



## **An Interview with playwright Tracey Rigney**

### **Q1. What cultural influences have inspired you as a contemporary artist?**

The cultural influences that inspire me as a contemporary artist are quite broad. I'd like to think I'm inspired by my Wotjobaluk and Ngarrindjeri roots, but that's only the beginning. I am heavily influenced by my upbringing in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as influenced by my family, friends and the environments I live in or visit. Be it country and/or city. What draws me to the city is watching people go about their lives. But I am bias when it comes to the natural environment – it truly is awe inspiring. I like to keep up to date with things going on in terms of popular culture and find social media a fascinating beast of a thing. Music is a massive part of my life and really helps me create. I actually write my scripts as I listen to music. And in addition to this I am a deeply spiritual person and find that this plays a huge role in my life personally and professionally.

### **Q2. How are these influences evident in 'Rella'?**

I think these influences are evident in Rella in a lot of ways. I get to funnel my First Nations perspective and voice through the character of Marlene. I get to tap into my idea of spirituality as I delve into the beauty of Samoan culture and spirituality. I also draw from life the notion of what family is in today's society – quite a departure of what that notion was during my formative years. In Rella I think the thing that excites me also is the fact that it is a musical. Music is so inspiring for me and I am just so grateful that I can now say I've written for a musical. Especially since we as a team all agreed to incorporate music from the 1980s and 1990s. I feel Rella really is a love letter to the music and fashion of those decades. And I must admit – I always love me some drag queen action too! I really do feel privileged to help tell this unique story.

### **Q3. What impact do you want your work to have on your audience considering these cultural influences?**

I hope the audiences find inspiration in my work just like I find inspiration from things that influence me in life. I hope they allow themselves to go on the journey with the characters. Venture into this Rella world and really enjoy their time there, learn something new there or see themselves reflected there. Art and storytelling have a vital role to play in our lives and can impact change for the greater good, be it through transformation, healing and empathy. And if the audiences watch this show and wonder to themselves if this creative life is something they might like to do – then I hope they have the courage to just do it. Because from my perspective - a creative life is a viable career option and it's such a fulfilling existence.