

ACCESS  
EQUITY  
INCLUSION | PLAN

2025 - 2027

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*Musica Viva Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we meet, work and live.*

*We pay our respects to Elders past and present – people who have sung their songs, danced their dances and told their stories on these lands for thousands of generations.*



MVAIS ensemble Wyniss. © Teniola Komolafe

### **Accessibility and formats**

This Plan is available to the public through our website, with both PDF and Word versions available. Hard copy formats in both large and standard print and other alternative formats are also available on request.

### **Language and terminology**

The authors of this Plan recognise that there are varying views on language and terminology around access, equity and inclusion in Australia and internationally. We also recognise that language dates, and this is a sign of progress.

This report uses person first language of 'person with disability' to recognise that disability is just one aspect of a person's life and does not determine who they are.

The language we use is guided by the Social Model of Disability that sees 'disability' as the result of the interaction between people living with different conditions and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers.

This report also uses the acronym LGBTIQ+ as an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and other. The term 'genders' can refer to male, female, transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, and other terms and all, none or a combination of these. The terms First Nations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are in use at the time of writing in policy and government domains.

Terms used to discuss other cultural diversities include CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) and 'people of colour'. The term, 'people of colour' refers to people who are not white, but is a descriptor of race and heritage so can include people who are 'white passing'. This term recognises that people who are not white face particular experiences of racism, marginalisation and discrimination that may not apply to all CALD people.

# Message from the CEO and Artistic Director



© Darren Leigh Roberts

We are delighted to share Musica Viva Australia's first Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan.

Performing arts organisations are busy places. There is never enough time, but sometimes it's too important to wait: you just have to start. So, developed over eight months of listening, learning and discussing among our staff, board, artists, audiences and MVA community members, this Plan represents the beginning of what we hope will be an important and transformational journey.

This Plan dovetails with MVA's Reconciliation Action Plan, in which we affirm our commitment to reconciliation and a more just and equitable future for First Nations Australians. Our RAP acknowledges the barriers that many First Nations people experience to accessing and participating in chamber music, and sets out ambitious actions that we hope will demonstrate leadership and drive change within our sphere of influence.

In our Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan, we commit to making Musica Viva Australia a more welcoming, accessible and diverse organisation – one that champions and celebrates everyone in our broad community and creates space for all Australians to enjoy music and participate in music-making. In the Plan, we acknowledge the work that MVA has already done to make our organisation and programs more accessible. We also take stock of areas for improvement and growth, focusing particularly on disability inclusion, cultural diversity, economic disadvantage and LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and the intersectionality between these areas.

In examining MVA's work through the lens of access, equity and inclusion, we acknowledge a tension between the strong sense of custodianship of our treasured artform and its traditions, and our aspirations for evolution, innovation and change. Despite the challenges, we know that MVA's work will be richer, more relevant and more enduring if we can meaningfully reduce the barriers to participation and in turn, increase the diversity of our artists, audiences, board and staff.

We extend our gratitude to our wise and generous consultants, Dr Rachael Jacobs and Morwenna Collett, to everyone in MVA's community who participated in the consultation for the Plan's development, and to MVA's staff, who have been enthusiastic advocates from the start, in particular Viv Rosman, who has guided this Plan to fruition.

Finally, we acknowledge that this Plan is a foundation for further learning and growth. We invite feedback, commit to transparency about our progress and undertake to renew this Plan at the end of its three-year timespan.

Anne Frankenberg  
CEO

Paul Kildea  
Artistic Director

# About Musica Viva Australia

Musica Viva Australia (MVA) is the world's largest platform for chamber music, presenting national, regional and school tours by Australian and international musicians. We are one of Australia's leading providers of music education in schools and a champion for Australian composers and emerging talent.

National reach is one of the key drivers of MVA's artistic program, across each of our three pillars of activity - Concerts and Communities, Emerging Artist programs and Education. Mainstage concerts are presented across the year in every mainland State capital city, Canberra and Newcastle, and in partnership with presenters in Tasmania and regional NSW. Our Emerging Artist programs invite participation from early career professionals, tertiary and high school students nationally and MVA's Education program reaches almost 200,000 students and teachers each year in every state and territory, including in regional and remote areas.

Musica Viva Australia turns 80 in 2025. It is a great source of pride that our organisation, started as a labour of love by refugees seeking to

connect with culture and build community through music, has thrived for so long. Of course, much has changed over the last 80 years. Notably, we now respect, celebrate and learn from the 60,000 years of continuous culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on these lands. Yet the connection that our founders sought with the culture of their homelands remains a vital reminder of the contribution Western classical music has made to a country with its own rich culture of First Nations music-making going back millennia. Each artistic tradition complements the other; the intersection points offer boundless opportunities.

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

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

Musica Viva Australia has a vision for a music-rich future for all Australians, and it is our mission to create memorable musical experiences for audiences at every stage of life and for musicians at every stage of development through Concerts, Education programs and Emerging Artist programs, with chamber music at our artistic core. This Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan speaks to this vision and mission, and will help us achieve our purpose for all Australians.

This Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan will help Musica Viva Australia to achieve:

## **OUR VISION**

**A music-rich future for all Australians.**

## **OUR PURPOSE**

**To connect all Australians to something bigger than themselves: to powerful music which awakens the spirit.**

## **OUR MISSION**

**With chamber music at our artistic core, Musica Viva Australia creates memorable musical experiences for audiences at every stage of life and for musicians at every stage of development through Concerts, Education programs and Emerging Artist programs.**

# About our Access, Equity and Inclusion (AEI) Plan

Music and the arts are spaces of great diversity. Engaging with concepts of access, equity and inclusion demands that we consider the diverse needs of all community members. Access, equity and inclusion principles aim to remove barriers to participation by minimising discrimination and ensuring fair treatment for all. Systemic approaches to access, equity and inclusion begin with a plan that reflects the mission and vision of the organisation, while also developing policies and practices that uphold equity principles, conform to anti-discrimination laws, and reflect 21st Century values.

Having an AEI Plan activates MVA's strategic commitment to increasing access to music performance and music education experiences, particularly for people from historically underrepresented backgrounds. This is the first AEI Plan for MVA, which builds a foundation for ongoing work in this area. There are many areas for growth beyond the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan, and

MVA commits to ongoing dialogue with staff, stakeholders and communities in order to make long-term sustainable achievements in AEI areas.

In our enquiries into access, equity and inclusion at MVA, we focussed on:

- Disability
- Sexuality and Gender
- Cultural Diversity
- Socio-economic access

While MVA has focussed on these four areas, we acknowledge the importance of addressing barriers to other underrepresented or minority groups including First Nations people (addressed in our Reconciliation Action Plan [RAP]), people in regional and remote areas, older people, children and young people. It is our aim that there should be as few barriers as possible to engage with MVA, and while one plan cannot erase every barrier to participation, it aims to make steps in a positive direction.

This Plan begins with an overview of demographic data that outlines some areas of concern and statistics for these groups. The legislative context is established, and some case studies of MVA's past and current achievements in the areas of AEI are highlighted. The aims, objectives and methodology used to arrive at the Plan are described in this document. We then establish four goal areas that will guide our AEI priorities over the next three years. The organisation will work towards a range of specific actions that accompany each goal.



## Relationship with the RAP

Musica Viva Australia's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched in 2021 (and extended into 2022 due to COVID-19 impacts). The Reflect RAP engaged leadership, staff and artists in appreciating the importance of reconciliation. In 2023 MVA's next Reconciliation Action Plan was developed. MVA's new Innovate RAP for 2024-2026 sets out ambitious actions for the organisation and reaffirms our commitment to drive change within MVA's sphere of influence.

