



## Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

July 2021 – Dec 2022

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### Acknowledgement of Country

State Opera South Australia acknowledges the First Peoples of the Lands upon which we perform. We pay our respects to all of South Australia's First Peoples, their ancestors and Elders and to our shared future.

### Who we are

Our mission as State Opera South Australia (State Opera) is to provide a high-quality cultural service to South Australians, and to be recognised for our artistic programming as well as our expanding reach and impact. We want to create and invest in meaningful engagements that will benefit the operatic art form, artists and audiences.

A fundamental aspect of our mission is the creation of a diverse, innovative and varied program that includes open engagement and education activities to reach the widest possible audiences.

### Our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

This is our first Diversity and Inclusion Plan, and we are excited about continuing to improve our work in this area, to ensure we are a company for everyone.

State Opera South Australia (SOSA) is committed to providing a diverse, inclusive and accessible environment for all staff, artists, contractors, audiences and board members who we engage with. This means that we will respect everyone in our community and work to provide recognition, involvement and support for those from underrepresented groups. As a company, we will work to remove barriers that prevent people from participating in the performing arts, as artists, arts administrators and audiences.

We believe that opera is an important part of the diverse theatrical landscape in South Australia and that it should be available to,

and enjoyed by, all members of our community. In this Action Plan, we acknowledge and address the barriers that have historically challenged equal opportunity and access to world-class theatrical experiences. Through research, reflection and counsel from advocates in our wider community, we are working to remove barriers and bring more opera to more people. This plan focuses on the following groups within our community: First Nations Australians, Gender and Sex, LGBTQI+ people, People of diverse faith/belief systems, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people, People of a wide range of ages (including children and young people, as well as older people), People with disability (including people with mental health conditions), People with familial or carer commitments (including pregnancy and maternity), People from various socio-economic groups and People with lived experience of domestic violence.

Where relevant and appropriate, we will actively consider and accommodate people from underrepresented groups in all our physical and digital communications and materials, our venues and our offices. Through our artistic program, we are committed to reflecting the diversity of our society onstage, through inclusive casting, repertoire and new commissions.

### **Methodology**

The development of this plan has been led by a team of staff from across the organisation interested in being champions and allies of diversity and inclusion. Senior management are strongly committed to the implementation of this plan, and it has been endorsed by our Board. We have sought expertise from an external arts and diversity consultant, with lived experience of diversity.

During the lifespan of this first plan, we intend to consult more widely with our diverse stakeholders and staff, to inform the development of our next plan.

### **Governance, monitoring and review**

The Board has overall oversight of both our Diversity and Inclusion Plan and Policy. Staff will be monitoring the implementation of this Plan and will report to the Board on a six-monthly basis on progress.

A progress report will be produced towards completion of this Plan, to measure its success

and make recommendations and identify areas of improvement for future plans.

### **Goal and focus areas**

The primary goal of State Opera's first Diversity and Inclusion Plan is to remove barriers and potential for discrimination to occur by people from diverse backgrounds in all areas of our business.

This plan has been broken down into the following focus areas of work:

- Spaces – rehearsal rooms, venues and performance spaces
- Operations – administration, organisational, processes and Human Resources
- Marketing and Communications – including ticketing
- Content and casting
- Wide community engagement.

### **Contact**

We welcome any feedback on this plan, as we are keen to make continuous improvement in this area.

Please contact us:

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## DEFINITIONS

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### PRIORITY AREAS

#### **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)**

There is no widely used standardised definition of the term CALD, and it is a term that to some people no longer feels fit for purpose, however it is still used as a measurement of diversity across many policy areas including arts and cultural engagement. In this plan, CALD refers to people from a diverse cultural background, based on self-selection. Other words associated with the term CALD include multicultural, race, colour and ethnicity.

#### **Disability**

The social model of disability defines disability as a result of the interaction between features of an individual (their medical condition) and features of society (the environment) in which they participate, where features of a society include attitudes, communication, natural and built environment, services, systems and policies, employment and activities, that may create barriers to participation. This plan

includes people with mental health conditions and those who are Deaf within this definition.

#### **Domestic violence**

Within this plan, the term domestic violence refers to anyone experiencing domestic or family violence. It refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship in domestic settings. These acts include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.

#### **Familial or carer commitments**

This plan uses the term familial or carer to cover a range of different responsibilities that some people have in relation to family and caring. Many people have care roles, including parents caring for their children, grown children caring for their parents and people caring for friends and relatives who are sick or recovering from an accident.

