

NIDA

National Institute
of Dramatic Art



RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN

REFLECT

REFLECT

Reconciliation Action Plan

August 2023 - August 2024

NIDA acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians
of the sacred lands, from the mountains to the sea,
on which we learn and tell stories.

The lands of the Bidjigal, Gadigal, Dharawal and Dharug peoples.
We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders
past and present.

We also recognise the work and strength of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander artists, workers and creatives within the
NIDA Community that spans this continent.

Sovereignty was never ceded.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.





EMILY PIRES

The Acknowledgement of Country banner is proudly hanging in the NIDA Foyer featuring a painting by Emily Pires' mother, Sonia Kennedy. The painting is of Coolamons (Indigenous Australian carrying vessels).

Untitled, acrylic on canvas, 2006

EMILY PIRES 2020 BFA COSTUME ALUMNI

Emily Pires is a proud Tubbagah Wiradjuri and Gumbaynggirr woman with a passion for sewing, costumes and history. At NIDA, Emily was taught to expand her skills and love for historical accuracy in costume. This has also opened up opportunities for her to expand her interest in millinery, tailoring and handmade bespoke footwear.

Whilst studying at NIDA, Emily provided the institute with this RAP's featured art work painted by her mother Sonia Kennedy 'Puukoo' (n.d), as a way for NIDA to do an Acknowledgement Country. The artwork now hangs on banners around NIDA. It was Emily's mother that first introduced a young Emily to NIDA on a trip to La Perouse. As they drove past NIDA Sonia pointed out to Emily "that's where the famous actors come from" sparking a potential career path for Emily. NIDA is so proud to be part of Emily's story and feature Sonia's art in our 2023 RAP. We would like to thank Emily for contribution and passionate support over the years.



FIRST NATIONS CONSULTANT STATEMENT -RHODA ROBERTS AO

As a Bundjalung woman from the Widjabul Wiabul clan group, I also proudly have Irish, Anglo, Scottish and Welsh heritage as well as family affiliations with the Dhungutti, the Kamilaroi and the Gumbaynggirr peoples and across the clans of our territories, I see our nation Australia, and who we are, from multiple perspectives.

NIDA is committed to seed, nurture, and grow our new talent, creatives and practitioners while generating world class stories of excellence across an industry network that reflects our Australian society in the 21st century.

I believe this RAP specifically identifies the work we all need to improve on and tackle new configurations, increasing accessibility and support for new students, connecting with community, and challenging our approaches as a training ground, that continues to review education and curriculum.



MATTHEW DOYLE - UNCLE IN RESIDENCE

Since joining the NIDA family in February 2023, Uncle Matt has formed strong connections with both the First Nations students and staff here at NIDA.

So far during his time, Uncle Matt developed and taught the 1st year acting BFA's cohort a class based on cultural movement/dance and song and connection to country. As well as doing a Masterclass for the 2nd year acting BFA's, Cultural awareness talks with the Writing, Technical Theatre and Props cohorts.

Other activities he has been involved in include being a part of the RAP Committee involving a visit with the some of the staff to the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Uncle Matt looks forward to continuing building strong relationships and support for all of the First Nation students and the whole of the NIDA family in general, through both providing practical and cultural support and guidance.

STATEMENT FROM CEO OF RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

INAUGURAL REFLECT RAP

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

NIDA joins a network of more than 2,200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to 3 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types— Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes. These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables NIDA to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations NIDA, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

Karen Mundine
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia





CEO STATEMENT

Through this RAP NIDA will continue to deepen our dialogue with emerging First Nations creatives and future leaders. As the conversations continue to evolve, our focus is on playing a key role in providing capacity building and skills development, while also providing a safe and respectful cultural environment for all.

Under the guidance of First Nations Consultant Rhoda Roberts AO, Head of First Nations Travis Cardona, and Uncle in Residence Matthew

Doyle, NIDA's First Nations commitment spans all areas of the organisation and includes building cultural consciousness and awareness, action planning for reconciliation and creating networks to foster and embed First Nations connections across the organisation and into industry.

