



REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

JUNE 2021 – JUNE 2022

**PERTH
FESTIVAL**



Founder



Principal Partner



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OUR BUSINESS

At the edge of Australia, at the edge of the world, our lifestyle, our environment, our history provides us with a singularly distinctive outlook on how we celebrate creativity and culture – and embrace the very best that humanity has to offer from anywhere on the planet. Every summer since 1953 Perth explodes with music, dance, stories, conversations and laughter. Bright and bold and refreshingly down-to-earth, our Festival is made for locals – but we invite everyone to jump in, and experience art in a different light.

We are uniquely placed to celebrate the oldest living culture in the world by championing rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and contemporary arts practice.

We build a creative community through arts sector development and diverse audience engagement, which are the heartbeat of the Festival. We collaborate with local institutions, grass roots arts organisations and provide opportunities, skills and jobs for hundreds of people each year.

This Festival and this city share the most dynamic region in the world, the Indian Ocean Rim and East Asian time zone where more than 60% of the world's population lives. The opportunities for artists, producers and presenters to explore creative engagement and international partnerships throughout the region are boundless. In 2020, Perth Festival reached an audience of over 413,000 with roughly 3,978 Festival visits by interstate and overseas attendees.

The Festival was born out of the University of Western Australia's annual summer school entertainment nights as a "festival for the people" in response to a changing post-war society hunger for cultural nourishment. Perth Festival's office is based in a UWA owned building in Crawley, Western Australia however we activate many venues and locations during the Festival season.

Perth Festival is a scalable organisation, with a core staff of 35 ongoing team members expanding to up to 200+ casual and fixed-term team members for Festival delivery. Perth Festival currently engages one Aboriginal staff member as part of our core, year-round staff and a Noongar Advisory Circle with six paid Aboriginal representatives that meet four times per year.

OUR RAP

Each year Perth Festival collaborates and consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and community groups to ensure they are appropriately represented in the Festival. The Festival also programs a considerable amount of First Peoples work, or work which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and voices. To date this consultation and the outcomes have not been formally measured or reported. It is time for the Festival to create a tangible plan for reconciliation that is reinforced by the works we present and the way in which we operate.

The RAP working group champions Perth Festival's RAP internally and consists of The Executive Director, Community Engagement Manager, Head of Programming, Digital Content Strategist and Head of People and Culture / General Counsel. Perth Festival Board Member, Dr Rishelle Hume AM has offered her guidance on our RAP Working Group and we have been supported by a Reconciliation Australia RAP Officer Tynan Waring.

The Perth Festival Noongar Advisory Circle was created under the leadership of the Associate Artist to ensure our respectful connection to this place, to its people and to the cultural bedrock of Noongar Boodjar remains strong.

Comprised of members with a range of qualifications and lived experiences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice, the Noongar advisory Circle brings together expert industry knowledge from well-respected story holders, performers, language & Land caretakers, visual artists, and organisation representatives.

Our Noongar Advisory Circle meet four times a year and are compensated for their valuable time and knowledge – knowledge which collectively spans approximately 185 years.

The NAC meet each quarter at the Perth Festival office with our Associate Artist, Kylie Bracknell, Artistic Director, Iain Grandage and Head of Programming, Anna Reece, to determine the best navigational approach for each individual event and creative exercise.

It is comprised of two men and four women from the Noongar community, honouring the strength of the matriarchal Noongar country. The Festival sees the NAC as one of the pillars of the Festival, providing guidance and support in our ambitions to celebrate Noongar culture both internally and to the wider Perth community through programming and events.

The Noongar Advisory Circle consists of the following members; Vivienne 'Binyarn' Hansen, Mitchella 'Waljin' Hutchins, Roma 'Yibiyung' Winmar, Carol Innes, Dr Richard Walley OAM and Barry McGuire.

The Noongar Advisory Circle have been consulted in the development of this RAP, along with the Perth Festival Board, led by Tim Ungar (Chair). Our Noongar Advisory Circle is particularly interested in ensuring we capture our 'journey of engagement' ('our partnerships and current activities') which details Perth Festival's reconciliation journey to date.

CHAIR OF THE PERTH FESTIVAL BOARD

Tim Ungar

Perth Festival has been bringing people together since beginning nearly 70 years ago.

Whatever our successes in the past, we are deeply aware of our need to greatly improve our practical reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose cultures the Festival has celebrated for many years here on Noongar Country.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan commits the Festival to building a better future by strengthening our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, particularly the Wadjuk Noongar community.