MVA's RAP Working Group meets bi-monthly and reports to the Board and staff members regularly through the year. RAP working group members also act as champions for reconciliation, embedding many small but meaningful changes in our day-to-day work practices, from Acknowledgement of Country when we meet, to regularly sharing, reflecting on and encouraging further exploration of First Nations art and culture, to creating a culture of challenging assumptions and

checking on privilege. Many initiatives have resulted from the RAP to date, including programming of First Nations artists, dedicated artist residencies, programs to improve access to instruments and music lessons in schools, creative leadership from First Nations elders, educators and artists, as well as professional learning for teachers.

The principles of access, equity and inclusion outlined in the AEI Plan are complementary to the actions and deliverables outlined in the RAP. The training provided on access, equity and inclusion as part of the development of this Plan enabled deeper understandings of the importance of the RAP, as well as broadened ideas on ways to achieve inclusion and respect for First Nations culture and peoples at MVA. Similarly, many of the actions and deliverables of the RAP have already begun the journey towards greater access, equity and inclusion for the organisation.



William Barton gives a Yidaki masterclass at Ngutu College, an MVA Music Education Residency school. © Sam Roberts

## Definitions

### **Access:**

The practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful and usable for as many people as possible. Access involves committing to removing barriers and creating pathways for everyone to reach and benefit from experiences and resources.

### **Equity:**

Equity encompasses the policies and practices used to ensure the fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement of all people. Equitable practices aim to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups. Unlike equality, which aims to treat everyone the same, equity focuses on providing individuals and groups with what they need to succeed, recognising that different people have different circumstances.

### **Inclusion:**

Inclusion is the process in which every person (irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity) who wishes to can access and participate fully in all aspects of an activity or service in the same way as any other member of the community. Inclusion comes about when environments are created where all individuals feel valued, respected, able to fully participate, and have a sense of belonging. Through inclusion, people are able to understand, celebrate and appreciate diverse ways of being and experiencing the world.

## Intersectionality

While we have previously named some areas in which people experience discrimination, marginalisation or barriers to participation, these experiences can compound and layer when people are part of more than one underrepresented group. In the creation of this Plan we have been mindful of the principles of intersectionality that acknowledge the way that barriers towards engagement overlap. This Plan aims to address the barriers to access for people from a multitude of lived experiences and provide more holistic and inclusive actions that can benefit many diverse groups.

# Some key statistics

Access, equity and inclusion are broad areas that aim to encompass the full range of lived experiences of Australia's diverse communities. The following statistics identify some of the issues faced by groups which have been traditionally underrepresented or marginalised. These statistics cannot represent the totality of the experiences of these groups, nor do they present the intersectional issues that compound when people are part of more than one group, as discussed previously. However, this snapshot is intended to locate key indicators of challenges, as well as some statistics that relate directly to each group's participation in music or the arts.



Top left: Yeeun Heo of the Esmé Quartet giving a cello masterclass at the University of Western Australia. © Tony McDonough | Top right: Students at Neerigen Brook Public School, MVA Music Education Residency school. © Melissa Vivian | Bottom left: Students at Ashwood School enjoy a performance of Imagination Exploration. © Studio Einwick | Bottom right: Andrea Lam performing in Orange. © Sean Moloney.

# Some key statistics / Disability

Around **1 in 5 (18%)** of Australians, or about 4.3 million Australians, have disability. (ABS, 2018)

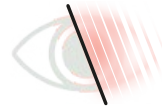
People with disability are three times more likely to be unemployed or underemployed and twice as likely to be **in the bottom 20%** of gross household incomes, and therefore twice as likely to be living in poverty. (ABS, 2018)



There are about **450,000 people** with intellectual disability in Australia. (Department of Health and Aged Care, 2018)



**1 in 6** Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are approx. 30,000 Deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss. (AFDO, 2024)



There are currently **357,000 people** in Australia who are Blind or have low vision. It is projected that the number of Australians who are Blind or have low vision will grow to 564,000 by 2030. (Vision Australia, 2024)

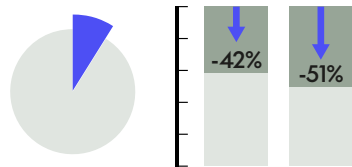
**180,000**

**More than 180,000 Australians** are wheelchair users, with more than 25,000 people requiring electric or power wheelchairs. Across the globe, wheelchair users make up 1.85% of the population. (CSIRO, 2023)

An estimated **30–40%** of Australians are neurodivergent. (Job Access, 2023)

45% of Australians aged 16–85 years **experience a mental health condition** during their lifetime. Three million Australians live with depression or anxiety. (ABS, 2023)

## In the Arts



**9% of the 569,400 people** in creative and cultural occupations in Australia have disability. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018)

Artists with disability **earn 42% less** overall than artists without disability and the average income from creative practice is **51% less for artists with disability** than those without disability. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2017)

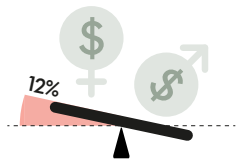


The 2020 'Towards Equity' report found that Australians living with disability are more likely to creatively **participate and engage online** than the rest of the population. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

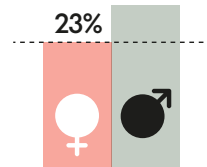
People with disability are less likely to attend arts events than people without disability and **continue to face barriers** in attending arts events. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

**3% of leadership positions** in arts organisations are held by people who identify with disability. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

# Some key statistics / Sexuality & Gender



The **gender pay gap is 12%** for base salary, and 21.7% when total take-home earnings are calculated. (WGEA, 2023)



There is an average **23% superannuation gap**, leaving more women economically insecure in retirement. (WGEA, 2023).



According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, **42% of LGBTIQ+ people hide** their sexuality or gender identity at social or community events. (AHRC, 2014)

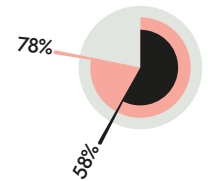
LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to experience and be diagnosed with depression, anxiety or other **mental health conditions** than the rest of the population. (LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, 2021)

Women of all ages complete more unpaid work and care than men and do more housework, even when they are the primary income earner. (Status of Women Report Card, 2023)

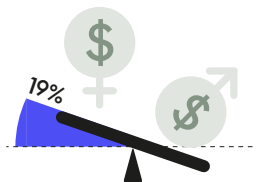


Women experience significantly more sexual harassment at work than men. **Women's experience of violence** – at home, online and in the community – constrains their workforce participation. These trends are consistent in the arts and cultural sectors. (Status of Women Report Card, 2023)

State based research has found that as many as 58% of LGBTIQ+ people experience **unfair treatment** on the basis of sexual orientation. 78% of trans and gender diverse people have faced unfair treatment based on their gender identity. (AHRC, 2014)



## In the Arts



The **gender pay gap among artists in Australia is 19%**, which is higher than the national average. (ABC, 2024)

Data collection and reporting on sexual orientation and gender identity are still relatively new and there is emerging reliable data on LGBTIQ+ representation in the arts across Australia. Creative Australia is currently reviewing how data is collected and reported on sexual orientation and gender identity to inform their approach moving forward. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

# Some key statistics / Cultural Diversity

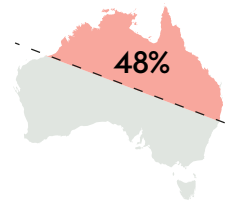


1 in 5 Australians speak a language other than English at home. Australians speak almost 300 different languages, including First Nations languages.  
(ABS, 2021)

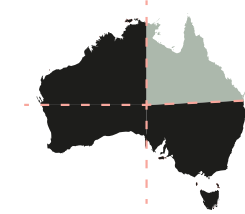
Census data indicates that over **7 million people in Australia were born overseas**, representing 27.6% of the population. This was an increase from 6.1 million, or 26.3%, in 2016.  
(ABS, 2021)



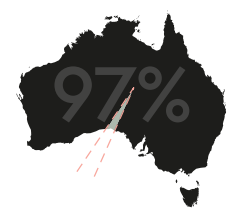
48% of Australians have at least **one parent born overseas**.  
(ABS, 2021)



**One-third** of all Australians report having **experienced racism**.  
(Western Sydney University, 2017)



**76%** of Australians from non-European ancestry **reported discrimination**.  
(ABS, 2021)



**97%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported having **experienced racism** in the last year.  
(AHRC, 2024)

Migrants earn, on average, less than the rest of the population, with 1 in 6 earning less than minimum wage.  
(Grattan Institute, 2023)

## In the Arts



The 2022 survey of National Arts Participation found that First Nations and culturally diverse Australians were **more likely to attend arts events**, such as festivals, concerts and exhibitions.  
(Creative Australia, 2023)

32% of Australians connect with, and share, their **cultural background** through arts and creativity. Over half of all CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Australians engage with the arts of their own cultural background.  
(Creative Australia, 2023)

CALD artists are less likely to **receive funding** in the arts or be represented in mainstream arts productions or performances.  
(Australia Council for the Arts, 2020).



