

**Sydney Opera House  
2016 – 17 Achievements**

# Reconciliation





Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain images of deceased persons.

**“Badu Gili uses contemporary artworks and new mediums to celebrate timeless stories of seasonal change that affect our landscape and Country. It combines music and images to create a gateway to Australia’s First Nations history and culture for the 8.2 million people who visit the Opera House each year.”**

*– Rhoda Roberts AO, Head of First Nations Programming*



Badu Gili. Artwork by the late Lin Onus.  
Photo by Daniel Boud.



In August 2016, the Sydney Opera House launched its 2017-19 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our 2016-17 achievements are highlighted here.



Koomurri perform at 2016 Dance Rites. Photo by Joseph Mayers.

## Badu Gili

On the eve of NAIDOC Week 2017, the Opera House launched Badu Gili – ‘water light’ in the Gadigal language – a new year-round experience that will light the eastern Bennelong sail every evening to celebrate the rich history and contemporary vibrancy of Australia’s First Nations culture. Curated by Rhoda Roberts AO, Badu Gili is a seven-minute video that weaves together the work of five eminent First Nations artists, including Jenuarrie (Judith Warrie), Frances Belle Parker, Alick Tipoti and the late Lin Onus and Minnie Pwerle. Badu Gili is enabled by the Opera House, its Idealist donors and the Australia Council for the Arts. Media coverage of the launch reached more than 125 million people worldwide. In its first week, more than 3,200 people attended the evening projections. The Facebook stream and online video have already received more than a million views.

#SOHFirstNations

## Programming

- On the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, the Opera House presented Deadly Voices Live: The Accidental Activist. Building on a new podcast series, Deadly Voices from the House, the live forum featured three influential leaders, Tara Houska, Bradley Moggridge and Dayne Pratzky (also known as the Frackman), who are using their skills and passions to campaign for political, social or cultural change. That same evening, we supported the Australia Council for the Arts’ 10th annual National Indigenous Arts Awards, held at the Opera House.
- More than 5,700 students engaged with First Nations stories at the Opera House by attending performances of Saltbush and The 7 Stages of Grieving, as well as participating in the Guwanyi Walama digital tour.
- Badu Gili was in part inspired by Songlines, Vivid Sydney’s 2016 Lighting of the Sails, in which six contemporary First Nations artists from around Australia interpreted the ancient dreaming tracks that weave through our landscapes and skies. They used the symbols, patterns and imagery that represent the stories of their clans and groups. The Opera House collaborated with SBS to develop a 360° virtual-reality clip of the animation, as a way of exploring the depth and cultural significance of these rich First Nations artworks. The clip was showcased at the innovation hub of the 2017 Cannes Film Festival’s Marché du Film, one of the largest film markets in the world.

“ We believe food is a medium which speaks to people in a unique way, evoking personal memories and bringing people together to celebrate. Having Lauren Murdoch with Clayton Donovan work together on Homeground 2016 was, to Portside Sydney, a way of using food to engage Opera House visitors in a culture they may not often experience. ”

– Portside Sydney



Clayton Donovan demonstration at Homeground 2016. Photo by Daniel Boud.

## RECONCILIATION SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE 2016 – 17 ACHIEVEMENTS



Dubmarine performs at Homeground 2016. Photo by Daniel Boud.

## Homeground

Homeground, the Opera House’s free outdoor festival celebrating First Nations art, music and culture, continues to expand and evolve. In 2016:

- Media coverage for the festival reached 3.7 million people, up from 2.2 million in 2015.
- The festival’s opening ceremony was live streamed on Facebook through the Opera House’s Intel Broadcast Studio. The video has reached more than 214,000 people.

- The Opera House co-commissioned a 360° virtual reality clip of the Dance Rites finals, in partnership with SBS Creative Digital Labs.
- We screened Collisions, a virtual reality film by Australian filmmaker Lynette Walworth, which told the story of Indigenous elder Nyarri Morgan and the Martu tribe, who live in the remote Western Desert.
- SBS brought Angelina Joshua’s My Grandmother’s Lingo to the festival – an interactive digital animation about preserving Indigenous languages.
- Portside Sydney teamed up with Australia’s only hatted indigenous chef, Clayton Donovan, to create bespoke food and beverage offerings using native ingredients and flavours.



## Staff Participation

Opera House staff are increasingly eager to participate in cultural engagement activities and learn more about First Nations culture:

- As part of NAIDOC Week 2016 celebrations, the Opera House launched a new e-learning module to increase staff understanding of First Nations culture and history and how they are celebrated at the Opera House. Almost a third of staff have now completed the module.
- Compared with 2016, there was a 135% increase in the number of staff attending National Reconciliation Week activities in 2017. The 2017 at-capacity events included a weaving workshop with Rhoda Roberts and a presentation from Aunty Beryl Van Oploo, from the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE), about the benefits of native ingredients. NCIE also made delicious lemon myrtle shortbread and taught our staff about NCIE's Jobs Ready program, which equips First Nations jobseekers with practical workplace and hospitality skills. Thanks to GG Espresso, coffee cups in the Opera House's Green Room cafe featured daily First Nations facts, so that staff and visitors could learn something new.
- The Opera House introduced a volunteer program for Dance Rites, Australia's national First Nations dance competition held during Homeground. On event day, 12 staff hosted 170 dancers from around the country.

