



ILBIJERRI
THEATRE COMPANY

ANNUAL REPORT
2021

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Country that we travel through and share stories on.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Elders, Ancestors and young leaders.

We acknowledge, with full respect, the strength of First Nations people and communities fighting to protect and look after Country, Community, Language and Lore, in the face of ongoing colonial interruption and cultural genocide.

In particular, we acknowledge and pay our respects to the sovereign peoples of the Kulin Nations on whose unceded land ILBIJERRI Theatre Company is based.

Always was, always will be.



ELDERS IN RESIDENCE

Vital to the company's operations has been the role of our Elders as cultural authorities and leaders. This ongoing program acknowledges the importance of Elders in our Community as leaders and keepers of Culture and knowledge.

We pay our respects to our Elders, N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs and Uncle Larry Walsh, who contribute to ILBIJERRI's strategic, artistic and cultural direction, with a particular focus on nurturing future generations.

Left: N'arweet Carolyn Briggs. Photo by James Henry.
Right: Uncle Larry Walsh. Photo by Tiffany Garvie.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

What another rollercoaster year it was - and yet a very productive one!

All credit goes to the extraordinary people whose ingenuity, passion, hard work, integrity and commitment to our vision shone through. Thank you Sarah Greentree, Caleb Thaiday, Lauren Sheree, Nina Bonacci, Kirsty Hillhouse, Tania Owen, Kath Pappas, Mayella Koroj, and John Hawkes. We could not have done it without the special skills of our lead artists, Nazaree Dickerson and Kamarra Bell-Wykes, and our more technical crew lead by Nick Glen.

Because of them we were able to deliver much of our work, both live and online.

We were fortunate to be able to premier our new work HEART IS A WASTELAND by John Harvey at Darwin Festival 11-15 August to full houses. The best review ever, came from Djujan Turner (the young boy from acclaimed documentary *In My Blood It Runs*) who had never seen any live theatre previously, which I think highlights the core purpose behind all of our work - to engage Community.

Djujan wrote, *"It got me in a mood that I never been in before. That was one of the best things I've ever seen. Watching them made me feel so satisfied - like watching a movie, but with your own eyes in 3D. I have never seen anyone do that before - act - change moods so fast. Other people need to see it!"*.

2021 also marked ILBIJERRI's thirtieth year! Although the main celebrations have been postponed till

2022, we were able to mark the occasion with a beautiful evening, partnered alongside YIRRAMBOI Festival, with the HISTORY SALON. It turned out to be a stunning evening of yarns, laughs, and amazing insights by one of ILBIJERRI's founding members and previous Artistic Director, Kylie Belling, hosted by Kerri-lee Harding.

Meanwhile in our BLACKWRIGHTS program, three writers alongside three dramaturgs developed new works, culminating in a live streamed public showing in each of their respective cities. It was a celebration of new exciting First Nations voices - a great taste of things to come.

Our Ensemble all-year artist development program culminated in a public outcome delivered online with the 10 IN 10 project. Fifteen writers were commissioned, in response to a nationwide call-out, to write a 10-minute new play in 10 days. The works were each allocated a newly mentored director, under the guidance of ILBIJERRI's experienced team, and the results were fantastic. The project gave us another opportunity to work in partnership with our sister ensemble company in Minnesota, USA, New Native Theatre.

Another completely new experience for ILBIJERRI came in the form of film-making! Our stage show, VIRAL, created in partnership with the Department of Health and LiverWell, was adapted from theatre to



a 25-minute film in 2021 which will be distributed in 2022 as a stunning, culturally appropriate, educational resource, able to reach mob usually beyond our reach.

Last but by no means least, our FOOTPRINTS program supporting emerging and Independents artists, grew. We were able to support young Brodie Murray's production, BILLY'S CHOICE which was presented on Zoom as part of Deadly Fringe.

RACHAEL MAZA AM
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A MESSAGE FROM OUR **CHAIR**



Although Covid continued to disrupt the performing arts sector, ILBIJERRI's staff and community moved forward with purpose and determination, pausing to reflect and plan for future growth.

I congratulate Rachael Maza (Artistic Director) and Sarah Greentree (Acting Executive Director) for their incredible stewardship in keeping the team buoyant during a second year of Covid-related delays and complications. Heartfelt thanks to Sarah, who created space and opportunity for First Nations leadership across 2021, leaving the company at the end of the year.

ILBIJERRI's Board of Directors welcomed three new Board members – Suzi Hutchings, Janine Mohamed and Brian Bero – who joined myself, Glenn Shea, Kareena Gay and Gavin Somers. This meant that ILBIJERRI bid a fond farewell to outgoing Board Members Tony McCartney, Lisa Maza and Erica McCalman, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge their leadership and dedication across the years.

