

THE OPERA HOUSE
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

2014–2016





FROM THE CEO

I am pleased to present the Opera House's third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a three-year strategic plan that provides real opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This document builds on two previous one-year RAPs, which helped us identify the areas in which our efforts have the greatest effect, such as education, employment and training, programming and broader cultural awareness. As a result of that process, we can now sharpen our focus and make those programs part of our core business.

This RAP includes tangible targets and a clear path to success. It is also timely in a year that marks the bicentenary of the death of Woollarawarre Bennelong, a member of the Wangal clan who gave Bennelong Point site its name and is regarded by many as Australia's first diplomat.

As an international performing arts centre and one of the most recognisable symbols of Australia, the Opera House has a clear leadership responsibility in relation to reconciliation.

This three-year program of strategies and activities is an important step in living up to that responsibility.

LOUISE HERRON AM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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



FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia congratulates Sydney Opera House on the release of its third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

As the first performing arts centre in the country to establish a RAP, I commend the many staff, trustees, performers and patrons who have supported this initiative over recent years. By recommitting to the program, Sydney Opera House is demonstrating just how good intentions can be turned into mutually beneficial actions—actions that align to core business objectives and reach the broader community.

Through its ongoing commitments to Indigenous programming, and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, the Opera House is providing opportunities for the wider Australian population to engage with, and learn about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and stories.

The outstanding support Sydney Opera House shows for the Message Sticks Festival and the annual Deadly Awards, as well as integrating Indigenous themes and content into broader activities such as the Festival of Dangerous Ideas, has seen these events continue to expand and develop.

These commitments, along with Sydney Opera House's focus on providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with pathways to career opportunities in the arts will ensure that we continue to enjoy and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to the cultural life of Australia.

On behalf of Reconciliation Australia, I wish you well as you embark on the next stage of your next RAP journey.

LEAH ARMSTRONG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



Our Mission

The Opera House embodies beauty, inspiration and the liberating power of art and ideas. It is a masterpiece that belongs to all Australians.

Our mission is two-fold:

- We will treasure and renew Sydney Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.
- Everything we do will engage and inspire people through its excellence, ambition and breadth. We will strengthen our central role in Australia's life and identity.

» Our Values

COLLABORATION

We will work together with a shared purpose and vision.

COMMUNITY

We will be generous of spirit and welcoming.

FOCUS

We will not deviate from our mission and learn from experience.

CREATIVITY

We will work with imagination.

SAFETY

Underlying everything we do is our commitment to work safely.



[Image] Message Sticks 2013. WANTOK: Sing Sing Murray Wo from Torres Strait



Our Vision for Reconciliation

The Opera House's vision for reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is a firm commitment to embrace, engender respect for, and celebrate the culture of our First Peoples, with the nation.

OUR BUSINESS

The Opera House is a National and World Heritage listed international performing arts centre, visitor precinct and meeting place. It sits on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, on Bennelong Point. An estimated 8.2m people visit our site, some 1,808 live performances are presented to over 1.4m people, and over 300,000 people take a tour of the building and precinct each year.

The Opera House is operated and maintained on behalf of the Government and people of NSW by the Sydney Opera House Trust and is constituted as a body corporate under the Sydney Opera House Trust Act 1961, which charges us with:

- Protecting, maintaining and developing the building as a performing arts centre.
- Promoting artistic taste and achievement.
- Encouraging innovation in the arts.

The Opera House provides a variety of experiences that entertain, engage and inspire audiences locally, nationally and internationally. We present the work of Australia's key arts organisations, our resident companies, produce and present our own programs and are a venue-for-hire for top commercial presenters.

The Opera House is also an online portal for performances, education, ideas and discussion, reaching audiences and communities nationally and internationally through an innovative program of digital experiences.

Our people have a wide variety of skills and knowledge, working across performing arts, theatre technical, tourism and commercial, building, marketing, communications and corporate functions. The Opera House has approximately 844 staff (514 FTE), including 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified staff.¹

¹ As at 30 April 2013. Sydney Opera House Workforce Profile and FTE Statistics.



