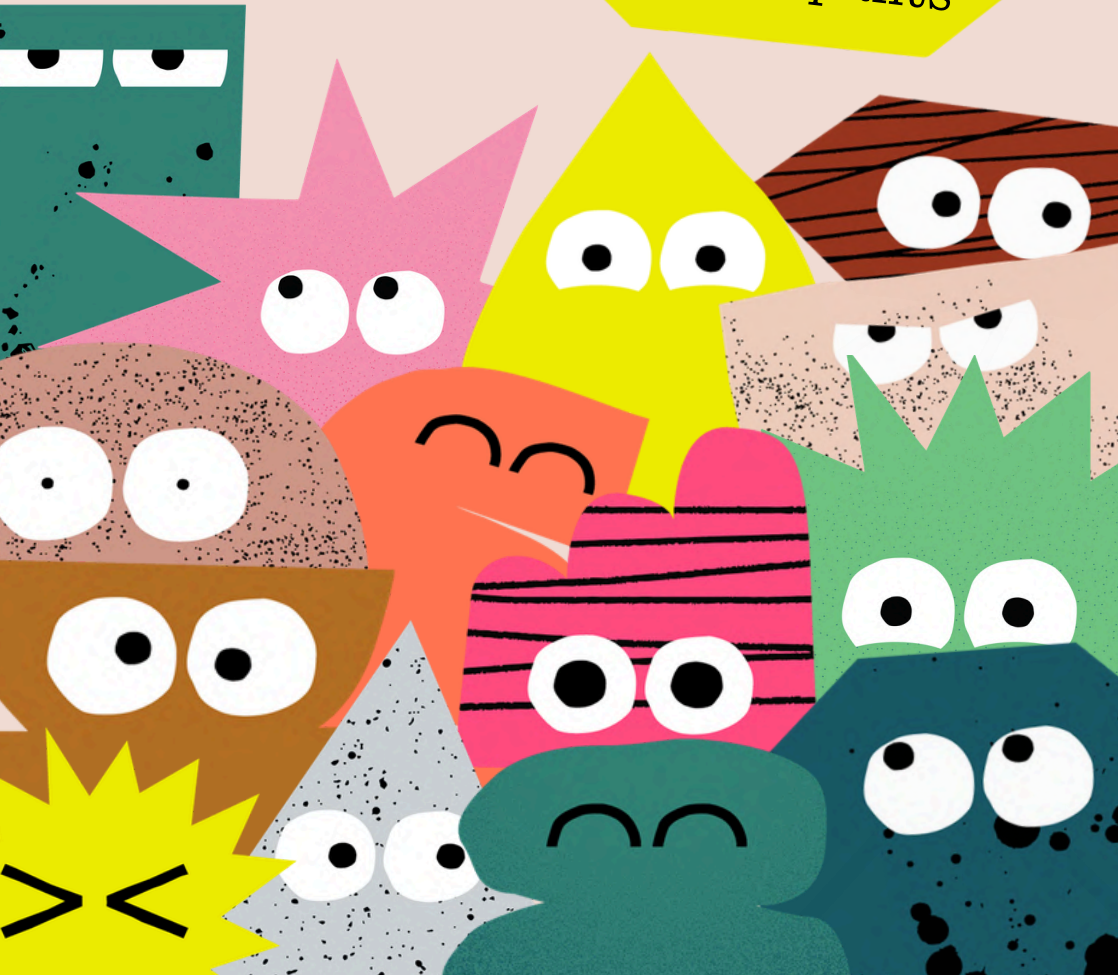
50  
Artists and workers employed

54,448

audience  
members

5,302

student  
participants



# Company report

## Cultural

We develop and present original Australian theatre that reflects the diversity of young audiences.

### Create and present theatre for young audiences

In 2025, we continued to bring bold and imaginative theatre to young audiences across Australia. Our national tour of Josephine Wants to Dance reached metropolitan, regional and remote communities, ensuring young people had access to high-quality creative experiences regardless of where they live.

We premiered *Where is the Green Sheep?*, setting up for a national tour throughout 2026, expanding access for early years audiences and strengthening our commitment to creating distinctive Australian works for young people. We toured *Detention* and *Yong*, adding to a rich year of programming across the country.

### Deliver creative learning workshops and engagement

In 2025, we continued to engage young people through creative learning programs that link theatre to the classroom and community. Our National Teaching Artist Tour travelled alongside the Josephine Wants to Dance tour, deepening young people's experience of theatre through interactive workshops and creative play.

We delivered workshops in schools, libraries and community settings across Australia, supporting young people to express themselves, collaborate and build confidence through the arts. New learning resources were developed to support *Detention*, providing teachers with curriculum-aligned tools to extend the themes of the work and spark meaningful conversation in the classroom.

### Develop artists and the industry

In 2025, we remained committed to supporting the next generation of theatre makers and strengthening the sector for young audiences. Through the Penny Cook Creative Associate Program, we concluded Felicity Nicol's term as our second Creative Associate, providing time, resources and creative support to expand their practice and contribute to our artistic vision.

We supported the development of *Detention*, providing a meaningful creative process for emerging theatre makers to build capacity, experience and pathways within a supportive environment. The project ensured new stories and diverse perspectives were presented on stage and demonstrated Monkey Ba's commitment to commissioning and partnering with independent artists.

Alongside these initiatives, we expanded our professional pathways for young people through a work experience program and co-creation opportunities that engaged young audiences in the development of new works, including *Where is the Green Sheep?* and *Detention*. Through these programs, young people contributed ideas, perspectives and lived experience to the creative process, fostering authentic storytelling and supporting future industry participation.