This plan maps out our vision to drive reconciliation through practical commitments and measurable outcomes. It is a living, dynamic document that each day will determine how we operate internally and engage with our community.

It formalises tangible strategies to build relationships, respect and opportunities based on a shared sense of belonging and a culture of diversity, inclusion and trust.

We have much to learn as we seek to improve our cultural awareness and enact progress in areas of programming, community engagement, employment pathways and partnerships.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank Reconciliation Australia, the Festival's Noongar Advisory Circle and our RAP Working Group for developing this plan so thoughtfully and thoroughly for us to follow.

We have undertaken many positive changes at the Festival but we must continue to lead reconciliation initiatives within our organisation, the arts sector and the broader community.

Delivering the actions and outcomes of this RAP is a high priority for the Festival. We expect our community to hold us accountable for our progress as we strive to make lasting change that will benefit all Australians under the one sky.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

This timeline and case studies document Perth Festival's inclusion of stories and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and its celebration of place on Wadjuk Noongar Boodjar: From the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work from central Australia programmed in 1960 at the Skinner Galleries to the latest 2020 Festival, which featured an entire week of First Peoples programming across theatre, dance, film, visual arts, Literature & Ideas and both the fine and contemporary music programs. This timeline includes a focus on the 2006 *Ngallak Koort Boodja* (Our Heart Land) canvas, the 2015 Perth Festival commission, *The Giants* and the 2017 & 2019 Festival commission *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak*.

The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work in Perth Festival has included Presenting, Commissioning, Collaboration and Community Engagement. Perth Festival's journey of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has shifted from purely presentation of work, to deep immersion through community engagement and partnerships. The distinction of this work is as follows:

Presentation	Presenting and showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works in the Festival Program
Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing resources for the work • Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist/s or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations • Presenting the work in the festival program • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership of the works
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing resources for the work • Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as advisory group • Employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the festival • Community engagement in the program • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts company partnerships
Immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the resource for the works • Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as advisory group • Employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the festival • Community engagement in the program • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts company partnership • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the board of the festival

See Appendix: RAP Case Studies & Journey of Engagement.

PERTH FESTIVAL 2021

In the process of drafting this RAP during the Perth Festival 2021 season, several deliverables were achieved, including:

- Allocating a budget to this Reflect RAP in order to assist with achieving outcomes
- Perth Festival 2021 programmed several significant First Nations works, and works created in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists including Fist of Fury Noongar Daa, Galup, The Sum of Us, Dreams of Place, Songlines, Songs From Patrick William Carter, Koort and Witness Stand.
 - Awareness of Aboriginal culture within Western Australia was raised by holding one large Welcome to Country event with three local Noongar Elders for artists – both visiting and local, staff and stakeholders. Welcomes and smokings were also hosted at Literature & Ideas, Fist of Fury Noongar Daa screenings, Projections at City of Lights, Witness Stand sites and stakeholder events.
- Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to connect with the 2021 Festival program were created, including a partnership with Kadjin: the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Youth Arts Network, and the Aboriginal Reviewer Program was continued.
- Opportunities for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to connect with the First Peoples component of the 2021 Festival program to facilitate education and understanding included production and regional touring of the film Fist of Fury Noongar Daa but Associate Artist Kylie Bracknell, and company Boomerang and Spear, and the continuing of the Noongar Storytellers in Schools program, made available to WA schools for NAIDOC week.
- Reconciliation Week, 27 May – 3 June 2021 was celebrated by staff participating in several events –
 - A Reconciliation Week breakfast with a Welcome, and learnings on Reconciliation Week by senior Noongar artist, leader and Noongar Advisory Circle member Barry McGuire and catered by local Indigenous owned business Black Pig Deli.
 - Karrgatup (Kings Park) Walking Tour with Go Cultural Aboriginal Tours & Experiences with local Noongar leader Walter McGuire
 - NITV/ SBS Reconciliation Film Club screening of Black Divaz
 - Events were registered on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website and Reconciliation Week events and resources were circulated to staff

RELATIONSHIPS

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	1 September 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	1 December 2021	Head of Programming
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	1 September 2021	Community Engagement Manager
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	20 May – 27 May, 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	RAP Working Group members and staff to participate in an internal and external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June, 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	Register all NRW events via Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	20 May – 27 May, 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	Extend an invitation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their reconciliation experiences or stories.	20 May – 27 May, 2022	Associate Artist
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	20 May – 27 May, 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	1 August 2021	Executive Director

