

The National Drama School

ADVANCED DIPLOMA OF ACTING

PROSPECTUS



2027

Course Code: 11360NAT CRICOS Course Code: 103336H

Photo credits: Darren Gill

N THE NATIONAL
DRAMA SCHOOL

The National Drama School

Established in 1936 as the first drama training institution in Australia, The National Drama School continues to be an outstanding training organisation, devoted to providing exceptional tuition to all students and nurturing them through this next stage of their artistic development.

Under the inspired leadership of Director of Drama Dr Jaime Dörner, the School's teaching faculty of industry experts impart their professional skills and techniques with budding young actors in the heritage-listed National Theatre building.

The National Drama School is famously the company that cares. We understand that a career in theatre, film and television is physically and emotionally demanding as well as highly competitive. We also understand what it feels like to be passionate about the performing arts; our professionally trained and encouraging teachers are here to develop your skills, your confidence, and your resilience. We shall provide the necessary methodologies and support to help you fulfil your full potential.

Located in Melbourne's heritage-listed National Theatre under the same roof as the acclaimed Ballet School, the Drama School enables students to train in our beautiful heritage listed building and perform in both the 800-seat auditorium and black box theatre, supported by our professional production and technical teams.

We believe that everyone should have the chance to enhance their artistic skills and to follow their dreams in a supportive and nurturing environment. We look forward to helping you reach your professional goals.

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL DRAMA SCHOOL

In these ever evolving times, The National Drama School is committed to fostering and developing the voice of our next generation of performing artists. Artists who are responsive, reflective and inquisitive about their own context.

The core values underpinning all our programs are Care, Excellence, and Community. We Care for each individual student, honoring their unique background and way of learning. We pursue Excellence in our teaching and performance outcomes, and we are passionate about The National as a vibrant centre of creativity and performance-making to nurture our student Community.

During an intensive two years of study, you'll work with specialist industry practitioners to deeply engage with the craft of acting. You'll be immersed in voice and movement training, screen acting and stagecraft.

Small class sizes and individualised attention will ensure that you hone your individuality, talent and point of difference as a performer.

Students study on-camera technique with filmed assessments, create showreels, self-tapes, and perform a range of texts on The National Theatre main stage and black box theatre. You will be featured in a performance directed by a leading industry director, which is filmed and circulated nationally to casting agents.

Students of The National Drama School have the opportunity to apply for a number of industry pathways and connect with casting agents and respected industry professionals. Additional performance opportunities are also available with the Ballet School and partner companies.



The National Drama School promotes the development of a close network with your cohort where you will learn how to communicate with professionalism, clarity and respect. You will develop practical techniques to support personal resilience and well-being. At the end of your training you will have the skills to thrive as a successful, entrepreneurial freelance artist, create professional self-tapes, and approach every audition with confidence.

Join us at The National to launch your acting career!

Dr Jaime Dörner
Director of Drama

ADVANCED DIPLOMA OF ACTING

Photo Credit : Tom Noble

Advanced Diploma of Acting

Course Code: 11360NAT
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Duration

2 years (22 contact hours per week on average),
Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm.

During terms when productions are staged these times may increase.

Fees 2027

AU/NZ student fees

Tuition fees \$27,400 for two-year Advanced Diploma.

International Students

Tuition fees \$31,000 for two-year Advanced Diploma

Course information

The Advanced Diploma of Acting (11360NAT) is a nationally accredited, full-time, professional training course that prepares students for careers as actors and performance makers in theatre, film, television and new media.

The two-year Advanced Diploma provides an intensive immersion focussed on the craft of acting for stage and screen.

Students work closely with a range of Industry professionals undertaking a rigorous program of actor training. Students will undertake practical training activities in a rehearsal and theatre space.

Students are encouraged to work with passion and engagement, demonstrate a strong commitment to develop their own individual approach, and to continuously refine their professional goals.