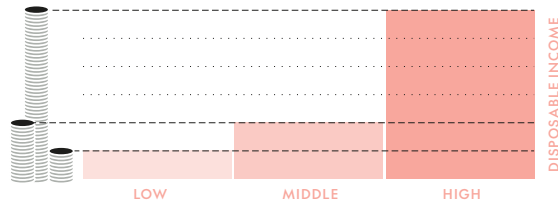
In 2019 16% of people in arts leadership roles **identified as CALD**.  
(Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

# Some key statistics / Socio-Economic Access



3.3 million Australians (13.4%) are living **below the poverty line**, with the highest risk groups being unemployed or underemployed people, people in insecure housing, sole parent households and people with disability.

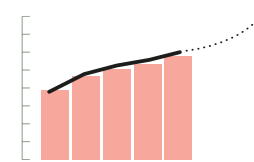
(ACOSS, 2023)



**Wealth inequality** in Australia is rising.

The differences between the average incomes of low, middle and high-income households in Australia are large. Households in the highest 20% income group have more than twice the average disposable income as the middle 20% income group and six times as much as households in the lowest 20% income group.

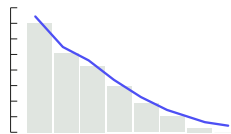
(ACOSS, 2023)



Australia has a **high cost of living**, with cost-of-living indicators currently on the rise.

(ABS, 2024)

## In the Arts



Arts **engagement decreases** with lower household income and education.

(Australia Council for the Arts, 2020)

Three quarters of employed Australians **attend the arts** (76%), compared to 53% of those receiving a carer or parenting payment, 51% of those who are unemployed for medical reasons, and 40% of those receiving disability support.

(Creative Australia, 2023)



Australians with a household income of under \$40,000 are more likely to **experience a number of barriers** to attending arts events compared to Australians overall, including cost of tickets or entry, physical or mental health concerns, difficulty getting to arts events and no arts events near where they live.

(Creative Australia, 2023)

# Legislative and policy context

There are a wide range of legislative requirements and policies that have influenced the development of this AEI Plan. This section has been written in the context of the laws and policies in place at the time of the development of this Plan. It is noted that this section is subject to change.

## International

Internationally, Australia is party to the seven core international human rights treaties, including the five that relate to MVA's AEI Plan:

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which grants economic, social, and cultural rights to individuals, including labour rights, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living;
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women which defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination;
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that 'recognises that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full effective participation in society on an equal basis with others';
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that obligates its signatory countries to pursue a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and to promote understanding among all races;
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child which outlines the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children.

The other two are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.



# Legislative and policy context

## National

There are Federal laws that protect people from discrimination and from breaches of their human rights. The following laws protect people from discrimination in the areas of employment, education, the provision of goods, services and facilities, and other areas:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004: protects people from age discrimination in employment, the provision of goods and services, education and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992: seeks to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities and supported by standards and frameworks such as the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards (2010), National Construction Code of Australia (2022), Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002) and Disability Standards for Education (2005).
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975: promotes equality before the law for all people regardless of race, colour or national or ethnic origin. It is unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984: makes it unlawful to treat anyone unfairly because of their sex, gender identity, intersex status, sexual orientation, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities; because they are pregnant or might become pregnant or are breastfeeding. It also makes sexual harassment against the law.

These are overseen by the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 which articulates the Australian Human Rights Commission role and responsibilities. It gives effect to Australia's obligations under the relevant laws and treaties.

Musica Viva Australia is a national organisation, but is also subject to state and territory laws and governance which guide local practices with regard to employment, education and the provision of goods, services and facilities.

# Access, Equity & Inclusion at Musica Viva Australia

Musica Viva Australia recognises its role as a cultural, community and industry leader and acknowledges that we can influence those sectors in a positive way through our actions. It is our responsibility to model leadership with regard to access, equity and inclusion both inside the organisation and in our interactions with the wider community. We regard our national footprint as a great strength, as it enables us to reflect the needs of our many stakeholders for the benefit of the whole organisation and the sector.

There are current and historical programs and initiatives at MVA to address different aspects of access, equity and inclusion. These span across each of our three artistic pillars of Education, Emerging Artists and Concerts and Communities, achieving significant outcomes for artists and audiences despite not always being funded or consistent across the company. Through this AEI Plan, we wish to build on the work to date that has enabled access to quality music experiences across diverse demographics and communities in a way which is planned, staged over time, and wholistic in terms of considering all aspects of MVA's programs and operations.

The following examples, while only covering a snapshot of current activities, demonstrate some of MVA's AEI focussed work across the organisation. These examples demonstrate MVA's current investment in, and attentiveness to, access, equity and inclusion principles, and positive relationships with artists, audiences and communities.

# Access, Equity & Inclusion at Musica Viva Australia

## MVA's Equal Music Fund

Each year Musica Viva Australia In Schools (MVAIS) provides transformative musical learning experiences to almost 200,000 students and teachers across Australia. This program has been running for over 40 years. MVA's Equal Music Fund is an initiative that applies approximately \$500,000 of government and philanthropically funded subsidies each year to support over 74,800 students who would otherwise not be able to experience music education or live performance. This provides heavily subsidised or free performances to schools rated low on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) and supports touring to regional and remote areas where the travel costs would otherwise be prohibitive, as well as to schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability. In June 2024, Equal Music funding enabled students from the tiny Raukkan Aboriginal School on Ngarrindjeri land in regional South

Australia (student population of around 10) to join forces with the nearby Meningie Area School for a MVAIS performance of *Life Is An Echo*, heavily subsidising the ticket price for students from both schools.

## Artist and Audience diversity: *Life Is An Echo* & Esmé Quartet

Musica Viva Australia In Schools ensembles are full of cultural diversity. Of Japanese, Taiwanese and Singaporean heritage, the musicians of the *Life Is An Echo* ensemble illuminate the richness of their cultural backgrounds by performing on erhu, guzheng and percussion. The ensemble's repertoire and range of instruments challenge students' understanding of what chamber music looks and sounds like. The performance ends with a Japanese tea ceremony where everyone practises respect and admiration.

Esmé Quartet is a German-based ensemble with three of its four musicians hailing from the Republic of Korea. MVA was proud to host the Quartet's debut Australian tour in 2024 as part of the mainstage concert program. A pilot marketing campaign focussed on developing audiences from the Korean community was initiated by MVA in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in partnership with Cultural Pulse. Elements of this work included translating key messages for the Korean market, targeting Korean media, particularly Korean language outlets, and amplification and community distribution of content with both Korean and English messaging. These efforts achieved significant reach and pave the way for ongoing relationships with the Korean community and future targeted audience development with other community groups.