# Social

We connect with young people and their communities by bringing high-quality theatre to them.

We create theatre experiences that support emotional growth and provide meaningful emotional journeys.

## Create and present theatre for young audiences

Over the past twelve months, Theatre Unlimited has continued to grow as a vital part of Monkey Baa's commitment to equity, access, and inclusion.

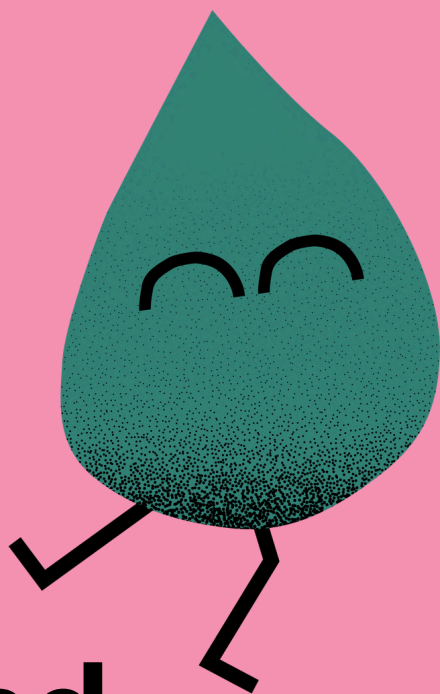
In 2025, we continued to align our work with our vision of reaching as many young people as possible, particularly those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience live theatre. Through Theatre Unlimited, we partnered with organisations across the country to connect our productions with young people facing disadvantage. These partnerships enabled us to provide free tickets and transport support, while our Adopt a School initiative continued to open access for low-SES and regional communities. We also expanded our reach into regional and remote locations, deepening our commitment to equitable access.

We also strengthened our impact framework to better understand and communicate the outcomes of our work. By refining how we measure access, participation and engagement, we are building a clearer picture of how theatre contributes to young people's confidence, creativity and sense of belonging.

## Organisational update

2025 was a year of continued transformation for Monkey Baa as we adapted to operating without a dedicated theatre space. We secured a warehouse in Western Sydney to provide logistical support for our touring productions, including storage and workshop space, ensuring we could continue to create and tour work at scale. We also moved our office into the Arts Exchange in The Rocks, joining a vibrant community of arts organisations through the support of Create NSW.

These changes strengthened our operational capacity and aligned with our long-term strategy to focus on creating and touring theatre for young audiences.



# Create and present theatre for young audiences

- Where is the Green Sheep?
- Josephine Wants to Dance
- Yong
- Detention

National and  
regional tour

Based on the book by  
Jackie French and Bruce  
Whatley. Adapted by Eva  
Di Cesare, Sandie Eldridge  
and Tim McGarry.



# Josephine Wants to Dance

National and regional tour  
January - September 2025

## Cast

- Callum Slater
- Nina Carmen
- Hannah Gwatkin
- Bronte Tonks
- Gracie Rowland
- Lily Baulderstone
- Georgia Unsworth (Understudy)
- Teo Persechino (Understudy)

## Creatives & Crew

- Eva Di Cesare
- Sandra Eldridge
- Tim McGarry
- Jonathan Biggins
- Phillip Scott
- Tim Harbour
- Laura Watson
- Jem Page
- James Browne
- Emma Lockhart-Wilson
- David Bergman
- Michael Tyack
- Veronique Benett
- Marianne Close
- Kirsty Mangelsdorf
- Joel Montgomery
- Alex Vaughan



133 performances  
41 communities  
36,566 audience

A hilarious musical about the importance of believing in yourself and realising your dreams and... a dancing kangaroo! Based on the picture book by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley, this delightful musical is a must see!

Josephine is a kangaroo who loves to dance. Her little brother, Joey, tells her kangaroos don't dance, they hop - but Josephine continues to point her toes and leap through the air. When a ballet troupe comes to the sleepy town of Shaggy Gully, Josephine desperately wants to dance like the ballerinas in pink tutus and silk ballet shoes.

On the day of the first performance the Ballet Company is in trouble. The prima ballerina twists her ankle, and the understudy has a splinter in her toe. Who can dance the lead role? Josephine's talents are called upon to help save the day. Can she do it, and more importantly, does it matter that she's a kangaroo?



## Touring locations

### NSW

Sydney  
Belrose  
Penrith  
Picton  
Chatswood  
Western Sydney  
Nowra  
Tamworth  
Orange  
Griffith  
Wagga Wagga  
Newcastle  
Port Macquarie  
Taree  
Cessnock  
Wyong  
Parramatta  
Sutherland

### VIC

Hamilton  
Ballarat  
Bendigo  
Bairnsdale

### WA

Wonthaggi  
Clayton  
Geelong  
Warrnambool  
Colac  
Warragul  
Nunawading

### QLD

Bunbury  
Perth  
Mandurah  
Geraldton  
Esperance  
Kalgoorlie  
Albany  
Rockhampton  
Bundaberg  
Caloundra  
Logan  
Brisbane

A hilarious musical  
about self-discovery,  
ballet, hip-hop and  
...a kangaroo.

