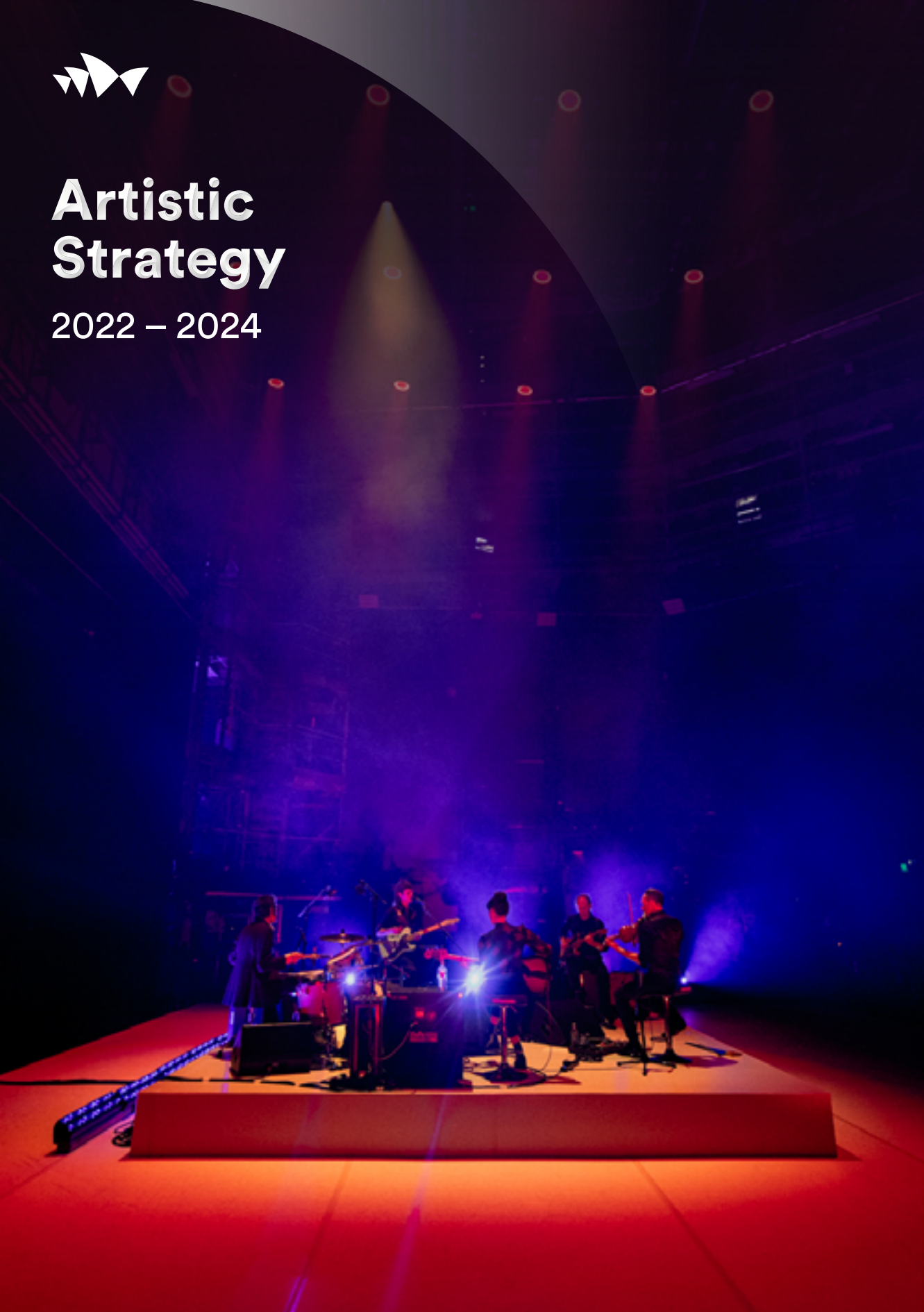




# Artistic Strategy

2022 – 2024





## Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land on which Australia's most iconic building and premier performing arts centre stands.

