

First Nations Performing Arts Companies

First Nations-led Industry Impact

First Nations Performing Arts

A photograph of a person in traditional Indigenous regalia, including a large feathered headdress, performing a dance. The person is in motion, with their arms and torso visible. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the person and their regalia.

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK
2025–2030**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The organisations that make up the group of First Nations Performing Arts Companies collectively uphold First Peoples sovereignty. We honour and pay respects to Country on which we work, travel and share stories. We pay respects to our Elders, past and present. We acknowledge all First Peoples of this continent and celebrate the beauty and strength of our communities. Always was, always will be.

We pay respect and homage to all Elders across Australia.

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK

First Published June 2025

This framework was developed by the First Nations Performing Arts Companies, a network of federally funded, First Peoples-governed arts organisations (in alphabetical order):

Lead organisations

- Bangarra Dance Theatre
- BlakDance
- ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
- Marrugeku (First Nations-led/governed intercultural company)
- Moogahlin Performing Arts
- Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Training organisation

- NAISDA Dance College

Writing & strategic support

This report has been researched and prepared by independent arts consultant Penny Miles in collaboration with representatives from the above organisation group. Our thanks to the generosity of many independent artists and other companies who shared their experiences, ideas and learnings in industry gatherings, interviews, and many conversations.

Funding support

This framework flows from the outcomes of the 2023 First Nations Performing Arts Workforce Roundtable, held on Wurundjeri land at Abbotsford Convent on Tuesday 13 June 2023. The industry roundtable was facilitated by Cameron Costello and Penny Miles and was made possible with funding from Creative Australia.

First Nations Performing Arts Companies



OUR INVITATION

We invite you to consider the future for the First Nations Performing Arts workforce with us.

Together, our companies represent a range of First Peoples' Performing Arts disciplines, art forms and expertise. As a collective of individual companies, the sum of our parts cover:

- **art forms:** theatre, dance, multi-arts and interdisciplinary practices
- **all scales:** major national performing arts framework, small-to-medium companies and service organisations for established and emerging artists
- **diversity of cultural representation:** First People's-led, community-centred, and intercultural experiences.

From these unique viewpoints, our combined insights offer a powerful understanding of the current and enduring significant challenges for First Peoples performing artists, creatives and arts workers.

In this report we outline these challenges, and importantly, start the conversation toward solutions. Through sharing with the broader sector, we have developed a set of guiding principles for a successful pathway forward. To bring these ideas to life, this report also offers a sample model as inspiration.

We envisage implementing a new, structured focus for the First Peoples performing arts workforce that will benefit First People industry entrants, existing employees, current workforce retention, the independent sector, the broader industry, and support the vision of government and society for Closing the Gap.

We look forward to you joining us in taking the next step toward a sustainable and vibrant workforce.

■ ■ We've been talking about it for many years, and often the conversations are ones we've had previously but I think now... there actually is an awakening. ■ ■

Rhoda Roberts AO, Artistic Director, 2023 Workforce Roundtable

WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE?

Currently 53.4% of roles across our First Nations Performing Arts companies are held by First Peoples. This should be 100%.*

First Nations cultural and artistic expression, First Nations production, First Nations leadership, First Nations training, First Nations administration – at every step, from creation to presentation, from strategy to delivery, all stages should be influenced, designed and decided by First Peoples.

Maximising employment of First Peoples in these companies is critical and overdue. The need reflects at its core the international rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Closing the Gap agreement, and in practical terms provides benefits of:

- safeguarding, preserving, growing, evolving, and developing culture with true self-determination
- authentic celebration, promoting, and developing cultural expression
- sharing stories, truth-telling and showcasing desired futures
- genuine connection and trust to support communities to come together for social well-being and inspiring younger generations
- creating prosperity with employment and income generating tours and presentations
- creating skills development opportunities formally and informally for early and mid-career First Nations arts workers.

This list is not a 'nice to have', but a '**must achieve**' situation for these companies, the communities they represent and the overall sector. It is estimated the shortfall in First Nations workforce representation is even higher when including the producing needs of independents artists and First Nations work being done by non-Indigenous companies

It is a long pathway to achieve the 100% goal for the First Nations performing arts sector. Barriers exist at each stage of attracting, recruiting, training, and retaining a First Nations performing arts workforce. These are not isolated barriers nor are they new. But success is possible with a new approach. We must think of funding for these organisations as **investment not subsidy**.

* Not including intentional intercultural opportunities such as those meeting the vision of organisations like Marrugeku.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE SUCCESS?

Establishing a thriving First Nations performing arts industry is a long-shared ambition of First People artists, organisations, and successive Federal, State and Territory governments. So why aren't we there yet?