This term also includes pregnancy and maternity, and responsibilities such as breastfeeding.

#### **First Nations**

This term recognises First Nations peoples' role as the original custodians of this country, also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This plan acknowledges First Nations peoples' right to self-determination, including of First Nations identity and membership.

#### **Gender and Sex**

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission 'sex' refers to a person's biological characteristics, whereas 'gender' refers to the way a person identifies or expresses themselves.<sup>1</sup> Binary data collection systems have limited reporting of gender diversity across many areas of society. This has impacted representation, visibility and inclusion for non-binary and gender diverse people.

#### **Faith/belief systems**

These terms refer to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief will affect someone's

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission 2018, Terminology.

life choices or the way they live for it to be included in the definition. This plan acknowledges that certain beliefs require particular commitments that may need to be accommodated in a workplace (e.g. prayer room, observing holidays and fasting).

### **LGBTIQ+**

The language used to talk about LGBTIQ+ people is constantly evolving. In this plan, the acronym LGBTIQ+ is used where possible, to refer to people who are, or identify as, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, trans, gender diverse, have an Intersex variation, queer, and asexual and to allow for evolving terminology.

### **Socio-economic**

Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. People from low socio-economic backgrounds may experience particular barriers to accessing the arts, including financial barriers.

### **Young People and Older People**

There are no standard definitions of young people and older people in Australia. Therefore, various age ranges are used in data collection and reporting across governments, businesses and organisations. At State Opera, we refer to those who are 30 and under as

young people and those 65 and over as older people.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY**

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility is about removing barriers to ensure that people with disability have equal access to programs, employment, training, goods and services, premises, communication, information and technology. Accessibility principles are closely related to those of universal design.

### **Cultural Safety**

Cultural Safety is an important element of psychological health. Central to feeling safe at work is the expectation that a person's cultural identity will not be demeaned or diminished by others and where we recognise and respect every worker's cultural identity whether they identify by their age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, social class, gender or other element.

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Aspects of identity can include First Nations identity, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, colour, race, visa status, language, age,

disability, socio-economic status, geographic location, and criminal record. Forms of discrimination can include ableism, ageism, sexism, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, intersex discrimination and social stigma.

### **Unconscious Bias**

Unconscious Bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, which happens automatically and is outside of our control. It is our brain's way of making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, using our background, cultural environment and personal experiences over our lifespan. Unconscious bias is reflected in the prejudices and stereotypes that are deeply seated within us as a result of our socialisation. It should be acknowledged and challenged within workplace environments.

### **Universal Design**

Universal Design is the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

\*Definitions from a range of sources haven been used, including the Australia Councils 'Towards Equity'<sup>2</sup> report.

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<sup>2</sup> Australia Council, *Towards Equity: A Research Overview of Diversity in Australia's Arts and Cultural Sector*.

## Area 1 - Our Rehearsal Rooms, Venues and Performance Spaces

Outcome	Action/s	Who it Impacts	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>1.1</p> <p>All people <b>feel welcomed</b> into our spaces</p>	<p>1.1.1 We will deliver a comprehensive induction to new groups when working in our spaces for the first time where we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host an informal welcome gathering</li> <li>• Issue welcome and info packs to all artists</li> <li>• Brief participants about relevant policies and staff contacts</li> </ul> <p>1.1.2 Program a Welcome to Country at all appropriate performances</p>	<p>All groups, including focus on First Nations</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Company Stage Manager</p> <p>Executive Director</p> <p>Producer</p>
<p>1.2</p> <p><b>Gender diversity</b> is appropriately catered for in our wardrobe fittings, dressing rooms and toilets during productions and in spaces managed by us</p>	<p>1.2.1 Share relevant information captured by administrative processes with all appropriate stakeholders.</p> <p>1.2.2 Ensure that all venues and rehearsal spaces we use have a gender-neutral toilet available.</p> <p>1.2.3 Consult gender-diverse artists about their preferred dressing room arrangements.</p> <p>1.2.4 Provide a private comfortable space and environment for wardrobe fittings.</p>	<p>LGBTQI+</p> <p>Gender and Sex</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Production Manager</p>