We honour the long Gadigal history of gathering and storytelling, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of First Nations people and communities past and present.

The Opera House continues this legacy today by embracing and celebrating First Nations artistic expression and culture.



# Welcome

The Sydney Opera House is a globally recognised icon, one of the architectural wonders of the 20th century and among the world's busiest performing arts centres. This refreshed Artistic Strategy sets out the Opera House's ambitions up to the end of 2024, including our 50th anniversary in 2023, to inspire artists and audiences, and to shape contemporary culture, locally, nationally and internationally.

The Opera House's Artistic Strategy 2018–21 addressed a range of emerging challenges and opportunities. This included preparing for the Concert Hall to be closed for major renewal works and planning for the Centre for Creativity, a purpose-built venue for hands-on creative experiences. The strategy also responded to significant external shifts, such as changes in audience expectations and rising demand for digital experiences.

Three years on, at the outset of this Artistic Strategy 2022–24, our environment has evolved more dramatically than we had imagined, and not only because of the profound and on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As important social, cultural and ethical movements gathered momentum around the world, the Opera House renewed its focus on cultural equity among its staff, programs and audience experiences with a new Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy.

Audience demand for new ways of participating in cultural activity has continued to grow rapidly. In response, we diversified our approach to programming to include interactive contemporary art and digital experiences. We also launched *Stream*, the Opera House's new online streaming service. Further boosting our digital capability and engagement will be a key focus in the next three years.

This is an exciting time for the Opera House in many ways. Starting with 2022, we will:

- Begin the year with the launch of the Centre for Creativity.
- Reopen the upgraded Concert Hall mid-year, the largest and final project in our Decade of Renewal.
- In October, kick off a 12-month program of performances and events to celebrate the Opera House's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

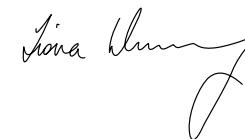
In this context, the Artistic Strategy 2022–24 sets out clear actions and measures for the performing arts across the Opera House – including our programming and production arms, Sydney Opera House Presents

and Production & Events – and how we will complement the work of our eight resident companies and many community and commercial hirers.

These actions and measures are summarised on pages 19–23 and further detailed in a separate action plan that sets out delivery timelines and accountable staff.

Agility and innovation will be key to inspiring artists, audiences and visitors while keeping everyone safe in the new world of living with the virus. In doing so, we will be guided by our values of safety, creativity, excellence, collaboration and accountability as we present unmissable performing arts experiences on site and online.

We recognise the contribution of our staff and stakeholders in developing this refreshed strategy and look forward to working together as we implement it.



Fiona Winning  
(Director, Programming)



Hannah Mason  
(Director, Production and Events)

## Our Purpose

Consistent with its mandate for creativity, engagement and entertainment, the Opera House aims to offer artists and audiences experiences that fulfil our vision: **to be as bold and inspiring as the Opera House itself**. Our artistic purpose can be distilled into three words:

To be  
unmissable



# Performing Arts at the House

In a 'normal' (pre-COVID) year, the Opera House welcomes audiences of almost 1.5 million to 2,400 performances presented on site by our programming arm, Sydney Opera House Presents (SOHP), eight resident companies, and community and commercial hirers. We also reach far beyond the physical venues, with more than 1.7 million hours of Opera House video content consumed globally in 2019–20.

**SOHP** offers a diverse range of programming on site and online including:

- First Nations programming, from community events such as *Dancerites* to the presentation of leading artists and new commissions.
- Contemporary Music & Performance, including the Vivid LIVE festival, bringing some of the most ambitious and innovative musicians to our stages, as well as musicals, cabaret, comedy and circus shows.
- Digital Programming through *Stream*, the Opera House's online streaming service launched in 2021.
- Children, Families & Creative Learning, including children's and family shows and content streamed to homes and schools throughout the country, with a new base in the Centre for Creativity from 2022.