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production  
Written by Jenevieve Chang  
Based on the book *Yong: The Journey of an Unworthy Son* by Janeen Brian  
published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd  
Created in collaboration with  
Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat  
and Bendigo Venues & Events



# Yong

Victorian Tour  
July – August 2025

## Cast

- Alan Zhu

## Creatives & Crew

- Jenevieve Chang
- Darren Yap
- James Browne
- Max Lambert
- Ben Brockman
- Angie Diaz
- Zac Saric
- Sandra Eldridge
- Charles Zhang
- Richard Frankland
- Laura Watson
- Jeremy Page
- Emily Phillips
- Jessica Pizzinga

Monkey Baa hosted a pre-show community event, in collaboration with Charles Zhang, at the opening night of *Yong* at the Arts Centre Melbourne.

Guests included the Arts Centre Melbourne executive team, local politicians and council members, members of the Chinese Consulate, members of the local Chinese community, as well as Monkey Baa donors and industry guests.

22 performances  
2,062 audience

Set against the backdrop of the Australian Goldrush of 1857, *Yong* is a new Australian play by Jenevieve Chang. Mixing historical fact and narrative fiction, *Yong* takes us on a journey across land and sea, from China to the goldfields of Australia.

*Yong* and his father leave their small village and travel across the seas hoping to strike gold and find their fortune in the goldfields of Ballarat. However, despite his family's desperate need for money, *Yong* does not want to be on this journey. On the surface, he is an honourable son, but bubbling below is deepening resentment for his father and a longing for home. Faced with momentous change, *Yong*'s courage and inner strength are tested, and in overcoming difficult challenges, he discovers a resilience in himself that he never knew he had.

Much more than a period piece, *Monkey Baa*'s latest offering has been created with the sensibilities of a contemporary young audience at its heart.

The production of *Yong* is based on 'Yong: the journey of an unworthy son' by Janeen Brian, published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney.



**Yong has been added to the 2025 VCE Playlist, a curated list of plays for students studying Drama and Theatre Studies in Years 11 and 12.**

## Touring locations

### VIC

- Melbourne
- Ballarat
- Shepparton
- Narre Warren
- Nunawading
- Bendigo



New Work  
Presentation

A Monkey Baa  
Theatre Company production  
Based on the novel  
by Tristan Bancks  
Adapted for the stage  
by Callan Purcell  
and Kobra Sayyadi.  
Directed by Randa Sayed

Nominated for  
Best Production  
For Young People  
(Sydney Theatre  
Awards 2025)

# Detention

New Work Presentation  
November 2025

## Cast

- Zeynab Noori
- Andrew Attieh
- Angie Diaz
- Challito Browne
- Matt Dorahy

## Creatives & Crew

- Callan Purcell
- Kobra Sayyadi
- Randa Sayed
- Jasper Lee-Lindsay,
- James Peter Brown
- Keerthi Subramanyam
- Kate Baldwin
- Rachael Jacobs
- Hailley Hunt
- Laura Watson
- Jeremy Page
- Emily Phillips
- Jessica Pizzinga

Our commissioning donors made this work possible through their vision and generosity: Darin Cooper Foundation, Lenore Robertson AM, The Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Eva Di Cesare and Kevin du Preez.

We are deeply grateful to our production donors for their belief in this story: Charlton and Caroline Hill, Jennie Orchard, Jennifer St George, Melissa and John Hertzberg, Michael Chalmers and Chris Bourke and Wendy Searle.

## New Work Presentation

Detention tells the compelling tale of two young people from disparate worlds finding each other amidst a figurative minefield.

Sima, a 14-year-old Hazara refugee, escapes with her family from a detention centre in Queensland. Their visa has been rejected, and they decide to fight to stay in Australia and get to Leeton in NSW where her uncle lives. Sima runs...and finds herself hiding in the boys' toilet of the local high school.

On the same morning, Dan, a marginalised 13-year-old raised in a caravan park finds a dog, chained up and left to die. When he gets to school, his intention is to find water for the dog but the school goes into lockdown, and he worries the dog will die. He escapes the classroom and finds himself in the boys' toilets.

Here, Sima and Dan meet and their shared quest for a sense of home and safety binds them together.

Led by Director Randa Sayed and told by an ensemble of five dynamic performers through movement and text, Detention is a poetic, sometimes funny, fast paced production that will leave young people on the edge of their seats.

Based on the novel by Tristan Bancks, this production explores the refugee experience, centring on themes of displacement, belonging, and shared humanity. Developed in collaboration with Hazara artists and young people, Detention seeks to ignite conversations, using theatre as a catalyst for truth-telling and change.



13 presentations  
2,039 audience

## Touring locations

### NSW

- Parramatta
- Wagga Wagga
- Leeton

LEGS  
ON THE  
WALL

RIVERSIDE  
STOP FRONT

CITY OF SYDNEY





# Creative Development

Detention is an original Australian work that places lived experience, cultural specificity and underrepresented voices at its centre. The project highlighted the artistic and cultural value of investing in new writing that engages with complex social and political themes, offering young audiences perspectives not often seen on Australian stages.

Detention also contributed to sector development by creating professional pathways for emerging creatives, including performers, designers and a first-time professional director. Through guidance from Artistic Director Eva Di Cesare and the wider company, the project strengthened skills, confidence and industry readiness among early-career practitioners.

The project broadened Monkey Baa's audience reach by connecting with communities who had not previously experienced our work. Audiences included refugee communities, schools new to theatre, and students who had studied the text in the classroom. This response demonstrated the value of creating space for new narratives and confirmed the appetite for stories that reflect the diverse experiences of young Australians.

