



SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

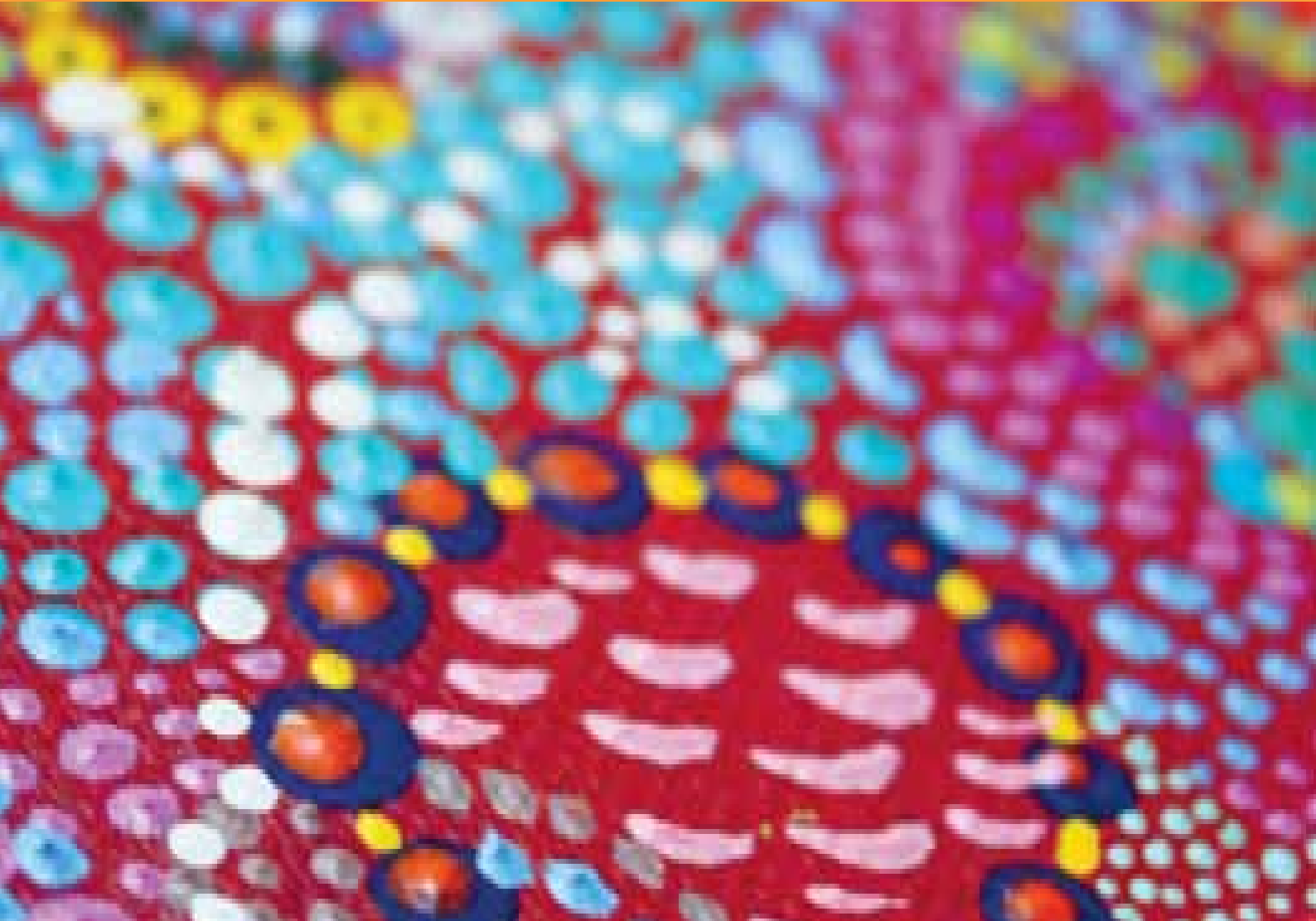
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Artwork: *Dreaming Sisters* 2011 by Mary Smith.
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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
**RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN**



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INTRODUCTION

Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal people, the traditional custodians, on whose ancestral land Sydney Opera House sits, on Bennelong Point. We acknowledge elders, past and present, and pay respect to the cultural authority and traditions with which they have gifted this land.

