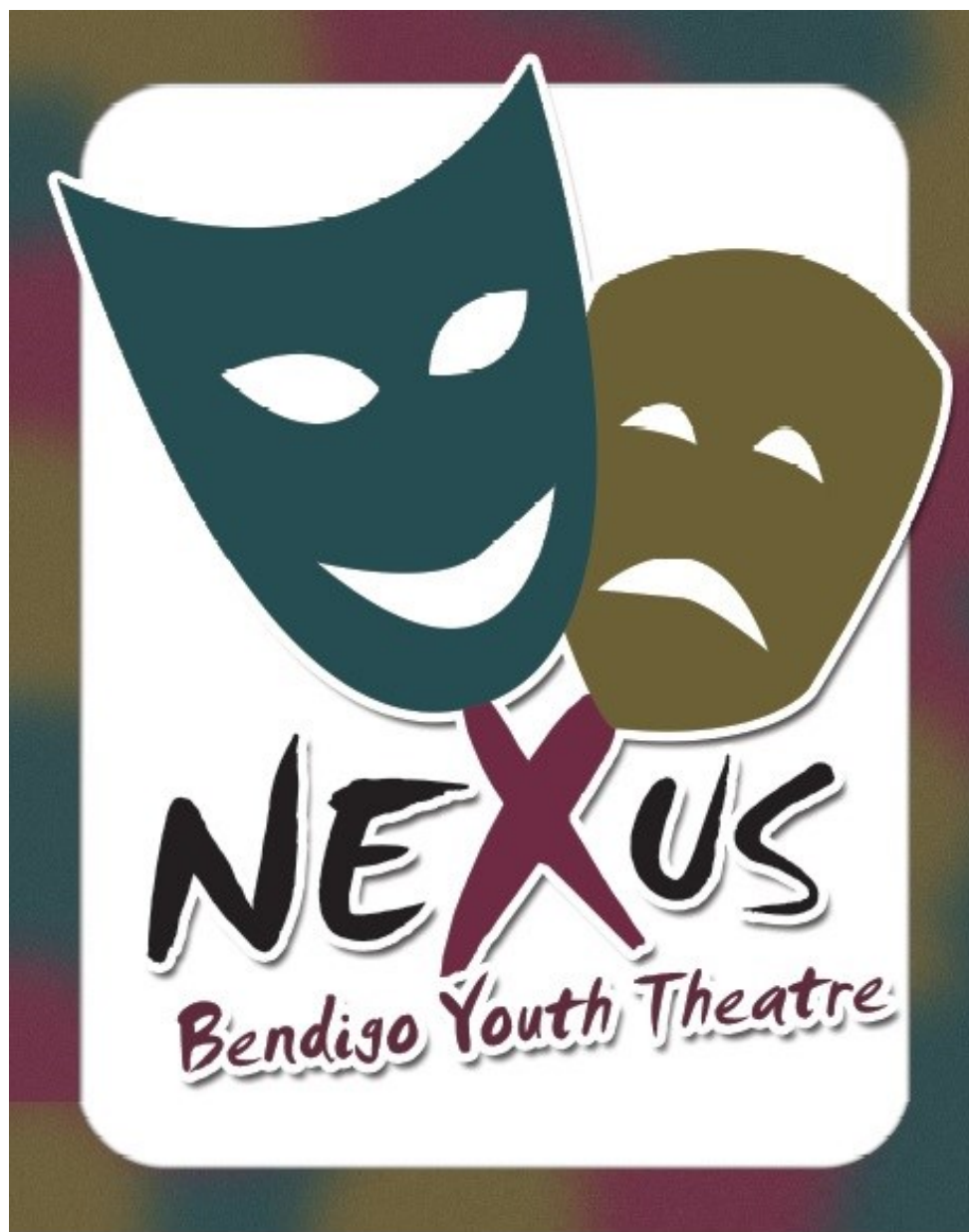


"IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE..."



## *Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre's Handbook*

Connecting Lives • Building Community • Nurturing Creativity  
Producing Excellence • Training for Life

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**For information and Enquiries**

**www.nexusbyt.com**      All Enquiries to: [info@nexusbyt.com](mailto:info@nexusbyt.com)

Phone or Text Enquiries to: **0401 691 931**

# NEXUS BENDIGO YOUTH THEATRE

*Connecting Lives, Building Community, Nurturing Creativity,  
Producing Excellence, and Training for Life.*



## **Mission Statement**

NEXUS BYT has a passion to provide an outlet and connection for all young people in Years 7 to 12, in the Bendigo Region to participate, educate, train and perform in the Theatre Arts.

## **Vision**

Nexus is a branch of the non-profit organisation Mad Cow (**M**ake **A** Difference **C**hange **O**ur **W**orld) and is run by an exceptional collective group of volunteers\*. All volunteers give their time willingly and eagerly to ensure the vision of Nexus is met.

Our vision is as follows:

**NEXUS desires...** to see the young people from all over the Bendigo Region connect together on a common ground to create 'community' and support for one another.

**NEXUS promotes...** a culture of social inclusion and community. We are a family made up of Christian values where everyone is welcome, included and accepted. We aim to develop leadership, self-esteem, friendship and confidence for many teens that are at risk, vulnerable to exclusion and desperately in need of community. We do our best to practice patience, positive attitude, personal initiative, honesty, trustworthiness, tolerance and consideration for the needs of others.

**NEXUS explores...** creativity through a wide variety of dramatic mediums, exposing and training students in every aspect of theatre production. Acting to advertising; choreography to costumes; directing to designing; singing to student leadership, we build and equip student strengths while challenging them to achieve their creative potential.

**NEXUS strives...** to produce a quality experience for students. Aiming for excellence in all areas, our goal is to give students an experience they will never forget; inspiring them to use the skills they have acquired to continue to grow in confidence and be a positive influence as future leaders.

**NEXUS aspires...** to help individuals in our community grow their passion for the performing arts by giving them the opportunity to find what they love and where they excel. The worthwhile experiences Nexus offers through internships, mentorships, coaching, workshops and performing in a full scale musical production, provides all participants with the initial skills and encouragement they need to explore their future within the performing arts.

Welcome to Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre!

I had a vision to start a theatre company where young people in the Bendigo Region had the opportunity to not only grow and develop their creativity and be nurtured in the areas of gifting, but to create a place where students could feel connected and valued for exactly who they are.

Nexus means connecting point and that is exactly what we are as a theatre company, a place where all people can connect in a supportive environment. Nexus is an innovative, exciting, and socially inclusive community that connects diverse young people, from various backgrounds, lifestyles, abilities and ages, who are passionate about the performing arts. It is a safe environment that demonstrates the value of how working together can give people a sense of connectedness and belonging. We give participants the opportunity to build social skills within a creative community of between 150-175 cast members, creatives and volunteers (ages 10-70+).

Our mission statement: Connecting Lives, Building Community, Nurturing Creativity, Producing Excellence and Training for Life, clearly aligns with Bendigo's goal of Wellbeing and Fairness in their community plan. At Nexus, we believe that young people need a vibrant and safe place to discover themselves and their potential. As a result, Nexus provides for the wellness and whole-being of each student and their families. Nexus fosters and encourages a strong community spirit, which is an incredible way to facilitate the journey young people must go through as they prepare to become active, creative and confident members in their wider community. Through the use of performing arts, we aim to nurture self-esteem, confidence, friendship, and life skills for teens who are often desperately in need of connection. At the heart of Nexus and all those involved in facilitating the program, is the desire to provide every youth the opportunity to feel they are a valued member of society.

At Nexus we have a Core Leadership Team and a Production Team, who oversee the various elements of the program. Nexus also focuses on developing and empowering the next generation of leaders. We have had a Graduate Leader and Alumni program and are now beginning an Intern program at to develop the next generation of talented future leaders in our community and the wider community.

