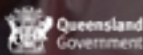


LA
BOITE

A SHOW OF
INNOCENCE AND
EXTROVERTS

IRL

BY LEWIS TRESTON
DIRECTED BY SANJA SIMIĆ



This content has been supported by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, the principal arts funding body in Australia.

This work has been supported by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Theatre Company, the principal arts funding body in Queensland.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At La Boite Theatre, we acknowledge the country on which we work and the traditional custodians of this land – the Turrbal and Jagera people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lands, winds and waters we all now share and their ancient and enduring cultures. This country was the home of storytelling long before La Boite existed, and we are privileged and grateful to share our stories here today.

LA BOITE THEATRE PRESENTS A WORLD PREMIERE SUPPORTED BY
THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT THROUGH ARTS QUEENSLAND

IRL

BY LEWIS TRESTON
DIRECTED BY SANJA SIMIĆ

DATES

6 – 25 NOV

DURATION

APPROX. 90 MINS
(no interval)

CONTENT ADVISORIES

*Recommended for
audiences aged 15+*
Contains coarse language
and sexual references.

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright Lewis Treston
Director Sanja Simić
Lighting Design Ben Hughes
Sound Design & Composition Wil Hughes
Set & Costume Design Anthony Spinaze
Design Realiser M'ck McKeague
Fight, Intimacy & Movement Direction Nigel Poulton
Fish Choreography Sammie Williams
Stage Manager Nicole Neil
Rehearsal Stage Manager Jacinta Way
Assistant Stage Manager Kayla Cahill
Director Observership Participants
Grace Wilson, Jordan Stott

CAST

Alexei Will Bartolo
Thaddeus Byron Lankester Howells
Taylor Rachel Nutchey

*Every effort has been made to ensure that all
information was correct at the time of printing.*



LEWIS TRESTON
PLAYWRIGHT

The genesis for *IRL* came about when I realised that all my plays feature a moment when a character wears a ludicrous costume or outfit of some description.

Creatively, I am usually guided by my unconscious, but when this trope became obvious to me, I consciously decided to develop a story that would exaggerate the metaphor of costumes to its fullest extent to see what I'd discover... So, where better to set such a play than at a cosplay convention?

There's a dizzying amount of funny, complicated, and dark questions and ideas that burst out of the kooky, specific, and loveable characters that populate *IRL*, and I don't want to give any of them away. What I will say is that one of my favourite directors, Mike Nichols, said something along the lines that all the elements of a play orbit a single metaphor that cannot be expressed, which is why the play exists in the first place.

Speaking of great directors, I'd like to thank my friend and collaborator, Sanja Simić, for her mammoth effort over the past few years developing this play, which is now culminating in its premiere production.

I'd also like to thank La Boite Theatre for their ongoing support over the years and **literally everyone** who has so warmly and sensitively brought their skills, imaginations, and hearts to this material.

WRITER'S NOTE

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

SANJA SIMIĆ
DIRECTOR

I. Love. This. Play.

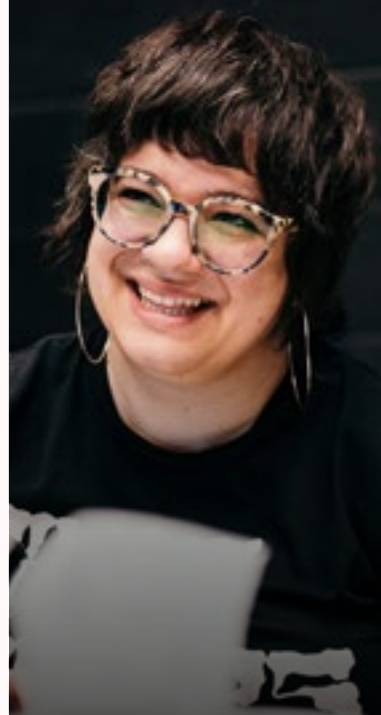
Lewis Treston and I have worked together on *IRL* from its inception. We have shared three years of developments, frenzied messages, long-form tarot readings, and a lot of laughter. *IRL* is funny, chaotic and full of heart – a tricky balance, but Lewis is a gifted writer of comedy and this play leaps off the page with possibility, abandon, and an addictive and dizzying madcap energy.

