

Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy



2021 – 23



To help bring the concepts and words in this strategy to life, we commissioned works by these three Australian artists:

Jason Phu – Diversity (p.8)

Lives and works across Sydney and Melbourne, Australia.

“Listen to my heart, don’t listen to people’s farts. Listen to my words, don’t listen to internet turds. And don’t talk over me please with your mouthful of bees.”

Emily Crockford – Inclusion (p.12)

Lives and works in Sydney, Australia under Studio A.

“Over the sea is the Oprah house and Sydney Bridge. The waves bring the water and the bridge brings the cars and trains. Lots of people. All kinds of people. My Coco Opera house is made of dark chocolate and white chocolate.”

Sally M. Nangala Mulda – Belonging (p.14)

Lives and works in Mparntwe, Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

“Marlene and I grew up together at Amoonguna and now we are both Town Camp Artists. Last year we went to Sydney Opera House together to see our films on the Opera House. We are both about the same age as that building. It is for everyone.”

For more information on these artists, please see page 38.

First Nations readers are advised that this document may contain the names and images of people who are now deceased.

Dancers from the Jannawi Dance Clan on the Opera House sails for Dancerites 2019. Photo by Daniel Boud.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land on which Australia’s most iconic building and premier performing arts centre stands.

We honour the long Gadigal history of gathering and storytelling, and celebrate the strength and resilience of First Nations people and communities, past and present. This proud heritage inspires the Opera House’s ambition to foster a shared sense of belonging for all Australians.





Welcome

As we approach the Opera House's 50th anniversary, we are setting out the positive change we want to drive over the next two years, and beyond. Because we have a committed and passionate workforce. Because it will make the Opera House a better place for everyone. Because what we do next will inspire others.

The Opera House plays an important role in shaping our nation, life and culture. We promote creativity, diversity, cultural rights, environmental sustainability and respect for heritage, on and off the stage, and take seriously our responsibility to be a meeting place for the whole community.

But we know there is much more we need to do, as well as things we need to do differently. Just as important as continuing to renew our building and infrastructure to ensure the Opera House continues to inspire generations of artists, audiences and visitors, is evolving our organisational culture and the experiences we offer. This requires commitment and action from each of us individually, and by all of us together.

The Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (DI&B) Strategy is the result of significant input from across the organisation, as well as from our stakeholders. It includes key actions aligned with three pillars: People, Experiences and Building & Technology. Bringing this strategy to life will play a significant role in the Opera House remaining fresh and relevant, encouraging creativity and innovation, and improving every aspect of our organisation.

Preparing this strategy and the action plans that go with it has been a tremendous group effort. I want to thank everyone who contributed, particularly our staff.

We are committed to doing all we can to inspire and bring about change so that together we can achieve our vision: The Sydney Opera House – who we are and everything we do – reflects and respects the diversity of the community.

Louise Herron AM
Chief Executive Officer
September 2021

**Our vision for diversity,
inclusion and belonging:**

**The Sydney Opera House
– who we are and everything
we do – reflects and respects
the diversity of the community.**



Jason Phu, *And don't talk over me please* (2021).

What do we mean by diversity, inclusion & belonging?

- Diversity** The range of people throughout the organisation – ‘who’s making decisions, being recruited, and promoted’ – and the programming and experiences we offer.
- Inclusion** Respecting and celebrating our differences – and what we have in common – in the way we work and how we treat each other.
- Belonging** Creating an equitable and welcoming environment in which everyone – all staff, artists, audiences and visitors – feels accepted and supported.

The DI&B Strategy will guide us in achieving our ...