The company continued to support artists creatively and financially with paid work, thanks to support from our core funders, the Australia Council for the Arts and Creative Victoria. We remain grateful to our trust and foundation partners and our project and program funders. We also thank our sector and industry partners who stood shoulder to shoulder with us despite facing their own obstacles in delivery of live events.

Not least, we owe our heart and soul to the generosity of our individual patrons who continue to show up year after year through sunshine and storms.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Flynn'.

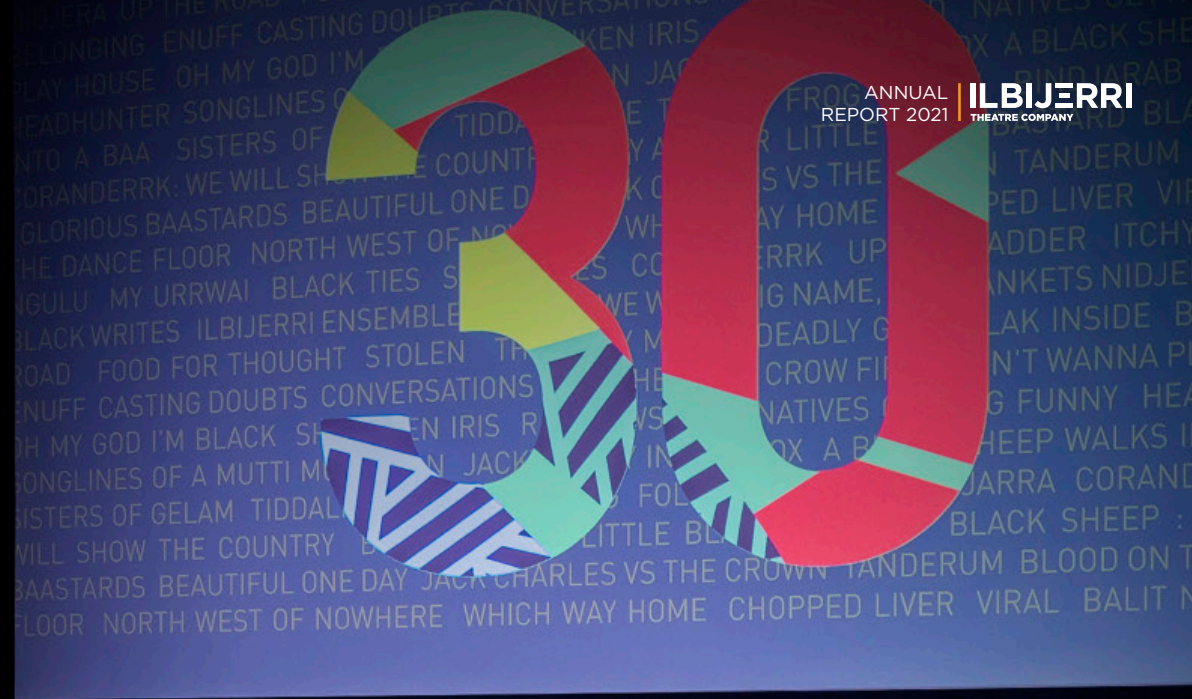
ELIZABETH FLYNN
CHAIR

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS STRONG

In 2021, with thirty years since incorporation, ILBIJERRI continues to bring the brilliance and sophistication of bold, black voices to audiences in country halls, community spaces, and major venues across Australia and the world.

Most of our plans to celebrate this auspicious year were thwarted by capacity limitations imposed due to the pandemic, so we hope to bring you to the party in 2022.

We were able to gather for a singular event HISTORY SALON, programmed in May 2021 as part of YIRRAMBOI Festival - with ILBIJERRI founding member Kylie Belling and current artistic director Rachael Maza in an interview with Kerri-Lee Harding in front of a live and very enthusiastic audience.



PRODUCTIONS

HEART IS A WASTELAND

Darwin Festival 11 - 15 August

After the huge success of the BLACK TIES 2020 tour, we eagerly awaited 2021 with hopes raised for the long awaited tour of our next big show, HEART IS A WASTELAND.

Nine venues from across Victoria, New South Wales, Northern Territory and Queensland were scheduled but with fresh border restrictions and lockdowns due to Covid, the show was only able to go ahead at one of the planned venues, with a one week season in Darwin Festival in August. We were fortunate to partner with Darwin Festival and the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) 2021 for delegates at the conference to be able to enjoy a live stream of the show.

Thankfully, the Darwin Festival premiere season was a sell-out success. HEART IS A WASTELAND, directed by Artistic Director Rachael Maza, truly brought John Harvey's humorous and deeply heartfelt script to life.

With original songs by Lydia Fairhall, exquisitely arranged by Gary Watling; freshly conceived sets and adventurous audio-visual design - this production brought Australia's stunning outback right to the front - matched by the vitality of its young leads, Dion Williams and Monica Jasmine Karo.

