

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2024





With the deepest respect MAV acknowledges that we live, work and celebrate on unceded Aboriginal land. We thank all Elders, past and present, for their care, knowledge and generosity, as custodians of the world's oldest continuing culture. We pledge our support towards truth telling, reparation and decolonisation. We open our hearts and minds to deep listening, learning, sharing and connecting – in solidarity with First People's here in Australia and around the world.



VISION

Arts as diverse as our people.

• PURPOSE

We channel the artistic practices of culturally diverse artists and communities to create systems of cultural production and participation that uphold equity and self-determination.

• VALUES

Diversity

we privilege non-western ways of doing, knowing and being, to tell stories that illuminate our humanity and improve intercultural understanding;

Equality

we strive for cultural democracy, sharing our knowledge and skills with partners across the arts and cultural sector to build platforms for engagement and visibility;

Trust

diverse communities see themselves represented in and by us, in work that resonates with their truths, underpinned by shared values and dreams of new futures; and

Courage

we are outspoken in our support of cultural participation as a human right, from which we derive social, cultural and economic benefits for the development of individuals and society.

“*The entirety of the arts sector is aimed at white people and for people of colour you have MAV.*”

- PROVOCATION FROM MAV COLLABORATOR





GOALS

1

To champion the development of artists and artform practices that speak to who we are as Australians, embedding pluralism and diversity as a fount of artistic and cultural innovation;

2

To build the case for diversity as one of our greatest cultural assets, through the generation of critical and compelling new work; and

3

To lead transformation in our sector, contesting the marginality of diverse artistic practices through the application of contemporary lenses and frameworks.

STRATEGIES & OUTCOMES

- 1

To champion the development of artists and artform practices that speak to who we are as Australians, embedding pluralism and diversity as a fount of artistic and cultural innovation;
- Develop and deliver bespoke, responsive artist development programs that connect diverse artists with each other, and with new opportunities;
 - Build platforms for artistic experimentation and presentation that highlight the capabilities and contributions of diverse artists; and
 - Design cultural leadership initiatives that empower diverse artists to challenge, re-define and contemporise cultural practice.
- 2

To build the case for diversity as one of our greatest cultural assets, through the generation of critical and compelling new work;
- Produce a bold and compelling annual program of multi-disciplinary new work that challenges prevailing cultural narratives;
 - Challenge traditional concepts of classical versus contemporary and professional versus community to create new works that inspire, provoke and engage; and
 - Respond to central themes of migration, settlement and colonisation to build new artistic platforms for dialogue and social cohesion.
- 3

To lead transformation in our sector, contesting the marginality of diverse artistic practices through the application of contemporary lenses and frameworks;
- Support the creation of new work that interrogates and elevates intercultural, intersectional and intergenerational practices;
 - Build and share cultural capital through sector development initiatives that centre diverse creatives as leaders and innovators; and
 - Advocate for change that builds understanding, capacity and representation of diverse cultural practitioners and practices across the arts and cultural sector.



Image: Then VS Now, Embrace Your Frizzique, Emerge in the West 2019, photo by Wild Hardt

KPIs and TARGETS

KPIs	Targets			
	2021	2022	2023	2024
Artist Development				
Development programs for emerging & mid-career artists	2	2	2	2
Peer to peer networking programs	3	4	4	5
Artist engagement across MAV programs	2000	2050	2100	2150
Artist curated programs	4	5	6	7
Employment of artists in mainstream	150	170	190	210
Leadership				
Cultural leadership programs	2	2	2	2
Employment of diverse cultural leaders across the organisation	3	3	4	4
Diverse representation in employment within MAV	3	4	4	5
Representation of diversity on Board	90%	90%	90%	90%
Artform Development				
New work across multiple artforms	2	2	3	3
New works focused on challenging status quo	2	2	2	2
New intercultural works	2	2	2	2
New intersectional works	1	1	1	1
New intergenerational works	1	1	1	1
Platforms				
Dedicated platforms across organisation	1	2	3	3
Events addressing migration, settlement and colonisation	3	3	3	3
Forums, conversations & critical dialogue	3	3	3	3
Sector Development				
Sector development initiatives	1	1	1	1
Publications	3	4	5	6
Campaigns	2	2	2	2
Strategic Partnerships	4	4	4	4
Impact Analysis				
Audience analysis	2	2	2	2
Program evaluation	2	2	2	2

Refer to 2020 Program for details regarding program offerings.



