Local News

Resource Smart

A record number of **Victorian** schools have been named as finalists in the 2025 **ResourceSmart Schools Awards, Victoria s** largest sustainability celebration of students, teachers and volunteers.

This year, 31 primary and secondary schools are vying for an award across 12 categories, including Teacher of the Year and Student Action Team of the Year.

From students to staff and volunteers, entire school communities are working together to protect and preserve the environment.

This year**, Sustainability Victoria** is marking 16 years of the **ResourceSmart Schools Awards** with the theme, 'Working Together'.

Katie Pahlow, Director Regions and Community Action, **Sustainability Victoria**, says, "We can achieve so much more when we work together, whether that's with other students, other schools, other teachers, or the wider community beyond the school gate. By working together, our efforts combine to build the future we need."

This year's winners will be announced at a prestigious awards ceremony held at the **MCG** on June 5.

Campus Infrastructure and Operations School of the Year

- Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury
- Croydon Hills Primary School, Croydon Hills
- St. Monica's College, Epping

CDS Vic Excellence Award (Primary)

- Our Lady of the Nativity Primary School, Aberfeldie
- Pleasant Street Primary School. Lake Wendouree
- Wandin Yallock Primary School, Wandin North

CDS Vic Excellence Award (Secondary)

- Braybrook College, Braybrook
- Kardinia International College, Bell Post Hill
- Kolbe Catholic College, Greenvale Lakes

Curriculum Leadership School of the Year (Primary)

- Heany Park Primary School, Rowville
- Gippsland Grammar, St Anne's Campus, Sale
- St James' Parish Primary School, Sebastopol

Curriculum Leadership School of the Year (Secondary)

- Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten, Muckleford
- Melbourne Girls' College, Richmond
- Victory Christian College, Strathdale

Emerging School of the Year

- Box Hill High School, Box Hill
- Siena Catholic Primary School, Lucas
- St. Angela of the Cross Primary School, Warragul

ResourceSmart School of the Year

- Aitken College, Greenvale
- Lilydale Heights College, Lilydale
- Monbulk Primary School. Monbulk

School Volunteer of the Year

- Bayswater South Primary School, Bayswater
- Ocean Grove Primary School, Ocean Grove
- Overnewton Anglican Community College, Keilor

Student Action Team of the Year (Primary)

- Brunswick South Primary School, Brunswick East
- Fairfield Primary School, Fairfield
- Heany Park Primary School, Rowville

Student Action Team of the Year (Secondary)

- Kardinia International College, Bell Post Hill
- Kew High School, Kew East
- Wellington Secondary College, Mulgrave

Teacher of the Year (Primary)

- Benson Steere, St Patrick's Parish Primary School, Port Fairy
- Marita Ryan, Albion Primary School, Albion
- Stephen McNeight, Wendouree Primary School, Wendouree

Teacher of the Year (Secondary)

- Ben Coleman, St. Monica's College, Epping
- Elise Dunstan, Kew High School, Kew East
- Shannon Sargeant, Lilydale Heights College, Lilydale

Melbourne Confidential

Talk is cheap, gossip is priceless

New Cats cast members

Producer **John Frost** for **Crossroads Live** has announced more cast members for the 40th Anniversary **Australian** tour of **Andrew Lloyd Webber s** record-breaking musical **Cats**, which will play at **Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne**, from December 21.

The coveted role of **Grizabella**, the former 'glamour cat' ostracised by the **Jellicles**, will be played by **Gabriyel Thomas**, who currently stars as **Michelle** and sometimes in the lead role of **Deloris Van Cartier** in the **Australian** tour of **Sister Act.**

Gabriyel s other credits include **The Sound of Music, Ragtime** and the **Australian** and **US** tours of **Hairspray.** Being cast as **Grizabella** in **Cats** is a dream come true for **Gabriyel** as the show was her introduction to musical theatre.

Most recently seen as **Roxie Hart** in the sold-out national tour of **Chicago** and the two-hander musical **No Love Songs, Lucy Maunder** is taking on the role of **Jellylorum**, who watches out for the kittens and takes care of **Gus the Theatre Cat.**

Since graduating from **WAPPA** in 2006, **Lucy** has performed lead roles in **Mary Poppins, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Pippin, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Matilda the Musica**l and **Doctor Zhivago** amongst many others.

