Hayes Theatre Co.

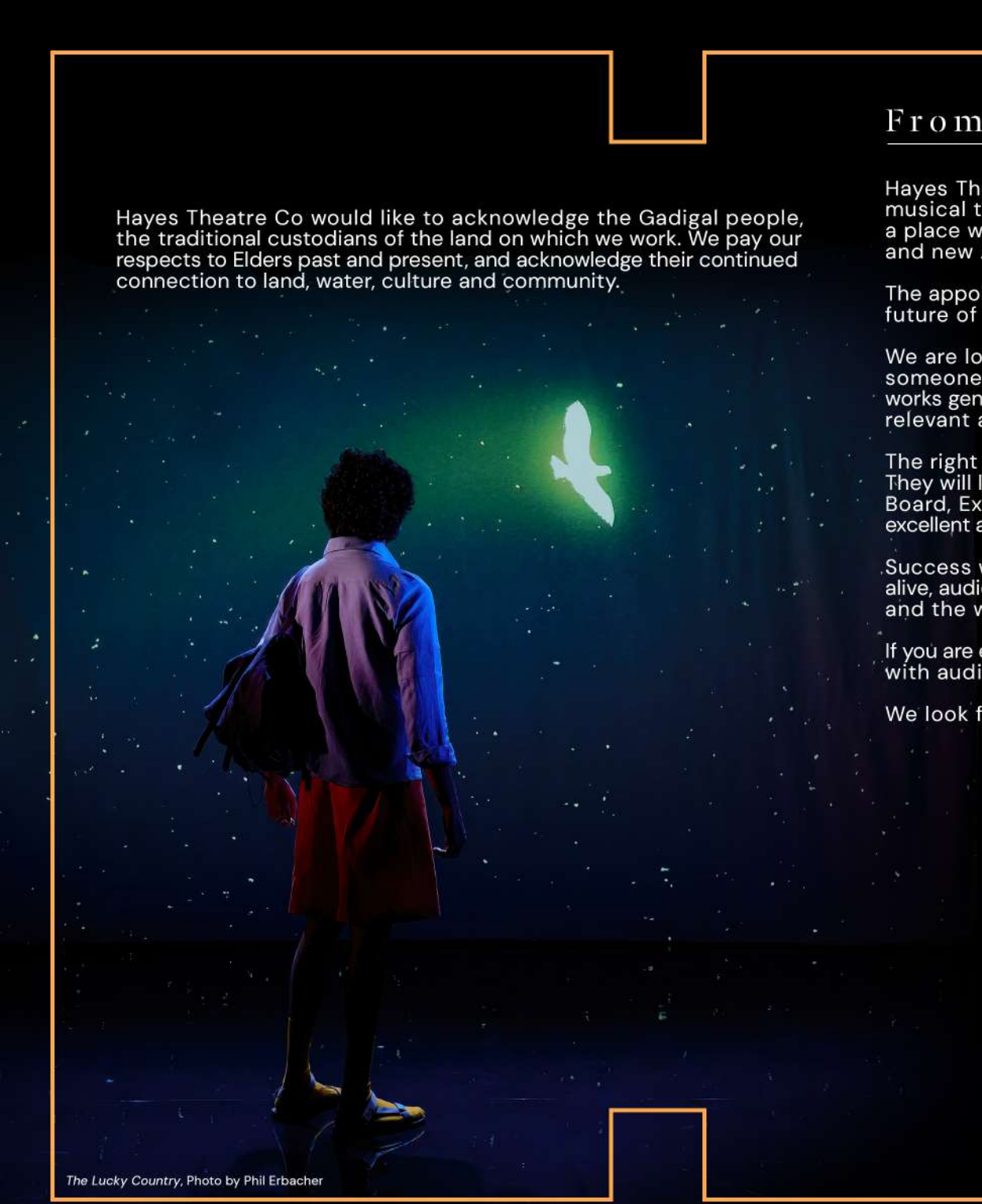
JOB PACK

OCTOBER 2026

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

HAYES THEATRE CO

Hayes Theatre Co would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge their continued connection to land, water, culture and community.