Units

Core Compulsory Units

CUARES601	Research and apply concepts of live performance practice
NAT11360001	Demonstrate a range of body awareness techniques in performance related activities
NAT11360002	Demonstrate techniques to physically release the voice in performance related activities
NAT11360003	Explore techniques to enliven and embody text in performance related activities
NAT11360004	Explore the key elements of the theatrical experience
NAT11360005	Create performance pieces
NAT11360006	Produce, promote and present an original public performance
NAT11360007	Prepare, rehearse and perform stage plays for public performance
NAT1130008	Rehearse and perform for the camera
CUAIND412	Provide freelance service
CUAPRF314	Develop audition techniques
CUAWSH312	Apply work health and safety practices

Year One

Intensive training in acting, voice, movement and performance making.

You will learn to analyse acting techniques for stage and screen, including the Stanislavski, Uta Hagen and Michael Chekhov techniques.

Learn to connect with and trust your instincts and develop connections with your ensemble.

Training on movement techniques to develop your physical sensitivity, presence, precision and power and voice training with the goal of freeing your voice and extend your vocal range and expression.

Your first year culminates in the creation of a solo performance in which you showcase your acting and performance making skills.

Year Two

In the second year you undertake a concentrated year of Showcase performances that extend your skills, hone your craft and showcase your work to industry leaders and performers.

Term 1: Filming of Professional Showreels and Self-tape Classes.

Term 2: Showcase Performance in the Black Box theatre.

Term 3: Showcase Performance on The National Theatre Mainstage.

Term 4: Group devised performance.

Throughout the year you will connect with industry leaders through guest talks and masterclasses. You'll refine your audition skills and develop self tapes, and freelance skills to be an entrepreneurial artist. You'll graduate from the program with a series of professional headshots, showreels, and professional-level performance and performance-making experience.

Trainers

The Drama School draws its staff exclusively from active industry professionals. Not only does this ensure the currency and relevance of our training but also provides students with valuable contacts in a wide range of performance and technical areas.

Auditions

In person audition will be held at The National Drama School Studios on October 3rd and December 4th.

Funding

VET Student Loan Scheme and Scholarships may be available for eligible candidates.

Entry Requirements

Students must be 18 years or over by 1st January the year their studies commence. Students must have completed Year 12 of Secondary School or have literacy skills at ACSF level 4 in an approved LLND test.

Acceptance is by audition only. This course is open to international students. Students must meet all requirements and pass all units of competency in each subsequent year to obtain the qualification.

INFORMATION

Uniform Requirements

Individual teachers may have specific clothing and equipment requirements for their classes and students will be informed of these in the first class. Comfortable loose clothing should be worn (no jeans or jewellery). Towels, deodorant, and basic hygiene product use are essential.

Resources

The courses fee structure includes the cost of any mandatory texts and video material. The school has a library with secondary sources that are available to be loaned to all students. Computer and internet facilities are provided in the library for students to use whilst in the building. A diary or notepad is required for the journaling of class activities. Students will require access to a laptop and the internet to submit assignments electronically as well as access online lessons if changes to the delivery mode are required.

Career Guidance

The school maintains close contact with a range of respected industry professionals many of whom teach in the Advanced Diploma program. In the second year students work closely with these industry reps and produce a Showreel which is circulated nationally to casting agents, and also present a showcase to the industry.

The National maintains professional industry links with companies such as Bell Shakespeare and Red Stitch Actors Theatre. Regular Industry Q&A sessions are held in our Black Box theatre with professional actors, directors, producers, agents and theatre-makers so students can get real insights into the profession and begin to make contact with their industry.



SCHOLARSHIPS

A person is seated on a wooden stool, playing an acoustic guitar. They are wearing a dark jacket and dark trousers. The background is dark with a dense field of small, glowing orange and yellow dots, resembling a starry night sky or a stage effect. The lighting is warm and focused on the person and the guitar.