● ARTISTIC RATIONALE

The principle driver of Multicultural Arts Victoria's (MAV) artistic rationale is the self-determination of artists and communities. To that end, the artistic motivations behind our work do not reflect the creative visions of one individual, but many.

We deliberately have no artistic director, instead enabling all participants to direct their engagement with our organisation in a way that reflects their aspirations and needs. Through self-determined practices, we underpin a human-rights based framework, which posits cultural practice as essential to the wellbeing and sustainability of individuals and society.

Within this framework, we reject the reductive dichotomies of professional versus community, arts versus culture and traditional versus contemporary. We draw our models from deep engagement with artists and communities whose cultural practices are inextricably embedded in notions of identity, citizenship and belonging. Arts and culture are not an optional extra in these communities, as markers of affluence and status. They are an expression of solidarity and indicators of collective identity.

These cultural practices are in constant evolution. They exist within complex systems of cultural production, dissemination and consumption. They may reflect traditional cultural practices, or re-emerge in contemporary manifestations that challenge and redefine culture. Cultural practices provide vehicles for the exploration of our past, present and future. They do not exist in isolation, but are expansive, allowing artists

to work interculturally, intersectionally and intergenerationally to evolve new forms, methods and impacts.

Deriving from this ethos, our work is multi-disciplinary, cross-artform and experimental. We encourage interrogation of artform and cultural practices that enable artists and communities to lead their engagements with us. Our work is of its time, reflecting contemporaneous dialogues, practices and frameworks. At the same time, it is future focused, as the work of today creates the pathways for artists of tomorrow.

Through our work, we seek to privilege non-western ways of doing, knowing and being. Beginning with respect for the role of First Nations cultures in redefining our fundamental conceptions of art and culture, we seek to understand and re-imagine the place of migration and settlement by the application of decolonising frameworks to our work, inviting engagement of First Nations artists across our programs as cultural leaders and collaborators.

Our artistic rationale is driven by our profound commitment to arts and artists shaping the narratives that define who we are as a multicultural nation. We make art as a visceral response to the forces of bigotry and intolerance, which seek to undermine the hard-fought battle for pluralism. We make art to understand who we are as migrants on Indigenous land. We make art to draw attention to the work that is still needed to future proof our identity as a society that deeply values its diversity.



● COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

We engage our community through the framework of our values, enabling us to demonstrate how they shape our relationships. Our community comprises culturally diverse artists, communities, audiences, partners and other stakeholders.

Diversity

We respond to a live and evolving conversation with artists and communities, as our core stakeholders, about the nature and purpose of arts and cultural practice. In this, the desire for self-determination is of prime importance. Through deliberate and deep engagement with our communities, we understand our role is to build platforms that illuminate cultural practice, bringing multiplicity, creation and innovation to creative exchanges. Underpinning this work are the principles of community cultural development, with a focus on intergenerational, intersectional, intercultural engagement.

Equality

Equity and equality are key drivers of our engagement with artists and communities. They are the lenses through which we interrogate our own practices to shed light on conscious and unconscious biases, and work systematically to eradicate barriers to participation. We are committed to ensuring autonomy and self-reliance, rather than creating a culture of dependence. We endeavour to walk alongside artists and communities, rather than lead. We invest in building the long-term capacity and resilience of artists and their communities,

through a focus on sustainable economic cultural participation.

Trust

Our commitment is to facilitate the work that culturally diverse artists and communities desire to make, as a powerful statement of cultural agency, visibility and respect for lived experiences. In creating new works alongside artists and communities, we seek to be a trusted organisation, that artists and communities identify as a champion, as a representative and as a facilitator. We desire an honest engagement with artists and communities about how our work serves to create change or perpetuate the status quo. We are grateful for the courage it takes artists and communities to give critical feedback and endeavour to meet all criticism with an open and welcoming stance.