IRL centres the experience of a queer teenager and drops us into his quest to find love, acceptance and community. We follow Alexei (our protagonist), Taylor (his best friend, a movie star on the cusp of considerable fame), and Thaddeus (his closeted internet crush) through a long, but incredibly fast paced and fantastical day, where one chaotic incident catapults into another. There simply aren't very many works in the Australian canon that detail the very specific experience of coming out (or not) as a young person. *IRL* celebrates Alexei's queerness – he's not someone who's struggling with his sexual identity, he just IS, and that's a joy to witness. *IRL* is a dream project and I have had the tremendous pleasure of bringing together some exceptional theatre makers to make this work. Will, Rachel & Byron make their La Boite Theatre debuts with this production and I, for one, cannot wait for Meanjin to meet these actors in all their brilliance.

Thank you to our equally brilliant team – Ant, Ben, Wil, Jacinta, Kayla, Nicole, Teegan, Nigel, M'ck, Maddie – and every person who's had a hand in getting this show up. It takes considerable talent to make work of this scale with limited resources and I am grateful for their commitment, experience, and heart. Directing this work at La Boite, my theatre heartland, has made it even more special – thank you to the company for having us. And now – don a wig, grab a cocktail, text your crush, and strap in for one helluva ride!

See you on the other side.

Sanja 🍷





What a joy the last few weeks have been having the *IRL* team in the building. Welcoming both Lewis Treston and Sanja Simić back to La Boite Theatre has been a treat.

A show of innocence and extroverts, of awkward meet-cutes, and young love, *IRL* is a mad cap comedy that will hopefully bring you as much joy to watch as it has brought us creating it.

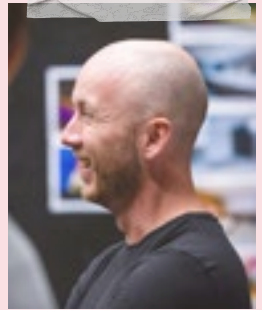
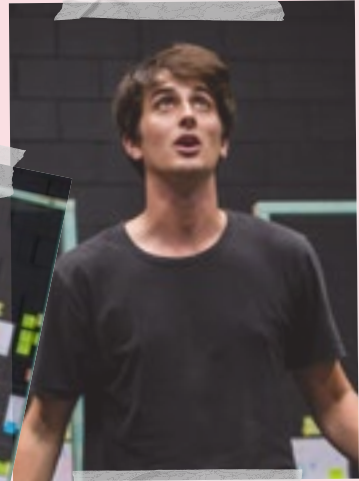
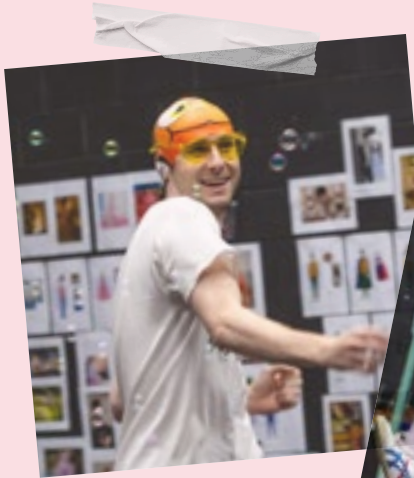
Relationships are made or break when we're young. Intense, exciting, anxiety-inducing, and often stormy, these relationships undergird some of the most iconic stories all time. *IRL* is an exciting addition to this canon. The phenomenal cast and creatives have dreamt up a world with characters so unique yet entirely relatable.

While familiar, this show also highlights different ways of thinking, feeling and experiencing the world. It shines a light on the importance of sub-cultures in offering an alternative way to find belonging when the rest of the world has closed its doors on you. Lewis' signature camp comedy is like a big warm welcoming hug right when we need it most.

