



**ILBIJERRI**

THEATRE COMPANY

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2023**



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 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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this report may include images and names of the deceased.

Papunya by James Henry.

Cover image: From *Tracker* by Pedro Greig, image of Rika Hamaguchi.



## 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.



**N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs** has continued her dedicated work in recording Boon Wurrung language, as well as her active engagement in Native Title, cultural preservation and cultural promotion. In 2023 N'Arweet Carolyn published a peer-reviewed journal article *Listen - Look up! Listen - Look down! Experiencing the counter-city through a sonic and augmented reality experience of urban undergrounds in southeast Melbourne* (Carolyn Briggs, Justin Buckley, David Chesworth, Taylor Coyne and Sonia Leber Leber, S., et al) through RMIT. It makes the connection between the survival of wetland ecosystems despite urbanisation, and the Boon Wurrung stories told in those spaces. Done through interactive sound and augmented reality helping build connection to urban wetland spaces.



Across 2023 **Uncle Larry Walsh** continued his practice of sharing stories and culture through lectures and his community engagement endeavours. As a cultural knowledge holder and avid storyteller, Uncle Larry spoke at Melbourne Museum for their Museum Lectures series; *First Peoples Storytelling with Uncle Larry Walsh*. This yarn was about the importance of Elders, storytelling, and intergenerational knowledge. Uncle Larry also took part in YIRRAMBOI Festival with his family, Victoria Morphy, Hannah Morphy-Walsh, and Isobel Morphy-Walsh in their debut production *Gunga-na Dhum-nganjinu (The Stories We Hold Tightly)*.

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Left L-R: N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs and Uncle Larry Walsh. ILBIJERRI's Elders in Residence Image of N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs by James Henry. Image of Uncle Larry Walsh by Tiffany Garvie.

# WELCOME

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



Photo by Tiffany Garvie

ILBIJERRI continues to grow from strength to strength with the creative development of multiple main stage shows and the development, presentation and touring of several incredible works of First Peoples theatre. It has been thrilling to see shows such as *Big Name, No Blankets* and *Gurr Era Op*, which both open in 2024, come to fruition. And to follow the success of tours for *Tracker*, which premiered at Sydney Festival, *The Score*, which saw us strengthen community partnerships, a community tour of *Goodbye Aunty Flo* and the distribution of *Viral, a deadly short film about smashing hepatitis C* to health spaces across Victoria. We are thankful to our supporters, collaborators and partners across our projects - the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, Sydney Festival, Force Majeure, YIRRAMBOI Festival, Indigenous Languages and Arts, Dennis Osborne Clarke Charitable Trust, Sage Foundation, Victorian Government Department of Health, The Balnaves Foundation, Australian Dance Theatre, Bureau of Works, Bamaga Productions, John T Reid Charitable Trusts, University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Drama Victoria, Free Theatre, LiverWell, Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Mildura Council - Youth Services, Mooghlin Performing Arts, Thorne Harbour Health, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Zeal Theatre, City of Melbourne, Gandel Foundation, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts & Cultural Diversity, City of Melbourne, Playking Foundation, Ian Potter and Gathered Here.

As always, we are thankful for the ongoing support of our key funders, Creative Australia and Creative Victoria as well as our organisational funders - Annamila First

Nations Foundation and the Sidney Myer Fund. With their support, ILBIJERRI has begun consolidating cultural ways of working and more formal frameworks for cultural safety. A big thank you to ILBIJERRI's Co-CEOs Rachael Maza and Angela Flynn for their leadership and responsiveness in these matters, and in guiding the team across a very busy year. 2023 also saw ILBIJERRI creatives Gary Watling, Lydia Fairhall and James Henry win the Green Room award for Outstanding Sound Design/Composition for *Heart is a Wasteland* - a testament to the beauty and strength of the company's work.

Finally, a warm thank you to my fellow Board Directors for their strong engagement across the year. 2023 saw us join together with ILBIJERRI staff in determining a strategic plan that will push our company forward while maintaining a strong grounding and foundation in the cultural values that drive us as First Peoples. As we have collectively visioned:

*First Peoples voices are powerful in determining the future of Australia. We create impact by and for First Peoples through sharing our stories, our way.*

**DR EUGENIA FLYNN**  
CHAIR

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Photo by Tiffany Garvie

The year started with the highly successful premiere season of *Tracker* at Sydney Festival, which was an Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) in association with ILBIJERRI production. Despite me having to take leave for Sorry business, Creative Associate Amy Sole was able to seamlessly step in as Co-Director with Daniel Riley the Artistic Director of ADT and get the show up. It also went on to have a successful regional and major festivals tour in 2023.

2023 was the final year of development for *Big Name, No Blankets* and *Gurr Era Op* (the latter in association with Force Majeure), with both gearing up for premiere seasons at Sydney Festival 2024. Both shows went into rehearsals throughout October - December. Amy was again a phenomenal support to *Gurr Era Op* lead artist Ghenoa Gela who was stepping up to direct her first show, which she also wrote and performed in - no small task! Meanwhile, in the *Big Name, No Blankets* development, we consulted with the families and finalised the script before stepping into the rehearsal room. We worked over the Christmas break and I have to say if you had to work through Christmas you couldn't do it with a better bunch and of course the music of Warumpi!

Our Artist Development program *BlackWrights* led by Amy Sole and Producer Joel Stevens, saw the development of four incredible new works and their writers over nine months of development in 2023. Well done to Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Jackie Sheppard, Dalara Williams and Melodie Reynolds-Diarra.

