

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

JUL 2025—JUN 2027

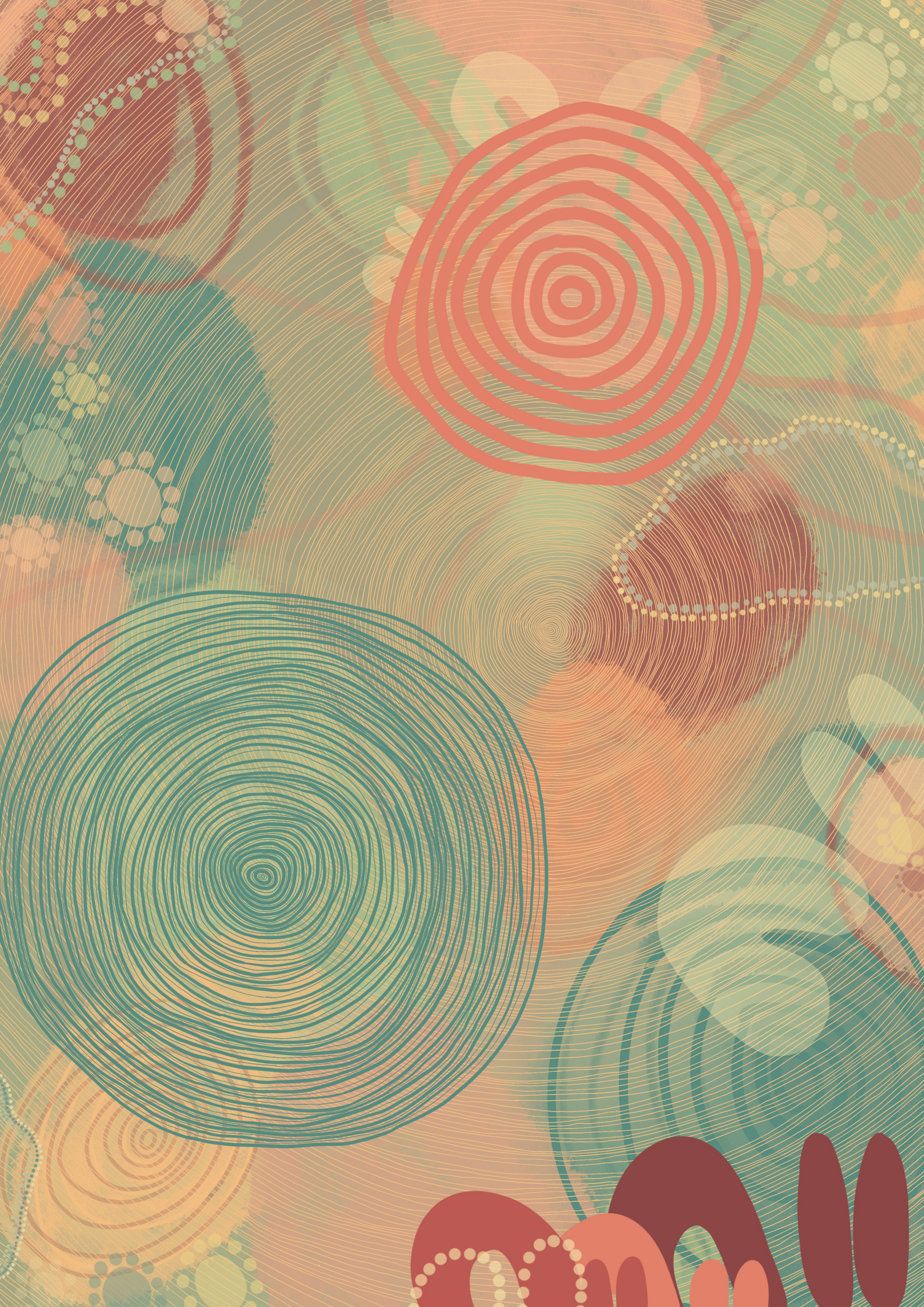
# INNOVATE

## Reconciliation action plan



CREATIVE  
VICTORIA









Brodi Purtill

# ABOUT THE COVER ARTWORK & ARTIST

This work is grounded in the idea of meeting places, spaces where people come together, share, listen, and learn. For First Peoples, meeting places are more than just physical locations. They are sacred sites of knowledge transfer, storytelling and deep cultural importance. They have existed on this land for tens of thousands of years. Long before Melbourne Theatre Company was established, this land held and told stories, and it's important to recognise that it still does.