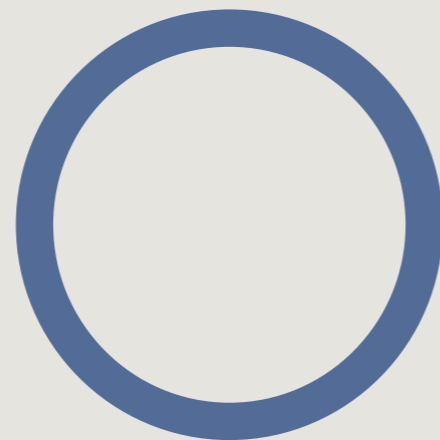
## RECONCILIATION SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE 2016 – 17 ACHIEVEMENTS

“ For this design, I drew inspiration from the past, present and future of Bennelong Point. It is my contemporary interpretation of the shell middens that were once here and how the architect of the Opera House, Jørn Utzon, used this to honour and acknowledge the traditional owners of this land. It represents how I see the complexity of this nation. ”

– Kirsty Paasila, Opera House employee and traineeship graduate



2017 Careers Day artwork by Kirsty Paasila.



## Career Pathways

- The Opera House is committed to increasing its employment of First Nations people from 2.1% of the workforce in 2017 to 3% by 2019. Two targeted positions were introduced this year – an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tour guide and an associate producer for First Nations Programming.
- More than 70 students experienced a taste of working at a performing arts organisation through the Opera House's early career pathways program, which includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Careers Day, work experience and traineeships.
- The Opera House is committed to supporting professional development for First Nations staff. Kirsty Paasila, a Wiradjuri woman, first engaged with the Opera House through the work experience program, and then went on to complete a traineeship. The skills and knowledge Kirsty gained from these programs helped her secure a position in the ticketing services team. This year, Kirsty completed secondments in two different areas of the business and developed new skills by helping organise Careers Day and National Reconciliation Week activities. As Kirsty is also a talented artist, the Opera House commissioned an original artwork that reflected her time at the Opera House for use on the canvas tote bags handed out during Careers Day.

“ For the group of 12 children from three of the most remote communities in Australia, it was an incredible occasion – and one that they will never forget. For the 19 schools who attended, it was a time they got to share and celebrate the culture and stories from children in remote Australia and learn a little bit about why the work of our Foundation is so important. Thank you for making it possible!!! ”

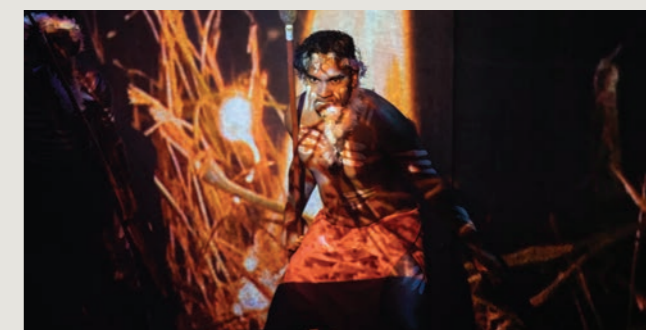
– Karen Williams, Executive Director, Indigenous Literacy Foundation



Weaving workshop at Homeground 2016. Photo by Daniel Boud.

## Partnerships & Engagement

- Philanthropic support is crucial to achieving the Opera House's RAP commitments. This year, donors gave more than \$338,000 to enable First Nations initiatives.
- In sharing First Nations respect for and connection to the land, the Opera House has found a natural fit between its strategies for reconciliation and environmental sustainability. When Opera House staff moved out of their Customs House offices this year, more than a quarter of unwanted furniture found a new home at Eora College, an organisation that caters to the educational needs of First Nations people. This diverted about 1.75 tonnes of furniture from landfill.
- The Opera House participated in a research study about RAPs in Australia by a PhD candidate at Harvard University and Visiting Fellow at Western Sydney University. The Opera House was included as a case study of how RAPs can work in an organisation that promotes the importance of art and culture.
- For the sixth consecutive year, the Opera House collaborated with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation to hold Indigenous Literacy Day at the Opera House. The event raises awareness and funds to support literacy programs for First Nations children in rural and remote Australia.



Djuki Mala performs at the Opera House in 2017. Photo by Daniel Boud.

# The Sydney Opera House's vision for reconciliation is to foster and celebrate a shared sense of belonging for all Australians.

## Year 1 achievements: 2017-19 RAP

### Art



**27k**

people attended Opera House's First Nations programming.



**48%**

increase in audiences from 2015/16.



**16k**

people attended the daily sails projection Badu Gili in its first month. Media coverage of the launch reached 125m people.



more than **214k**

views of Homeground's opening ceremony video, which was live streamed on Facebook.

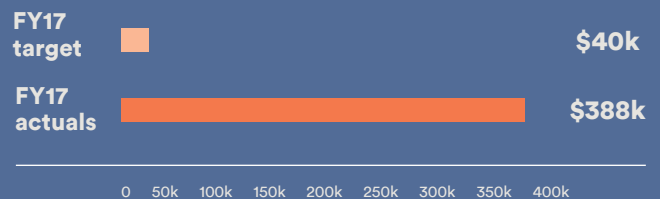


**18.5k**

people attended Bangarra's 2017 season of Bennelong at the Opera House.

### External funding

SOH raised \$388k for First Nations initiatives from philanthropy, corporate partnerships and/or government grants, well exceeding its \$40k target.



### Employment



**73**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in career pathways programs.



**2.1%**  
20 People

employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Years 2 and 3 focus areas

- Grow employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to 3% of the workforce (30 people) by 2019.
- Meet cultural awareness training targets for staff and Trustees.
- Develop a strategy to increase procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.
- Grow the Badu Gili audience to 200k people annually.
- Expand and embed First Nations programs, artists and speakers across all programming streams.
- Establish and deepen relationships with First Nations artists, communities and organisations.
- Share our RAP journey and achievements with key stakeholders and the community.

### For more information about the Opera House's RAP, please contact:

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