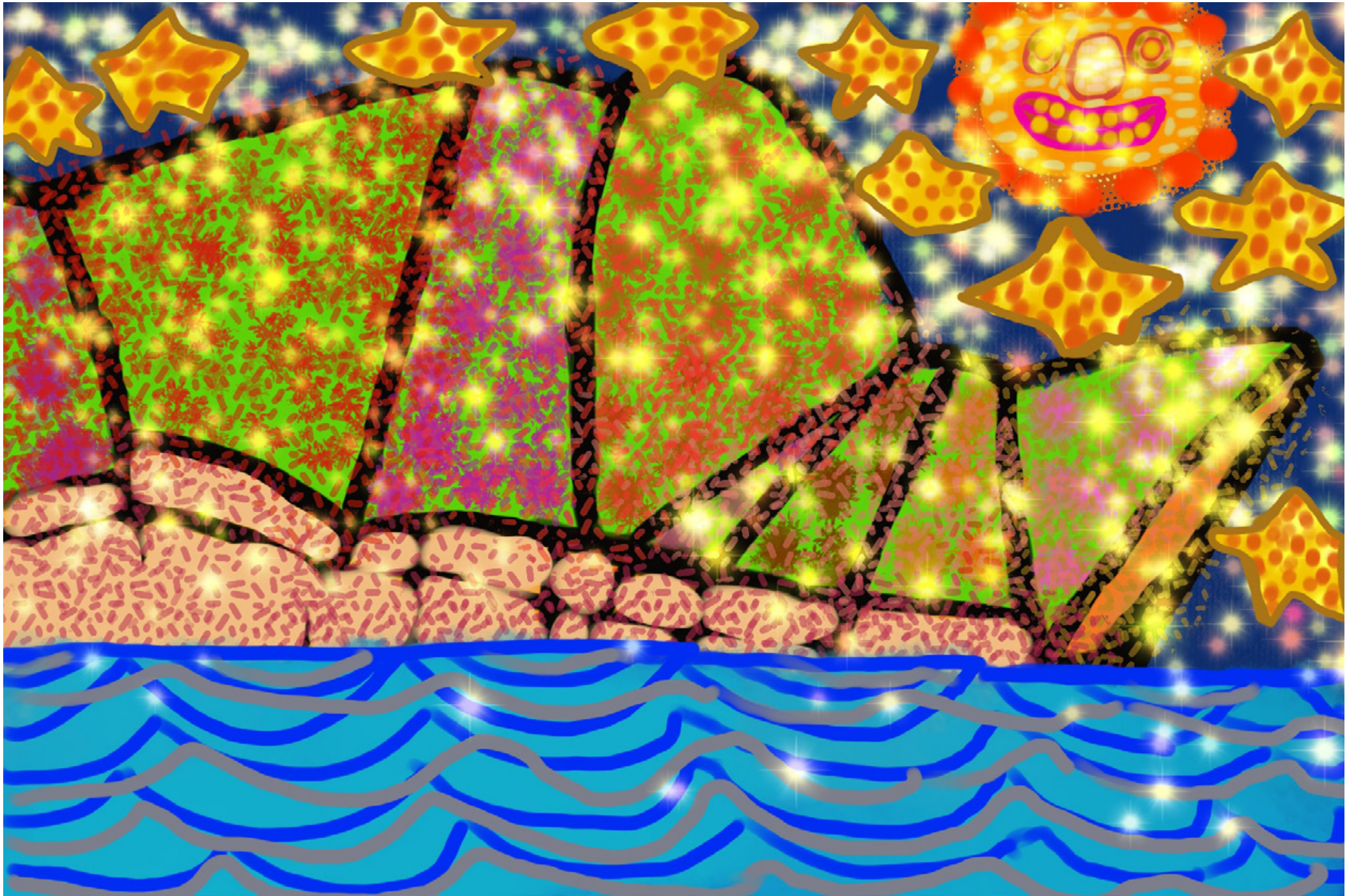
Vision To be as bold and inspiring as the Opera House itself

Mission To treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors
To inspire, and strengthen the community, through everything we do

Values
Creativity
Excellence
Collaboration
Accountability
Safety

The strategy is also aligned with our commitment to the UN Global Goals (see page 30).







Sally M. Nangala Mulda, *Judith, Marlene, Sally and Jennifer* (2021).

Guiding principles



DI&B is everyone's responsibility, individually and collectively – in how we behave, make decisions and treat each other every day.



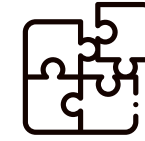
We invest the energy, focus and financial resources required to bring about meaningful change.



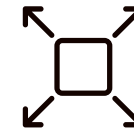
Decisions are made in consultation with members of any groups affected by the decision.