Our Achievements

2012 - 2013



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- The appointment of Rhoda Roberts as Head of Indigenous Programming in 2012 has been critical to the achievements of the RAP Working Group. Rhoda's connections with the Aboriginal and arts communities have been a valuable source of guidance and advice.
- Our Message Sticks Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts festival travelled up to The Glasshouse Arts Centre in Port Macquarie in April 2013 with great success. All performances sold out and Opera House staff received lots of positive feedback about the importance of bringing high quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts experiences to the regions.
- In November 2012 the Opera House piloted an Indigenous Perspectives Workshop to assist Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers develop skills and confidence in teaching Aboriginal perspectives.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

- NAIDOC Week 2012 featured cultural awareness sessions for staff presented by the Opera House's Head of Indigenous Programming Rhoda Roberts, Shane Phillips from Tribal Warrior and Clarence Slockee from the Royal Botanic Gardens. The play *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country*, by Ilbjerri Theatre Company, was also programmed in the Playhouse across NAIDOC week. Members of the local Aboriginal community were invited to attend the performance followed by a free BBQ with Opera House staff on 1 July 2012.

- We developed a pilot tour of the Opera House site to mark the anniversary of the death of Woollarawarre Bennelong on 3 January 2013. The tour commemorating Bennelong's life focuses on his story and the clan traditions and customary lore associated with Bennelong Point. The tour was pieced together with settlers' accounts from the time, oral history and the assistance of historian, Keith Vincent Smith. The tour was delivered to staff on the anniversary date and was rolled out to the public as part of Message Sticks Festival 2013. The tour is now being considered for further delivery throughout the year, particularly for NAIDOC week celebrations and during the Sydney based Corroborree celebrations.



[Image] Message Stick 2013, WATOK Sing Sing - Vikia Bull, Olivia Foa, Linda Bull. Photo Prudence Upton.

Our Achievements

2012 - 2013



DEVELOPING RESPECT

- This year the Opera House produced its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols, providing advice on culturally respectful behaviours and guiding staff on the appropriate use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural material. The Protocols have been distributed to staff and resident companies and are also available publicly on the Opera House website.

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Message Sticks Festival 2013, the Opera House's annual event celebrating the arts and culture of the Australia's First Peoples, took place from 18-24 March 2013 and was attended by an estimated 14,610 people. The festival included eight Indigenous shows, talks and films, as well as a range of free cultural events and an art exhibition. A highlight of the festival was a remote workshop program including a weaving workshop and Nathi ceremony at the Royal Botanic Gardens.
- Five school-based trainees continued their two-year traineeships in 2013, working in a number of departments to develop business skills and gain valuable insights into the workings of a performing arts centre. We have learned a lot during this first year with the traineeship program and will make adjustments to the program as a result. Three of the trainees will continue with the traineeship until the end of 2013.

- In 2012 the Opera House signed up to the Australian Employment Covenant to assist with reaching our employment goal of 2% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff. The Employment Covenant will work with us and provide support and connections to assist us in increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment levels.
- Our work experience program in partnership with the Aboriginal Education unit of the Department of Education and Training continued with 18 participants taking part in the program over the past year. The program was presented to the Sydney Regional Principals' conference in November 2012 and is considered best practice.

[Images] Host Luke Carrill and Jessica Mauboy with the Deadly@ Dancers at the 2012 Deadly@ Finale. Photo Ben Symons.



Case Study 1:

The Opera House Deadly Award



In September 2012 we celebrated 10 years of The Deadly Awards being presented at the Opera House. Deadly Vibe is a valuable partner of the Opera House and we support The Deadly Awards each year through our experienced Theatre and Events team.

In September 2012 we introduced a new award for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist to have their album recorded in the Opera House Recording Studio. With state-of-the-art technology, the Opera House Recording Studio unlocks a world of potential for young artists. Run by a team of Grammy Award-winning professional engineers, the recipient of the Award can expect a nurturing environment to lay down the tracks for their album. The Opera House Deadly Award entitled the winner to up to \$10,000 worth of studio and staff time.

The Deadly Academy selected the winner from the list of 2012 Deadly nominees. The award was presented live, to singer/songwriter Thelma Plum on the Concert Hall stage on 25 September by the Opera House's CEO Louise Herron and Head of Indigenous Programming Rhoda Roberts.

[image] The Honey Spot, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Kalya Shevstov, Ian Wilkie and Emma McCoy [on Callio]. Photo: Jan Green



Case Study 2:

Creative Approaches to Teaching Indigenous Perspectives

“Jane, Bridgette and Frank were all fantastic and eager in ensuring the participants received maximum benefits from the forum. Keep them involved.”