Our Social Impact program has gone from strength to strength in 2023. The premiere Community tour of *Goodbye Aunty Flo* was a phenomenal success. Hilarious and very moving and most importantly - got everyone talking about menopause. Big shout out to Nazaree Dickerson as both writer and director! A new fully immersive fun packed theatre incursion, *The Score*, went into communities working with young soon-to-be-adults. Led by Kamarra Bell-Wykes working in partnership with

Sarah Woodland, they guided young people to talk about important themes around healthy relationships and created a space for the young people to lead the conversation. This work represents the evolution of over a decade of development utilising theatre to actively engage, empower and bring about change in our Communities.

Works that continued their development in 2023 include: *Biw A Githalay* (Crab and the Mangrove Tree), a beautiful work based on a well known Saibai story for children and families. In collaboration with the Saibai Community, this work is attracting a lot of interest and will be premiering in 2025. *Because We're Black* by Melodie Dia is a hilarious and deeply moving portrait of the matriarch of the family, set in Broome. It had further development in 2023 with a public reading at the Margaret River Writers Festival. *Because We're Black* is being developed in collaboration with Yirra Yaakin, Goolarri Media and ILBIJERRI and is set to premiere in 2026.

I am grateful for all of the amazing creative collaborators I have worked with in 2023 and I acknowledge all of the ILBIJERRI staff that make it happen behind the scenes.

**RACHAEL MAZA AM**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo by Tiffany Garvie

In 2023 I have been excited to see the creation of ILBIJERRI's first Cultural Safety Action Plan. Staff and board were involved with the development of the plan over the course of the year with workshops supported and facilitated by Indi Clarke, Oliver Tye and Associate Professor Gregory Phillips from ABSTARR Consulting.

The staff and board also developed ILBIJERRI's new Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027 over a series of sessions which were skillfully facilitated by ILBIJERRI's Chairperson, Dr. Eugenia Flynn, who also undertook the mammoth task of consolidating our vision, purpose, values and more into a plan that we are very proud of.

I want to acknowledge the sheer commitment, diversity of perspective and critical input of all staff, board members, Elders and Community that contributed to the creation of these two important works. Both documents will be living works that the company will actively engage with and they will continue to evolve and develop as we grow and move into the future.

For the last 17 years ILBIJERRI's Social Impact program has been a core passion for the company, delivering imaginative performance works that connect with Community, spark conversation around public health issues, and ignite positive social change. ILBIJERRI's social impact work uses proven methodology and processes to connect Communities and support existing health and wellbeing programs to create a fairer future for First People. In 2023 we saw a deepening and expansion of how we work in and with Community across all the work we do with the development of our Social Impact strategy. Its implementation was across all projects and was led by Social Impact Producer Laura Harris with Community Engagement Producer Della Bedford.

All in all 2023 was a great year for ILBIJERRI and we will be stepping into 2024 with a clear vision within our Strategic Plan. This puts us in a strong position as we continue to grow, support and empower First Peoples voices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Flynn', with a long, sweeping tail stroke.

**ANGELA FLYNN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CO-CEO



## Artist Feedback

“It’s a wonderful, open, strong and supportive blak space. ILBIJERRI are a company where you can feel like you’re thriving and can learn and make mistakes without shame.”

Artist feedback

“Love working with ILBIJERRI”

Artist feedback

“Thank you for this play, it was beautiful. Congratulations on handling such a difficult topic sensitively and with humour. Just like Aunty Flo, this play took me through a whole range of emotions. I laughed and cried both at the same time! Congratulations and well done, this is such important work”

Audience feedback  
Goodbye Aunty Flo

### VISION

First Peoples voices are powerful in determining the future of Australia. We create impact by and for First Peoples through sharing our stories, our way.

### PURPOSE

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company exists to:

Create impactful theatre by First Peoples that tells our stories our way, embedding creative sovereignty in all our work and continuing our Songlines

Meet our responsibilities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including aspirations of voice and truth-telling, uplift, healing, opportunity, and access

Inform and encourage accomplices in the fight to eradicate racism

### VALUES

#### FIRST PEOPLES’ PROTOCOLS AND WAYS OF WORKING

We respect our people, community, and artists by working in accordance with the protocols of our own Community, and those whose Country we are working on. We honour our Elders and the lineage and legacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers who have come before us.

#### SELF-DETERMINATION

We ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people drive all key decision-making processes within ILBIJERRI.

#### RESPECT

We always give our fullest respect to our people, our Elders, our Culture, and Country and to all peoples with whom we share our land. We work with reciprocity and empathy, ensuring that all voices are heard.

#### DIVERSITY OF FIRST PEOPLES

We respect, celebrate, and embrace the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, our stories, our culture, and our experiences.



The work was highly praised by media:

## Arts Hub

“The production’s intricate layers are like callings to us to look more closely at the past, and sharpen our eyes to its complex ripple effects on the present day. It’s a generous offering that leaves impressions with both subtlety and tenderness.”



## Time Out

“Tracker is a great reminder of the power of self-determined, First Nations storytelling.”



This project was initially seeded by ILBIJERRI Theatre Company in 2020 by Wiradjuri Creative Associate Daniel Riley. With the appointment of Daniel as Artistic Director of Australian Dance Theatre, the company decided to continue the development of the work as an Australian Dance Theatre production in association with ILBIJERRI. This association saw our Artistic Director Rachael Maza co-direct the work. Rachael sees co-directing as an integral part of empowering the next generation of black leaders to tell their stories. With her wealth of knowledge as a director, Rachael was there to hold space and support Daniel as a leader and director, coming into his power as a storyteller. We also had ILBIJERRI Wiradjuri Creative Associate Amy Sole on board as dramaturg.

