

**Sydney Opera House
2017–18 Achievements**

Reconciliation



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

“ In just an hour, Pigram gives the audience insights into her life growing up in Broome with a mixed heritage of Aboriginal Australian, Malay and Irish ancestors. The unique and engaging language of her dance embraces them all in subtle ways, illustrating the woman she has become. Her strong personality, both outgoing and reflective, powers her performance.”

Jill Sykes, Sydney Morning Herald



Gudirr Gudirr. Dancer Dalisa Pigram.
Photo by Daniel Boud

In August 2016, the Sydney Opera House launched its fourth Reconciliation Action Plan, the 2017-19 RAP. These are the 2017-18 highlights.

PROGRAMMING

Homeground

In late November 2017, more than 25,000 people attended Homeground, the Opera House's free festival of First Nations music, dance, art and culture. Presented on the Forecourt for the first time, the expanded footprint included a main stage, dance grounds, workshops, the Homeground Arts Market, a food precinct and film screenings as part of the Winda film festival.

The international music and professional dance line-up included First Nations Australian performers representing 87 clan groups from all states and territories as well as performers from Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Tibet, New Zealand and Canada.

The music program included Yothu Yindi Band featuring Yirrmal, Sarong Samuraj, Tenzin Choeygal, Eric Avery, Irish Mythen, and Khal Wallis.

Media coverage for Homeground increased significantly with media reach* growing from 2.5 million to 147 million.



Electric Fields, Homeground 2017. Photo by Daniel Boud

* 'Reach' is defined as views, listens and readerships (across print, broadcast and online).



Dance Rites 2017 winners – The Kulgoodah Dancers from Woorabinda. Photo by Daniel Boud

Dance Rites

A key part of Homeground was Dance Rites, the Opera House's annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance competition, won in 2017 by the Kulgoodah Dancers from Woorabinda.

The fourth Dance Rites program included participants from all states and territories of Australia, revitalising ancient songlines, dance and other traditional practices. The 2017 Dance Rites finals were live-streamed on Facebook reaching over 157,000 people.

Dance Rites, which is supported through philanthropic funding, is a powerful initiative with a positive social impact.

“ Two months ago Woorabinda was a town in crisis. There were daily break-ins, reports of vandalism and community concerns over a failure to address the real problems, with children instead on a roundabout through the justice system. Now the town is making national headlines, but this time it's for the right reason as they celebrate an enormous cultural achievement.”

– The Rockhampton Bulletin (Kulgoodah Dancers, 2017 competition winners)

First Nations programming

In June 2018, more than 600 people attended *Gudirr Gudirr*, a solo work by acclaimed First Nations Australian choreographer and dancer Dalisa Pigram, performed in The Studio.

The First Nations Vivid Studio Party in 2018 celebrated the anniversary of the 27 May 1967 Referendum. More than 500 people attended with performances by Electric Fields and Kuren, musicians who blend their traditional languages with song and electronica.

The Opera House completed a five-year partnership with Playwriting Australia, hosting script development labs for First Nations artists in the performing arts sector. Participants included Dr Romain Moreton, Shari Sebbens, Rarrwuy Hick, Albie Wright, Casey Donovan, Bill McPherson and Troy Brady.

Deadly Voices, the Opera House's radio show highlighting First Nations artists, evolved this year into a monthly podcast series featuring high-profile leaders, performers, sports people and politicians telling their personal stories as First Nations members of the LBGTLQI community.

In June 2018, nearly 1,700 people attended Songkeepers in Concert: The Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir in the Concert Hall. The Choir performed music in the Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara languages, from the Northern Territory and South Australia.

More than 1,340 students engaged with *Guwany Walama*, the Opera House's digital online tour about the Indigenous history of Bennelong Point.

Bangarra

More than 17,100 people attended Bangarra's 2018 season of *Dark Emu*.

The Opera House partnered with Bangarra to present a performance of *Dark Emu* and a Q&A session to 533 students. After the performance, students were encouraged to take the Opera House's digital interactive tour *Guwany Walama*.

Welcome to Country

The Opera House is committed to honouring First Nations protocols at Sydney Opera House Presents performances and encouraging our resident companies and hirers to acknowledge country. Audio recordings of a Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country by Darug actor Richard Green have been played before a range of performances, including all Vivid Live performances in 2018. New recordings with local male and female Aboriginal artists and community leaders are being prepared to accompany the diverse range of Opera House performances.



Dark Emu. Photo by Daniel Boud

TELLING THE STORY OF TUBOWGULE

Conservation Management Plan Fourth Edition and Renewal Interpretation Strategy

In October 2017, the Opera House launched its Conservation Management Plan Fourth Edition (CMP4) titled *Respecting the Vision: Sydney Opera House – a Conservation Management Plan*. The CMP4 was launched at a stakeholder event in the Utzon Room and included a performance of *Bennelong's Song* by Clarence Slockee and Matthew Doyle.

The CMP4 includes greater recognition of the Opera House's First Nations heritage, including a deeper understanding of the history of the site, known to the Gadigal as Tubowgule, and policies about the interpretation of First Nations stories of the place. This is reflected in the Opera House's Renewal Interpretation Strategy, which was launched in December 2017 and includes a goal to 'Deepen appreciation of the Aboriginal heritage central to the identity and continued evolution of the Opera House today as a place for community, culture and the arts.'

#SOHFirstNations



Badu Gili. Photo by Daniel Boud

Badu Gili

Badu Gili, a daily sails lighting experience on the Opera House's eastern Bennelong sails, was launched in June 2017. Since its launch, Badu Gili has been experienced by more than 160,000 visitors and more than 600,000 people online.