The Company has the privilege of telling stories on this land. This work honours that truth and the long line of storytellers who have come before, during and after us.

In the middle of this piece is a blue meeting place surrounded by 71 rings, each one representing a year of the Melbourne Theatre Company.

A single journey line connects this meeting place to a pink meeting place. These represent the 8 years I spent at

the Company. Surrounding my meeting place are the people who supported me most during my time at this Company. In a space that was not built for people like me, these people gave me room to grow, to learn, to teach, and to create art. Their support and presence made it possible for me to keep going. For that, I carry deep gratitude.

Embedded into the foundation of the work are 14 young mob, representing the Deadly Creatives. These young ones are our future storytellers, knowledge holders, and leaders. Their presence in the piece is intentional. Through them, our stories will continue to evolve and thrive. They remind us that while we honour legacy, we must also invest in what comes next. Our stories did not begin here, and they will not end here either.

This piece also reflects the Company's ongoing commitment to truth-telling and reconciliation. That journey is still unfolding. True reconciliation takes

time, honesty, courage, and real action. I have seen movement in that direction, through difficult conversations, deep listening, and growing awareness. It is not perfect, but it is a hopeful beginning. This work is part of that process. It stands as a visual record of where we have been, and a reminder of the work still to do.

This piece and the overall RAP journey speaks to survival, legacy, gratitude, responsibility, and the unbreakable connection we hold to story and to Country. My hope is that this piece invites reflection. Not just on the past, but on how we walk into a better future, for all of us. ■

---

## Brodi Purtill, Mutti Mutti

Throughout 2016—2024 at Melbourne Theatre Company, Brodi was a work experience student, Youth Scholarship Course and Deadly Creatives participant, Assistant Stage Manager, Education Coordinator and more.



Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, create and gather.

We pay our respects to all First Nations people, their Elders past and present, and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories. As a Company we remain committed to the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for voice, truth and treaty.

# TERMINOLOGY STATEMENT



Corey Saylor-Brunskill; Deadly Creatives (2018)

Defining terminology with consideration, respect and collaboration is central to our reconciliation journey. We acknowledge that finding language and singular terminology to sit across all platforms, suit all purposes and authentically represent all people is challenging. The Australian First Nations population comprises hundreds of groups, with distinct languages, histories, and cultural traditions. We acknowledge and understand that preferred terminology across these groups and individuals can and will differ.

For this Reconciliation Action Plan, we use the term First Nations to respectfully encompass the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. Any other terms used to describe an individual's cultural identity when referring to work or artists have been determined in consultation with the people involved. We are committed to the process of listening and reflecting, so there may be times when this terminology changes.

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges Destiny Deacon (KuKu, Erub/Mer), artist, broadcaster and political activist for provenance of the term "Blak." ■



# OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

A man with a long beard and hair, wearing traditional Indigenous Australian clothing including a feathered headdress and body paint, is captured in a dynamic pose, possibly performing a dance or ceremony. He is illuminated by warm, golden light against a dark background.

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that champions and celebrates First Nations communities' representation and self-determination – acknowledging our shared history, taking pride in the world's oldest continuous living cultures, and building stronger relationships based on trust and respect that are free of racism.

For our Company, this means sharing First Nations-led stories on our stages, created in a culturally safe and inclusive workplace, for a diverse audience.