David Dai performing Life is an Echo at Morphet Vale Public School. © Musica Viva Australia



Above: Satomi Ohnishi, Zhao Liang and David Dai of San Ureshi. © Musica Viva Australia  
Below: The Esmé Quartet. © Tony McDonough



# Access, Equity & Inclusion at Musica Viva Australia

## Commissioning and programming new work by diverse artists

MVA is passionate about showcasing new Australian music, writers and composers, including by commissioning new works, which is one of MVA's most important contributions to the development of artists' careers. Our philanthropically supported Hildegard Fund specifically supports commissions by female and gender-diverse composers as MVA seeks to redress the gender imbalance in the traditional chamber music repertoire.

In 2024 a range of outstanding artists featured across MVA's programs reflect the diversity of Australia's musical culture:

- Liza Lim is a composer, educator and researcher whose music focuses on collaborative and transcultural practices. Liza was commissioned by MVA to create a new work, *Transcendental Etude*, for pianist Kirill Gerstein to perform during his tour.

- Judith Nangala Crispin is a poet and visual artist whose work includes themes of displacement and identity loss, a reflection on her own lost Aboriginal ancestry and the concept of connection with Country. She traces her ancestry to the Bpangerang people of North-Eastern Victoria and the NSW Riverina; and to Ghana, the Ivory Coast, France, Ireland and Scotland. Judith's poem *Charlotte* was set to new music by Damian Barbeler and was performed by The Choir of King's College, Cambridge on its Australian tour.
- William Barton is a Kalkadunga man, a renowned composer and multi-instrumentalist. He is known for his yidaki playing and collaborations with classical orchestras and his work has been commissioned by some of the most outstanding ensembles from around the world. William's newly commissioned work, *Journey to the Edge of the Horizon*, was performed in a national tour with Ensemble Q in late 2024.



Top: Liza Lim. © Harold Hoffmann  
Middle: Judith Nangala Crispin. © Kerrie Brewer  
Bottom: William Barton. © Keith Saunders

# AEI Plan Aims and Objectives

Musica Viva Australia acknowledges that in this rapidly changing world, we must be responsive to the needs of our community. This means that we need to proactively work towards access, equity and inclusion, both in principle and practice, in a way that is structured and accountable.

## Aims and objectives

MVA is on a mission to enhance the organisation's commitment to and actions around access, equity and inclusion. In order to achieve our overarching vision of creating a vibrant music-rich future for all Australians, MVA has created an ambitious AEI Plan which will work towards the following aims and objectives:

- **Organisational commitment** - To recognise, encourage and promote access, equity and inclusion across all areas of the organisation.
- **Inclusive workplace** - To contribute to the elimination of discrimination in the workplace and wider community by promoting and celebrating the rights of all people, particularly those from underrepresented groups.
- **Inclusive programs and services** - To ensure that MVA staff, artists, audience members and other stakeholders have equitable access to programs and services.
- **Lived experience** - To celebrate the unique needs and the lived experience and expertise of diverse communities.
- **Tangible actions** - To undertake practical actions to drive and support an inclusive and accessible culture at MVA.

# Methodology & consultation

To develop this AEI Plan, we engaged external AEI consultants Morwenna Collett and Rachael Jacobs to assist us and ensure we consulted with staff and stakeholders across all areas of MVA's work. This process commenced in November 2023, with stakeholder consultation taking place from February to May 2024. The development of this Plan was co-designed with a voluntary staff advisory group.

The methodology included:

- A Desktop Review, consisting of an analysis of MVA strategies, plans, policies, procedures and HR documents, a map of artistic offerings, analysis of media and social media and a venue analysis;
- A digital accessibility audit;
- Interviews with staff members, Board Directors and external stakeholders;
- Focus groups with audience members, artists and other stakeholders, such as teaching artists;
- Training seminars on Disability Inclusion, Gender and LGBTIQ+ Awareness and Privilege, Bias, Institutional Racism and Cultural Safety, with accompanying discussions about the AEI Plan;
- Internal staff survey and external community survey;
- Dedicated drop-in sessions, consultation and information meetings with the internal advisory group, board members and staff.

Through the development of this AEI Plan, we have created goals and actions that are achievable, relevant and meaningful to MVA's communities. We acknowledge the importance of regular and ongoing dialogue with diverse groups throughout the life of this Plan to ensure that continuous progress, learning and improvement is made.

# What We Found

The consultation and data gathering process created space for reflection on AEI across MVA's different stakeholder groups. The findings identified many areas of strengths where MVA has engaged in positive actions that address AEI matters. The consultation also highlighted areas of concern from staff and stakeholders, as well as opportunities which were considered priorities for further development. The following analysis of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats outlines some of the main feedback themes from the consultation process.

## Strengths

Overall, the development of the AEI Plan was met with a positive attitude from staff, the Board and stakeholders, which resulted in high levels of engagement in the process. Staff consultations and training sessions were well attended, and numerous stakeholders volunteered to be engaged in the consultation. Many staff, in particular, expressed strong feelings that an AEI Plan was necessary for MVA to meet its role of being an organisation of cultural leadership.

“We are starting to acknowledge that we have some shortcomings and that these can be spoken about in a way that validates the experiences of people without making anyone feel like they are being targeted. We are being proactive to identify areas where we can improve.” (Staff interview participant)

In the consultation, staff and stakeholders reflected positively on moves towards programming artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly when they featured musical instruments and styles

outside of the Western classical canon. While traditional Western chamber music is loved by staff and stakeholders, the opportunity to become familiar with a wider range of programming was also appreciated. Other positive feedback centred MVA's Education Program, and the progress made towards making resources and programs more accessible to a wide range of schools. In particular, efforts to be inclusive of socioeconomically disadvantaged schools were praised, as were the moves towards more accessible performances and resources that cater for students with diverse access needs. Strike A Chord was similarly praised for its strong geographic reach and the coaching and travel support provided to students from regional and low socioeconomic schools.

Many staff members reflected positively on the status of women in MVA, discussing the numbers of women employed and in leadership roles. Staff members were similarly appreciative of AEI training offerings that were created as part of this consultation, and they attended with enthusiasm.



# What We Found

## Weaknesses

The consultation allowed staff and stakeholders to express their thoughts on areas where they would like to see more attention given to AEI matters, adding to the areas for development identified by the consultants through the Desktop Review and digital accessibility audit. Both the Desktop Review and digital accessibility audit identified a number of places where digital channels, online resources and organisational documents can be updated for greater accessibility and to represent AEI principles more strongly.

Many staff and stakeholders expressed a desire to see more diversity among audience members, including cultural diversity, disability and socioeconomic groups. Many reflected on the need to address specific aspects of performance venues, for example, accessibility or geographic location, which may aid this pursuit. The affordability of tickets was highlighted by many in the consultation. Some reflected on the prohibitive cost of ticketing in the arts in Australia, and MVA

is just one of many organisations facing this challenge. Although this review did not inquire into age as one of the AEI areas, many staff and stakeholders reflected on the ageing audience base, their access requirements, and the need to diversify MVA's reach. However, there was also a strong desire to address audience diversity holistically, rather than taking a 'quick fix' approach.

"Address the root cause of lack of audience diversity and work towards shifting this over time." (Survey respondent)

Stakeholders also reflected on historical and contemporary barriers that have excluded many from classical music education and ultimately from careers in the arts, including holding key artistic roles or leadership positions. MVA is an organisation that acknowledges the need to intentionally subvert such barriers with concrete actions. A range of these actions have been placed in the AEI Plan in order to strategically and methodically address issues of diverse representation among MVA artists. Some concerns were expressed about the cultural

and gender diversity of composers and performers and there was also interest in profiling artists who had non-traditional pathways into music, in order to broaden perceptions about the type of artists that can engage with MVA. With regard to the internal challenges for AEI in the workforce, there was concern about lack of diversity among employees, in particular in leadership roles.