HEART IS A WASTELAND is a soul-warming battle of egos, recognising everyone's individual right to love. We look forward to a future tour in 2022.

CREATIVE CREDITS

Writer	John Harvey (Saibai Island)
Director	Rachael Maza (Yidinji, Meriam)
Songwriter	Lydia Fairhall (Worimi)
Musical Director and Arrangements	Gary Watling (Wiradjuri)
Sound Designer	James Henry (Yuwaalaraay and Yorta Yorta)
Production Manager	Nick Glen
Set & Costume Design	Emily Barrie
Lighting Design	Niklas Pajanti
AV Design	Sean Bacon
Dramaturg	Mark Pritchard
Stage Manager	Jess Keepence
Performers	Dion Williams (Wiradjuri from Narrandera and Wakaman far North Queensland) Monica Jasmine Karo (Gunai/Gunditjmara) Gary Watling (Wiradjuri)

Heart is a Wasteland is a RISING co-production. Supported by Sidney Myer Fund. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



Monica Jasmine Karo and Dion Williams.
Heart is a Wasteland, Darwin 2021.
Photo by Fiona Morrison.

IN DEVELOPMENT

BIG NAME, NO BLANKETS PAPUNYA CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT 2021

BIG NAME, NO BLANKETS is a rock'n'roll theatre show celebrating the untold story of the Butcher Brothers, and their rise to fame as the heart and soul of the iconic Warumpi Band. This large-scale production showcases Luritja/Pitjantjatjara, Gumatj (Yolngu Martha) and Warlpiri languages, culture and dance from Central Australia and North East Arnhem Land.

Celebrating the Warumpi Band's phenomenal journey and impact, the production will undertake further creative development in 2022, an NT Community tour as a work-in-progress in 2023, and is set to premiere in 2024.

ILBIJERRI's on-Country 2021 creative development of BIG NAME, NO BLANKETS took place 12-17 April in the remote Aboriginal community of Papunya, Northern Territory, where our creative team worked with Warumpi Band family members and Community locals. The development was guided by Papunya Elder, Sammy Butcher - the Warumpi Band's legendary co-founding member - who has the cultural authority of this story. We are incredibly honoured to have Sammy guiding the production as the Story and Cultural Consultant.

The 2021 creative development was capped off by a public forum as part of Parrtjima in Alice Springs, where Anyupa Butcher and Rachael Maza featured in a question and answer session with Rhoda Roberts.

PAPUNYA CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT CREDITS

Story & Cultural Consultant	Sammy Butcher
Co-Writers	Anyupa Butcher and Ursula Yovich
Co-Directors	Dr Rachael Maza AM and Anyupa Butcher
Musical Arrangements	Crystal Butcher
Musical Arrangement Mentor	David Bridie
Performers	Jason Butcher, Jeremiah Butcher, Liliku Elkin Wilson, Norbie Williams
Creative Consultant	Lisa Watts
Theatre Consultant	Sarah Goodes
Producer	Nina Bonacci



L-R: Nina Bonacci, David Bridie, Lisa Watts, Ruben Ruolle, Ursula Yovich, Sammy Butcher, Liliku Elkin Wilson, Derik Lynch and Rachael Maza

The project is supported by Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals via Major Festivals Initiative, RISING, and Brisbane Festival.

Major
Festivals
Initiative



Australia
Council
for the Arts

RISING:

Dennis Osborne Clarke
Charitable Trust



AUSTRALIAN
PLAYS
TRANSFORM





BIW A GITHALAY
ON-COUNTRY CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT 5 - 11 FEBRUARY

BIW A GITHALAY (The Crab and the Mangrove Tree) is a universal and interactive theatrical experience for children aged five and over. Told through puppetry, story, dance and song, this work introduces children to the language, culture and people of Saibai Island of the Torres Strait.

BIW A GITHALAY tells a culturally significant story that is shared across the diaspora of Saibai communities in Cairns, Brisbane, Bamaga and Thursday Island. It is a children's bedtime story told in two Torres Strait language translations of Kalaw Kawaw Ya and Torres Strait Creole, about the need for balance and harmony within the natural world. This story has been shared for generations but holds a powerful contemporary relevance with increasing climate change.

The work is a project for Community, driven and made by Community. How the project develops at every stage is decided by the Community with Cultural accountability from Elders. The project is guided by a strong community of Saibai Island mothers, Aunties and grandmothers in collaboration with First Nations theatre industry professionals.

TIMELINE
February 2021

On-Country Community engagement on Saibai Island, Thursday Island and Bamaga.