It has been a privilege to work with so many talented cast members and volunteers who have impacted my life for the better. While the productions are what people come to see, the life-changing stories and journeys, that take place behind the stage, are what is most important to us. We are called to shine like the star and Nexus really is a place that is *immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine.*

**Once a Nexonian, Always a Nexonian**



**Julie Lovell**  
**Producer & Director**



# What have the Students loved about being involved in NEXUS Bendigo Youth Theatre ?



***“Nexus is great for teenage people to come together to share their passion for performing.”***

*“It’s an amazing opportunity that I haven’t been offered before.”*

***“Nexus is bringing me out of my comfort zone.”***

***“Nexus is a great step ahead for my career and I’ve loved being surrounded by lovely, like-minded people.”***

***“Nexus is a fun experience and I’ve appreciated the opportunity to meet new people.”***

***“Nexus is great place to be, everyone is friendly”***

***“I like the way that Nexus brings out each others strengths.”***

***“It is the highlight of my week, where I can relax and have fun.”***

***“Nexus is a great opportunity to enjoy and explore the Performing Arts and feel safe to be who you are.”***

*"Nexus is a great place to make new friends who love to do what I love to do!"*

*"Nexus is a great social network, where I'm enjoying the chance to meet new people."*

*"I love being surrounded by people who challenge me to be a better actress."*

*"I've found Nexus to be an interesting experience, I've enjoyed meeting new people and exploring my character."*

*"Nexus is a great opportunity for music and acting, meeting friends and learning from great directors".*

*"Nexus is opening up acting to a larger part of the community."*

*"Nexus has helped to awaken my theatrical side."*

## MEET THE CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Julie Lovell**  
Producer



**Matthew Parkinson**  
Director of MAD COW  
(Nexus BYT is an initiative of MADCOW®)



**Alison Gaskell**



**Madelyn Kidd**



**Chloe Lovell**



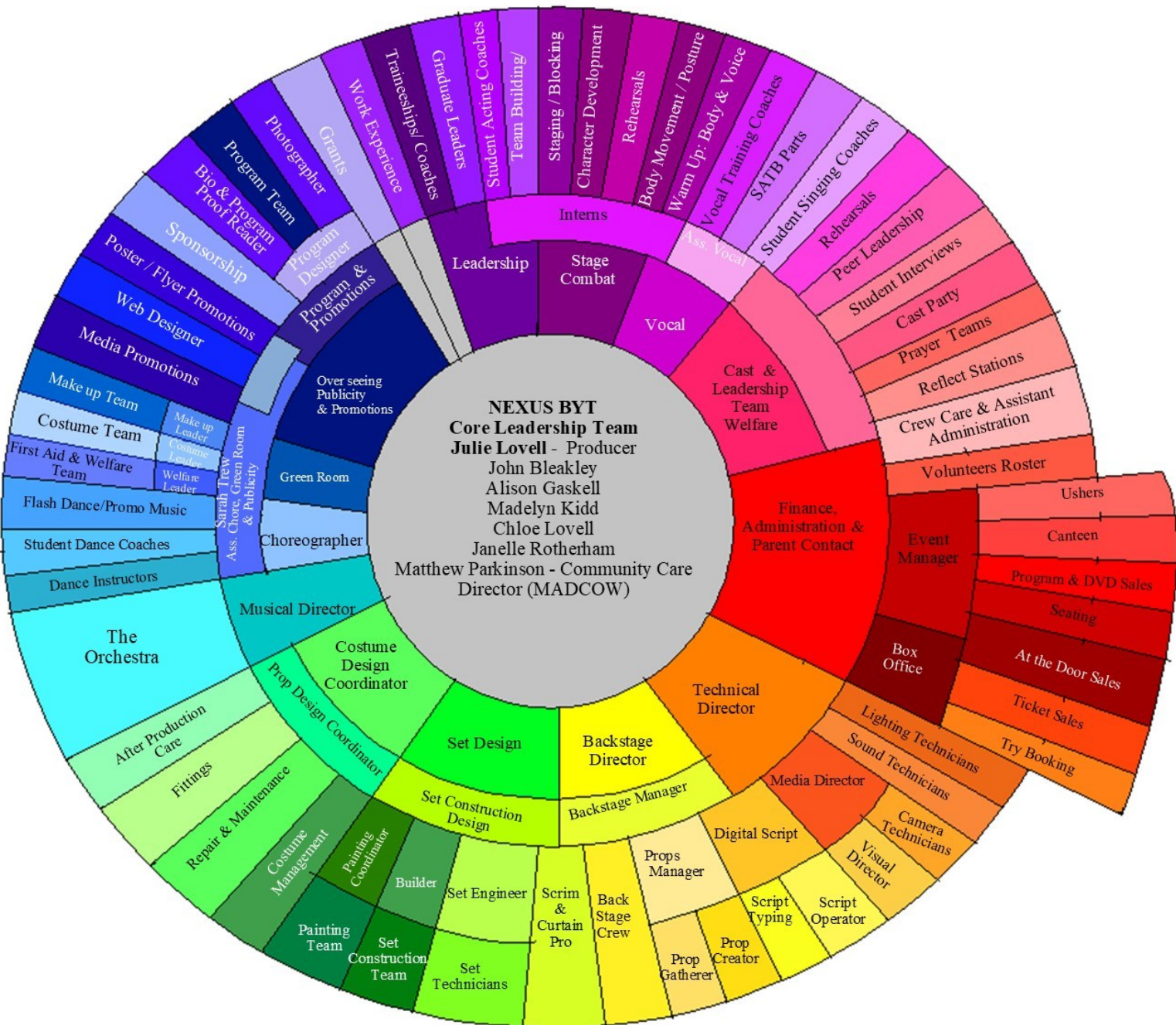
**John Bleakley**



**Janelle Rotherham**

# NEXUS LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Nexus Leadership Structure consists of a Core Team, a Production Team and volunteers. The Core Leadership Team works together to manage the overall organisation, keep the mission and vision alignment, assure that policies and procedures are being upheld and help to uplift and encourage the Nexus community as a whole. The Production Team works to manage the yearly production. They work in collaboration with the Core Team and volunteers to build the Nexus community and reach our goal as an organisation.





## Communication

We understand that throughout the rehearsal process and performance run that you may have many questions or queries. We often find it hard to find the time to have lengthy discussions and conversations with cast members and their families, particularly during and after a rehearsal, so instead we request that you contact us via our various communications. Most of Nexus' correspondence will take place via email or Facebook, as we recognise that this is our casts' preferred mode of contact. We will on occasion send home a notice or letter with the cast if required. We have a number of ways for you to get in touch and for your questions and queries to be acknowledged and answered. We will endeavour to respond to your messages as soon as possible.

You can contact us via email: [info@nexusbyt.com.au](mailto:info@nexusbyt.com.au)

You can choose to subscribe to Nexus News, via our website, if you wish to be the first to know about any updates regarding Nexus (i.e. auditions and announcements).

We also regularly mail out newsletters and updates to our current cast members via Nexus Cast News. All cast members and their parents/guardians will be automatically subscribed to this mail list and may unsubscribe at any time.

OR

You can contact us via our social media platforms:

FACEBOOK:



- NEXUS Bendigo Youth Theatre Page
  - Friends of Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre Group
  - Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre - Current Cast Group
- ^^This is a group for people involved in the current show

INSTAGRAM:



@nexusbyt

You can also visit the Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre website at <http://nexusbyt.com/>. The website is updated often and is a valuable source to find important information such as the calendar, key information updates and rehearsal tracks and videos.

Nexus is a wonderful place to meet new friends and from time to time cast members like to organise their own gatherings and parties. Please understand that Nexus will always advertise and provide invitations or flyers to families detailing information about official Nexus events. Nexus cannot be held responsible for any unofficial events held by cast members. Please contact us if you are in doubt or have any questions regarding this statement.