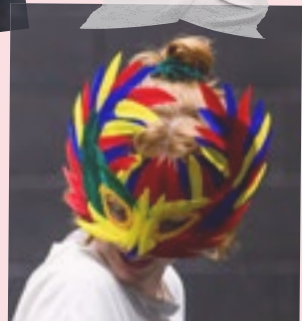
COURTNEY STEWART
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CEO
LA BOITE THEATRE

**WELCOME
MESSAGE**

REHEARSAL IMAGES



Credits L-R: (Top) Byron Lankester Howells, Will Bartolo, Byron Lankester Howells, Will Bartolo (Middle) Sanja Simić, Lewis Treston (Bottom) Nigel Poulton, Rachel Nutchey



Credits L-R: (Top) Rachel Nutchey, Will Bartolo
(Middle) Sanja Simić, Will Bartolo, Rachel Nutchey,
Nigel Poulton, Byron Lankester Howells
(Bottom) Rachel Nutchey

CAST MEMBERS



WILL BARTOLO (he/him)
ALEXEI / MULLET / HOST / PINOCCHIO

Will is simply stoked to be making his La Boite Theatre debut with *IRL*. Theatre credits include *The Almighty Sometimes*, *First Casualty* (Queensland Theatre), *How to Catch a Star* (Australian Chamber Orchestra), *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare). Screen credits include *Erotic Stories* (SBS), *Cut* (Vancouver international film festival), and *Yannis* (screened internationally, Best Lead Actor – Made in the West film festival). As a motion capture performer he has worked with Shapeshifter studios and the BBC on *Toy*, animated reconstructions of original *Doctor Who* stories. Will has a Bachelor of Arts (Acting) from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, is a proud member of MEAA, and is also a teaching artist for Bell Shakespeare.



BYRON LANKESTER HOWELLS (he/him)
THADDEUS / MASKED HERO / FIN / MELODY
/ KIEREN / CHESHIRE CAT / MOTHER

IRL is both Byron's professional stage debut and his debut production with La Boite Theatre. Upon graduating high school, Byron began training with Townsville-based theatre company TheatreiNQ, most notably appearing as Orestes in an adaptation of *The Oresteia*. In 2020, Byron moved to Brisbane to complete a BFA (Acting) at QUT where he appeared as Prior Walter in a production of *Angels in America* and Henry Miller in the Wesley Enoch directed *Tight in the Bud*. Byron is also a proud member of MEAA.



RACHEL NUTCHEY (she/her)
TAYLOR / ANDROID / SM BEAR / PHOENIX
/ CASPIAN BERMUDA / DARREN / MADAM
MALHEUR / MOUSE / OWL / FATHER

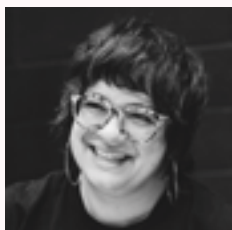
Rachel is an actor and theatre maker proudly hailing from North Queensland. Before graduating from QUT with a BFA (Acting) in 2020, she completed three years of training with TheatreiNQ's Bridge Project. She spent last year touring the state with The Grin and Tonic Theatre Troupe (dir. Jason Klarwein). Her mainstage and independent credits include *We Are The Mutable* (Queensland Theatre), *Bloody Mary*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (TheatreiNQ) and *The Unspoken Word is Joe* (The Reaction Theory). She is also a proud member of MEAA. *IRL* will mark Rachel's debut on the La Boite stage.

CREATIVE TEAM



LEWIS TRESTON (he/him)
PLAYWRIGHT

Lewis is thrilled to be returning to La Boite Theatre after his bonkers adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* (dir. Bridget Boyle) shocked and delighted audiences last year. This original play, *IRL*, was commissioned by La Boite in mid-2020 and has been in an ongoing state of development since then. He is a regular face at La Boite who got his start with the company working behind the bar, but has gone on to become the playwriting mentor for the company's Assembly program. Away from La Boite, his award-winning comedy *Hubris & Humiliation* (dir. Dean Bryant) premiered at Sydney Theatre Company this year as a part of World Pride to sellout performances and rave reviews.