Over the years, different government programs have looked to cultivate the workforce and specific skills shortages. There has been varied success across programs, but no sustainable growth.

This can be attributed to:

- short-term nature of programs
- limited number of placements
- lack of collaborations across jurisdictions
- programs addressing only one part of the workforce chain
- policy design with little or no consultation
- lack of First Nations-led training organisations or programs designed for and by First Nations institutes and educators.

The learnings of the 2024 Productivity Commission report on the Closing the Gap agreement demonstrates how these factors can stagnate results *"Although there are pockets of good practice, overall progress against the Priority Reforms has been slow, uncoordinated and piecemeal"*.

A core recommendation of the Productivity Commission is to reform the institutional mindset of top-down support. Seen as fundamental to success, this has been an inspiration for this Framework. To achieve the needed workforce uplift, First Nations-led is key.

Image: Rachael Maza and Anyupa Butcher, *Big Name No Blankets*, creative development. Photo: James Henry.



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“ We really need to look at the long-term goals, not opportunities that are six months, one year based. They need to be long term investment. I would suggest 1–2 years should be a minimum, and then 5–10 years. Otherwise, if we keep going with these pilot six-month programs we are going to end up in the same position. ”

Sinsa Mansell, Producer,
Performing Lines TAS, 2023 Workforce Roundtable

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE



Image: *Yuldea*, Bangarra, community night, Sydney Opera House. Photo: Daniel Boud.

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE SUMMARY

There are five key drivers for why we need to act now to establish First Nations-led solutions for increasing the scale and vitality of the First Nations Performing Arts workforce.



1. SOCIETY CONTEXT

There has never been a more critical time to increase First Peoples representation in First Nations performing arts.

We are a society that said no to the First Nations Voice. We are failing at Closing the Gap on disadvantage – stark and devastating gaps across most facets of life created by the same colonial structures responsible for progressing results.

We need a compass for the realities of experiences. We need to lean into the truth of today and how this society was forged. To never forget, to never repeat, to acknowledge, to change and to heal. We need to create space for and listen to stories.

There is opportunity to respect, celebrate and genuinely cherish the oldest continuing culture on this planet. Cultures of care and knowledge born of this land, for this land. There is much an imported society could learn.

Our First Nations artists and companies and training organisations are ambassadors of creativity and sharing cultural expression. They can provide a welcoming entry point for the wider audiences to increase awareness, familiarity and understanding. Our artists produce stories, promote truth-telling, and can present a vision for the future.

The performing arts provide moments to come together, to have shared experiences, to celebrate, and commemorate.

For our First Nations artists and companies to deliver all these needed societal benefits, they need First Peoples employed in all roles. A First Nations workforce is the only way to guarantee authentic contribution, to achieve self-determination. Required roles include:

- Creative & production roles: set designers, lighting designers, composers, costumer designers
- Producing, senior & specialised admin roles: marketing, fundraising, support roles, general management

Currently, at the height of their peak production periods, the following First Nations Performing Arts Companies have on average 33% of close to 800 roles covered by non-Indigenous contractors and employees:

- Bangarra Dance Theatre
- BlakDance
- ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
- Marrugeku*
- Moogahlin Performing Arts
- Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company
- NAISDA Dance College

These organisations have joined forces to address the workforce issues. Together the First Nations Performing Arts Companies recognise there has never been a more opportune time to increase First Peoples representation.

The quality and strength of work by these companies continues to gain momentum with new records in audience development continually being reset in their major city seasons and on national tours. International demand for First Nations work continues to grow and is an opportunity to cultivate new income pathways. These market avenues expect fully self-determined productions.

The Revive National Cultural Policy, and the affiliation of the arts with the portfolio of employment and workplace relations, are timely levers to address the culmination of need and capitalising on opportunities.

“It’s incredible the diversity of peoples from across the sector that are here in support of this because we acknowledge this is important. Our stories are important. Our position in this country as the First Peoples of this country is important.”

Dr Rachael Maza AM,
Artistic Director ILBIJERRI Theatre Company,
2023 Workforce Roundtable

* First Nations-led/governed intercultural company.

2. INDUSTRY SUPPORT

To help drive change, the seven organisations listed earlier decided to expand the conversation with an invitation to the industry to attend a roundtable on the state of First Nations Performing Arts Workforce in 2023.

Over 90 people, representing First Peoples artists, arts workers, First Nations-led organisations, Indigenous focused companies, and non-Indigenous organisations, attended the roundtable. This was a pivotal moment bringing together many intersecting stakeholders.

Throughout the day, First Peoples-led panel discussions and workshops illuminated a deeper understanding of workforce challenges and the critical need.

The clarity of realities and challenges for the First Nations workforce galvanised the roundtable participants in support for change.