Lisle Jones Scholarship

In honour of the much-respected and much-loved former student, actor and teacher at the National Theatre, Lisle Jones, this scholarship is valued at \$3,000. It is awarded to a second year Advanced Diploma Student who, in the opinion of the Director and teaching faculty, has both demonstrated their professional potential, and can demonstrate that financial assistance would significantly benefit them. The funds are to be used primarily for the payment of tuition fees.

The W.P. Carr Award

This scholarship, named in honour of the National Theatre's first Artistic Director of Drama, is valued at \$1,000. It is awarded to a second year Advanced Diploma student who, in the opinion of the Director and teaching faculty, has both demonstrated their professional potential, and can demonstrate that financial assistance would significantly benefit them. The funds are to be used primarily for the payment of tuition fees.

Student Information

STUDYING AT THE NATIONAL DRAMA SCHOOL



Student ID Cards

All students will be issued with a student card and student number. All students must provide a current passport photo on the day of orientation. ID cards are provided free of charge to all enrolled students. A \$10 replacement fee is required if the card is lost or damaged.

Professional Representation

Students who have professional representation should advise their agent at the commencement of their course that they may not be available to take certain work that conflicts with class times. External training will be approved at the discretion of the School Director.

Facilities

The National Drama School is uniquely positioned as we have our own heritage-listed theatre, right in the heart of St Kilda where productions of large scale can be produced.

Studio 2, The National's intimate 50 seat black box theatre is used for rehearsals and Unit of Study performances and showings.

Our smaller studios, equipped with television and camera facilities, can be booked by current students for private rehearsal times free of charge.

There is a small library for students consisting of relevant drama and dance related plays, books, journals, magazines, sheet music, videos and CDs. Students also have unlimited access to IT facilities (computers, printer and photocopier).

The school has kitchen facilities that allow students to store and heat food, as well as a lounge area to relax in.

All students are provided a locker to store valuables. This is a service accessed by paying a \$10 key deposit, which is to be returned to the office on completion of your studies at the end of each year.

Orientation Day

Students are required to attend an orientation day prior to the start of their course. The aim of the day is to provide students with information about studying at the National Theatre Melbourne, and for interstate or international students, about living in Melbourne. It will include information on the following:

- Information on course of study and timetable for the year
- Fees, charges, and VET Student Loans (where applicable)
- Student Handbook, including information on Policies and Procedures (Support services, refunds, deferral, suspension and withdrawal, complaints)
- Student ID cards
- Contact details
- Melbourne information, public transport and health services.
- Fire safety, evacuation and OHS
- Unique Student Identifier information

You will be notified by your School with the details once you have accepted your place on the course.

Graduation

The Drama School holds an annual graduation ceremony for all students who have successfully completed their accredited training course. The Drama graduation ceremony is usually held on the year of graduating in late November / early December.

Technology Requirements

It is required for all students enrolled into the Advanced Diploma of Acting to have a learning device, PC, laptop, or tablet including secure internet to be able to complete all set work and assessments for online delivery if necessary.

VET STUDENT LOANS

Vet Student Loan Scheme

The National Drama School's Advanced Diploma course is recognised under the loan scheme. Students who enrol on any of these courses may be eligible to apply for support under the loan scheme, to pay for all or part of their Course Fees. The VSL scheme is not available to support any other study or living costs you may incur whilst enrolled. The amount students are allowed to borrow is released by DEWR in September each year.

What Is The VSL Scheme?

VET Student Loans (VSL) is a Government student loan scheme for the VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector. It is part of the Commonwealth Government's Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) to help students pay their fees when studying, with eligible organisations, at Diploma level or above.

How Does It Work?

On enrolment, if you meet the eligibility criteria you can elect to access a loan and the Australian Government will pay (all or in part) the course fees on your behalf.

The debt is incurred gradually, as you enrol in units of study and progress through your course. There are four census dates per year aligned with the four terms of the course where fees become applicable for all enrolled students. Once these census dates occur, you are then liable for the unit tuition fees and if you have elected to access VSL, it is then your debt occurs or increases by the amount of the fees plus any loan fee.