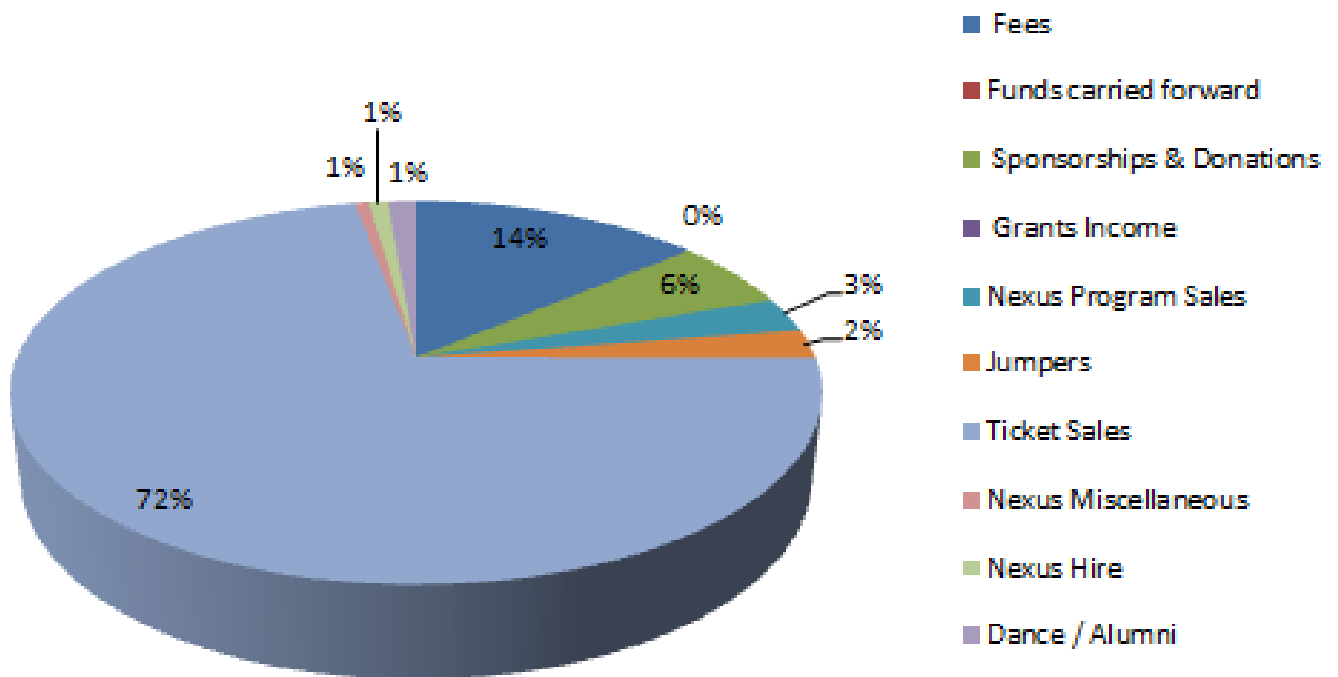
*"IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE..."*

## Nexus Financial Overview

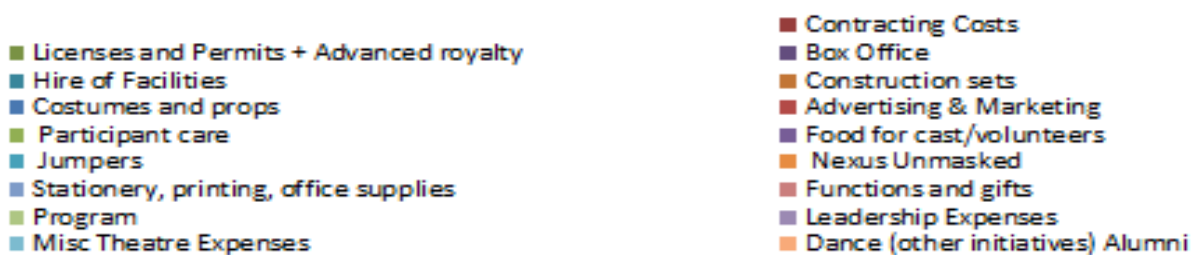
Nexus is a branch of the not-for-profit organisation MADCOW (Make A Difference, Change Our World) and as such aims to be good stewards of our resources and finances, while ensuring a safe and professional experience for our participants. We are fortunate enough to have a wonderful and talented team of volunteers who give their time and energy freely and who are able to make the most incredible costumes, sets and props out of discarded or low cost materials, however, many of our costs are unavoidable.

The following charts offer a transparent look at the financial breakdown of staging a full scale production

### Income



### Expenses



## How much does it cost?

The cost of running a full-scale musical production, with a large cast, runs between \$110,000 and \$120,000 per year. The participation fee helps to an 1/8 of the overall production cost. Cast members will be involved in 160+ hours of Nexus over 15 weeks. This involves rehearsals, working bees, community events and performances. The participant fee works out to be less than \$2 an hour for their involvement, growth in skills and confidence. That's longer lasting entertainment than a trip to the cinemas and costs less than a cup of coffee!

Participation Fee = \$300

Family Multiple Child Discount: \$75 per additional family member in the cast

\*Plus an additional \$30 audition fee - payable at the audition /\$15 per additional family member

Included in the participation fee; is a production t-shirt, program, provided costumes, stage underwear (if needed), performance make up and food through out the year and at the end you will have online access to the show.

**Note:** audition fees are separate to the participation fee and are non-refundable. They are designed to discourage participants from pulling out of the production after the casting process.

- Audition fee must be paid at audition: If the audition fee is not paid, the participant will be ineligible for callbacks and consequently, ineligible for a lead role.

If auditionee withdraws from the show post casting, there will be:

- No refunds available and they risk forfeiting a lead role in future productions.

### **Payment Options**

We have two payment options available:

- one upfront payment due at the first payment rehearsal
- three instalments due at spaced intervals over the production run

You will be required to let us know which option you wish to choose on your audition forms.

Please see the current calendar for payment dates.



## Financial Aid

We have never turned a child away because of an inability to pay fees. Our theatre company is a not-for-profit organisation and as with many organisations of a non-profit nature, we rely heavily on donations and grants to cover our operating expenses. We also rely on family volunteers to keep our operating costs as low as possible.

We will do our utmost to help all families with critical financial need. Financial Aid opportunities are available, but are limited. While all students must pay the audition fee, financial aid is available to help cover the cost of the participation fee. There are three different scholarship options available on application; full fee scholarship, half fee scholarship and one-third fee scholarship.

The application for financial aid can be found on the online parent/guardian form that will be sent out as your child auditions, those accepted for financial aid will be contacted before the first fee payment. The form is simple and easy to fill out, though it must be returned before the deadline. We will review your application and be in touch with you regarding the outcome.

There is a fixed amount of financial aid funding available and it will be dispersed at the Core leaderships discretion and is available for only one cast member per family. Subsequent family members will be required to pay the multi-child discounted price.

Those who apply who have a current pension or health care card will receive priority in our decision of the distribution of the available funds.

\*\* Please note: Financial Aid is not intended for those who are involved in multiple community activities (i.e. sports, dance, music lessons etc.) but cannot afford them all; as this is an indication that the financial need is not a critical issue, but one regarding personal priority and choice.



## Age Inclusions and Exclusions

NEXUS Bendigo Youth Theatre is open to all students Years 7 -12 attending Secondary School in this region. Young people who are actively attending BRIT or BTEC (and not enrolled in University) are invited to participate; provided they do not turn 19 during the scheduled production run.\*

\*Special considerations can be made for the following:

-Students who have participated in Accelerated Educational Learning Programs and have graduated from Year 12 early and are not yet enrolled in University; provided they do not turn aged 19 during the scheduled production run.

-Students currently completing Year 13; provided they do not turn aged 19 during the scheduled production run.

-Students taking a 'Gap Year' after Year 12; provided they do not turn aged 19 during the scheduled production run.

**Please understand that decisions regarding 'special considerations' for students who turn 19 during the run of the show are made at the discretion of the Core Leadership.**

Whilst University Students are unable to participate in the NEXUS BYT performance, they are encouraged to participate in our leadership development program. While this is a limited opportunity, expressions of interest can be made via email to the Core Leadership. Each year NEXUS BYT looks for a variety of talented people willing to help out in many areas.