Nadia Emery, Workshop Participant



In November 2012 we piloted the Creative Approaches to Teaching Indigenous Perspectives workshop, to assist Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers develop skills and confidence in teaching Aboriginal perspectives. This was the Opera House’s first accredited teacher professional development program with the NSW Institute of Teachers. Eight teachers from NSW participated in the workshop after attending a performance of *The Honey Spot* by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

The participating teachers were led through hands-on, practical exercises including reflective visual art exercises and audio elements. Feedback on the Workshop was positive and as a result, 75 Aboriginal teachers from the Sydney and Western Sydney Regions then attended the Message Sticks 2013 performance of *Wulmanyuwi and the Seven Pamanui* by Jason De Santis.

After the performance the Sydney Region of NSW Public Schools, led by Sydney Regional Director Dr Phil Lambert, organised a YARN UP with Rhoda Roberts, focussing on the cultural engagement program with communities within the Message Sticks Festival.

Connecting with these 75 Aboriginal teachers as a result of the Indigenous Perspectives Workshop was significant for the Opera House in developing relationships. We will work closely with the Department of Education’s Aboriginal Education Unit to develop relationships with this group of teachers with the aim of engaging them in further professional development opportunities and bringing their students to participate in the Opera House’s education programs.

» We will ensure that the Opera House reflects our national identity and the diversity of our people, customers and the community.

[Images L to R] Message Sticks 2012, Dancestry, Photo by Prudence Upton, School Based Traineeship, Photo by Susannah Wimberley, Dancestry, Photo by Prudence Upton.



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) maintains a commitment to Reconciliation Australia's three principles of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities by strengthening and expanding strategies in areas where we can make the most impact. It sets out a range of strategies centred on artistic programs, education, employment pathways and cultural awareness.

Our RAP has been developed by our RAP Working Group, in conjunction with staff and Executive leaders, and with the support of Reconciliation Australia. Delivery of our RAP also requires further engagement and collaboration with our partners, stakeholders and community. We are committed to working with, and learning from, our community of stakeholders to deliver on our actions and achieve real outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.



RELATIONSHIPS

Trusting and mutually beneficial relationships are the cornerstone of building meaningful opportunities within our organisation and the community. We aim to strengthen our existing partnerships and build new relationships through collaboration, respect and a commitment to learning from our experiences.

RESPECT

Encouraging and demonstrating respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, heritage and culture is vital to building strong and respectful relationships. We will ensure that the Opera House reflects our national identity and the diversity of our people, customers and the community.

OPPORTUNITIES

Our contribution to closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians means providing opportunities that leverage our strengths and focus on where we will provide the greatest impact for individuals, communities and organisations. We will provide artistic, cultural, educational and employment opportunities that build capacity.

TRACKING PROGRESS AND REPORTING

We will track our progress by monitoring, reporting and evaluating the outcomes of our actions and the impact of our strategies for both the Opera House and the communities we work with.

Relationships

Trusting and mutually beneficial relationships are the cornerstone of building meaningful opportunities within our organisation and the community. We aim to strengthen our existing partnerships and build new relationships through collaboration, respect and a commitment to learning from our experiences.

ACTION	MEASURABLE TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Continue to promote and enhance relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations and networks.	One or more RAP development or information sessions held with resident companies.	RAP Working Group	As required July 2013 – June 2016
	Deadly Awards 20th Anniversary in 2014 recognised and celebrated in collaboration with Vibe Australia.	Director, Theatre & Events	September 2014
	Opera House in-house training offered to Bangarra Dance Theatre.	Chief Operating Officer	July 2013 – June 2016
	Minimum of one opportunity offered per year for staff to volunteer on Opera House and presenting partner events and programs (e.g. Message Sticks, Deadly Awards).	Programming Director Director Theatre & Events	June 2014, 2015, 2016
	Jimmy Little Foundation established and promoted within Opera House workplace giving program.	Chief Operating Officer	August 2013
	RAP alignments with media partners developed to:	Programming Director	June 2014
	1. Profile Message Sticks and future programming. 2. Engage staff. 3. Engage advertisers/cultivate corporate clients.		
	Continue to collaborate with neighbour organisations through active participation in the Sydney Harbour Aboriginal Interpretation Advisory Group.	Director, Building Development & Maintenance	July 2013 – June 2016