Brent Watkins, *The Black Woman of Gippsland* (2025)



# STATEMENT FROM CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



Ngali Shaw; 37 (2024)

## First Innovate RAP

**Reconciliation Australia commends Melbourne Theatre Company on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).**

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Melbourne Theatre Company to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Melbourne Theatre Company will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of *relationships, respect, and opportunities* emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With close to 3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Melbourne Theatre Company is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Melbourne Theatre Company's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Melbourne Theatre Company on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey. ■

---

**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



# MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY



Teresa Moore; *Emu In The Sun* (2024)

Melbourne Theatre Company is based in Naarm (Melbourne), Victoria, and located on the lands of the Kulin Nation. At Melbourne Theatre Company, we're for stories. The stories less told, the stories told before and the stories yet to be told.

Our storytelling contributes to the cultural conversations within Australia by listening, understanding and evolving to challenge, inspire and entertain our audiences.

As Victoria's state theatre company and a department of the University of Melbourne, we deliver an annual program of live performance and related activity at our Southbank Theatre home and as resident theatre company at Arts Centre Melbourne. With MTC Digital Theatre, our productions can be streamed at home around Australia. Over the past 72 years we have presented more than 850 productions and been at the forefront of ground-breaking new work that has shaped artists, audiences and the country.

We employ over 150 permanent, fixed term and casual employees at any one time. As of July 2025, this included four employees that identify as First Nations; one full-time, one part-time and two employed on a casual basis. We have one First Nations Member of the Melbourne Theatre Company Board, an appointed volunteer role. In addition to our core staff, we have employed 56 First Nations cast and creatives and other industry professionals on contracts in 2024.

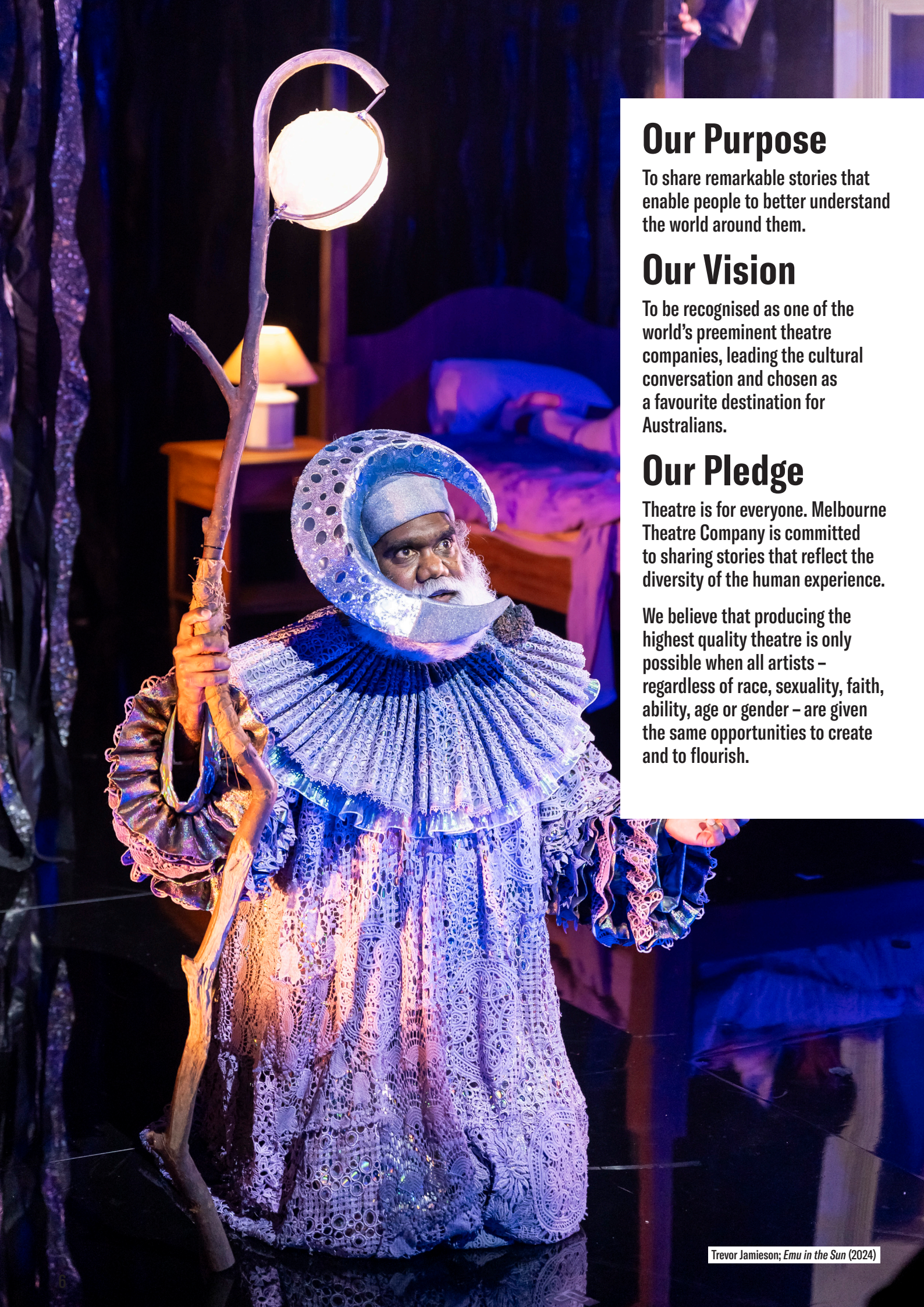
Our Board, Management and Departmental Staff are focussed on continuing to develop community partnerships and engage with reconciliation and First Nations peoples as demonstrated through the following programs and initiatives: We offer \$29 Blaktix for people who identify as being