Courage

We commit to developing not only new cultural products but also new systems of knowledge. Through processes of collaboration and innovation we recognise the strengths and resources of artists and communities rather than needs and deficits. Our multi-art form practice enables culturally diverse artists and communities to engage with our work in dynamic, iterative and complex ways. We deeply value and understand the interdependencies between artistic, cultural, social and economic benefits to both individuals and society, that derive from meaningful engagement in the arts. To that end, we must demonstrate the courage of our convictions, to stand with those that call out racism in the arts, to put an end to practices that marginalise and exclude, and to be a force for change.

● STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Externally

Both globally, and nationally, we are seeing the emergence of critical issues that will require our individual and collective imaginations to address; namely climate change and immigration. These are separate but interrelated, as climate crises create dispossession, which lead to further global population movement.

Central to MAV's purpose is the experience of immigration; from the perspective of long-term settlement in Australia by pre and post war migrant communities to the recent and contested arrival of asylum seekers and refugees, fleeing persecution in their homelands. We are deeply concerned with the complexities of a settler identity in an Indigenous land, and what this might mean for reconciliation and reparation. We are deeply committed to framing immigration as a key asset in society building, by demonstrating solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and other marginalised communities, to show how diversity is not a problem to be fixed, but rather a solution to many problems.

These are the prisms for our creation of artistic works, and the development of capabilities in our artists and cultural leaders.

With more than 50% of Australians either born overseas, or having at least one parent born

overseas, the fact of our diversity is incontestable, but how we will live together may become the contest of our times. Increasingly, we reside in a country divided, along lines of ideology, race and class. These struggles are the frame in which we must work, bringing creators, communities and audiences into powerful, enriching, discomfiting dialogues about the kind of society we seek to become. Our aim is to elevate the chroniclers of this journey towards nationhood, to eradicate the inequalities that keep them silent, and to be a force for change.

To that end, the strategic contexts for our work are racism and its impacts such as discrimination, isolation, violence, persecution and income inequality. The strategic outcomes of our work will be equity and equality, social cohesion and intercultural understanding. The medium of this work is fearless multi-disciplinary artistic practice, deep engagement with artists and communities, and dynamic new platforms for their narratives to be heard.

To ensure impact, we cultivate partnerships and audiences at state, national and international levels, extending our market reach through shared networks. These mutually advantageous relationships activate promotional channels as touch points for an increasing range of culturally diverse markets, opening up mainstream arts to a wealth of creative possibilities and established pathways for artists to build careers.



● STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Internally

Our internal challenges are to ensure we have the capacity to respond to the complexity of our strategic position in the sector. This includes the financial resources to realise an ambitious agenda of transformation, and the human resources to navigate a multifaceted socio-political terrain. There is no question, that the demand for our support exceeds our capacity. This requires careful consideration on our part of the strategic investments we make to enable the maximum benefit to artists and communities.

Critical to this is partnerships and alliances. Through carefully designed collaborations with organisations across the arts, community, philanthropic and education sectors, we can build capacity for engagement that magnifies our singular capability. This fortuitously reflects the desire and necessity of the arts to embrace diversity, which enables us to work in mutually beneficial ways. We hope to build effective alliances with partners across these sectors, founded on a reciprocal commitment to change, that will facilitate greater engagement with the mainstream.

We also need to build our workforce capability, so that we reflect internally and at all levels, the communities we serve. We have made substantive progress on this front, with 90% of Board members identifying as culturally diverse, and a culturally diverse CEO. We have culturally diverse staff employed across the organisation, working in solidarity with non-diverse colleagues to build a culture of co-operation and mutual respect. We have also introduced new structures at the program level to enable key decision-making roles to be taken on by people of colour, including curatorial and project leader positions. Across the board, we are committed to ensuring that all our staff have high levels of cultural literacy, and that we as an organisation are capable of reflexive practice.