- Contemporary Art, including the lighting of the Bennelong sails with works by First Nations artists, curated in collaboration with the Art Gallery of NSW.
- Talks & Ideas, including the *All About Women* and *Antidote* festivals.
- *UnWrapped*, a curated program of innovative and diverse local works.
- Classical Music, including international orchestras and chamber music groups.

**Resident companies:** The Opera House is proud to partner with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, The Australian Ballet, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.

**Community and commercial hirers:** Opera House hirers include high-profile local and international acts, government partners including Destination New South Wales, Department of Premier and Cabinet and City of Sydney, audiences from diverse communities, and the education sector, with thousands of NSW school students performing for families and friends.

**Event delivery:** All Opera House performing arts events, on our stages and online, are delivered by the Production & Events portfolio, including Venue & Event Sales, Event Operations & Planning, Production Services and Recording & Broadcast teams.



L-R, T-B: The Australian Ballet, *New York Dialects* by NYP Production; Harriet Gordon-Anderson in Bell Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Brett Boardman; Sydney Symphony Orchestra by Julian Kingma; James Brown's *What the Ocean Said* by Prudence Upton; Isabel Allende at *All About Women* by Daniel Boud & Steven Oliver's *Bigger & Blacker* by Daniel Boud.



## Responding to our landscape







### Balancing act

Balancing traditional and popular performances with new and participatory experiences is paramount.

We will inspire audiences with extraordinary experiences from *Storytime Ballet* to *The Cure*. Our annual festival *Vivid LIVE*, our popular summer season of contemporary performances and our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary will engage Australians and tourists in large-scale, shared cultural experiences on site and online.

New ideas and audiences require long-term commitment and a deep understanding of the needs of artists and audiences. By way of example, our new Centre for Creativity will deepen and diversify opportunities offered to artists and producers, building on our commissioned works, digital programming and *UnWrapped* series.

Essential to this balancing act is continuing to acknowledge the precarious situation facing the arts/entertainment industry and the increasing need for private funding and meaningful long-term partnerships.



### Inclusion and cultural equity

As we inspire artists and audiences, our programs and ways of working must reflect and respect the diversity of our communities.

Artists with different lived experiences can challenge and redefine aesthetics. Developing long-term partnerships, we will invest in a culturally safe environment for all, including First Nations artists, culturally and linguistically diverse artists and artists with disability.

Throughout the lifecycle of this strategy, we will work to better understand our audiences and the impact of our evolving programs.



### Fit for our future

As the Decade of Renewal draws to a close, the Opera House and its transformed venues will be ready for 21st-century arts, artists, and audiences. We will continue to invest in our people and technology, working safely with agility and innovation.

The Centre for Creativity will open its doors in January 2022 to artists, educators and audiences. For the first time, we will have a purpose-built venue dedicated to creativity and interactivity.

The Concert Hall will reopen in mid-2022 with improved acoustics, upgraded access for people with mobility needs and new theatre machinery and staging systems. The \$5.2 million NSW Government investment in the Recording and Broadcast studio will enable national and international audience growth for our digital program.

# Our Mission

To treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors; and  
To inspire, and strengthen the community, in everything we do.

# Our Values

<b>Safety</b> Our greatest responsibility	Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of ourselves and others at all times
<b>Creativity</b> Be bold and innovative	Pursue creativity, and innovation both in the art we present and in our working practices
<b>Excellence</b> Strive for the best	Challenge ourselves to be the best we can, valuing and embracing excellence
<b>Collaboration</b> One team	Work with genuine engagement and be authentic in our approach, developing a sense of belonging and inclusion for all
<b>Accountability</b> Focus and own it	Be honest with ourselves and play fairly at all times

We will be guided by two key drivers:

## Leverage our key moments

As the Opera House approaches several key moments in its history, in particular in 2022 the Concert Hall re-opening and the commencement of the 50th anniversary year, we will:

- Invite everyone to be part of celebrations that reflect on the past, present and future of the Sydney Opera House, on site, off site and online.
- Use the celebrations to invest in the Opera House staff and physical infrastructure for future generations.
- Collaborate with all our partners and stakeholders and share our success through landmark occasions.