of First Nations descent to enable greater access to all Melbourne Theatre Company productions. During 2024 this equated to 560 tickets.

**Deadly Creatives** is a free participatory creative learning program for young First Nations people interested in the arts. Many of the program's 33 alumni are practising artists outside the Company, and six returned in 2025 as paid creative artists to present the Deadly Creatives double bill at the Lawler theatre. In 2024 we collaborated with ILBIJERRI Theatre Company to present **Blak In The Room**, a series of fresh, unheard stories that illustrated a vast diversity of First Peoples voices, cultures and experiences.

Further to this, our broader programs such as **NEXT STAGE**, **Cybec Electric**, **Future Creatives**, and **MinterEllison Future Directors** nurture the next generation of artists and audiences, championing new writing and addressing underrepresentation across our industry including First Nations, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ creatives. For example, our original productions *Jacky* and *37* were developed through NEXT STAGE and were seen by 9,230 and 12,711 people respectively in their first seasons. *37* also enjoyed a return season and *Jacky* toured interstate after its Melbourne run. ■





## Our Purpose

To share remarkable stories that enable people to better understand the world around them.

## Our Vision

To be recognised as one of the world's preeminent theatre companies, leading the cultural conversation and chosen as a favourite destination for Australians.

## Our Pledge

Theatre is for everyone. Melbourne Theatre Company is committed to sharing stories that reflect the diversity of the human experience.

We believe that producing the highest quality theatre is only possible when all artists – regardless of race, sexuality, faith, ability, age or gender – are given the same opportunities to create and to flourish.





## Our Values

### Leadership

- We are a contemporary leader in the arts, with a clear vision and viable roadmap for the future.
- We are part of the cultural conversation, ensuring theatre remains an influential and relevant artform in Australia and internationally.

### Equity & Inclusion

- We champion equity across our staff, performers and programs.
- We also represent and reflect the diversity of our society and the many stories of our time.

### Creativity

- We take artistic risks and challenge conventional performance boundaries.
- We integrate creativity into our daily work, using it to solve business challenges as they arise.

### Connection

- We grow and connect with our communities by ensuring Melbourne Theatre Company remains relevant.