As CEO of NIDA I feel it's our responsibility to support and amplify the First Nations workforce in the creative industries with world class training and initiatives. A well trained First Nations workforce and a culturally safe performing arts industry is a key component to enable diverse storytelling and cultural awareness for audiences in Australia and around the world.

Liz Hughes
CEO, NIDA



Burning is a world premiere and vital First Nations work written and directed by Amy Sale. This theatrical epic, confronts the pain afflicted on these lands and this soul.

NIDA Production *Burning* (2022)
Photographer Lisa Maree Williams

OUR BUSINESS

The main campus of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in Kensington, NSW is situated on the traditional lands of the Bidjigal, Gadigal, Dharawal and Dharug peoples. NIDA's Melbourne campus is situated on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nations. NIDA acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the sacred lands, from the mountains to the sea, on which we learn and tell stories, and we pay our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present.

Founded in 1958 as Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art, NIDA is both Australia's preeminent performing arts educator, and one of the most globally respected brands in its field. NIDA's unparalleled practice-based learning, connections to industry and culture of innovation have produced some of the world's most influential and in-demand storytellers across stage, screen and beyond. NIDA's goal is to empower storytellers of all ages and backgrounds, wherever they may be. From our acclaimed undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and vocational diplomas, to open short courses; from transformative corporate training and partnerships, to much-loved school programs; and powerful in-studio and online learning to experiences.

NIDA National Institute
of Dramatic Art

NIDA's Board Statement of Principles (27 July 2020) reflects our commitment to First Nations First:

- We recognise the sovereignty of First Nations Peoples.
- We affirm our support for the lives, wellbeing, dignity and creative agency of First Nations Peoples and People of Colour. We see that this support comes with a duty to act.
- In acknowledging the powerful role that the arts play in Australia, we also must acknowledge our key responsibility in supporting anti-racism and decolonisation. As a leader in the training of world-class performers and other professionals in the national and international performing arts, NIDA acknowledges it has a role to play in being part of global change.
- We recognise that this change must be led by First Nations Peoples and People of Colour. We are ready to listen to and resource this process.
- We support existing calls to action for meaningful structural change made by First Nations Peoples and People of Colour, both in the arts sector (including NIDA) and beyond.
- It is essential that NIDA is a place where every person feels safe to bring their whole self, to tell their stories and so be a courageous and creative voice for the nation. Where NIDA fails to be inclusive, we will change.
- We are committed to changing how we operate because it is the right thing to do. We are ready for truth-telling and rebuilding, as well as ensuring that First Nations people and People of Colour have their rightful supports and representation at NIDA.

As at August 2023, NIDA employs 161 part and full-time staff. We have 4 identified First Nations staff (2.5%) and 13 students (of 297, 4.4%)

NIDA Production *Gods Country* (2021)
Photographer Patrick Boland



OUR RAP

We are developing our RAP to be more strategic and accountable in our approach to Reconciliation at NIDA and this REFLECT RAP is designed to help us articulate our vision and plan, implement and monitor tangible actions to improve the lived experience of First Nations students and staff at NIDA. We have incrementally increased our representation of First Nations students and staff over the years; however, and our aim is to continually grow our First Nations community. We have also made some adjustments to our processes, policies, and training however COVID was an obvious disruption and until recently, this work and these relationships have not been captured in one overarching plan that can be tracked and monitored.

NIDA is ready to reflect and innovate to support Reconciliation, to develop respectful relationships and to create meaningful opportunities with and for, First Nations peoples. NIDA's Reconciliation Action Plan for 2023 - 2024 is informed by the:

- The NIDA Board's Statement of Principles and Annexure (27 July 2020)
- NIDA Strategic Plan 2021-2024
- NIDA Business Plan 2023
- NIDA 2030 Vision
- NIDA Inclusion Action Plan 2023
- 2020 NIDA-wide survey of First Nations lecturers, tutors, guest speakers, resources, and teaching materials
- Reconciliation Plan Working Group discussions 2019-20, and 2022-2023
- National Cultural Policy - Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place, January 30, 2023
- NIDA's First Nations Consultant, Rhoda Roberts AO, Uncle in Residence, Matthew Doyle and Head of First Nations, Travis Cardona

OUR PARTNERSHIPS/CURRENT ACTIVITIES

NIDA's alumni includes 36 of Australia's most accomplished and dynamic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts practitioners in the Nation.