The Lucky Country, Photo by Phil Erbacher

From our Board Chair

Hayes Theatre Co may be small in scale, but its influence on Australian musical theatre is outsized. It is adventurous, nimble and deeply loved: a place where artists take risks, audiences meet the work at close range, and new Australian stories find their first life.

The appointment of our next Artistic Director is a defining decision for the future of Hayes.

We are looking for a leader with vision, courage, warmth and credibility: someone who understands the craft and possibility of musical theatre, works generously with artists and producers, and can keep Hayes distinctive, relevant and closely connected to its audiences.

The right person will bring imagination and judgement in equal measure. They will love the rehearsal room, understand audiences, and work with the Board, Executive Director and team to create the conditions that make excellent art possible.

Success will be visible in work that feels unmistakably Hayes: artistically alive, audience-connected, and capable of opening doors for artists, partners and the wider sector.

If you are excited by the possibility of leading a brave, artist-centred company with audiences at its heart, I warmly invite you to consider this role.

We look forward to hearing the future you imagine for Hayes.

Fiona Allan
Board Chair, Hayes Theatre Co

About Hayes Theatre Co

A place where bold new Australian musicals stand shoulder to shoulder with thrilling new productions of classic and contemporary works. Step inside our theatre and you're one of just 111 people sharing an intimate, up close and personal experience that couldn't happen anywhere else, in a space that inspires innovation and ingenuity in shows both new and reimagined.

Founded in 2014 and named in honour of Australian musical theatre legend Nancye Hayes, Hayes Theatre Co is Australia's home of musical theatre. We are Australia's only registered charity dedicated exclusively to developing, commissioning, producing and touring Australian musical theatre, so Australian stories, artists and productions can find their voice, their audience and their future.

We've built a reputation for fearless, ambitious work that gives artists the confidence to take creative risks and audiences the chance to see musical theatre differently. We believe the future of the artform is forged by backing the people bold enough to imagine it.

That's why we champion Australian musical theatre from the very first spark of an idea to opening night — and beyond. We commission writers and composers, develop new musicals through workshops and public presentations, produce original Australian works for the Hayes stage, and help successful productions reach audiences across Australia through future seasons and touring. Alongside our own productions, we curate an annual season that gives outstanding independent producers and creative teams a home for high-quality new musical theatre and cabaret.

Hayes is where artists find collaborators, careers gather momentum and the next generation of Australian musical theatre steps into the spotlight. Every year we create work for hundreds of performers, musicians, writers, directors, designers, technicians, producers and arts workers, helping to build a stronger, more vibrant future for Australian musical theatre.

Everything we do is made possible by an extraordinary community of donors, partners, subscribers and audiences who believe Australian musicals deserve to be seen, heard and celebrated.

"Hayes Theatre has long punched above its weight."

Sydney Morning Herald

"This company has established itself as the beating heart of Australia's musical theatre industry."

TIME OUT

Flat Earthers, Photo by John McRae

Hayes Theatre Co Achievements

Since we opened in 2014, we've presented 93 musicals, of which 32 have been our own productions

In addition, we've supported the development of 46 Australian musicals through our Hayes Creative programme. 11 new Australian musicals have been produced by Hayes, with more in the pipeline.

We proud to be a significant industry employer: This year our Festival of New Work alone showcased over 150 paid artists, in addition to many others on longer term contracts.

Audiences love our productions and coming to our theatre. Our subscriber base is growing, and we average 86% occupancy across the year, with our most recent Australian musicals selling out.

Awards

Hayes presented musicals have won 51 Sydney Theatre Awards. Since opening, we've won Best Musical category every year with three notable exceptions - losing out to Hamilton, Matilda and Moulin Rouge.

In 2025, Zombie! The Musical also won the awards for Best Direction and Best Choreography.

Then in 2026, Phar Lap: The Electro-Swing Musical won a trifecta, also picking up Best Direction and Best Performance in a leading role in a musical.

It's not just the Sydney Theatre Awards: In 2025 Hayes was awarded the Critics' Choice Impact Award at the Time Out Sydney Arts and Culture Awards.