Matisse Knight; Deadly Creatives (2021)

# OUR RAP

**Melbourne Theatre Company is committed to contributing to the reconciliation journey between First Nations peoples and the broader Victorian community.**

We recognise the value, privilege and responsibility in the work we do as we present stories that ask questions, create conversations and influence the wider community.

We recognise longstanding leadership of First Nations peoples and the potential to walk together in a shared understanding, to build a vision of leadership for Australia that is inclusive of all its peoples, in all its challenges, strengths and opportunities. In particular, we thank N'arwee't Dr Carolyn Briggs AM (Boon Wurrung) and Professor Aunty Diane Kerr OAM (Wurundjeri) for their leadership and guidance throughout our RAP journey.

We see our contribution to reconciliation through this RAP as embedding our commitment to arts leadership and using our privilege and responsibility to work in allyship with First Nations people for a better future. We aim to do this with our workforce, creative partners, community stakeholders, donors, and audiences, who bring their experience, perspectives, and passion for theatre to their engagement with us.

Continuing to build our own cultural competency is our starting point. We will continue to increase our awareness of First

Nations communities in which we work, and the rich leadership we encounter, and share this awareness with the hundreds of program participants, clients, and stakeholders with whom we work. We expect it will expand the ways in which we think about leadership and see it in action around us.

We hope that our commitment to relationships, respect, opportunities, and governance in this RAP will not only change us as a Company but also shape the actions of others in the many communities in which we engage, creating a collective vision for a better future.

Our RAP has been in various stages of development since 2016 and the original RAP Working Group participated in RAP development sessions facilitated by Caroline Martin, Yalukit Marnang, Consulting & Cultural Strengthening Programs. The draft RAP that was developed was revisited by the Company in 2022.

Since 2022, our RAP Working Group has led our RAP development through regular reporting and consultation with our Access & Inclusion Committee, Management Team and Board of Management.

As of July 2025, our RAP Working Group is represented by staff members: Emily Doyle, Education Content Producer; Mandy Jones, Events Manager; Matisse Knight (Wiradjuri), Marketing & Communications Coordinator; Nick Tranter, Learning Manager; Joanna Geysen, Director People & Culture; and Maddison Ryan, People & Culture Business Partner. Our RAP is led by our Executive Director and Co-CEO, Sally Noonan.

We acknowledge and thank the many former Melbourne Theatre Company employees who have contributed to the development of our RAP, including Virginia Lovett, Christine Verginis, People & Culture Business Partner and Sean Jameson Director, People & Culture. In particular, we would like to thank Brodi Purtill (Mutti Mutti) and Karin Farrell. Brodi Purtill was Melbourne Theatre Company's Education Coordinator and designed our RAP Artwork to reflect her time at the company. Karin was employed as Programs Producer and championed this RAP work for many years.

We have consulted with the University of Melbourne on the development of our RAP. The University has provided support for our RAP with reference to Murmuk Djerring, the University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy 2023—2027.

We are committed to continual review and will listen to First Nations communities to ensure respectful and inclusive language in our acknowledgements. ■



# OUR RECONCILIATION JOURNEY

## 2016

Formed a Reconciliation Action Plan Committee, started dialogue with Senior Boon Wurrung Elder for permission to create a unique Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians, and established a dedicated First Nations Education & Families program (now known as **Deadly Creatives**) to nurture young First Nations artists/creatives.



Lateisha Chaplin, Jon-Paul Madgwick

## 2017

Increased support for First Nations Artists' stories with the **NEXT STAGE** Writers' Program, expanded what is now known as **Deadly Creatives** to include more participants and greater scope, and held our inaugural First Nations Community Night.



Lenka Vanderboom, Sermsah Bin Saad, Jacinta Keefe, Joshua Marshall, Brodi Purtill

## 2018



Tahlee Fereday, Eva Grace Mullaley

Committed to presenting the work of at least one First Nations writer annually, beginning in Season 2019 and supported the development of First Nations writers' work through the **First Stage** professional development program.

