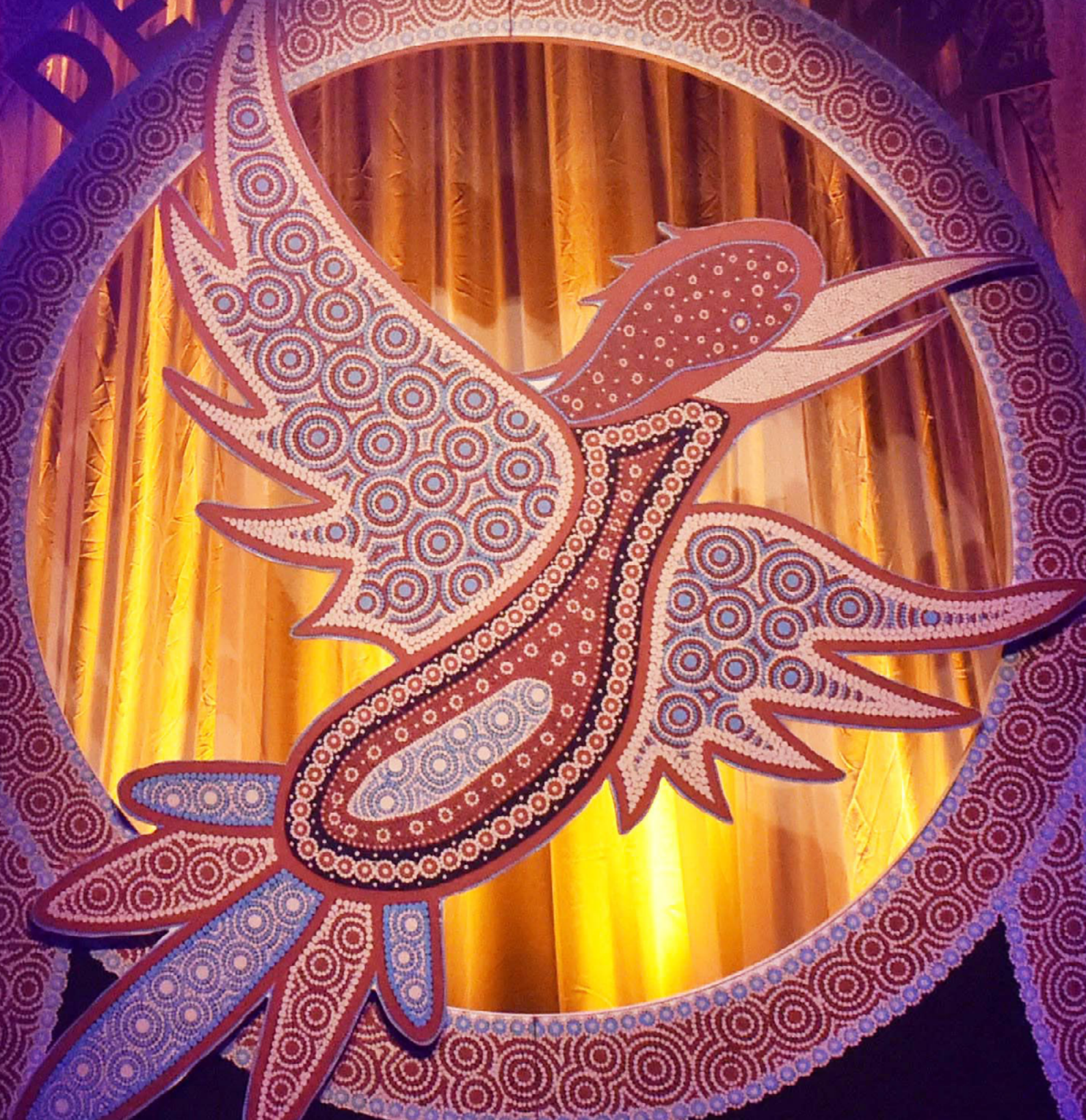




**MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN**
SEPTEMBER 2026 - SEPTEMBER 2028 INNOVATE



Melbourne International Comedy Festival acknowledges that we conduct our business upon the lands of the Kulin Nations, and we further extend respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. As we travel, perform and engage with communities throughout Australia, we understand there is a diversity in language, lore and history, but that above all else, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Custodians of this country.