August 2021

Creative development on Country on Saibai Island – completed via zoom and on-Country, focused on Community engagement, writing and linguistics, puppetry workshops, Cultural Protocol and Engagement training, design meetings and script development

August 2022

Creative development and workshop presentations are planned with four Saibai Communities in Cairns, Brisbane, Bamaga and Thursday Island. This will culminate in a rehearsal period, premiere and national tour in 2023 – 2024.



CREATIVE & CULTURAL TEAM

Lead Cultural Consultant and Saibai Community Consultation Partner	Milton Walit
Bamaga Community Consultation Partner & Cultural Linguistics Advisor	Leonora Adidi
Brisbane Community Consultant	Nancy Bamaga
Script Consultant	John Harvey
Director/Facilitator	Rachael Maza AM
Senior Cultural Consultant	MacRose Elu
Puppet/Costume Designer	Joe Blanck
Sound Designer / Associate Producer	Mayella Koro

BIW A GITHALAY is supported by the Australian Government through the Indigenous Languages and Arts Program, Arts Queensland, and the Playking Foundation.



Above: Biw a Githalay creative development on-Country, Saibai Island, February 2021.

COLLABORATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

GURR ERA OP

Award-winning Torres Strait Island choreographer and performer Ghenoa Gela collaborates with Sydney's renowned physical theatre company Force Majeure and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, to develop this dance-theatre work, now in its third year of development, focusing on the impact of climate change on Torres Strait culture.

The work asks: Is culture inextricably linked to place? And what does it mean if the islands sink? What will the legacy and consequences of this issue be for future generations of islanders?

Co-Directed by Rachael Maza and Ghenoa Gela, this show features an extraordinary all-female cast of Torres Strait women, GURR ERA OP has a focus on language and will be bilingual in Creole and English.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Ghenoa Gela
Rachael Maza
Danielle Micich (Force Majeure)

This is a co-production by Force Majeure and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



Gurr Era Op development.
Photos by Ashley de Prazer.



Tracker development.
Photo by Jacinta Keefe.

TRACKER

TRACKER, a multidisciplinary work by Wiradjuri choreographer and director, Daniel Riley, explores the life and story of his Great-Great Uncle Alec 'Tracker' Riley, a Wiradjuri elder from Dubbo NSW, who served the NSW Police Force as a tracker for 40 years through the beginning of the 20th century.

TRACKER was the first work in development emerging out of our support for creative practitioners through our Executive Leadership Program. Now in its second year of development, it is a culturally rich and ambitiously original work, exploring the legacy of Alec Riley's decisions in the face of a forcefully implemented colonial system, a legacy that fuels our continued cultural resilience.

Featuring interwoven dance, music and text, TRACKER is developed collaboratively by an experienced team of First Nations creatives, led by Daniel Riley, and consisting of award-winning playwright Ursula Yovich, ILBIJERRI's Artistic Director Rachael Maza AM, composer James Henry, visual artist Jonathan Jones and an all First Nations cast.

CREATIVE TEAM

Co-director/Choreographer	Daniel Riley	Development Performers	Dion Williams
Co-director	Rachael Maza		Tamara Bouman
Writer	Ursula Yovich		Ren Hammat
Composer	James Henry		Zoë Brown
Dramaturg	Jennifer Medway	Performer/Musician	Gary Watling
Visual/Spatial Designer	Jonathan Jones	Producer	Erin Milne

This project was initiated by Daniel Riley and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company. Produced by Bureau of Works. This production has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc.; the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria; supported by Sydney Festival, RISING and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

BLACKWRIGHTS

BlackWrights is ILBIJERRI's writers' and dramaturg development program aimed at bringing new First Nations work to the stages of Australia.

The program creates a culturally safe and nurturing space that is designed to empower First Nations artists to share our stories through theatre. The evolution of the BlackWrights program continues based on needs identified through each previous iteration of the program.

To date, BlackWrights has evolved through writer's residencies; commissions; connecting and evolving programs including the Creators Program (supporting streams such as Writers Program and Dramaturg Program) and the Master Labs series (hands-on theatre workshops), all exclusively codesigned with and for First Nations artists and creatives.

Three BlackWrights Creators Program participants, Phoebe Grainer, Alexis West and Amy Sole have been through four workshop series', and two creative developments over 2020 and 2021 supported by a dramaturg and ILBIJERRI's creative team to develop their skills as writers, culminating in showings.

BlackWrights is supported by City of Melbourne and the Besen Family Foundation



ILBIJERRI BlackWrights workshop.
Photos by James Henry.





ILBIJERRI ENSEMBLE

The ILBIJERRI Ensemble is open to Australian First Nations emerging theatre practitioners, young people and community members 15 years and over, who are offered a series of workshops with a presentation outcome each year.

In November, the ILBIJERRI Ensemble presented an exciting online mini-festival of 10-minute play readings, shining a spotlight on new First Nations scripts, read by actors from the ILBIJERRI Ensemble.