RELATIONSHIPS (CONTINUED)

3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a communications strategy to communicate our RAP to all internal and external stakeholders.	1 September 2021	Digital Content Strategist
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	1 June 2021	Head of Programming
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	1 June 2021	Community Engagement Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	1 June 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	1 June 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
5. Raise awareness nationally and internationally of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within Western Australia	Invite local Traditional Owners or Custodians to provide regular Welcome to Country events across the 2022 Festival for local and visiting artists, and report on the number of these events.	1 April 2022	Head of Programming
	Recognise and create opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to connect with the 2022 Festival program	1 March 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	Recognise and create opportunities for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to connect with the First Peoples component of the 2022 Festival program to facilitate education and understanding	1 March 2022	Producer: Connect

RESPECT

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	1 April 2022	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	1 April 2022	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	In consultation with local Traditional Owners develop a cultural awareness training strategy for all staff. Strategy will outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural learning needs of employees Various ways for cultural learning, including online, face-to-face and cultural immersion opportunities 	1 December 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Profile Uluru Statement From The Heart with staff to gain deeper understanding of its intent	1 August 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Provide opportunities for all staff to participate in cultural training	1 July 2021	Executive Director
7. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Invite local Traditional Owners or Custodians to provide regular Welcome to Country events across the 2022 Festival for local and visiting artists, and report on the number of these events.	1 April 2022	Head of Programming
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important internal and external meetings and events	1 July 2021	Executive Director

RESPECT (CONTINUED)

7. Continued	Encourage staff to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all important meetings	1 July 2021	Executive Director
	Invite Traditional Owners into our office to explain the significance of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country	1 August 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	1 July 2021	Associate Artist
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	1 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager
8. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	1 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	1 July 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Review current cultural leave policy	1 May 2022	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to hold an internal or external NAIDOC Week event	9 July 2021	Associate Artist
	Contact our local NAIDOC Week Committee to discover events in our community	9 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager

8. Continued	Conduct a lunch and learn event around the annual NAIDOC theme to raise awareness internally	9 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	9 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	9 July 2021	Community Engagement Manager

OPPORTUNITIES

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	1 July 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Develop pathway programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce participation	1 July 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on the development of an employment and retention strategy	1 July 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and future applicants participating in our workplace.	1 July 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Establish a buddy system to support positive connections for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	1 August 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel

OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

9. Continued	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	1 August 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
10. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Update our procurement policy to consider and encourage engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	1 June 2022	Head of Corporate Services
	Review and update procurement policies, matrices and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses	1 June 2022	Head of Corporate Services
	Develop communications to staff on how to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, referring to supplynation.org.au and ncci.com.au guidance and directories.	1 June 2022	Head of Corporate Services
	Investigate commercial relationships with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned business	1 June 2022	Head of Corporate Services
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	1 June 2022	Head of Corporate Services
	11. Build a pipeline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Talent	Build a pipeline of talent from secondary schools	1 December 2021
	Investigate introduction of school-based traineeships	1 December 2021	Community Engagement Manager

GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	1 September 2021	Head of People and Culture / General Counsel
	Establish and grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	1 January 2022	Community Engagement Manager
	Meet at least four times per year to monitor and report on RAP implementation.	Friday 25 June 2021, Friday 10 September 2021, Thurs 20 January 2022 and Thursday 21 April 2022	Community Engagement Manager
13. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	1 June 2021	Community Engagement Manager
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	1 June 2021	Executive Director
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	1 June 2021	Community Engagement Manager
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2021	Community Engagement Manager
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	1 March 2022	Community Engagement Manager

CONTACT DETAILS

For public enquiries about our RAP.

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APPENDIX: RAP CASE STUDIES & JOURNEY OF ENGAGEMENT

Presentation

- 1960 Aboriginal art is featured for the first time in the Festival, with works from Ernabella in central Australia on show at the Skinner Galleries.
- 1967 The Aboriginal Theatre Foundation from Yirrkala and Bathurst Island in the Northern Territory, performed on centre court at Royal Kings Park Tennis Club and were one of the largest visiting companies at this Festival.
- 1982 The Swan River Stage Company's *The Dreamers* by Jack Davis had its world premiere this year at UWA's Dolphin Theatre.

