

# First Peoples Engagement Framework

Chunky Move is located on the unceded lands of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations. We respectfully acknowledge the significant contributions of Australia's First Peoples, and are committed to supporting the continuity of culture and relationship to this land.

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## ACKNOWLEDGING FIRST PEOPLES INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Chunky Move acknowledges any Cultural Knowledge, Relationships and Cultural Intellectual Property obtained from any engagement belongs to the community from where it came. We recognise that knowledge is power and power is shared in First Peoples communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Chunky Move was established in 1995 and has since carved out a place as one of the most influential contemporary dance companies in Australia. We value the inclusion of First Peoples voices within our organisation and as partners in our activities, fundamental to who we are. Our projects and programs aim to reflect diverse perspectives and we acknowledge Australia's First Peoples hold a critical and necessary place within this. The company is committed to learning from Elders and other senior community members to ensure we continue to deepen our knowledge and understanding of our First Peoples. The company is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive, accessible and culturally safe environment for all our stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND

In 2020, Chunky Move was fortunate to be invited to participate in Fair Play, an equity and inclusion capacity building program facilitated by Diversity Arts Australia. We are extremely grateful to the team at Diversity Arts Australia for their facilitation of this program and particularly wish to acknowledge Jacob Boehme, who was initially paired with the company as mentor, and Dr. Görkem Acaroğlu, who became the company's primary mentor. Funded by the Victorian State Government through Creative Victoria, Fair Play aimed to address barriers to participation by underrepresented groups in Victoria's creative industries, with a focus on developing organisations' skills and capacity in working with three groups:

- First Peoples
- people with disability
- people from underrepresented cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Organisations undertook a fully supported audit to investigate opportunities for changes in leadership, creative programming, staff, marketing and audience development. Mentors were professional experts from the First Peoples, Disability and culturally and linguistically diverse communities who supported the participant company's process towards transformative and sustainable change. Targeted training included support to develop an Equity Action Plan (EAP).

In August 2021, following the completion of the company's EAP, Chunky Move invited Rob Hyatt, Manager, Education and Visitor Experience, Koorie Heritage Trust to lead a workshop with the company's Board and staff to discuss the foundations for a First Peoples Engagement Framework. Acknowledging the company had already established some positive groundwork in the appointment of First Peoples at Chunky Move and through streams of activity supporting outcomes for First Peoples artists and community, it was the optimum time for Chunky Move to establish a dedicated framework outlining the company's **approach** and **guiding principles** for engaging First Peoples and detailing how this aligns with the company's **core values**. Chunky Move are grateful for the generosity and expertise offered by Rob Hyatt through his facilitation of

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this critical workshop. We thank our Board and staff, in particular Daniel Riley and Ngioka Bunda-Heath for their generous input.

## APPROACH

Through our engagement with First Peoples and community we fundamentally value everyone has their own cultural narrative. There is diversity within diversity so every approach and relationship must be authentic, meaningful and bespoke to the individual or community. Consultation is a foremost priority to establish the needs of any individual or community and at Chunky Move, we're guided by our **core values** and a set of **guiding principles** which provide a foundation for meaningful, safe and respectful engagement with First People.

## CORE VALUES

Our approach in engagement with First Peoples and community are inextricably linked and influenced by Chunky Move's organisational values - **Collaboration, Activation, Fearless Experimentation** and **Leadership**. These values are included in Chunky Move's 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

### Collaboration

We deeply value cooperation with all First People and community and encourage a 'side by side' approach. As with all our projects and through Chunky Move's workplace culture, we acknowledge everyone plays an important role, all contributions are valuable and that we are stronger together.

### Activation

We value First Peoples voices as fundamental within our organisation. We acknowledge that maintaining this takes consistent work. We are committed to ensuring we have a culturally safe workplace and organisation, and we build relationships with peers who can support and ground our perspective on this.

### Fearless Experimentation

We accept that a journey of learning and evolution means we're not always going to get things right. We are committed to contributing to a more inclusive, accessible and culturally safe society for our First Peoples and can hold ourselves to account when mistakes or missteps occur. We have an appetite for rewriting narratives and seek to create a future that provides our First Peoples with respect and the opportunities they deserve.

### Leadership

We support Aboriginal self-determination and lead by ensuring and supporting others to lead.

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## **Our GUIDING PRINCIPLES for engaging with First Peoples and community**

**Consultation:** With Traditional Owners, Elders, community members with whom we have a relationship and knowledge holders. Always at the commencement of a new relationship, idea or project. Our staff are committed to on-going learning through our consultation commitment.

**Time:** Take time to build meaningful relationships.

**Reciprocity:** Ensure understanding of community needs and aim for reciprocal exchange expecting, this won't always be equally weighted and should foremost, benefit First Peoples first.

**Respect:** Commit to Aboriginal self-determination and cultural safety.

**Evaluation:** Create space for reflection and feedback, document the journey along the way. Listening and reflection provide greater understanding. Assessment assists us to hold ourselves to account.

**Evolution:** Encourage evolution of our approach and adapt as and when required as more knowledge and experience is gained.

## **GOALS and ACTIONS**

We have numerous strategic goals and actions specific to our engagement of and with First Peoples and communities across 2021 - 2024. These are detailed in our 2021 – 2024 Equity Action Plan which can be accessed [here](#).

## **EVALUATION PROCESSES**

Chunky Move employs a variety of tools and methodologies to evaluate our processes. These include qualitative and quantitative measures and third party review. We assess our performance and track behavioural change incrementally throughout the year and report annually to the Chunky Move Board, funding bodies and other key stakeholders. Details regarding our evaluation processes can be found in our 2021 – 2024 Equity Action Plan.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **First Peoples**

First Peoples is a term broadly used to describe Indigenous people across the globe. In the Australian context, First Peoples of Australia refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but does not necessarily reflect the diversity of identity within and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and groups.

### **Aboriginal self-determination**

Self-determination means Aboriginal people and their communities make decisions, have a voice and lead on their own terms and use their own cultural values, models, paradigms and ways of working. Self-determination is a fundamental shift in power – it should support local Aboriginal

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people to have an equal say in equally negotiated values, motivations, governance, strategies, operations, accountability and investments (Phillips 2015).

## **Cultural safety**

Cultural safety is about creating an environment that is safe for First Peoples. This means there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience.

Cultural safety is about:

- Shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge
- The experience of learning together with dignity and truly listening
- Strategic and institutional reform to remove barriers to the optimal health, wellbeing and safety of First Peoples. This includes addressing unconscious bias, racism and discrimination, and supporting First Peoples self-determination
- Individuals, organisations and systems ensuring their cultural values do not negatively impact on First Peoples, including addressing the potential for unconscious bias, racism and discrimination
- Individuals, organisations and systems ensuring self-determination for Aboriginal people. This includes sharing power (decision-making and governance) and resources with First Peoples communities. It's especially relevant for the design, delivery and evaluation of services for First Peoples.

## **REFERENCES**

Victorian State Government Health and Human Services  
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework](#)

Victorian State Government Health and Human Services  
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety continuum reflective tool](#)

Victorian State Government health.vic <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/aboriginal-health/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety>

Australia Council for the Arts  
[Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts](#)