Curated by Sydney Opera House Head of First Nations Programming Rhoda Roberts AO, Badu Gili is a celebration of the rich history and contemporary vibrancy of Australia's First People. The seven-minute animation showcased the work of 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.

An exhibition of the artists involved in Badu Gili took place in the Samsung Lounge from October 2017 to January 2018. A new edition of Badu Gili launched in July 2018.

Partnerships and engagement

- Badu Gili is enabled by the Opera House, its Idealist donors, and the Australia Council for the Arts.
- Westpac was signed as a Major Partner supporting the Opera House's First Nations Programming, and joined AMP Capital as Homeground Event Partner.
- Philanthropic contributions towards First Nations initiatives totalled more than \$126,000.
- 225 students attended the Opera House's seventh Indigenous Literacy Day in the studio, in partnership with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF). The event was followed by a book swap in the Western Foyers. ILF raises awareness and funds to support literacy programs for First Nations children in rural and remote Australia.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Opera House staff interest in First Nations cultural engagement activities continues to be strong, with high levels of staff participation in NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week events.

In a joint environmental sustainability and RAP initiative, 14 Opera House staff attended Taronga Zoo's special NAIDOC Week Free-Flight Bird Presentation.

The show includes the story of the dreaming and acknowledges the important connection all people have to place, their community and wildlife.

Fifty Opera House and resident company staff participated in the following National Reconciliation Week activities:

- Darug language workshop with musician and educator Jacinta Tobin;
- Mini film festival featuring episodes from the Art & Soul documentary; and
- Excursion to the Australian Museum for a tour of the Gadi exhibition.

National Reconciliation Week events were catered by the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) in Redfern.

“ As a new(ish) employee it was a great opportunity to learn about First Nations culture and also to realise that I was lucky enough to work for an organisation committed to Reconciliation and employee awareness. ”

– Sydney Opera House staff member

Cultural awareness

To demonstrate commitment to reconciliation, an Acknowledgement of Country has been added to the Opera House email signature.

Almost 200 staff completed cultural awareness training via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness online e-learning module launched in 2016. The module is promoted to new staff during orientation.

Two employees completed TAFE NSW's Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program.

DEVELOPING FIRST NATIONS TALENT

Work experience and internship programs

Twenty-six students participated in First Nations career path programs at the Opera House. Twenty-four students participated in the First Nations work experience program for high school-aged students. Two of these students went on to complete an internship in the Opera House's Ticketing department and another two internships were appointed from the 2016-17 work experience program.

For the first time in 2018, alumni from the work experience and internship programs have been involved in facilitating the new programs, sharing knowledge about their experience at the Opera House and mentoring new students throughout the program.



Work Experience, July 2018. Photo by Andrew Cox

“ Meeting people within the Opera House really helped me push myself to be more confident and give new things a go ... I loved working with people who are really proud of themselves and are proud of who they represent, whether that's representing country or culture or just representing the Opera House. ”

– 2018 Work Experience Program participant



Jacinta Tobin, Reconciliation Week. Photo by Jennifer Dunstan

Travis De Vries wins a NSW Aboriginal Arts Fellowship

Travis De Vries, former Opera House Associate Producer of First Nations Programming, won a Create NSW 2018 NSW Aboriginal Arts Fellowship. Travis received \$50,000 to develop his artistic practice, which spans performance, producing, writing, music and painting.

As a result, Travis moved from his position as Associate Producer of First Nations Programming to undertake a residency at the Australian Museum in 2018, exploring Gamilaroi language and lore. His work will be featured at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre in 2019.

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

2017-18 Highlights

Art



almost **30k** people attended the Opera House's First Nations programming, a 11.5% increase on 2016-17



17.1k people attended Bangarra's 2018 season of *Dark Emu*



160k visitors have experienced Badu Gili on site since its launch, joining more than 600,000 people online



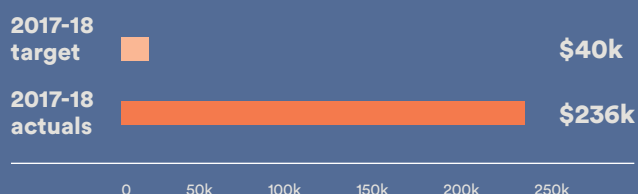
147m Homeground media reach*, up from 2.5 million in 2016-17



157k people viewed a live-stream of the Dance Rites finals on Facebook

External funding

SOH exceeded its \$40k funding target for First Nations initiatives by almost five times, raising more than \$236k for First Nations initiatives through philanthropy, corporate partnerships and government grants in FY18.



Employment



2% employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
19 People

There was a reduction of one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee in 2017-18, which resulted in a decrease of First Nations staff from 2.1% in 2016-17 to 2% in 2017-18 across the business. The recruitment and retention of First Nations staff will be a significant focus in 2018-19.

Years 3 focus areas

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to be at 3% of staff by 2019
- Deliver cultural awareness training to staff and Trustees including implementation of a cultural awareness strategy
- Increase procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses based on the NSW Government's new Aboriginal Procurement Policy
- Continue to increase the Badu Gili audience on site and online
- 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 in the community
- Encourage and support other organisations and schools to develop a RAP
- Develop the Opera House's next RAP 2020-22

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

reconciliation@sydneyoperahouse.com

02 9250 7915

sydneyoperahouse.com/reconciliation

* 'Reach' is defined as views, listens and readerships (across print, broadcast and online).