## Opportunities

The consultation highlighted numerous opportunities for growth with regard to AEI practices. The consultation itself highlighted the need to collect data on the diversity of staff, audiences and other stakeholders (such as Board members) in order to gauge where gaps exist. Similarly, tracking data over time would allow for reflection on the progress of AEI measures. There are numerous existing programs in which there are opportunities to engage in affirmative action to meet AEI goals. There are also existing artistic programs which can be reviewed with an AEI focus, and re-branded or re-imagined as spaces that

# What We Found

focus on accessibility and diversity. Many commented on the possibility of engaging a diverse range of audiences using creative approaches to community engagement, marketing and ticketing.

Staff commented positively on the possibility of engaging in more learning on AEI matters, through more training, as well as educative talks and events structured around focus areas. Many staff also expressed a desire for a central person charged with AEI responsibilities. This review has also highlighted the need to centre people with lived experience as experts. There are opportunities to engage with experts through advisory boards, talks, consultations or experts in residence.

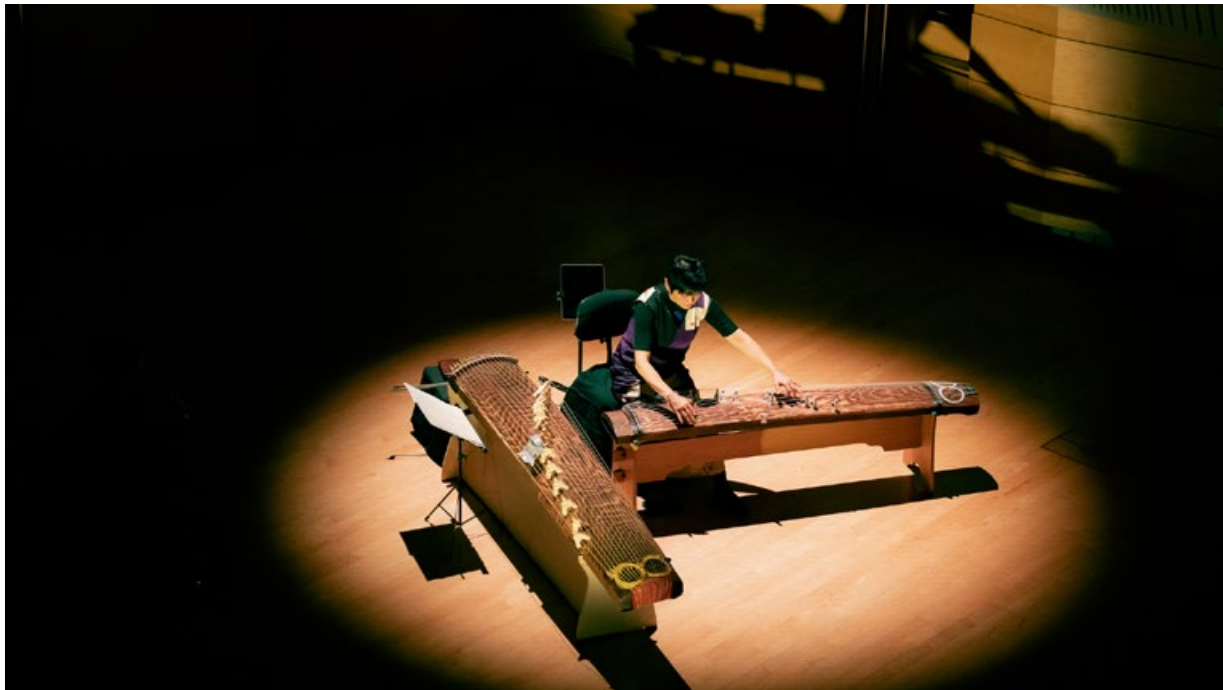
“I think we could do more to create a safe space to have open conversations at MVA about lived experiences and perspectives” (Staff interview participant)

## Threats

The consultation process demonstrated an appetite for AEI progress at MVA from all sections of the organisation. It would be detrimental not to follow up with tangible actions and institutional change. Internally, staff expressed a strong desire for more prioritisation of AEI matters, including more strategic direction that leads to sustainable change. Staff also saw one-off measures and trainings sessions as making limited change. They particularly expressed a desire for more specialised ongoing training in all sectors of the organisation.

“We need to be more comfortable sitting in discomfort, which is a skill that as an organisation we have not had much practice developing.” (Staff survey response)

While the consultation has highlighted some areas for development in the areas of AEI, there are also areas in which MVA has achieved AEI gains without specific targets and goals. One of the threats, therefore, is that AEI targets are set too low or that goals are not ambitious enough for an organisation that is already making progress. It is for this reason that the action items in the Plan aim to address some specific AEI measures as well as encouraging institutional change through the creation of working groups, dedicated AEI points of contact and expert advisory panels.



Top: Members of The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, walking on country with Djon Mundine (centre) Judith Nangala Crispin and Damian Barbeler. | Below: Satsuki Odamura rehearsing for Silk, Metal, Wood. © Annelise Maurer

Dyagula performing in Women of Song in Lismore. © Sean Moloney

# Outcome Areas

Over the next three years (2025–2027), we have set the following goals:

# 1

## ARTISTS

We engage and support a diverse range of artists in MVA programs and offerings, enabling a wider variety of artists to be supported by the organisation's activities and offering our audiences a more diverse experience.

# 2

## AUDIENCES

We embrace our audience members' access and equity needs, while broadening the reach of our organisation to build more diverse audiences and create an inclusive environment that welcomes everyone.

# 3

## WORKFORCE

We prioritise the principles of access, equity and inclusion across the areas of recruitment, procurement and contracting, training and workplace culture to diversify our workforce and ensure a sense of belonging for staff and artists.

# 4

## ORGANISATION-WIDE

We strive to create a culture that is accountable and informed about access, equity and inclusion principles in a way that inspires confidence and trust from our stakeholders.

# Action Plan

# 1

## ARTISTS

**Goal:** We engage and support a diverse range of artists in MVA programs and offerings, enabling a wider variety of artists to be supported by the organisation's activities and offering our audiences a more diverse experience.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<b>1.1 Pathways for young and emerging artists.</b> Continue to advocate for and invest in the careers of emerging musicians from diverse backgrounds.	<b>1</b> Play a role in future national and state policies and planning around music education, and advocate for consideration and accommodations to be provided for young people from underrepresented backgrounds.	CEO, Director of External Affairs, Director of Emerging Artists, Director of Education	Ongoing
	<b>2</b> Continue building and broadening MVA offerings for young and emerging artists, including open EOI opportunities wherever possible, and promote these broadly. Consider initiating a new opportunity for Emerging Artists from underrepresented groups.	Artistic Director, Director of Emerging Artists	Ongoing
	<b>3</b> Review and update the Strike A Chord Program (across application, judging and delivery stages) to ensure access, equity, diversity and inclusion is prioritised and barriers are removed. Actions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Allocate space in the coaching program for a student/s with disability.</li> <li>▸ Measure and share the diversity of entrants and successes of Strike A Chord program in terms of AEI impacts.</li> <li>▸ Maintain or increase the prize for Courage and Commitment, for students who experience barriers to participation in music-making.</li> <li>▸ Consider ways to support underrepresented students following Strike A Chord to further develop career pathways (e.g. mentoring).</li> </ul>	Artistic Director, Director of Emerging Artists, Artistic Director of Competitions	Year 1–2

