



MEDIA RELEASE

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Merrigong Theatre Company appoints new General Manager

Merrigong Theatre Company has today announced the appointment of **Rachel Francis** to the role of General Manager.

Originally from the UK, Rachel will be leaving her current role as Manager, Community Cultural Development at the City of Whittlesea in Melbourne, where she has worked for several years. Prior to that, she was General Manager of Watermans Arts Centre in London, following an extensive career in production, technical and company management roles in the UK arts industry.

Simon Hinton, CEO / Artistic Director of Merrigong Theatre Company said the appointment followed a wide-ranging industry recruitment process. *"I'm excited that we've been able to secure the services of someone with Rachel's level of industry experience to further build on the great work that Pauline Doyle, our outgoing GM, has done over the last few years,"* he said.

Rachel commences full-time with Merrigong from 22 March 2021 following Pauline's retirement.

"I'm very excited to be stepping into the role of General Manager at Merrigong Theatre Company," said Rachel. *"This company has so much heart and soul, you can see it in the program, in the support for new artists, and in its connection to the community. I'll be bringing a positive leadership approach and a passion for excellence, building on the great work of my predecessor."*

Merrigong Theatre Company manages one of Australia's busiest, most dynamic regional venues – Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC) in Wollongong, about an hour south of Sydney. The company also manages the city's key civic and community venue, the Wollongong Town Hall. Since 2005, under Artistic Director Simon Hinton, Merrigong has developed into a vibrant theatre company in its own right – producing, presenting and touring exciting contemporary theatre and supporting the development of a wide range of theatre-makers. Merrigong presents a diverse annual season of theatre, dance and children's programming, including work sourced from Australia's finest performing arts companies, self-produced work, acclaimed international productions, and innovative contemporary work from new companies.

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For further information, interviews and images:

Edie Watt

ewatt@merrigong.com or phone 0422 050 691.