## EXPECTATIONS: Students

- You will be expected to treat your fellow Nexonians with fairness, honesty, courtesy and respect and to encourage each other in all areas. You must also extend the same attitude towards the Production team and parent volunteers.
- Nexus practices a zero tolerance to bullying.
- When you join Nexus BYT you're making a commitment to the production run. After Casting you are member of a team, and in fairness to all the others involved, **commitment is essential**. We recognise that there could be exceptional or unexpected circumstances which may prevent a student from fulfilling this expectation and would be sympathetic to such occurrence. However, commitment is expected.
- You are expected to attend rehearsals with your script. You are also expected to look after your script and not write on your script in anything permanent. (Light grey lead pencil is permitted)
- Students are required to bring a water bottle to all rehearsals to ensure students do not get dehydrated
- Students must wear **appropriate modest clothing** to rehearsals— **No skirts, dresses or revealing tops, may be worn**, as these limit student's ability to move with comfort in required choreography. A continued issue in this area may prohibit a student's involvement in a scene, as they will not be able to rehearse.
- Good Stewardship of our theatre space.
  - Students will respect and care for costumes, sets, props, scripts, technology and any other equipment.
  - We put things back where they belong or where we found them.
  - We do not touch things that are not in use by, or in the use of, others, especially props, costumes, sound and lighting.
  - Students are expected to be a part of our clean up roster and occasional working bees.

### Rehearsal Attendance

- Students are allowed to miss 2 non-mandatory rehearsals. Genuine inability to attend is accepted. However, on all occasions of inability, a **prior** apology must be given, either by email, text or by prior written communication through the Parent Enquiry book. Apologies are **not** to be sent via other students.
- **Mandatory rehearsal** dates are indicated YELLOW on the rehearsal calendar. These rehearsals are not optional and 100% attendance is required. Exceptions will be made for **mandatory** school excursions, extended school holidays, or illness. Any other exceptions must be approved by the Producer (Julie Lovell) in advance in conjunction with the parent/guardian. Students who miss a mandatory rehearsal without approval risk being removed from the scene being rehearsed. This is not meant to be legalistic; instead it is to ensure the integrity of the show and respect from the cast, crew and leaders.
  - **Please Note:** Bump in and bump out is part of the mandatory rehearsal requirements.
  - Year 11 and 12 Students: Please Note - Homework and SAC's are not considered an excuse for not attending Mandatory Rehearsals. It is your responsibility to make prior arrangements with your school/ teachers if there are conflicting dates.
  - Punctuality is an important part of showing respect to your fellow Nexonians.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

At Nexus we maintain a high importance on the safety and wellbeing of the students involved in our program and ensure they are cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. As a result, it is imperative that indemnity and medical forms are returned on or before the first rehearsal. Following this time it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform a production team or committee member of any information changes

At Nexus we recognise it is our moral obligation and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for cast members, creatives, volunteers, and visitors, and endeavour to ensure these people do nothing to place themselves or members of the public at risk of injury or illness. In doing this we have the following in place

- \*A current Risk Assessment plan, including sexual abuse precautions
- \* Working with children checks for leaders over 18
- \* Adherence to Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.
- \*An active and visible Evacuation Plan in case of emergency.
- \*Trained Anaphylaxis, Asthma and First Aid workers at Nexus.
- \*An up-to-date and complete medical form including an Agreed Action Plan, for any student who has indicated special needs medical risks on their medical Operoo.

Our Working Bee Policy, including the use of vehicle's and trailers are out line in the BUV Working bee guide and will be made available at all working bees.

If Operoo medical information is not completed on or before the first rehearsal your child **will not be able to safely participate in any activities including rehearsals**, therefore parents will be required to collect their child early from the premises, until their medical Operoo online form is completed.



### **Welfare Team**

Nexus takes a wholistic approach to caring for students and leaders. The Welfare Team offers opportunities for students to share their life journey, foster team building and encourages students to reach their potential. The team is also available for students and/or families who require support. At times the Welfare Team may contact students outside of Nexus rehearsals.

**The Purple Principle:** We understand that relationships will often develop between secondary students. Due to the age range at Nexus, we ask that students, guests and leadership refrain from overtly public displays of affection. If Nexus leaders become aware or concerned of any overtly affectionate behaviours at Nexus organised events; as part of our duty of care we may feel a responsibility to approach students and/or inform parents.

## **Non Acceptable Behaviour**

- Student relationships that exclude others, or displays of affection that make others uncomfortable, are not appropriate. Furthermore, they can limit the individual's participation in the community; as being exclusive is not community building.
- At Nexus BYT alcohol, drugs, tobacco and violence have no place. This policy is absolute! If a student uses or has possession of alcohol, drugs, or unauthorised weapons while at Nexus, they will be asked to leave immediately, their parents will be informed and further discussion will need to take place regarding any continuing involvement. Leadership reserves the right to dismiss a student over any of these infractions and no fees will be refunded.
- If someone at our theatre engages in risky or destructive behaviour, the leadership or students will ask them to stop. If you choose to join Nexus, you also agree to the implicit contract that you will never bring illegal substances to any Nexus events. Participation in an activity or action which is against the law or which places a person or our theatre in danger will result in an immediate discussion between leadership, parents and the student. Nexus reserves the right to ask a student to leave on disciplinary grounds. A continuous effort is made to foster respect and responsibility in every one, yet if a student persists in anti-social activities and/or behaviours he/she will be liable for disciplinary action which may include suspension or expulsion from the theatre and its programs. No fees will be refunded.
- If you have concerns to share or misconducts to discuss, your name will not be revealed to the people you are speaking about; you can always be honest with Nexus Leadership and everything will be kept completely confidential. Your name will not be revealed to the people you are speaking about. By speaking out about dangerous or unacceptable behaviour you are helping to foster and maintain a culture at Nexus that is creative and safe and free for everyone. You are always free to discuss with Nexus Leadership any behaviour that makes you uncomfortable or that feels inappropriate to you.
- We seek to understand the individuals involved, to understand the truth about, and causes of, the behaviour that is taking place. If necessary, we seek professional help for students who are at risk.

## **Consequences for failure to comply**

- Students who miss Three (3) rehearsals consecutively, without prior notice or reasonable explanation, will be considered to have left the production and recasting of that role will occur. Fees will not be refunded.
- Any student who misses 25% or more of rehearsals will be considered to have left the production and recasting of that role will occur. Fees paid will not be refunded. In some cases illness may be an exception to this rule.
- We reserve the right to limit a student's performance in a production run or scene if mandatory rehearsals are not attended. In some cases illness may be an exception to this rule. Lead Roles who miss mandatory rehearsals may have their roles taken over by their understudies.
- At any time during the year, a student may be placed on a Behavioural Contract, at the discretion of the Core Leadership.



## **Student Leadership Development Opportunities**

At Nexus we endeavour to encourage student to develop their abilities, gain confidence and celebrate their skills and talents in assisting others. We have a variety of leadership areas that students made be involved in: Peer Leadership Team, Captains and Student Captains.

### **Peer Leaderships Team**

The Peer Leadership Team consists of students from any age group and are chosen each year and approached by the Core Leadership. They are students who have shown themselves to be leaders amongst the Nexus community and have demonstrated social inclusion and an understanding of the Nexus Mission Statement and the goals of BCCI.

The Peer Leadership Team are to be good examples and guides to all involved in Nexus BYT and take on responsibilities from helping new members to find 'find their feet' to being representatives of Nexus in the community. The Peer Leadership Team meets regularly with the Nexus Leadership Team. It is considered a privilege to be approached for Peer Leadership and is a great opportunity for young people to further develop their leadership skills.

### **Student Captains**

Being a Student Captain is a great opportunity for young people who exhibit a talent in Acting, Singing, Dance or Leadership to take the next step to learn how to work with their peers to mentor and help them to develop their skills. Student Captains work with the directors and leadership team, regularly meeting to determine what their next focus will be. They may be given the opportunity to work with individual or groups of students as a character mentor or singing tutor, to 'block out' a scene or choreograph as section of dance or to be that captain of cast members. They also have the opportunity to give and may be drawn upon for suggestions by the Nexus Leadership Team.