NIDA continues to ensure we maintain First Nations representation on our Board and Academic Board. Since 2020 we have made several key First Nations appointments into critical roles including but not limited to First Nations Consultant, Artistic Associates, First Nations Student Counsellor, Head of First Nations, and an Uncle in Residence.

We have an ongoing focus on recruitment of First Nations students and staff through identification of key roles and inclusive recruitment practices. We are employing recent First Nations and culturally diverse alumni to engage with prospective applicants to NIDA and have engagement with over 40 creative organisations who are engaged with artists who identify as First Nations and/or People of Colour.

Since 2018, NIDA has undertaken various external engagement activities and collaborations including but not limited to Cultural Leadership First Nations Panels, Reconciliation Week celebrations between 2018-2022, Presentation in 2019 of the Statement of the Heart in the NIDA lobby, Special hosting and Q&A of The Final Quarter looking at the racism experienced by Adam Goodes in December 2019, NAISDA – collaborative project with MFA Directing and BFA Design programs, and Course Advisory Groups held for BFA and MFA courses which included three First Nations practitioners (and alumni) in December 2022.

We have undertaken cultural awareness training through creative experiences, industry guest speakers (internationally and nationally) sharing their ground-breaking work in the creative industries overseas, hosting panels with inspiring First Nations and People of Colour creatives and undertaking extensive international benchmarking and conversations with performing arts educators globally who have successfully transformed their organisations to be inclusive learning environments.

In 2020, NIDA commissioned Indigenous lawyer Terri Janke to review the learning environment at NIDA. Terri undertook extensive meetings with students, alumni and staff and other stakeholders and provided a series of recommendations to improve inclusivity, many of which have been implemented.

We have increased accessibility to our courses through the provision of scholarships specifically for First Nations, People of Colour and culturally and linguistically diverse students between 2018-2022. These include significant scholarships for students from supporters such as The Balnaves Foundation, ARA Group, Ingham's, YouTube (Google), ARA Group, Chrysanthy and Tessa Mallos Bequest, Luminis Foundation, Finch, Tim Fairfax AC, Zareh Nalbandian, Margaret Kirby and Dr Eric Wegman.

NIDA continues to develop partnerships, to engage and collaborate with, and give a voice to, First Nations peoples and organisations. However, there is a critical need for NIDA to continue to strategically build our engagement with and support for, First Nations students and staff, and this will be a key focus in our REFLECT RAP during 2023-24.

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	a. Identify First Nations stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	Jan –Dec 2023	Head of First Nations
	b. Identify and develop relationships with relevant Indigenous arts organisations & venues with pro-First Nations programming, youth arts programs, theatre companies, cultural organisations and through City Councils that have First Nations programming to support recruitment initiatives.	Jan – Dec 2023	Head of First Nations
	c. Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with First Nations stakeholders and organisations.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations
	d. Increase First Nations knowledge within learning activities by increasing the number of First Nations and content into course curriculum.	Dec 2023	Director of Learning & Innovation
	e. Encourage more partnerships with First Nations organisations as part of the learning experience for NIDA students.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations and Director of Learning & Innovation
	f. Scope out tailored workshops for First Nations high school students at NIDA and nationally	Dec 2023	Head of NIDA Open
	g. Consider and implement free subsidy places for First Nations individuals into NIDA Open courses who may wish to undertake studies at NIDA in the future.	Dec 2023	Head of NIDA Open
	h. Develop an increased awareness of NIDA and make it more accessible to the wider community.	Mar 2024	Head of First Nations

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	a. Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024 (annually)	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing
	b. RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May- 3 June 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	c. Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	d. Celebrate NRW through an event for staff and students.	27 May- 3 June 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing
	e. Make Survival Day a day that staff can choose not to work.	26 Jan 2024	Director, People & Culture
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	a. Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	Aug 2023	CEO
	b. Set up an intranet site to share reconciliation resources and events with NIDA staff	End of Q2 2023	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing
	c. Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations/ Exec Team
	d. Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	Dec 2023	Senior, Business Development Manager with Department Heads

