



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday August 9**

**International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS**

# Homeground

***Festival of First Nations culture – immersive, free and for all ages***

***“One of the nation’s most joyful and competitive Indigenous cultural events.”***  
– ABC Lateline on Dance Rites

The edge-of-your-seat dance competition **Dance Rites** leads two packed days of free music, art and performance at **Homeground**, the annual festival that transforms the **Sydney Opera House** into an inspiring celebration of First Nations culture on October 8-9.

Aboriginal rock band **East Journey**, featuring the next generation of the legendary Yothu Yindi musical family, will bring the soul of their Yolngu homelands in northeast Arnhem Land to Sydney on the Homeground stage. Echoes of Fat Freddy’s Drop will ring out from Wellington-based **Trinity Roots’** jazz-inspired rootsy soul music, while Brisbane-based live sensation **Dubmarine’s** beats and energy mix hypnotically for late-night dancing.

The immersive **Homeground** program also includes a popular Indigenous arts market, tours revealing Bennelong’s story, menu items curated by Australia’s only ‘hatted’ Indigenous chef Clayton Donovan and interactive workshops for all ages. The weekend of experiences brings to life the age-old traditions of Bennelong Point, known to the Gadigal people as Tubowgule, meaning ‘where the magic waters meet’.

Crowd favourite **Dance Rites** – Australia’s first national Indigenous dance competition – will be back, this year in the Opera House’s biggest-yet specially-made harbourside sand circle. Last year’s Dance Rites pilot attracted a capacity crowd to the Western Boardwalk and this year’s competition promises to be even bigger and better with dancers showcasing the language, dance movements, instruments and skin markings of their communities for local and international audiences alike.

Through Dance Rites, participants to share knowledge between generations and communities, reigniting vanishing cultural practices as they dazzle the crowd.

**Opera House Head of Indigenous Programming Rhoda Roberts AO** says: “Come with your family and be inspired by some of the oldest living cultures on earth. **Homeground** is for everyone, wherever they come from and whatever their age, a chance to stand together to celebrate First Nations culture at the Opera House.”

**Homeground** comes on the heels of the Sydney Opera House’s ambitious new **Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019**, unveiled last week. The festival forms the centerpiece of the Opera House’s year-round Indigenous program which, along with Dance Rites, is a highlight story of the latest RAP.



The Opera House was the first performing arts centre in Australia to establish a RAP in 2011. Building on strong foundations established over the past five years, with on-going support from **Reconciliation Australia**, the fourth RAP details ambitious targets to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island arts and culture across the full spectrum of what the Opera House offers - from programming and experiences, to education and employment; from artists and performers, to visitors and audiences.

**Sydney Opera House CEO Louise Herron AM** says: "I invite everyone to join us at Homeground to enjoy our annual celebration of First Nations culture. This is our fourth Homeground and I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved so far. By joining together we create a shared sense of belonging and a better future for us all."

Key achievements from the last Opera House RAP include the centerpiece of Vivid LIVE 2016, [Songlines](#), which has now reached millions of people at home and abroad; Dance Rites; and education programs such as the [Guwany Walama](#) digital interactive learning tour; Indigenous Work Experience and Traineeship Programs; and an Annual Careers Day for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander high school students.

**Georgia Durmush, who participated in the Indigenous Work Experience and Traineeship Program** in 2014, is a casual employee in the Opera House's Front of House team. Georgia says: "The Sydney Opera House work experience and traineeship program has given me an understanding of how a world-class performing arts organisation works and I'm continually inspired by the performances I see here. I love approaching the Opera House when I come to work and thinking 'I work here!' – sometimes I pinch myself."

Alongside Vivid LIVE, All About Women, Festival of Dangerous Ideas and GRAPHIC, Homeground, the festival of First Nations culture, is one of the signature annual festivals in the Opera House calendar.

#### KEY INFORMATION

**WHAT:** Homeground  
**WHEN:** Saturday 8 & Sunday 9 October  
**WHERE:** Sydney Opera House  
**MORE INFO:** <http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/homeground.aspx>  
**IMAGES:** [Download here](#)

#### AVAILABLE MEDIA:

[Watch](#) the highlights of Dance Rites 2015  
[Watch](#) the Reconciliation Action Plan video  
[Read](#) the full Reconciliation Action Plan

**AMP CAPITAL**  Homeground Event Partner



Dance Rites has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



PRINCIPAL PARTNER

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