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1. An Innovate RAP is for organisations that have developed relationships with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and are ready to develop or implement programs for cultural learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier diversity.

An Innovate RAP will give your organisation the freedom to develop and test new and innovative approaches, and embed the RAP in your organisation.

www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/

MESSAGE FROM THE FESTIVAL DIRECTOR / CEO



We at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival are delighted to launch our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Across the past four decades we've had the privilege of presenting the Festival, touring artists across Australia and internationally, and building artistic development programs to discover and support emerging performers across all corners of this beautiful, ancient country. In 2007 we launched Deadly Funny in order to grow the participation and representation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples within the comedy industry. Our commitment to build increased profile and opportunities for First Nations producers and comedians, and to build First Nations audiences for comedy, continues today.

Our First Nations programs work directly with Traditional Owners to unearth and recognise bright new comic talent. We showcase artists and bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories to the broadest possible audience, ensuring these vital voices reach communities nationwide. But there is still a journey to be made in elevating and increasing awareness of First Nations voices, stories and experiences.

At the Melbourne International Comedy Festival we see comedy as a powerful tool for reconciliation. We believe that humour has the power to educate, heal, inspire and unify an Australia that embraces respect, equality and equity for all. Through opportunities on and off the stage, we want to see First Nations comedians and colleagues have their voices heard widely both in Australia and overseas.

Our inaugural Innovate RAP is another step forward in this journey, capturing our ongoing commitment to growing as an organisation together with First Nations peoples of this country.

Susan Provan AO

Festival Director / CEO

Melbourne International Comedy Festival

RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA CEO'S MESSAGE



Reconciliation Australia commends Melbourne International Comedy Festival on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Melbourne International Comedy Festival to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Melbourne International Comedy Festival will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 5.5 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Melbourne International Comedy Festival is part of a strong network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Melbourne International Comedy Festival's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Melbourne International Comedy Festival on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

Karen Mundine

Chief Executive Officer

Reconciliation Australia

OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Melbourne International Comedy Festival sees comedy as a powerful tool for reconciliation. Through outreach, development, mentorship, performance platforms, staffing and board representation we want to grow significantly the opportunities for First Nations comedians and colleagues have their voices heard.

Our vision is for strong representation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples performing and producing locally and nationally, as well as leading internationally as representatives of Australia on the global stage. Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF) is dedicated to elevating and increasing the awareness of First Nations voices, stories and experiences. We believe humour has the power to educate, heal, inspire and unify an Australia that embraces respect and equality for all.

The Festival's First Nation's programs work with Traditional Owners to seek out and support emerging comic talent, showcase artists and bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories to the broadest audience.

Melbourne International Comedy Festival acknowledges that we conduct our business upon the lands of the Kulin Nations, and we further extend respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. As we travel, perform and engage with communities throughout Australia, we understand there is a diversity in language, lore and history, but that above all else, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Custodians of this country.

We must begin with an acknowledgement that there is a history which has resulted in profound grief and suffering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that the true story of Australia remains largely untold, denied and misrepresented. The original conflict must first be understood before we can walk together in unity and harmony.

We understand Reconciliation to be a journey in Australia that has begun, but which remains unfinished business. Our Reconciliation Action Plan demonstrates our unwavering commitment to improving our cultural capabilities, knowing that being truly connected and belonging to this nation requires a change in our hearts and minds.

Our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their lands and communities aims to foster genuine partnerships and mutual respect.

Our vision to employ comedy as a powerful tool for Reconciliation will be achieved by:

- Producing the Deadly Funny Program, the foremost comedy program designed to seek out and support emerging comic artists, building an international and national voice, through comedy, to First Peoples.

