

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: Arts editors

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University of Melbourne Launches Graduate School 'Revolution' in performing and visual arts education

The University of Melbourne is revolutionising higher education in Australia, becoming the first Australian university to introduce a comprehensive graduate school model of education.

Today the University officially unveiled the first of its graduate schools.

This bold move breaks with the status quo in Australian higher education and provides genuine diversity in Australia's university sector. Melbourne's graduate school model is aligned with an emerging global norm, but remains distinctively Australian.

The VCA is Australia's leading tertiary training and education institution for the visual and performing arts with around 1100 students comprising undergraduate, postgraduate and short course participants. The VCA graduate school is an exciting new destination for postgraduate study and research training, complimenting the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts' distinct specialist undergraduate and non-award programs.

Associate Professor Su Baker, Associate Dean (Research and Research Training) and Head of Art at the VCA said that: "While the VCA continues to focus on the important high quality undergraduate experience, over the past fifteen years there has been a growing interest in postgraduate study in the creative arts sector. To this end there has been increasing attention paid to strengthening this significant area of the VCA's educational programs.

The VCA graduate school will encompass all artistic disciplines at the College – art, dance, drama, film and television, music, production, puppetry, Indigenous arts management, community cultural development and interdisciplinary research through the Centre for Ideas – and will include convergent and emerging new media forms," said Associate Professor Baker.

Current research activity at the VCA covers diverse areas such as aesthetic and philosophical enquiry in the visual arts, the translation of specialist knowledge about the body in dance and voice, analysis of techniques and training methods in music and technical innovation in areas such as animation and production design.

The range of courses from graduate certificates, graduate and postgraduate coursework programs, masters by research and PhD programs offer participants other pathways into a career in the arts. Recognised internationally, VCA academic staff are dedicated practitioners and theorists from all spheres of national and international art forms and represent a wide spectrum of experience, skills, knowledge and expertise.

Artistic Director of the Melbourne Theatre Company, Simon Phillips says: "Theatre is in a constant state of renewal, a spring that needs to be replenished from below, with new talent constantly bubbling to the surface."

"That's why MTC's relationship with VCA is so close. There is barely a production at MTC which is not giving a debut to a young actor or the big break to a neophyte stage manager or technician. Necessity compels us to do so. We know that those legions of theatre workers who graduate from VCA, fearfully talented and dauntingly qualified, will be the major source of the creativity and excitement of theatre in the decades ahead."

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