

MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA AND QPAC PRESENT

Changing *the* **CONVERSATION**

A SERIES EXPLORING MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA

WHO ARE WE?

IDENTITY IN A MULTICULTURAL



TUESDAY 20 AUGUST

CONCERT HALL, QPAC | BOOK QPAC.COM.AU



MULTICULTURAL
AUSTRALIA



WELCOME

FROM QPAC AND MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA



Who are we? The question is easy enough to pose, but to answer – whether as an individual or on behalf of a collective – may take a lifetime of dissection and exploration. One thing is for sure: a singular, static notion of what it is to be 'Australian' is reductive and outdated. The beauty of a multicultural Australia lies in its diversity, in the meeting of cultures, but alongside that beauty is its challenge: balancing a sense of the collective, togetherness and belonging, with the recognition of cultural and heritage differences.

In an increasingly polarised world, the need for nuance and genuine, respectful engagement is more important than ever. Together with Multicultural Australia, our hope with this *Changing the Conversation*

series is to inspire and perhaps inform discussions that continue beyond our walls. That those discussions are ever evolving in the same way our world, our country, and our communities continuously change, growing, welcoming new people, languages, and cultures to our shores.

As we do so, we create new ideas of what our collective identity is for future generations to build on. And what better representation of that future than the young people from Mable Park State School, a remarkable school in Brisbane's South that is home to students from more than 70 cultures. We warmly welcome them to QPAC this evening to share some of their cultural heritage and to remind us why this conversation is so necessary.

John Kotzas AM
Chief Executive, QPAC



Any conversation about our national identity must begin with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who first occupied this continent and hold the earliest cultural memories of this land. This is our starting point as we explore how identity shapes who we are, individually and collectively, in Australia.

Australia is an ancient land rich with diverse cultures, languages, spiritualities, and faiths. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage with deep-rooted traditions and ancestral connections to land is integral to our national story, while British heritage has significantly shaped our social and economic character. Migration, which began with trade and inter-marriage with Indigenous nations,

accelerating in successive waves of the past century, has created a nation of many different backgrounds and cultures.

This is a conversation about the struggles and triumphs of our past and our present, and creating a future that embraces everyone, celebrating our differences and uniting our diverse stories into a cohesive narrative. It is a conversation about identity, belonging, equity and inclusion – removing the barriers of marginalisation, discrimination, and racism – to fully embrace our multicultural identity.

Multicultural Queensland Month 2024 is about learning, action, and celebration. Our panel today represents just some of the many voices and stories of Australia. As you listen, I hope you will reflect on what it means to be Australian and continue this important conversation with your own circles.

Christine Castley
CEO, Multicultural Australia

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ABOUT THE PANELLISTS



YUMI STYNES - FACILITATOR

Yumi Stynes is an award-winning broadcaster and author. She has been working in Australian media for more than two decades, first as a music reporter, arts reporter and pop culture interviewer to working now as a writer and authority on sex education, consent, women's issues, race issues, food and art. She is the face and voice of the hugely popular ABC podcast, *Ladies, We Need to Talk*, and co-author of the acclaimed *Welcome To* book series.

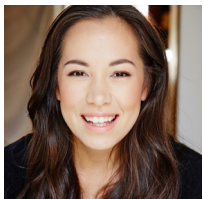


DR DINESH PALIPANA OAM

Dinesh is a doctor, lawyer, disability advocate, and researcher. While in medical school, he was involved in a car accident that caused a spinal cord injury. He was Queensland's first quadriplegic medical intern.

An award-winning individual both professionally and personally, Dinesh was the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service's Junior Doctor of the Year in 2018. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2019. He was the third Australian to be awarded a Henry Viscardi Achievement Award. He was the 2021 Griffith University Young Alumnus of the Year. Dinesh was the Queensland Australian of the Year for 2021. In 2022, Dinesh was listed as number 33 in *The Courier-Mail's* top 100 power list for Queensland's most influential in health and wellbeing. His autobiography, *Stronger*, was published by Pan Macmillan in 2022.

He is a strong advocate and leader for human rights and inclusion, serving in many capacities to build the understanding and capability of the Queensland community regarding people with disabilities.



COURTNEY STEWART

Courtney Stewart is an acclaimed director, dramaturg, actor and teaching artist with a deep passion for intercultural works and multicultural dramaturgies. She is the current Artistic Director and CEO of La Boite Theatre.

A proud Queenslander, Courtney started her professional career as an actor before honing her talents as a director, dramaturg, diversity advocate, and change maker for some of the country's most prolific companies and organisations, including Sydney Theatre Company (as Directing Associate and Richard Wherrett Fellow), Belvoir, and Contemporary Asian Australian Performance (as Artistic Associate).