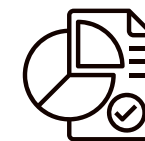
We maximise our impact and inspire others through collaboration with the Opera House's many stakeholders – government, on-site operators, contractors, suppliers, resident companies and hirers, corporate partners and donors.



DI&B is supported by area-specific action plans that work hand in hand with our strategies, business plans, community action plans and UN Global Goals commitments. Together, they guide a cohesive, coordinated approach to positive change.



We take a broad and holistic approach to diversity, including expanding current focus areas (First Nations, disability, LGBTIQ+, women) to include cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD), neurodiversity, age and modes of employment.



We commit to clear measures, timing and responsibilities, and provide regular updates on implementation, including progress reports to our staff, Trustees and community.

People



Outcomes:
More diverse workforce
More inclusive behaviours and processes

Sydney Opera House Mardi Gras Parade float in 2020.
Photo by Richard Hedger.

Experiences



Outcomes:
Greater diversity of offerings
Greater diversity of audiences and visitors

Audience members at Sensorium Theatre's *Whoosh!* in 2019.
Photo by Prudence Upton.

Building & Technology



Outcomes:
More inclusive site
More inclusive heritage interpretation

The Welcome Team provides on site transport support to visitors with mobility needs. Photo by Ken Leanfore.

People

Objectives

Foster a safe and inclusive workplace that provides the leadership, environment and tools our diverse team needs to thrive.

- Promote an organisational culture in which diversity of thought and experience is valued.
- Improve recruitment, selection and development to attract, retain and promote diverse talent and create a more inclusive organisation.
- Equip managers and staff to support DI&B, including through leadership development and educational programs.
- Share stories and promote internal discussion to build awareness about the benefits of DI&B.
- Ensure policies, processes and guidelines are consistent with the DI&B vision.
- Improve data collection to better track our DI&B progress.



Members of the Opera House Front of House team. Photo by Ken Leanfore.

Key Actions

- Implement a new recruitment and retention plan to attract, develop and promote a more diverse workforce, including to achieve greater diversity in senior leadership roles.
- Overhaul the Opera House’s career development program to offer portfolio-specific options for diverse candidates, including internships, traineeships, cadetships, work experience and early career roles.

Key Measures

- Demonstrate annual progress towards NSW Government 2025 workforce diversity goals, across the organisation and at the leadership level (see table).

| Workforce diversity group | NSW Govt. 2025 goal |
|---|---------------------|
| Women | 50% |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people | 3.3% |
| People whose first language spoken as a child was not English | 23.2% |
| People with disability | 5.6% |



Opera House staff members engaging in a sustainable clothing initiative, in support of refugee women.

Key Actions

- Provide unconscious bias training for all staff, starting with hiring managers and customer-facing staff, as part of a new DI&B learning and development program.
- Celebrate the value of diversity and encourage cross-organisation connection through regular educational events/activities and internal storytelling, including strengthening engagement with casual staff.
- Establish a dedicated Head of DI&B role in the Senior Leadership Team to lead strategy implementation, accountability and reporting.
- Diversify Opera House suppliers and service providers as part of a sustainable procurement framework.

Key Measures

- Unconscious bias training delivered to all staff by end of FY22.
- Increase in People Matter Employee Survey inclusion and diversity score from 77% in 2020.
- Regular staff surveys conducted to get feedback on commitment to and effectiveness of DI&B actions.
- DI&B lens applied to all Opera House policies reviewed or developed.
- Baseline established for diversity of Opera House suppliers and targets set for annual increase.

Case Study Building our capability

The Opera House’s learning and development program supports the DI&B Strategy by broadening employees’ cultural understanding, challenging the way we think, and connecting staff with one another. Highlights include:

- Diversity Council Australia unconscious bias training, already completed by 80 managers in 2021, and will be provided to all staff by July 2022.
- Cultural awareness training is deepening staff understanding of First Nations heritage and culture, including through the popular BlackCard and Arrilla digital courses. This formal training complements

staff-led initiatives, such as the May 2021 personal Acknowledgement of Country workshops attended by more than 65 staff.

- 100 staff attended Guide Dogs NSW/ACT training and seven have completed audio-description training by Vision Australia, enabling them to better support visitors who are blind or have low vision.
- All Opera House policies are being reviewed with a DI&B lens, with important ones such as the Respectful Workplace Behaviour policy included in annual compliance training for all staff.
- Frequent Lunch & Learn staff events provide an informal environment for learning and discussion.