- Increasing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the organisation through employment and performance opportunities throughout the Festival, within affiliated venues, and in partnership strategies with key stakeholders and supporters.
- Enhancing cultural capabilities of our employees, through accredited and compulsory cultural competency training in conjunction with ongoing personal and professional development opportunities pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Continuing to mentor and support Deadly Funny alumni as they build successful comedy careers.

OUR BUSINESS

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival takes over Melbourne, every autumn with an enormous program of stand-up comedy, cabaret, theatre, street performance, film, television, radio and visual arts. For over 40 years the Festival's creative, eclectic programming has earned it a global reputation.

Conceived to promote the comedic arts in Australia, the Festival aims to discover, develop and showcase great talent for the entertainment and inspiration of a broad audience, while ensuring those who want to get into the profession have every opportunity to develop their skills.

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival employs approximately 10 First Nations artists annually in various roles for the Deadly Funny program. Over 60 further artistic opportunities arise across the organisation's special events, digital content and national and international tours. The Festival office is based in Melbourne and activities are presented throughout Australia and overseas. The Festival employs 13 core year-round staff as well as a number of fixed-term contract roles and casual employees in peak periods of Festival delivery. As part of it's year-round team the Festival employs a First Nations Producer and a First Nations Creative Advisor.

The breadth of our activities sets MICF apart from other annual arts festivals. Although the actual festival runs for just four weeks, the organisation is active year-round. National and international touring, and educational and artistic development programs complement Festival delivery while building and supporting a flourishing comedy industry.

Through its development programs, touring and Festival events the Melbourne International Comedy Festival is Australia's largest employer of comedians. Industry development is a priority for MICF with intertwined national programs offering pathways into the comedy industry. These programs include the workshop-based Class Clowns program for secondary school students; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedy development program Deadly Funny; Australia's largest open mic competition RAW Comedy; Up Next, a regular stage-time opportunity for Class Clowns alumni and The Comedy Zone, where emerging comics have their first full Melbourne International Comedy Festival season in a Festival produced show. The Jeez Louise initiative supports the career development of women in comedy and offers seminars and workshops through each festival.

Our annual Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow travels the length and breadth of the nation (and regularly to Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Korea and India) bringing Festival highlights to over 40,000 eager comedy lovers.

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival provides the environment and promotional activities that unite and support all events and champions and celebrates diverse voices. MICF builds and manages many of the venues that house Festival shows in order to cater for the growing program. By doing so the Festival is able to subsidise

critical performance space for artists and platform the next generation alongside established comedians. MICF also presents a program of the best contemporary comedy from overseas and produces a significant number of special events for stage and broadcast on free-to-air and online platforms.

The annual Melbourne International Comedy Festival is the culmination of our year-round activities and for four weeks every year, makes Melbourne the centre of the comedy universe.

DEADLY FUNNY

Deadly Funny is a comedy workshop, mentoring program, comedy competition and showcase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers. Designed to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to participate in the comedy and live performance community; the program develops performance and writing skills and creates pathways into the industry.

Since the program's inception almost one thousand First Nations people have registered to participate in a workshop. Audiences of thousands more have attended a Deadly Funny event across the country, a National Grand Final at the Festival, or tuned into Deadly Funny content online or on TV and broadcast streaming services.

Humour is a popular foundation within Australian culture but the rich heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander humour is yet to be as widely exposed as it could be. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians are under-represented in the Australian entertainment industry. Deadly Funny is committed to supporting First Nations performers and producers, and to seeing First Nations humour and First Nations comedians as a vibrant and integral element of the contemporary comedy sector.

When Deadly Funny was first conceived, there were very few professional First Nations comedians. The groundwork laid by Deadly Funny over the years has led to significant steps forward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' comedy,

including the high-profile successes of Deadly Funny alumni Steph Tisdell and Andy Saunders. Steph hosted the 2022 Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala, and starred in TV shows including Class of '07 (2023), Total Control (2021-24) and Bump (2023-24). Andy became a household name via The Block (2019) and has gone onto many other TV appearances (including Urzila on ABC TV, 2026) as well as extensive touring as a comedian. Both Andy and Steph, along with other successful Deadly Alumni including Kevin Kropinyeri, performed with the Aboriginal Comedy Allstars on their first international tour in 2019 to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and London's Soho Theatre. It is critical we continue this momentum.

