

MEDIA RELEASE

22 June 2021

## **\$21,000 funding boost for Wollongong's The Strangeways Ensemble**

Merrigong Theatre Company has received a share of the latest funding allocation announced by the Australia Council for the Arts, with a \$21,443 boost for a new work from the Merrigong's permanent company of professional actors, **The Strangeways Ensemble**.

Dedicated to exploring universal themes from a unique perspective, the Ensemble are recognised for making theatre that is evocative and challenging, but also poetic and funny. Comprised of seven permanent members, their work regularly combines humour, song, physical theatre and verbatim. Their most recent mainstage production, *Trash Talk*, was a look at industrial relations issues in the disability employment sector through a mash-up of workplace drama, video storytelling and professional wrestling, and premiered as part of Merrigong's annual Theatre Season in early 2020 before touring to Riverside Theatres in Parramatta.

The Australia Council grant will directly support **The Strangeways Cabaret**, a rollicking new cabaret curated and performed by the Ensemble and invited guests, premiering in The Music Lounge this September.

*"Joining The Strangeways Ensemble has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and to know that the Australian Council is committed to fund us gives me reassurance that our program can continue,"* said The Strangeways Ensemble member **Jordan Bowater** about the funding boost.

*"It's really great to be receiving this funding from the Australia Council as we are hoping to do more works for the public and we're particularly excited to do cabaret shows. We love to make people think and laugh,"* said Ensemble member **Ethan Arnold**.

Merrigong Theatre Company's Artistic Director / CEO Simon Hinton added: *"We are so excited to see this recognition and support for Merrigong's work with The Strangeways Ensemble from the Australia Council for the Arts. The Ensemble was formalised in 2018, after a 10 year program of*



*Merrigong working with The Disability Trust in a range of both community and professional contexts to support theatre making for people living with disability. We are incredibly proud of this amazing ensemble of artists – the only permanent professional acting ensemble in the region.”*

For more information on The Strangeways Ensemble, visit [Merrigong.com.au](http://Merrigong.com.au).

ENDS

For further information, interviews and images:

**Edie Watt**

[ewatt@merrigong.com](mailto:ewatt@merrigong.com) or phone 0422 050 691.