All tuition fees are set at the time of enrolment for the full period that you are studying at The National Drama School. Census dates are published on the website and are listed in the course handbook.

Students who access VSL will have a loan with the Australian Government which they then repay through the Australian Tax system once they reach the minimum income threshold level for repayment.

Eligibility

You will be eligible to apply via The National Drama School for a VET Student Loan if you meet the eligibility criteria and the student entry procedure.

Citizenship Or Residency

You must meet and provide proof of one of the following:

- Are an Australian citizen; OR
- Are a New Zealand Special Category Visa holder who meets long term residency requirements; OR
- Are a permanent humanitarian visa holder usually resident in Australia.

Academic Suitability

All students must pass an audition to gain a place on our courses and once you are enrolled on an approved course, you also need to meet the academic suitability requirements for the VSL scheme.

Applying to The National Drama School:

You must provide either:

- A copy of your Australian Year 12 Certificate (Senior Secondary Certificate of Education); OR
- Display competence at or above Exit Level 4 in the Australian Core Skills Framework in both reading and numeracy through an approved LLND assessment tool and The National Drama School reasonably believes that you display competence;

OR

- Provide a copy of a successfully completed Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate IV or higher qualification that was delivered in English.

For more information and borrowing limitations please visit dewr.gov.au



The National Drama School

LIVING AND STUDYING IN MELBOURNE

Students at The National Drama School often come from overseas and interstate to study. This section provides some basic information about Melbourne and St Kilda where The National Theatre Melbourne is based.

Location

The National Drama School is approximately 7kms from the Melbourne City Centre and less than 100 metres from the St Kilda foreshore, Luna Park and the Palais Theatre.

Accommodation For Students

There is rental accommodation in the surrounding areas close to The National Drama School. If you need to find accommodation whilst you are studying in Melbourne there are a number of websites that will help, some include:

www.fdz.com.au/facilities

www.melbournhomestay.org

www.realestate.com.au

Public Transport

Melbourne has a great public transport system consisting of trains, trams and buses. To use public transport, you must have a Myki card. To get to The National Theatre Melbourne in St Kilda you can access by:

Trams: No.96 St Kilda to Brunswick via the city, No.16 from Kew to Melbourne University via the city.

Buses: No.246 from Clifton Hill to Elsternwick

Trains: Balacava Station is 15 mins walk or direct connection by No.16 tram.

Useful Websites

For more information on Melbourne, St Kilda, Victoria and Australia try the following websites and phone apps.

Visit Victoria: www.visitvictoria.com

Visit Melbourne: www.visitmelbourne.com

City of Melbourne: www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

The National Drama School

WHY CHOOSE THE NASH?

The National Theatre is one of Australia's most beloved and enduring cultural landmarks. Founded in 1935, it has stood for nearly a century as a home for the performing arts in Melbourne – nurturing generations of actors, dancers, and theatre-makers who have gone on to shape the national stage and screen. Its grand St Kilda home carries the memory of every performance ever given within its walls, from classic productions to bold contemporary works. To train here is to step into that lineage – to learn in the same spaces where Australian theatre history was made, and to carry that legacy forward into a profession that needs passionate, well-trained artists now more than ever.

Life as a student at the National Drama School is unlike any other arts training experience. Small ensembles with tailored artistry development foster a deep creative bonds within your ensemble allows your to grow as a professional unlike any other space. The National Drama School is a tight-knit family and commits fully to a shared artistic vision over time.

Across the two-year Advanced Diploma, students master more than just technique; they build it together, devising, rehearsing, and performing works of real ambition and scale. Each year brings new challenges and new creative peaks, with the ensemble evolving from a group of individuals into a true company. It is an immersive, demanding, and profoundly rewarding way to train – one that mirrors the collaborative realities of professional life from the very first week.