The collaboration between Australian Dance Theatre and ILBIJERRI was dynamic and exciting, and a great example of the magic that can be created when strong black leadership comes together.

After three years of development *Tracker* embarked on its premiere tour in 2023 with performances in major festivals across Australia including Sydney Festival, Perth Festival, Adelaide Festival, RISING Festival and Brisbane Festival.

It also had a season at the Odeon Theatre in Adelaide and a regional tour of South Australia.

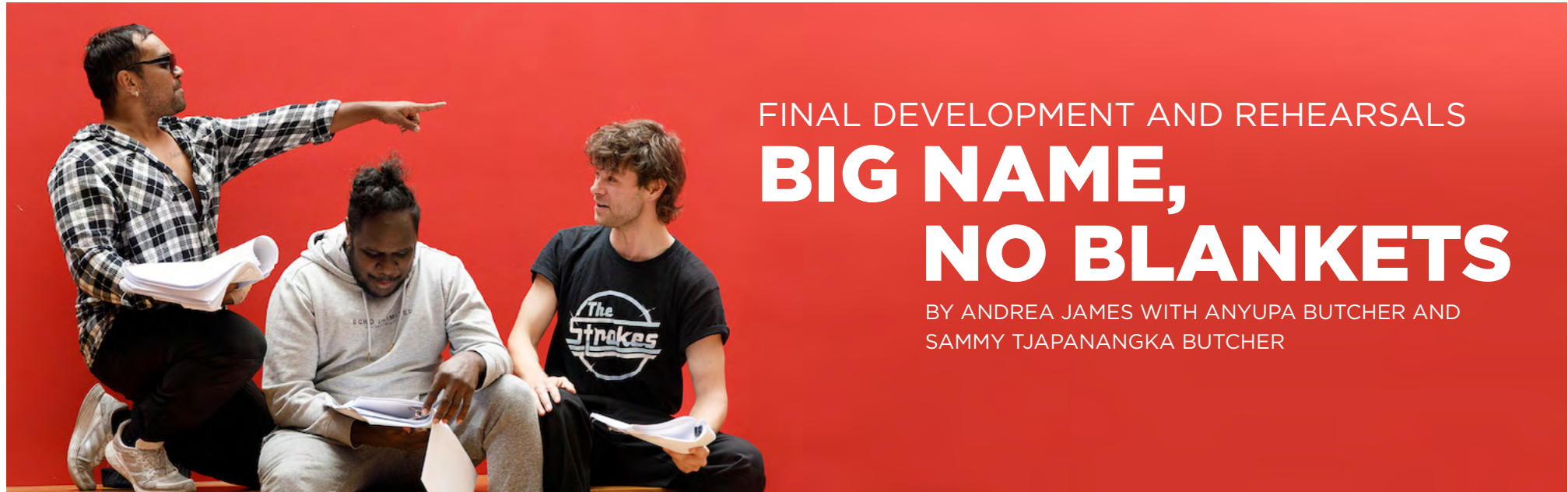
This production interweaves story, dance and music in an extraordinary blending of artforms that rings true for the story while also innovating contemporary performance artforms.

The creative team included the remarkable Wiradjuri Songman Gary Watling as the composer and musician and Jonathan Jones award-winning Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi visual artist as the set designer. We had the involvement of Wiradjuri Language translator Aunty Diane Riley McNaboe and cultural advice, leadership and support from Aunty Shirley Mathews and Aunty Ann Crib. It was a strong Wiradjuri team to tell a significant Wiradjuri story.

Above: Performers Tyrel Dulvarie, Rika Hamaguch and Kaine Sultan-Babij. Photo by Pedro Greig.







FINAL DEVELOPMENT AND REHEARSALS  
**BIG NAME,  
NO BLANKETS**

BY ANDREA JAMES WITH ANYUPA BUTCHER AND  
SAMMY TJAPANANGKA BUTCHER



We also profiled *Big Name, No Blankets* to national and international delegates at a Major Festivals Initiative (MFI) session in June 2023, and at an APAM roundtable the same month, as well as pitching the work as part of APAM’s digital Here’s Our Idea program.

In 2024 and 2025, *Big Name, No Blankets* will tour to major festivals nationally, before being scaled down for remote touring in the Northern Territory, and further scaled down to a nimble version for touring into prisons across the NT and Victoria.

ILBIJERRI is honoured to be working very closely with the founding member of the Warumpi Band – and absolute big-hearted legend – Sammy Tjapanangka Butcher, in the creation of this work. Sammy and his family have guided this project since ILBIJERRI began its journey on the story in 2019. Through this collaboration, ILBIJERRI is proud to ensure that creative and cultural control remains in the hands of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose story it is that we are producing. This is central to our practice.

*Big Name, No Blankets* is both timely and joyful – the celebration that we all need. It is the ultimate antidote to the current state of the world.

Above L-R: Tibian Wyles, Baykali Ganambarr and Jackson Peele. Left L-R: Rachael Maza, Anyupa Butcher and Andrea James. Photos by James Henry.



*Big Name, No Blankets* celebrates the phenomenal journey and impact of Australian music icons, Warumpi Band, told from the perspective of founding member Sammy Tjapanangka Butcher.

ILBIJERRI held creative developments of *Big Name, No Blankets* in March and August 2023, each culminating in work-in-progress showings to invited guests – the August show ended with all our guests getting up and dancing! In November to December we undertook pre-production and rehearsals in Melbourne, in the lead-up to our Sydney Festival world premiere in January 2024.



