

Thursday 25 May 2017

## **RYDE YOUTH THEATRE SECURES 4-YEAR FUNDING FROM COUNCIL**

A four-year funding program for the Ryde Youth Theatre will provide stability and additional resources to plan ambitious artistic programs and expand social engagement opportunities for young people.

The City of Ryde Council unanimously endorsed a \$75,000 per annum allocation for years 2017/18 to 2020/21 for the highly successful youth group that had only been funded by Council on an ad hoc basis since inception in 2009.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Bill Pickering, said the Council decision was a great outcome. “The four-year funding program is a key component of the Council’s efforts to foster a vibrant and sustainable local arts sector and to provide an outlet for young people with an interest in theatre and performance.

“This investment in our youth will allow this dedicated group to create and present excellent and innovative artistic works that engage audiences and provide a unique social involvement for young people that is sometimes life changing.”

RYT is the only performing arts company of its type in the Northern Sydney region. It provides opportunities for young people aged 12 – 25 to join mentors and other likeminded young people to write, workshop, produce and perform their own plays.

Artistic Director of Ryde Youth Theatre, Suzanne Hauser, said: "We are so fortunate to have a Council who understands the importance of the arts to young people and who has shown strong support for the theatre. I’m privileged to work with such passionate, committed and talented young people and to bring their stories, visions and imaginings to life.

“Over the next four years we will see many opportunities for young artists to develop and perform their own work, more compelling, original and authentic productions, and even more young people find a place to belong and be celebrated in their community.”

Since 2009 RYT has worked with over 350 young people and produced 24 original works, with four more planned for 2017. Its yearly program includes both short and full length plays, all written by and with young people, for young people. Around 70% of their core audience are aged between 12 and 18.

### **What the Four-Year funding program means to members of RYT**

**Emily Hespe** “As a performer I have found very few accessible, professional environments to explore all aspects of theatre. The new funding for Ryde Youth Theatre guarantees a place for

others like me to have the opportunity of performing purely theatre with others just like me. The funding has brought an ideology of a bright future for current and hopefully new members in our amazing community.”

**Cooper Ware** “Ryde Youth Theatre provides a welcoming and comfortable environment to socialise and work in. This really helps young adults and teenagers to express their imagination and emotions in the form of writing, directing and acting. Without programs like this, many youths that aren’t as interested in sports or other social activities wouldn’t have a place where they can just be themselves and feel comfortable in their surroundings.”

**Raman Mondraty** “With this additional funding, the creative ideas we are developing, have a secure place in our future. Many of the more long-term members have begun moving into developing our own full length plays helping them build up a portfolio of extremely well realised works. Most of us wish to pursue this as a career and beyond this there are few options that allow budding young playwrights to have their work produced to a professional standard”

**Liam Regent** “I believe that the Ryde Youth Theatre members are very creative young people that like to think of ideas both for characters and stories and visual representations of what we can do. With this funding I believe that we can more than exceed our limitless imaginations.”

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