Hayes beyond Hayes

Musicals first staged at Hayes have frequently transferred or toured nationally, including *Assassins, In the Heights, Blood Brothers, Heathers, Violet, Little Shop of Horrors, H.M.S. Pinafore, Rent, Godspell, Dubbo Championship Wrestling, Spamalot, American Psycho, The Lucky Country, Calamity Jane, Murder for Two, The Pirates of Penzance,* and *Barbra: The Greatest Star.*

In 2027, *Phar Lap: The Electro-Swing Musical* will embark on a 20-week national tour, starting with a 5-week season at Carriageworks before travelling to The Art House Wyong, IPAC Merrigong, Geelong Art Centre and Melbourne Theatre Company.

We'll also present our first major new musical to premiere outside the Hayes Theatre when we produce *Mack the Knife* at the Foundry Theatre.

Dubbo Championship Wrestling, Photo by Phil Erbacher

About the Role

Since 2022, Hayes Theatre Co has been led by two Co-Artistic Directors in partnership with an Executive Director.

The Board now seeks to appoint an Artistic Director to commence in late 2027, deliver the 2028 season and lead programming from 2029 onwards. The next Artistic Director will help shape Hayes' 2029–2032 strategic plan and contribute to the company's longer-term ambition: developing work of the highest calibre, backing new Australian music theatre, fostering the next generation of artists, growing audiences and strengthening partnerships, touring opportunities and financial sustainability.

The Artistic Director will work in close partnership with the Executive Director to realise Hayes' artistic ambition while strengthening its audiences, financial sustainability, organisational capacity and stakeholder confidence. They will shape Hayes' own productions and curate the wider annual season, connecting artistic vision with the producing, marketing, fundraising and operational choices that bring the work to life.

This role offers artistic leadership, influence and impact: the chance to work close to artists, audiences and the making of the work, while shaping a company whose reputation, relationships and impact reach well beyond the scale of its venue.

The role reports to the Board through the Chair and is based at Hayes' office and theatre in Elizabeth Bay, working closely with creative teams, independent producers and the company's technical, producing and marketing teams. Some travel to support touring productions and attend industry events will be required.

The Hayes Board will support a thoughtful transition, including a handover with the outgoing Artistic Directors, early introductions to key artists, producers, funders, donors and sector partners, and clear alignment with the Board and Executive Director on strategy, priorities and decision-making.

Merrily We Roll Along, Photo by Phil Erbacher

Gutenberg! The Musical!, Photo by John McRae

Responsibilities

Artistic leadership

- Curate seasons that are bold, engaging and recognisably Hayes, with impact, range, integrity and a strong connection with audiences.
- Balance Hayes productions, independent seasons, creative development and special projects.
- Encourage fresh interpretations on existing repertoire and discover new voices, new forms and new collaborators.
- Support a strong pipeline of independent producers and presentations, with clear expectations, sustainable models and high artistic standards.
- Be a persuasive public voice for Hayes and the possibilities of musical theatre in Australia.

New work and artist development

- Champion new Australian musical theatre with care, rigour and imagination.
- Strengthen the Festival of New Work and other pathways that move promising ideas from early development to production, touring and future audiences.
- Foster the next generation of creatives, performers, and musicians.
- Lead the work of Hayes Creative, including commissioning and development.

Zombie! The Musical, Photo by John McRae

Barbra The Greatest Star, Photo by John McRae

Responsibilities

Partnerships, relationships and representation

- Build trusted partnerships with artists, producers, rights holders, presenters and industry partners.
- Develop opportunities to maximise the commercial potential of Hayes' productions.
- Represent Hayes confidently across the cultural sector and, with the Executive Director, build strong relationships with government, funders, sponsors, donors and philanthropists, making a compelling case for supporting Hayes' artistic value and impact.
- Cultivate meaningful relationships with audiences through regular conversation, events and forums, engaging them as active partners in Hayes' future.