Students interested in a captain role (Acting, Singing, Dance, Ensembles or Leadership) can apply to be a student captain by filling out an expression of interest form. The role of student captains are given out at the discretion of the Core Leadership and numbers vary depending on the production need.

## **Post-Graduate Leadership Development Opportunities**

### **Graduate Leader (1-2 year program)**

This is an opportunity for Nexus graduates to return and use the skill set they developed while being involved in Nexus. Graduates will be asked to help with warm ups, theatre games, individual characterisation and student welfare. They will also be given opportunities to develop their area of passion with a Nexus Core Leader/Mentor.

### **Coach**

The next step in leadership development for post graduates requires more responsibility and expectations. Coaches will be given greater opportunities to use their theatrical skills independent of the Nexus Core leadership's input. They will also be asked to help develop and encourage the next generation of student captains.

## **EXPECTATIONS: Parents and Guardians**

At Nexus we are a community, but most importantly we are a family. As part of being a family, things cannot be achieved unless **everyone** contributes and helps out around the home. Our Nexus 'home' is run by volunteers and therefore parent involvement is required to ensure all areas are running effectively and smoothly.

Parent involvement does not only ensure that the Production Team are able to focus more on students and other needed areas, it also gives parents the opportunities to see Nexus for themselves. As a result, parents are able to witness first-hand what their child gets to experience and meet their friends at the same time.

### **Student Involvement**

All Cast Members are required to contribute 4 hours at a working bee (excluding bump in/out) and to help in their team pack up after rehearsal (rotational)

### **Mandatory Parent Involvement**

Every cast member/family must provide one parent/ adult for a minimum of 2 hours at a bump in or out at the Novo Centre and/ or Performance Complex. Please note this is in addition to the Volunteer options/ hours.

### **Parent Volunteer Options**

Each parent or guardian must choose one of the following options:



**Bring food and fruit for the cast and leaders** (approx 40-50 people) to 2 rehearsals. With students (and leaders) quickly burning up energy, food is greatly appreciated. (Example: Boxes of 20 pack chips, a bag of apples/fruit, a couple bags of lollies, muffins, etc.).

**Volunteer to help with costumes** (min 4 hours) .- Everyone is blessed with different gifts- some can sing, others can dance - but believe it or not, everyone can help with costumes. From sewing, steaming/ironing, to sticking on labels- anyone can help!

**Volunteer to help with construction or painting of sets on a Friday/Saturday** (min 4 hours) - In the past those helping with construction have seen great bonding moments with parents and their children. If you can lift a hammer or carry a paint brush - you can help!

**Help us bump in and out from the theatre.** See calendar for date. (min 4 hours) -We need lots of hands to help load up the trucks and move everything, and while the entire cast is required for bump in, adult hands are much appreciated! This is also a great way for you to not only meet the leaders, but all of the students too. What a great opportunity! [This is in addition to the required 2 hours of Bump in/out].

**Pay \$75 Volunteer Levy for us to hire someone to cover the hours** - We understand that with work and family commitments it can be hard to contribute to the above. As a result, we ask that you pay a simple \$75 levy so we can hire someone to do the work for you or to aid us in the purchase of food to feed cast members.

**Provide a simple dinner for cast/PT during Nexup in July.** Arrange this with the Nexus Leadership.

Volunteer to be a door monitor at The Capital Theatre on one of the performance nights (these are usually 5+ hours long). Julie will contact you with further information if you choose this option.

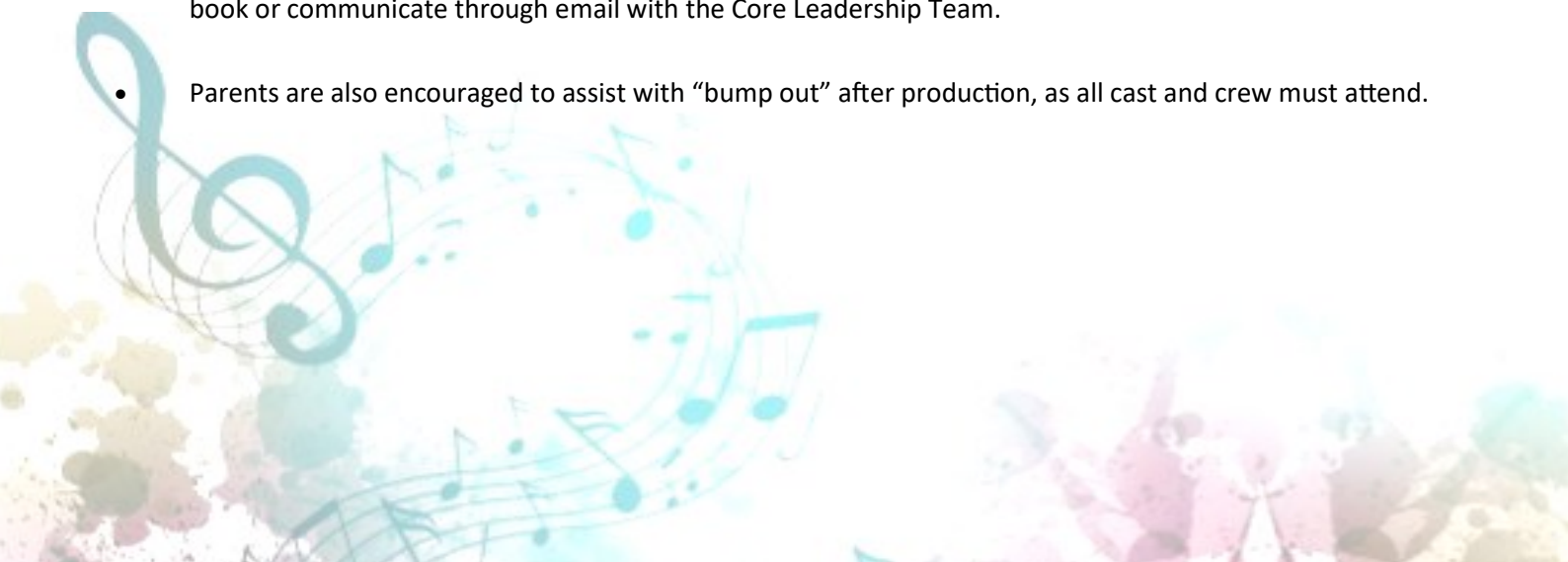
## Rehearsal Requirements

Please note the following important information regarding rehearsals.

- Parents and guardians are required to transport their child to and from all rehearsals and performances. Carpooling is recommended and advantageous to minimise mileage and waiting times. If you are interested in being involved in a carpool either to or from Nexus, please put your details in the communication book and we will try and connect you.
- Parents should be aware that participation in our production requires a March – August commitment once cast. Toward the performance dates it can become extremely demanding. Please read the ***What to Expect Section*** on page 22.
- We strive to finish our rehearsals on time, however at times we may run late. Please be forgiving, we do try. An idea might be to plan to arrive 5-10 mins after our conclusion time.  
*Note: Students in the role of Student Coaches or Peer Leadership may have a meeting after rehearsals, if your child is involved please check the calendar for times.*
- There may be some costume requirements you will need to obtain for your child. If so, they will be sent to you by the costume department. However it is recommended that students have basic items for performances. Such as: socks or stockings and shoes; skin coloured underwear, including bras (as otherwise they may be visible through clothing under spotlights). Some students have chosen to purchase skin coloured bike shorts/body suits or petticoats/slips, which can be a good idea if a character has multiple costume changes.
- On Monday rehearsals we like to conclude our session with students showing each other how their sections are progressing. Parents are welcome to have a look.
- Comfortable Clothing—No Dresses, skirts or revealing tops.
- A water bottle is a key essential to every rehearsal

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- Rehearsals that take place in the weeks leading up to the production are MANDATORY rehearsals. Please refer to calendar for when they are on. All mandatory rehearsals are highlighted
- If there are any dates that you know your child is unable to attend please place this in the parent enquires book or communicate through email with the Core Leadership Team.
- Parents are also encouraged to assist with “bump out” after production, as all cast and crew must attend.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP?