*Gurr Era Op*, a compelling dance theatre piece about climate action by Ghenoa Gela, is a collaboration with Force Majeure and in association with ILBIJERRI. It underwent a pivotal development phase from May to June 2023. During this period, we honed the dramaturgical structure of the piece and consolidated its script, laying a robust foundation for its artistic journey. Recognising the narrative's need for intimacy and the yarning structure of the text, we chose to reimagine the scale, opting for a more intimate space to enhance its resonance. With this realisation, we secured Bangarra studio as the venue for its premiere at Sydney Festival in 2024.

In 2023, roles shifted within our creative team as the role of our Creative Associate, Amy Sole, transitioned from Co-Director to Associate Director. This shift was a strategic move to empower our lead creative, Ghenoa Gela, giving her unfettered creative autonomy and support in facilitating the realisation of her vision.

From November to December, 2023, rehearsals commenced at Bangarra studio. It proved to be a period of great discovery, both artistically and conceptually. Through a series of explorations, we crafted the design elements and layout, with the symbolic imagery of crab traps serving as a guiding beacon. Central to the rehearsal process were text refinements, collaborative devising, and choreographing, all of which flourished amidst an atmosphere of joy, laughter, and delicious food.

Above: Ghenoa Gela. Photo by Ashley de Prazer.

Great progress was made throughout 2023 on *Biw A Githalay*, with further work being done crafting the script and deeper ties being established between ILBIJERRI and the Saibai Cultural Elders.

ILBIJERRI has engaged Dead Puppets Society as a partner in creating puppetry for the production and they joined us for a creative development in October which took place at QPAC, Brisbane. Over the course of the week's development, some initial prototype puppets were created and further development of the script took place.

While in Brisbane the ILBIJERRI team continued conversations with QPAC around building towards a Brisbane premiere of the show followed by a tour of Communities in Bamaga and Saibai Island as well as the potential for additional partnerships with presenters across Queensland and other states.

An additional development took place at Dead Puppet Society's studio in December that has further generated excitement within the team about the year ahead. Plans are to continue puppet and costume creation in 2024 in Brisbane and Cairns, working with Community in both locations to bring the production to life.

"The collaborative process between industry and Cultural creatives is always a fruitful process held with the blessing and guidance from the Saibai Elders and Community." - Mayella Koroï, Sound Designer & Producer

Above L-R: Benjin Maza, Mayella Koroï and Joshua Thaiday. Photo by Dead Puppets Society.





# SCAR TREES

WORK IN PROGRESS

In 2023 we engaged with a number of presenters and communities to gauge interest for a Melbourne tour of *Scar Trees* which is scheduled to take place in July 2024.

Confirmed locations include Bunjil Place in the City of Casey and The Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre in Wyndham Vale, which both expressed a desire for a production for the Communities in those areas. We will also be having at least one showing in central Melbourne and are currently in conversation with Community in Castlemaine to take the production there for a performance.

Above: Dion Williams, Rachael Oak Butler and Muriel Spearim. Photo by Tiffany Garvie.



In 2023 we teamed up with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) to celebrate the enormous legacy of Gunditjamaara (Kirrae Whurrong/Djab Wurrung), Bundjalung Senior Elder, Songman and Storyteller Archie Roach AC AM, as part of the MSO's NAIDOC Week program.

Our Artistic Director & Co-CEO Rachael Maza was approached to direct the concert where she led a high calibre group of First People musicians including Dan Sultan, Emma Donovan, William Barton, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO plus many more in a spectacular performance that honoured the life of Archie Roach AC AM. Set in the grand Hamer Hall over two shows, there was a full house and standing ovation each night.

This partnership saw us branching into new artistic forms of classical music and giving us access to new audiences. After the success of this partnership, we have discussed the potential of future collaborations with the MSO.

Back Row L-R: Sally Dastey, Tenzin Choegyal, Lionel Lauch, Tamala Shelton, William Barton, Allara Briggs Pattison, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO, Dan Sultan, Paul Grabowsky AO, Jaime Martin, Jess Hitchcock, Emma Donovan, Kee'ahn and Radical Son.

Front Row: Members of the Dhungala Children's Choir. Photo by Samantha Meuleman.

**Melbourne  
Symphony  
Orchestra**



# SOCIAL IMPACT

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. This participatory theatre model pushes our Social Impact work further by centering the work on participants' stories and experiences, giving Community members ownership over the material being explored, and agency in discovering culturally safe ways to reduce stigma and address health. Our methodology privileges First Peoples' knowledge and cultural values, emphasising the cultural determinants of health in addressing best practices in public health.

ILBIJERRI is committed to intentional and imaginative engagement with audiences around critical issues faced by First Peoples. Our Social Impact program for 2023 included the continuation of two performance works, under the umbrella of *Stigma Stories* to address health and wellbeing issues around STIs and menopause.

Social Impact Producer Laura Harris was invited to speak at the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres conference in Brisbane in September 2023. Laura attended and spoke on a panel about performing arts centres doing more to advance social impact. Laura spoke about ILBIJERRI's Social Impact program, the company's approach to working in Communities, and what partnering organisations can do to support First Peoples ways of working, and how doing so benefits audience experience and the industry as a whole.



## THE SCORE

The production of *The Score* increased awareness among young First Peoples about the realities of STIs and transmission of STIs. Australia has seen a decade-long trend of rising rates of STIs particularly chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhoea. This has disproportionately affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and youth.

*The Score* is an immersive, interactive workshop/performance project for First Nations young people and communities aimed at destigmatising sexual health discussions, and providing tailored and culturally appropriate strengths-based approaches to creating generational change towards optimal sexual health. The process represents an innovative, integrated model for health promotion and education through theatre that privileges First Peoples' knowledge and cultural approaches, community engagement, and capacity building.

