

For immediate release: 28 January 2026

Theatre Works proudly presents

Beyond The Neck

By Tom Holloway

19 March – 4 April 2026

Theatre Works: 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au

Marking 30 years since the Port Arthur massacre, this March **Theatre Works** brings Melbourne audiences **Tom Holloway's** award-winning play,

Beyond The Neck. Helmed by renowned director **Suzanne Chaundy**, this powerful and compelling work honours the long-term impact of trauma, profoundly resonating in a world where violence is ever-present in the news cycle.

Set years after the events at Port Arthur, ***Beyond the Neck*** is a portrait of a community living with loss. A young boy who just wants to play cricket, a teenage girl begrudgingly playing happy families, a mother on a holiday gifted to her by colleagues, and a tour guide who revisits the site every day... four individual stories braided together. All strangers, until they meet in the aftermath of one of Australia's darkest days.

Based on real accounts from people affected by the Port Arthur massacre, ***Beyond The Neck*** is a remarkable portrait of a community learning to live beyond trauma. A moment in time when humour flickers through the darkness, and kindness sits beside pain.

"Beyond the Neck isn't about the violence itself, it's about what happens after. It's about grief, survival, and the long, uneven process of recovery", explains **Theatre Works Executive Director Dianne Toulson**.

"At the time there was a sense, maybe even a quiet hope, that Port Arthur had marked a turning point for Australia. That it reshaped who we are, how we think about safety, and how seriously we take responsibility for one another. Then the Bondi tragedy happened, and it shook all of us. It forced a deeper reckoning. Not because the situations are the same, but because it reminded us that trauma doesn't stay in the past. It re-surfaces. It echoes. That's when the relevance of this play sharpened.

Audiences can expect a production that is deeply considered in how it cares for them. This is not about shock. It's about empathy. It's also a reminder that theatre can be a place to sit together with difficult things, not to be retraumatised, but to feel less alone."

Created with an intricate and beautiful style of writing, ***Beyond The Neck*** sits between testimonial theatre and poetic storytelling. An extraordinary piece which is closer to a musical quartet than a traditional play, it features an award-winning design team including **Richard Vabre** on lighting, sound design by **Jack Burmeister**, set and costume by **Emma Ashton**, and an original score by **Philip McLeod**. Performed by a highly respected ensemble of actors; **Francis Greenslade**, **Emmaline Carroll Southwell**, **Cassidy Dunn**, and **Freddy Collyer** also bring extraordinary depth and emotional intelligence to the world.

Produced by **Theatre Works** as a part of their 2026 **By Theatre Works** programming, this season of ***Beyond The Neck*** will also tour to the **West Gippsland Performing Arts Centre** (19 April), **The Round** (24 and 25 April) and the **Clocktower Centre** (1 and 2 May). An exceptional Australian play honouring an important anniversary in Australia's history, this singular production is not to be missed.



Based in St Kilda, **Theatre Works** has been home to bold, independent theatre for more than 40 years. They give artists the space, support and freedom to take risks, and audiences the chance to discover powerful new Australian stories. Each year, they present dozens of productions across their three venues, from reimagined classics to brand new works, created in partnership with some of the country's most exciting theatre makers.

Beyond The Neck is playing as part of the **By Theatre Works** programming stream. Other **By Theatre Works** productions in 2026 include *Australian Open*, *Savages*, *Mara*, *Red Sky Morning*, *Lazarus*, *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, *The Wolves*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

Directed by Suzanne Chaundy

Performed by Francis Greenslade, Emmaline Carroll Southwell, Cassidy Dunn and Freddy Collyer

Lighting design by Richard Vabre

Set and costume design by Emma Ashton

Sound composition by Philip McLeod

Sound design by Jack Burmeister

Produced by Theatre Works

19 March – 4 April 2026

Tues – Sat 7:30pm

Previews: Thursday 19 and Friday 20 March

Opening Night: Saturday 21 March

Tickets: \$55 Full, \$48 Concession, \$40 Preview

Bookings: www.theatreworks.org.au/2026/beyond-the-neck

Enquiries: (03) 9534 3388

Venue: Theatre Works – 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au

Duration: 75 minutes no interval

Age suitability: 15+

Warnings: Viewer discretion advised. Beyond the Neck reflects on the long-term impact of the Port Arthur massacre and the experiences of those affected in its aftermath. The play does not depict or describe the events of the day and contains no graphic violence. Themes of mass violence, loss, and trauma are present and may be distressing for some audience members

Accessibility: Theatre Works is a wheelchair-accessible venue. A full-access guide will be available closer to the date