This role was more than a performance—it was a deeply personal and transformative experience that challenged me to bring authenticity, emotion, and my lived experiences as a Hazara artist to the stage.  
- Zeynab Noori

New Work  
Presentation

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company and QPAC's Out of the Box co-production  
Based on the book by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek  
Written for the stage and directed by Eva Di Cesare

# Where is the Green Sheep?

New work presentation  
July - December 2025

Premiere at  
Out of the Box  
Festival

## Cast

- Michael Ho
- Paul Grabovac
- Ebony Tucker
- Lucia May
- George Wohlfel, Understudy
- Katherine Munro, Understudy
- Catherine McNamara
- Year 2 Students from Bankstown  
West Public School and Hugo  
Metzke

## Creatives & Crew

- Eva Di Cesare
- Judy Horacek
- Tobhiyah Stone Feller
- Me-Lee Hay
- Kay Yasugi
- Kailah Cabanas
- Susie Henderson
- Matt Cox
- Zac Saric
- Nat Jobe
- Laura Watson
- Jeremy Page
- Cally Bartley
- Jessica Pizzinga
- Natasha Marich



Nominated for  
Best Children's  
Production  
(Sydney Theatre  
Awards 2025)

New Work  
Presentation



Where is the Green Sheep? is an immersive visual theatre experience based on the beloved children's book by Mem Fox and Judy Horacek. We meet Blue Sheep who loves blue flowers and Red Sheep who loves to cartwheel in the fields, Bath Sheep who loves bubbles and Bed Sheep who loves to bounce... But where IS that Green Sheep?

Blending puppetry and animation, this beautiful production invites young audiences to join our three farmers on their quest to find the elusive green sheep. Co-created with students from Bankstown West Public School, this production integrates their voices as narrators, ensuring the work resonates deeply with young audiences. Nominated for Best Production for Children (Sydney Theatre Awards 2025).

36 Presentations  
13,310 Audience

Where is the Green Sheep? is a co-production with QPAC's Out of the Box in association with Arts Centre Melbourne, The Sydney Opera House and The Art House, Wyong.

## Touring locations

### NSW

- Sydney Opera House, Sydney

### QLD

- Out of the Box Festival, Brisbane





# Green Sheep: You and Me

## **Child and Grownup creative play sessions**

We delivered nine workshops during QPAC's Out of the Box season. Each workshop accommodated ten pairs of adult + child.

This special one-to-one workshop has been designed for children and their adult to share together, offering a gentle and imaginative journey to explore the mystery of the Green Sheep through movement, sensory play, and creative storytelling.

Guided by our workshop facilitators, adults and children revisit the whimsical world of the Blue Sheep, Red Sheep, Bath Sheep, and Bed Sheep – discovering new ways to bring their playful spirit to life. This special shared experience is designed for audience members who have attended *Where is the Green Sheep?* and offers a unique opportunity to deepen connection to the story through interactive exploration.

## **School workshops**

Creativity and imagination build confidence in this hands-on workshop, where students explore the story of *Where is the Green Sheep?*, bringing the colourful characters to life through fun, drama-based activities.

With guidance from our expert Teaching Artist, students bring Blue Sheep, Red Sheep, Bath Sheep, and Bed Sheep to life through movement, voice and puppetry skills—building worlds and telling stories as they embark on a playful quest to find the elusive Green Sheep.

Each one-hour session is tailored to students in Kindergarten and Year 1, with content adjusted to suit their age and developmental needs.



# International engagement

In 2025, we continued to explore opportunities for international touring and sector exchange. Kevin du Preez travelled to Hong Kong for an industry development opportunity, connecting with presenters, producers and organisations from the Asia-Pacific region.

During this trip, Monkey Baa hosted an industry networking event that brought together Australian theatre companies with regional presenters to foster dialogue, share practice and strengthen international relationships.

This work has informed our plans for international engagement in 2026, including a proposed international tour to China.

## **International Exchange Program**

Supported through funding from Arts Council England, Monkey Baa welcomed UK-based artist and producer Chloe Bradbury for an international residency focused on cultural exchange and contemporary approaches to producing theatre for young audiences. During her time with the company, Chloe deepened her practice through engagement with Monkey Baa's artistic, touring and social impact work, while also contributing insights from her company, Little Wild Theatre, which centres children's wellbeing through immersive, nature-inspired performance.

This exchange highlights the mutual value of international collaboration, strengthening Monkey Baa's global connections and enriching artistic dialogue, while supporting Chloe's development as an artist and deepening a shared commitment to theatre as a powerful tool for children's wellbeing and emotional resilience.



# Develop artists and the industry

- 50 artists engaged
- 2 creative development weeks
- 2 new works

# Co-Creation Program

Throughout 2025, Monkey Baa led the co-creation elements of three significant works: *Where is the Green Sheep?*, *Detention* and *To My Future Self*. We worked closely with young people as collaborators, building their agency within theatre-making processes and strengthening Monkey Baa's own co-creation methodologies.

This program was supported by Creative Australia.





## Where is the Green Sheep?

The development and premiere season of *Where is the Green Sheep?* incorporated extensive young audience participation. Co-design workshops were undertaken with kindergarten students from Bankstown West Public School, our longstanding partner school. Workshops included one introductory session and three creative sessions, followed by professional voice recording with the students. Their voices became integrated into the final production as part of the sound design, a powerful outcome that enabled the young participants to hear themselves within the theatrical work. Many experienced increased confidence and pride in seeing their contribution within a professional production.

## Detention

Co-creation activity for *Detention* centred on script development and creative feedback with drama students at Holroyd High School. The creative team consulted with students, providing them with opportunities to offer perspectives on narrative, character and the portrayal of refugee experiences. Two emerging actors were cast in the production, offering professional experience and embedding youth perspectives within the performance.