In early 2023, *The Score* team undertook capacity building with youth workers and wellbeing staff at Bunjilwarra Koori Youth Drug & Alcohol Healing Service. Across two days, ILBIJERRI's team provided training to equip Bunjilwarra staff to use *The*

## Participant Feedback

“I got to meet and get to know a fantastic group of creatives and do work which I never saw myself doing but now is something I would love to continue doing. It was a space where I felt very held and the content and reason for this project was something that I care about.”

“It was a great refresher in working with young people”

“*The Score* was supported and held as a safe and sovereign space for artists and the work. I felt self determined and empowered as a leading artist”

*Score's* innovative theatre-based approaches to education, health promotion, and wellbeing in their work with young people engaged with the service. The training provided staff

with the skills to facilitate games, scenarios and fictional characters they can use to build group cohesion and trust among young people, and explore issues such as conflict, sexual health, drug and alcohol use, and mental health. Staff were overwhelmingly positive about the potential to use these approaches in their workplace.

We continued the research and evaluation of *The Score* under Dr Sarah Woodland at the University of Melbourne Victorian College of the Arts and the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health throughout 2023.

Above L-R: Taeg Twist, Miela Anich, Zach Blampied and Matisse Knight. Photo by Erika Budiman of Pixels+PaperStudio.







**GOODBYE AUNTY FLO**

*Goodbye Aunty Flo* was first developed by Nazaree Dickerson in consultation with First Peoples women across Victoria in 2021. It integrates the many facets of menopause and the personal stories which allow for a better understanding of the issue generally.

In 2023 ILBIJERRI’s Social Impact producer and support staff visited community sites to conduct pre-tour consultations before the rollout phase of a premiere tour in March 2023.

In association with health services, women’s groups, and community organisations we toured *Goodbye Aunty Flo* across metropolitan Melbourne. The tour included: Boorndawan Aboriginal Healing Service, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and Oonah Belonging Place, Frankston Nairn Marr, Djambana Gathering Place, Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place, Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation Melton, Aboriginal Advancement League.

The show skillfully uses humour to break down stigma and open up conversations about women’s health. After each Community show, the team engaged in a yarning circle with audiences where women comfortably shared their experiences with perimenopause

and menopause. The overwhelming response from audiences was their appreciation for ILBIJERRI creating very relatable characters, tackling taboo topics with a light hearted approach, and providing a joyful shared experience for women in their Community.

In 2023, we also pitched *Goodbye Aunty Flo* at Showcase Victoria and garnered interest from mainstream performing arts centres. This would allow the company to put together a hybrid tour for 2024, where we take the show to First Peoples Communities, as well as broader public audiences.

An additional public performance took place at ILBIJERRI’s home at Collingwood Yards to allow us to share the performance with a broader audience. We invited prospective presenting partners to this performance with the goal of embarking on a Regional Victoria tour in 2024.

Above L-R: Lisa Maza, Georgia MacGuire and Helen Kennedy. Photo by Tiffany Garvie.



**Audience Feedback**

“This show is incredible, and presents menopause in a non-shame way appropriate for Community and all mob.”

“Absolutely loved it. Was so entertaining and relatable!”

“Performance was amazing. Loved every moment. An important topic, needs to be normalised. Keep up the great ‘Flo’!”

“Amazing work! Great humour. Made it so accessible!”

**88%**  
OF AUDIENCE STRONGLY AGREED THEATRE SHOWS LIKE *GOODBYE AUNTY FLO* ARE A GOOD WAY TO ENCOURAGE TALKING ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLBEING.



## BLACKWRIGHTS

In 2023 *BlackWrights* took part in a reading of works at YIRRAMBOI Festival, which was met with great feedback from the audience. We then commenced the next phase of the program that required writers to submit a first draft of their play for consideration. Three writers, Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Phoebe Grainer and Maurial Spearim, were selected to take part in the next phase of the program and they continued to work on their scripts with ongoing dramaturgy sessions and regroups as a team to share their practice as a collective.

2023 also saw the commencement of a partnership between ILBIJERRI and Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC), which will see the three writers have their works staged at MTC in 2024 as part of a repertory season.

Above: Rachael Maza (centre). Photo by Tiffany Garvie.



## ENSEMBLE

ILBIJERRI's Ensemble is our artist development program that supports First People into theatre practitioner roles. Ensemble Program Director Nazaree Dickerson has trained the Ensemble team to lead workshops, build industry networks and career pathways. Running since 2018, ILBIJERRI's Ensemble program has been shaped by its participants - and in 2023 the program empowered a whole new generation of young theatre-makers.

In 2023 Corey Saylor-Brunskill took on the role of director and workshop facilitator for *Get Your Geek On* after being trained throughout 2022. *Get Your Geek On* is an Ensemble devised 30 minute performance for primary school aged children. Ensemble alumni Miela Anich and Zane Webster also took on lead workshop facilitator and performance roles in 2023.

Through ILBIJERRI's social media platforms, we did a call out for free workshops and performances in schools and we reached new schools and communities. In 2024 there will be a metro and regional Victorian school tour of *Get Your Geek On*.