Deadly Funny alumni have gone on to become household names, inspiring future First Nations peoples to follow in their footsteps. Past program participants have performed at festivals around the country and have received training to become comedy workshop facilitators, encouraging the next generation of aspiring talent. The prestigious alumni group includes artists and mentors, who are at the heart of the program – Kevin Kropinyeri, Andy Saunders, Janty Blair, Jay Wymarra, Sean Choolburra, Elaine Crombie, Kimmie Lovegrove and Dane Simpson. Deadly alumni Tarsh Jago was nominated for Best Newcomer at the 2026 Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

While Deadly Funny is committed to presenting comedians who stand successfully in their own right, there are important ancillary benefits:

1. PRACTICAL RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

Humour can be a non-threatening way of educating non-Indigenous Australians about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Utilising humour and storytelling, the program demonstrates that comedy can improve non-Indigenous Australians' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and address unjust and inaccurate stereotypes.

2. MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Deadly Funny gives a voice to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who may otherwise go unrepresented in the media and society, allowing individuals to address social issues in an open, non-confrontational way. Deadly Funny empowers performers to tell the stories that otherwise remain untold, address issues that may be otherwise ignored and discuss the impact of social issues on communities.

Raising awareness on previously unvoiced topics in a nurturing environment can lead to the processing of trauma for individuals and society as a collective.

3. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND THE CREATION OF NEW WORK

Deadly Funny's workshop and competition model creates opportunities for emerging comedic artists to develop new work, be supported by experienced mentors, and participate in small-scale (state heats) and large-scale (national final) performances. The program is committed to building a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians who can sustain long term careers as comedy professionals, including as writers, producers, performers and stand-up comedians.

Each year, Deadly Funny provides workshop delivery training for new facilitators.

4. EDUCATIONAL

Humour has long been used as a vehicle to improve literacy and numeracy skills, and to reduce truancy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Deadly Funny can achieve key educational and social benefits in addition to arts and cultural outcomes such as the development of writing, critical thinking, communication skills (on and off stage) and the development of public speaking skills.

5. BROAD EXPOSURE

The Festival is committed to ensuring the Deadly Funny program is delivered nationally and enjoyed by a broad audience. Deadly Funny delivers a national program of free comedy workshops (with performance outcomes) for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across most states and territories. The national final and showcase is programmed as part of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival encouraging a diverse audience. Artists' performances are professionally recorded for broadcast on NITV (National Indigenous Television), and online distribution (SBS On Demand and Festival owned channels) reaching hundreds of thousands more in digital audiences. Content is also made available for artists to use for promotional purposes.

6. PARTNERSHIPS

The Festival has worked with a range of First Nations cultural organisations including Inala Wangarra (QLD) and Hart Enterprises (WA), aiding in sector development and further opportunities for communities to perform or attend performances.

Each year new co-presenter relationships are established with a view to developing relationships and expanding the delivery of workshops and heats nationally.

The Festival has supported the touring of Aboriginal Comedy Allstars, featuring Deadly Funny alumni and mentors and assisted them to find national and international audiences and continue to grow as mentors for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians.

Melbourne International Comedy Festival engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists for performances across a broad suite of special events and programs and as workshop facilitators to deliver activities nationally.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are engaged annually for performances in the Festival's Gala special events (Oxfam Gala and Opening Night Comedy Allstars Supershow – both broadcast

nationally), Comedy Up Late series (ABC TV and Audible), Deadly Funny National Grand Final (NITV), Stand And Deliver (kids comedy series for ABC ME), The Big FOUR-Oh! – forty years of funny special event (Channel Ten) and the Melbourne Comedy Festival Roadshow national tour (including an SBS documentary, 2016).