## 2019

Partnered with ILBIJERRI Theatre Company to present **BlackWrights** at the Emerging Writers' Festival. Presented *Black is the New White*, a Sydney Theatre Company production, presented in association with Melbourne International Arts Festival.



Miranda Tapsell, Tuuli Narkle, Anthony Taufu, Tom Stokes

## 2020

Supported First Nations writers through the **Cybec Electric** play reading series, and online during COVID-19 lockdowns through the **First Stage** professional development program.



Chris Mead, Andrea James, Kurt Pimblett

## 2021

Re-opened Southbank Theatre after COVID-19 lockdowns with a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony. Expanded what is now known as **Deadly Creatives** to nurture both new participants and alumni to take up other learning and paid employment opportunities with the Company and other partner organisations. **YIRRAMBOI** First Nations Arts Festival and the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development at VCA joined as **Deadly Creatives** program partners.



Matisse Knight, Emma Salmon, Josh Vickery Stewart



# 2022

Established the Artistic Associates network which included First Nations artists. Presented *Sunshine Super Girl*, a First Nations story led by First Nations creatives and produced by Performing Lines, and provided subsidised and free tickets to support young First Nations people to see it. Supported more First Nations writers through **Cybec Electric** and **First Stage**.



Lincoln Elliott, Katiana Olsen, Ella Ferris

# 2023

Supported the First Nations Voice to Parliament with a public statement of support. Commissioned and presented *Jacky*, a First Nations story led by Aboriginal playwright Declan Furber Gillick, through the **NEXT STAGE** Writers' Program. Added **Blaktix** discount tickets as a fixture across the season for people who identify as being of First Nations descent.



Ngali Shaw, Guy Simon

# 2024

Commissioned and co-presented with Queensland Theatre 37, a First Nations story written by Trawlwoolway Playwright Nathan Maynard. Submitted draft *Reflect RAP* to Reconciliation Australia and received feedback to progress to an *Innovate RAP*. Partnered with **ILBIJERRI** Theatre Company to present three First Nations-led stories for **Blak In The Room**, showcasing new works by First Nations artists that have evolved through **ILBIJERRI's BlackWrights** Program.



Ngali Shaw

# 2025



Chenoa Deemal, Zach Blampied

Presented four First Nations-led productions across two cities: in Sydney, *Jacky* toured to Belvoir St Theatre as part of Sydney Festival; in Melbourne, a return season of 37 at Southbank Theatre, and two new **NEXT STAGE** commissions, *The Black Woman of Gippsland* and *The Robot Dog* (Education & Families Production). *The Deadly Creatives* presented a double bill as part of **YIRRAMBOI**.



Hannah Morphy-Walsh, Carly Sheppard, Rachael Maza; *Gunawarra Re-Creation* (2024)



# A DECADE OF LEARNING

From 2016 to 2025, we've made strides to becoming a workplace committed to reconciliation and cultural safety.

We began our journey by seeking advice from Traditional Custodians and worked together to create a unique Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians to play inside our theatres before each performance.

This acknowledgement has evolved over the past ten years, much like the processes that are now embedded into our way of working: we begin internal events with an Acknowledgment of Country; we participate in company-

wide cultural learning programs; and we engage Traditional Custodians to provide Welcomes to Country and Smoking Ceremonies at significant Company events. Through our artistic output and collaborations with First Nations artists, we've learned more about our nation's past, interrogated our present, and made goals that steer us to do better in the future. We haven't always got it right, but this RAP will guide us for the next two years to continue our journey. ■







# RELATIONSHIPS

At Melbourne Theatre Company, we tell stories, and we recognise that stories have been told on this land for millennia. We want to build strong relationships with First Nations artists, audiences and organisations, to share stories that reflect the diversity of Australia.

It is only through these respectful relationships that we can create the highest quality theatre possible and fulfil our pledge that theatre is for everyone. We are part of the broader conversation, ensuring theatre remains an influential and relevant artform in Australia and internationally.