We recognise the rich contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures make to the diversity of the Australian community. We are committed to furthering reconciliation and ensuring that the First Peoples of this nation are valued for their contribution to Australian life.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Sydney Opera House has long celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, embracing the rich heritage of the Bennelong Point site and paying tribute to the contribution the First Peoples have made to our nation's cultural development.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) aims to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and their fellow Australians by introducing a number of robust targets across our organisation. Importantly, the RAP commits to improving employment opportunities in the performing arts and entertainment industry by working in partnership to create and implement programs designed to contribute to the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our RAP sets measurable targets for Sydney Opera House in relation to creating education and employment pathways and opportunities, and an ongoing strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national identity and presence in our programming content. We will put in place respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and encourage engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

Sydney Opera House is proud to have Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia's national premier Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts company, as an important partner in fulfilling our RAP objectives.

We know that reconciliation is a long journey that requires dedication, commitment and flexibility. We appreciate that results will take time and we recognise that we will need to learn along the way and be ready to refresh our RAP to ensure Sydney Opera House achieves real and lasting results.

We commit ourselves as an organisation and a community of individuals to the initiatives and the targets laid out in this Reconciliation Action Plan.



Richard Evans
Chief Executive Officer



Photo: Julian Kingma



OUR VISION

FOR RECONCILIATION

Sydney Opera House's vision for reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 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

Sydney Opera House is an international performing arts centre, National and World Heritage listed icon and tourism destination visited by an estimated 8.2 million people annually. Sydney Opera House comprises seven venues and stages over 1,700 performances a year.

Sydney Opera House, one of the most recognisable symbols of Australia, sits on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, on Bennelong Point.

Sydney Opera House's resident companies and presenting partners include Opera Australia, The Australian Ballet, Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Symphony, Bangarra Dance Theatre and Bell Shakespeare. Sydney Opera House also presents its own content - an eclectic mix of artistic and cultural activities from the educational to the experimental, in addition to a range of compelling visitor experiences and free community events.

Sydney Opera House is operated and maintained for the NSW Government by the Sydney Opera House Trust, which is constituted as a body corporate under the Sydney Opera House Trust Act 1961. Sydney Opera House's governance structure includes a Board of Trustees, a Building Committee, an Audit Risk Committee and a Conservation Council.

Sydney Opera House strives for artistic excellence by providing the most engaging performing arts experiences onsite, at Sydney Opera House, offsite through community engagement and access programs, and online through our digital platforms.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS ARE:

- Artistic Excellence
- Community Engagement and Access
- A Vibrant and Sustainable Site
- Earning Our Way



Photo: Jack Atley



EXISTING INITIATIVES & RELATIONSHIPS

Sydney Opera House has many existing relationships with important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and stakeholders which we hope to build on with the development of our RAP.

Sydney Opera House partners and stakeholders include:

Bangarra Dance Theatre; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community associations; Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council; NAISDA Dance College; the NSW Government; the Commonwealth Government; Communities NSW; Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services; Tourism NSW; Tourism Australia; and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board at the Australia Council for the Arts.

As of 30 June 2010, Sydney Opera House had employed 730 staff, 306 permanent staff and 424 non-permanent staff. Of the total staff employed 0.5% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Employment will receive a strong focus in the RAP so that we can achieve our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target of 2%.

The Message Sticks Festival (Message Sticks) is a successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts festival that Sydney Opera House has presented since 2000. During its lifetime, Message Sticks has evolved continually and has in some instances been a fully-fledged arts festival with talks, debates, performing arts in addition to the film festival. More recently the program has consisted solely of the film festival and has included an education strand, with selected film screenings promoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools students.

In 2011, Sydney Opera House received funding to expand and revitalise Message Sticks to include talks, debates and live performances in addition to film. As part of this initiative, and to further consolidate Indigenous programming, we are also appointing an experienced Indigenous Arts producer to develop a strategy for incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work into our programs more broadly.

The Sydney Opera House Indigenous Work Placement Program celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2010. The program has created an avenue for young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to enter the arts industry via a 12 month traineeship in the theatre technical fields of lighting, staging or sound. It has since evolved into a three month placement program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates in any business field offered.

