



MEDIA RELEASE MARCH 30 2022

## NEW SHORT FILMS SHARE STORIES OF HOPE & UNCERTAINTY IN THE WATERLOO HOUSING ESTATE

On Wednesday 20 April, Milk Crate Theatre releases a series of six short films, entitled *Waterloo*. Created and performed by Waterloo residents, this project offers a creative lens into the Waterloo Housing Estate, sharing the stories, experiences and challenges of the community. All films will be available to view on the Milk Crate Theatre website from 5:30pm on April 20 [milkcratetheatre.com/waterloo](http://milkcratetheatre.com/waterloo)

Milk Crate Theatre Artistic Program Manager, Jessica Saras says, “Despite a number of challenges that meant a change in the structure from live to online workshop, an extension of the project from 10 weeks to 12 months, and a move from live performance to short film, we are delighted to be able to share such important works that bring stories and characters from Waterloo to life; highlighting their amazing resilience and strength as a community.”

The six short films of *Waterloo* are a mix of light and shade, humour and reflection, revealing overlooked elements of tenants’ lives and dreams.

- Poet Flora Zaydenberg opens the series with her walking meditation *Waterloo*, musing that “gentrification, simply put, is displacement.”
- Fashion designer and visual artist ‘Fresh Buddha of Sydney’ documents a journey from homelessness to “limitless creation” in his film *Made for Now*.
- Actor, writer and community organiser, Rebecca Reddin, showcases her chameleonic comedy skills in the sketch comedy short *Best of Bec*.
- Writer and activist Larry Billington delivers a complex portrait of the Waterloo community’s struggles for answers about their future in *So Far Away*.
- In *Tree of Hope*, visual artist and dancer “Hana in Sydney” uses illustration, design and dance to express her hope for happiness and safety.
- Closing the series is *The Silver City*, in which writer and performer Garry Richards memorises all the street names of Broken Hill, “in case I have to live there”.

This is not the first taste of uncertainty and delays for the Waterloo community. In 2015, news broke that the residents of the Waterloo Housing Estate would have to move from their homes, with plans for redevelopment of the area. Seven years on, with a preferred masterplan on the table, and a push to change planning authority, there is still uncertainty for residents – some of whom have lived in the estate for decades. Milk Crate’s *Waterloo* film launch coincides with the final weeks of the public exhibition of the Modified Waterloo (South) Planning Proposal – the long-awaited redevelopment plans for the homes of the majority of the Waterloo Creative Ensemble.

Whilst this provides a view into what their community might look like in the future, it still doesn’t offer answers around where they may be relocated, for how long, or when they might be invited back.



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This project has been facilitated by Milk Crate Theatre with the support of Counterpoint Community Services and 107 Projects.

**Creative Team**

Co-Directors – James Dalton + Bethany Simons

Producer – Jessica Saras

Videography + Editing – Adam McPhilbin

Collaborative Artists - Flora Zaydenberg, Fresh Buddha of Sydney, Rebecca Reddin, Larry Billington, Hana in Sydney, Garry Richards

This project would not have been possible without the amazing support of our funders including City of Sydney, Australia Turf Foundation, DebtFix and the Australian Commonwealth Governments RISE Fund.

For interviews, please contact Jessica Saras on 0481 348 218 or [jess@milkcratetheatre.com](mailto:jess@milkcratetheatre.com)

**ABOUT MILK CRATE THEATRE:**

Milk Crate Theatre effects social change through the power of performance.

We provide opportunities for people whose voices are under-represented to engage in artistic practice and then share their bold and resonant stories to build empathy and break down barriers.

Our community of Collaborative Artists (participants) are generally living with, have experienced or are at risk of homelessness; living with mental health or disability support needs; have experienced domestic violence or come from First Nations and/or culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We are the leading arts organisation in Australia working in the unique intersection of the arts, homelessness, mental health, and disability, providing professional development pathways and opportunities for collaborative artists to engage in creative practices as both creators and performers of original theatre and works. Our annual program incorporates a wide range of workshops, developments and presentations of new theatre and film works.

Milk Crate Theatre harnesses the power of the arts to drive social impact.

At a person level, we provides creative opportunities to support participants to build individual capacity. Initially, increasing confidence, skills and connections and through longer engagement supporting an increased sense of self agency, improved wellbeing, and an improved outlook on life.

The arts also offers a powerful tool to challenge perceptions and through the sharing our work, we break down barriers, encourage inclusion and increase opportunities for people with lived experiences to thrive, thus tackling the issue of disadvantage from both sides.