Commission

- 1985 *No Sugar* was commissioned for the 1985 Festival of Perth, and told the story of the Millimurra family's survival and resilience against government 'protection' policies in 1930s Australia.

Presentation

- 1990 The musical *Bran Nue Dae*, directed by Andrew Ross and written by Broome's Jimmy Chi with his band Kuckles was the Festival's first Aboriginal musical, the final work from the WA Theatre Company and the catalyst for the formation of the Black Swan State Theatre Company.
- 1992 Two world premieres from the new Black Swan Theatre Company featured at this Festival, in Sally Morgan's *Sistergirl* and Jack Davis' *Wahngin Country*.
- 1993 Deckchair Theatre and Nova Ensemble staged Eddie Bennell's opera *My Spiritual Dreaming*: stories of creation from the Bibbulmun tribe of the South-West in the form of a rock Opera.
- 1994 The Black Swan-Belvoir production of Nicholas Parsons' *Dead Heart* featured in this Festival.

Commission

- 1996 The Festival commissioned the birth of the Marrugeku company and its stilt theatre show *Mimi*, performed at the Boya Quarry. Ngaatjarra woman Pantjiti Mary McLean was the featured Festival artist this year.

Presentation

- 1997 Yirra Yaakin's first professional season was launched at this Festival with David Milroy's *Runamuk*.
- 1999 Yirra Yaakin's *Cruel Wild Woman* was presented at this Festival.

Commission

- 2000 Starting with a *Survival Concert* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music on Australia Day, Festival Director Sean Doran put the elemental stamp of Water, Earth, Air and Fire as themes running through each of his four Millennium Festival programs.
- 2001 The spirit of reconciliation and the celebration of the centenary of Federation is captured in the "Earth" Festival of 2001. Marrugeku presented the world-premiere of *Crying Baby* at the Quarry Amphitheatre.

Presentation

- 2002 The Gija-Worla massacre story *Fire, Fire Burning Bright*, which told the true story of the massacre of the Gija and Worla people in the Kimberley region of Western Australia premiers at this Festival. It featured about 30 members of the Neminuwarlin Performance Group who had never performed in a theatre prior to rehearsals.

Collaboration

- 2003 Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company led a showcase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent in the *Festival Lotteries Opening Event* and a partnership with Perth Festival was established acknowledging Yirra Yaakin as 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partner' of the Festival of Perth.

Commission

- 2004 Projection artist Ian de Gruchy, Noongar and Kimberley artists and a 1000-voice choir led the Lotterywest Festival Overture in promenade from Government House Gardens to the Perth Concert Hall and His Majesty's Theatre.
- 2005 Noongar and Indian performers led the 2005 opening, the Lotterywest Festival Overture, which culminated with *Opera in the Park* in Supreme Court Gardens.

Immersion

A bespoke eight-lesson Noongar language course was created for (and completed by) Perth Festival staff as part of their MOU with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partner, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. The lessons were facilitated by Yirra Yaakin's Community Liaison Officer, Kylie Farmer, and the Noongar language teachers were Mrs Kathleen Yarran (dec) and Mrs Janet Collard (dec).

Collaboration

- 2006 The Ngallak Koort Boodja (Our Heart Land) canvas was unveiled in Kings Park to open this Festival. The Festival staged its biggest Welcome to Country, starting with a procession from Heirisson Island that culminated with the unveiling of the major artwork uniting all fourteen Noongar clan groups of the Noongar nation created over three years. Inspired by the *Ngurrara* Kimberley canvas of 2003, Noongar elders assisted by Carol Innes and Barry McGuire agree that six artists – Lance Chadd, Shane Pickett, Troy Bennell, Yvonne Kickett, Alice Warrell and Sharyn Egan – create a lasting "arts document" for the Noongar people. The Ngallak Koort Boodja Group guided and advised the Festival on the development and implementation of the canvas. The group was selected by Noongar Elders – and met seven times from April to November 2005. The original idea and concept for this project was instigated by Noongar elder Janet 'Djenaburra' Hayden and Sam Cook circa 2004 during a meeting with then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partner, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. The canvas is currently living in the Albany Entertainment Centre.