Above: Back row L-R: Zane Webster, Zach Blampied, Jenny Le. Middle Row: Zerene Jaadwa, Miela Anich, Kimmie Lovegrove, and Matisse Knight. Front Row: Taeg Twist and Corey Saylor-Brunskill. Photo by Erika Budiman of Pixels+PaperStudio







## AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING ARTS MARKET (APAM) FIRST NATIONS LEAD 2019-24

### APAM

As the First Nations Lead for APAM, ILBIJERRI brings the company's extensive expertise and leadership as a successful and internationally engaged First Peoples led organisation. The partnership comprises of two producers employed by ILBIJERRI and based in the APAM office, and the APAM First Nations Advisory Group chaired by our Artistic Director Rachael Maza. The advisory group is made up of performing arts sector leaders from across the country who guide APAM's First Peoples program.

In 2023 we continued to deliver Blak Lounge - a digital space convened quarterly, connecting international First Peoples for networking and conversations relevant to upcoming APAM gatherings and the global performing arts sector. Each lounge is co-hosted by one of our First Peoples industry peers as a guest speaker, alongside our First Peoples APAM producer. It is a valuable networking resource inclusive of all 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.

We also produced four in-person gatherings with World Pride 2024, RISING Festival, PANNZ and Yellamundie. These events brought First People communities together and continued to build on our collaborations, networks and mentoring.

### First Nations Performing Arts Companies Workforce Roundtable

Since 2020 we have been collaborating with BlakDance, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Marrugeku, Moogahlin Performing Arts, Bangarra and NAISDA to advocate for workforce priorities in our sector under the title First Nations Performing Arts Companies (FNPAC). In June 2023 FNPAC brought representatives from the national performing arts sector together to discuss solutions for First Peoples self determined workforce development. It was a gathering of strong blak leadership and self determination with

over 100 people participating in the forum. To get a sense of the event, you can watch [here](#). In the lead up to the forum we commissioned consultations that led to a Background Issues Paper. We identified six key workforce development issues impacting sustainable career pathways for First Peoples arts and culture workers. We are gathering the insights of the discussion for a report that is in development, but in the meantime you can read the Background Issue Paper [here](#).

### Tri-Nations Gathering

As part of FNPAC and our collectively expressed need for First People Producer development we are proud to have collectively assisted 27 First Peoples Producers and independent artists to travel to Aotearoa to attend Kia Mau Festival and the Tri-Nations gathering for 2023. This was an important investment in the next generation to participate in the global First Peoples self-determined context, and to cultivate their own relationships and opportunities for First Peoples-to-First Peoples trade, exchange and reciprocity. Tri-Nations is a self-determined, First Peoples-led circle of emerging and established arts practitioners, Elders, Cultural Leaders and Knowledge Keepers, who are committed to supporting international contemporary First Peoples performing arts with our people, by our people and for our people. We had five ILBIJERRI staff attend this event: Executive Director Angela Flynn, Producers Joel Stevens, Alexandra Paige and Theodore Cassady and Community Engagement Coordinator Della Bedford. It was the first in-person gathering post COVID and it was a joy and pleasure to take part in this gathering.



Above Left: Luke Currie-Richardson.  
Above Middle: Laura Harris and Teresa Moore with Rachael Maza.  
Above Right: Angela Flynn and Victor Rodger.  
Photos by Tiffany Garvie.

# 100%

FIRST PEOPLE IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

# 100%

PROJECTS WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY FIRST PEOPLE ARTISTS

# 71

FIRST PEOPLE ARTIST EMPLOYED

# 7577

PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

# 816

PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR LECTURES, SEMINARS AND PUBLIC TALKS

# 96

PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

# 9

NEW ENSEMBLE SCHOOL FACILITATORS

# 9

NEW SOCIAL IMPACT FACILITATORS

## 2023 PRODUCTIONS

### TRACKER

Writer	Ursula Yovich
Co-Director & Choreographer	Daniel Riley
Co-Director	Rachael Maza
Composer & Sound Designer	James Henry
Dramaturg	Amy Sole & Jennifer Medway
Visual & Spatial Designer	Jonathan Jones Development
Composer & Live Musician	Gary Watling
Producer	Erin Milne
Set Designer	Jonathan Jones
Lighting Designer	Chloe Ogilvie
Production Manager	Simon Greer
Stage Manager	Lyndie Li Wan Po
Wiradjuri Language Translator	Aunty Diane Riley McNaboe
Cast	Tyrel Dulvarie, Rika Hamaguchi, Ari Maza Long (Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and SA Regional Tour), Kaine Sultan-Babij, Ella Ferris (Melbourne), Abbie-lee Lewis (Sydney)

### BIG NAME, NO BLANKETS

Writer	Andrea James
Story and Cultural Consultant	Sammy Butcher (founding member of Warumpi Band)
Warumpi Family Consulting	Suzina McDonald & Marion Burarrwanga
Co-Directors	Rachael Maza & Anyupa Butcher
Music Director	Gary Watling
Cinematographer & Sound Designer	James Henry
Sound Arrangements & Composition	Crystal Butcher
Sound Arrangements & Composition Mentor	David Bridie
Dramaturg	Amy Sole
Set Designer	Emily Barrie
Lighting Designer	Jenny Hector
Costume Designer	Heidi Brooks
Video Content Designer	Sean Bacon
Animation	Patricia McKean and Guck
Producers	Nina Bonacci & Alexandra Paige
Theatre Consultant	Sarah Goodes
Production Manager	Nathan Evers
Stage Manager	Celina Mack
Assistant Stage Managers	PJ Rosas & Kira Feeney
Audio Engineer	Daniel Lade
Core Band	Gary Watling, Malcolm Beveridge, Jason Butcher, Jeremiah Butcher