### Sponsorship, Advertising, Donations, Work Parties and Catering

In addition to the Parent Volunteer Options on Page 17, parents can also help out in other various ways. These include:

- **Sponsor our show:** Benefits include advertising, media exposure and possible free tickets
- **Advertising:** Purchase an advertisement in our program and hundreds of people will know of your company's support
- **Donations:** Donations can be made or alternatively you might want to sponsor a student requiring financial aid. Because we are a non-profit organisation, donations are tax deductible
- **Working Bees:** Come along to one of our working bees- not only do we get a lot done but we have fun working alongside one another!

#### Food

We like to, and have been able to, provide our cast with a snack at rehearsals to keep everyone going. We love to care for our cast, however, with such a big cast we need your help or alternatively we will not be able to do this and cast will be required to provide for themselves. If any parents would be interested in helping out on our food roster, we would love to have you a part of our team. Please indicate this on your volunteer form. Everyone involved in the Nexus BYT Production Team are volunteers, and many hands make light work!

**Please be aware that at some rehearsals students will be required to supply their own tea.**

**We will inform you when these dates are and will ensure you have plenty of notice.**



# THE CASTING PROCESS

## Take a Breath...

Another step in the NEXUS development has been to articulate how we select and put into action the shows we do and how we go about casting them. Every student who maintains an enthusiastic commitment to personal growth as a performer will have his or her chance to shine here at NEXUS.

That said, when casting we do our best to balance the needs of individuals against the needs of the company and the play itself. Primarily, we aim to create the most enjoyable and self-developing experience for all students. Of course, a show is, by nature, a product-oriented venture; the enjoyment of the audience is also important, as is the feeling of success to the cast itself. So that, naturally, has some bearing on casting. Ultimately, casting decisions are artistic; we make them and we make them carefully.

Auditions are held and attended by the Casting Panel made up of the Directors and the Core Leadership Team. Other members of the Production Team involved in Auditions have a voice in the casting process, but may not be involved in the final casting. Production Team members will help in observing students so that they might contribute to the casting decisions AND so that they might stay connected with the growth of all NEXUS actors.

After auditions, the Production Team either hand in feedback on what they have seen during auditions to the Casting panel or maybe are invited to attend the gathering of the Casting Panel for lengthy casting discussions. During which, many topics come up besides just the needs of each student and the needs of the show. Other discussion items include: actors/ actress' age, commitment and progress, ability to concentrate, preparation and listening and attitude. This discussion continues, with much animated and caring debate, until we arrive at our decisions confidently and with mutual support.

Regardless of the role a student is cast in, he or she will be stretched and engaged. No part is without challenge; no role is unimportant to the overall success of the production. Parents, too, are vitally important in supporting children in this process where feelings of disappointment sometimes arise. With this in mind, please help us model for your children a positive attitude towards casting - one that allows for both humility and buoyancy. Sometimes a handful of shows might pass without a leading role, but remember to step back and look at the big picture of your child's involvement with NEXUS. Developing skills and building confidence takes time. So, have patience and enjoy the ride.



## The Audition Process

Unlike Australian Idol, we do not sit in a panel formation to judge students. Therefore, students do not need to have songs or speeches prepared. However, being familiar with the songs from the show they are auditioning for will give them an advantage.

Our audition process will involve the students being divided into groups; each group will rotate between script reading/ acting, theatre sports, dance, singing, costume information, gathering, administrative paperwork and vocal range. Our Production Leadership Team will work with the students while determining those we need to see again for leading role call backs.

Each year information regarding Call Backs and casting will be distributed to students at auditions and the parent information night. If you did not receive a call back, no need to panic, this does not mean that you have not made the cast, as most supporting roles and ensemble are cast without call backs and will be posted.

You might receive a phone call from a Core Leader to clarify questions about a role during the casting process.

These calls are to remain between the students, parent and Leadership prior to the posting of the cast.

- In order to achieve a great Nexus audition please read the parent pack and information distributed, and listen to the songs on our website that will be used in auditions and call backs
- If you have no access to the internet to view the Call Back List, please let us know at auditions and we will telephone you to inform you if you have been called back.
- If you have been asked to attend Call Backs, the information regarding the order of the day will be outline on the internet with the Call Back List.

**The Website will clearly state an expected time  
when the call backs and cast announcement should be posted.  
You will need to check the website to see if you are required at call backs,  
and check again to find out the cast and roles.**

**[www.nexusbyt.com](http://www.nexusbyt.com)**

Students not cast in the show will be contacted prior to the posting by a someone from Leadership .

### Alumni Casting

Please Note: Each year we work hard to cast the right student to each role and so far we have had in our previous casts, students who, with training, have been able to fill the requirements of the principle lead roles. However, we understand that the day may come when there is a lead role that can not be filled by any of the students who have auditioned. In this case or in the case of an understudy being required for a difficult to fill role, then Nexus Core Leadership have the ability to audition Nexus Alumni's, under the proviso that if an Alumni is cast that they would obtain/hold a current working with children check.



# KEEPING YOUR FEET PLANTED- WHAT A NEXUS PARENT SHOULD EXPECT

*- A FAMILY GUIDE TO THE MAGIC OF THEATRE - Text courtesy of Music Theatre International*

## Introduction

It happens in a moment. A notice gets posted reading “Auditions for the next show!” Anticipation bubbles as visions of singing, dancing, acting, and standing ovations run rampant in the minds of children near and far!

Participating in a musical is one of the most rewarding experiences a young person can have. The director and other adults working on the production care about your child’s future and want to invest time and energy into his or her development.

Your child is about to take a journey that, with a little help from you, could have a positive, long-lasting impact on her or him and the community in which you live.

This is designed to provide you with information to assist your child from auditions through closing night. It’s also an overview of the process of producing a musical and suggests ways in which you can get involved. Most importantly, it’s an opportunity for you and your child to share some quality time together on an activity that is fun and inspires the imagination.

***CURTAIN UP! LIGHT THE LIGHTS! LET’S BEGIN!***

## Why a musical?

Musicals are fun! They also provide young people with many valuable development opportunities.

A musical brings together all of the arts in one comprehensive program. Music and dance introduce basic performing arts. The design and creation of sets, costumes and props integrate the visual arts. Rehearsing and performing dialogue develops language skills. Integrating sound and lighting explores the use of technology. As you can see, a musical celebrates many diverse disciplines in one arena.



In addition, the process of presenting a musical offers young people the opportunity to develop social skills and learn valuable life lessons. Some examples follow:

- In a musical, **everyone's contribution is important**. The child operating the sound system is as important to the overall success of the production as the child who plays Belle, Annie or Captain Von Trapp.
- Everyone must **work together for the greater good**, encouraging **collaboration** and **community**.
- Children learn the importance of **listening** to each other speak and **waiting one's turn**. They take **positive risks** and **conquer fears** while building self-confidence.
- **Assessment** in a musical is nearly **instantaneous** in the applause and standing ovations participants receive at the end of the show, meaning they don't have to wait months for a grade, praise or feedback.

But the best part? A musical is a lot of fun for everyone involved, whether your child creates sets, is in the backstage crew, sings in the chorus or plays a lead.

**The process:** Audition announcement; auditions; posting of cast list; rehearsals; technical rehearsals; dress rehearsals; performances; bump out; post show blues.

#### **Audition Announcement and Preparations**

- A musical is a commitment of time and energy. Make sure you review the rehearsal and performance schedule in advance. It's important to be honest and let the producer know of conflicts in advance. Please put Nexus calendar dates on the family calendar to avoid potential conflicts.
- What function or job is your child curious to explore? For example, does your child want to perform onstage as an actor or offstage as a part of the crew? (See possible jobs)
- Aside from the support and guidance you're bound to offer your child, any extra time you have to volunteer on the production is more than welcome (i.e. signing up for ushering, cast snacks and/or letting us know if you have particular artistic/design/building skills)!