Deadly Funny is dedicated to continuing to mentor and support participants to build successful comedy careers.



Steph Tisdell (photo by Jim Lee)

OUR RAP

The journey towards reconciliation began for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival almost two decades ago, driven by the desire to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to create professional development pathways for aspiring comics.

Likewise, the journey towards developing our RAP has been years in the making. The Festival believes it is important to ensure we are doing our work towards reconciliation across all parts of the organisation. The development and implementation of the Innovate RAP is a first step on this journey.

With a storytelling history spanning 60,000 years, the need to discover, develop and showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' comedy was obvious, and it was apparent from a cultural perspective that humour sat at the very heart of cultural resilience for Australia's First Peoples. Bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, through comedy, to broad audiences drove the creation of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Deadly Funny Program.

A core focus of our RAP is to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across the broader operations of our business (core team members, contractors and casuals), including but not limited to: production, marketing and graphic design, board representation, producers, workshop facilitators, venue management and ticketing. We will achieve this by raising core staff awareness, staff cultural training, broadening employment outreach, building on key relationships, annual training of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators and investigating resources such as Supply Nation.

Deadly Funny has developed, discovered and showcased the best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comics in Australia. The intent of our RAP is to further develop the Deadly Funny Program – delivering the program into new locations, increasing participation and providing new development opportunities – continuing our work in creating pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into comedy.



Tarsh Jago (Photo by Tiffany Garvie)

Now in its 19th year, the Deadly Funny Program includes:

- Workshops for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comics facilitated by leading Australian comedians
- The annual Deadly Funny Competition, which unearths the freshest, fiercest and funniest new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander talent from around the country, and
- An annual National Grand Final and showcase during the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, featuring competition finalists and some of the best established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians.

RAP WORKING GROUP

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival RAP Working Group includes 10 staff from across MICF, including two members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Internal staff members have been chosen for their identified commitment to reconciliation, and desire to act as organisational champions in this space. Each member supports and promotes information sharing and actions related to reconciliation, engaging events that support the discovery, development and showcasing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedy.

MEMBER	POSITION
Adrian Joannou	Program Manager – Special Events, MICF (RAP Champion)
Denise Damianos	Marketing & Partnership Director, MICF
Dylan Cole	Executive Director, MICF
Erin Martin	Office Manager, MICF
Josh Bond	Creative Producer – First Nations, MICF; and Director, Djuki Mala
Kevin Kropinyeri	Creative Advisor in Residence, MICF; and Comedian
Nathan Hale	Technical Director, MICF
Rebecca Austin	Director of Touring, MICF
Roan Johnson	Program Manager – Education, Family & Film, MICF
Susan Provan AO	Festival Director/CEO, MICF



Kevin Kropinyeri (photo by Jim Lee)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our Strategic Priorities are to:

1. Strengthen our relationships with First Nations peoples and organisations
2. Demonstrate respect for cultural protocols and a commitment to cultural competency across the organisation.
3. Create employment opportunities for First Nations talent
4. Establish effective governance mechanisms

Strategies to achieve these priorities are outlined in the tables below and will inform more detailed planning activity amongst Melbourne International Comedy Festival management and the Reconciliation Action Working Group. Updates on progress against these priorities will be provided on a regular basis.



Dhinawan (photo by Tiffany Garvie)

Kookarki Karnkin (2016)

Kookarki Karnkin translates as “laughing Kookaburra” in the traditional language of the Ngarrindjeri people of the area now known as the Lower River Murray, Lakes and Coorong region of South Australia.

The painting by comedian and artist Kevin Kropinyeri was commissioned by Melbourne International Comedy Festival as the symbol for the organisation’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

Laughter is healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Kookaburra is spreading the healing to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples through her laughter and this laughter is contagious.



Kevin’s Kookarki Karnkin painting commissioned for the Festival’s RAP has also been incorporated into the annual Deadly Funny National Grand Final production design.

