

CARRIAGEWORKS

DANCEHOUSE D/

the **KEIR**
FOUNDATION

**Keir Choreographic Award launches
- Australia's first national prize supporting contemporary dance
invites entries for inaugural Award -**

Carriageworks, The Keir Foundation and Dancehouse today announced that Dancehouse and Carriageworks will present the first Australian choreographic award. The Keir Choreographic Award will be a biennial award dedicated to the commissioning of new choreographic work and promoting innovation in contemporary dance.

Carriageworks, the Keir Foundation and Dancehouse will partner for the first time to present the award which will bring significant support and profile to the dance sector, increase the profile of contemporary dance in Australia both nationally and internationally.

'Contemporary dance is thriving in Australia right now and yet there are few, if any, opportunities to showcase, reflect on and reward talent on a truly national level. This award creates an exciting and unprecedented platform for all Australians to enjoy the very best contemporary dance work being made across the country. We are thrilled to be playing a part in the development of this landmark event in the dance sector.' said Phillip Keir, Director of The Keir Foundation.

The Keir Choreographic Award will be supported and delivered by Dancehouse in Melbourne and Carriageworks in Sydney. A two-week season of the commissioned works will be presented at Dancehouse in Melbourne with a view to provide increased exposure for the artists. The jury will select four of the commissioned works to be presented at Carriageworks in Sydney for the finals. The winner will receive a \$30,000 prize. A \$10,000 prize will be voted by the audience.

'The Keir Choreographic award represents a major step forward for the sector in Australia. For the first time, there will be a cash prize for commissioned choreographic work in Australia. The literary, music and visual arts sectors have a comprehensive range of awards in Australia with over 100 national cash prize awards annually. It is time that a national showcase was also provided which rewards quality and innovation in contemporary dance. Significantly, this initiative also marks the first major commitment to the dance sector by a private foundation as this award is only possible through the generous support of The Keir Foundation,' said Lisa Havilah, Director, Carriageworks.

'By creating a national award, we are providing an important opportunity for fostering excellence, originality and risk-taking. The Keir Choreographic Award will build a much needed platform for artists to present new works which may tour nationally and internationally. We firmly believe this outstanding collaboration will bring renewed exposure to the art form. We are tremendously excited to be part of this pioneering initiative,' said Dancehouse Artistic Director and CEO, Angela Conquet.

Importantly, the Keir Choreographic Award will have a particularly national focus and will be open to applicants and artists from other art forms. The use of a video application in the selection process will support the inclusion of choreographers and artists for whom English is a not their first language.

Entries open on 20 January 2014, calling for professional artists with an established practice to enter by submitting a 5min video pitch with a choreographic idea of 20min in duration. A jury with national and international representatives will assess the initial video applications and select eight works to be provided commissioning funds. These eight works will be then produced by Dancehouse and Carriageworks. The same jury will then select the semi-finalists and the winner of the Award.

The Award process will also encourage audience engagement. A public program will be developed around both the semi-final and final seasons and will include master-classes, post-show talks and panel discussions. It will also focus on developing international interest in new Australian choreographic work by inviting an international jury.

TIMELINE

Applications open	20 January 2014
Applications close	28 February 2014
Commissioned artists announced	25 March 2014
Rehearsal period	14 April – 29 June 2014
Dancehouse Season (Melbourne)	3-13 July 2014
Finals Carriageworks (Sydney)	16 - 19 July 2014

ABOUT CARRIAGEWORKS

Carriageworks presents a contemporary multi-arts program that engages artists and audiences with contemporary ideas and issues. The program is artist led and emerges from Carriageworks' commitment to reflecting social and cultural diversity. The Carriageworks artistic program is ambitious, risk taking and unrelenting in its support of artists. Carriageworks is a cultural facility of the NSW Government and is supported by Arts NSW. The Carriageworks program can be viewed at carriageworks.com.au

ABOUT DANCEHOUSE

Dancehouse is the Centre for independent dance in Melbourne. Through its programs of residencies, performance, training and research, Dancehouse is a space for developing challenging, invigorating, and socially engaged moving art. Dancehouse is also a hub of knowledge and resources, a presenter of outstanding programs targeting multiple communities and a fierce advocate for the vibrancy and literacy of the Australian independent dance sector.

ABOUT THE KEIR FOUNDATION

Established by Phillip Keir and Sarah Benjamin as a private ancillary fund, the Foundation's purpose is to foster innovation and excellence in the arts, particularly among new and emerging practitioners. The Keir Foundation has previously worked in commissioning dance projects and this choreographic award has emerged from an ongoing involvement with the dance community both nationally and internationally. Phillip Keir worked for twenty years in media, specifically as Chief Executive, Publisher and Founder of NextMedia. He is a board member of the Biennale of Sydney and Lift International Theatre Festival.

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