The rebellious cat **Rum Tum Tugger** who likes to cause mischief amongst the **Jellicle** tribe, will be played by **Des Flanagan.** Best known for playing **Christian** in the **Australian** tour of **Moulin Rouge! The Musical, Des** is currently starring as **Leo Bloom** in **Mel Brooks The Producers** at **Hayes Theatre Co** and **Riverside Theatres**.

WAPPA graduate **Jarrod Draper** has been cast as **Munkustrap**, the tabby tomcat who is the storyteller and protector of the **Jellicle** tribe.

Currently playing **Artie Green** in **Sunset Boulevard** in **China** after performing the role in **Melbourne, Sydney** and **Singapore, Jarrod** has also starred in **Moulin Rouge! The Musical** and **Promises, Promises**.

The remainder of the company includes **Sarah Bourke** (playing **Tantomile**), **Olivia Carniato (Demeter), Mia Dabkowski-Chandler (Bombalurina), Tom Davis (Shimbleshanks), Ella Fitzpatrick (Jemima), Charlie Follows (Bill Bailey), Joshua Gordon (Coricopat), Chaska Halliday (Cassandra), Dominique Hamilton (swing), Claudia Hastings (Victoria/ White Cat)**, **Aimee Jones** (swing), **Savannah Lind (Rumpleteazer), Jake O'Brien (Mungojerrie), Xavier Pellin (swing), Guy Pik (Carbuckety), Rania Potaka-Osborne (Alonzo), Edward Smith (Admetus/ Macavity)**, **Thalia Smith** (swing) and **Tod Strike** (swing).

They join the previously announced principal performers **Todd McKenney**, who will play the dual roles of **Bustopher Jones** and **Asparagus** the Theatre Cat, classical performer **Mark Vincent** as **Old Deuteronomy**, and **Leigh Archer** as **Jennyanydots**, also known as the "Gumbie Cat".

"We have assembled a purr-fect cast for this 40th Anniversary **Australian** tour of **Cats**, led by **Gabriyel, Todd** and **Mark**.

"It's a wonderful clowder of seasoned artists and new performers to the industry," said **John Frost**.

"**Cats** was revolutionary when it first opened and to celebrate the production in the theatre where it first played is a real thrill. **Australia** has an enduring love for **Cats** and it's time to let the memory live again."

The musical tells the story of the **Jellicle cat** tribe. On just one special night of the year, all **Jellicle** cats meet at the **Jellicle Ball** where **Old Deuteronomy**, their wise and benevolent leader, makes the **Jellicle** choice and announces which of them will go up to 'The Heaviside Layer' and be reborn into a whole new Jellicle life

Venue: Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne
Season: From December 21
Performance Times: Tues.-Thurs. 7pm, Fri.-Sat. 7.30pm, Wed. 1pm, Sat .2pm, Sun. 1pm and 6pm (schedule varies weekly)
Prices: From $69.90 (Transaction fees apply)
Bookings: catsthemusical.com.au or call 1300 182 183. Groups 8+ call 1300 182 183

The Comeuppance

From left: AYA, Kevin Hofbauer, Khisraw Jones-Shukoor, Julia Grace, and Tess Masters in The Comeuppance. Photo: Cameron Grant - Parenthesy

Gary Abrahams, in his direction of **The Comeuppance** by **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, provides a juxtaposition of lives led vacuously against a backdrop of personal and social trauma.

Ostensibly reconnecting for a class reunion after 20 years, five friends weigh up the cost of their successes and failures.

Ursula (AYA), the recluse, doesn't want to go to the reunion despite the exhortations of **Emilio (Khisraw Jones-Shukoor)**, a successful artist, who still holds a torch for **Caitlin (Julia Grace).**

Adding to the intensity is **Kristina (Tess Masters)**, an anaesthetist, who brings her cousin **Francisco (Kevin Hofbauer)**, a war veteran.

The front porch on which they meet **(Ella Butler)** bears out the dilapidation of the lives led.

Amidst the reminiscences of their school years are recriminations, accusations and faux pas charging the respective discussions with a pathos that brings into question the **American Dream**.

Some have made poor decisions but the plethora of social ailments has beggared them all. **COVID**, the storming of the capitol, Catholicism**, Columbine**, striving for success, gender identity, date rape and military service have all led to an exhaustion which is borne out in **Fransisco s** seizures, **Ursula s** gradual blindness, **Caitlin s** lassitude, **Kristina s** exhaustion and **Emilio s** frustration.

