



PRESS RELEASE

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE AUSTRALIA'S LONGEST SERVING NATIONAL DIRECTOR RETIRES AFTER 29 YEARS



- Bronwyn Watkins was responsible for a number of “firsts” for RAD Australia
- Launch of ballet teaching qualifications and the rollout of major global initiatives to increase access to dance for all
- Hosted the Genée International Ballet Competition in 2002 and 2016
- Oversaw the major redevelopment of RAD Australia’s Sydney headquarters in 2012

After 29 years as National Director of the Royal Academy of Dance in Australia, Bronwyn Watkins will be retiring in July 2019. Bronwyn is the longest serving National Director of the RAD in Australia, the largest RAD national office outside London.

Bronwyn has overseen significant growth and expansion of the RAD’s activities in Australia during her tenure. She has been responsible for introducing a range of new programmes and syllabi, the redevelopment of RAD Australia’s Sydney headquarters, and developed initiatives which have widened access to dance for all ages and abilities across Australia.



During Bronwyn's leadership, RAD Australia has broken new ground, earning local recognition throughout, as one of the world's leading dance education and training organisations. With a firm commitment to deliver dance for all, Bronwyn's leadership has seen RAD Australia undertake projects to encourage more boys to dance (Project B) and also Silver Swans™, ballet classes designed specifically for the over 55s in Australia.

In 2002, the Genée International Ballet Competition was held in Sydney. This was the first time the prestigious competition had been held outside London, and Steven McRae (now Principal Dancer of The Royal Ballet) won the gold medal on home soil. The competition returned to Sydney in 2016 to great acclaim.

Bronwyn's time as National Director has also been defined by forging a range of partnerships with leading dance and arts organisations across Australia. Projects have been undertaken with AusDance, World Dance Alliance, and Dance and the Child International, allowing RAD Australia to bring dance to more people in more places.

Bronwyn reflects: *'It has been an honour and a privilege leading the Academy in Australia over these years, supported by a hardworking and dedicated team of staff and volunteers, some for 20-25 years. Both the staff and the membership have been a source of inspiration to me. As the Academy approaches its centenary I am pleased to be leaving RAD Australia as a stronger, more accessible and engaged leader in the field of dance education and training, than ever before.'*

Chief Executive Luke Rittner said: *"Bronwyn Watkins has led RAD Australia with loyalty, commitment, and distinction for almost 30 years. Over a period of rapid change, Bronwyn has provided continuity and stability while also ensuring the Academy has evolved and is fit for purpose in the 21st Century. With a strong regional structure and a dedicated and professional team in Sydney, Bronwyn leaves RAD Australia financially sound and playing an active and respected role as a leading player in the dance industry in Australia."*

Recruitment for a new RAD National Director Australia begins immediately.

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors

Website: www.rad.org.au / www.royalacademyofdance.org

Facebook: @RoyalAcademyofDanceAustralia

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Royal Academy of Dance

With 14,000 members in 84 countries, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the largest and most influential dance education and training organisations in the world. Established in 1920 to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training, the Academy helps and encourages its teachers to perfect their teaching skills and pass on this knowledge to their students. There are currently over 1,000 students in full-time or part-time teacher training programmes with the Academy and each year the examination syllabus is taught to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

- ENDS-

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