## Focus areas

From Company Strategy 2023—2028

- Develop the artistic capability of the Company; and expand the art form through our commitment to artists, makers, new work and education.
- Strengthen and grow our audience base, ensure our audience is representative of our community and that we are planning for our future audiences.



Deadly Creatives; *Odd Socks* (2017)



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.</li> </ul>	October 2025 & October 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director and Co-CEO;</li> <li>Artistic Director and Co-CEO;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.</li> </ul>	June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director and Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.</li> </ul>	June 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO;</li> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	May 2026 & May 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.</li> </ul>	27 May–3 June 2026 & 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.</li> </ul>	27 May–3 June, 2026 & 2027	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> <li>Artistic Director and Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise at least one NRW event each year.</li> </ul>	27 May–3 June, 2026 & 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People and Culture Business Partner RAP representative</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.</li> </ul>	May 2026 & May 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote NRW externally through Melbourne Theatre Company social media platforms.</li> </ul>	May 2026 & May 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.</li> </ul>	September 2025 & September 2027	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture,</li> <li>Director Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Administrator</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & July 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EP and Deputy CEO,</li> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications;</li> <li>Director of Development</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture;</li> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with <i>Murmuk Djerring</i>. The University of Melbourne Indigenous Strategy 2023–2027.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & January 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture;</li> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch and communicate our RAP to all staff and our audience</li> </ul>	November 2025	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Marketing &amp; Communications;</li> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overview of the RAP process as part of induction process for new employees.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture;</li> <li>• Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO</li> </ul>
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.</li> </ul>	December 2025 & December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.</li> </ul>	March 2026 & March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & January 2027	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>• Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>



Kristel Lee-Kickett, Carly Sheppard, Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, Hannah Morphy-Walsh; *Gunawarra Re-Creation*, 2024





# RESPECT

At Melbourne Theatre Company, we acknowledge First Nations histories and cultures and their significant impact on the arts landscape.

We collaborate with First Nations artists and embrace First Nations-led theatre-making practices as an essential part of respectfully delivering First Nations works onstage. We strive to make our Company safe and welcoming for all peoples ensuring our industry-leading initiatives are investments in the future of theatre. We are driven by the 'nothing about us without us' principle and ensure First Nations people are included in decision making.

## Focus areas

From Company Strategy 2023—2028

- Live our values of: Leadership; Equity and Inclusion; Creativity; Connection



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.</li> </ul>	December 2025 & December 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.</li> </ul>	October 2025 (Current and ongoing since 2024)	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement, and communicate a cultural learning strategy document for our staff.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.</li> </ul>	October 2025, August 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture;</li> </ul>
<b>2. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.</li> </ul>	November 2026 & November 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.</li> </ul>	December 2026 & December 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO;</li> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.</li> </ul>	October 2025 (Ongoing)	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.</li> </ul>	October 2025 (In place and ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update Company Photography policy to adopt and reference the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocols (ICIP) and ensure this update is rolled out company wide.</li> </ul>	October 2025 & October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>
<b>3. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.</li> </ul>	First week in July 2025 & 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A&amp;I Chair</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.</li> </ul>	March 2026 & March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.</li> </ul>	First week in June 2026 & June 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>



4. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by providing a culturally safe environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an annual audit of Production Props and Costume to ensure that all cultural items are stored in accordance with protocols and parameters established in consultation with culturally appropriate advisors or community representatives, and to identify and remove any culturally inappropriate items.</li> </ul>	December 2025 & December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical &amp; Production Director</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide First Nations employees with support and resources in recognising 'colonial load' experiences e.g., leave provision; tailored Employee Assistance Program services.</li> </ul>	October 2025 & October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and communicate a Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy</li> </ul>	October 2025 & August 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture,</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champion the '<i>nothing about us, without us</i>' principle by consulting First Nations staff and artists along our RAP journey.</li> </ul>	December 2025 & December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A&amp;I Chair</li> </ul>



Caitlyn Gerada; Deadly Creatives (2018)





# OPPORTUNITIES

**At Melbourne Theatre Company we are committed to strengthening opportunities for First Nations-led work to influence the Australian arts landscape.**

Through our programs and initiatives, we support professional development for First Nations people to succeed in Arts careers. To strengthen culturally safe workplaces, we will continue to partner and collaborate with First Nations organisations.

