



CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE PARTNERS WITH BIG hART TO EMPOWER YOUNG WOMEN

Big hART is delighted to announce that **Canberra Theatre Centre** will partner with our young women's family violence prevention initiative **Project O**, to roll out the project in Canberra.

"We are delighted to once again have the support of Canberra Theatre Centre to offer this initiative for the young women in Canberra, to enable them to be change-makers in their community," said Genevieve Dugard, National Director of Project O.

"Canberra Theatre Centre has been a long-term supporter of Big hART's work over many years. As CTC's Company in Residence we have staged *Namatjira*, *Hipbone Sticking Out*, *Ngapartji Ngapartji* and *Museum of the Long Weekend*, and also presented masterclasses and events with local artists and arts workers."

Programming Manager of Canberra Theatre Centre Gill Hugonnet said "We continue to passionately support Big hART's world-class shows and their drive to share Australia's invisible stories in order to create change. We hope Project O will empower young Canberra women to build new skills, agency and pathways to employment."

The aim of Project O is to assist young women to build strong personal agency to foster resilience, change their story and help to drive generational change around the issue of family violence. With Project O, young women acquire new capabilities, enabling them to be courageous in the face of stereotypes and inequalities that may place them at risk. In Canberra the initiative works with young women from Campbell High School who will participate in non-welfare, skills-based workshops at Canberra Theatre Centre, and work with inspiring female mentors to enable them to step up, be heard and build a stronger community.

Project O is fast becoming a national movement –it began in Tasmania 2 years ago, was launched in Cooma this year, will commence in the Pilbara shortly, and has gone on to win numerous awards. The 'O' stands for Ophelia and of the 30,000 words in Shakespeare's play, the role of Ophelia is given less than a thousand. Her struggles are similar to many young women – she feels worthless and disempowered.

Big hART was founded in Tasmania's North West 25 years ago and has since grown into Australia's leading arts and social change company of national renown. Our work assists vulnerable people who are experiencing complex disadvantage to have a voice, reimagine their future, and gain the skills – the gift of their story can help drive generational change. To date Big hART has worked in over 50 communities, alongside over 8000 individuals in urban, rural, regional and remote Australia and won over 45 awards, most recently the 2016 Tasmanian Human Rights Award for Organisation of the Year.

Project O in Canberra is proudly supported by the Australia Council for the Arts, The Federal Government's Office for Women, Catalyst, Campbell High School and Canberra Theatre Centre.



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