## Commit to diversity in everything we do

Aligned with the organisational Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy, we will:

- Make a commitment to increase the diversity of programming and audiences.
- Develop ways to measure and report our impacts.
- Foster a safe and inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of the community.
- Support a cohesive and coordinated response to positive change, alongside our Reconciliation, Accessibility and Environmental plans and the UN Global Goals.



# Sydney Opera House Artistic Strategy (2022–24)

## Vision

**To be as bold and inspiring as the Opera House itself**

Our Strategic Drivers:

## Mission

To treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors; and

To inspire, and strengthen the community, in everything we do.

## Purpose

To be unmissable

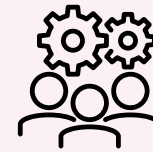
## Our values

Safety  
Creativity  
Excellence  
Collaboration  
Accountability



## Experiences

Balance artistic, community engagement and commercial success



## People & Processes

Support the development of our people, practices and physical infrastructure



## Partners & Stakeholders

Work with our partners and stakeholders in a responsive and collaborative way

**Leverage our key moments**

- 1.1** Program contemporary and traditional art forms to engage on site and online audiences
- 1.2** Present programs that celebrate SOH key moments to inspire both new and existing audiences, including the Concert Hall reopening and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

- 2.1** Develop and expand the capacity of our people to enhance the safe and effective delivery of our experiences
- 2.2** Continue to develop and enhance our operations to deliver world-class experiences
- 2.3** Work at the intersection of art, production and technology to ensure best use of our physical and digital infrastructure

- 3.1** Provide all our hirers with the highest quality service
- 3.2** Collaborate with resident companies, cultural institutions and other cultural partners on COVID-19 recovery and key local and global events

**Commit to diversity in everything we do**

- 1.3** Support the development and presentation of work by artists from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences, prioritising First Nations artists
- 1.4** Evolve the allocation of our venues to enable the programming of diverse work that reflects and respects our current and future communities
- 1.5** Develop mechanisms to measure the impacts of broad and diverse programming and audiences

- 2.4** Continue to build a strong culture of diversity among our people and the broader community of arts workers
- 2.5** Develop and expect high-quality professional practice by embedding and role modelling the Opera House's values
- 2.6** Find new ways to work innovatively and effectively in a World Heritage building honouring its past while securing its future as a vibrant cultural centre

- 3.3** Establish and maintain strong relationships with our donors and corporate partners (private and public) to expand and sustain support
- 3.4** Broker and maintain strong external industry relationships in peer and leadership roles
- 3.5** Collaborate with our colleagues on all broader Opera House strategic and social impact initiatives

**Outcomes**

**Broad and diverse programming and audiences**

**Extraordinary experiences delivered in world-class venues**

**Leading, connected and industry renowned**

# Experiences



## Goal

**Balance artistic, community engagement and commercial success**

## Outcome

**Broad and diverse programming and audiences**

## Objectives

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1.1</b> Program contemporary and traditional art forms to engage on site and online audiences   | <b>1.3</b> Support the development and presentation of work by artists from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences, prioritising First Nations artists |
| <b>1.2</b> Present programs that celebrate SOH key moments to inspire both new and existing audiences, including the Concert Hall reopening and the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary | <b>1.4</b> Evolve the allocation of our venues to enable the programming of diverse work that reflects and respects our current and future communities              |
|  | <b>1.5</b> Develop mechanisms to measure the impacts of broad and diverse programming and audiences   |

## Key Actions

- Launch and implement a dynamic program of intimate interactive experiences in the Centre for Creativity (CFC)
- Develop and implement a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary artistic program with increased focus on engaging local artists and audiences on site and online
- Continue to embed presentations of First Nations work across all SOHP programming areas
- Commission artists from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences to develop work on site and online
- Invest in future-focused digital programming that extends the reach of live work on site and presents 'digital-first' programs to broad and diverse audiences

