

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Our company's name, 'Merrigong', reflects the Dharawal word for the Illawarra region's distinctive escarpment, a landmark of supreme cultural importance. This name serves as a constant reminder that our venues rest on unceded First Nations land. In all that we do, Merrigong Theatre Company seeks to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and to show respect to all First Nations people who call our region home.

VALUES

As a team we value...

- courage and leadership;
- inclusion and respect;
- creativity and innovation;
- honesty and accountability.

PURPOSE

Merrigong Theatre Company is a pioneering cultural leader, exemplifying and championing the arts in our local region, our nation, and beyond. We put artists and community at the centre of everything we do, connecting them and promoting their strength. From our venues in Wollongong, we seed, develop, produce, present, host, facilitate and tour performances and programs that connect and reflect our diverse communities.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The intention of this plan is to include and embrace the many and varied peoples who live in our local communities and who work with us as artists. We seek to remove barriers, but we acknowledge that language has the power to divide. The words we use in this plan are intended to show respect, and we acknowledge that as language evolves, so does meaning. During the life-span of this plan, the words may become out-dated but our intention will remain the same - to play a positive role in uniting and empowering our community and our industry.

Goal 1: Cultural Equity

Merrigong will embed cultural justice and equity throughout all levels of the company, its programs, decision-making and governance.



Priorities:

-  **First Nations First:** establish a distinct, self-determined First Nations Performing Arts Program at Merrigong.
-  **Culturally Safe:** ensure Merrigong is a culturally safe place for all to work and visit.
-  **Community-Centred:** establish mechanisms through which communities have direct input and influence on the company's programming and processes.
-  **Inclusive:** Ensure that those in our region with lived experience of marginalisation have equitable opportunities to inform, create and participate in all that Merrigong does.
-  **Culturally Diverse:** strengthen engagement with First Nations and People of Colour, including the Asian, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander and African diaspora communities in our local region.
-  **Accessibility-Focused:** ensure people with disability and those who are d/Deaf have equitable opportunities to inform, create and participate in all that Merrigong does.





Goal 2: Artist Centred

Merrigong will ensure a range of creative voices impact on everything it does, making artists central to the structure and processes of our company.

Priorities:

-  **Artists' Voices:** place artists into positions where they can have a greater influence on the direction of the company and its decision-making.
-  **Artist Development:** develop artists through an exceptional program of seeding, commissioning, and developing new works from our local region and beyond.
-  **Artists' Wellbeing:** better support the health, wellbeing, safety and security of artists.

KEY Focus Areas:

-  How do we do better for our community?
-  How do we do better for our artists?
-  How do we do better for our team?
-  Are we pioneering and testing new ideas?

Goal 3: Impactful Experiences

Merrigong will ensure that people are connected, strengthened and empowered through the experiences they have with us.

Priorities:

-  **Produce New Work:** produce exceptional new works of local relevance and universal resonance.
-  **Artistic Program:** program and present a dynamic, adventurous, and varied annual season of local, national and international theatre (Merrigong Season/Artistic Season).
-  **Strategic/Commercial Program:** program and present a range of events that address key strategic or commercial imperatives for the Company (Strategic/Commercial Program).
-  **Hire Events Program:** source and deliver a range of events for hirers of the venue (Hire Program).
-  **First Nations Program:** establish a distinct, self-determined First Nations Performing Arts Program.
-  **Disability-Led Program:** further develop and grow the curating, programming and theatre-making activities of our ensemble of professional actors, The Strangeways Ensemble.
-  **Visitor Experience:** provide our patrons, supporters, hirers and venue users with an outstanding experience in all of their interactions with us.

Goal 4: Strong and Responsible

Merrigong will build its strength and capacity, ensuring its future as a resilient, successful and accountable arts organisation.

Priorities:

-  **Culture:** develop a company culture of transparency, accountability and best practice.
-  **Team:** develop a strong, skillful, effective team, adopting flexible work practices that support health and wellbeing.
-  **Environment:** adopt practices of greater environmental and social responsibility, limiting the negative impacts of our operations.
-  **Finance/s:** diversify and grow our revenue streams, building our financial reserves.
-  **Infrastructure:** develop, renew, and operate our venues and equipment safely and effectively.
-  **Relationships:** connect and collaborate more deeply with a range of stakeholders and partners.