Photo: Daniel Boud
Muriel Pittman and Jirriwarr Blacklock Edwards at the
opening of Sydney Opera House's youth engagement program
Detours and Destinations in the Studio at Sydney Opera House in 2010



OUR RAP

Sydney Opera House's RAP was developed in consultation with a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, both internal and external, Sydney Opera House staff (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff) and our Sydney Opera House Aboriginal Trustee. Sydney Opera House also worked closely with Reconciliation Australia to develop our RAP.

Our RAP actions will facilitate greater understanding of the matters important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the establishment of new relationships that will help with community consultation both locally and more widely. Our RAP actions include new opportunities that will support economic inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and help Sydney Opera House to present new and inspiring artistic performances.

Each business area of Sydney Opera House will have an Ambassador who will monitor the progress of RAP actions against our targets and champion the RAP in their business area.

Our RAP Working Group monitors the implementation of the RAP, providing regular updates to our CEO on progress. The composition of the group will include Reconciliation Ambassadors from each business area of the House and will be reviewed annually to support members' relationships, retention of corporate knowledge and renewal of the group. Reconciliation Ambassadors will encourage staff to become involved and contribute to reconciliation activities; assist in building relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other staff; and enable staff views and ideas to be considered by the RAP Working Group, during reporting and refreshing of the RAP. Our first annual RAP Report is due in mid-2012. It will capture our achievements and lessons learned in implementing this RAP.

The RAP Working Group will use the RAP Report and draw on key relationships as part of its responsibility to refresh the RAP.



RELATIONSHIPS

Sydney Opera House is built on land which has a rich Aboriginal history. It is very important to ensure these historical ties are celebrated and integrated into everything we do. It is through our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that we will be able to celebrate with all Australians the cultures of our First Peoples.

FOCUS AREA: SUPPORTING SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE'S EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIPS

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group implements and monitors actions in the RAP	Chief Executive Officer	May 2011 June 2012
2. Identify Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander advisors for consultation and advice on matters as they arise and become prominent	Head of CEO's Office	September 2011
3. Identify, via community consultation, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to be appointed to the Conservation Council	Sydney Opera House Trust Chair	June 2011
4. Sydney Opera House embraces the NSW Government initiatives to ensure Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander representation on the Sydney Opera House Trust	Sydney Opera House Trust	June 2012 May 2011

FOCUS AREA: SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUDIENCES

5. Sydney Opera House will develop a strategy to measure and increase participation of both (1) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, and (2) audiences for Sydney Opera House Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities (including performances)	Director Marketing, Communications and Customer Service	December 2011 June 2012
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	MEASURABLE TARGET
	<p>RAP Working Group members announced to staff and Reconciliation Ambassadors endorsed</p> <p>Quarterly RAP Working Group meetings to monitor progress with Reconciliation Ambassadors from each business area of Sydney Opera House in attendance</p> <p>Bi-annual reports provided to Sydney Opera House Executive Team, Management Team and Sydney Opera House Trust</p> <p>RAP Working Group membership comprises both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other staff at all levels</p> <p>RAP Working Group meetings include a standing invitation for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander members of the Sydney Opera House Trust</p>
	<p>Identify two to three advisors in the community to consult with</p> <p>Consultation partners to be published in Sydney Opera House's Annual Report and listed in the RAP Report</p>
	<p>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person to be appointed to the Sydney Opera House Conservation Council</p>
	<p>All recommendations to the Minister include two suitable Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nominees for a position and refer to this RAP</p> <p>Minimum of one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person on the Sydney Opera House Trust at all times</p>
	<p>Initial strategy developed and signed-off</p> <p>Baseline data established for strategy focus and included in the June 2012 RAP Report</p>

RESPECT

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, land and history is important to Sydney Opera House as a National and World Heritage listed icon built on a site of significant national heritage. Our national and international profile in the arts brings with it a great responsibility. Respectful relationships with our First Peoples enable us to provide engaging performing arts that reflect our national identity.