## **Focus areas**

**From Company Strategy 2023—2028**

- Contribute to Australian culture through our work, for the benefit of both our Company and the sector.
- Develop the artistic capability of the Company; and expand the art form through our commitment to artists, makers, new work and education.



Ursula Yovich, Chenoa Deemal, Zach Blampied; *The Black Woman of Gippsland* (2025)



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	November 2025 (and ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & January 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.</li> </ul>	February 2026 & February 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul> Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.</li> </ul>	September 2025 & September 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
<b>2. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & January 2027	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO;</li> <li>Director of Finance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate Supply Nation membership.</li> </ul>	October 2025	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A&amp;I Chair</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.</li> </ul>	September 2025	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A&amp;I Chair;</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Finance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	October 2025	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.</li> </ul>	December 2025	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Technical &amp; Production;</li> <li>Director of Development</li> </ul>
<b>3. Strengthen Company participation of First Nations stories, voices, talent and creatives.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively engage First Nations artists in development of Company artistic outputs.</li> </ul>	September 2025 & September 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program and present at least one show each year led by First Nations artists.</li> </ul>	September 2025 & September 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO;</li> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with First Nations community organisations to encourage young First Nations people to participate in Company activities including mentoring programs.</li> </ul>	February 2026 & February 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Education &amp; Families;</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Producer &amp; Deputy CEO;</li> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</li> </ul>





# GOVERNANCE

Guy Simon and Alison Whyte; *Jacky* (2023)



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
<b>1. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.</li> </ul>	October 2025 & 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	January 2026 & January 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul>
<b>2. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define resource needs for RAP implementation.</li> </ul>	September 2025 & April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion,</li> <li>Artistic Director &amp; Co-CEO,</li> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & July 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director People &amp; Culture</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of CRM &amp; Audience Insights</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.</li> </ul>	November 2025 & August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
<b>3. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.</li> </ul>	June annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey</li> </ul>	1 August annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.</li> </ul>	30 September annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.</li> </ul>	March, June, September, December annually	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.</li> </ul>	December 2025, July 2026 & June 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director of Marketing &amp; Comms</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.</li> </ul>	March-June 2026	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.</li> </ul>	June 2027	Lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul> Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
<b>4. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.</b>	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RWG Chair</li> </ul>
<b>5. Communicate with Company governance about our RAP journey.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with Director, Indigenous Strategy and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) to share our RAP journey</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Director &amp; Co-CEO</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with Melbourne Theatre Company Board to share our RAP journey</li> </ul>	November 2025 & November 2026	Co-Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEOs</li> <li>RAP Champion</li> </ul>



# CONTACT US

Joanna Geysen  
Director, People and Culture  
03 8688 0976  
[j.geysen@mtc.com.au](mailto:j.geysen@mtc.com.au)

Melbourne Theatre Company  
252 Sturt St  
Southbank VIC 3006  
[mtc.com.au](http://mtc.com.au)

MTC IS A DEPARTMENT  
OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF MELBOURNE



MTC IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH CREATIVE AUSTRALIA, ITS PRINCIPAL ARTS INVESTMENT AND ADVISORY BODY, AND BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA THROUGH CREATIVE VICTORIA.



CREATIVE  
VICTORIA

Photography Credits: Jeff Busby, Tiffany Garvie, Sneharo Ghosh, James Henry, Pia Johnson, Jacinta Keefe, Deryk McAlpin, Josh Scott, Paz Tassone, Brett Walker, Sarah Walker, Heath Warwick