SANJA SIMIĆ (she/her)
DIRECTOR

Sanja Simić is an award-winning theatre director, dramaturg, and creative producer, currently based in Meanjin, on the unceded lands of the Turrbal and Jagera people. She has over a decade of experience as a theatre director and creative producer in Australia. Recent directorial credits include *Naked & Screaming* (La Boite Theatre, 2021), *Caesar* (La Boite Theatre, 2021), and *Lysa & The Freeborn Dames* (La Boite Theatre, 2018). With independent company Bodysnatchers, which she co-founded with playwright Mark Rogers in 2010, she has directed Rogers' *Plastic* (2017), *Soothsayers* (2012), and *Blood Pressure* (Sydney, 2012), as well as multiple seasons of Kirby Medway's *Encounter* in Sydney, Adelaide, and Melbourne. She was Director in Residence at La Boite Theatre from 2021-22 and Creative Producer from 2017-2021. She was the Development Executive at Unless Pictures from 2021-22. This year, she curated the 2023 Australian Performing Arts Forum.



BEN HUGHES (he/him)
LIGHTING DESIGN

Ben's lighting designs span theatre, dance, opera, concerts and events. He designs for many companies including Queensland Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Queensland Ballet, Opera Queensland, La Boite Theatre, Malthouse, Belvoir, Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide Festivals, Australasian Dance Collective, The Danger Ensemble and The Good Room. Recent lighting design credits include: *Bananaland*, *Salamander* (Brisbane Festival), *The Poison of Polygamy* (STC/La Boite Theatre), *The Last Five Years*, *Away, Naked & Screaming*, *The Time is Now* (La Boite Theatre); *Breaking The Castle* (Oombarra Productions/QPAC), *The Almighty Sometimes*, *Othello*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Return to the Dirt* (QT). Ben lectures in lighting design at Queensland University of Technology.



WIL HUGHES (he/him)
SOUND DESIGN & COMPOSER

Wil's credits as a composer, songwriter and sound designer for theatre have ranged from contemporary ballet to musicals, including *Blue* (Belvoir St); *Tiddas*, *Single Asian Female*, *The Dead Devils of Cockle Creek*, *The Village*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Wind in the Willows* (La Boite); *Face to Face* (Playlab); *Lucie In The Sky*, *Arc*, *Still Life* (Australasian Dance Collective); *Propel* (Expressions Dance Company); *Mind Your Head*, *From Within*, *Sonder*, *B-Sides* (Queensland Ballet); *Kill Climate Deniers* (That Production Company); *Elizabeth I* (Monsters Appear/Wonderland Festival); *Rice*, *The Scene Project 2018* (Queensland Theatre); *Day After Terrible Day*, *We Will Not Kiss/Touch/Frighten You in the Dark*, *Caligula* (The Danger Ensemble); *The Theory of Everything* (Brisbane Festival/Metro Arts); *Dust Covered Butterfly* (Metro Arts); and *Sweet Meniscus* (Anywhere Theatre Festival). Wil is also an internationally acclaimed composer, awarded Composer of the Year by the California Independent Film Festival (2018) and most recently Best Music for a Short Film at the Australian Screen Music Awards (2022).



ANTHONY SPINAZE (he/him)
SET & COSTUME DESIGN

Anthony is a theatre designer, visual artist, and painter. He studied Design at NIDA, where he was the recipient of the William Fletcher Foundation award for emerging artists. He has been nominated for awards including the 2017 Matilda Awards for his set design for *Switzerland* (2016) and the 2016 APDG awards, for his designs for both *Switzerland* (2016) and *Capricornia* (2015). He has designed for Queensland Theatre (where he was Resident Designer in 2016), Jute Theatre Company, and Brisbane Powerhouse. His previous work for La Boite Theatre includes *Blackrock* (2017), *Lysa and the Freeborn Dames* (2018) and *Romeo and Juliet* (2019); he is excited to return to the theatre for *IRL*.