## Glossary of possible jobs:



Some of these areas will require students to fill out an expression of interest form.

**Actor/Actress** – performs in the production.

**Lead / Ensemble Captains** - Assists with an ensemble group either in a focus scene or musical number.

**Student Dance Coach** – Assists the choreographer, sometimes leading dance rehearsals and creating own choreography.

**Student Acting Coach** - Assists in working with other student to help develop their characters, share ideas of blocking and assisting with warm ups.

**Student Singing Coach** – Assist with STAB Parts, working with both groups and individuals.

**Nexus Design** – you could be a part of Nexus Design in the following areas:

**The Program Team** – working in the areas of graphic design, journalism, photography and marketing.

**Construction Crew**– hand with woodwork, help construct the sets.

**Painting Team** – Work on the Sets either with block painting, detail or fine detail.

**Creative multimedia** – capturing behind the scenes footage and producing promotional creative media.

**Make Up Team** – Works backstage to assist students in applying stage make up for performances.

**Backstage Crew** – prepares props and sets and works backstage during show.

**Tech Crew** - prepares lights, sound, digital script and media, learn how tech system works (maybe operate a camera.)

**In the Orchestra** - If you play an instrument at a A.M.A.B Grade 4 equivalent or higher, preferred but not essential.

## Don't be a Mama Rose!

Mama Rose is a character from the musical *Gypsy*. She's a bossy "stage mother" (a term for a parent who pushes his/her child into the performing arts in a negative manner). We've all seen these types at sports events, football games, beauty pageants and everything in between. Some of us have probably even acted this way to some degree without even knowing it! When our heart is in the right place, we're sometimes blind to the fact that we might be stepping on someone else's toes or pushing just a little too hard.

Theatre is a collaborative effort, but it's important to remember that it's the director's role to see the big picture and guide every aspect of the production. If the cast, crew and volunteers do their best to work within the director's vision, the production will be a rewarding, resounding success!

Remember, having your child participate in theatre has little to do with creating a "star". The objective of rehearsing and presenting a musical is to provide children with opportunities to develop life skills and have fun.

"IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE..."

## **Auditions**

Auditions are held in many different ways. For our procedure please see section: ***Casting Process***.

**Audition Techniques:** Directors respond positively when your child can do the following:

### **BE PREPARED**

- Communicate the story.

### **SMILE AND ENJOY YOURSELF**

- The leaders want you to do well!

### **SHOW GOOD BEHAVIOUR**

- Directors are often more concerned with your attitude than how well you sing, dance or act.

### **TRUST THE DIRECTOR'S CHOICES**

- Do your best at whatever you are asked to do, even if you find it challenging or awkward.

## **Announcing the Cast**

The announcement of the cast can be a difficult time since the role offered may not meet your child's expectations. You know your child best. If he/she is upset about the casting decision, empower your child to talk to the director one-on-one to discuss the decision and how to enhance future auditions. You'll ultimately know best how to comfort your child, but here are some **ways** that might help open new avenues of conversation.

## **Making the best of casting decisions**

- Trust the director's judgment. The director is casting an ensemble, not just one or two "lead" roles. It's important for the cast to understand the importance of working together as an ensemble and to see the production as a whole – not as individual parts that seem less or more important than others.
- Remind your child that everyone's contribution is important and valued.
- Let your child brainstorm ideas for characteristics for his or her role. Is he/she a peppy or an indifferent kind of character? Confident or awkward? Ultimately the director may have specific character qualities in mind, but this will introduce your child to the basics of acting.
- Take the role to another level by encouraging your child to create a "back story" for his or her character. Where is the character from? Why is the character in the show? Half the fun is that the audience never has to know the character's back story, but this exploration by your child will round out the character even more. Again, have fun, but create a story that works realistically within the directors' vision for the show.



## Surviving the First Rehearsal

At the first rehearsal, kids in the cast receive their scripts and get to know the rest of their collaborators. Some cast members may want to count their lines, but this should be discouraged. The authors created every character for a reason, and each role impacts the entire production.

As the famous Russian director and acting teacher, Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1938) advised, “THERE ARE NO SMALL PARTS, ONLY SMALL ACTORS!”

## Rehearsals

The cast is set and now it's time to get to work. Here are some ways to help your child:

1. Place a copy of the rehearsal schedule on the refrigerator or family bulletin board.
2. Make sure your child arrives at rehearsal on time, dressed appropriately and prepared for the rehearsal.
3. After rehearsal, ask your child how it went and if there's anything you can do to help.
4. If your child is assisting with tech or crew, make sure to get a schedule of when he/she is needed at the theatre and that he/she comes dressed appropriately for the task at hand.

## Memorising

Usually, children memorise lines, songs and dances easily. If they are struggling, however, here are some solutions:

- Encourage your child to review songs, dances, and scenes outside of rehearsal and in front of a small supportive group. You can even do it at dinner time and you'll have your own dinner theatre!
- To memorise scene work, have your child break down the point of the scene: what's the most important information presented or action taking place? Answering all these questions will help your child better understand the scene and improvise if something goes awry!
- Have your child read over scenes before going to sleep at night and first thing in the morning. This is a great way to memorise parts.
- It's helpful to practice dialogue, songs, and dances out loud and in front of a mirror, rather than “in your head.” This enlists kinaesthetic (muscle) memory, as well as visual and aural memory to help learn the part.



## Technical Rehearsals

At these rehearsals, known as “tech rehearsals”, the director adds the technical elements to the productions. These may include sound, lights, hand properties (or “props”) and even special effects such as fog. Tech rehearsals can seem long and tedious, but are where the important details of the show are ironed out. If your child is on the tech crew, this is the time to shine! Here are some ways you can help:

- Send your child to rehearsal well-fed, but avoid sugary snacks and soda.
- Because there will be a lot of down time, encourage your child to bring homework, a book or another quiet activity to help prevent excess noise that could distract the director and fellow cast/crew.

## Dress Rehearsals

By the time the production reaches dress rehearsals, the show is really coming together! Costumes are now added to complement the technical elements already in place. With actors in “dress”, their characters come to life in a magical way.

- Since your child has spent a lot of time rehearsing and developing his/her character, it’s possible that a costume might look or feel awkward at first. But it’s **important to be patient and grateful for the costumers’ hard work** since many hours have been spent sewing, creating and shopping for costume pieces. While a costume might seem silly by itself, it will blend in or stand out beautifully in the overall design of the show.
- Because some fabrics stain easily and are difficult to clean quickly, it’s a general rule to **avoid eating or drinking while in costume**.

## Performances: PLACES EVERYONE!

There are very few events in life as exciting as opening night. Cherish it, embrace it, and make a big deal out of it! Your child will experience a huge range of emotions and look to you for support and encouragement. After opening night, your child will still need your assistance and guidance. A musical is a lot of physical and mental work, so children need help pacing their energy. Make sure your child eats well, takes vitamins, drinks plenty of water, and gets enough rest.

### Opening night checklist:

1. Make sure your child gets plenty of rest prior to opening night. A good night’s sleep or a nap will help.
2. Make sure your child arrives at the performance fed, but avoid any “junk” foods. A light meal might serve better than a heavy one.



## **Closing night**

The closing night performance is as exciting as opening night, but also bittersweet. It's the last time the show will be performed and marks the end of what can be months of mental and physical investment. After final bows, the cast and crew will take down – or “bump out” - the sets that helped bring the show to life.