The business of building culture is our central pre-occupation, whether it be through our programs, our engagement with artists and creative communities, or indeed within our organisation. We will know we have succeeded when the artists and communities we serve see MAV as their organisation, and an instrument for the realisation of their artistic and cultural aspirations.



Above: Justin Shoulder (Performer) at Balimbing- Filipino Queerness Photographic Exhibition by Gregory Lorenzutti, Mapping Melbourne 2017, photo by Damian W Vincenzi. Left: Angga Wedhaswara, Ana Muslim, Mapping Melbourne 2019, photo by Damian W Vincenzi

● **FINANCIAL PLAN (2021 – 2022)**
Financial Goals

1. To be seen as a trusted and worthy recipient of strategic investment in culture building;
2. To better articulate our value as a cultural partner to funders and supporters; and
3. To generate the resources needed to underpin our ambitions and strategic goals.

Priorities	Key Performance Areas	Key Actions			
		Year 1	Impact	Year 2	Impact
Income Consolidation	Existing public sector partners identify MAV as a leader and invest in our work	Effective reporting to government on achievements and impact	Maintain or increase current funding relationship	Building confidence of existing funding partners in MAV strategic direction and capability	Increased invest reflect increased confidence in our capability
	Existing private sector partners identify MAV as a leader and invest in our work	Effective reporting to partners on achievements and impact	Maintain or increase current funding relationships	Building opportunities for multi-year investment in strategic projects	Increased invest reflect increased confidence in our capability
	Evaluation and research partners help us to build narrative for investment in our work	Ensure evaluation programs enable effective communication of impact	Strong evidence base to support our advocacy for increased investment	Build ARC linkage program with one university partner	Strong evidence base to support our advocacy for increased investment
	Government increasingly identifies MAV as a vehicle for achieving change through capacity building	Build credentials as capacity building/ change management organisation through project delivery and knowledge creation	New investment in capacity building and sector development	Successfully apply for and deliver strategic project towards increased sector diversity	New investment in capacity building and sector development

Priorities	Key Performance Areas	Key Actions			
		Year 1	Impact	Year 2	Impact
Income Growth	Social enterprise Go-for-broke	Build online sales portal for streamlining bookings	Increased sales ensure sustainability of service and profit	Invest in social enterprise manager	Increased sales ensure sustainability of service and profit
	Share portfolio	Introduce management of share portfolio to build capital	Maintain or increase current income from investments	Increase share portfolio through informed investment strategy	Increase current income from investments
	MAV engages in new markets	Identify new markets for MAV cultural products	Maintain or increase current income from activities	Build engagement with major events producers	Increase current income from activities
	Fee for service training program	Build training program to introduce fee for service model within sector capacity building	New income stream that reflects core expertise	Secure 20 fee for service clients	Consolidate and build new income stream from activities
Income Diversification	New public and private sector relationships	Build new relationships with government and philanthropic funders	New investment in capacity building and sector development	Secure new contracts and project funds	New investment in capacity building and sector development



● EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Goals

- 1. To capture ongoing and robust data on the impact of programs to enable effective decision making within the organisation;
- 2. To centre the voices of culturally diverse stakeholders in shaping the future of projects, programs and the organisation; and
- 3. To build an evidence base to support our diversity agenda across the arts.

Matrix

WHO do we want to learn from?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural and linguistically diverse artists• Cultural and linguistically diverse community members• First People’s artists and communities• Audiences• Partners/Supporters• Funders
WHAT do we want to find out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the social, cultural and economic impact of our activities?• What is changing as a result of our work?• What do people value and why?• What is coming next in the context of stakeholder’s lives that MAV should be responding to?• What does success look like?• How can we learn from failure?
HOW do we gather data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empowering CALD artists and communities to give feedback fearlessly by adopting a non-defensive, deep listening stance• Innovating to ensure that data collection methods are designed by and responsive to the needs and interest of CALD artists and communities• Using a range of methods including quantitative and qualitative surveys, focus groups and open dialogue to build reflexive processes across the organisation
WHY are we collecting data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To maintain a reflexive, learning culture across the organisation• To create a foundation for decision making and strategic impact• To build an evidence base for our interventions capable of attracting increased investment in our work• To support the creative case for diversity which enables us to effectively challenge dominant cultural narratives
WHEN do we collect data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least every four years we will engage in broad stakeholder analysis to inform strategic direction setting• Annually, we will link reporting mechanisms and qualitative methodologies to reflect on impact, capacity and transformation• At the beginning and end of interventions so that we are effectively measuring change



● STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In 2019, MAV undertook a consultation with more than 200 culturally diverse artists and partners across our programs, as well with some who had never engaged with MAV in the past. This included nine focus groups with 120 participants, 80 survey responses and numerous one-on-one meetings.

