# MUSICA VIVA AUSTRALIA

# Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) – Innovate

# September 2024 – September 2026

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## Musica Viva Australia’s vision for reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia that embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrates the diversity of their rich and multifaceted cultures. This vision includes the need for acceptance of our mutual histories and proactive steps to redress the hurt, discrimination and trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples due to colonisation, both historically and ongoing. This requires a commitment to building strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a foundation of trust, respect and equity.

In the context of our organisation, we aim to create equal opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, arts workers and students to create and participate in all facets of our business. This means making space for First Nations stories and content within the works that we produce and facilitating opportunities for these works to reach wide and diverse audiences.

At Musica Viva Australia, we want to create and maintain a culturally rich and supportive workplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have agency to lead, the opportunity and pathways to learn, and the support of the organisation to question and be curious.  This also means ensuring we have a staff body that is inclusive, culturally educated and reflective of a modern, diverse, 21st century society. We commit to reconciliation as an ongoing process that we are constantly reviewing.

## Our business

Musica Viva Australia (MVA) is the world’s largest platform for chamber music, presenting national, regional and school tours by Australian and international musicians. We are one of Australia’s leading providers of music education in schools and a champion for Australian composers and emerging talent. With chamber music at the core of MVA’s identity, the creative curiosity of our artists and audiences encourages programming that expands beyond any strict definition of form, enabling thrilling possibilities for collaboration and evolution. In the almost 80 years since MVA was founded, the company has grown from humble beginnings as a single Sydney-based ensemble to a national touring and producing organisation with 60 staff and 220 contracted artists based around the country, including 22 First Nations people.

National reach is one of the key drivers of MVA’s artistic program, across each of our three pillars of activity - Concerts and Communities, Emerging Artist programs and Education. Mainstage concerts are presented across the year in every mainland State capital city, Canberra and Newcastle, and in partnership with presenters in Tasmania and regional NSW. Our Emerging Artist programs invite participation from early career professionals, tertiary and high school students nationally and MVA’s Education program reaches over 160,000 children each year in every state and territory, including in regional and remote areas.

MVA is committed to being at the forefront of the evolution of classical music. We are positioning MVA as a producing house for innovative chamber music productions that bring artists together in unexpected and original combinations. These works are building MVA’s reputation as a creative incubator, reflecting our own national stories and creating exciting opportunities for Australian artists at home and overseas.

Evolution also means balancing our custodianship of the traditional European canon with a greater mix of voices, artforms, ideas and cultures, and making our work accessible and relevant to many more people across Australia’s diverse communities – better reflecting the world in which we live.

Of our current Musica Viva Australia In Schools (MVAIS) touring ensembles, one is First Nations led. Wyniss, a Torres Strait Islander program developed in partnership with NAISDA Dance College, has performed more than 550 concerts across all states and territories to more than 100,000 students. Lost Histories commenced touring in 2023 and reflects on the experiences of ensemble member Troy Russell, a Biripai and Gamillaroi musician and composer.

Previously we have toured highly successful First Nations led shows within MVAIS and regional touring programs, including Mission Songs by Jessie Lloyd, and Dätiwuy Dreaming, a co-production with NAISDA Dance College. Additionally, several current MVAIS shows feature commissioned compositions by First Nations artists, including Colours of Home and Walking with the Wilderness.

We work in collaboration with the Northern Territory and New South Wales governments to specifically target Connected Community schools to ensure First Nations students have access to MVA’s Education programs. Alongside our school programs, teachers have access to an accredited First Nations professional development opportunity, ‘Exploring Music from the Torres Strait’, which was developed as an extension of the Wyniss touring program. This workshop is co-led by a First Nations musician and teaching artist.

In recent years, MVA’s mainstage program has commissioned leading First Nations composers including Brenda Gifford and William Barton. In 2024, MVA presents a national tour of Ensemble Q and William Barton that includes the major work composed by Barton, and a concert by Indigenous singer-songwriter Jess Hitchcock with the Penny Quartet.

## Our RAP

Musica Viva Australia’s ‘Innovate’ Reconciliation Action Plan confirms our ongoing commitment to creating a culturally safe and inclusive workspace that nurtures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, arts workers, communities and organisations. We do so with deep commitment to listening to, reflecting on, and challenging the way things are done and have been done. We recognise our role as an industry leader and the responsibility to model best practice in our sector. We want to build on the learning, initiatives and work we have done through our Reflect RAP, as well as our recent and historical work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, to continue making work with and advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities.