The scope of **Jacobs-Jenkin s** play is epic. Whilst the reunion is a common trope, the individual is not just the victim of their own irresponsibility but a toy in the hands of larger forces beyond their ability to master.

The evidence for this is in the presence of the supernatural. Death interposes itself during the course of the play commenting on individuals and outcomes.

Each actor in turn drops character to become the **Grim Reaper** with suitable reverb on a hand held microphone (**Joe Paradise Lui**). Naturalism gives way to the beyond.

Jacobs-Jenkins has firm views about the nature of society. His characters, whilst seemingly disingenuous at times, seek solace wherever they can and cannot necessarily be held accountable despite the magnitude of their sins.

Red Stitch Theatre, St Kilda
Until May 25
Bookings: redstitch.net

Review by David McLean

Ken to speak

Ken James will be the guest speaker at the **Marquee Luncheon Club** at **South Melbourne** on Tuesdday, May 20.

His credits include **Skippy, The Box, Glenview Highm, Skyways, Sons and Daughters, Matlock Police, P\ugwell** and **Prisoner.**

What's On

From Roses to Poison

From Roses to Poison, being the **English** translation, was premiered by the **Melbourne French Theatre Inc** as a rehearsed and costumed reading at their very own **La Maison De Maitre Building** in **Carlton**, being their 110th production over their 48 years.

From **English** it has been translated into **French** by **Michelle Beugnot** with the help of translation courses at **Monash University** and finally updated and modified with the playwright's blessing by **Michel Bula, MFT s** co-founder, and now performed in **French** for the first time in **Australia**.

Renowned **Dutch-Australian** playwright **Marijke Eysbertse-van Schaik** delved into **Emperor Napolean Bonaparte s** final years of exile and then days before his death on **Saint Helena.**

The rehearsed reading was so complete you would have thought it was a performance without scripts. Costuming of the period was quite right and certainly added to the expectation of the reality of the day.

With **English** surtitles on the wall above the acting area, those not so conversant in **French** could easily follow the events around **Napoleon s** last years at **St Helena.**

The portrayal of **Napoleon** by **Karim Lopez** was dynamic in capturing his moments of joy, despair and the realisation they were out to poison him.

Having established a relationship with the Superintendent of the **East India Company, William Balcombe** strongly played by **Richard Ryan**, a plan to escape is hatched only to fail.

While under the watchful eye of some 3000 **British** Soldiers and the merciless **Governor Sir Hudson Lowe** formidably played by **Michel Bula**, there were no favours granted as **Napoleon** spent his last days at **Longwood** in a rat infected cottage.

Supporting cast, **Veronique Duche** as **Mrs Balcombe**, with daughters **Lucie Poivaiki Regal** as **Betsy, Lucie Sors** as **Jane** all shone while **Josh Hauville** as **George Carstairs** and **Yves Boucaud** as **Conte de Montholon** added much verve to the overall performance.

A cameo appearance of **Arnaud Ramdoo** as **Dr Antonmarchi** with his exuberant performance brought some humour in what was a desperate situation for **Napoleon.**

Directed by **Donald McManus** it was an all round compelling performance by **MFT**.

melbournefrenchtheatre.org.au

Review by Graeme McCoubrie

Omnia Art Prize

The **Omnia Art Prize and Exhibition** is a premier annual prize and exhibition celebrating **Australian** contemporary art.

This prestigious $15,000 major prize and, for the first time in 2025, a new $5000 small sculpture prize, showcases the best of emerging and established contemporary artists nationally.

A highlight on the calendar of the **Melbourne** art and design community, the prize winners will be announced at a Gala Opening on May 23, and the exhibition of over 250 shortlisted artworks available for sale will run across May 24-25.

Proceeds from the event go to the **St Kevin s College Foundation** to support students experiencing barriers to accessing education.

Spanning a diverse array of mediums including oils, acrylics, photography, mixed media and small sculpture, the shortlisted artworks are a vibrant testament to the rich tapestry of cultures, experiences, and perspectives that define contemporary **Australia**; and a response to both the darkness and beauty found in the world around us.

Some of the standout submissions to this year's collection include **Datsun Tran's** artwork depicting **Australian** animals impacted by bushfire, created using charcoal sourced from burned trees in the **Adelaide Hills, Josh Dykgraaf s** feather-collage of a cat; highlighting the devastating impact cats have on native **Australian** wildlife, and the sculpture **Just a Minute** by **Claire O Halloran** honouring the beauty, resilience, and quiet fortitude of aging.