## To My Future Self

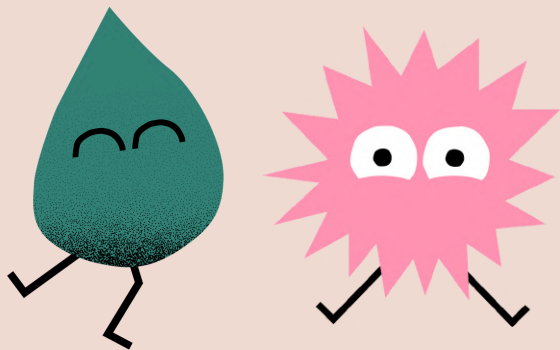
To My Future Self progressed in partnership with Headspace as a regional youth-led project supporting queer young people in Port Macquarie. Young participants guided the themes and form of the project, supported by Monkey Baa and a locally appointed youth leader. Workshops and development sessions were undertaken across artforms, enabling participants to build skills, articulate their stories, and shape the final creative outcome (podcast and performance). The youth leader role proved critical in ensuring cultural safety, continuity of engagement and locally grounded relationships.

## Work experience

A animation work experience opportunity was delivered in partnership with the NSW Department of Education through the CApture Film Festival. Monkey Baa assessed entries in the animation category, with the winner (a Year 7 student) receiving a placement with Monkey Baa during rehearsals.

The student attended multiple rehearsals, became embedded in the process, attended the premiere season, and expressed pride and excitement at contributing to a national theatre company. This provided a tangible pathway for engagement in theatre and screen arts.

# Deliver creative learning workshops and engagement





## National Teaching Artists tour

In 2025, we delivered drama-based workshops across the country, enhancing the experience of *Josephine Wants to Dance* ahead of the theatre presentation. Our teaching artists worked with over 3,581 students to deepen their understanding and connection to the story.

We prioritise employing artists from the regions where we tour. These artists bring a local perspective, strengthening community connections and making the experience even more meaningful for young audiences. 95% of teachers believed the workshop fostered creativity among students, with activities designed to encourage imaginative expression.

### Teaching artists

- Alexander Andrews (NSW)
- Eva Di Cesare (NSW)
- Branden Christine Munyan (NSW)
- Paul Grabovac (NSW)
- Teale Howie (NSW)
- Rachel Jackett (NSW)
- Julia Davis (VIC)
- Vincent Hooper (VIC)
- Michelle Hall (WA)
- Sophie Wickes (QLD)

3,581 student participants  
172 workshops  
30 communities



## Workshop Program

Monkey Baa's workshops bring the magic of theatre making to thousands of students across Australia. Designed for Early Learning through to Stage 6, these dynamic sessions help young people build confidence, develop creative skills, and explore storytelling in an engaging and accessible way.

In 2025, we delivered these workshops across schools, community groups and libraries.

16 workshops  
1,289 participants

### Schools

- Brisbane Waters Secondary
- Chisholm Catholic College
- Kyeemagh Public School
- Marist College Eastwood
- St Maroun's College
- Kambala
- Ebenezer Public School
- Balgowlah North Public School
- Wyndham College

### Community groups and libraries

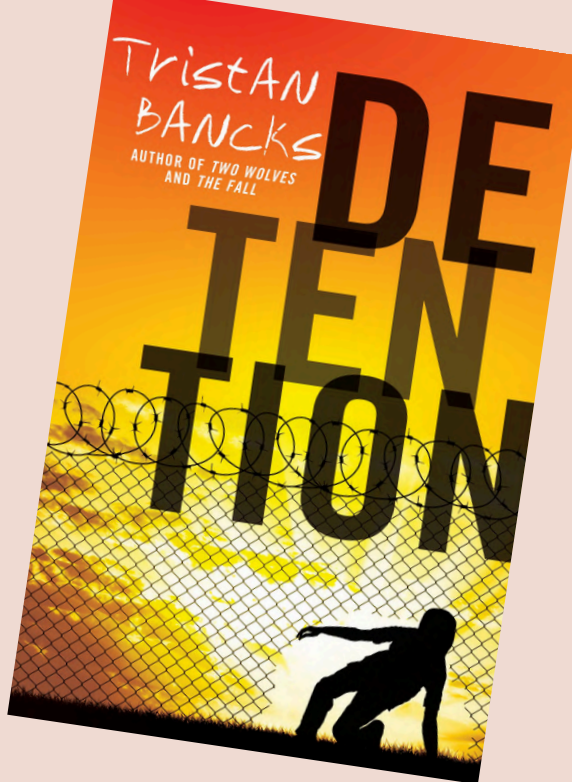
- Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day
- City of Parramatta Holiday Workshops
- TheirCare School Holiday Workshops
- Camp Quality Holiday Camp
- St Mary's Georges Hall
- CECAL Community Centre

## Learning Resources

Alongside the development of *Detention*, Monkey Baa produced new learning resources to support teachers and students in exploring theatre. These resources take students behind the scenes, offering insights into script development, design, rehearsal, and performance.

The learning pack supports teachers and students engaging with *Detention*, a stage adaptation of Tristan Bancks' novel. Designed for Years 5–10, it offers curriculum-aligned activities across English, Drama and HASS (Civics & Citizenship/History), exploring themes of morality, identity, social justice, displacement, belonging and shared humanity.

The production invites young people to examine the clash between personal values and political systems, the role of empathy and critical thinking in decision-making and what it means to stand up for what you believe in. Developed in collaboration with Hazara artists and young people, it centres lived experience and encourages nuanced, respectful discussion.