Applications came flooding in for First Nations writers of all experience levels – to write a ten-minute play in ten days – with the help of a \$2000 commission as part of ILBIJERRI Theatre Company’s 10 IN 10 project.

The successful applicants had just ten days to flesh out a ten-minute script – all based on a provocation of ‘circles’- with ‘campfire pit stops’ offered by the ILBIJERRI professional creative team along the way.

ILBIJERRI also invited participation from New Native Theatre, based in Minnesota (USA), as part of an ongoing cross-cultural partnership. Three of their works formed part of the program of readings.

The fifteen successful script writers were Jada Alberts, Marlanie Haerewa, Monica Harland, Barb Hostalek, Nicola Ingram, Kalina Lauer, Brodie Murray, Melodie Reynolds, Maurial Spearim, Rudi Louis Taylor-Bragge, Laila Thaker, and Ruby Williams. From the US, Montana Cypress, Michael Nephew and Lini Wilkins.

Their works were read by ILBIJERRI Ensemble actors, under the guidance of five ILBIJERRI directors and dramaturgs, with a different program of script readings each night of the online 10 IN 10 Festival.

ILBIJERRI Ensemble is supported by City of Melbourne; and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.



Above: Lachlan Stokes, Laila Thaker, Caleb Thaiday and Ebony McGuire. ILBIJERRI Ensemble. Photo by Darren Gill.

BLACKSTAGE

BlackStage is another development program offering the opportunity for mentoring in all aspects of theatre making such as set and costume design, lighting, sound, production management, touring and theatre direction.

ILBIJERRI currently has two sector development programs for our new works, attached to forthcoming projects which match five emerging First Nations theatre practitioners with an interest in creative roles and/or technical theatre with skilled mentors. Each participant is given a paid position to work on these productions, and experience the creative process firsthand in their chosen discipline.

In 2021, Kiwatt Kennell and Kimberley Lovegrove were selected to work on our production of HEART IS A WASTELAND, receiving training and mentorship in the areas of sound, AV and stage management.

FOOTPRINTS

Footprints is a new ILBIJERRI program designed to support independent artists.

Our highly experienced staff and creatives are often available to assist during the development process of new independent works, to write letters of support, assist with artist and emerging producer contracts, and funding application feedback.

In 2021, Rachael Maza undertook the director role in Brodie Murray’s 2021 development of Billy’s Choice which premiered at Melbourne Fringe as an on demand digital event embedded on the Digital Fringe platform (due to Covid). Billy’s Choice is a play set in Lockdown Victoria 2020 on Wamba Wamba Country near present day Swan Hill and in inner city Melbourne, Eastern Kulin Nations. It explores the conflict that can arise as young people seek independence, focusing on the cultural and political contexts of growing up in modern Indigenous Australia.

In 2022, we hope to initiate allowing First Nations independent artists and theatre-makers to utilise facilities in our office space at Collingwood Yards.

Billy’s Choice presented by



SOCIAL IMPACT

For the past 16 years, ILBIJERRI has been touring theatre performances across Victoria aimed at educating First Nations communities around health issues.

ILBIJERRI and its stakeholders have identified the need to develop more community-engaged participatory approaches that place target audiences at the centre of the storytelling process.

Evidence suggests that arts-led approaches, and specifically theatre, can strengthen sexual health promotion and education in First Nations communities. This is why we have worked closely with a research team at University of Melbourne to track our progress. By centering participants' stories and experiences, participatory theatre gives community members ownership over material being explored, and agency in discovering culturally safe ways to reduce stigma and address sexual health.

ILBIJERRI is developing two new Social Impact performance works over 2021 and 2022, under the umbrella of STIGMA STORIES to address health and wellbeing issues around STIs and menopause. These new works, THE SCORE and GOODBYE AUNTY FLO, integrate story and concept with the goal to support affected communities to address stigma and barriers to getting help, including the use of community champions and peer-based approaches.

A Social Impact actor ensemble was recruited early 2021 and training over two periods with three-weeks taking place in February-March 2021 and a further two week period to be scheduled in 2022.

These were facilitated by Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Stefo Nantsou (Zeal Theatre NSW), Dr Sarah Woodland as well as additional expert arts/health practitioners, and focused on developing skills in participatory theatre and sexual health education. A performance of THE SCORE was developed out of the first phase of this process (Feb-Mar 2021) that will be used as a catalyst for community workshops.

Researchers will participate and document the process and lead yarning circles and interviews with the Ensemble as the work develops. ILBIJERRI received funding from Creative Victoria for the delivery of this phase. AIATSIS funding and University of Melbourne in-kind support will contribute to data collection.