Customer service staff undergo Guide Dogs NSW/ACT training. Photo by Jenny Muldoon.

“As I say to my fantastic son, who has autism, it’s not a disability. It means that you have different abilities, and that’s what makes you the person you are!”

Staff member Daniel Sillers, after the World Autism Awareness Day Lunch & Learn session.

Experiences

Objectives

Broaden and deepen our engagement with the community through inclusive content, products and services.

- Embed DI&B into operations and decision-making about content, products and services.
- Present a diverse range of experiences, on site and online, building engagement with audiences and new communities.
- Increase representation of diversity and its importance in Opera House external storytelling.



Outcome:
Greater diversity of offerings, audiences and visitors

Miku dancers from the Yolngu nation perform at Dancerites 2019. Photo by Daniel Boud.

Key Actions

- Embed DI&B objectives and targets in all relevant Opera House strategies to diversify our experiences, audiences and visitors.
- Establish dedicated roles in Sydney Opera House Presents (community liaison) and Engagement (audience development) to build/strengthen relationships with diverse artists, audiences and other participants.

Key Measures (for offerings)

- Baseline established and appropriate targets set for:
 - Diversity in Sydney Opera House Presents programming and content creators.
 - Community awareness of diverse Sydney Opera House Presents programming.
 - Visitor experience offerings to increase patron diversity.
 - Diversity in Opera House marketing/communications imagery and storytelling.

Key Measures (for audiences & visitors)

- Baseline established for Opera House engagement with diverse audiences/customers in FY22, with increased engagement demonstrated by end of FY23.
- Artist, audience and community feedback about Opera House DI&B practices appropriately recorded and considered.

Case Study

A centre for lifelong learning

The Centre for Creativity, due to open in early 2022, is one of the final projects in the Opera House's Decade of Renewal. It will play a key role in our DI&B commitment to broaden and deepen engagement with new audiences.

The Centre will cater for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, bringing the Opera House to schools and homes everywhere – metropolitan, regional and remote.

New on-site and online programs will extend the Opera House's Creative Learning work with schools. They will draw on the extraordinary building, the art and artists that bring our stages and digital spaces to life, and the powerful First Nations stories of our site. Led by artists from diverse backgrounds and lived experience, the Centre's programming will inspire creativity among participants through dance, design, performance and storytelling.

“The program teaches you we are all creative.”

School principal, Creative Leadership in Learning Program

“It made me feel like the future was going to be a better place.”

Participating student, Creative Leadership in Learning Program

Children participate in creative play during school holidays. Photo by Daniel Boud.



Building & Technology

Objectives

Make the building more accessible and inclusive – for staff, onsite operators, artists, audiences and visitors – always with the utmost respect for our heritage.

- Ensure the physical environment, technology and facilities we provide meet the diverse needs of our team and community.
- Better understand and represent the contribution of diversity in our heritage interpretation.



Outcome:
**More inclusive
heritage
interpretation**

Artist Marlene Rubuntja's work in the *Badu Gili: Wonder Women* projection on the Bennelong sails. Photo by Daniel Boud.

Key Actions

- Complete the First Nations history of Bennelong Point research project and share stories through interpretation activities and a new First Nations tour.

Key Measures

- Research on the First Nations history of Bennelong Point completed and shared with the community, including through a new tour.
- Project on the role of diversity in the design and construction of the Opera House scoped.



Outcome:
**More
inclusive site**

A new lift was installed in the Joan Sutherland Theatre northern foyers in 2018. Photo by Daniel Boud.

Key Actions

- Update Opera House building, accommodation and technology plans to be more inclusive.

Key Measures

- Accessibility elements of the Opera House's Renewal and other capital works projects completed and benefits articulated in internal and external communications.
- Opera House building and accommodation masterplan updated to be more inclusive, addressing staff and patron needs such as all-gender bathroom/changing facilities, meditation/prayer room and breastfeeding/expressing facility.
- Inclusive technology initiatives delivered
 - Opera House website meets accessibility requirements (WCAG 2.1 compliance).
 - Microsoft 365 rolled out, improving internal collaboration.
 - Audio-description technology shared with resident companies.