Company leadership

- In partnership with the Executive Director and the Board, develop a strategic plan for Hayes to cover the 2029–2032 funding period.
- Align artistic ambition with Hayes' strategy, resourcing capacity and audience development plans.
- Contribute to budgeting, scheduling, planning and risk decisions, working with Hayes' personnel across all disciplines.
- With the Executive Director, champion all dimensions of workplace health and safety, including artist care and respectful rehearsal-room culture.
- Consider diversity across all aspects of workforce planning, on stage and off stage, making Hayes a safe and inclusive environment for all.
- Attend all meetings of the Hayes Board and, when required, Board subcommittees, developing trusted and respectful relationships with members of the Board. Model leadership behaviour and demonstrate commitment to Hayes' Code of Conduct.

Assassins, Photo by Phil Erbacher

A Little Night Music, Photo by John McRae

About You

Essential criteria

- Proven artistic leadership in music theatre or a related field.
- Strong curatorial judgement and the ability to shape a program with identity, range and audience engagement.
- Deep knowledge of music theatre in an Australian context, including artists, repertoire, practice, audiences and development pathways.
- Established professional relationships across the Australian performing arts sector and musical theatre ecology.
- Commercial judgement and comfort working with budgets, planning, risk, fundraising and strategic trade-offs.
- A genuine commitment to inclusion, cultural respect, access, artist care and safe practice.
- The presence and confidence to successfully represent Hayes with artists, audiences and stakeholders.
- Australian residency or work rights, required presence in Sydney and active engagement at Hayes' Elizabeth Bay theatre.

Desirable criteria

- Experience commissioning, developing or producing new Australian music theatre.
- A track record of effective collaboration with artists, producers, boards, staff, funders, donors and partners.
- Experience working in or with small-to-medium arts organisations.
- Experience partnering with an Executive Director or in a similar co-leadership model.
- Understanding of philanthropy, sponsorship, government funding and stakeholder advocacy.
- Experience building audiences, communities and partnerships around artistic programs.
- Understanding of licensing, royalties and intellectual property as they apply to musical theatre.

Personal attributes

- Artistically ambitious, curious and brave.
- Collaborative and credible in leadership style.
- Strategic, practical and financially aware.
- Inclusive and culturally aware.
- Persuasive and confident as a public advocate.
- Resilient, adaptable and comfortable working in a fast-paced, agile environment.
- Deeply committed to artists, audiences and the future of Australian musical theatre.

Ride The Cyclone, Photo by Prudence Upton

Terms of Employment

Basis	Full-time
Contract Length	2 year term.
Commencement	The current Artistic Directors are contracted through to October 2027, with the expectation that their duties include shaping and launching the 2028 season. It is expected that the successful candidate will start in mid-October 2027. Ideally, they would have some prior availability to spend time with Hayes personnel and contribute to Hayes activities.
Location	Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. The role requires presence in Sydney and active engagement in the life of the theatre, including the office, rehearsal room, performances, artists, audiences and stakeholders.
Hours of Work	Will vary around production and performance requirements. Evening and weekend work will be required.
External Engagements	Consideration will be given to the Artistic Director undertaking independent or external professional work each year, by mutual agreement as to time and duration.

Godspell, Photo by Phil Erbacher

The Lucky Country, Photo by Phil Erbacher

How to Apply

To apply, candidates should provide a CV and a short statement (no more than 3 pages) outlining why this role matters to them, what they would bring to Hayes, how they meet the essential criteria, and the artistic future they imagine for the company.

Applications should include contact details for two referees, who will only be contacted with the candidate's permission.

Hayes is committed to an inclusive and accessible recruitment process. We welcome applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and lived experience, and will make reasonable adjustments to support participation in the process.

For more information or a confidential conversation contact:

Executive Director
Will Harvey
will@hayestheatre.com.au

or

Chair
Fiona Allan
enquiries@fionaallan.com

To Apply

Please email Fiona Allan:
enquiries@fionaallan.com

Deadline for applications is:

5pm Friday
27 November 2026.

Interviews will be held in early 2027, with an appointment expected to be made by March 2027.

Phar Lap: The Electro-Swing Musical Photo by John McRae

Cover photo credits:
A Little Night Music, Photo by John McRae
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