

Media release
For immediate release

Photo Toby Burrows

Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela will conclude his tenure with Sydney Dance Company in 2028, following nearly two decades of transformative artistic leadership.

"I will always be forever grateful and so proud to have led Sydney Dance Company, said Bonachela.

"Together, we have cultivated a Company defined by collaboration, courage and generosity, commissioning new work, championing emerging and established choreographers, and fostering enduring creative partnerships.

"I am deeply proud of our artistic legacy; from the works on our stages; to our global standing; to New Breed, INDance and our other expanded training programs which continue to shape dance in Australia.

"I am enormously proud of the Company's successful Capital Campaign for the transformative renovation of The Wharf. The campaign secured our home as a world-class dance hub and a cutting-edge, artist-centred space that elevates our capabilities.

"Sydney Dance Company has been my artistic home, a place of trust, creativity and possibility. I am profoundly grateful to the dancers, artists, staff, Board, audiences and partners who have shared this journey."

During Bonachela's tenure, the Company has toured extensively across Australia and internationally, including to Chaillot – Théâtre national de la Danse, Royal Opera House, The Joyce Theater, Odeon of Herodes Atticus, and Mercat de les Flors. These tours showcased commissions from Bonachela, as well as other Australian and international choreographers, highlighting local talent globally and delivering new experiences to national audiences. Under Bonachela's guidance the Company has also developed a robust Education Program for young audiences.

His work has been widely recognised, including Green Room and Helpmann Awards, New York Festival Gold Awards and Spain's Cruz de la Orden del Mérito Civil.

Bonachela has championed new pathways for artists, including through the Pre-Professional Year program (2014); *New Breed* – supporting 47 emerging choreographers in partnership with The Balnaves Foundation; *INDance* (commenced 2022) supported by the Neilson Foundation; and The Balnaves Foundation Artist in Residence, now in its third year. 2026 introduces *ORBIT*, a pilot touring program, delivered with Australian Dance Theatre and Dancehouse.

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[Images available to download HERE](#)

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Bonachela said *“After deep reflection, I have decided the time is right to look towards my next stage.*

“The coming period will be one of ongoing momentum – creating new work, commissioning and supporting artists, and ensuring a thoughtful transition for the Company. I remain fully committed to leading the Company with ambition and care as it prepares for its next chapter.

“This transition will be a new and exciting time for the Company, and a new step for me professionally - I am looking forward to continuing to create and collaborate, beyond the rich experiences I have had in this role.”

Chair of the Board, Emma-Jane Newton said: *“Building on its deep foundations, Rafael’s vision has reshaped the Sydney Dance Company and cemented its standing nationally and globally. Under his leadership the Company has broadened its artistic ambition, invested in the next generation of artists, and ensured an enduring reputation of significance.*

“On behalf of the Board, dancers and staff, and the Sydney Dance Company community, I thank Rafael for his extraordinary contribution and creative leadership. We look forward to supporting and working with him as he continues to lead the Company artistically over the coming period.

“The Board is committed to a thoughtful and well-governed transition. We eagerly await Rafael’s final seasons while positioning the Company with confidence for its next chapter.”

The Board will commence a global search for the next Artistic Director mid-2026. Bonachela’s final full-year directing the Company is anticipated to be 2027, with 2028 dedicated to a planned leadership transition. Further announcements will be made in due course.

For more information on Sydney Dance Company and Rafael Bonachela, visit sydneydancecompany.com