### Performers

Baykali Ganambarr (Sammy), Googoorewon Knox (George), Teangi Knox (Gordon & drums), Aaron McGrath (Brian & Ensemble), Jackson Peele (Neil), Cassandra Williams (Suzina, Mum, Ensemble), Tibian Wyles (Ian, Ensemble, Understudy)

### GURR ERA OP

**Creator, Director, Writer and Performer**  
**Associate Director/ILBIJERRI Theatre Creative Associate**  
**Artistic Consultant/Force Majeure Artistic Director**  
**Elders/Cultural Consultants/Advisors**

Ghenoa Gela

Amy Sole

Danielle Micich  
Anson Jack Gela, Annie Gela, Agnes Santo, Meo Sailor, Mua Sailor, Nancy Nawie, Patricia Dow, Sarah Gela, Joshua Thaiday

**Set Designer**  
**Costume Designer**  
**Lighting Designer**  
**Composer and Sound Designer**  
**Costume Associate**  
**Stage Manager**  
**Production Manager**  
**Producer**  
**Performers**

Katy Moir  
Lisa Fa'alafi  
Kelsey Lee  
Ania Reynolds  
Anthony Aitch  
Bronte Schuftan  
Mark Haslam  
Force Majeure  
Taryn Beatty, Berthalia Selina Reuben, Aba Bero

### BIW A GITHALAY

**Story Holders**  
**Senior Cultural Consultant & Co-writer**  
**Senior Cultural Consultant**  
**Co-Writer**  
**Director/Facilitator**  
**Senior Language Consultant**  
**Brisbane Location Facilitator**  
**Bamaga Location & Language Consultant**  
**Puppet/Costume Co-Designer**  
**Sound Designer/Producer**  
**Producer**

Seven Clans of Saibai Island  
Milton Walit  
MacRose Elu  
John Harvey  
Rachael Maza  
Mariana Babia  
Nancy Bamaga  
Leonora Adidi  
Sedrick Waia  
Mayella Koroj  
Joel Stevens

### SCAR TREE

**Writer**  
**Director**  
**Producer**  
**Social Impact Producer**  
**Community Engagement Producer**

Declan Furber Gillick  
Amy Sole  
Joel Stevens  
Laura Harris  
Della Bedford



## 2023 PRODUCTIONS CONTINUED

### ARCHIE ROACH - ONE SONG

**Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Conductor** Jaime Martin  
**Music Director** Paul Grabowsky AO  
**Stage Director** Rachael Maza  
**Featuring** Dan Sultan  
 Emma Donovan  
 William Barton  
 Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO  
 Jess Hitchcock  
 Radical Son  
 Sally Dastey  
 Kee'ahn  
 Tamala Shelton  
 Dhungala Children's Choir

### THE SCORE

**Program Designers**

Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Stefo Nantsou (Zeal Theatre), Sarah Woodland (University of Melbourne)

**Devised by**

Bayden Clayton, Lisa Maza, Zerene Jaadwa, Jerrika Pevitt, Bala Neba, and Axel Garay. With contributions from Richard Barber and Pongjit Saphakhun (Free Theatre)

**Producer**

Laura Harris

**Associate Producer**

Theodore Cassady

**2023 Ensemble**

Miela Anich, Della Bedford, Zach Blampied, Zerene Jaadwa, Matisse Knight, Kimmie Lovegrove, Corey Saylor-Brunskill, Taeg Twist, and Zane Webster

### GOODBYE AUNTY FLO

**Writer & Director**

Nazaree Dickerson

**Dramaturg**

Amy Sole

**Set & Costume Design**

Emily Barrie

**Sound Design**

Candice Lorrae

**Stage Manager**

Jenny Le

**Producer**

Laura Harris

**Community Coordinators**

April Clarke / Della Bedford

**Yarning Circle Facilitators**

April Clarke / Della Bedford

**Cast**

Lisa Maza (Aunty Flo), Denise McGuinness (Jules), Georgia MacGuire (Sharon)

### VIRAL

**Writer**

Maryanne Sam

**Screen Adaptation**

Chantelle Murray

**Creative Direction**

Kamarra Bell-Wykes

**Producer**

Lauren Sheree

**Cast**

Blayne Welsh, Laila Thaker, Corey Saylor-Brunskill, Joshua Austin, Zerene Jaadwa, Lisa Maza, Nick Sumner-Wright, Eban Roach, Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, Jaeden Williams, Stone Motherless Cold, Alinta Roberta, Natasha Garling, Dylan Kerr  
 YOUTHWORX Productions

**Film and editing**

### BLACKWRIGHTS

**Creative Associate & Co-Director**

Amy Sole

**Producer**

Joel Stevens

**Phase 1**

**Co-Directors**

Kirk Page, Rachael Maza

**Writers**

Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, Jackie Sheppard, Dalara Williams Nelson Baker, Tahlee Fereday, Kristel-Lee Kickett, Dalara Williams, Dion Williams  
 Lauren Bok

**Cast**

**Stage Manager**

**Phase 2**

**Writers**

Isobel Morphy-Walsh, Phoebe Grainer, Maurial Spearim

**Dramaturgs**

Jules Orcullo, Dylan Van den Berg

### ENSEMBLE

**Ensemble Participants**

Corey Salor-Brunskill, Zane Webster, Miela Anich

**Producer**

Alexandra Paige

**Associate Producer**

Theodore Cassady

# AUDITED FINANCIALS

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>PROFIT OR LOSS STATEMENT</b>		
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grant Income	2,327,500	1,996,906
Event Income	53,875	47,726
Philanthropy and Donations	85,667	131,016
Other Income	147,253	109,928
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>2,614,295</b>	<b>2,285,576</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Presenting & Touring	364,523	197,394
Employee Benefits & Expenses	1,846,275	1,808,335
Infrastructure Costs	216,409	208,715
Marketing	43,732	49,688
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,470,939</b>	<b>2,264,132</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) BEFORE INCOME TAX</b>	<b>143,356</b>	<b>21,445</b>
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) AFTER INCOME TAX</b>	<b>143,356</b>	<b>21,445</b>
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>143,356</b>	<b>21,445</b>