Expressed on the day with a show of hands and comments, there was enthusiastic industry support for change in the way workforce development is addressed. In exit surveys, 95% of respondents (n 43 orgs) said they gained new insights and perspectives during the roundtable, and **97% endorsed:**

- **co-design of solutions with First Peoples as essential for success**
- **a commitment to embed long-term strategies.**

From the broader sector, roundtable delegates represented major producing and presenting organisations, service bodies, training institutes, policy makers and private investors. As the day evolved, many realised they represent direct and indirect industry practices that have reinforced barriers to a sustained First Nations performing arts workforce.

The commitment of these sector delegates to be open to solutions and be at the ready to contribute to First Nations-led actions, was both emotional and palpable as the roundtable day concluded.

There are industry allies ready to endorse and support change.

For more information on the industry roundtable, head to:

<https://www.blakdance.org.au/roundtable-2023>



3. COMPOUNDING BARRIERS

In preparation for the 2023 Workforce roundtable, six key barriers were identified to successful workforce development.

Each issue represents a separate stage in career pathways – from training, the recruitment of First Peoples joining the sector through to the retention of a viable workforce of emerging and established arts and cultural professionals.

Each barrier individually is problematic to an effective workforce pipeline, but together they have a compounding effect – diminishing incrementally the potential scale of the First Peoples workforce.

All issues need to be addressed to achieve lasting success.

1. Required roles (recruitment)

Significant number of roles requiring First Peoples representation throughout self-determined organisations.

2. Potential candidates (recruitment)

There is a small pool of potential new and existing candidates.

3. Resourcing for on-job learning (skills development)

First Nations performing arts organisations are not funded to meet the demand and requirements for on-job training.

4. Formal Training (skills development)

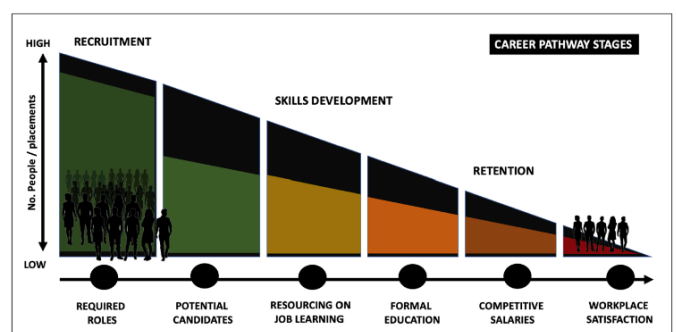
Formal training through non-Indigenous institutions is not often set-up to support First Peoples Ways of Working.

5. Competitive salaries (retention)

The First Nations performing arts organisation cannot compete with the higher salaries offered elsewhere in the arts, government, corporate and other sectors.

6. Workplace satisfaction (retention)

Unsatisfactory workplace experiences due to a lack of cultural safety and capability can result in First Peoples leaving the sector.



The compounding attrition impact

4. THE DISADVANTAGE PARADIGM

The 2023 Workforce Roundtable revealed stories of the significant energy First Nations artists and companies invest in finding and training First Peoples arts workers, only for employees to be tempted by more lucrative salaries of non-Indigenous arts organisations or other industries (see Issue 5 on the previous page).

There were heartbreaking first-hand accounts from independent artists, questioning if they can continue their award-winning practice, unable to afford the cost, quality control and cultural integrity of their artistic vision.

The notion of financial disadvantage was unpacked to reveal it is more than the literal balance sheet disparity. It is also the call on what the dollar is required to cover.

Non-Indigenous companies can focus their investment predominately on productions, whereas First Peoples practice requires stretching the dollar to cover in-house training and mentoring, cultural advisors, cultural protocols, and cultural wellbeing needs (Issue 3 and 6).

The net impact, as summarised by one Roundtable workshop group, is *“Every \$3 of First Peoples funding is worth \$5-\$7 in the broader performing arts industry”*.

The colonial policy structure also increases disadvantage for First Peoples workforce development. Though acknowledged it is hard for the system to be instrumental in its own dismantling, the rules of engagement mean the framework is already set-up as a non-Indigenous structure. It is a structure where you need to argue the case for exemptions and exceptions instead of genuine equal partnerships or the ability to simply state what is required on First Peoples terms.

The targeted nature of workforce funding can be a two-edged sword for career continuity. Non-Indigenous counterparts are often guaranteed security with salaries covered by core funding. For First Peoples trainees participating in dedicated funding programs, when the program finishes there is often no connecting role or qualifications attached to the traineeships.

More than practical employment issues, the disadvantage cycle of under-valuing and under-funding the First Nations performing arts means solving the workforce development issues should be the top priority for the benefit of First People artists, audiences and the arts and cultural industry and in line with the government National Cultural Policy Revive and its commitment to First Nations First

5. SECTOR REPRESENTATION BURNOUT

As social justice awareness continues to evolve across the arts and cultural industry, business practices are placing critical pressure on the existing First Nations workforce.