## Key Measures

- CFC activity attracts strong audiences and critical acclaim. Audience engagement evaluation framework also developed and insights reported
- Ambitious and diverse 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary program developed and delivered, with all engagement (on site, off site and online) measured and reported
- First Nations-led production/events presented in each programming area and *New Work Now* commission of First Nations-led work annually
- Support artists with disability and disability-led producing organisations annually
- One million substantive online audience engagements with the program annually
- Increased Concert Hall or Joan Sutherland Theatre access utilised by SOHP and community and commercial hirers for diverse programming



# People & Processes



## Goal

**Support the development of our people, practices and physical infrastructure**

## Outcome

**Extraordinary experiences delivered in world-class venues**

## Objectives

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>2.1</b> Develop and expand the capacity of our people to enhance the safe and effective delivery of our experiences              | <b>2.4</b> Continue to build a strong culture of diversity among our people and the broader community of arts workers  |
| <b>2.2</b> Continue to develop and enhance our operations to deliver world-class experiences  | <b>2.5</b> Develop and expect high-quality professional practice by embedding and role modelling the Opera House's values  |
| <b>2.3</b> Work at the intersection of art, production and technology to ensure best use of our physical and digital infrastructure | <b>2.6</b> Find new ways to work innovatively and effectively in a World Heritage building honouring its past while securing its future as a vibrant cultural centre |

## Key Actions

- Develop training modules to support all Production & Events staff to deliver safe, effective, world-class events in the renewed Concert Hall and all venues on site and online
- Execute our organisational commitments to support the continued growth of a more diverse workforce
- Build internal capacity to support small to medium and independent artists alongside the larger companies
- Identify infrastructure investment priorities for the Opera House's western theatres to meet the future needs of all hirers, including resident companies and SOHP
- Embed sustainability into our operations and support resident companies, hirers and partners to adopt a framework of best practice for their events

## Key Measures

- Concert Hall ramp-up training program developed and delivered
- Develop and deliver a suite of professional arts worker pathways: traineeships, secondments, work experience and mentorships
- Develop a system to identify needs and allocate additional resources to support independent artists/small companies
- Comprehensive review of infrastructure and equipment undertaken across the western theatres
- ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Management certification achieved

# Partners & Stakeholders



## Goal

**Work with our partners and stakeholders in a responsive and collaborative way**

## Outcome

**Leading, connected and industry renowned**

## Objectives

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>3.1</b> Provide all our hirers with the highest quality service   | <b>3.3</b> Establish and maintain strong relationships with our donors and corporate partners (private and public) to expand and sustain support |
| <b>3.2</b> Collaborate with resident companies, cultural institutions and other cultural partners on COVID-19 recovery and key local and global events | <b>3.4</b> Broker and maintain strong external industry relationships in peer and leadership roles   |
|  | <b>3.5</b> Collaborate with our colleagues on all broader Opera House strategic and social impact initiatives                                    |

## Key Actions

- Support partnerships that enable the ambitions of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary program
- Nurture philanthropic relationships that maximise the potential of the Centre for Creativity and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Continue to collaborate with our resident companies to exchange knowledge and plans to keep all our visitors and staff safe, including COVID-19
- Expand opportunities to create experiences within the cultural and tourism sectors
- Deepen our industry partnerships and increase consultation to support and build capacity for the implementation of our Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, Accessibility, Environmental and Reconciliation action plans

## Key Measures

- Collaborate with cultural institutions and other partners to present ambitious 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary programs
- Philanthropists are engaged with and support the CFC and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary programs and continue to support *New Work Now* fund to enable the commissioning of new works
- Regular meeting cycle with resident companies
- Strategic partnerships developed, trialed and evaluated with relevant sector-led service organisations
- Industry speakers program implemented to build capacity and increase connection to broad and diverse communities





“We are so incredibly grateful to you for having us for the season of *Rent*. Everything from the rehearsal process to the brilliant packed season in the Drama Theatre was a dream. It was a wild ride to bring the show to life so quickly after the COVID year (2020) but it was worth it to see audiences on their feet, loving being back in a theatre filled with incredible music.”