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION</b>		
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,191,107	2,648,740
Trade and other receivables	136,288	7,768
Other current assets	1,934	726
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>3,329,329</b>	<b>2,657,234</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Refundable deposit	8,250	8,750
Property, plant and equipment	147,955	191,609
Right-of-use asset	35,299	65,556
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>191,504</b>	<b>265,915</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>3,520,833</b>	<b>2,923,150</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	238,716	277,531
Contract Liabilities	2,449,959	1,799,352
Provisions	133,357	259,756
Lease Liability	32,929	31,065
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,854,961</b>	<b>2,367,704</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Lease Liability	5,438	38,368
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>5,438</b>	<b>38,368</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,860,399</b>	<b>2,406,072</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>660,434</b>	<b>517,078</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	660,434	517,078
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>660,434</b>	<b>517,078</b>



# STAFF & BOARD



## **ELDERS IN RESIDENCE**

N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs AM  
Uncle Larry Walsh

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Chair** Dr Eugenia Flynn  
**Deputy Chair** Brian Bero  
**Treasurer** Dr Suzi Hutchings  
**Secretary** Gavin Somers  
**Director** Kareena Gay  
**Director** Glenn Shea

## **STAFF**

**Artistic Director & Co-CEO** Rachael Maza  
**Executive Director & Co-CEO** Angela Flynn  
**Creative Associate** Amy Sole  
**General Manager** Darise Pulfer  
**Head of Producing** Nina Bonacci  
**Development Manager** Kirsty Hillhouse  
**Marketing Manager (until July 2023)** Tania Owen  
**Marketing Manager (from October 2023)** Sophia Constantine  
**Marketing & Admin Coordinator** Natasha Carter  
**APAM First Nations Lead Senior Producer** Kath Papas  
**Social Impact Producer** Laura Harris  
**Community Engagement Producer** Della Bedford  
**Producer** Alexandra Paige  
**Producer** Joel Stevens  
**Associate Producer** Theodore Cassady  
**Associate Producer APAM** Mayella Koroi

# OUR PATRONS

Our Supporters are an integral part of the ILBIJERRI family. We extend our warm thanks to the generosity and investment of Patrons. Your support has a huge impact on ILBIJERRI and directly supports our ability to tell our stories our way with cultural and artistic integrity.



## MUDRURT (Blue Stars)

**\$10,000 - \$20,000**

Julie Kantor AO



## WAR-RAK (Banksia)

**\$1,000- \$2,499**

Anonymous  
Anonymous



## BURN-NA-LOOK (Blackwood)

**\$100 - \$499**

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Amanda Lourie  
Anna Moulton  
Barbara Panelli  
Bree Wyeth  
Bruce Fisher  
Carmelina Di Guglielmo  
Carolyn Poon  
Claire Wilcock  
Dylan Van Den Berg  
Eloise Curry  
Helen Sandercoe  
James O'May  
Jane Bayly  
Jean Taylor  
Jennifer Bates  
Jessie McCudden  
Judy Pile  
Julie Warren  
Kavitha Chandra-Shekeran  
Lesley Somerville  
Leslie Tate  
Lisa Maza  
Margaret Grant  
Mitchell Ralston  
Ngair Bennett  
Outer Urban Projects  
Peta Murray  
Peter Kift  
Rosemary Hinde  
Ruark Lewis  
Samara Pitt  
Vanessa Witton  
Xavier O'Shannessy



## WAYETUCK (Black She-oak )

**\$5,000 - \$10,000**

Carrillo Gantner AC & Ziyin Wang  
Gantner  
Linda Herd



## GARAWANG (Apple-berries)

**\$500- \$999**

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Christine Bayly  
Debra Jefferies  
Jacqueline Robinson  
Jemana Stellato  
Pledger  
Jennifer Reed  
John O'Rourke  
Naomi Pullen  
Oscar Redding  
Rodney Sharp  
Sarah Miller  
Simon Bedford  
Steve Gome



## DJELWUCK (Mulberries)

**\$2,500 - \$4,999**

Wesley Enoch AM  
Jenny M Green



# OUR PARTNERS

We couldn't do all that we do without the incredible support of our major government, corporate, community and philanthropic partners. It takes a whole community to bring our work to life.

We would like to acknowledge the critical role our partners play through their generosity, passion and commitment.

From all of us at ILBIJERRI, **thank you.** Your commitment to ILBIJERRI is invaluable, and we thank every one of you for believing in our dreams and joining us to achieve our vision.

## GOVERNMENT CORE FUNDING PARTNERS



## PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS



## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PARTNERS



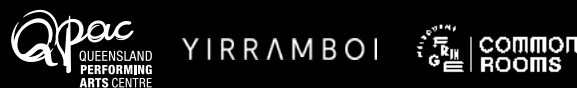
## OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



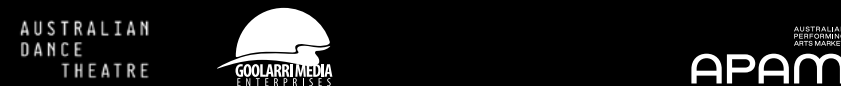
## HEALTH AND SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERS



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



## SECTOR PARTNERS



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