The Ngallak Koort Boodja Group members included Fred Pickett, Leana Crabbe, Kathleen Yarran, Janet Collard, Doolan-Leisha Eatts, Shirley Wynne, Vilma Webb, Steven Egan, Jenny Mogridge, Marie Thorne, Dorothy Winmar, May McGuire, Gabrielle Hansen, Lynnette Narkle, Peter Phillips, Beverley Port-Louis, Francis Bolton, Richard Walley, Harley Coyne, Rod Garlett, Barry McGuire and Troy Bennell.

The Festival closed with a collaborative performance in Forrest Place between Richard Walley and the Japanese taiko drummer Eitetsu Hayashi and Australian group TaikOz.

Presentation

Koorah Coolingah – Children Long Ago, the artwork of Stolen Generation children at Carrolup mission school from 1945–53, and Sally Richardson's *The Drover's Wives* also premiered at this Festival.

Presentation

- 2007 Trevor Jamieson starred in the presentation of Big hART's *Ngapartji: the consequences of kindness*.
- 2008 Under new Artistic Director Shelagh Magadza, the story of Kimberly resistance fighter *Jandamarra* came to the stage in the cross-cultural theatre production from Black Swan Theatre Company and Bunuba Films.

Collaboration

- 2011 Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company's *Waltzing the Wilarra*, a world premier by David Milroy, revisited the music and race-based curfews of post-war Perth.
- 2013 Matilda Bay hosted a historic evening of *Shakespearean Sonnets in Noongar* from Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and music from Archie Roach before audiences walked across to the University of Western Australia to watch the *LUMINOUSnight* celebrations marking 100 years since students first arrived at the campus.

Presentation

Sydney Theatre Company's *The Secret River*, a story of two families including a family from the Dharug people divided by culture and land was also presented at this Festival.

Collaboration

- 2015 Perth Festival's commission of Royal de Luxe's *The Giants* embedded Noongar culture and collaboration across the project's planning and presentation. Celebrating the Noongar culture of Wadjuk was a key consideration in the creation of the Royal de Luxe story and performance of *The Giants* in Perth.

Perth International Arts Festival (PIAF) engaged with Noongar Elders and experienced arts professionals across within the Aboriginal Arts Industry of Western Australia with a collective aim: to give the *Giants* a very strong engagement with and presence of Noongar people.

Initial engagement

The conversations with Noongar Elders, Dr Richard Walley in particular, were some of the very first to take place with Jean-Luc Courcoult and his team upon their arrival to Perth to begin their research around the creation of a giant spectacle for Western Australia. Dr Walley walked Jean-Luc through Kings Park and spoke to him of Wadjuk Country and the culture and history imbedded within the land. From the very beginning Royal de Luxe had a strong desire to work with the Noongar people.

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company were invited into the conversation around bringing to life the Noongar voice within the spectacular. The company became Royal de Luxe's key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collaborator, engaged by PIAF to coordinate and deliver the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative component of the work. Kyle Morrison was engaged as the Associate Director, and WAAPA Aboriginal Theatre graduate and Yirra Yaakin performer, Shakara Walley was engaged as the event's Emerging / Assistant Producer for the Noongar component of the work. In consultation with Elders from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Component Advisory Group and in collaboration with Royal de Luxe and the PIAF Event Producer, Yirra Yaakin co-ordinated the creation of a Welcome to Country, including smoking ceremony, didgeridoo players and the delivery of gifts to welcome the Giants to Noongar Country as well as a continued Noongar presence across the event each day.

"The Giants was an important project for Yirra Yaakin to be a part of. It allowed us to collaborate with the Perth International Arts Festival, collaborate with international artists and showcase our work to a strong 500,000 plus crowd over the 3-day event. We had a number of professional performers, artists, dancers and musicians who helped tell the story, but the main component involved a group of local Noongar Elders who shared this story and engaged with The Giants. There was a beautiful set-up that we rehearsed and put into place. They were beautiful engagement moments that were approaching an actual intimacy."

– Kyle Morrison, Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and the Artistic Associate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Component of The Giants

The Giants Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Component Advisory Group (ICGA)

Together Yirra Yaakin and PIAF formed a cultural reference group for The Giants made up of key elders from the Noongar community. Consideration was given to the importance of having an equal amount of men and women as well as their relevance to the project. The ICGA members for the Giants in Perth were Dr Richard Walley, May McGuire, Barry McGuire and Carol Innes. The ICGA met regularly as a group at Yirra Yaakin with the PIAF Event Producer, Kyle Morrison and Shakara Walley and provided advice on cultural content including Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony moments and cultural protocol and permissions.