M'CK MCKEAGUE (it/its/they/them)
DESIGN REALISER

M'ck McKeague is a performance maker, set and costume designer and scenographer currently living on unceded Yuggera and Turrbal land. Since completing the Master of Design for Performance at Victorian College of the Arts in 2018, M'ck has collaborated with Ivor MacAskill & Rosana Cade (UK), Krishna Isha (UK), Michael Zavros, Rachel Hann & Nic Farr (UK), Company Bad (KOR/AUS), The Hole Collective, Lenine Bourke, All the Queens Men, Polyglot Theatre, Elbow Room, and Embittered Swish. M'ck advocates for trans and non-binary approaches to scenography and has presented on panels at Prague Quadrennial (CZ), World Stage Design (CAN), People of Theatre (UK), Brisbane Art Design, University of Melbourne, Australian Production Design Guild and Ahead of the Game Artist Residency. Dissatisfied with master narratives and the systems and spaces that uphold them, M'ck seeks out collaborative scenographic practices that embrace difference and disrupt privilege in process, form and content.



NIGEL POULTON (he/him)
FIGHT, INTIMACY & MOVEMENT DIRECTION

Nigel is an award-winning movement director, fight and intimacy coordinator, SAG-AFTRA/MEAA stunt performer and actor with over 25 years of professional experience. Nigel is a certified Intimacy Director with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators and has been awarded Fight Master status with the Society of American Fight Directors. Nigel is also a certified Fight Director and past President of the Society of Australian Fight Directors Inc and an Honorary Fight Director with Fight Directors Canada. In addition to working with La Boite Theatre, Nigel's choreography credits include Finnish National Ballet, The Australian Ballet, New York City Ballet, The Metropolitan Opera, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Washington Opera Company, Opera Australia, Circus Oz, Melbourne Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre, Belvoir, Playbox Theatre, Kooemba Jdarra and many more. Nigel's film & TV work includes *Deadloch*, *Nautilus*, *Poker Face*, *Thor: Love and Thunder*, *Escape from Spiderhead*, *Ding Dong I'm Gay*, *Occupation 2*, *Pirates of the Caribbean V*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *The Water Diviner*, *The Bourne Legacy*, *Vikings* and *Winter's Tale*.



SAMMIE WILLIAMS (she/her)
FISH CHOREOGRAPHY

Sammie choreographs, performs and teaches across a variety of dance styles from contemporary to hip hop. She is extremely passionate about working across arts education previously working for Street Dreams, as a High School dance teacher and in the VET Sector. Sammie has been an artist in residence at Metro Arts and the inaugural recipient of the Mad Dance and La Boite Theatre Grant to present a development of Hip Hop Theatre work *One Way*. She has also partnered with Elements Collective on *Goldie and the 3 B-bears* which toured North QLD and the NT. Recently Sammie has performed with Vulcana Woman's Circus for Impact and as a movement director with Brothers Book Club and is excited to have had a small hand in the wonderful show that is *IRL*.



NICOLE NEIL (she/her)
STAGE MANAGER

Nicole is a Brisbane-based Stage Manager with a passion for innovative new work, collaborative environment and excel spreadsheets. Since graduating from Queensland University of Technology with Fine Arts degrees in both Drama (2012) and Technical Production (2015), Nicole has worked with companies including Queensland Theatre, Opera Australia, Dead Puppet Society, Opera Queensland, QMF, Shake & Stir and QPAC. Previously for La Boite Nicole has been the Stage Manager for; *Naked & Screaming* (2021), *Neon Tiger* (2018) and *Laser Beak Man* (2017 with Dead Puppet Society) and the Assistant Stage Manager/Show Caller for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2016). Nicole is a sessional academic in Stage Management for the BFA Technical Production at QUT and recently completed her Masters in Primary Education.



JACINTA WAY (she/her)
REHEARSAL STAGE MANAGER

Jacinta is a Production, Stage and Event Manager from Kurna country. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Performing Arts – specialising in Stage Management – she’s worked with companies such as Windmill Theatre, Patch Theatre, Slingsby, STCSA, Dragone and arts festivals in Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Tasmania and most recently Brisbane. Lately, she worked as the Production Stage Manager for Dark Mof’s Blue Rose Ball / Winter Feast and Stage Manager for the premiere season of *Salamanca*, produced by Brisbane Festival. This is her first time working at La Boite Theatre and she is very excited to be part of bringing this incredible psychotropic Disney-esque performance to life.