Case Study Upgrading facilities

As part of the Opera House's Decade of Renewal, we aim to create an ever-more vibrant and accessible space that fosters creativity and engages more deeply with the community.

A key milestone was the installation of a new lift and passageway, giving wheelchair users and less mobile visitors access to every level of the Joan Sutherland Theatre (JST) foyers. This project earned industry recognition, including the Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts at the UNESCO 2019 Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, demonstrating how heritage buildings can evolve to be more inclusive. Similar upgrades are under way in the Concert Hall, which will reopen in 2022.

In addition to the Renewal upgrades, the Opera House trialled all-gender bathrooms during the Vivid LIVE and Antidote festivals, as well as a permanent all-gender facility back-of-house, and upgraded its audio-description equipment. Accessibility building and technology projects will continue to be a key part of the building's evolution and support the DI&B Strategy goal of ensuring our physical environment, facilities and technology meet the diverse needs of staff, onsite operators, artists, audiences and visitors.



Inclusion champion Max Burt with Ian Cashen Executive Director Building, Safety and Security using the new Joan Sutherland Theatre lift for the first time in 2018. Photo by Daniel Boud.

“I've been a wheelchair user for more than 19 years and have been coming to the Opera House for the seven years I've been living in Sydney. This is the first time I could reach the Joan Sutherland Theatre's Northern Foyer and see for myself the fantastic harbour view. This is a remarkable building and now people with limited mobility can experience it the way everyone else does.”

Max Burt, *Inclusion champion*

Alignment to the UN Global Goals

Through the DI&B Strategy and associated action plans, the Opera House supports global efforts to promote inclusive, equitable opportunities for all.

People

Objectives under our People strategic pillar

- Promote an organisational culture in which diversity of thought and experience is valued.
- Improve recruitment, selection and development to attract, retain and promote diverse talent and create a more inclusive organisation.
- Equip managers and staff to support DI&B, including through leadership development and educational programs.
- Share stories and promote internal discussion to build awareness about the benefits of DI&B.
- Ensure policies, processes and guidelines are consistent with the DI&B vision.
- Improve data collection to better track our DI&B progress.

Global Goals and targets the Opera House's actions will support*



*The numbers below each Goal refer to the Global Goal targets that the DI&B Strategy actions will support, with the exception of Goal 3 for which Opera House has developed its own target.

Experiences

Objectives under our Experiences strategic pillar

- Embed DI&B into operations and decision-making about content, products and services.
- Present a diverse range of experiences, on site and online, building engagement with new audiences and communities.
- Increase representation of diversity and its importance in Opera House external storytelling.

Global Goals and targets the Opera House's actions will support*



Building & Technology

Objectives under our Building & Technology strategic pillar

- Ensure the physical environment, technology and facilities we provide meet the diverse needs of our team and community.
- Better understand and represent the contribution of diversity in our heritage interpretation.

Global Goals and targets the Opera House's actions will support*



How did we develop our DI&B Strategy?

Laying the foundation

Strategy development planning undertaken, process designed, approved by Executive Team and launched to staff

Collaboration with DI&B expert consultant Symmetra commenced

Joined Diversity Council Australia as a member

May–Oct 2020



Oct–Dec 2020



Discovery: Understanding our people

‘Different perspectives’ staff event – 160+ views

Leadership workshops – 50+ participants

DI&B survey – almost 200 full completions and 250+ partially complete

Staff focus groups x6 with 50+ participants

Systems/process benchmarking survey – 30 participants

1:1 meetings – internal & external

Sense making

Research insights shared through a number of presentations, including a session with 70+ staff

1:1 meetings – internal & external

Jan 2021



Development

Workshops with subject matter experts

12 workshops with 190 attendees to develop portfolio-specific action plans

Workshops with Executive Team

1:1 meetings – internal & external

Feb–May 2021



Sense checking

Staff, Trustees and stakeholder feedback on the draft strategy, including detailed presentation to 160+ staff and feedback sessions x3

Jun 2021



Finalisation & approval

Strategy document approved and designed

Jul–Aug 2021



Launch

Sep 2021



Implementation

Over the next two years, we will implement our actions, introduce regular reporting, and commence planning for the next version of the strategy

