

**DARLINGHURST
THEATRE COMPANY**

Access, Equity and Inclusion Statement

2021

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Photos: (TOP) Eternity Playhouse by Brett Boardman, (BOTTOM) BLOOM Festival by Robert Catto



Acknowledgement of Country

Darlinghurst Theatre Company acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of this land on which we work and create.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal Land.

Acknowledgements

Darlinghurst Theatre Company (DTC) humbly recognises the original storytellers being the First Nations peoples and we acknowledge the responsibility and the privilege in telling stories here.

We acknowledge that Darlinghurst is and has been a predominantly white institution (PWI) and with that, our complicity in the historic exclusion and marginalisation of everyone else. With the development of our Cultural Representation Policy Report, we have implemented clear metrics to begin the process of decolonising our practice.

This living document has been created by the company of DTC with support and guidance from Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultants, Stage A Change. We acknowledge and expect that as time passes, our awareness and understanding will grow, and as the world evolves this document will evolve with it.

Our Access, Equity and Inclusion Statement guides our productions, programming, and participation in the community. It represents the knowledge and perspective of the humans on our team today. We acknowledge that we have work to do and commit to continual learning to expand in both ways.

We encourage other organisations to use this document to continue to expand their work in Access, Equity and Inclusion.

Photo: Eternity Playhouse by Brett Boardman



Statement

We, the humans of Darlinghurst Theatre Company, are united and driven by our unwavering commitment to equity, access and inclusion. We are a theatre for everyone.

We know that without access, equity and inclusion, diversification is performative at best. In all parts of our theatre-making, we will acknowledge and address inequity, consciously work to reduce and remove barriers to access and champion inclusion and belonging for our stages, our workplace and our community.

This can only be done by telling stories by, for, about and with humans of all identities, races, ethnicities, nationalities, abilities, religions, sexualities, sizes, and experiences. We recognise our responsibility to advocate for and give agency to all humans.

We define access, equity and inclusion as:

- Access - The removal of barriers for all
- Equity - The guarantee of fair treatment for all
- Inclusion - The celebration of identity and welcome of all



Principles

To be an accessible, equitable and inclusive theatre, we are led by the principles of connection, creation, ambition, culture and legacy.

Connection - Connection and community has always been at the centre of our values. We will continue working collaboratively with our community to foster growth for everyone, with care and compassion.

Creation - Celebrating innovation and flexibility, we create theatre and tell stories with passion. Our vision is to explore the world in which we live, create opportunities for authentic representations, and provide opportunity for personal and artistic growth for audiences and artists.

Ambition - Leading the sector, we are boldly meeting and driving the demand to make excellent work by calculating and taking risks. With humble growth and continuous learning, we commit to exploring and innovating new ways to empower the humans of the world to share their truths.

Culture - In all things, we require kindness, we create joy and we enthusiastically have a good time in work and in play.

Legacy - Recognising our responsibility to the land, the community, and the organisation, the humans of Darlo commit to making a contribution, an impact, and a difference in the lives of all we encounter and the spaces we occupy. We must constantly hold ourselves accountable and advocate and stand up for all that is good and just and fair.



Commitment

Aligning our principles with our commitment to equity, access and inclusion, we have outlined the way we will work.

We empower you, artists, contractors, vendors and the community, to hold us accountable.

| | CONNECTION | CREATION | AMBITION | LEGACY | CULTURE |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACCESS | All humans can see themselves represented. With connection to community, we listen and learn from leaders. | We curate safe spaces for artists and audiences to be brave, learn and grow. | We create pathways to elevate stories that need to be told. | Humans are empowered to tell stories the way they want to tell them. All people feel invited and welcome. | We welcome audiences to come as they are. We don't define theatre but by what it is, but what it could be. |
| EQUITY | Every action is measured by the same metric - does it encourage connection and understanding? | We offer the same energy and resources for the shows that are familiar as we do to the ones that are new. | Using the success of commercial productions we are able to support and fund new work. | Setting an industry standard and leading by example, we work to deliver transparency and equity in everything we do. | There is no hierarchy; we include ideas and inspiration from everyone on the team. |
| INCLUSION | By recognizing all kinds of diversity, we are continuously expanding our knowledge and perspective. | We trust you to know you - we lean into the wisdom and lived experiences of artists, prioritising authenticity. | Money, experience, and identity will never be a barrier to making or engaging with our work. | Our work is better with you in it. We don't ask you to fit in our mould, we allow you to break and reset the mould. | Personal and artistic fulfilment are our priority and we centre that for everyone who enters the building. |

Actions

The following is an incomplete list of actions we will take to begin to embed access, equity and inclusion into our policies, procedures and long-term planning. All actions are to be completed by 1 August 2022 unless otherwise specified.

We acknowledge the historic exclusion of humans who identify as Indigenous and/or Black and/or a Person of Colour and/or d/Deaf & Hard of Hearing and/or Disabled and/or Chronically Ill. While we recognise the uniqueness of their experiences, challenges, barriers and marginalisation, we also recognise our shortcomings in past support of this collective group of humans. Under-representation is a result of exclusion.