The resource provides discussion prompts, classroom activities that unpack key moments and character decisions, insights into the adaptation process from page to stage, as well as opportunities to analyse theatrical elements and performance choices. Activities connect to the Australian Curriculum and build general capabilities in Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding.

This resource was created by Alexander Andrews, with Callan Purcell.



# **Social impact and engagement**

# Reflecting on 2025

Over the past twelve months, Theatre Unlimited has continued to grow as a vital part of Monkey Baa's commitment to equity, access, and inclusion.

Guided by our Theory of Change, we've deepened our social impact work and extended the reach of our programs to more young people across Australia, particularly those who face barriers to participating in the arts.

Key achievements include:

- Reached over 23,000 young people in 38 regional and remote communities.
- Distribution of about 1,000 free tickets (approx. \$44,000 worth) to young people and families through targeted community and school partnerships, ensuring access to high-quality theatre regardless of financial or geographic barriers.

- Expanded outreach to new community organisations and schools, building new relationships with regional presenters, education partners, and social support services to identify young people who would benefit most from our work.
- Ongoing refinement of our impact goals and indicators, ensuring that our activities are clearly aligned with the outcomes we aim to achieve: confidence, creativity, connection, and increased cultural participation among young people.

Our deepest thanks to our donors who have made this work possible, and enable us to reach more young people across the country.



**Laura Pike**  
Social Impact  
Manager

# Program overview

## **Partner to amplify our impact**

We've built and maintained active partnerships with six national organisations to help connect our work with the young people who need it most.

## **Free tickets and transport**

We have distributed over 300 free tickets to young people and families across Australia

## **School engagement**

Our Adopt a School initiative continues to play a key role in ensuring students from low-SES and regional communities can access high-quality theatre experiences.

## **Expand regional and remote access**

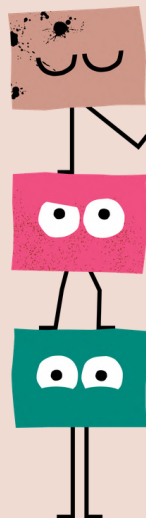
We've significantly expanded our reach into regional and remote communities, deepening our commitment to equitable access.

## **Building our social impact measurement framework**

We have refined our theory of change, and developed a social impact measurement framework through our work with GoodWolF consulting.

## **Develop our social impact investment strategy**

We have participated in a impact investment readiness program with Creative Australia to support a social impact loan.

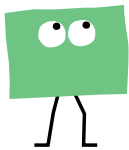


# Partnerships

Partnerships are at the heart of Theatre Unlimited. By working with aligned organisations, we extend the reach and deepen the impact of our programs, ensuring that more young people can access transformative theatre experiences.

This year, we've built and maintained active partnerships with eight national organisations, each bringing valuable networks and expertise to help connect our work with the young people who need it most.

These partnerships ensure that participation is not just available, but meaningful and supported. This includes providing transport where required, and being flexible to the changing needs and circumstances of the young people.



Absolutely love, love, loved the production of *Josephine wants to Dance*. She said it was a first time to the theatre for her daughter and her grandchildren, and they were blown away by the experience.

– Your Library Family VIC





## Camp Quality

Monkey Baa partnered with Camp Quality and PHIVE Parramatta to deliver a full-day creative workshop for children living with cancer and their families during the school holidays. The workshop engaged 30 young people in inclusive, joyful activities including drama, dance, puppetry, and craft, all inspired by our Shaggy Gully productions. The day culminated in a creative showcase for families and carers, with strong positive feedback highlighting the value of the experience as a moment of self-care, creativity, and connection.

Volunteers from Camp Quality supported accessibility throughout the day, and the partnership has opened up pathways for ongoing collaboration across future holiday programs and theatre access initiatives.

Feedback from both participants and Camp Quality staff was overwhelmingly positive, with comments describing the workshop as "excellent", "awesome", and a "momentary break and distraction" from ongoing challenges. Families valued the accessible location and opportunity for self-expression, while Camp Quality staff praised the facilitators and the workshop's focus on wellbeing, inclusion, and creativity.

The program created a safe and playful space for children to connect, express themselves, and simply enjoy being kids. The success of this collaboration has laid the groundwork for future programs.

# Boys and Girls Brigade

Monkey Baa delivered a school holiday workshop program at Boys and Girls Brigade, designed to engage young people in creative, hands-on theatre experiences during the break. The program was fully subsidised by Monkey Baa, with no cost to the organisation or participants. Each session was facilitated by one to two Teaching Artists (Alex Andrews and Mat Lee), using accessible materials such as puppetry and basic craft supplies. In addition, we co-designed and delivered professional development sessions with GBB staff to build capacity and support ongoing creative engagement. Performance tickets were provided as in-kind support, ensuring participants had access to high-quality live theatre experiences beyond the workshops.



## KidsXpress

KidsXpress is a community organisation working with young people impacted by trauma. In August we worked with KidsXpress to support Batlow Technical School students to travel to Wagga to experience 'Josephine Wants to Dance'. These young people would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend.

\*A mum said she'd seen it advertised and thought it looked great, but they didn't have the extra funds to buy tickets. They were thrilled to receive free tickets through Your Library and said the show was amazing! Even her 11-year-old son who was reluctant to attend, thoroughly enjoyed the show!  
- Your Library VIC



## Free tickets and transport

As part of our commitment to access and inclusion, Monkey Baa has distributed over free tickets to young people and families across Australia in the first half of the year. These tickets have been made available through our community and education partners, removing financial barriers to participation and ensuring more children can experience the magic of live theatre.