**“I DISCOVERED THE POWER OF TRUST
WORKING WITH MY ENSEMBLE AT THE
NASH.”**

TARQUINN O'TOOLE
ADVANCED DIPLOMA GRADUATE, 2025

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applying for The National Drama School

For the 2027 intake, auditions will be conducted in the School's studios in St Kilda for students living locally, and via video in the first instance for interstate and international students.

Audition submissions can be sent at any time from August onwards.

Studio auditions will take place on October 3rd and December 4th.

All places will be finalised by December 2027.

On rare occasions, and if a place becomes available, we may accept applications after this date – contact enquiries@nationaltheatre.org.au if you are interested beyond December.

Entry Requirements

Students must be 18 years or over by the 1st of January the year their studies commence. Students must have completed Year 12 High School or equivalent. Acceptance is by audition only.

This course is open to international students (see International Prospectus for full details). Students must meet all requirements and pass all units of competency in each subsequent year to obtain the qualification.

TO APPLY (ALL APPLICANTS)

1. Complete the online application form, answering all questions (add extra pages if required).
2. Upload a recent headshot photograph to your application.
3. Submit the completed form
4. Submit your video for the first stage of the audition process if an Interstate/International applicant.

On receipt of the application, the auditionee is emailed the monologue booklet, candidates will complete the 'Drama Audition Video Submission Form' if applying interstate or overseas.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Applying In Person (VIC/AU Applicants):

Studio Auditions will take place on October 3rd and December 4th.

Auditionees will attend one session, where they will perform their prepared monologues individually. Your monologues will be reviewed in conjunction with your application. The tutors will be looking for evidence of:

- an ability to relax sufficiently to engage with what they are performing and be open to direction
- curiosity and enjoyment of performance
- an ability to maintain focus
- willingness to collaborate
- an ability to communicate and connect with text

You will then participate in a Group Session. This session is included because a major component of the course is working with a group to produce work. As such, your ability to work within a group is part of the auditioning process.

During the Group Session, you will be workshopped through your performance to assess your suitability for the Advanced Diploma of Acting, whilst looking for further evidence of:

- an ability to play and be inventive
- an ability to imaginatively engage in a fictional situation
- commitment to collaborative creation

All auditionees will receive notification of the outcome of their audition within seven days of their final audition.

INTERSTATE/INTERNATIONAL AUDITION PROCESS:

Stage 1 – Video

Video submission of two monologues; one Shakespeare and one contemporary (one monologue is to be chosen from the School's booklet, the other must be of your own choosing).

When choosing please note:

- your Shakespeare choice must be in verse – NOT PROSE.
- your Contemporary choice can be from 1900 to the present day.

Once prepared, video yourself – frame size: whole body.

Then upload either the video or a YouTube/ Vimeo video link into the Video Submission Form that has been emailed to you.

If you are successful at Stage 1, you will be invited for a zoom interview where you may be workshopped through your monologue and to assess your suitability to the Advanced Diploma of Acting, and looking for further evidence of:

- an ability to play and invent
- an ability to imaginatively engage in a fictional situation
- commitment to collaborative creation

Stage 2 – Individual Interview (Scheduled From Late–November)

Your application will be reviewed in conjunction with your video submission. The tutors will be looking for evidence of:

- an ability to relax sufficiently to engage with what auditionees are performing
- an enjoyment of performance
- an ability to maintain focus
- an ability to communicate and connect with text

All auditionees will receive notification of the outcome of their audition within seven days of their final audition.

For all enrolled Advanced Diploma of Acting students, Term 1 will commence in January 2027. All students will be required to attend the full day Orientation Day. Please note: there is no mid-year intake available for this course.