FY22 & FY23

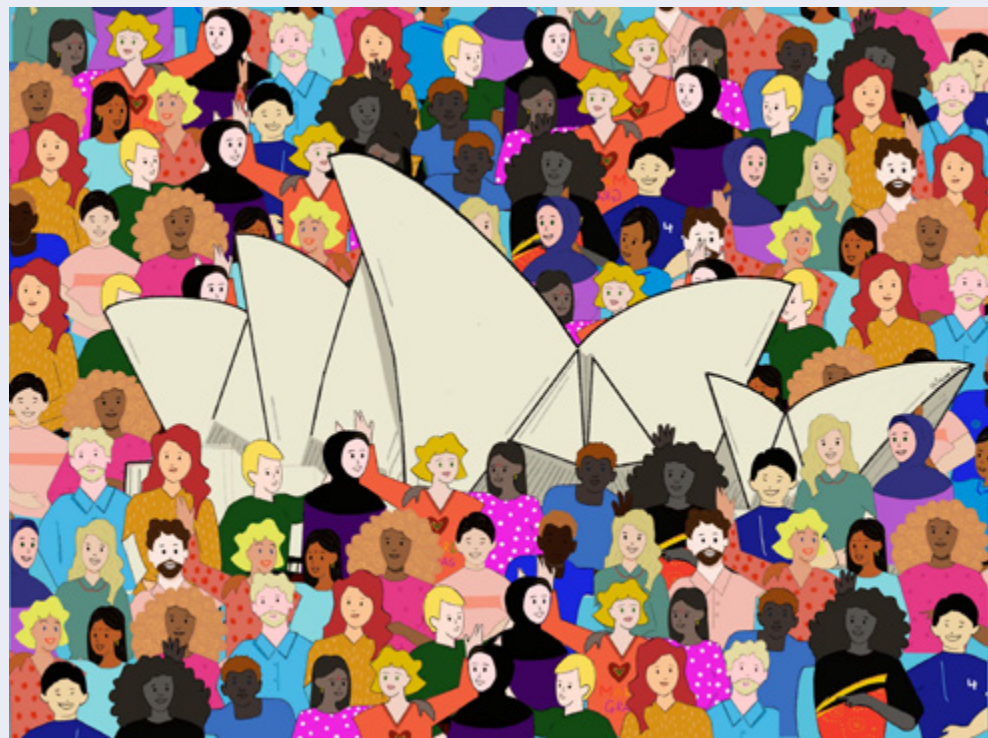


Other Sydney Opera House DI&B Activities

In addition to developing the strategy, we implemented a range of initiatives and programs in FY21, including:

- Appointed a dedicated First Nations Advisor and established a First Nations Staff Network
- Continued to facilitate cultural and accessibility training, and commenced unconscious bias training for all people and hiring managers and customer-facing teams
- Developed new policy documents that underpin our commitment to ensuring the Opera House is a respectful workplace
- Introduced informal learning opportunities via staff Lunch & Learn series

What does belonging mean to our staff?



Saima B, Building

“To see and be seen
To hear and be heard
To understand and be understood
To include and be included
To accept and be accepted”

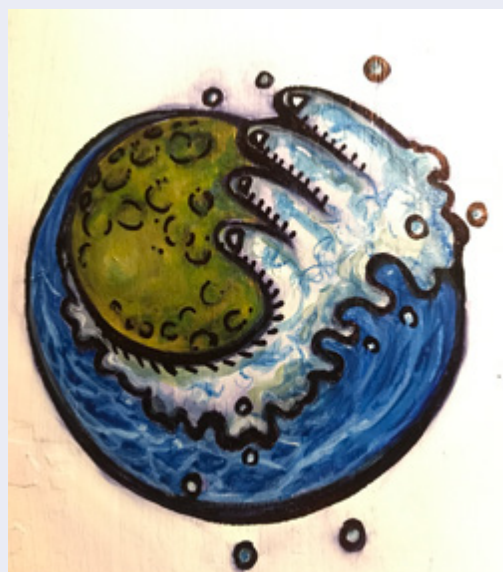
Ronit O, Legal

“Not shaping myself to fit into a pre-existing template of what I think an Opera House staff member should look like, and feeling like an outsider if I don't exactly fit.”