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>1.2 Diverse artists and musicians</b></p> <p>Ensure all artists feel supported and empowered by MVA staff, programs and offerings.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Develop support mechanisms for artists and musicians from minority or underrepresented groups to ensure cultural safety at every stage of engagement, from recruitment, contracting and onboarding to check-ins throughout the engagement. Conduct a formal and anonymous survey evaluation of artists' experiences working with MVA at the conclusion of the relationship.</p>	<p>Director of Emerging Artists, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, CFO, People and Culture Manager</p>	<p>Year 1</p>
	<p><b>5</b> Extend AEI training opportunities to all artists MVA works with at the onboarding stage and ongoing, to develop their skills and confidence in this area (also see Actions 34 and 36).</p>	<p>Director of Emerging Artists, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, CFO, People and Culture Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>1.3 Accessibility for artists</b></p> <p>Ensure accessibility is considered as part of all MVA offerings and ensure artists access needs are met.</p>	<p><b>6</b> Actively promote artist opportunities within disability and d/Deaf communities and make it clear MVA can provide reasonable adjustments.</p>	<p>Director of Emerging Artists, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, CFO, People and Culture Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p><b>7</b> Scope the possibility of designing a new d/Deaf and disability-led Education program (e.g. a new MVAIS ensemble) in consultation with people with disability.</p>	<p>Director of Education</p>	<p>Year 3</p>
<p><b>1.4 Artistic programming</b></p> <p>Increase and invest in more diverse artistic program offerings at MVA.</p>	<p><b>8</b> Create a Diverse Programming Framework that spans all of MVA's artistic programs. Actions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Develop a process of inviting artists to tell MVA how they identify, also considering intersectional identities (also see Action 38).</li> <li>▸ Expand the methods that MVA artistic decision-makers use to identify potential artists for consideration.</li> <li>▸ Consider opportunities to program and champion at least one artist each year who is from a non-traditional entry pathway to chamber music (e.g. not conservatorium-trained).</li> <li>▸ Recognise and champion intergenerational knowledge and training in non-Western and traditional instruments.</li> <li>▸ Program more diverse artists for public programming activities such as artist talks, masterclasses and podcasts, including in languages other than English and in alternative venues (also see Action 67).</li> </ul>	<p>Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists</p>	<p>Year 1–2</p>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
	9 Track and monitor the representation of culturally diverse artists across all programs, aiming for a year-on-year increase in representation.	Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists	Ongoing
	10 Maintain representation of over 50% of women and gender diverse people among commissioned artists across all programs.	Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists	Ongoing
	11 Track and monitor the representation of women and gender diverse people in concert programming, aiming to increase representation of performers to 50% by 2027 and for a year-on-year increase in representation among composers.	Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities	Ongoing
	12 Track and monitor the representation of musicians with disability across all programs, aiming to increase employment opportunities year-on-year.	Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists	Ongoing
<b>1.5 Intersectionality</b> Work with artists and musicians from intersectional backgrounds to address barriers and find solutions.	13 Through engagement with the External AEI Advisory Group (see Action 54), work with intersectional artists and communities to better understand the nuances around barriers to participation and inclusion (e.g. through learning sessions and resources).	Director of External Affairs, AEI Advisory Group	Ongoing

# 2

## AUDIENCES

**Goal:** We embrace our audience members' access and equity needs, while broadening the reach of our organisation to create an inclusive environment that welcomes everyone.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<b>2.1 Education Program</b> Continue strengthening diverse education programming and showcase best practice internally and externally.	14	Increase offerings for students with diverse access needs (e.g. more show adaptations, more digital learning resource adaptations, more visual stories).	Director of Education, Creative Producer Year 1
	15	Develop Easy English or alternative resources to support lower socio-economic schools and parents/guardians with low literacy to access MVAIS resources.	Director of Education, Creative Producer Year 2
	16	Seek resources to increase Equal Music funds so that more low socio-economic schools can access MVAIS performances.	Director of Development, Director of External Affairs Ongoing
	17	Develop Case Studies to profile best practice inclusion in MVA's Education Program, both internally and externally.	Director of Education, Director of External Affairs, Public Affairs Manager Year 1
	18	Ensure accessibility for presenters and artists at all MVA Professional Development workshops (e.g. by asking about access requirements).	Director of Education, Professional Development Manager Year 1



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>2.2 Audience development</b></p> <p>Grow and develop audiences to increase diversity across MVA concerts and events.</p>	<p><b>19</b> Implement a Diverse Audience Development Strategy to focus on specific audience segments, track engagement and increase representation over time. Actions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Use audience demographic data to identify groups that are underrepresented in the MVA audience.</li> <li>▸ Build ongoing relationships with underrepresented local audience groups, community organisations and peak bodies.</li> <li>▸ Use relevant programming alongside marketing/ticketing access measures.</li> <li>▸ Undertake authentic community outreach and engagement and present concerts in diverse community spaces.</li> <li>▸ Experiment with the impact of decisions such as venue choice, geographic location and programming on audience diversity and growth.</li> <li>▸ Consider long-term engagement of diverse audiences and track data on repeat ticket buyers.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts</p>	<p>Year 1–2</p>
	<p><b>20</b> Scope the potential to increase the variety of concert types, venues and performance locations to appeal to and welcome a broader range of audiences (e.g. disability, aging, young families, lower socio-economic groups).</p>	<p>Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Marketing</p>	<p>Year 2</p>
<p><b>2.3 Accessibility for audiences</b></p> <p>Meet the diverse needs of different audience segments; enable more people to engage with MVA concerts and events through accessible design and inclusive performances.</p>	<p><b>21</b> Scope the development of a series of relaxed public performances and ensure these are promoted widely, potentially exploring whether Sydney Morning Masters and Viva Edge Concerts could develop to meet this need. Pair relaxed performances with Visual Stories, Virtual Tours, appropriate programming and sensory aids, building on MVAIS work in this area.</p>	<p>Artistic Director, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Marketing</p>	<p>Year 2</p>
	<p><b>22</b> Explore the introduction of quiet spaces at MVA concerts and events, in consultation with venues.</p>	<p>Director of Concerts and Communities, Senior Operations Manager</p>	<p>Year 1</p>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
	23 Consult with Blind and low vision communities and AEI Advisory Committee to identify appropriate performances to audio describe each year.	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts	Ongoing
	24 Consult with d/Deaf and hard of hearing communities and AEI Advisory Committee to influence provision of Auslan interpreters and captions for concerts and events.	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts	Ongoing
	25 Seek opportunities for livestreaming, on-demand playback and radio broadcast as additional ways for audiences to experience concerts.	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts, Director of Concerts and Communities	Ongoing
	26 Introduce early-access and priority seating for people with limited mobility and other access needs.	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts	Year 1
<b>2.4 Whole-of-journey audience experience</b> Prioritise an accessible end-to-end audience journey and experience at MVA.	27 Review and communicate online and on-site accessibility, and the whole-of-journey experience from ticket purchase to transport and parking, to arriving at and departing a venue, including providing access information for audiences to plan their visit in advance (also see Actions 59 and 62).	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts	Year 1
<b>2.5 Venue accessibility</b> Ensure everyone can access and feels welcome at MVA venues.	28 Undertake an Access audit of all MVA performance and event venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Document the findings and ensure the accessibility features are listed on the venue and MVA's website.</li> <li>▸ Advocate and use influence with venues to encourage them to improve their venue accessibility.</li> <li>▸ Ensure venue accessibility is a key selection criteria in the identification of future venues so that less accessible venues are replaced with more accessible venues over time.</li> </ul>	Director of Concerts and Communities, Senior Operations Manager	Year 1
	29 Review the amount and type of seating options available across venues including in foyers and function spaces. Where possible, ensure a variety of seating options are available, including those with back and arm rests.	Director of Concerts and Communities, Senior Operations Manager, Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts	Year 1
<b>2.6 Ticketing processes</b> Review ticketing processes to improve access and inclusion.	30 Ensure ticketing processes are inclusive and accessible (e.g. include a range of pronouns and prefixes in the booking forms, use clear language, ensure availability of accessible communication methods).	Director of Marketing, CRM and Ticketing Manager	Year 1

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
	<p><b>31</b> Review the process for booking accessible tickets (e.g. wheelchair seating), ensuring they are available in a range of locations in venues and can be booked online. Ensure clarity between MVA and venues on accessible tickets and patron liaison.</p>	Director of Marketing, CRM and Ticketing Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>32</b> Review affordable ticket pricing for concerts and scope expanded affordable options. Options could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Develop a mechanism to offer unsold tickets/empty seats to students, teachers and lower socio-economic groups.</li> <li>▸ Scope the potential of offering a ‘buy someone else a ticket’ option.</li> <li>▸ Allocate free tickets or discount codes to build relationships with underrepresented communities to encourage longer term attendance.</li> </ul>	Director of Marketing, Marketing Manager, Concerts, Director of Development	Year 1–2

# 3

## WORKFORCE

**Goal:** We prioritise the principles of access, equity and inclusion across the areas of recruitment, procurement and contracting, training and workplace culture to diversify our workforce and ensure a sense of belonging for staff and artists.