These practices both stifle growth and threaten to diminish further the current First Nations workforce representation. Practices include:

- outcompeting the salary offer of First Nations organisations in the bid to increase First Nations roles within the broader sector. Resulting in movement away from First Nations companies.
- employing First Nations staff without having best practice cultural frameworks to support workplace satisfaction and safety. Resulting in diminished industry retention.
- The cultural load on First Nations employees in non-Indigenous companies creates unreasonable additional expectations outside of their position description.

In addition, there has been dramatic growth in First Nations advice and governance representation within the broader sector. This is placing unprecedented demand on the time and skills of the current First Nations workforce.

The same people are being stretched thin on multiple committees, advisory groups, think tanks and Boards. The pressure continues to grow with formal mechanisms such as the Creative Australia 4-year funding round requiring more companies to pursue representation.

The burnout for the current workforce is reaching an unsustainable level. Addressing workforce growth is urgently required to stem the drain on retention.

FRAME- WORK FOR SUCCESS



Image: *SILENCE*, Karul Projects, produced by BlakDance. Photo: Gregory Lorenzutti.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The success of any future model, actions and solutions for workforce support would benefit from adopting the following design principles. These principles have been developed by drawing on the extensive lived experience of First Nations artists and arts workers, knowledge of past workforce programs and policies, and broader industry endorsement at the 2023 Roundtable and subsequent participant survey.

First Peoples-led solutions are essential for success

- In keeping with the overall principles and rights of self-determination.
- Ensures strategies are relevant, accountable and enhance effectiveness.
- Supports solution-design based on deep knowledge and understanding of the issues.
- Gain understanding of interdependencies with other community considerations.

Workforce development requires a commitment to embed long-term strategies

- Each stage of workforce development pipeline needs attention.
- It will likely take 10 years to mature a workforce from training and recruitment through to retention.
- Previous programs have demonstrated 1–2 years can stimulate success, but a legacy deficit follows when programs are discontinued.
- Solutions require stability for organisational planning and employee confidence and security.
- Allows for iterative prototyping to continually improve and mature solutions.

Timing is critical to rectify systemic disadvantage and act on stakeholder interest

- In-kind investment of First Nations organisations and individuals to address issues is no longer sustainable.
- Significant industry-wide stakeholder representation at the 2023 Roundtable provided strong agreement with the issues and endorsement for progressing solutions.
- The overall performing arts industry workforce is diminished because of COVID-19, and this is further exacerbated for the First Nations sector which was disproportionately smaller and more vulnerable beforehand.
- Opportunity for action under key bipartisan policies, such as Closing the Gap, and in alignment with self-determined workforce development led by the First Nations Board at Creative Australia.

“ It’s us who have the relationships with community. And it’s us who are doing the training and until there is acknowledgment that it’s our labour, anything that happens in the broader sector unfortunately becomes extractive. ”

Merindah Donnelly, Executive Producer BlakDance,
2023 Workforce Roundtable

ACCOUNTABILITY & DELIVERY CAPACITY

Our collective of First Nations organisations deliver powerful cultural outcomes across dance, theatre and performing arts practice areas. We provide fundamental infrastructure and services over vast distances, with remits at local, regional/remote, national, and international levels.

As leaders and service organisations we provide industry standards for working conditions including First Nations Creative Control and adherence to and implementation of the principles of Indigenous Cultural Protocols and working with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

Our organisations recognise we have a significant role to play in workforce development. Across the six key barrier themes, the organisations have developed training programs, pilot programs, advocated for reform and continued to champion the development of solutions by hosting strategic sessions such as the 2023 Roundtable on First Nations Performing Arts Workforce in Melbourne.

Our organisations are perfectly positioned to support the first design principle of First Nations-led solutions and we offer our skills, experience and networks as partners for the next steps of progressing solutions.

To demonstrate our commitment, following is a potential example of an embedded workforce support model within these companies to:

- drive First Nations-led results
- maximise outcomes
- increase transparency and accountability to First Peoples, communities, and independent artists
- lead the wider industry in the correct ways of working with First Nations artists.