Considerations

When discussing the Noongar presence within The Giants consideration was given to the significance of entering Noongar Country and cultural protocols, presentation of both traditional and contemporary Noongar culture, communicating Wadjuk Country's place within Aboriginal Australia and working with custodians, determining which aspects of Noongar stories to be included and what is culturally acceptable.

Noongar Performance Elements & Individual Artist Commissions

- *Waking up the Little Girl – Women's Business*
 - Female singers and dancers performed every time the Little Girl Giant woke up. They sang and danced by her as she slept forming part of her dreams before the Lilliputians arrived.
- *Didgeridoo Players*
 - Six didgeridoo players were engaged across the project:
 - Performance all day on the Friday 13th at the Perth Train Station while the Diver slept.
 - Collaborated with the Royal de Luxe musicians – travelling with them on the music truck throughout the three days
 - Performance during the Welcome to Country on Saturday 14th February at Langley Park.
 - Performance on the barge as the two Giants sailed away down the Swan River.

- *Welcome to Country*
 - Noongar Elders and their families gathered at Langley Park to Welcome the Giants to Wadjuk. Calling upon their ancestors and the spirits to watch over them. The Welcome began with a traditional smoking ceremony – the fire lit and watched over by men. All Elders were draped in kangaroo skins.
 - Male Elders approached the Diver Giant in a boom lift with buckets full of burning Balga chips and smoking eucalyptus leaves. As the boom lift took them up, they smoked the Diver Giant and marked his face with ochre in traditional Noongar male ceremony markings.
 - Female Elders approached the Little Girl Giant. They too smoked her and climbing onto a platform they ceremoniously marked her face.
 - As the smoking and marking was taking place didgeridoos played and Dr Richard Walley lead the entire performance company (French and Australian) in a traditional Noongar chant and song.
 - Once the Giants had been smoked, they were presented with traditional gifts – a dilly bag for the Little Girl and a message stick for the Diver.
 - The Giants were then addressed by one male and one female Elder – welcomed in Language to Wadjuk Boodja.
- Barry McGuire was commissioned to design and paint the Little Girl Giant's Boat, creating a design which told the story Little Girl waking up in the Eastern part of Western Australia; starting from the waterholes country, coming through the Salt Lake systems and into the Avon River and then to Perth Area now known as the Swan River. *"The design is depicting the running of water, when you travel through country, you travel from water hole to waterhole. The running of water connects you as you travel."* – Barry McGuire
- Sandy McKendrick & Sharyn Egan were commissioned to design and create a traditional dilly bag for the Little Girl Giant.
- Richard Walley was commissioned to design a message stick for the Diver Giant.

Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participants and Project Contributors

- Dancer – Ricki Walley
- Singers – Della Rae Morrison, Elizabeth Gogos and Karla Hart
- Didgeridoo Players – Kyle Morrison, Derek Nannup, James and Sam Pilot
- Elders – Maisie Weston, Alf Taylor, Cedric Jacobs and Sealin Garlett
- Fire Makers – Walter McGuire, Calvin McGuire and Mathew McGuire
- Creative Contributors – Melinda Eades, Gina Williams, Vanessa Parker, Ingrid Cummings, Katina Bexessi, Candice Lloyd, Ian Wilkes, Lauren Williams, John Walley, Rhiannon Williams, Olman Walley, Kristel Kickett, Alton Walley and Bella Williams
- Welcomes & Smoking Ceremonies – Len Collard and Barry McGuire

Private welcome and smoking ceremonies for the visiting company and Giants

The Royal de Luxe Company and our Australian team were given a series of private Welcomes and Smoking Ceremonies by our Noongar Elders. Each time a different Elder would carry out the ceremony – providing the company with an important understanding of how different Welcomes can be. A smoking ceremony was performed by Barry McGuire before any work commenced in the rehearsal space at Henderson and then another by Len Collard on the first day of rehearsals. Both were very touching and important moments within the creation of The Giants. The whole company was brought together through a Noongar tradition and cemented the importance of Noongar culture and story within the work.

