



Victorian Opera
REFLECT
RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN
MAY 2023 – MAY 2024

VICTORIAN
OPERA



**Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges
the people of the Kulin Nation on whose
unceded lands we honour the continuation
of the oldest music practice in the world.**

STATEMENT FROM CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA



Reconciliation Australia welcomes Victorian Opera to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Victorian Opera joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously

develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes. These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Victorian Opera to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Victorian Opera, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

MESSAGE OF COMMITMENT FROM CEO OF VICTORIAN OPERA



Victorian Opera is proud to present this Reflect, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). In this, our inaugural plan, we take a significant step in our journey for reconciliation and truth-telling for First Nations culture. At our home base on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung land, we are committed to learning and understanding of the cultural life of the First People of Australia.

Victorian Opera as an organisation is only a teenager and like most teenagers, we have a great deal to learn. Our learning commenced a few years ago and has only fuelled our desire to continue the search for knowledge, truth and contribution to community. We will make mistakes, but will always strive to remedy any

mistakes and move forward with our knowledge.

Victorian Opera is a core staff of 21, all committed to the RAP and the work it stands for. We employ up to 500 people across any given year in performers, technicians and support staff. We seek to engage all who come through our doors, and invite them to join us on our journey of Reconciliation with this plan as our guide.

In this year, where our country has the opportunity to acknowledge the true custodians of our land and their rights through the Voice to Parliament, and alongside the movement for a Treaty we support support these initiatives

as a nation-wide path forward. This RAP is one step and our continued commitment to the First People of Australia and we will embed this plan across all our work.

With Regards,

Elizabeth Hill-Cooper
CEO, Victorian Opera
On behalf of all Staff and
Board of Victorian Opera

ABOUT US

Victorian Opera is the state opera company for Victoria. We make creative, accessible and affordable work for everyone while adventurously evolving our art form.

Our company was founded in October 2005 and has entertained hundreds of thousands of people with our imaginative approach to opera and musical theatre. Each year, we premiere at least one new Australian opera and have commissioned 32 new works since our formation.

Victorian Opera contracts on average 200 artists and 100 creatives across the arts industries each year. We recruit some of the finest local singers, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

In 2022, Victorian Opera engaged 7 First Nations people in roles across artistic and technical staff. Victorian Opera currently has 20 staff employees, with no First Nations peoples employed as staff. Victorian Opera provides pathways for creatives, with an emphasis on diversity in the arts industry. As a part of this, in the 2023 Season Victorian Opera is premiering a newly commissioned opera from First Nations peoples, composer Christopher Lainsbury, and original playwright and librettist, Janet Harrison.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera proudly became an Australian Major Performing Arts company in 2019, and transitioned to the National Performing Arts Partnership

Framework in 2021. Through our digital access offering and education program, Victorian Opera reaches communities across the state of Victoria and throughout Australia. Our offices are located at Horticultural Hall, and Trades Hall in Melbourne.

OUR RAP

Victorian Opera wishes to formalise our approach to reconciliation and develop an all-staff and Board approach to our goals for reconciliation. Victorian Opera's RAP champion is the Head of Marketing and Sales, they will drive internal engagement and awareness of the company RAP. Through the application of our RAP practices

as a company we aim to foster First Nations talent in our productions across creatives and technical staff, and more broadly in the arts and entertainment industry, while challenging our organisation to reimagine the way we operate to ensure we function as a company committed to a RAP.

We will integrate our RAP tasks into our company workflows to ensure the RAP work is committed with the same level of priority as all other Victorian Opera work.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/ CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Victorian Opera currently attends workshops with the Koorie Heritage Trust on cultural learnings workshops across all staff to ensure the organisation is a safe cultural space.



RELATIONSHIPS

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	May, 2023	Content Producer
	1.2 Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	May, 2023	Content Producer
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May, 2023	Head of Marketing and Sales
	2.2 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	May, June 2023	Head of Marketing and Sales
	2.3 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	May, June 2023	Head of Marketing and Sales
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	May, 2023	CEO
	3.2 Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	May, 2023	CEO
	3.3 Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	May, 2023	CEO

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	May, 2023	Company Management
	4.2 Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	May, 2023	Head of Finance



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	5.1 Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	June, 2023	Company Management
	5.2 Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	June, 2023	Company Management
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	6.1 Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	June, 2023	Head of Marketing and Sales
	6.2 Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	June, 2023	Head of Marketing and Sales
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	7.1 Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June, 2023	CEO
	7.2 Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	July, 2023	CEO
	7.3 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July, 2023	CEO



OPPORTUNITIES

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	8.1 Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	July, 2023	CEO
	8.2 Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	July, 2023	CEO
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	9.1 Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	July, 2023	CEO
	9.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July, 2023	CEO



GOVERNANCE

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	10.1 Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	May, 2023	Head of Marketing
	10.2 Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	May, 2023	Head of Marketing
	10.3 Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	May, 2023	Head of Marketing
11. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	11.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	May, 2023	CEO
	11.2 Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	May, 2023	CEO
	11.3 Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	May, 2023	CEO
	11.4 Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	May, 2023	CEO
12. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	12.1 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.	June, 2023, annually	Head of Marketing
	12.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August, 2023, annually	Head of Marketing
	12.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, 2023, annually	Head of Marketing
13. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	13.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	January, 2024	Head of Marketing

CONTACT

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