In our Action Statements, we refer to humans who identify as Indigenous and/or Black and/or a Person of Colour and/or d/Deaf & Hard of Hearing and/or Disabled and/or Chronically Ill as historically excluded.



Admin, Staff and Board

- We will continue to invest and engage in anti-racist and cultural competency training across our organisation, to further our education and improve our practices of inclusivity and the safety of our spaces.
- We will increase our employee safety, inclusion and belonging scores by 10% from the 2021 scores of the Stage A Change survey.
- We will offer basic Auslan training to FOH staff by the end of 2021.
- We will continue to work to increase applications from historically excluded humans. Starting in 2022, the short-list for every operational role will include a minimum of 50% historically excluded humans. All job postings will stay open until we hit that metric.
- Internally, we will audit and share findings to ensure equity in pay between humans of all genders, races, abilities and contract lengths.
- We will add 2 seats to our Board in 2022 for historically excluded humans, to be recruited in line with the skills matrix.
- By January of 2023 the board will be made up of a minimum 50% historically excluded humans.
- We will fill 50% of all newly created full-time roles with humans who have been historically excluded.
- Starting in 2022, we will fill 50% of all casual Front of House staff with humans who have been historically excluded.

Auditions and Rehearsals

- We will announce all roles that are pre-cast.
- We will ask about access needs before auditions and have a plan to institute requirements for neurodiversity, disability, d/Deaf & hard of hearing or blind & low vision.
- We will define safety and implement a safety survey before the rehearsal process for cast, crew, and creatives.
- We will offer learning support to ensure all designers are capable of working with all body, hair and skin types.
- We will engage cultural consultants or intimacy directors as necessary, especially in the case of a culturally specific show without a director of the culture. A request for further support can be made by designers, directors or the performers.
- We will include harassment, bullying, anti-racism, safety and inclusion policies for all onboarding and inductions for every project.
- We will engage an internal and external representative to report and address any issues of racism, bullying, harassment for every production.

Community and Partnership

- We will seek sponsors and suppliers who align with our values. Any supplier who is misaligned will be replaced by 2024.
- We will increase press access / opening night invitations to include historically excluded press and journalists.
- We will identify and partner with a community organisation to amplify their message through Darlo's channels quarterly.
- We will offer reduced rates for hires and meeting space to not-for-profit organisations.

Programming, Planning and Producing

- Starting January 2022, 50% of all artists employed by our company across any calendar years will be from historically excluded communities.
- Starting in 2023, we will require co-productions to have at minimum 15% participation by historically excluded artists, designers or directors. That will increase to 25% in 2025.
- We will be mindful that our marketing materials do not over- or under-represent the diversity of the artists working in our company.
- All programmed productions will have access to cultural advisors. This request can be made by designers, directors or the performers.
- We will develop a bespoke community engagement strategy for each production.
- We will increase our recruitment of artists and arts workers who are d/Deaf & hard of hearing, disabled, neurodiverse, chronically ill and blind or low vision. By 2024, we will be on parity with the NSW population, which is currently approximately 18%.
- We will require all external hires to pay artists a living wage.

History and Future

- We are open and honest about our past, using history as a teacher.
- We openly welcome feedback and will create an anonymous portal for feedback by October 1, 2022.
- We embrace a culture of constant improvement and implement pathways for staff to voice concerns and have a response.
- We have taken a full staff survey and now have benchmarks for employee inclusion, access and belonging. We will measure this annually.
- We will update our Cultural Representation Policy Report yearly.
- We will ask artists to self-identity and track data on number of opportunities and length of opportunity to ensure parity.
- We will continue to ensure that 50% of all artists employed by our company in any given year are women.

Education

- We will expand our Anti-Racism Book Club to include all contractors, artists and designers, and sharing it with our audiences.
- We will offer all regular staff and the board at least 1 continuing education opportunity each year in equity, access, inclusion, anti-racist, consent, decolonisation or safety.
- Onboarding for all lead artists and production team will include an equity and inclusion workshop facilitated by an external consultant.
- We will create open opportunities for secondments, internships or observation for emerging artists. By 2024, at least 50% of technical secondments at Darlinghurst will be filled by historically excluded humans.
- In 2022, we will seek funding that is specifically for a First Nations or person of colour technical apprenticeship scheme.
- We will continue to request funding to support educational opportunities for those humans who are traditionally excluded from theatre practice. With every funding application, we will determine how we can still create the essence of the opportunity even if the funds are not accessible.

Accountability

This statement requires us to be accountable to ourselves, each other, the theatre and the community. We acknowledge that we are all human and will make mistakes and take missteps. We invite you to help us stay accountable to our statement. Should you have feedback, comments, or see a space to call us in, we offer the following options.

You can reach us by:

- **Link**- The link on the website welcomes feedback with or without your contact details.
- **Social Media** - Send us your feedback via social media @darlinghursttheatreco
- **Internal** - Current staff can speak to their manager or contact our Executive Team at any time.
- **Consultant** - Staff, contractors and artists can reach out to our external consultants, Stage A Change at hello@stageachange.org

Stage A Change offers Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy and Consulting services to deliver action-focussed support to DEI challenges, specifically within the performing arts sector.