## **Cast Graduation, Cast Party and Post Show Blues...**

It is normal for your child to be emotional leading up to, during and after the final performances. This lingering sadness after a show closes is called “post-show blues.” You can help relieve these feelings by attending the cast graduation and the cast party after the closing performance. As this gives the cast something to look forward to in the future and ease their separation anxiety. The cast graduation is a wonderful time to celebrating and recognise student's amazing performance, where each student receives an individual award and recognition, and a chance to share what they have learnt, loved and special highlights from their Nexus Journey. The Cast party is a few days later, this helps students to gradually farewell the production which helps with post show blues. At the Cast Party, we watch the DVD of the performance sharing in the excitement of seeing it from the audience perspective and then to finish we traditionally go to the Zone to roller skate and laser tag and generally finish with some good old fashion fun.

## **What's next?!**

After the last performance many kids immediately ask, “What's the next show?” These words are a good indication that your child has had a wonderful experience. - It's our little secret that they also learned a great deal and explored some very important life lessons....



**Congratulations on a job well done!**

## NEXUS AWARDS

Each student will receive an award at the conclusion of the production to reflect their Nexus journey and area of excellence (Best Actor/Actress etc). Our highest award given to a senior student is the Nexus Award and the criterion used to identify them is as follows, the junior aged highest award is the Director’s Choice Award which is based on similar criterion to the Nexus Award.

The Nexus Award was established in 2010 as an award given to a cast member who exhibits exceptional qualities. Deemed our highest award, the recipient of the Nexus Award must demonstrate a number of the following characteristics. The Award is presented each year by the previous year’s Nexus Award winner to the new recipient at the final Nexus BYT production.

For a Cast Member to be eligible for the Nexus Award they must be nominated by a member of the production team and then discussed against the following criterion. Candidates need to qualify within a minimum of five of the above categories to be eligible. In order to be chosen for categories with a \* criterion students must be deemed to be in the top 5% of the cast. This Award is given at the discretion of the Nexus BYT Leadership Team

* Brilliant at or displays aptitude in: Acting and Characterisation	* Willingness to listen, engage and grow, to take on board and respond positively to constructive critique	Humility
* Brilliant at or displays aptitude in: Dance	* Leadership Qualities / Student Coaching	Personal Integrity
* Brilliant at or displays aptitude in: Singing	* Caring Nature to the Cast	Ability to see beyond themselves and seek out ways to support the Leadership Team
* Brilliant at or displays aptitude in: Construction or Design	* Gives their best at all times	Exhibiting Positive Attitude
neXus Factor - Unique talent or ability that they 'bring to the table.'	Respected by their Peers	Self Motivated
Senior Years of Nexus	Considering a further pursuit in the Performing Arts	A Role Model

The Nexsemble Award was established in 2019 during our 10 anniversary. Nexus remains extremely proud of our incredibly talented lead performers. However, the heart of Nexus is perhaps best exemplified in our very large ensembles, which enable as many young people as we can possibly encompass to shine, so that each may have their time in the spotlight and grow – both in performance skills and as a person. Our Nexus ensemble graduates will go on to success in many different fields of endeavour. For many, this may be the last time they set foot on a musical theatre stage. But as Nexonians (once, and always!), they will take with them a confidence born of personal challenges faced and met, and an experience of the importance of commitment, teamwork, community, and a servant-heart that will set each of them in great stead wherever life’s journey leads. Thus, we believe that the Nexsemble award represents and recognises something unique to Nexus.

This Award is given at the discretion of the Nexus BYT Leadership Team. It will be awarded each year, to a long-term, dedicated and enthusiastic senior member of the cast, for outstanding commitment to the ensemble over a number of years.

## OTHER NEXUS INITIATIVES:

### Nexus Unmasked, Nexus Alumni Nexatonix and Nexus Hire

For further information regarding the when following programs are running, please check the website or email us on [info@nexusbyt.com](mailto:info@nexusbyt.com)

#### Nexus Unmasked

Unmasked emerged from Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre, and while it is principally run by the same leadership team, it runs separate from BYT, allowing students to be involved from outside the cast of BYT's production. Unmasked aims to teach, train and build student abilities in both dramatic and vocal skills in a fun, encouraging environment. Running twice a year each for duration of 3– 4 weeks, each session of Unmasked has a different focus skill that gradually builds on student abilities. During each session students are introduced to a new skill to learn, then together it is developed and practiced in groups and then they have the opportunity to perform their new skill.

Nexus Unmasked is a great way for Youth to experience various dramatic styles, from Shakespeare to Mime, Clowning to Singing in Character, all while having fun.

#### Nexus Alumni

Alumni is born out of the desire for graduate cast members and passionate volunteers to continue in their Nexus journey by allowing them the opportunity to perform in a low cost, short term, black box experience. This initiative is open to Nexus graduates, production team, orchestra members, leaders, backstage and anyone, aged 18+, who has volunteered in a major Nexus production. Nexus Alumni aims to see the Nexus connection continue to grow and develop future leaders through the Arts in our community.

#### Nexatonix

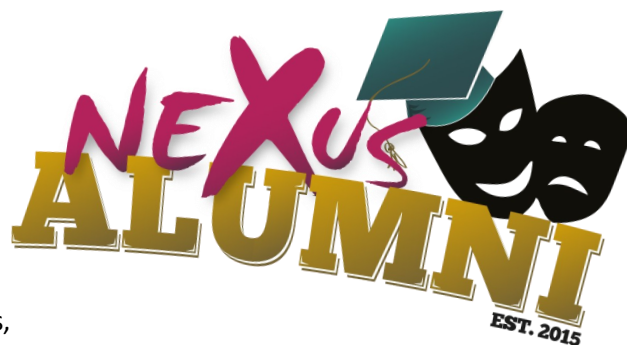
Nexatonix is a *\*new\**, specialist vocal ensemble that will run often in conjunction with Nexus BYT Unmasked.

Nexatonix aims to make beautiful music using some of the beautiful young voices of Nexus BYT, whilst also building skills in music reading and musicianship. We want to make something really special that showcases a selection of our best singers.

#### Nexus Hire

Nexus has been very fortunate to have talented people volunteer their time and energy to create amazing costume, props and sets for our productions. Nexus Hire is all about supporting other local community groups and schools with their productions and events by providing access to our resources at affordable rates.

For enquiries contact us at [info@nexusbyt.com](mailto:info@nexusbyt.com) or Janelle on 0458 012 562 between 4pm-6pm Tuesday & Thursdays.





## **OTHER NEXUS INITIATIVES:**

### **Nexus Dance, Nexus Grants a Dream, Nexus Design and Nexus Community Events**

For further information regarding the when following programs are running, please check the website or email us on [info@nexusbyt.com](mailto:info@nexusbyt.com)

#### **Nexus Dance**

The aim of Nexus Dance is to provide children, teens and young adults, both males and females, the opportunity to learn to dance in a safe, fun and friendly environment. Students are exposed to a variety of dance styles from classical, ballet, contemporary, jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Nexus Dance is an amazing opportunity for young people to challenge themselves and grow in confidence.



#### **Nexus Design**

Nexus Design continues to be an initiative in progress and development. Nexus Design aims to support and build talented youth in the areas of Graphic Design, Creative Media, Costume Design and Creation, Set Design and Construction and the Fine Arts. Currently Nexus Design works in conjunction with Nexus Bendigo Youth Theatre, but with many plans for future endeavours, Nexus Design looks set to hold many wonderful opportunities to enrich the youth of Bendigo.



#### **Nexus Grants a Dream**

Nexus Grants a Dream is an incredible opportunity for the NEXUS students and leaders to give back to the community. The 'dream' behind this initiative is two-fold. One is to provide an opportunity for a NEXUS age teen who has a mental, physical or social disadvantage or disability, to be able participate in NEXUS BYT in a special debut capacity. The aim is for the NEXUS BYT students to be able to interact and bless someone who might not otherwise have the opportunity to participate. It is also a time for these students to be blessed by a variety of people from their community. This initiative is the perfect way to practice the concept of social inclusion, which is an important part of NEXUS.



#### **Nexus Community Events**

Nexus Community is an event based program run by Nexus to engage with those involved in all areas of Nexus and their families, as well as the wider community by creating an opportunity for families to participate in fun enjoyable activities together. Through one off events, our key objective is to see families create amazing memories, while fostering meaningful connections into a caring community.