Our designated RAP Champion company-wide is our Director of External Affairs, who is based in our Sydney office and who has close ties to our governance structure. In recognition of the fact that we are a national organisation with several state offices, we also designate our State Managers as State RAP Champions, who are accountable for RAP actions at a state level. All staff complete cultural competency training and are encouraged to work with their managers to plan for cultural learning professional development opportunities.

As a truly national arts organisation of significant history, impact and influence, Musica Viva Australia’s approach to implementing our RAP will be collaborative and nationwide. We regard our national footprint as a great strength, as it enables us to reflect the needs of our many stakeholders in each state, for the benefit of the whole organisation and the sector. As we take the next steps in our reconciliation journey, we intend to use our reach to inform localised and national action, particularly with regards to employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engagement with Supply Nation certified businesses when seeking vendors in our supply chain, and increased creative opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists within our mainstage program. We commit to making reconciliation visible, internally and externally, through formalised acknowledgement within our schools and concert programs, and on outgoing communications including email signatures and on our website.

Through our Innovate RAP we commit to making reconciliation actions systemic and awareness of cultural protocols organisation-wide. We commit to extending the deep work that has been done with First Nations artists in our education programs to our mainstage program, which in 2024 features our first major mainstage commission from a First Nations artist, William Barton. We commit to continuing active conversations about how our mainstage program might engage with First Nations artists.

Finally, through our Innovate RAP we will examine our sphere of influence both within the arts community and beyond. We will question what Musica Viva Australia’s influence looks like, and how we may direct it to support reconciliation initiatives. This will be inclusive of other arts organisations and non-profits, but will also extend to audiences, emerging artists, philanthropic and development circles, as well as our individual influence on each other within the workplace.

## Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

A key outcome of our ‘Reflect’ RAP was to successfully form a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. This group has been instrumental in opening up conversations about reconciliation within MVA and has encouraged members of the broader company to go on their own reconciliation journey. It has been a tangible starting point for reconciliation activity, particularly when the journey towards reconciliation has seemed overwhelming or confusing. The group has initiated Cultural Competency training and established protocols for the ways we engage First Nations artists. It has been a place where people feel free to share, offer ideas, suggestions, concerns, celebrations, community protocols and networks.

Our RAP Working Group includes the following staff members:

* CEO (co-chair)
* ACT & Public Affairs Manager (co-chair)
* Director of External Affairs (RAP Champion – National)
* Director of Emerging Artist Programs
* State Managers – Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and ACT
* People and Culture Manager
* Strategic Partnerships Manager
* Marketing Coordinator, Concerts
* Education Coordinator, NSW, TAS, NT

Education Consultant Dr Sue Lane also participates on the RAP working group, bringing invaluable knowledge of MVA’s Education programs and a particular relationship to Torres Strait Islander ensemble, Wyniss. Additionally, Dr. Christopher Sainsbury, a proud Dharug man and the founder of the Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers program serves on our RAP working group. Dr Sainsbury is also on MVA’s National Members' Council, an advisory body of industry and philanthropic leaders. Musica Viva Australia is committed to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives on our RAP working group during the course of our Innovate RAP.

## Relationships

We recognise that reconciliation is built on a foundation of trust and equality, and that this foundation comes only through respectful relationships with our First Nations colleagues and communities. We recognise that First Nations artists, arts workers, and arts organisations face ongoing barriers to engagement with our artform. We are committed to carving space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have agency to lead, the opportunity and pathways to learn, and the support of the organisation to question and be curious.

### Relationships Action Number One:

Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Confer with current First Nations organisational partners, e.g. NAISDA, Ngutu College about current principles for engagement. Seek new partners within broader sphere of influence. This work is to be delivered by February 2025. The CEO, Artistic Director, Director of External Affairs and Director of Education are responsible for this work.
* Develop and implement an engagement plan to connect with new First Nation communities and towns with significant First Nations populations. This work is to be delivered by September 2026. The Director of External Affairs and Director of Concerts and Communities are responsible for this work.

### Relationships Action Number Two:

Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Circulate Reconciliation Australia’s NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff. This should be completed in May 2025 and May 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event. This should be completed in May 2025 and May 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW. This should be completed in May 2025 and May 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Include MVA artists in First Nations cultural events including National Reconciliation Week. This should be completed in May 2025 and May 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia’s [NRW website](https://www.reconciliation.org.au/national-reconciliation-week/). This should be completed in May 2025 and May 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.