Jess M, Ticketing Services

“To belong is to be at once deeply connected and utterly unbound.”

Laura D, Legal



“In short, the Sydney Opera House seems to be a shining light on the harbour bringing hope to those in need, like a lighthouse in days gone past.”

Doug M, Resident Contractor

“Belonging is anywhere you feel home. It's a place, a person, a connection that fills you up and makes you breathe out. It's knowing that you count.”

Ebony B, Programming

“Belonging to me means acceptance.”

Daniel P, Tours

“Belonging is community, belonging is you and me.”

Rebecca M, Executive Assistant

“Theatre lifts you up when you're feeling blue.

Inside you are vulnerable, raw, and true;
you release yourself, finding the freedom to be,
of who you are in the world, learning to be free.”

Jamie W, Programming

“... The Sea and the Moon bring me peace where I was born, or wherever I am a guest... Looking at them I feel the Earth as whole place and my responsibility to respect and protect nature (the hand embrace).”

Giovanna F, Staging



“Belonging is feeling comfortable to bring your entire self to work.”

Anthony C, Executive Assistant to CEO



Sharron C, Production Services

“Being part of a team, where differences are embraced and celebrated, while challenging and supporting each other to learn and grow in service of a shared vision to make the world a better place for everyone.”

Melissa P, People & Development

What does belonging mean to our staff?



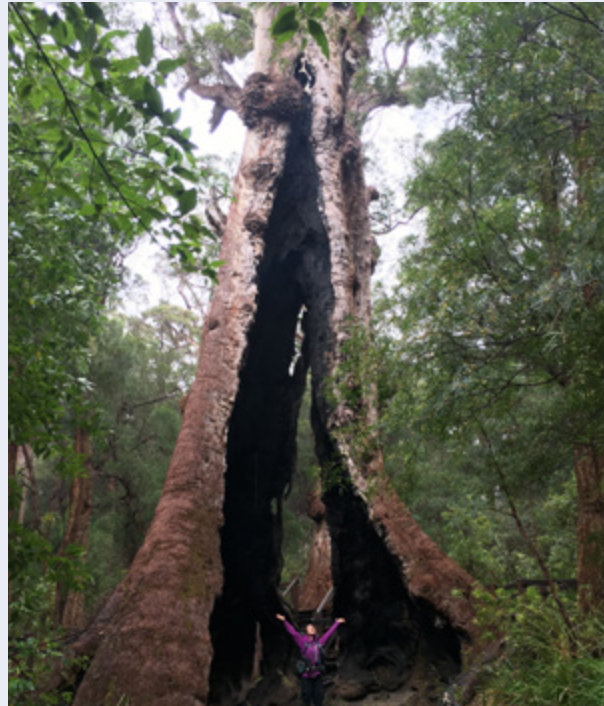
Janelle R,
Accessibility

“... Where I know I’m supported and always feel strong,
The House, my nirvana,
I feel I belong.”

Nichola G, Finance

“ ... ‘belonging’ in my happy place (nature) while hiking the 1000km Bibbulmun Track in Western Australia.”

Caroline G-T, Environmental Sustainability



“Feeling like others genuinely see and care about the person in you, beyond general workplace interactions and pleasantries.”

Yani N, Risk

“Feeling like we can be ourselves starts with self-acceptance, embracing our virtues and flaw, believing that we are enough.”

Bibiana V, Policy

“You are authentic
You are different
You are the reason
I am here”

Carolyn S-S, Company Secretary



“Working with passionate colleagues who have shared values, commitment & enthusiasm to make the world a better place.”

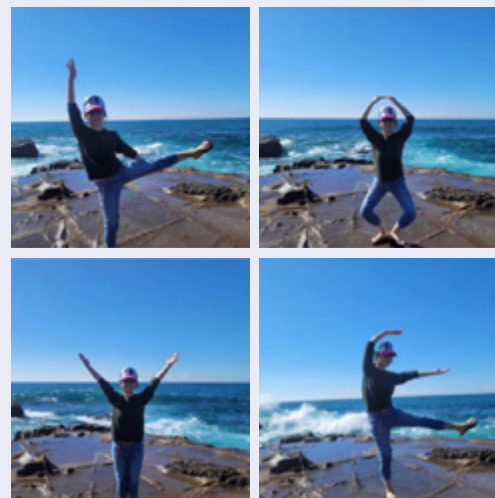
Emma B, Environmental Sustainability

“Belonging is the millions of fleeting moments that build a deep sense of unconditional togetherness.”