KAYLA CAHILL (she/her)
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Kayla is an emerging Brisbane based Stage Manager and Technical Production artist. She is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree majoring in Technical Production from the Queensland University of Technology. Previously for La Boite Theatre, Kayla was the Assistant Stage Manager of *An Ideal Husband* (2022). Other credits include: as Assistant Stage Manager: *Billy Elliot* (Matt Ward Entertainment, 2023), *Queensland Music Awards* (2022, 2023), *Australian Women in Music Awards and Conference* (2022, 2023). As Stage Manager: *The Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes* (Offside Theatre Company, 2023), *Gloria* (QUT, 2021). As Sound Coordinator: *Gloria, Mr Burns, Dinner, Love and Money* (QUT, 2020-2021).

BOARD

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 Gresham Congoo
 Amanda Jolly
 Sarah McAree
 Lynn Rainbow-Reid AM
 Jessica Simpson
 Sarah Townsend

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Head of Business
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Executive Producer (Acting)
 Krista Barker
Head of Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagements
 Jackie Maxwell
Head of Marketing & Audience Development
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Resident Dramaturg
 Katrina Irawati Graham
Marketing Coordinator
 Siluni Kumarapperuma
Graphic Designer
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 Aruga
Production Manager
 Teegan Kranenburg
Workshop Coordinator
 Andrew Mills
Venue Technician
 Natalie Scott

Venue & Operations Manager


Nick Seery
Ticketing & Administration Officer
 Sophie Wickes
Company Accountant
 Karen Mitchell
Finance Officer
 Elizabeth Lepua


FRONT OF HOUSE, ESPRESSO BAR & CAFÉ


Espresso Bar Coordinator / Barista
 Peta Kishawi
Front of House Supervisors
 Megan Dale, Marie David and Sophia Harris
Front of House & Espresso Bar Staff
 Cassidy Cahill, Kayla Cahill, Courtney Cavallaro, Annabel Gilbert, Peter Keavy, Kristina Marjanac, Bryson McGuire, Georgia McKenzie, Aimee Sheather, Carys Walsh, Lily Williams, Zoe Walters and Presley Woods


PRODUCTION

Set Builders
 Tim Monley
 Alex Mangu-thurgood
 Hasen Degebrodt
 Vajra Papp
Costume Construction
 Madison Goodridge
Prop Maker
 Regan Henry
Sound Operator
 Hamish Elliot

 laboitetheatre

 LaBoiteTheatre

 LaBoiteTheatreCompany

 LaBoiteTheatre

Lighting Technicians

Tia-Hanee Cleary
 Briana Clarke
 Tim Gawne
 Erin O'Shea
 Winter Chapman

Photography Credits

David Kelly (Hero)
 Stephen Henry (Rehearsal)
 Morgan Roberts (pp. 4-5)

Video Trailer

PixelFrame

SPECIAL THANKS

PQI, Felmingham Design, Queensland National Ballet School, The Farm, Brisbane Arts Theatre, Queensland Theatre, Kat O'Halloran, Hugh Parker, Amy Ingram, Harry Hughes, Mark Rogers, Kate Woodcroft, Flynn Hall, Ari Palani, Will Carseldine, Billy Fogarty, Emily Burton, Morgan Francis, Bri Zammit, Daniel Gabriel, Nathalie Ryner

LA BOITE SPONSORS



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La Boite Theatre Company is supported by the Queensland Government through the Queensland



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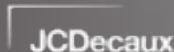


MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA
It's who we are

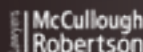
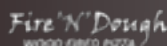


KILWIN GROVE

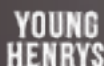
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WINE & DINE 'N



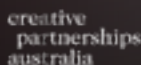
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AUCKLAND LIVE



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It's who we are



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西悉尼科技大学