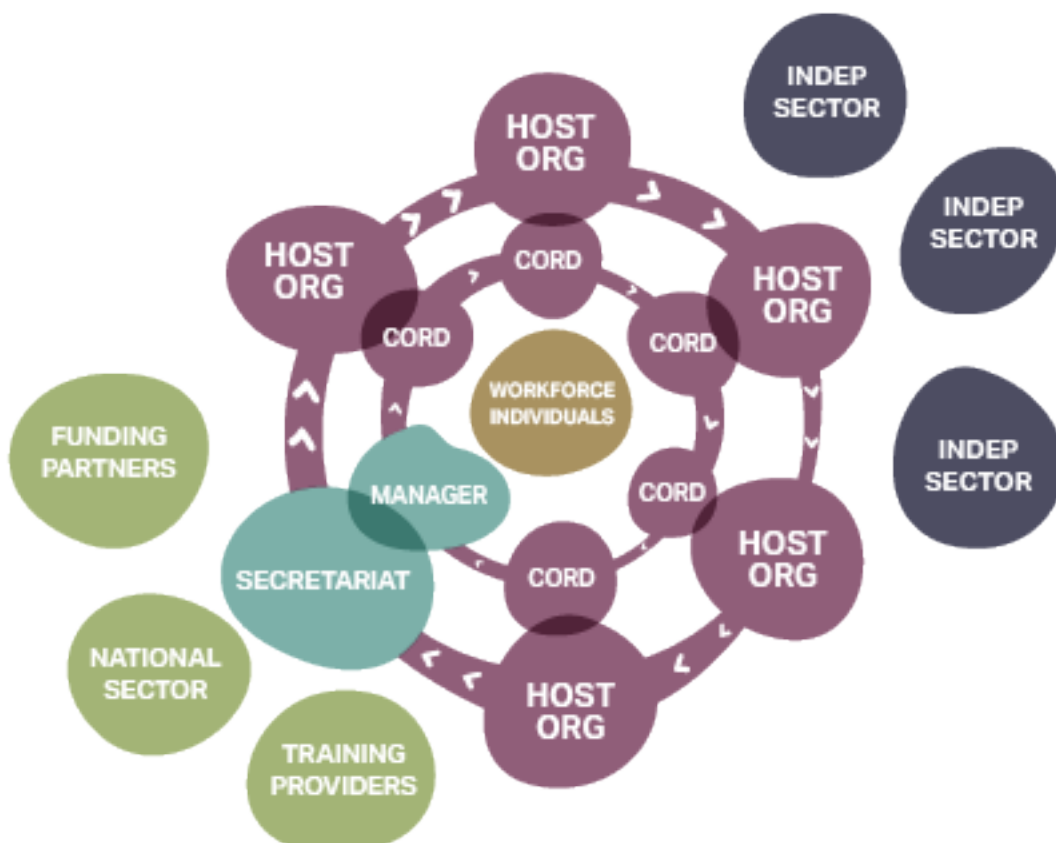
Considering the investment trialed on past workforce programs, shifting to an embedded model could safeguard and leverage funding already provided to these companies, extend the value of further targeted investment and flip the disadvantage paradigm. This may prove a more cost-effective solution than anything previously tried.

EMBEDDED MODEL EXAMPLE

Inspired by workforce development initiatives for other industries, such as Jobs and Skills Council (JSC), the following is offered as an illustration of a First Peoples-led and industry-led network model with embedded staff providing first-hand advice, coordination, implementation, and monitoring.

The features of this model are:

- utilising each of the six First Nations performing arts organisations to host a workforce development coordinator
- formalising a network for the workforce coordinators with secretariat support
- funding the network to implement programs, monitor results and design continual improvement



1. Hosted Workforce Development Coordinators

These roles would be responsible for:

- local community and sector consultation
- actioning sector initiatives such as trainee programs and recruitment campaigns
- in-house retention projects
- driving accredited training programs with a First People perspective
- tailored individual employee and new recruits monitoring and support

Being embedded within functioning performing arts organisations enables these roles to monitor, coordinate workflow schedules and workplace opportunities within companies and across the First Nations sector.

2. Network secretariat

A secretariat model of a network manager embedded within one of the host organisations is recommended. This role might rotate to different hosts every 2-3 years and will expand outcomes by:

- supporting the flow of learnings and ideas across the network
- liaise with First Nations and non-Indigenous training providers to create new models
- advocate to other key industry stakeholders, sharing results and strategies for change
- collaborate with government partners and provide funds administration

3. Program funding

The network would need to be adequately funded to implement targeted workforce initiatives. Ideas raised in the Roundtable, provide examples of programs to be developed and scoped further by the network:

- advanced in-house trainee programs for a variety of roles from creators, Senior Producers, administration, and production
- facilitated national trainee exchange program – providing increased workplace experiences and bolstering First Peoples skills availability across organisations and the sector.
- salary uplift transition programs – supporting organisations to incrementally address industry standards
- First Nations tailored course design with educational professionals and institutes to address accredited qualifications
- development of in-house well-being and cultural safety tools, resources, and mechanisms
- role model showcase tours in partnership with communities to inspire new entrants to the industry
- creation and partnerships with existing providers to create First Peoples recruitment platforms