Anna Y, People & Government

“As a returning employee of the House, I always knew I would be back, I feel a deep connection to the house and its people.”

Michael L,
Building Operations



“I know I belong here because,
Though we may look and sound different,
We look outwards in the same direction together.”

This is where,
We are safe,
We grow,
We thrive together.”

Kate L,
Executive Assistant

Shirley Z,
Sales Tours
& Experiences

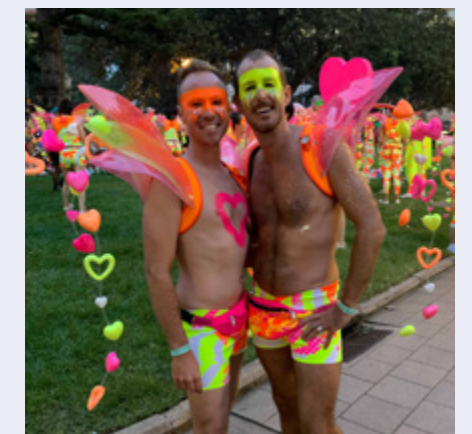
“Feeling accepted and being welcomed for who you are.”

Chelsea B-H, Strategic Events



“Having a strong team around you is so important.”

Nicola R, Communications



Artwork artist credits

Jason Phu

And don't talk over me please (2021), digital image. Commissioned by the Sydney Opera House for its Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy. Image courtesy of the artist.

Artist Jason Phu's multidisciplinary practice brings together a wide range of sometimes contradictory references, from traditional ink paintings and calligraphy to mass-produced objects, everyday vernacular to official records, personal narratives to historical events. Working across drawing, installation, painting and performance, the artist frequently uses humour to explore experiences of cultural dislocation. Recent exhibition projects include: the Dobell Drawing Biennale (2018) at the Art Gallery of NSW; Primavera (2018) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and The Burrangong Affray (2019) at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Jason was the inaugural Art Assembly artist project in 2019, commissioned for the Opera House's Antidote festival.

Emily Crockford

The Phantom Oprah House (2021), acrylic on canvas. Commissioned by the Sydney Opera House for its Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy. Image courtesy of the artist and Studio A.

Emily Crockford, a Studio A artist, has a long exhibition history and is well known for her major public art commissions. She has been an artist-in-residence at Cicada Press, UNSW Art & Design and Koskela, and has collaborated with established designers Corban & Blair and One Another. Her recent exhibition projects include: *Suburbia* (2018) at Cement Fondu; *Sydney, Good Neighbours* (2017) at Artbank, Sydney; and the Archibald Prize (2020) at the Art Gallery of NSW. Her public art projects appear at Westpac's Concord offices, the City of Sydney Creative Hoardings Project and the University of Technology, Sydney.

Sally M. Nangala Mulda

Judith, Marlene, Sally and Jennifer (2021), acrylic on linen. Commissioned by the Sydney Opera House for its Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy. Image courtesy of the artist and Tangentyere Artists.

Sally M. Nangala Mulda was born in Titjikala, south of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), to parents from the Erldunda and Aputula regions. She went to school at Amoonguna. After losing the use of her left arm in a childhood accident, Mulda later faced the challenge of losing sight in one eye. Mulda had never painted before joining Tangentyere Artists, an artist centre, in 2008. From the outset, Mulda sought to record the interactions that constitute life for so many Aboriginal people today. Mulda belongs to the Titjikala community, Central Desert region and her language group is Luritja, Central Desert region. Her recent projects include: *Tarnanthi* (2019) at the Art Gallery of South Australia; *The National: New Australian Art* (2019) at the Art Gallery of NSW; and the Sir John Sulman Prize (2019), also at the Art Gallery of NSW. Mulda's work was included in *Badu Gili: Wonder Women* (2021), co-curated by the Opera House and the Art Gallery of NSW.

Contact us at
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