Laila Thaker, VIRAL.
Photo by Jody Haines

THE SCORE

THE SCORE is a short play with big energy full of highs and some pretty common challenges, set at the scene of a football knockout carnival. It's all about football, friends, hook-ups and sexual health. The story starts with Billy, a champion local footballer. On the night before the big game he hooks up with Sam, someone he's only ever seen from a distance. The play focuses on the stigma surrounding STIs and the benefits of more open discussion and education about it all.

This project is bigger than a play about STIs. There are also opportunities for those who want to explore skills in acting and/or dance, music and theatre technical production, or writing and storytelling for any sized audience.

THE SCORE has been developed with actors based in Melbourne - as well as with Wemba Wemba, Wadawarang and Gunditjmara people to strengthen local Community connections in Northern, Central and South West Victoria. A Community audience was invited to discuss their thoughts with the cast after the show to assist in the development of new scenes, characters and storylines for THE SCORE.

The show will tour to regional and metro areas in 2022.

CREATIVE TEAM

Development

Facilitators Jerrika Pevitt
Stefo Nantsou
Kamarra Bell-Wykes
Free Theatre
- Pongjit Saphakhunm (Jon)
- Richard Barber

Research Sarah Woodland

Sound Caroline McAllister

Film/photography James Henry

CAST

Bala Neba/Andrew Toby
Axel Garay
Bayden Clayton
Monique Grbec
Zerene Jaaadwa [Webster]
Nazaree Dickerson
Lisa Maza

GOODBYE AUNTY FLO

In 2021, ILBIJERRI commissioned playwright Nazaree Dickerson, to research medical implications of menopause and undertake community consultation.

The production of GOODBYE AUNTY FLO will integrate the many facets of menopause and the personal stories which allow for a better understanding of the issue generally. This work promotes sacred women's business and comfort with this specific stage in life - including finding ways to explore individual experiences and responses, and to encourage life choices that minimize the negative impacts of menopause. Menopause is a natural biological event that can be accompanied by symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, irritability, depression, anxiety and weight gain. Little understood and often underestimated, menopause affects every woman directly and every family member indirectly.

Menopause is and has often been a source of great humour which denigrates the importance of major life transition. This new work will integrate the many facets of menopause and the personal stories which allow for a better understanding of the issue generally. The work will seek to promote women's comfort level with this specific stage in life - including finding ways to explore individual experiences and responses, and to encourage life choices that minimize the negative impacts of menopause.

A creative team was engaged to work with playwright, Nazaree Dickerson, medical researchers, actors and Community Elders were brought together to explore sacred women's business relation to menopause. Two online women's yarning circles took place, as well as an in person women's morning tea and weaving workshop and creative development.

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer Nazaree Dickerson

Producer Kim Bennett

With thanks to The University of Melbourne Dean's Research Fellow, Dr Sarah Woodland, and the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health.





VIRAL

This Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) commissioned work focusing on blood-borne infections was due to have its third and final community tour in 2020 as a live theatre show. In response to Covid restrictions and the unlikely chance of getting the work out into community spaces, prisons, and health centres, the production was re-imagined as a film.

While Covid continued to disrupt the production period of the film over 2021, the original creative team and film company YOUTHWORX took opportunities in various windows to film and edit this project to be rolled out in 2022

VIRAL was originally created and delivered through a holistic engagement process including community workshops prior to the tour, and yarning circles after each show. We hope to engage in further conversation with Community with the launch of the film in 2022.

BACKGROUND

In 2005 ILBIJERRI was approached by the Victorian Government Department of Health & Human Services to develop a play that would communicate hepatitis C prevention and education messages in a culturally appropriate way to the Indigenous community.

Live performance, particularly comedy, is an effective tool in breaking down social boundaries where certain concepts and issues are considered too confronting to publicly discuss. VIRAL follows on from our widely-acclaimed works CHOPPED LIVER and BODY ARMOUR. It is the third exciting instalment in ILBIJERRI's trilogy of hepatitis C health works - aimed at breaking down stigma, promoting healing, and getting our Community hep C free.

Now that a free, easy and safe treatment is available, VIRAL asks why Community aren't accessing it and what we can do to support those wanting to take control of their health.

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer	Maryanne Sam
Adapted for Screen	Chantelle Murray
Film Director	Kimberley Duband
Original Stage Play Director	Kamarra Bell-Wykes
Producer	Lauren Sheree
Social Impact Producer	Kim Bennett
Creative Lead	Kamarra Bell-Wykes
Film Production Company	Youthworx

CAST

Ally	Laila Thaker
Merv	Blayne Welsh
Doc/Kevin	Corey Saylor-Brunskill
Lewis	Joshua Austin
Lizzy	Zerene Jaadwa
Nurse	Lisa Maza
Security Guard	Nick Sumner-Wright
Community members	Eban Roach, Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, Jaeden Williams, Stone Motherless Cold, Alinta Roberta, Natasha Garling, Dylan Kerr

Joshua Austin and Laila Thaker, Viral.
Photo by Jody Haines.



SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

In response to public consultation, a new National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (NPAPF) was launched in 2021 with eight new organisations - including ILBIJERRI - joining the program previously known as the Major Performing Arts (MPA) Framework. These companies must meet a range of criteria, including the demonstration of the highest artistic standards, a sizable audience base and a minimum average income of more than \$1.6 million over the previous three-year period.

We were delighted to be invited to join this auspicious group understanding this recognition and support will assist us in further developing, sharing and strengthening our vitally important work.

On 11 October 2019, the Meeting of Cultural Ministers agreed to create this new Partnership Framework responding to the outcomes of a public consultation conducted in 2018. The new Framework retains the most effective elements of the former iteration. At this time, it was agreed that additional companies needed to be invited into the Framework to more clearly represent the depth of artistic knowledge and activity across the country.

Alongside ILBIJERRI Theatre Company are Artback NT, Back to Back Theatre, Dancenorth, Griffin Theatre Company, Marrugeku, Windmill Theatre Company and Terrapin Theatre invited to broaden the scope of the Partnership Framework and reflect the importance of arts and culture for all Australians.



AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING ARTS MARKET (APAM)

FIRST NATIONS LEAD 2019-24

As the First Nations Lead for APAM, ILBIJERRI brings the company's extensive expertise and leadership as a successful and internationally engaged First Nations led organisation. The partnership comprises two producers employed by ILBIJERRI and based in the APAM office, and the APAM First Nations Advisory Group, made up of performing arts sector leaders from First Nations across the country.

FIRST NATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

The First Nations Advisory Group (FNAG) supports APAM's decision making, providing advice, engagement, and guidance to the APAM Office. Collectively, the FNAG also supports the programming, cultural and creative decisions of our First Nations Lead Producers around APAM Gatherings and other events, and have a representative on APAM curatorial panels. 2021 members were Rachael Maza (chair), Merindah Donnelly (QLD), Ben Graetz (NT), Gina Rings (SA) and Moogahlin Performing Arts (NSW) - a rotating position between Lily Shearer and Ali Murphy-Oates.

During 2021, the APAM First Nations Framework and Policies & Accountabilities were finalised and approved by the Advisory Group, following a review from consultant Cameron Costello. The Framework outlines the role of the Advisory Group, sets out the foundational principles of the First Nations Lead arrangement, and defines focus areas for the First Nations Program. The Policies & Accountabilities take those principles forward into action in four key areas: cultural protocols, local engagement with Traditional Owners, cultural safety, and feedback. Both documents are published on APAM's website.

APAM GATHERINGS & FIRST NATIONS INDUSTRY PROGRAM

The APAM First Nations Lead producers were part of delivering two APAM Gatherings in 2021. Both events featured rich panel discussions on topics curated by the First Nations Advisory Group.

APAM Gathering at DreamBIG Children's Festival, held on Kurna Country/Adelaide in May, had a specific focus on promoting work for intergenerational audiences. This was a hybrid in-person and digital event, with Australian and some Aotearoa/NZ delegates attending in person, and international delegates joining online via APAM's Swapcard digital platform. First Nations Advisory Group member Gina Rings led on connecting with Kurna Traditional Owners. The local engagement included a lunch with Elders, a beautiful Welcome to Country event on the bank of Kurrawirra Parri (River Torrens) and a Night at Tandanya. The Gathering program featured three pitches and two showcases of self-determined First Nations works, and First Nations panel discussions The Future of Touring: From FIFO to deep Country, and For Future Generations Self-determination in the youth arts sector.

APAM Gathering at Darwin Festival, held on Larrakia Country/Darwin in August, was a digital event on the Swapcard platform. The in-person event was cancelled shortly before the Gathering due to COVID-19. First Nations Advisory Group member Ben Graetz led on connecting with Larrakia Traditional Owners. A digital Welcome to Country was performed. The Gathering program featured six profile pitches and two showcases of self-determined First Nations work from both Australia and Aotearoa/NZ, and First Nations panel discussions Whose Mob: First Nations first in festivals and events, and The Circle Never Ends: Multigenerational approaches to making work.

Open to First Nations producers and self-producing artists every APAM Gathering, the First Nations Industry Program (FNIP) brings together a cross-generational network to share knowledge, expertise and build connections nationally and internationally. FNIP is key to APAM's intention to make First Nations artists and their work central, and break down barriers to successful participation in APAM Gatherings.

Over the course of the two Gatherings, the producing team re-invented FNIP as a digital program open to all First Nations participants, with preparatory sessions pre-market, support during the event, and a post-market debrief and reflection. As well as practical information about the event and the Swapcard platform, the program gave introductions to key international markets in a session with Australia Council for the Arts and Creative New Zealand staff.