4. Partnership leverage

With increased capacity, the host organisations would be able to foster industry-led programs to:

- create accredited qualifications with existing training institutions to cover production and creation
- introduce cadetships with major organisations
- drive accredited training programs with a First Nations perspective
- host apprentice-style learning opportunities

BENEFICIARIES

An embedded model would create needed uplift within host organisations with outcomes also extending to:

- new First People industry entrants with better support structures to set them up for success
- existing First Peoples employees by redistributing the existing pressure of unsupported in-house training
- current workforces with programs designed to address retention
- the independent sector with an increased workforce available to undertake freelance support
- training providers achieving the outcomes for which they are responsible under Closing the Gap
- training providers providing equitable access and pathways for First Peoples students
- the broader industry with potential for future natural workforce flow without undermining the vitality of self-determined productions and companies

FIRST STEP

A funded business case for a workforce support model and associated programs is the first step.

Investment is required to engage the expertise of a leading, independent First Nations consultant to undertake the feasibility work. We offer our collective as key stakeholders to work with and support the consultant with insights on practicalities of an embedded or other models, and as a way to ensure design principles are incorporated into the work. We envisage the scope for the consultant would include:

- developing the business plans, determining the best model and network terms of reference and protocols
- research of broader sector needs
- consultation with community (eg advice on attracting new workforce entrants)
- mapping opportunities and ways of working within the network and independent sector
- developing the next 4 year strategy and the vision for a ten year plan to achieve sustainable results

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUNDS



Image: *Jurrungu Ngan-ga*, Marrugeku. Photo: Prudence Upton.

ISSUES DETAIL

RECRUITMENT

1. FILLING REQUIRED ROLES	<p>Significant number of roles requiring First Peoples representation throughout self-determined organisations</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative & production roles: designers, lighting designers, composers, costumer designers etc • Producing, senior & specialised admin: marketing, fundraising, general management etc
2. GROWING POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	<p>There is a small pool of potential new and existing candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts industry is not promoted widely as a career choice for First Peoples, especially in comparison to other sectors • With a relatively small First Nations workforce there are less role models to encourage young entrants • It is hard for organisations to find and source potential entrants to the industry

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

3. RESOURCING FOR ON-JOB LEARNING	<p>First Nations Performing Arts organisations are not funded to meet the demand and requirements for on-job training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without adequate funding, there is a limit on capacity for training and number of placements for emerging workforce candidates • All self-determined First Nations Performing Arts organisations provide a degree of on-job training. This places them at a disadvantage to the rest of the industry who have less demand on their capacity for core business • Tailored on-job mentoring is a preferred skills development approach - this requires mentors and mentorees to be paid to acknowledge the time and commitment involved
4. CREATING ACCESSIBLE FORMAL TRAINING	<p>Formal training through non-Indigenous institutions is not often set-up to support First Peoples Ways of Working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course structures can be a barrier to other learning and cultural obligations of First People students • Attendance requirements can prohibit concurrent on-job learning through practice and mentoring • The curriculum focus of some courses is less suited to cross-culture, cross art expression that may be more attractive to First Peoples students

RETENTION

5. REDUCING THE SALARY GAP	<p>The First Nations Performing Arts organisation cannot compete with the higher salaries offered elsewhere in the arts and other sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once trained by First Nations companies, salaries offered elsewhere can entice employees to leave the self-determined organisations • The loss of trained personnel means self-determined organisations need to restart the cycle for filling roles regularly. • Funding incentives for employing for First Peoples are often geared to non-Indigenous organisations
6. INCREASING WORKPLACE SATISFACTION	<p>Unsatisfactory workplace experiences can result in leaving the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment targets in non-Indigenous organisation can lead to appointments of First Peoples candidates who are not ready or qualified for roles • Cultural safety is an evolving benchmark in sector workplaces • The small First Nations workforce leads to high demand and high burnout



Image: Attendees of the First Nations Performing Arts Workforce Roundtable. Photo: Tamati Smith.