**Gus Murray**, Producer, *Rent*

“Antidote 2021 will all be livestreamed online via the harbourside icon’s snazzy new Stream platform, meaning you can hear insights from some of the brightest minds going, all without leaving home.”

**Time Out, Sydney**

“The opportunity to perform for the last two nights in the Studio was amazing. The Middle Eastern community and specifically the Persian community loved it.”

**Hamed Sadeghi**,  
Musician, Eishan Ensemble

“Whether it is through my music or through film I want to keep preserving the stories that have been passed down to me. I am grateful to the Sydney Opera House for trusting in my vision and supporting me to bring this story to life.”

**Ziggy Ramo**, on the making of the music video, *Little Things*



“A huge thank you for today’s digital creative learning session. Our rural school in country Victoria, (9 students in total) absolutely loved the workshop. Brilliant and very refreshing, (especially during these trying times of the pandemic).”

**Emily Dalkin**, Principal,  
Marnoo Primary School



“I want to congratulate the Sydney Opera House for staging Angela Goh’s latest work: *Sky Blue Mythic*. This is brave, responsible, and inspired programming!”

**Dr Amanda Card**, Senior  
Lecturer, Department of  
Theatre and Performance  
Studies, University of Sydney



“I brought my two year old granddaughter to the *Bluey* performance and she was completely mesmerised from go to whoa.”

**Audience Member**,  
*Bluey’s Big Play*





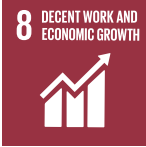



# UN Global Goals

In 2015, the United Nations defined 17 goals, known as the Global Goals, to address the world's most pressing challenges by 2030, including poverty, inequality, climate, education and justice. The Global Goals provide a to-do list for the world and a roadmap to achieve a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. In October 2019, the Opera House announced its commitment to nine of the goals, including education, equality and sustainability. While the goals can be

achieved only through coordinated global action, we are committed to doing all we can to inspire and bring about positive change together, with the community.

This Artistic Strategy supports the Global Goals by committing to initiatives that increase and foster cultural participation in the arts. Through this we inspire positive change and work towards a sense of shared belonging at the Opera House for everyone.



Global Goal	Target	Opera House Commitment	Objectives
 <b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION	4.7	The Opera House will promote quality education and learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program contemporary and traditional art forms to engage on site and online audiences</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms to measure the impacts of broad and diverse programming and audiences</li> </ul>
 <b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY	5C	The Opera House will promote gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build a strong culture of diversity amongst our people and the broader community of arts workers</li> <li>• Collaborate with our colleagues on all broader Opera House strategic and social impact initiatives</li> </ul>
 <b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8.3, 8.8	The Opera House will champion diversity and human rights in its workforce and business operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and expect high-quality professional practice by embedding and role modeling our Opera House values</li> <li>• Develop and expand the capacity of our people to enhance the safe and effective delivery of our experiences</li> </ul>
 <b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.2	The Opera House will improve inclusion and accessibility on and off stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development and presentation of work by artists from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences, prioritising First Nations artists</li> </ul>
 <b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.4	The Opera House will safeguard and revitalise cultural practices, heritage and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find new ways to work innovatively and effectively in a World Heritage building honouring its past while securing its future as a vibrant cultural centre</li> <li>• Support the development and presentation of work by First Nations artists</li> </ul>
 <b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	17.17	The Opera House will deepen and enrich our relationships with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broker and maintain strong external industry relationships in peer and leadership roles</li> <li>• Establish and maintain strong relationships with our donors, corporate partners (private and public) to expand and sustain support</li> </ul>