Identify and develop new relationships and networks to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives and opportunities for collaboration.	School network established to inform and identify students for participation in School-Based Traineeship Program and skills development programs.	Chief Operating Officer	December 2014
	One or more new partnerships with local area or industry organisations identified and established.	RAP Working Group	June 2016
	Combined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience packages investigated with local tourism organisations and implemented where feasible.	Director, Commercial	June 2016
	Opera House's status as a Participation Bronze Partner maintained under the Australia Council national Indigenous Arts Infrastructure Program through timely reporting.	RAP Working Group Chief Operating Officer	July 2013 – June 2016
Increase participation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to mutually develop organisational knowledge, skills and experience.	Staff Immersion Program developed and piloted, providing voluntary staff placements within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to share skills and knowledge and build capacity.	Chief Operating Officer	February 2014 – June 2016
	A minimum of two significant cultural events within community per year promoted to staff.	RAP Working Group Executive Team Leadership Team	June 2014, 2015, 2016
	Build strategies to:		
1. Increase engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.	Audience Development Strategy developed, anchored in Message Sticks program and other future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programming, including potential media partnerships.	Programming Director	June 2016
2. Increase audiences for Opera House Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programming.			
Connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through digital programs.	Digital Education Program delivered to a minimum of two Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities.	Programming Director	June 2014
Celebrate, promote and support participation in National Reconciliation Week with staff and the community.	One or more staff events or initiatives celebrated during National Reconciliation Week.	RAP Working Group	27 May – 3 June 2014, 2015, 2016
	National Reconciliation Week events and activities promoted to staff and participation supported.	RAP Working Group Executive and Leadership Teams	27 May – 3 June 2014, 2015, 2016

Respect

» Encouraging and demonstrating respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, heritage and culture is vital to building strong and respectful relationships. We will ensure that the Opera House reflects our national identity and the diversity of our people, customers and the community.

ACTION	MEASURABLE TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Engage employees in cultural learning to increase understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds and lay the foundation for other RAP actions to be achieved.	Cultural Awareness Program developed, encompassing a range of activities and experiences.	Chief Operating Officer	February 2014
	Cultural Awareness Program available to all staff and participation actively encouraged by Leadership Teams.	Chief Operating Officer	July 2014 – June 2016
	All Executive and Leadership Team participated in Cultural Awareness Program.	Executive Team Leadership Team	June 2016
Develop strategies to enhance acknowledgement of Aboriginal heritage and culture onsite and online.	Bennelong Walk implemented as a regular tour experience.	Director, Commercial	March 2014
	Opera House Heritage Interpretation Plan developed including interpretation activities of the site's Aboriginal heritage and cultural significance, both past and present.	Director, Building Development & Maintenance	January 2014
	Implement opportunities to weave stories of Tubowgulle and the Gadigal through experiences onsite and online as identified in the Opera House Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Plan. – Priority project developed. – Additional projects identified and developed.	Executive Team	June 2014 July 2014 – June 2016
Encourage staff and partners to use established Cultural Protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols integrated into staff Cultural Awareness Program.	Chief Operating Officer	February 2014
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols provided to all resident companies and major hirers.	Director, Theatre & Events	July 2013 – June 2016
	Acknowledgement of Country or Welcome to Country given at all significant Opera House events.	Programming Director Director, External Affairs	July 2013 – June 2016
Celebrate, promote and support participation in NAIDOC week with staff and the community.	One or more events or initiatives celebrated at the Opera House during NAIDOC Week.	Programming Director RAP Working Group	1st Sunday to 2nd Sunday July 2013, 2014, 2015
	NAIDOC Week programming, events and activities promoted to staff and participation supported.	RAP Working Group Executive and Leadership Teams	1st Sunday to 2nd Sunday July 2013, 2014, 2015


Opportunities

Our contribution to closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians means providing opportunities that leverage our strengths and focus on where we will provide the greatest impact for individuals, communities and organisations. We will provide artistic, cultural, educational and employment opportunities that build capacity.