WORKFORCE ROUNDTABLE ATTENDEES

Name	Language Group/Nation	Organisation
Sherry McLane Alejos		Abbotsford Convent
Bhawna Sharma		Abbotsford Convent
Marcia Ferguson		Abbotsford Convent
Collette Brennan		Abbotsford Convent
Tracy Hart	Wakaya	Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA)
Chris Scoggin		Aboriginal Cultural Centre WA
Troy Walsh	Panninher/Palawa	Arts Centre Melbourne
Lauren O'Dwyer	Yorta Yorta	Arts Centre Melbourne
Samantha Hamilton		Arts Centre Melbourne
Murray Johnstone		Arts Centre Melbourne
Louana Sainsbury	Dharug	Arts House
Emily Sexton		Arts House
Stephen Smith	Ugaremlle (Zenadth Kes Buaigiz)	Arts Queensland
Franchesca Cubillo	Yanuwa, Larrakia, Bardi, and Wardaman	Australia Council for the Arts
Sarah Greentree		Australia Council for the Arts
Annette Madden		Australia Council for the Arts
Adam McGowan		Australia Council for the Arts
Daniel Riley	Wiradjuri	Australian Dance Theatre
Nick Hays		Australian Dance Theatre
Eira Swaine		Australian Dance Theatre
Lucy Ericson		Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)
Jared Yapp		Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)
Sidney Saltner	Wulli Wulli – Wakka Wakka	Bangarra Dance Theatre
Shane Carroll		Bangarra Dance Theatre

Karina Hogan	Bundjalung	BlakDance
Trudy Gunston	Kullilli	BlakDance
Merindah Donnelly	Wiradjuri	BlakDance
Kate Eltham		BlakDance
Lilla Berry	Yankunytjatjara	Carclew / Independent
Ngioka Bunda-Heath	Wakka Wakka, Ngugi and Birrpai	Chunky Move
Amrit Gill		City of Melbourne
Tammy Close	Yiny / Yidinji	Create NSW
Rei Cheetham		Create NSW
Sarah Bond	Wakka Wakka/Waanji	Creative Victoria
Kylie Belling	Yorta Yorta/Wiradjuri/South Sea Islander	Creative Victoria
Victoria Jones		Creative Victoria
Geoffrey Masters		Dancehouse
Hillary Coyne		Dancenorth
Alison Todd		Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
Rādhikā Ram Tevita	Indo-Fijian	Diversity Arts Australia
Lena Nahlous		Diversity Arts Australia
Dan Mitchell	Whadjuk Noongar	Footscray Community Arts and Dumawal
Gary Lang	Larrakia	Gary Lang Northern Territory Dance Company
Erica McCallum		Gary Lang Northern Territory Dance Company
Della Bedford	Bunuba	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Joel Stevens	Maori	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Rachael Maza	Meriam, Yidinji	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Theodore Cassady	Munanjali/Butchulla	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Alexandra Paige	Taungurung	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Angela Flynn	Tiwi and Larrakia	ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Laura Harris		ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Kirsty Hillhouse		ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
Penny Johnson	Guwamu/Murrawarri	Independent
Marilyn Miller	Kukuyalanji / Waanyi	Independent
Janina Harding	Meriam	Independent
Eva Mullaley	Widi Yamatji Nyarlu	Independent
Jackie Sheppard	Tagalaka	Independent
Heidi Brooks	Daingatti	Independent
Emily Coleman	Bundjalung Githabul	Independent (currently contracted with APAF)
Lucy Guerin		Lucy Guerin Inc
Guy Boyce		Marrugeku
Ashley Rose	Wiradjuri/Darug/Eora	Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance

Erica McCalman	Ballardong Noongar	Melbourne Fringe
Danny Delahunty		Melbourne Fringe
Stephen Moore		Melbourne Theatre Company
Leroy Parsons	Yuin Nation	Merrigong Theatre Company
Rachel Francis		Merrigong Theatre Company
Lily Shearer	Murrawarri	Moogahlin Performing Arts
Alison Murphy-Oates	Ngilyampaa Wailwan	Moogahlin Performing Arts
Natano Fa'anana		Moogahlin Performing Arts
Harley Mann	Wakka Wakka	Na Djinang Circus and Circa Cairns
Kim Walker		NAISDA Dance College
Simona Jobbagy		National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA)
Travis Cardona	Malak Malak	National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)
Rhoda Roberts AO	Widjabul/Wieybal	National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)
Jamie Lewis		Next Wave
Katherine Connor		PAC Australia
Lauren Sheree		Performing Lines
Sinsa Mansell	Pakana	Performing Lines Tasmania
Bradley Chatfield	Kamilaroi	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Carl Nilsson-Polias		Sidney Myer Fund
Sofie Burgoyne		STRUT Dance
Viviana Sacchero		The Australian Ballet
Kirsty Ritchie		The Australian Ballet School
Lauren Swain	Dabee Wiradjuri	Theatre Network Australia (TNA)
Nicole Beyer		Theatre Network Australia (TNA)
Kim Goodwin		University of Melbourne
Virginia Lovett		University of Melbourne
Hannah Donnelly	Wiradjuri	Urban Theatre Projects (Utp)
Jessica Olivieri		Urban Theatre Projects (Utp)
Carol Brown		Victorian College of Arts, University of Melbourne
Siu CHAN		Yarra City Council
Olivia Allen		Yarra City Council
Skye Lockyer	Kariyarra, Ngarluma, Nyul Nyul, Yawru	Yirra Yaakin
Maitland Schnaars	Noongar	Yirra Yaakin
Bobbi Henry	Noongar Whadjuk Ballardong	Yirra Yaakin
Teresa Moore	Noongar Yamatji, Whadjuk Nyamal Wadjari Malgana Nhanda	Yirra Yaakin
Jen Edwards		Yirra Yaakin
Peter Kift		Yirra Yaakin
Alice Muhling		YIRRAMBOI Festival