Courtney was previously Chair of the Equity Diversity Committee, a delegate to the National Performers Committee, and a former board member for Contemporary Asian Australian Performance.



DR INDIGO WILLING

Dr Indigo Willing is the creator and co-founder of award-winning community projects focused on diversity and inclusion.

Her activities span social worlds that reflect her diverse background and lived experiences as a Vietnam War orphan and adoptee, an Asian Australian, academic and skateboarder.

She is a co-founder of the women and Queer-led networks – Consent is Rad, and We Skate QLD – and is a part of the Skating/Sustainability/Health Research/Environmental Design (SSHRED) team. She is also the Co-Chair of the International Advisory Board for Skateistan.

Reflecting her other community connections, she is also the founder of the Adopted Vietnamese International (AVI) network, and convenes the Asian Australian Films, Forum, and News Network.



MAYOR JON RAVEN

Mayor Jon Raven was elected to lead the city of Logan earlier this year. His new role builds on his previous work; he'd been serving the city as Councillor since 2016. Mayor Raven is passionate about creating local jobs, encouraging investment and working closely with the community to help Logan realise its full potential.

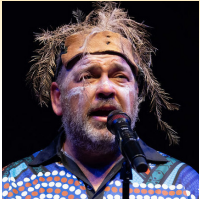


MURRAY BENTON

Murray Benton is an Aboriginal Barkindji Koori man from Central West New South Wales. He is a valued part of the leadership team with Q Shelter, a peak body working to influence solutions to housing need and homelessness in Queensland.

He is a member of the Child Death Review Board with the Queensland Family and Child Commission, a Board Director of Bendigo Bank Gympie Branch, and a Community Partner with White Ribbon Australia.

Murray holds an impressive record of working closely with government departments and non-government agencies to deliver specialist homelessness and dignity services. He is also a fierce advocate in the First Nations space and achieved international exposure through his advocacy in youth mental health and suicide prevention. He has overcome many adverse childhood experiences shaping the person he is today.



WELCOME TO COUNTRY BY **SHANNON RUSKA** (TRIBAL EXPERIENCES)

Shannon Ruska descends from the Yuggera, Nunukul and Yugambeh people of the Brisbane and Gold Coast regions. He has been working on reviving and maintaining Indigenous culture through arts and entertainment for more than 23 years. In his career he has educated over 15 million people globally via live stage performances, Welcome to Country speeches and TV appearances.

From the big stages to schools, Shannon has taught over 2000 Indigenous children from the South East Queensland corner through Aboriginal song, dance and culture. Shannon has been an Advisor and Cultural Consultant for major companies such as Brisbane City Council, Qantas Airlines, Queensland Performing Arts Centre and many others in Tourism, Mining, Education, Arts and Construction. He is also a member of the QTIC Indigenous Champions Network and continues to share stories of the Aboriginal culture to bring these stories to life.



SPECIAL PERFORMANCE FEATURING **MABEL PARK STATE SCHOOL**

Mabel Park State High School's MUDITA Performance Group is a collective of exceptional students showcasing how culture is celebrated at Mabel. MUDITA is a Sanskrit term that means joy, and it refers to the pleasure obtained from seeing other people do well. MUDITA shares joy for all cultures with pride and are excited to showcase the following cultures today: First Nations, Filipino, Cook Islands, African Nations, Samoan, Tongan and Māori.

QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

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The Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP: Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts

Director-General, Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts: Ms Clare O'Connor

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors – our First Nations Peoples – gives strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who help us engage broadly across the state and continue enriching lives through performing arts.

Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC, Dr Lee and Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Leigh Tabrett PSM, Susan Rix AM, Julian Myers, Dr Sally Pitkin AO, Dare Power, Dr Cathryn Mittelheuser AM, Sandi Hoskins, Lance and Suzanne Hockridge, Leigh Wheeler, Queensland Community Foundation, de Groot's Charitable Fund, Joachim and Paula Erpf, Dr Colin and Mrs Noela Kratzing, Barbara Snelling, Frank and Karen Alpert, Dr Ailbhe and Dr Frank Cunningham, Jenny Morton, Klaus Beckmann and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

We give heartfelt thanks to QPAC's Principal Partners Hyundai and MinterEllison.

Changing the CONVERSATION

WORDS THAT BIND

CREATING UNITY THROUGH OUR MANY LANGUAGES

19 NOVEMBER, 7PM

Join us for this panel about the transformative potential of language diversity as a tool for nation building and social inclusion.



DON'T MISS OUR FINAL CHANGING THE CONVERSATION EVENT FOR THE YEAR

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