



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 12 April 2016

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS

Homeground Talks

Australia's meeting place puts Indigenous debate on stage and art on sails

The inaugural **HOMEGROUND TALKS** will take place at **Sydney Opera House** on **27 May**, the anniversary of Australia's 1967 Indigenous referendum, providing an important new forum for provocative conversations about contemporary First Nations issues.

That evening the building that symbolises modern Australia will for the first time unveil **Songlines**, an immersive artwork by six Aboriginal artists that will animate the Opera House's famous sails as part of **Vivid LIVE** and **Vivid Sydney**, the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas.

Sydney Opera House Head of Indigenous Programming and Director of Songlines **Rhoda Roberts**, is playing a leading role in these historic events on Bennelong Point, previously known as Tubowgule and a meeting place for the local Gadigal people for thousands of years.

Charged with being a meeting place for matters of local, national and international significance, the Opera House continues this tradition through a year-round program celebrating the richness of First Nations culture that has as its centrepiece the Opera House's annual Homeground festival.

HOMEGROUND TALKS will feature influential artists, leaders and academics including **Marcia Langton AM**, musician **David Bridie**, **Rosalie Kunoth-Monks OAM** and Maori activist **Tame Iti** debating economic opportunity and sovereignty for Indigenous people.

The event begins with a much-anticipated discussion called, ***Unfinished Paperwork: Recognition and Sovereignty***. Treaty, native title and sovereignty remain hot issues in Australia and New Zealand. On 27 May 1967 Australia voted 'yes' in a national referendum to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a status in the constitution, but the recognition only went part way. This panel, with a diverse and provocative range of opinion leaders, will discuss the first political question. Speakers will include **Michael Mansell**, Rosalie Kunoth-Monks OAM and Tame Iti.

The evening continues with the panel, ***Open for Business: Diverse Economies in First Nations Communities***, Langton, Bridie, **John Faunt** and **Amelia Telford** will go beyond mining – examining some of the lesser-known economies at play in First Nations communities, alternative business models and ways to work that may not garner the same media attention as mining income.

Sydney Opera House Head of Indigenous Programming Rhoda Roberts says,
"HOMEGROUND TALKS is a platform where honest, robust opinions can be shared from the

First Nations community in Australia and the Asia Pacific. The Sydney Opera House is the perfect setting for diverse voices to be heard in a contemporary conversation that matters to all Australians. We hope it will become a highlight of the Indigenous Program at the Sydney Opera House, along with Homeground Festival later this year."

KEY INFORMATION

WHAT:	HOMEGROUND TALKS
WHEN:	Friday May 27 2016 5pm <i>Unfinished Paperwork: Recognition and Sovereignty</i> 7.15pm <i>Open for Business: Diverse Economies in First Nations Communities</i>
WHERE:	The Playhouse, Sydney Opera House
TICKETS:	Full Price \$30 Insiders \$24 Concession \$27 Multipack \$22.50 (save 25%)
MORE INFO:	http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/about/program_homeground_talks.aspx

ABOUT THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE INDIGENOUS PROGRAM

The Sydney Opera House presents a wide range of Indigenous Programming throughout the year for local and international audiences, celebrating the rich culture of First Nations through dance, music and talks events. The highlight of the Indigenous program is **Homeground** – an immersive annual two-day festival of global culture showcasing some of the most talented Indigenous artists from Australia, and across the globe.

ABOUT THE PANELS

Unfinished Paperwork: Recognition & Sovereignty

Michael Mansell

Michael Mansell is an Aboriginal from Tasmania and Secretary of the Aboriginal Provisional Government. He is a lawyer.

He challenges where necessary but takes a co-operative approach where cooperation is justified - he helped develop the shape of the Native Title Act as part of the 'B-Team', and worked with both the Tasmanian Liberal and Labor governments respectively throughout the 1990s and beyond for return of lands to Aborigines in Tasmania and compensation for the stolen generations.

He has helped shape Tasmanian legislation that provided land rights, fishing rights, burial rights and stolen generations compensation. He has long campaigned for national law reforms that would see an Aboriginal law system operating parallel with, not beneath, the white legal system.

His focus is with the Aboriginal Provisional Government (APG), of which he is a founding member. The APG stands for sovereignty, issuing passports and birth certificates. Like the APG, Michael Mansell believes the future of Aboriginal people is for Aboriginal people, not white Australia, to decide.

Rosalie Kunothe-Monks OAM

Named the 2015 NAIDOC Person of the Year, Rosalie Kunothe-Monks OAM has devoted her life to Indigenous issues and to defending her people's traditional way of life. Her career began in 1955 when she starred in the classic Australian film *Jedda*. Subsequent achievements include setting up the first home for Aboriginal children in Victoria, working as

an adviser for Aboriginal affairs for the Northern Territory government, and her current role of Chancellor for the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

Tame Iti

With his full facial moko – which he described as "the face of the future" in New Zealand – Maori activist and artist Tame Iti's ability to court controversy has made him a common feature in New Zealand news media. Iti was a founding member of the Maori Liberation Front and the Tent Embassy in Wellington NZ in the 1970s, and he continues to be a powerful advocate for the Maori community.

Open for Business: Diverse Economies in First Nations Communities

Marcia Langton AM

Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies in the Centre for Health and Society at the University of Melbourne, Marcia Langton is an authority on social issues concerning Aboriginal people. During the 1970s Langton was active during the Women's Liberation movement, drawing attention to the oppression of black women. A member of the Order of Australia in 1993, for her service as an anthropologist and advocate of Aboriginal issues, she was also admitted as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2001.

John Faunt

An advocate and musician from Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, John Faunt's work aims to preserve and showcase his traditional Manus Island heritage. Faunt consults widely on Papua New Guinea and Manus Island culture, advising major brands, film companies and charities. The continued media attention on the Australian-run Manus Regional Processing Centre, has portrayed the Manus Indigenous population in a negative light. Does the income that the immigration detention centre brings offset the detrimental portrayal?

David Bridie

Seven-time ARIA award-winning songwriter and composer David Bridie has developed the Wantok Musik Foundation alongside respected PNG musician Airileke Ingram. The not-for-profit music label aims to generate and foster various cultural exchanges between Indigenous Australia and Melanesia by recording, releasing and promoting music from the region.

Amelia Telford

Amelia Telford, a young Aboriginal and South Sea Islander woman from Bundjalung country, is the National Director of the Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition. In her work, Amelia supports a national network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people building a movement for climate justice to protect country and be a part of creating positive change for our people. Amelia was awarded National NAIDOC Youth of Year in 2014, Bob Brown's Young Environmentalist for the Year 2015 and Australian Geographic Young Conservationist of the Year 2015 for her commitment to building a more just and sustainable future for all young people.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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