May – 15 participants from Australia, Aotearoa/NZ and Turtle Island/Canada
August – 35 participants from Australia, Aotearoa/NZ and Turtle Island/Canada

In August, thanks to support from the Besen Family Foundation, APAM was able to offer bursaries to support nine Australian First Nations artists and producers to participate in the Gathering.



First Nations Dance Collective, APAM 2021.
Photo by Nharla Photography.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

ILBIJERRI's Executive Leadership Program prepares mid-career Indigenous artists and producers for executive positions within ILBIJERRI and in the performing arts sector more broadly. This program aims to become a successful model for increasing diversity in leadership for the entire sector, whilst also ensuring our growth as an Indigenous-controlled organisation with strong governance and world leading Indigenous artistic outcomes.

ILBIJERRI is thrilled that the most recent candidate of our Executive Leadership Program, Daniel Riley, has been appointed Artistic Director of Australian Dance Theatre. This is a landmark appointment as the first ever Aboriginal artistic director to be selected to lead a non-First Nations Australian dance company. We congratulate Dan and look forward to continuing to collaborate with him on his current personal project in development, TRACKER.

“ So many positive results, outcomes, and new networking opportunities that have come about it's hard to know where to begin. Linking in with the Aunties and Uncles in the game has been the most exceptional outcome. ... My networks have grown exponentially particularly with my First Nations mob doing brilliant work in the same spaces as me which is just THE BEST!!!”

– participant feedback,
August 2021

BLAK LOUNGE

Blak Lounge is a digital lounge connecting International First Peoples for networking and conversations relevant to upcoming gatherings and the industry climate. Following great success during APAM Gatherings in 2021, there was a high demand from First Nations delegates to extend the lounge beyond APAM gatherings. Blak Lounge will now be held quarterly on an ongoing basis, as well as during gatherings and sector events such as Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art 2021 (Performance Space) and Clancestry 2022 (QPAC).

Each lounge is co-hosted by an industry First Peoples guest speaker alongside the APAM Producer, First Nations Lead. It is a valuable networking resource inclusive of all identifying First Peoples who are seeking a culturally safe platform for professional development, mentoring and community support. It is an opportunity to build and sustain relationships pre and post APAM gatherings.

Above: Welcome to Country for APAM Gathering at DreamBIG Festival. Photo by Nharla Photography.

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FINANCIALS

AT A GLANCE

	(\$'000)	2021 \$	2020 \$		(\$'000)	2021 \$	2020 \$
PROFIT OR LOSS STATEMENT	INCOME			BALANCE SHEET	CURRENT ASSETS		
	Event Income	326	690		Cash and cash equivalents	3,512	3,253
	Philanthropy and Donations	191	35		Trade and other receivables	6	337
	Other Income	27	166		Other current assets	7	18
	Government Grants	1,610	926		TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,525	3,608
	ATO Covid Cash Flow Boost	0	100		Non-Current Assets		
	TOTAL INCOME	2,154	1,917		Property, plant and equipment	96	
	EXPENSES				TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	96	0
	Presenting & Touring	230	288		TOTAL ASSETS	3621	3608
	Employee Benefits & Expenses	1,704	1,323		CURRENT LIABILITIES		
	Operational costs	127	154		Trade and other payables	227	206
	Marketing	39	79		Short-term Provisions payable	288	167
	TOTAL EXPENSES	2,100	1,844		Income in Advance/Contract Liabilities	2,511	2,793
SURPLUS	54	73	Lease Liability	28	0		
			TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,054			
			Non-Current Liabilities				
			Lease Liability	71			
			TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	71	0		
			TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,125	3,166		
			EQUITY				
			Retained Earnings	442	369		
			Current Earnings	54	73		
			TOTAL EQUITY	496	442		

OUR BOARD AND STAFF

ELDERS IN RESIDENCE

N'arweet Carolyn Briggs & Uncle Larry Walsh

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Secretary	Gavin Somers
Director	Glenn Shea
Director	Dr Suzi Hutchens
Director	Kareena Gay (immediate past President)
Treasurer	Anthony McCartney*
Director	Lisa Maza*
Director	Erica McCalman*

STAFF

Artistic Director/CEO	Rachael Maza AM
Acting Executive Director	Sarah Greentree
General Manager	Graham Coffey
Finance Manager	Jon Hawkes
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Senior Producer (APAM)	Kath Papas
Associate Producer (APAM)	Mayella Koroi
Social Impact Producer	Kim Bennett
Producer	Caleb Thaiday
Producer	Lauren Sheree
Office Manager	Meegan Jia Good

With thanks to Lisa Maza who stepped into many roles to assist ILBIJERRI during 2021, and also to creative consultants Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Nazaree Dickerson.

*resigned during 2021

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