### Relationships Action Number Three:

Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.  This should be completed by September 2024. The Director of External Affairs and the People and Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly: through Acknowledgement of Country on our website, the listing of traditional Countries in our letterhead, staff lists, email signatures, position descriptions and any publications (online and printed). This should be completed by September 2024. The CEO and the Director of Marketing are responsible for this work.
* Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes, including educating ourselves and our audiences about the Uluru Statement. This should be completed in September 2024, September 2025, and September 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work, supported by the RAP Working Group Co-Chair and the Director of Marketing.
* Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation. This should be completed by September 2026. The CEO, Director of External Affairs, and RAP Working Group Co-chair are responsible for this work.

### Relationships Action Number Four:

Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.

*How will we achieve this work?*

* Review and update HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs. This should be completed by September 2025. The People and Culture Manager is responsible for this work.
* Engage a First Nations consultant to audit current policies and procedures, including ant-discrimination policy, as part of the development of an Access, Equity and Inclusion plan. This should be completed by September 2025. The CEO and the People and Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy. This should be completed by April 2025. The CEO and the People and Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Educate senior leaders and board on the effects of racism. Ensure all senior leaders and board have completed cultural competency training. This should be completed by April 2025. The CEO (engaging a consultant) is responsible for this work.

### Relationships Action Number Five:

Educate our stakeholders on the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Utilize Reconciliation Australia resources to devise communication strategies for external stakeholders. This should be completed by April 2025. The RAP Working Group Co-chair and the Director of Marketing are responsible for this work.
* Reach out to other likeminded organisations for support in developing a plan to educate and listen to the leadership of First Nations-led arts organisations. The RAP Working Group Co-chair and the Director of Marketing are responsible for this work.

## Respect

We have a creative, socially engaged team of staff and artists, who are eager to go on a journey to increase their cultural understanding. The work we’ve done on our reconciliation journey to date to embed respect and to create a place of cultural safety has been welcomed as a valuable element of our organisational culture.

### Respect Action Number One:

Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.  This should be completed by February 2025. The People and Culture Manager is responsible for this work.
* Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy. Ensure that advisors are renumerated for their consultation time.  This should be completed by February 2025. The CEO and Director of Education are responsible for this work.
* Develop, implement, and communicate cultural learning opportunities for our staff.    This should be completed by March 2026. The CEO and People and Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.  This should be completed in March 2025 and March 2026. The CEO and People and Culture Manager are responsible for this work.

### Respect Action Number Two:

Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols through regular training, comprehensive onboarding of new staff and regular communication from Leadership.  This should be completed by March 2026. The CEO, Director of External Affairs and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Conduct regular reviews to ensure current protocols are being conducted and followed properly. This should be completed by March 2025. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.  This should be completed by February 2025. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.  This should be completed in February 2025 and February 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.  This ongoing task will be completed at the end of this RAP, September 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work.

### Respect Action Number Three:

Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event. This should be completed in July 2025 and July 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week. This should be completed by March 2025. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.  This should be completed in June 2025 and June 2026. The RAP Working Group Co-chair and Director of External Affairs are responsible for this work.

## Opportunities

We are aware that the extended and intense training required to perform in the artform we work in has not historically been accessible to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to creating opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musicians to engage with music of all kinds and develop their skills. Our work with schools and training institutions, particularly those that are First Nations-led, will continue to evolve and develop towards this goal.

### Opportunities Action Number One:

Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention, and professional development.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities. This work should be completed by March 2026. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. Ensure that staff are renumerated for their consultation time. This work should be completed by March 2025. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy. This work should be completed by March 2026. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. This work should be completed by March 2026. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Create artistic leadership roles for First Nations artists: Five in both 2025 and 2026. This work should be completed by September 2026. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.
* Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace. This work should be completed by March 2026. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.

### Opportunities Action Number Two:

Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy. This work should be completed by September 2024. The CEO, the Chief Financial Officer, RAP Working Group Co-chair and Director of External Affairs are responsible for this work.
* Investigate Supply Nation NFP membership. This work should be completed by September 2024. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff. This work should be completed by April 2025. The CEO, RAP Working Group Co-chair, State Managers and Director of External Affairs are responsible for this work.
* Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. His work should be completed by April 2025. The CEO and Chief Financial Officer are responsible for this work.
* Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses. This work should be completed by April 2025. The CEO, State Managers, Partnerships Manager and Director of External Affairs are responsible for this work.

