

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY MEDIA STATEMENT

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A CHAPTER CONCLUDES AS A NEW ONE UNFOLDS FOR BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY

Black Swan State Theatre Company announces Artistic Director Kate Champion will step down from her role when her contract comes to an end in November.

An acclaimed director, Champion took on the position of Artistic Director in 2022 and will have programmed five seasons for the company.

Under her direction, Black Swan has gone from strength to strength, achieving both critical acclaim and record box office success. Productions including *Things I Know To Be True*, *The Pool*, *Never Have I Ever* and *Prima Facie* captivated audiences, with the latter selling out seasons in both Perth and Sydney.

Her programming highlights included Suzie Miller's *RBG: Of Many, One*, which generated a waitlist of more than 1,000 people and returns to the Heath Ledger Theatre this month, *August: Osage County* by Tracy Letts, and original works by WA artists - *Dirty Birds* by Hayley and Mandy McElhinney, *Raised in Big Spirit Country* - by Naomi Pigram-Mitchell and *Carol* by Andrea Gibbs. Most recently, Champion directed *Meow Meow's The Red Shoes*, which premiered in Sydney before touring to Melbourne and Perth as part of Perth Festival, filling His Majesty's Theatre and receiving rave reviews.

Champion's leadership has been recognised with several notable accolades, including the 2025 Creative Australia Award for Theatre, honouring her more than three decades of contribution to Australian performance. In 2023 she received the PAWA Award for Outstanding Direction for *Things I Know To Be True* and has also been named in *Business News' Power 500*, recognising Western Australia's most influential leaders across key industries.

Black Swan Chair Francois Witbooi said Champion's incredible connections within the artistic community across Australia cemented strong relationships for the Perth-based company with all the major national theatre companies.

"She has been leading the company and our audiences to explore the contemporary meaning of what is theatre, with site-specific works such as *The Pool* being held at Bold Park swimming pool to sold out audiences as part of the 2024 Perth Festival, and commissioning and programming several successful original WA plays and adaptations" he said.

Champion embraced the local sector, recognising their talent and skills, with many shows driven entirely by Perth creatives.

“Thank you, Kate for your extraordinary contribution to Black Swan State Theatre Company,” Witbooi said.

“While we are saddened to be losing a person of Kate’s calibre and expertise, we look forward to the fresh perspective a new director will bring as the company continues to evolve.”

Champion said the company would remain close to her heart.

“I have loved my time steering the artistic helm of Black Swan State Theatre Company,” she said.

“From the beginning of my tenure, I’ve felt embraced and supported by my colleagues, the local artistic community and our enthusiastic donors and audiences.

“The greatest challenge for an Artistic Director is to encourage and support artists to take risks, stretch their imagination and give their all, while simultaneously keeping audiences inspired and entertained by the highest calibre plays on offer. It’s a balance I believe we’ve achieved in my time with the company.

“Black Swan will remain close to my heart, as will the people who make creating art an essential element of this vibrant WA society.”

Champion is an award-winning artist receiving multiple Helpmann, Australian Dance and Green Room awards. She has extensive experience working in theatre, dance-theatre, opera, musical-theatre, film and circus – in genres ranging from devised original work, new Australian plays, classics, comedy, multi-art form work, interactive and physical theatre. She has worked on large-scale projects for major theatre companies as well as in the small to-medium and independent theatre scene.

A national and international search for a new Artistic Director to lead the company will commence in the coming weeks.

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