To further support access, we have trialled subsidised transport initiatives:

### Regional access

Provided transport support for students travelling from Batlow to Wagga to attend performances.

### Metro access

Piloted the use of Uber vouchers in partnership with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation to support safe, flexible travel for families in need. Feedback from families has been strongly positive, with many highlighting that the removal of cost barriers (both tickets and transport) was the deciding factor in their ability to attend. These initiatives have been especially impactful for families experiencing hardship, and have reinforced the importance of holistic access support in our programming.

Thank you to our Theatre Unlimited Donor Circle members who have made this program possible.



# School engagement

Our school initiative continues to play a key role in ensuring students from low-SES and regional communities can access high-quality theatre experiences. Through a combination of free tickets and travel support, we've maintained relationships with schools across Bankstown, Leppington, Rydalmere and Batlow.

These experiences are creating lasting impact, with strong engagement from local teachers and students. The campaign is not only about access, but also about advocating for the value of theatre and performing arts for students.

So good, funny,  
awesome  
experience.  
Better than I  
expected



One of our partners in Esperance said  
*'It is so important that regional communities  
have opportunities to see and hear live music  
and theatre shows and not have to either watch  
them on a broadcast or travel to the city to  
access them. For a lot of residents in remote  
and regional towns, traveling to see a show is  
often not possible due to costs and time'*

## Expanding regional and remote access

In the past year, we've significantly expanded our reach into regional and remote communities, deepening our commitment to equitable access. New engagement in Queensland and regional Victoria has been supported through partnerships with organisations such as Bush Kids, The Pyjama Foundation, and a growing number of regional schools. Direct support has been provided to schools in West Wyalong, Batlow, and Warragul, helping students access performances and creative workshops through ticketing and travel support.

Looking ahead, we are exploring Western Australia-based partnerships and planning pilot regional programs to continue extending Theatre Unlimited's impact across even more remote and underserved communities.



In 2025, we focused on building our reach and impact across Western Australia and Central Queensland

# Social impact measurement

Our social impact activities continue to align strongly with the three core pillars of our Theory of Change: inclusion, creativity, and empowerment. Across all programs, we've received consistently positive feedback from partner organisations, families, and participants.

Impact is being measured through a combination of post-show surveys, partner feedback, and testimonials, providing both quantitative data and rich qualitative insights.

Early findings show:

- A high proportion of first-time theatre attendees, particularly among regional and low-SES communities
- Increased confidence, self-expression, and engagement among participants

Our theory of change is provided as an appendix to this report.

Amazing  
performance, kids  
and adults loved it.  
It was a truly  
wonderful family  
event. We loved the  
production.

## GoodWolf

We are continuing to develop and refine our measurement framework to establish robust impact data, through our ongoing work with [GoodWolf Partners](#). GoodWolf provide expert consulting advice on social impact frameworks, indicators and measurement, which has been invaluable to refining our theory of change, and integrating our impact pillars throughout the organisation. We have worked closely with Nina Yousefpour at GoodWolf to refine our approach, and Nina joined a board meeting to provide insight into impact investment opportunities for for-purpose organisations.



## Social impact investment

Throughout 2025, we participated in the Creative Australia Impact investment Readiness Program, facilitated by SEFA. We joined six other organisations working in social impact to build our capacity and readiness for impact investment. We worked closely with a mentor and coach from SEFA to clearly define our goals and develop robust financial modelling for investment and repayment options over the next five years.

We were invited to submit and EOI to SEFA's Backing the Bold impact investment fund. The EOI has been approved, and we are now working through the more detailed application and financial assessment. This funding will provide \$50,000 to support capability building in the organisation.



# Our supporters

We are deeply grateful to all  
those who have contributed to  
Monkey Baa.



Principal Partner

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# Our supporters

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# Our donors

## **\$100,000+**

Claire Stokes, Edward Federman  
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## **\$50,000 - \$100,000**

Robertson Foundation

## **\$10,000 – \$50,000**

Envest for Good, APS Foundation  
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for Young People, Professor Judith Mclean  
Ruth Armytage AM, Waratah Education  
Foundation

## **\$5,000 – \$10,000**

Maryon Campbell

## **\$2,500 – \$5,000**

Decjuba Foundation, Eva Di Cesare  
Gael Ballantyne, Late Dr Sue-Anne Wallace  
AM, Mundango Charitable Trust, Sally  
White OAM, Peter and Roz Owens

## **\$1,000 - \$2,500**

Bridgette Van Leuven, Dr Sue-Anne Wallace  
(Vale), Jennie Orchard, Kevin du Preez  
Margaret Osborne, Meredith & George  
Fanelli, Michael Mitchell, Pamela Easton &  
Morris Gleitzman, Richard Tulloch, Sarah  
Nason, The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, Tony  
Grybowski

## **\$500 - \$1,000**

Lena Nahlous, Callan Purcell, Sandra  
Eldridge, Lucinda Armour, Tim Schaare-  
Weeks, Jennifer A Norman, Melissa & John  
Hertzberg, Dr Wendy Were

### **The Memory Makers Donor Circle**

Gina Fairfax AC & Tim Fairfax AC,  
Professor Judith McLean, Maryon Campbell,  
Margaret Osborne, Pamela Easton,  
Sally Cottee, Sarah Nason

### **Theatre Unlimited Donor Circle**

Bridgette Van Leuven, Catherine Brooks  
Frances Christodoulou, Kevin du Preez  
Tony Grybowski, Wendy Were.