### OBJECTIVE

#### 3.1 Attitudes and behaviours

Breakdown barriers to achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices amongst MVA workforce.

### ACTION

### ACTION OWNER

### TIMEFRAME

33

Ensure an organisation-wide commitment to AEI, by including it on the agenda of regular staff meetings and in all project planning and budget templates (also see Action 68).

Leadership team, Executive Manager

Ongoing

34

Build awareness around the impact of ableist, racist and homophobic/transphobic language and create an environment which encourages people to be 'called in' (rather than 'called out'). E.g. include a link to PWDA's Language Guide on the MVA intranet and include in induction materials.

CFO, People and Culture Manager

Year 1

35

Maintain the option for staff to include pronouns on email signatures and business cards, and ensure that the induction process advises new staff of these options. Normalise asking for pronouns when working with new staff, artists and contractors.

CFO, People and Culture Manager

Year 1

36

Build cultural safety into all facets of the organisation, through staff training, induction materials, open conversations, guest speakers on key event days (e.g. International Women's Day) and listening to people with lived experience.

Leadership team, People and Culture Manager

Ongoing

37

Scope the potential to create a dedicated MVA staffing role and associated budget to lead AEI work. This position could act as Anti-Discrimination Officer and be a key contact for raising issues for staff and artists, as well as providing training and onboarding and supporting project teams.

CEO, CFO, People and Culture Manager

Year 3

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>3.2 Diversifying current staffing</b></p> <p>Introduce new measures to diversify staff base and ensure all staff feel valued and supported in the workplace.</p>	<p><b>38</b> Identify AEI diversity baseline data for staff, board and artists and then measure progress via an annual survey to track demographic data.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>39</b> Finalise flexible work policy and update regularly to adjust for shifts in workplace needs.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>40</b> Provide Manager level training to build awareness of Job Access and the Employee Assistance Fund to support staff with disability.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>3.3 Employment, recruitment and selection</b></p> <p>Ensure employment opportunities and processes are inclusive for everyone.</p>	<p><b>41</b> Develop a Diverse Employment Strategy to attract more diverse candidates. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ advertising on The Field and through potential partners such as Accessible Arts.</li> <li>▸ ensuring representation and addressing bias on recruitment panels.</li> <li>▸ promoting the AEI Plan and commitment to diversity through the recruitment process.</li> </ul>	CFO, People and Culture Manager
<p><b>42</b> Following establishment of baseline data, introduce diversity targets for new people joining MVA including artists, contractors, Board members and staff.</p>		CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 2
<p><b>43</b> Develop a Board Diversity Matrix to complement the current Skills Matrix, and prioritise people from diverse backgrounds which are not currently represented on the Board (particularly First Nations people and people with disability) in future appointments.</p>		CEO, Executive Manager	Year 1
<p><b>44</b> Standardise and consistently ask for access requirements at each stage of the recruitment and selection process.</p> <p>Introduce Access Riders to capture any access requirements for staff, board and artists on commencement and check for updates annually (e.g. through the performance review process).</p>		CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
	<p><b>45</b> Participate in career pathway programs such as internships and mentorships to support emerging practitioners from underrepresented groups (e.g. Createability).</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager, Director of External Affairs	Ongoing
<p><b>3.4 Onboarding and Induction processes</b></p> <p>Ensure all processes are inclusive and accessible.</p>	<p><b>46</b> Develop AEI induction materials to ensure AEI topics of cultural diversity, gender, disability and language protocols are included in the on-boarding process for staff, board, artists and volunteers.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
<p><b>3.5 Venues, offices and spaces</b></p> <p>Ensure MVA spaces are equitable, accessible and inclusive</p>	<p><b>47</b> Ensure, where possible, that all MVA offices have toilets which are accessible and gender neutral.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>48</b> Undertake an audit of the physical accessibility of MVA work spaces nationally and make reasonable adjustments as necessary.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
<p><b>3.6 Procurement and contracting</b></p> <p>Ensure tender, procurement and contracting processes prioritise diversity and consider accessibility and inclusion.</p>	<p><b>49</b> Prioritise diversity as part of procurement processes, utilising options such as Supply Nation, Executive Search (by Diversity Australia), Omnia (Disability Employment Service), CoACT (CALD people), First People Recruitment.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Ongoing
<p><b>3.7 Staff confidence and competence</b></p> <p>Design and deliver appropriate training for staff to further develop their confidence and competence in AEI.</p>	<p><b>50</b> Commit to annual AEI refresher training for MVA staff and Board, with a focus on tools, skills and practical application.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
	<p><b>51</b> Develop a regular training suite that responds to key areas of learning for staff, including a series of digestible self-led learning for staff to access during induction and beyond. Topics might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ non-visible disability / neurodiversity</li> <li>▸ cultural awareness training</li> <li>▸ understanding microaggressions</li> <li>▸ anti-racism training / bias / privilege</li> <li>▸ training for supervisors / managers / leadership to support diverse staff needs, handle complaints sensitively and prioritise wellbeing</li> <li>▸ inclusive marketing and communications</li> <li>▸ ally training</li> <li>▸ inclusive workplaces training.</li> </ul>	CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>52</b> Introduce an ongoing lunch and learn series (with artists, staff and guests) to discuss AEI regularly, encouraging staff to be proactive and advocate for change internally.</p>	Director of External Affairs, CFO, People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>53</b> Introduce the Sunflower program internally and train staff on non-visible disability and discuss this program with all MVA utilised venues.</p>	CFO, People and Culture Manager, Director of Marketing, Director of External Affairs	Year 1
<p><b>3.8 Advisory group</b> Utilise lived experience expertise where possible.</p>	<p><b>54</b> Establish a paid external AEI Advisory Group that includes artists and other stakeholders to regularly advise and consult on AEI areas.</p>	CEO, Director of External Affairs	Year 1
	<p><b>55</b> Maintain the internal AEI Group to monitor progress and implementation of this Plan.</p>	Director of External Affairs	Year 1

# 4

## ORGANISATION-WIDE ACTIONS

**Goal:** We strive to create a culture that is accountable and informed about access, equity and inclusion principles in a way that inspires confidence and trust from our stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<b>4.1 Continuous improvement</b> Develop an accountable and informed culture across the organisation that commits to continuous learning and improvement.	<b>56</b> Plan and deliver strategic communications to socialise the AEI Plan with all MVA stakeholders.	CEO; Director of Marketing; Director of External Affairs	Year 1
	<b>57</b> Regularly monitor and review the AEI Plan to ensure continuous learning and improvements are captured and enacted.	CEO, Director of External Affairs, AEI Advisory Group	Ongoing
	<b>58</b> Strengthen organisation-wide attitudes to receiving feedback by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ offering increased informal and formal opportunities for staff and artists to debrief;</li> <li>▸ analysing and sharing audience and stakeholder feedback.</li> </ul>	CFO; People and Culture Manager; Director of Marketing; Director of Education, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Emerging Artists	Ongoing