About the artist: Kevin Kropinyeri

Kevin belongs to the Ngarrindjeri Nation of the lower River Murray and Lakes region in South Australia.

He grew up along the River Murray in his home towns of Tailem Bend and Murray Bridge. His love of and connection to Country; land, waters and creatures is reflected in his art practice. His desire to paint lay dormant until July 2005 when Kevin was living and working in Bourke (Far Western New South Wales). People took an interest in his drawings and encouraged him to transfer them onto canvas. Using bold designs with complex patterning, his work represents River Life, Creation Stories and Issues that affect Aboriginal people. Kevin has designed and fabricated a number of public art works, worked collaboratively on community arts projects and continues to sell paintings by commission. His strong designs have also been translated into set designs, logos and clothing.



Let the bird fly! In 2020 the Festival was thrilled to release the Deadly Funny Kookarki Karnkin, illustrated by comedian and artist Kevin Kropinyeri, as the new visual representation for the Festival’s Deadly Funny program.

RELATIONSHIPS

Our RAP commits the Melbourne International Comedy Festival to a journey of finding ways for the First Peoples of our nation to reclaim, maintain, and self-determine community, country and culture.

Fostering relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our Deadly Funny Program and the overall Festival business plan requires us to further extend existing relationships, broaden employment outreach and continue to build a deeper level of respect and trust. Establishing trust forms the foundation for mutual respect and cross-cultural learning. The Festival has the capacity to unearth and

recognise bright and bold talent and support career development across all aspects of the entertainment industry, thus giving an International and national voice through comedy to First Peoples.

Focus area:

- Building relationships with Kulin Nations (on the lands where MICF business takes place) and Traditional Owners nation-wide
- Developing partnerships that nurture and strengthen the Deadly Funny Program locally and nationally.



Ghenoa Gela (photo by Tiffany Garvie)

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Meet with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Executive Director, Festival Director, Creative Advisor
	Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Executive Director, Creative Advisor.
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2027, 2028	Office Manager
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May - 3 June 2027, 2028	Office Manager
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May- 3 June 2027, 2028	Executive Director
	Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May- 3 June 2027, 2028	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Creative Advisor
	Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2027, 2028	Lead: Office Manager Support: Executive Director, Marketing team

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	July 2027, July 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, Deadly Funny Producer, Creative Advisor
	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Festival Director Support: Executive Director
	Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	September – December 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director
	Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop ways to advance reconciliation.	September 2026, June 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Deadly Funny Producer
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	July 2027, 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, General Manager
	Develop, implement and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, General Manager
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	September 2026	Lead: Executive Director Support: Deadly Funny Producer
	Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, Deadly Funny Producer



June Mills (photo by Jim Lee)

RESPECT

Melbourne International Comedy Festival acknowledges that respect for First Nations cultures is central to fostering a shared national identity, and that comedy can play an important role in facilitating greater understanding, respect and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and storytelling.

MICF is committed to enabling the inclusion and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through our Deadly Funny Program and broader engagements across all Melbourne International Comedy Festival operations. MICF can support, develop and promote the voices of First Peoples, through comedy, to broad international and national audiences.

MICF must find ways to discover and promote the voices of Australia’s First Peoples through comedy. These voices are inextricably linked to and foster the development of the broad Australian comedy landscape.

- Focus area:
- Develop cultural protocols for MICF in consultation with Kulin Nations and other Traditional Owners where MICF conducts business.
 - Cultivate cultural respect frameworks to underpin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement activities.
 - Provide mechanisms for the celebration of, and learning about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
 - Develop pilot foundational cultural competency training for all MICF staff.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, Deadly Funny Producer, Creative Advisor
	Consult local Traditional Owners and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisors on the development and implementation of a cultural learning strategy.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Creative Advisor
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural learning strategy for our staff.	November 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Deadly Funny Producer, Marketing & Partnership Director
	Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, HR managers and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	October 2026, 2027	Executive Director



Janty Blair (photo by Tiffany Garvie)