Please visit www.thenationaldramaschool.vic.edu.au

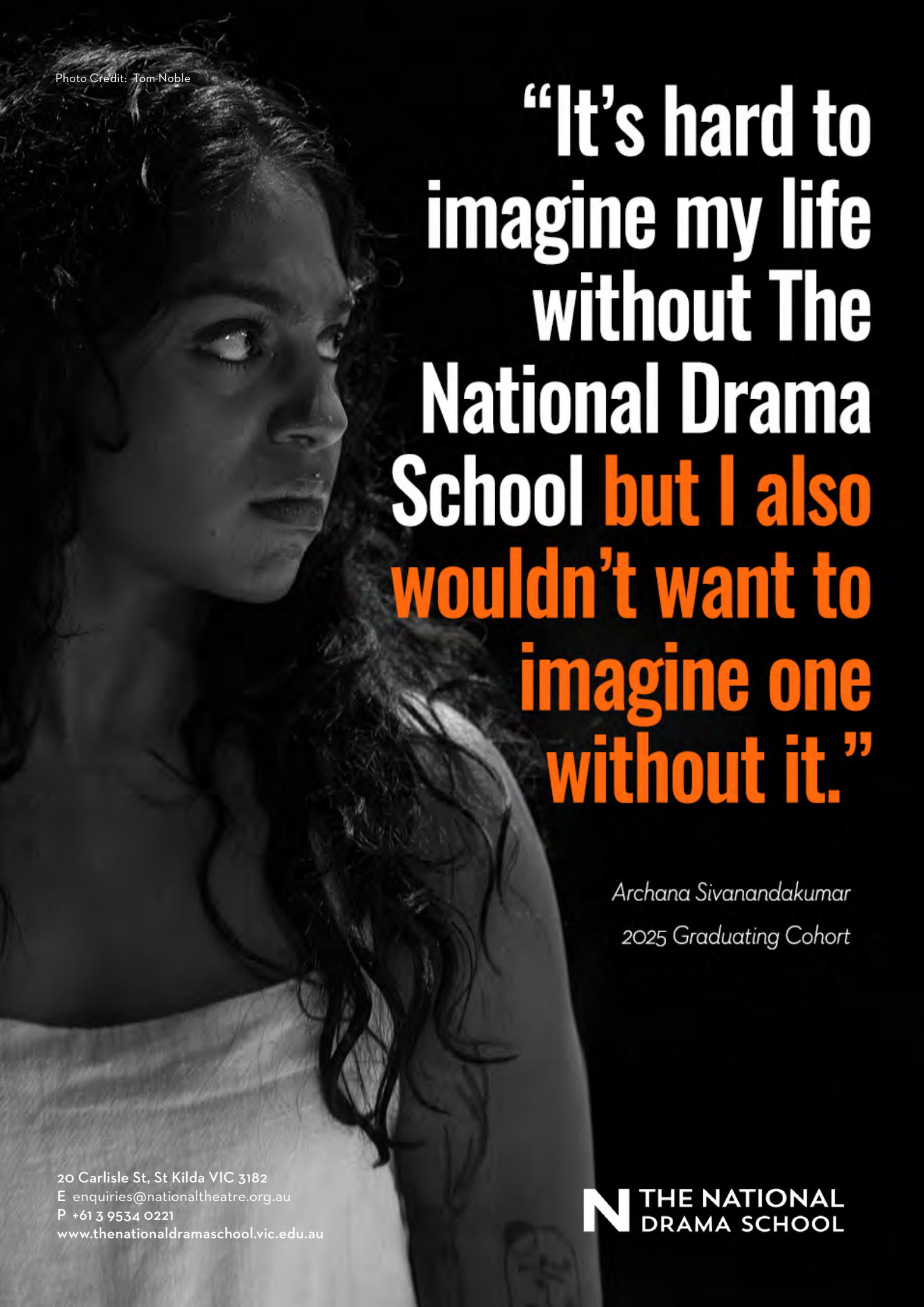


Photo Credit: Tom Noble

**“It’s hard to
imagine my life
without The
National Drama
School but I also
wouldn’t want to
imagine one
without it.”**

Archana Sivanandakumar

2025 Graduating Cohort

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