### Opportunities Outcome Number Three:

Embed First Nations cultures, storytelling and music within our artistic programs.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Ensure at least two MVAIS Ensembles are First Nations led. This work should be completed by September 2024. The Director of Education, Artistic Director and Creative Producer are responsible for this work.
* Ensure our mainstage program continues to commission and program First Nations artists. This work should be completed by September 2024. The Artistic Director and the Director of Concerts and Communities are responsible for this work.
* Investigate opportunities for Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country artistic commissions within Emerging Artist and Musica Viva Australia In Schools Education Programs. This work should be completed by March 2025. The Director of Emerging Artists and Director of Education are responsible for this work.
* Engage with sector organisations (particularly First Nations-led organisations) to support First Nations music students to access opportunities and professional pathways. This work should be completed by March 2025. The CEO, Director of Emerging Artists, Director of Education and the Director of Concerts and Communities are responsible for this work.
* Build ongoing relationships with schools and community partners to grow participation of students in MVA’s Education and Emerging Artist programs. This work should be completed by April 2025. The Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists and State Managers are responsible for this work.
* Commit to the presentation of Education programs that raise awareness and celebrate First Nations culture - MVAIS performance programs, PD workshops, resources and Music Education Residencies in schools. This work should be completed by April 2025. The Director of Education is responsible for this work.
* Deliver targeted coaching opportunities and 1:1 instrumental lessons for First Nations high school students through our Emerging Artists programs. This work should be completed by June 2025. The Director of Emerging Artists is responsible for this work.
* Develop accessible marketing and communications about all MVA programs and opportunities, including for communities who have first languages other than English and those with limited internet access. This work should be completed by March 2026. The Director of Marketing, Director of Education and Director of Concerts and Communities are responsible for this work.

## Governance

Musica Viva Australia promotes adherence to an ethical value system and compliance with the law. We are aware of the value a robust and active RAP Working Group can bring to an organisation. We intend to support and elevate this group through regular reflection, engagement with senior leadership, and appropriate process development.

### Governance Action Number One:

Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG to ensure a range of viewpoints from First Nations people. This work should be completed by March 2025. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG. This work should be completed by September 2025. The CEO and RAP Working Group Co-Chair is responsible for this work.
* Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation. MVA commits to meeting in February, April, June, June, October and December in 2025 and 2026. The CEO and the RAP Working Group Co-chair are responsible for this work.

### Governance Action Number Two:

Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.

How will we achieve this work?

* Define resource needs for RAP implementation and determine who is responsible for managing RAP budget. This work should be completed by September 2024. The RAP Working Group Co-chair and Director of External Affairs are responsible for this work.
* Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments. This work should be completed by February 2025. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments. This work should be completed by February 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management as well as State-based RAP Champions. This work will be completed by September 2024. The CEO, Director of External Affairs and State Managers are responsible for this work.

### Governance Action Number Three:

Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence. This work should be completed by September 2024. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire. This work should be completed in August 2024 and August 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia. This work should be completed in September 2024 and September 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly. This should occur in January, April, July and October. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually. This work should be completed in April 2025 and April 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia’s biennial Workplace RAP Barometer. This work should be completed by March 2026. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.
* Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP. This work should be completed by October 2026. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.

### Governance Action Number Four:

Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.

#### How will we achieve this work?

* Register via Reconciliation Australia’s website to begin developing our next RAP. This work should be completed by September 2025. The RAP Working Group co-chair is responsible for this work.

### Governance Action Number Five:

Ensure that MVA’s Board participate in our Reconciliation journey.

*How will we achieve this work?*

* Report on RAP progress and provide general updates on First Nations projects and relationships in Board papers. This work should be completed in February, March, May, August and November. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Discuss with MVA Chair appointing a RAP Champion on the MVA Board. This work should be completed by August 2026. The CEO is responsible for this work.

### Governance Action Number Six:

Support equitable participation by First Nations people in our governance.

#### How will we complete this work?

* Develop an Access, Equity and Inclusion plan for 2024-2027 that includes targets for First Nations Board and National Members Council members. This work should be completed by April 2025. The CEO is responsible for this work.
* Develop a policy to pay First Nations Board members, First Nations Working Group Members, National Members Council Members for their participation where appropriate. This work should be completed by April 2025. The CEO and People & Culture Manager are responsible for this work.