### **The Regular Givers**

Catherine Brooks, Dr Wendy Were, Janeen  
Brian, Professor Judith McLean, Lucinda  
Armour, Janeen Brian, Ross Maher, John  
McCallum, Michael Mitchell

## Our Principal Sponsor

# ARA

Monkey Baa is delighted to have ARA as their Principal Sponsor.

With over 150 locations across Australia and New Zealand, ARA delivers fully integrated essential services and products for infrastructure and facilities. ARA has more than 5,000 employees working across four operating Divisions, Electrical, Building Services, Fire and Security and Products. ARA is an employee-owned company established in 2001 and has gained recognition as an industry leader that is committed to giving back.

As an inherent part of their culture, ARA believes that supporting the communities in which they work and live makes them a better company and they are committed to building meaningful community partnerships.

**ARA. Here for you. Here for good.**



# Thanks to ARA, we are able to...



Provide experiences for young people that are empowering and inspiring.



Facilitate workshops to communities who otherwise miss out.



Tour to communities in Metro, Regional, Rural and Remote Australia.



Bring innovative new Australian work to the stage.



Support the talent within Australia's creative industries.



Provide additional services to young people of all abilities.

# Our People

**We are a collective of super dedicated people bringing the joy of theatre to all young people across Australia.**

## Patrons

**Jackie French AM**

**Susanne Gervay OAM**

**Morris Gleitzman**

## Board

**Professor Judith McLean**  
Chair

**Siobhan McGeown**  
Deputy chair

**Dr Csaba Fekete**  
Treasurer (Until May 2025)

**Dr Wendy Were**

**Lena Nahlous**

**Claudia Chidiac**

**Jo Dyer**

**Amy Payten**

**Kai Kasad**  
Treasurer (from June 2025)

**Bridgette Van Leuven**  
(from June 2025)

**Tim Kurylowicz**  
(from December 2025)

**Laura Pike**  
Secretary, non-voting

## Staff

**Kevin du Preez**  
Executive Director

**Eva Di Cesare**  
Artistic Director

**Felicity Nicol**  
Creative Associate (Until February 2025)

**Emma Khamis**  
Producer

**Sonia Dodd**  
Producer

**Sophie Wickes**  
Associate Producer (Queensland)

**Alexander Andrews**  
Learning and Engagement Specialist  
(Until August 2025)

**Laura Watson**  
Head of Production

**Jem Page**  
Head of Technical Operations

**Jessica Pizzinga**  
Production Coordinator

**Shaotong Li**  
Digital Marketing Specialist

**Laura Pike**  
Social Impact Manager

## Technical crew

**Emily Phillips**

**Gaby Whalland**

**Cally Bartley**

**Jessica Pizzinga**

**Joel Montgomery**

**Kirsty Mangelsdorf**

**Natasha Marich**

**Paris Bell**

**Ryan Devlin**

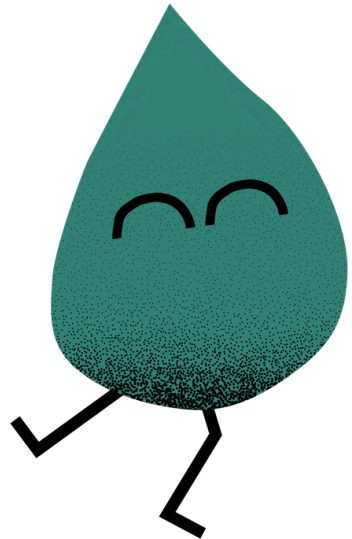
**Sam Gray**

## International Exchange Program

**Chloe Bradbury**

## Intern

**Zoe Hales**



# Join us in making live theatre accessible for more young people across Australia.

Your support helps bring inspiring shows and tours to communities across Australia, sparking creativity, empowering young people, and fostering a lifelong love for the arts. Play your part in this journey to ignite creativity and connection across the nation.

**Visit [monkeybaa.com.au/support-us](https://monkeybaa.com.au/support-us) to explore ways you can help.**

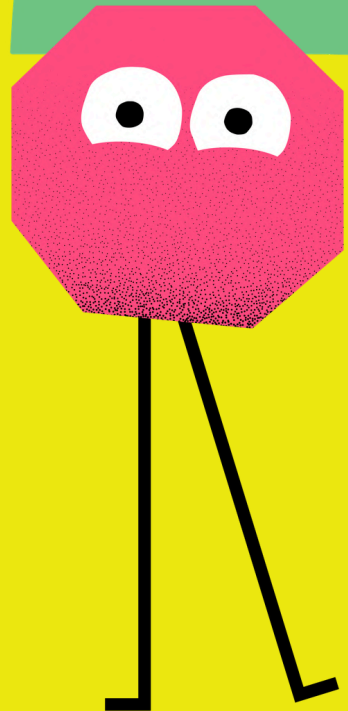
By supporting Monkey Baa's Theatre Unlimited, you can help ensure young people have access to transformative theatre experiences, breaking down barriers and inspiring creativity.

You can make a practical difference by donating now with a one-off gift, starting a monthly contribution at an amount you can afford, joining one of our donor circles, or reaching out to discuss other philanthropic opportunities.

Together, we can empower the next generation through the power of storytelling and the arts.

Monkey Baa is a registered charity and is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR). Donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible, and all contributions will receive a receipt.

**Donate today!**



[www.monkeybaa.com.au](http://www.monkeybaa.com.au)