FOCUS AREA: SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE REFLECTS OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Sydney Opera House will use appropriate cultural protocols including Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	Head of CEO's Office	May 2011 September 2011 June 2012

FOCUS AREA: SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE FOSTERS RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

2. Sydney Opera House will develop and roll out the Sydney Opera House RAP	Head of CEO's Office	May 2011
3. Sydney Opera House will increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness across the organisation.	Chief Executive Officer	December 2011 June 2012 June 2012
4. Sydney Opera House will raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and artists by extending the Message Sticks brand.	Executive Producer, Sydney Opera House Presents	June 2011 June 2012

	MEASURABLE TARGET
	<p>All relevant events include a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Sydney Opera House site specific Acknowledgement of Country developed with the assistance of Traditional Owners Australia Council for the Arts protocol documents (e.g. performing arts, visual arts protocols and Indigenous protocol guides) disseminated to staff and applied at all relevant events.</p>
	<p>Sydney Opera House RAP launched during Reconciliation Week 2011 Roll out of plan commences RAP placed on the Sydney Opera House and Reconciliation Australia websites Internal and external stakeholders engaged: - Including via promotion of the Sydney Opera House RAP at events like Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC; and - Including via internal staff bulletins and Reconciliation Australia's newsletter</p>
	<p>Each Sydney Opera House business area to propose strategies to increase awareness of and enhance the visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for the general public Sydney Opera House will promote NAIDOC week on the digital screens across the House All staff participate in cultural awareness raising activities, as recommended by the RAP Working Group and agreed to by Sydney Opera House Executive Team and Management Team All new staff participate in cultural awareness training as part of induction to Sydney Opera House from May 2011 Cultural awareness training program and schedule established to enable all staff to benefit from training from July 2012.</p>
	<p>Project Manager appointed and project commences Case study included in the June 2012 RAP Report Expanded Message Sticks program will include three new works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists commissioned in 2012</p>

OPPORTUNITIES

Providing education and employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations is a priority for Sydney Opera House. We believe it supports greater economic participation, social inclusion and allows us to directly benefit from increased access to diverse skills and knowledge.

FOCUS AREA: PROMOTING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
1. Sydney Opera House will implement a work experience program targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander High School students	Learning and Development Team Leader and Head of Education	June 2012
2. Sydney Opera House will participate in an Indigenous School Based Apprenticeships Program	Learning and Development Team Leader and Head of Education	December 2011
3. Sydney Opera House will increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff employed at Sydney Opera House from 0.5% of total staff.	Head of People and Culture	June 2011 June 2012

FOCUS AREA: SUPPORTING STRONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT AT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

4. Sydney Opera House will include new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent and guests in its programming.	Executive Producer, Sydney Opera House Presents	June 2012
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	<p>MEASURABLE TARGET</p>
	<p>12 students per year (June 2011 to June 2012) Partnering schools listed in the June 2012 RAP Report</p>
	<p>Five placements per year across the organisation All placements complete their apprenticeship Set up alumni database from the apprenticeship program to ensure we can provide them with information about relevant job opportunities that may arise within Sydney Opera House Sydney Opera House's apprenticeship program documentation will encourage managers to support the transition of students from the program into full time work and careers.</p>
	<p>Sydney Opera House to engage Indigenous-led recruitment agency All new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members proudly give details about their background Sydney Opera House will set aside two positions from major recruitment drives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people Increase to 2% (number of employees)</p>
	<p>Ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists participating in Sydney Opera House Presents programs each year Three Sydney Opera House Presents titles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content per year</p>



TRACKING PROGRESS & REPORTING

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	MEASURABLE TARGET
1. Annual review of the RAP	RAP Working Group	May 2011	RAP report submitted to Reconciliation Australia for placement on its website post-review
		June 2012	RAP progress against targets submitted for inclusion in the Sydney Opera House Annual Report 2011/12
2. RAP refreshed based on learnings identified in the RAP Report and opportunities presenting in the next 12 months	RAP Working Group	July 2012	Refreshed RAP drafted by the RAP Working Group in consultation with key stakeholders, including Reconciliation Australia
		August 2012	Refreshed RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia
		August 2012	Refreshed RAP placed on the Sydney Opera House and Reconciliation Australia websites