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Artist & Program Administrator, Deadly Funny Producer
	Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Participant Services Manager, Venues Program Manager
	Invite a local Traditional Owner or Custodian to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	March 2027, 2028	Executive Director
	Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of important meetings.	September 2026	Lead: Festival Director Support: Executive Director
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2027, 2028	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Executive Director
	Review HR policies and procedures to remove barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	June 2027, 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Marketing & Partnerships Director
	Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	First week in July 2027, 2028	Lead: Office Manager Support: Deadly Funny Producer

OPPORTUNITIES

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival aims to: discover, develop and showcase great talent for the entertainment and inspiration of a broad-based audience. Deadly Funny demonstrates our commitment to providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through comedy, to be celebrated.

Strengthening pathways for First Peoples into comedy performance is about justice, inclusion and the growth of Australian comedy as a whole.

Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, MICF commits to broadening opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples beyond the Deadly Funny Program to reach across all business operations both nationally and internationally.

Focus area: Investigate growing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Jay Wymarra (photo by Tiffany Garvie)

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director, General Manager
	Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	October 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Technical Director
	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	June 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Technical Director, Marketing & Partnerships Director, Technical Director
	Advertise job vacancies to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders effectively.	September 2026	Lead: Office Manager Support: Executive Director, Marketing Manager
	Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in our workplace.	September 2026, June 2027, 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Technical Director

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement strategy.	July 2027, 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	September 2026	Lead: Marketing & Partnerships Director Support: Deadly Funny Producer, Technical Director
	Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.	July 2027, 2028	Lead: Marketing & Partnerships Director Support: Technical Director, Office Manager
	Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2026, July 2027, 2028	Lead: Marketing & Partnerships Director Support: Technical Director, Office Manager
	Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.	September 2026, July 2027, 2028	Lead: Marketing and Partnerships Director, Technical Director
10. Support pathways for winners and participants of Deadly Funny Competition/ Showcase to Aboriginal All-stars, MICF Roadshow, other multimedia platforms and MICF performance platforms.	Build a partnership agreement with the Aboriginal Comedy Allstars. Ensure The Comedy Zone, Roadshow and other Festival programs are active pathways for Deadly Funny winners and alumni.	September 2027, 2028	Lead: Festival Director Support: Executive Director, Director of Touring
	Develop mentorships for Deadly Funny participants with established leading comedians both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous (e.g. Andy Saunders, Kevin Kropinyeri, Judith Lucy, Kitty Flanagan, Nelly Thomas).	November 2026, 2027	Deadly Funny Producer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Create professional career development opportunities for established Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comedians and producers across MICF performance platforms and in the broader comedy industry.	Strengthen participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in RAW Comedy, Roadshow tours, major MICF performance platforms.	November 2026, 2027	Lead: Festival Director Support: Producers, Deadly Funny Producer, Producer: Education & Development
	Advocate for performance and other employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through industry connections and partners.	November 2026, 2027	Lead: Festival Director Support: Producers



Leon Filewood (photo by Nick Robertson)

GOVERNANCE

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
12. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Festival Director	14. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	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 2027, 2028	Executive Director
	Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	September 2026	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Festival Director, Executive Director		Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August 2027, 2028	Executive Director
	Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	September 2026, 2027 December 2026, 2027 May 2027, 2028 July 2027, 2028	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Festival Director, Executive Director		Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2026, 2027, 2028	Executive Director
13. Provide appropriate support for the effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Executive Director		Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	September 2026, 2027 December 2026, 2027 May 2027, 2028 July 2027, 2028	Executive Director
	Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	September 2026, 2027	Executive Director		Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	July 2027, 2028	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director
	Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Deadly Funny Producer Support: Executive Director		Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	May 2028	Executive Director
	Maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	September 2026, 2027	Lead: Executive Director Support: Festival Director	15. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP	September 2028	Executive Director
					Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2028	Executive Director

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The Melbourne International Comedy Festival's
Innovate RAP was designed by Little Rocket



2021 Deadly Funny National Grand Final cast and judges (photo by Jim Lee)