<p>1.3</p> <p>All performance venues, rehearsal rooms and office spaces are suitable for staff, artists and audiences with <b>access requirements</b></p>	<p>1.3.1 Ask staff and artists for their access requirements on commencement.</p> <p>1.3.2 Ensure audience members can relay access requirement information when booking tickets.</p> <p>1.3.3 Consider accessibility during selection of spaces we work in.</p> <p>1.3.4 Offer alternative dressing room options to artists, if required.</p>	<p>Age Disability</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Stage Manager collates information and shares with Production Manager</p>
<p>1.4</p> <p>Ensure our venues and theatres have <b>baby changing and feeding spaces</b> available</p>	<p>1.4.1 Consider these facilities when selecting the new State Opera home venue, as well as any other external venues used.</p>	<p>Familial/carers</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Production Manager</p>
<p>1.5</p> <p>Consider a diverse range of needs in relation to <b>surtitles</b></p>	<p>1.5.1 When arranging surtitles, consider placement, readability and availability.</p> <p>1.5.2 Consult with community advocates and establish best practice for surtitles in our venues in terms of placement, size and typeface.</p> <p>1.5.3 Make surtitles available when necessary and viable, including ensuring that any new State Opera home venue has provision for surtitles.</p>	<p>Older people Disability</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>Production Manager Artistic Director</p>
<p>1.6</p> <p>Provide <b>appropriate lighting</b> for people with access needs</p>	<p>1.6.1 Ensure pre-show lighting is at a suitable level for people with access requirements, including when we are not using standard venues.</p> <p>1.6.2 Establish pre-sets for this at the New State Opera home.</p>	<p>Disability Older people</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Production Manager</p>

<p>1.7</p> <p>Ensure appropriate <b>accessible parking and drop-off points</b> at the New State Opera home</p>	<p>1.6.1 Contact the council and request that they provide an appropriate number of accessible parking bays nearby as well as a drop-off zone out the front of the New State Opera home.</p>	<p>Older people Disability</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>Executive Director</p>
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## Area 2 - Administration, Organisational, Processes and HR

Outcome	Action/s	Who it Impacts	Timeline	Responsibility
2.1 Increase the <b>diversity of our workforce</b>	<p>2.1.1 Proactively encourage people from all backgrounds to apply for job positions, by advertising broadly.</p> <p>2.1.2 Review recruitment and selection processes to ensure these are accessible and inclusive. This will include ensuring people can apply using a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>2.1.3 Provide Hiring Managers with relevant training (e.g. unconscious bias) to ensure no discrimination occurs during hiring processes.</p>	All Groups	2021, then ongoing	Executive Director and Board
2.2 <b>Staff are confident and competent</b> in their skills relating to diversity and inclusion	2.2.1 Provide staff with relevant and ongoing training in relation to diversity and inclusion areas	All Groups	Ongoing	Executive Director
2.3 Provide easy to access <b>staff support</b> options	<p>2.4.1 Ensure all staff and artists are informed of the mediation and counselling services available to them, as well as the reporting lines within the company.</p> <p>2.4.2 Ensure employee support programs are well publicised, including physical signage and provision in welcome packs given to new staff and artists.</p>	All Groups	2021, then ongoing	Executive Director

<p>2.4</p> <p><b>New employee processes</b> capture and embed relevant staff information.</p>	<p>2.5 1 Update the way we capture our employee information, to ensure relevant information is gathered and disseminated. This may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preferred names or pronouns</li> <li>• any access requirements or reasonable adjustments required in the workplace (e.g. Auslan interpreter, scores or written material in a larger or alternative format, food or drink facilities for a service dog, etc.)</li> <li>• cultural or familial flexibility needed</li> </ul> <p>2.5.2 Consider the confidentiality of shared information, and utilise a disclaimer that any information will only be shared with the wider organisation on a “need to know basis”.</p>	<p>All Groups</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Finance Dept</p>
<p>2.5</p> <p>Provide <b>flexible working</b> conditions</p>	<p>2.6.1 Continue to offer a high level of flexibility for staff, creatives and artists in terms of working hours, working from home when needed, and accommodating issues such as familial caring or cultural and faith requirements.</p> <p>2.6 2 Provide touring artists who need to tour with their children the option of assigning their accommodation allowance to other expenses better suited to their needs.</p>	<p>All Groups</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Director</p>
<p>2.6</p> <p><b>Current processes</b> relating to diversity and inclusion are embedded across our organisation</p>	<p>2.7.1 Establish a process for employee requesting a name change (e.g. for gender diversity or for familial reasons).</p> <p>2.7.2 Establish a formal and supportive process for reporting incidents of a sensitive nature that might take place in rehearsal rooms.</p>	<p>All Groups, with focus on Familial LGBTQI+</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>Executive Director</p>