ABOUT US

Bangarra

Bangarra is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and one of Australia's leading performing arts companies, widely acclaimed nationally and around the world for our powerful dancing, distinctive theatrical voice and utterly unique soundscapes, music and design. The company's dancers are professionally trained, dynamic artists who represent the pinnacle of Australian dance. Each has a proud Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, from various locations across the country. Bangarra means 'to make fire' in Wiradjuri language and today, Artistic Director and co-CEO Frances Rings and Executive Director and co-CEO Louise Ingram lead the company in our mission to promote awareness and understanding of our cultures.

BlakDance

BlakDance is the national industry development and producing services organisation for First Nations contemporary dancers and choreographers. We develop the capacity and professional pathways of contemporary First Nations dance artists, incubate emerging small to medium dance companies and support artists and communities to connect, collaborate, make and share performance works nationally and globally. We are a self-determined, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, governed by a voluntary First Nations Board of Directors and by a dedicated BlakDance Cultural Council that ensures First Nations cultural governance at all levels of our activities. Across two decades, BlakDance has grown to become an irreplaceable organisation in the Australian dance ecology, vital to the First Nations performing arts sector nationally and internationally.

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

ILBIJERRI is one of Australia's leading theatre companies creating innovative works by First Peoples artists. The longest established First Peoples theatre company in Australia, ILBIJERRI creates, presents and tours powerful and engaging theatre by First Peoples artists that gives voice to our Cultures. ILBIJERRI is committed to growing a sustainable and vibrant First Peoples arts ecology and is investing in the next generation of First Peoples theatre makers and industry professionals.

Moogahlin Performing Arts

Moogahlin Performing Arts Incorporated is New South Wales' leading First Peoples performing arts company. Moogahlin was formed in November 2007, by a group of First Peoples artists, educators, and community workers at the request of the late Kevin Smith and in honour of the founding members of the National Black Theatre. We are based on Gadigal in Redfern, Sydney, and Ngemba Land in Brewarrina, far-west NSW. Moogahlin (Muu-garl-in) is a Yuin/Bundjalung word meaning to play, to fool about.

Marrugeku

Marrugeku is an unparalleled presence in Australia today, dedicated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians working together to develop new dance languages that are restless, transformative and unwavering. Our works are created out of urgent reciprocities between Peoples, Country and custodians, understanding that telling stories together is one of the simplest and hardest things we can do. Marrugeku is led by co-artistic directors: choreographer/dancer Dalisa Pigram and director/dramaturg Rachael Swain. Working together for nearly three decades, they co-conceive and facilitate Marrugeku's productions and research laboratories, introducing audiences to the unique and potent structures of Indigenous knowledge systems and the compelling experience of intercultural performance. Marrugeku's performers come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, collaborating to co-create each production. Marrugeku's patron is Yawuru cultural leader and national reconciliation advocate former Senator Patrick Dodson. Our productions tour throughout urban and remote Australia, to other Indigenous contexts internationally and throughout the world.

NAISDA Dance College

For nearly 50 years, NAISDA has been Australia's leading First Nations arts training organisation, creating and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in dance and performing arts education. Our unique curriculum extends learning beyond studios and classrooms, providing students with real-world performance and production experiences in professional theatres, as well as valuable industry placements with national arts companies. Spanning nationally-accredited qualifications from Certificate III to Advanced Diploma, NAISDA provides critical knowledge and cultural connection for the growth and autonomy of our young men and women, as well as our First Nations arts organisations and sector.

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company produces award-winning world-class theatre that is exciting, insightful, authentic, and culturally appropriate. In over 30 years Yirra Yaakin has commissioned and premiered more than 60 new works reaching 13 countries on 5 continents. Yirra Yaakin has won many awards including Best Mainstage Production (PAWA) for *Hecatè* 2021, and Outstanding Ensemble, Musicals & Opera for *Panawathi Girl* 2022, and a prestigious Sidney Myer Award for our outstanding record of facilitating Indigenous artistic programs.

Back cover image: *The Visitors*, Moogahlin Performing Arts. Photo: Daniel Boud.



First Nations-led Industry Impact

First Nations Performing Arts

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK
2025-2030**