Noongar Community Testimonials

"I not only enjoyed being a part of the process but participating in the actual ceremony is something that I will keep in my heart. It was such an exciting project and fairy-tale like experience and magical moment. My grandchildren were so excited and still talk about the giants today. Thank you for showing such care and respect for our old people and the way you worked with us all." – Carol Innes

"Felt blessed to help tell one of the largest stories we have ever told in Perth". – Dr Richard Walley

"In Australia we have access to a very old and very distinct culture and to be able to share some of that, invest some of that into the Giants is an exciting thing. To share that not only with an international company but with the people of Perth..." – Kyle Morrison

"Having Royal De Luxe involve the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as part of the production, for the first time in their 10 year history and the fact that we got to be a part of that, now that is something that I'm definitely proud of! The experience on a whole was definitely one of a kind and I'm grateful to be a part of it." – Shakara Walley

Presentation

Queensland Theatre Company's *Black Diggers*, Tom Wright's play about Aboriginal soldiers who answered the call to arms was also presented at this Festival.

Collaboration

2016 Perth Festival commission *Home* featured as the Festival opening event at Langley Park, the work was created by director Nigel Jamieson, Noongar elder and director Richard Walley, designers Zoe Atkinson and Sohan Ariel Hayes, musical directors Iain Grandage, Lucky Oceans and Wayne Freer and an assembly of WA artists from John Butler to Tim Minchin celebrate the land, people and culture of WA.

Welcomes to Country from Noongar Elders in Kings Park were offered to all visiting and local artists by the Festival.

2017 The Festival opened with *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak*, a world-premiere Perth Festival commission was developed in collaboration with Noongar elders, artists and Kings Park scientists under Artistic Director, Wendy Martin. It involved 2,000 contributors and attracted 110,000 people to Kings Park over three nights. Director Nigel Jamieson collaborated closely with Artistic Associate and Cultural Advisor and respected Noongar elder and leader Richard Walley from the very beginning of the project. Critical early conversations were guided by Richard, including with Noel Nannup and Trevor Walley and the Wadjuk Working Group, whose support was critical both culturally and publicly. Many members of the Wadjuk Working Group were contributors to *Boorna Waanginy*, and guided the stories included. Irma Woods was engaged as the Community Liaison Officer who communicated directly with participants including elders.

The night before the first public performance, a community barbeque and smoking ceremony was held for all participants and their families, including many Noongar community members. This group then walked through the work as the first audience of the work. The same was held in 2019 when the work was remounted, bringing back together many of the original community members and contributors. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributors included:

Creative Team

- Associate & Cultural Advisor – Dr Richard Walley (Artistic)
- Writer (Six Seasons) – Kim Scott
- Project Contributor – Dr Noel Nannup
- Project Contributor – Doolann Leisha Eatts

Project Team

- Liaison Officer & Voice Artist – Irma Woods (Community)

Other Contributors

- Dancers – Annalyse Eades, Annette Morrison, Hunter Wilson, Lara Seko, Ron Gidgup, Sharyn Egan, Stan Headland, Vanessa Parker, Tionne Eades, Kwarbah Djookian Dancers, Middar Aboriginal Dance Group and Ochre Contemporary Dance Company.
- Project contributors – Carol Innes, Trevor Walley, Uncle Walter Eatts, The Late Reverend Cedric Jacobs*, Mossenson Galleries, Nick Abraham at SWALSC and the Late Mr Shane Pickett's Family
- Actor/ Performer – Trevor Jamieson
- Dancer/ Performer – Melinda Eades
- Dancers and Musicians – John Walley and Olman Walley
- Singer – Rickeeta Walley
- Female Dance Choreographer & Singer – Karla Hart
- Painter – The Late Mr Shane Pickett*
- Voice Artist – Kelton Pell

*Permission has been granted by the Jacobs Family for the use of the recording by the late Rev Cedric Jacobs

2018 *Siren Song* descended from the sky in an ethereal opening to the Festival. This dawn-and-dusk sound installation, featuring women's voices from speakers atop CBD towers and on a circling helicopter, is recurred for the first ten days of the Festival. Vocalists included Yorta soprano Deborah Cheetham, and Noongar singers Kristal Kickett and Karla Hart.

A public showing of selected scenes from the Noongar *Macbeth* adaptation was held as part of this Festival.

2019 Back by popular acclaim, *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak* takes saws more than 200,000 people experience the opening event in Kings Park.

In *Kwongkan: Sand*, Perth's Ochre Dance and India's Daksha Sheth Dance combined artistry in a ritual of dance, theatre, music and aerial work at Fremantle Arts Centre.

Perth Festival commission, *Five Short Blasts* premiered on the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River), a small-boat cruise at dawn and dusk to encounter the sights, sounds and stories of Fremantle port life with cultural consultation and project contribution from Noongar elder Marie Taylor.