We asked them to reflect on the following provocation:

For 45 years, MAV has played a critical role in promoting cultural diversity and challenging the dominant cultural narrative. Our deep roots into diaspora communities and engagement with newly arrived refugees and migrants have made MAV a nexus for participation and creation. But what does the future hold for an organisation like MAV in these times of significant social upheaval? How might MAV navigate the changing terrain of its work in a way that underpins self-determination and creative agency, so that the stories we tell through our arts practice are relevant and distinctive, with the power to transform?

This is some of what they told us, which has shaped the directions of this strategic plan:

"I think MAV has allowed me to dream and helped me nut out certain pathways that I didn't know were possible."

"I want to be an artist and I want to be an influencer in the cultural landscape and the creative landscape – but we hit a ceiling."

"I keep coming up against white people who think they don't have any work to do because they think they're one of the 'good' white people, but actually, my God, they are really in the way...I just think there's a rich potential for you to lead on racial literacy and awareness amongst powerful white people in the arts, and there are so many powerful white people in the arts in the most senior positions, the most well paid, the most secure positions."

"Those bigger cultural institutions, they're so excluding. They're not just excluding in what they show; they're excluding in the experience that people have when they go to them. And the reason it's such an excluding experience is because a vast majority of people just don't see themselves reflected."

"I find the arts in my experience as very dominated by white people. I have often had experiences of coming up against the sheer, the very harmful ways in which that plays out in trying to keep making work as an artist."

"I think that MAV is in a really good position to be a leader in how to do arts through a decolonising lens."

"What people are seeking from MAV is that advocacy, policy-making, change-making, pathway-making role."

"I think part of the stance is about helping to challenge how other people work across the sector. I don't think MAV's role is to run every possible program, but to challenge what the idea of multicultural creativity or the creativity of our multicultural communities can be."

"I think, in a perfect world, I think MAV should be an outspoken voice in Melbourne, not just in Melbourne, but in Victoria, Australia. That's what I would want from MAV...to be able to really say things, to speak out and to be an advocacy body... Finally, there's someone who's speaking out for us, in a way which is real. Because often there isn't anyone in that space who is speaking out like that."

"I often see arts and culture as a way of instilling change and that increasingly needs to happen to build our understanding of migrant and refugee communities in Australia. To do this through arts and culture, through those types of expressions that appeal to people."

"I think that some of the most exciting things I've seen have been the cross-cultural collaborations."

"We spoke a lot around why we feel the need to work within higher institutions and having to answer to a western sort of arts language and system. Can we find our own spaces?"

"They got me to do a mentorship with a young Ethiopian artist and I think what they were doing was provoking me to help this guy infiltrate the system. I think that's the legacy I'd like to leave behind, like 'Get me out of the way' and 'What can I do to help these people infiltrate the system?'"

"I see MAV can play a role in terms of situating it like an ally. What does an ally need to do? How do they work, how do they leverage their soft and hard power? And, this is probably my personal politics, if you're working with the communities that you're working with, there is no way that you can be neutral. So, transparency around the politics and the ideologies and potential short comings and the repetitiveness of the ideologies. But some sort of transparency around that dialogue is also a trust building thing too."

"I think it's an organisation with a lot of expectation. We all look at MAV as the peak body that represents everyone and everything. That's a massive challenge for a relatively small organisation to do."

"What are we? What is Melbourne, what is Australia? What is that word Australia?"



*"What are we? What is Melbourne,
what is Australia? What is that word Australia?"*
- Consultation participant

