

# Media Release

**The Hon Danny Pearson MP**

Assistant Treasurer

Minister for Regulatory Reform

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Creative Industries

Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Thursday, 13 May 2021

## **BALLARAT TEAM PREPARES TO TAKE THE STAGE**

A team of Ballarat artists is preparing to take to the stage for the world premiere of their play *Coconut Woman* as part of Melbourne's Yirramboi festival, backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

Writer, director and producer Maryanne Sam, actors Deb Lowah Clarke and Tobi Sam Morris, and musician Jayden Lillyst are among hundreds of Victorian-based artists whose work has been supported through the latest round of the VicArts Grants program.

Maryanne Sam received a \$25,000 grant to present the show, which explores and celebrates her Torres Strait Islander culture.

The play features comedy, drama and music to tell the story of a woman from the city whose work draws her to the Torres Strait Islands, the ancestral home of her late mother. There, a comedy of errors ensues as she navigates Ailan culture and her newfound Ailan family.

*Coconut Woman* is one of almost 100 diverse creative projects to share in funding totaling more than \$2.5 million for independent artists and small organisations through Creative Victoria.

The latest recipients include artists working across the breadth of the creative industries, including theatre, dance, literature, visual art, community collaborations, works for children and more.

The program has also provided grants for the presentation of creative events including the upcoming Yarra Valley Writers Festival, support for a 12-month mentorship initiative for emerging artists with Disability and a program addressing gender diversity in the music industry through mentoring of girls and gender diverse youth.

To see the full list of projects supported through the VicArts Grants program visit [creative.vic.gov.au](https://creative.vic.gov.au).

*Coconut Woman* runs from 12-15 May at the Meat Market, North Melbourne as part of the Yirramboi First Nations arts festival. For more details go to [yirramboi.com.au](https://yirramboi.com.au).

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson**

*"Our VicArts Grants program is all about backing local creatives like Maryanne Sam – so they have a platform to share their work with audiences across the state."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Ballarat Juliana Addison**

*"I wish the Coconut Woman team all the best as they return to the stage next month, taking a bit of Ballarat brilliance to Melbourne."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle**

*"This will only bolster Ballarat's creative offering and bring more visitors and jobs to our city."*

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