More than 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from across the Kimberley filled the Art Gallery of WA for *Desert River Sea*.

Immersion

2020 The first Festival under new Artistic Director Iain Grandage was dedicated to First Peoples performance throughout the first week of programming. Kylie Bracknell was employed as the Festival's Associate Artist, and created the inaugural Noongar Advisory Circle, comprised of six experienced Noongar people with extensive arts and culture knowledge. Aboriginal Representative appointed to the Festival Board through new member Rishelle Hume AM.

Work included Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company's history making all-Noongar language production *Hecate**, the Gurrumul-inspired *Bungul*, Bangarra Dance Theatre's *Bennelong*, Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse's *Koorlangka*. Festival favourites *Bran Nue Dae* and *Cloudstreet* and the trans-Tasman comedy *BLACK TIES*, by ILBIJERRI Theatre Company and Te Rêhia Theatre Company were also presented. Spinifex Gum and Briggs performed at the contemporary music venue *The Lighthouse*, and documentary *In My Blood It Runs* featuring Arrernte/ Garrwa boy Djujan premiered at Somerville. Walmajarri man John Prince Siddon, Noongar artist Sandra Hill, Tennant Creek artist Dion Beasley and the late Gooniyandi man Butcher Cherele Janangoo featured in the visual arts program. A series of Chamber Music Weekend concerts, *Quartet and Country*, saw collaboration between the Australian String Quartet, and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists Roma Winmar, Stephen Pigram, Lou Bennett and William Barton.

*Yirra Yaakin's *Hecate*, adapted and directed by Kylie Bracknell, translated by Kylie Bracknell and Dr Clint Bracknell (Boomerang and Spear) and edited by Roma Yibiyung Winmar was presented in this Festival. The Shakespeare in Noongar idea was conceived by Kyle J Morrison during his tenure as Artistic Director at Yirra Yaakin and he performed in *Hecate* as Lennox and one of the mischief makers.

Creative Team

- Director/Adaptor: Kylie Bracknell [Kaarljilba Kaardn]
- Translators: Kylie Bracknell [Kaarljilba Kaardn] & Dr Clint Bracknell
- Editor/Senior Language Consultant: Roma Yibiyung Winmar

Project Team

- Set & Costume Designer: Zoë Atkinson
- Lighting Designer: Mark Howett
- Composer/Musical Director/Sound Designer: Dr Clint Bracknell
- Movement Director: Janine Oxenham
- Dramaturg: Kate Mulvaney

Other Contributors

- Cultural Consultants: Judy Bone & Mitchella Hutchins
- Cast: Bobbi Henry, Cezera Critti-Schnaars, Della Rae Morrison, Kyle J Morrison, Mark Nannup, Trevor Ryan, Maitland Schnaars, Ian Wilkes, Rubeun Yorkshire

Noongar Community Testimonials for Hecate

"Last night I had the absolute pleasure of being at the final performance of Hecate as part of the Festival of Perth and performed by the cast of Yirra Yaakin . Words are hard to find to describe what I saw and heard, Shakespeare spoken in the language of our Noongar people, it made tears fall from my eyes, my heart so full of wonder and sent my spirit soaring to the skies full of happiness. Congratulations to all the cast and crew on a wonderful performance. A huge congratulations to Kylie Bracknell and Kyle Morrison for pursuing the dream, what a great occasion it was, I already knew you all are extremely talented, revel in your success and I know it is only going to lead to even bigger and brighter achievements in the future. Gnung koort djerup ni baalup waangening Noongar." – Vivienne Binyarn Hansen

"I saw the opening show. It was deadly. Very proud of Kylie and all the cast, also the Elders who shared their language. Thanks for the invite." – Alice Kearing

General Community Testimonials for Hecate

"I highly recommend this show. For me it is the theatrical highlight of the festival and gob smackingly good theatre. So proud of all involved. No matter in Noongar. Actors are brilliant & speak with their faces, bodies and hearts as well as their ancient tongue. Superbly directed. Fantastic set. Remarkable interpretation. An exquisite treat. Truly molto moorditj." – Mary Jones Mondo

"This Noongar interpretation of Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy is performed with such passion and power, it doesn't matter if you're not familiar with Macbeth or Noongar, you'll get it. And you'll float out the theatre feeling like you were a part of something profoundly epic." – Michelle White