ACTION	MEASURABLE TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Continue to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and content throughout Opera House programming.	A minimum of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander shows programmed during Message Sticks.	Programming Director	March 2014, 2015, 2016
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander component included in annual Education and Young Audiences Program.	Programming Director	June 2014, 2015, 2016
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus included in the Opera House 40th Anniversary program.	Programming Director	October 2013
Create opportunities to develop employability skills and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Renewed School-Based Traineeship Program implemented with a minimum of two students participating the Program.	Chief Operating Officer	January 2014 – December 2015
	Minimum of ten students completed the Opera House Indigenous Work Experience Program per year during Message Sticks or NAIDOC week.	Programming Director	June 2014, 2015, 2016
	One or more career skills development workshops provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students per year.	Chief Operating Officer	June 2014, 2015, 2016
Support the teaching Aboriginal perspectives and professional development of teachers.	Professional Development program established and implemented in partnership with the Department of Education and linked to artistic programming.	Programming Director	June 2014

Celebrate and support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities.	Artistic program/event, supporting mid-career artists and engaging the Dance community, piloted in 2014 and held annually.	Programming Director	November 2014, 2015
	NAIDOC Week programming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NITV co-production with the Opera House for a new 13 part series titled <i>In the Frame</i>. Songwrites projects. Specific artist projects focussed on developing skills base. 	Programming Director	July 2013
	Partnership established with the Corroboree festival producing a number of tours and productions annually.	Programming Director	November 2013, 2014, 2015
	Opera House commission for new children's program with the MIn MIn project and Vibe Australia.	Programming Director	July 2013 – November 2014
	Opera House sponsored Deadly Award, provided to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist.	Director, Theatre & Events	September 2013, 2014, 2015
Develop and support employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	All position advertisements include provision to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.	Chief Operating Officer	July 2014
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Strategy developed and communicated to Executive and Leadership Teams.	Chief Operating Officer	July 2014
	A minimum of one position in each Executive business stream identified and scoped for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicant through the recruitment campaign.	Executive Team	January 2015 – June 2016
Promote the benefits of supplier diversity at the Opera House.	Procurement Policy supports increased participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and suppliers in procurement.	Director, Commercial	July 2013
	Lease Agreements for new Commercial Partners encourage and support initiatives to meet RAP objectives.	Director, Commercial	June 2015
	Initiatives identified by Commercial Partners to meet RAP objectives commenced with support of the Opera House.	Director, Commercial	June 2016
Increase stakeholder connection and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and initiatives.	Messaging strategy developed to engage and inform stakeholders on Opera House programs, events and strategies.	Director, External Affairs	February 2014
	A minimum of two proposals to philanthropy foundations identified and submitted per year to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs at the Opera House.	Director, External Affairs	June 2014, 2015, 2016

Tracking Progress and Reporting


 We will track our progress by monitoring, reporting and evaluating the outcomes of our actions and the impact of our strategies for both the Opera House and the communities we work with.

ACTION	MEASURABLE TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Working Group continues to actively monitor RAP development, including implementation of actions and tracking progress.	Quarterly RAP Working Group meetings to monitor implementation and progress.	RAP Working Group	July 2013 – June 2016
	RAP working group members advocate and work with their business areas to deliver on RAP actions and events.	RAP Working Group	Ongoing
Engage Trustees and Executive leadership to inform and champion RAP programs and initiatives.	Opera House Trustee invited as RAP Champion to advise on and advocate for the Opera House RAP.	Chief Operating Officer	August 2013
	Opera House Trust and sub-committees consulted on initiatives and programs where appropriate.	Chief Operating Officer	As required July 2013 – June 2016
Report achievements, challenges and learnings to stakeholders and the public.	RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire completed and submitted to Reconciliation Australia annually.	Chief Operating Officer	September 2013, 2014, 2015
	RAP impact report provided to Trustees and Executive annually.	Chief Operating Officer	April 2014, 2015, 2016
	RAP progress, achievements and learnings reported publically in the Opera House Annual Report.	Chief Operating Officer Director, External Affairs	October 2013, 2014, 2015
	Updates and outcomes reported to supporting individuals and organisations where appropriate.	Director, External Affairs	As required July 2014 – June 2016


 Weaving reconciliation principles into the fabric of everything that we do.

[Image] Kiris An Taran (TSI), Norman Gozi Waraka Peters, Photo Prudence Upton



COVER ARTWORK

This specific design is about connecting with each other on this, the land of the Gadigal, and the importance of the Bennelong site. The arrows indicate moving forward into the future together.

THE OPERA HOUSE
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
sydneyoperahouse.com

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