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>4.2 Digital information</b></p> <p>Provide useful and useable access and diversity information on the website and social media, to enhance equity and inclusion.</p>	<p><b>59</b> Implement the recommendations from the 2024 website and social media accessibility audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Develop website updating guidelines which document MVA’s expectations around digital accessibility, to ensure website standards are maintained and improved upon over time.</li> <li>▸ Create a dedicated page for accessibility on the website and consider implementing a widget such as Userway.</li> <li>▸ Scope the potential of translating key sections of the website into different languages to communicate with diverse communities.</li> <li>▸ Consider publishing Visual Stories and Virtual Tours for MVA performances and programs.</li> <li>▸ Develop and utilise AEI Social Media Guidelines, to ensure things like consistent use of Alt Text, image descriptions and #CamelCase.</li> <li>▸ Ensure all video content is captioned on all digital channels.</li> </ul>	<p>Director of Marketing, Digital Marketing Manager, Director of Education</p>	<p>Year 1–2</p>
	<p><b>60</b> Review and update digital content and imagery to visibly reflect the AEI priorities of the organisation. Actively celebrate, platform and showcase diversity across all channels.</p>	<p>Director of Marketing, Digital Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Year 1</p>
	<p><b>61</b> Commit to another website accessibility audit mid-way through the life of this plan.</p>	<p>Director of Marketing, Digital Marketing Manager</p>	<p>Year 2</p>
	<p><b>62</b> Review and update concert communications to include important access, venue and transport information.</p>	<p>Director of Marketing; Marketing Manager, Concerts.</p>	<p>Year 1–2</p>
	<p><b>63</b> Make programs available online in accessible digital format and have Large Print copies available at concert venues.</p>	<p>Director of Marketing; Marketing Manager, Concerts.</p>	<p>Year 1</p>
	<p><b>64</b> Scope the potential to provide select written communication in languages other than English (eg. when programs or events are particularly relevant to specific cultural communities).</p>	<p>Director of Marketing; Marketing Manager, Concerts.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>4.4 Policy and procedures</b></p> <p>Ensure all internal systems, policies and procedures are accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p><b>65</b> Implement the findings of the Desktop Review, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Ensure access, equity and inclusion is considered and built into every policy and procedural review.</li> <li>▸ Update all policies, procedures and documents to ensure accessibility (Plain English, font size, accessible versions, text alignment).</li> <li>▸ Update the language in the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>▸ Consider developing a specific Disability Inclusion Policy.</li> </ul>	CFO; People and Culture Manager, Executive Manager	Year 1-2
	<p><b>66</b> Review contracts and policies to ensure these protect the intellectually property rights of First Nations and culturally diverse artists.</p>	CFO; People and Culture Manager, Director of Concerts and Communities, Director of Education, Director of Emerging Artists	Year 1-2
	<p><b>67</b> Develop an AEI target for speakers for all presentations and events (internal and external).</p>	CEO; Director of External Affairs	Year 1
	<p><b>68</b> Review and update all organisation-wide budgets to include a line for AEI and community engagement costs.</p>	CFO; Project Accountant	Year 1
	<p><b>69</b> Review and update emergency evacuation procedures in all MVA offices to include accessibility information.</p>	CFO; People and Culture Manager	Year 1
	<p><b>70</b> Review and update privacy policy around storing audience, staff and artist demographic data securely.</p>	CFO; People and Culture Manager	Year 1
<p><b>4.5 Partnerships</b></p> <p>Develop partnerships that prioritise shared values and enable increased diversity.</p>	<p><b>71</b> Investigate transport partners to ensure safe and accessible travel options to MVA performances.</p>	Director of Development, Director of External Affairs, Director of Marketing	Year 1
	<p><b>72</b> Work in partnership with consultants and peak bodies/organisations such as Accessible Arts and Diversity Arts Australia for guidance and support and consider membership of these and other similar organisations.</p>	Director of External Affairs, AEI Advisory Group	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TIMEFRAME
<p><b>4.6 Leadership</b></p> <p>Demonstrate sector leadership on a national level by working toward systemic change in classical music.</p>	<p><b>73</b> Leverage MVA's position in the sector to advocate for systemic change in the classical music industry, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Speak about MVA's AEI work at conferences and events.</li> <li>▶ Participate in national and international forums and events about AEI in music (e.g. Unlimited festival, Chineke! and Neurokin Arts Festival).</li> <li>▶ Champion broader definitions of chamber music and instruments from a range of cultures and contexts.</li> <li>▶ Research and share international best practice in classical music programming and presentation.</li> </ul>	<p>CEO, Artistic Director, Director of External Affairs, Director of Education</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p><b>74</b> Ensure Board Meetings and Board Reports are appropriate for Board Members' access requirements.</p>	<p>CEO, Executive Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>4.7 Donor diversity</b></p> <p>Diversify and expand the donor base and seek new resources for MVA's AEI work.</p>	<p><b>75</b> Clearly articulate the MVA vision and aspirations for AEI and seek philanthropic and partnership support for MVA's AEI offer and associated programs.</p>	<p>Director of Development, Partnerships Manager, Individual Giving Manager, Director of Marketing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

# Governance, Monitoring & Review

## AEI Advisory Group

In 2024, MVA formed an advisory group to assist in the development of the AEI Plan, consisting of representatives from all areas of the organisation who have lived experience and/or a particular interest in access, equity and inclusion. Representatives came together to guide the planning and provide advice on the consultation with staff and stakeholders that led to MVA's first Plan. The Director of External Affairs was appointed to project manage the development of the Plan and lead the advisory group.

After delivery of the AEI Plan, the AEI advisory group will continue to meet quarterly to monitor the implementation of the Plan, assist with decision making around priority areas, and champion access, equity and inclusion across the organisation. The group may expand to co-opt new members, and new staff members will be informed about the group as part of their induction

process. Updates from the advisory group will be shared regularly with MVA's Leadership team. The advisory group will provide a progress update on the AEI Plan's implementation on an annual basis to the Board and externally via the Annual Report.

## Expert advisors

As part of the implementation of this Plan, an external AEI Advisory Group will be formed. This Group will comprise of community members and other MVA stakeholders with lived and work experience in AEI diversity areas, and will regularly provide insights, knowledge and advice on Plan implementation as well as wider issues of AEI. MVA is also committed to engaging with other experts, partners, stakeholders and community groups with lived experience of AEI matters to assist in the implementation of the Plan.

Terms of reference for both the internal and external advisory groups will be developed.

## Reporting

MVA will provide a report on Plan progress annually as part of the organisation's Annual Report. This will be shared widely with stakeholders. A range of measures and measurement tools will be used to ensure accountability and track progress against objectives and targets.

# Governance, Monitoring & Review

## Contact Us

MVA values community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals and actions of our AEI Plan. We encourage individuals and organisations to share their thoughts with us for continued improvement.

Email: [contact@musicaviva.com.au](mailto:contact@musicaviva.com.au)

Phone: 1800 688 482

## Acknowledgements

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- Interview and focus group participants and survey respondents
- Our artists, staff, contractors and volunteers
- Our audience members, partners and other stakeholders
- Project Manager,  
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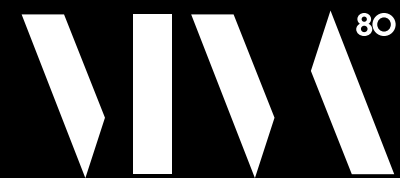
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Teaching artist Tim Hansen with students from Ashcroft Public School, MVA Music Education Residency school. © Toby Zerna



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