

A New Approach (ANA)

MEDIA RELEASE

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A New Approach (ANA) welcomes 2024 Board Associates

Australia's national arts and culture think tank A New Approach (ANA) is delighted to announce the appointment of April Phillips and Merlynn Tong to the Board, with both joining as Associates in 2024.

Merlynn Tong is an actor and playwright who often creates works that stem from the autobiographical experience of growing up in Singapore and harness the themes of transformation, legacy, inheritance and hope. Her work *Blue Bones* (Playlab Theatre) won six Matilda Awards including the Lord Mayor Award for Best New Australian Work, Best Mainstage Production and Best Female Actor in a Leading Role. Her work *Golden Blood* (Griffin Theatre) was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award (Drama) and the Sydney Theatre Awards (Best New Australian Work). *Golden Blood* will be staged by Sydney Theatre Company and Melbourne Theatre Company in 2024. Merlynn is based in Brisbane, Queensland.

April Phillips is a Wiradjuri-Scottish woman of the Galari/Kalari peoples, residing on the Yuin nation on the NSW South Coast. As a professional artist and arts worker, April leverages digital tools with experimental processes, futurism and human rights in mind. She was awarded the Women in Digital Rising Star of the Year in 2023, attributed to innovation and social impact. April has worked in creative and advisory roles with the Australian Children's Television Foundation, National Portrait Gallery, Telstra Foundation, National Gallery of Australia, Australian Parliament House, Big hART, National Association of the Visual Arts, The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Museum of Australian Democracy, and the Australian Museum.

ANA's Board Associates program was launched in 2021 to nurture emerging arts and cultural leaders and to ensure ANA's strategic direction is continually informed by new perspectives. Associates are given mentoring and support from ANA's experienced Board and staff throughout their 18-month term.

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ANA CEO Kate Fielding said that April and Merlynn are both creators at the leading edge of their respective fields and have been selected for their commitment to innovation and excellence as well as their ongoing connection and service to the community.

“Through their artistic practice and their diverse experience in both metropolitan and regional Australia, as well as internationally, Merlynn and April will offer invaluable insights and contributions to help shape the work of ANA now and into the future.

“We are thrilled that Merlynn and April will be supporting ANA’s vision for Australia to become a cultural powerhouse whose creativity is locally loved, nationally valued and globally influential.”

Ms Fielding thanked outgoing Board Associates, dancer and choreographer Daniel Riley and founder of Pub Choir Astrid Jorgensen OAM. “Astrid and Daniel have been very generous with their time and expertise over the last 18 months, and we are grateful for their dedication to ANA’s work and to Australia’s cultural and creative future.”

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