Relationships			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
	e. Find opportunities to bring together First Nations staff and students together with Indigenous industry practitioners. This could be in collaboration with other organisations such as AFTRS, and NAISDA.	March 2024	Head of First Nations with Course Leaders
	f. Build on and develop connections and opportunities with ARTS8 organisations	March 2024	CEO
	g. Increase advocacy through Alumni and the First Nations performing arts sector.		CEO and Head of First Nations
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	a. Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	March 2024	Inclusion Manager
	b. Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2024	Director, People & Culture and Inclusion Manager

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights through cultural learning.	a. Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge, and rights within our organisation.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations with First Nations Consultant & Uncle in Residence
	b. Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	Dec 2023	Director, People & Culture with Head of First Nations
	c. Provide First Nations cultural awareness training and programs, across the organisation	Dec 2023	Director, People & Culture
	d. Maintain an Uncle-in-Residence program to support and mentor staff and students in creative performances, seminars, masterclasses, exhibitions and workshops	Dec 2023	CEO

Respect				
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	
6. Demonstrate respect to First Nations peoples by observing cultural protocols.	a. Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area; and increase engagement with Local Community.	Aug 2024	Head of First Nations	
	b. Research & develop a specific learning initiative for staff and students about the Country, including the history and language of the land on which we meet and learn at NIDA	May 2024	Head of First Nations in consultation with our Uncle in Residence	
	c. Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	March 2024	Head of First Nations	
	d. Continue to ensure that an Acknowledgment of Country is given at all NIDA official events and performances (this can be pre-recorded for performance seasons), and on public facing communications, website, etc. (including the Melbourne office).	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations	
	e. Hold a Welcome to Country and a Calling to Country Smoking Ceremony at the beginning of every academic year (Welcome Week) when all students and staff are present.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations with Uncle in Residence	
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	a. Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing	
	b. Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing	

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
7. Build respect for First Nations cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	c. RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner with Head of Marketing
	d. Continue to hold a NAIDOC week event for staff and students	First week in July 2024	Head of First Nations

Opportunities			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development.	a. Develop a business case for First Nations employment within our organisation.	April 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	b. Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	April 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	c. Develop a draft First Nations Employment and Recruitment Strategy/ Plan	April 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner
9. Increase First Nations supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	a. Develop a business case for procurement from First Nations owned businesses.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations and CFO
	b. Investigate Supply Nation membership.	Dec 2023	Head of First Nations and CFO
10. Develop Cultural safety framework and protocols	a. Develop a cultural safety framework and set of protocols undertaken in consultation with appropriate leaders to enable NIDA and its community as a culturally safe space, to embed cultural awareness practices.	Aug 2024	Head of First Nations, Inclusion Manager & Director, People & Culture

Governance			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	a. Maintain a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	Aug 2023,24	Chair of RAP Group
	b. Review Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2024	Chair of RAP Group
	c. Establish and maintain First Nations representation on the RWG.	Aug 2023,24	Chair of RAP Group
	d. Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Dec 2023	Chair of RAP Group
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	a. Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	Dec 2023	Chair of RAP Group
	b. Continue to engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	Aug 2024	Head of First Nations
	c. Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	Aug 2023	CEO
13. Embed First Nations Representation within NIDA governance structures	a. Ensure First Nations representation across board and key committees wherever possible.	Aug 2024	CEO and NIDA Board
	d. Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	Dec 2023	Chair of RAP Group
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	a. 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.	June annually	Snr, P & C Business Partner

Respect			
Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	a. 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.	June annually	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	b. Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August annually	Snr, P & C Business Partner
	c. Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September, annually	Snr, P & C Business Partner
15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	a. Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2024	Snr, P & C Business Partner

Contact details:

Name: Amelia Polaschek
 Position: Senior P&C Business Partner
 Phone: 02 96977536
 Email: amelia.polaschek@nida.edu.au



National Institute of Dramatic Art
 215 Anzac Parade
 Kensington NSW 2033
 02 9697 7600
 info@nida.edu.au nida.edu.au

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Nathan Maynard's new play *God's Country* is a refreshing, humorous, confronting, and poignant consideration of our national day. What better way to continue this debate than through the voices of the next generation.

NIDA Production *God's Country* (2021)
 Photographer Patrick Boland