<p>2.7</p> <p>Engage with a <b>diverse range of suppliers</b> through our business operations</p>	<p>2.8.1 Regularly review our suppliers to ensure opportunities for diversity and inclusion (e.g. switching to a First Nations-operated supplier).</p>	<p>All Groups, with first focus on First Nations</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Director</p>
<p>2.8</p> <p>Our <b>accessible performance offerings</b> are effectively marketed to relevant and audiences</p>	<p>2.10.1 Utilise effective marketing strategies, targeted to particular audience segments within the disability community. Build particular audience development strategies around particular accessibility offerings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• companion cards</li> <li>• Hearing loops</li> <li>• Audio Description</li> <li>• Relaxed Performances</li> </ul>	<p>Older People Disability</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Marketing</p>

### Area 3 - Marketing, Ticketing and Communications

Outcome	Action/s	Who it Impacts	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>3.1</p> <p>Our <b>website is accessible</b> to people from diverse backgrounds</p>	<p>3.1.1 Undertake a website access audit, to determine the current level of accessibility of our website, in relation to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.</p> <p>Priorities for this audit will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease in finding access information</li> <li>• Screen reader usability</li> <li>• Accessible typefaces and design</li> <li>• Universal design</li> <li>• Language translation functionality</li> <li>• Providing Alt Descriptions for online images</li> </ul> <p>3.1.2 Following the audit, make a plan for implementing required website improvements</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>CALD</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Marketing</p>
<p>3.2</p> <p>Growth in <b>free online and digital content</b></p>	<p>3.2.1 Continue to create and build upon our online content so our work can be accessed by everyone, including people living regionally, people with disability and people from low socio-economic backgrounds.</p>	<p>All Groups</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Marketing</p>

<p>3.3</p> <p>Our <b>accessible performance offerings</b> are effectively marketed to relevant and audiences</p>	<p>3.3.1 Utilise effective marketing strategies, targeted to particular audience segments within the disability community. Build particular audience development strategies around particular accessibility offerings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companion Cards</li> <li>• Hearing loops</li> <li>• Audio Description</li> <li>• Relaxed Performances</li> </ul>	<p>Older People Disability</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Marketing</p>
<p>3.4</p> <p>Use <b>inclusive language</b> in all internal and external communication (e.g. including in verbal production directives and external written communications)</p>	<p>3.4.1 As a company we will balance the tradition and etiquette of schedules, calls to stage and public addresses while using gender-inclusive language.</p> <p>3.4.2 Update our company Style Guide to include information on inclusive language (seeking external advice, where required).</p> <p>3.4.3 Provide company training on inclusive language use.</p>	<p>All groups, with a focus on LGBTQI+, Disability and Age</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Company Stage Manager Head of Marketing</p>

#### Area 4 - Content and Casting

Outcome	Action/s	Who it Impacts	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>4.1</p> <p>Ensure our <b>casting is diverse</b> and reflects the society we live in</p>	<p>4.1.1 Encourage people from all backgrounds to apply for to casting opportunities, using a range of accessible formats where required.</p> <p>4.1.2 The artistic team will take an inclusive approach to filling roles.</p>	All Groups	2021, then ongoing	Artistic Director
<p>4.2</p> <p>Provide at least <b>one accessible performance</b> per year</p>	<p>4.2.1 Artistic Director and Production team to engage with Access2Arts early in programming conversations to determine which production would be best suited to an accessible performance.</p> <p>Different accessible performance types may include Audio Description and Relaxed Performances.</p>	Disability	2022 and then ongoing	Artistic Director <i>(Turn of the Screw – May 2022)</i>

**Area 5 – Staff and Performing Arts Community Engagement**

Outcome	Action/s	Who it Impacts	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>5.1 <b>Create and maintain a safe and inclusive workplace</b></p>	<p>5.1.1 Executive Director to have an “open door” policy where employees can feel comfortable to discuss and share</p> <p>5.1.2 No gossip policy and ensure all are aware of Code of Conduct from regular staff briefings</p> <p>5.1.3 Host regular informal gatherings where staff can get to know one another and share information to create a comfortable and supported atmosphere</p>	<p>Employees Artists Workplace visitors</p>	<p>2021, then ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Director</p>