



yirra yaakin
THEATRE COMPANY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CANDIDATE PACK



Panawathi Girl by David Milroy | Perth Festival 2022 | His Majesty's Theatre
Photo: Dana Weeks

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Cover: Photo by Dana Weeks.

*Ngala kaaditj nidja Whadjuk Noongar
Boodjar. Ngala woolah. Ni Moortang
dandjoo koorliny boodjar, boodjar, wongi
ngala yeye, ba kalyakoorl.*

We know and acknowledge this is Whadjuk
Noongar Country, and we celebrate, listen,
and connect with their families, knowledge
and land that talks to us, from the past,
today and the future.

Dr Roma Yibiyung Winmar and Ingrid Ngoorlak Cumming

Songbird by Shakara Walley | 2024
Photo: Tori Lill

Image. Photo by XX.



INVITATION FROM THE CHAIR

Yirra Yaakin
[*Yir-raarh Yaarh-kin*]
means **Stand Tall** in
Noongar language, a
name that reflects the
strength, resilience,
and vibrancy of
our company and
community.

For over three decades, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company has been a powerful voice for Aboriginal storytellers, celebrating and sharing First Nations culture through the performing arts and is currently under the artistic leadership of Artistic Director, Maitland Schnaars.

From our home at the Subiaco (Wandaraguttagurru) Arts Centre, our stories travel far and wide—reaching theatres, schools, and community spaces across the nation.

Each production is an opportunity to amplify Aboriginal voices, challenge perceptions, and foster meaningful connections between cultures.

Beyond the stage, Yirra Yaakin is deeply committed to nurturing the next generation of Aboriginal artists. Through our engagement and education programs, we create pathways for young creatives, ensuring that Aboriginal theatre remains under Aboriginal control and continues to thrive.

In recent years the company has seen growth in audiences and impact. Our audiences and participants grew from 11,100 in 2015 to over 29,000 in 2019, which represented a 161% increase over a five-year period. This growth has been essential to enable us to fulfil our artistic objectives and remain at the forefront of what we do. Our priority is to build upon this legacy and ensure that Yirra Yaakin is well positioned for the next stage in its development.

We are seeking an accomplished Executive Director to provide exceptional strategic and cultural leadership, focussing on audience, artistic and financial sustainability, while maintaining robust connections within Aboriginal, government, business and artistic communities, both locally and nationally. This is a role that requires strong and recurring advocacy to establish new funding pathways and opportunities. We’re seeking someone who can engage meaningfully with a variety of stakeholders who have a desire and mandate to invest in Aboriginal theatre , culture and storytelling. We need someone who is a great listener with a high level of energy and enthusiasm to guide our fantastic team dedicated to highlighting First Nations stories that reach beyond our region.

Working closely with the Artistic Director, this is a unique opportunity for a cultural leader to lead a respected theatre company with a national profile to contribute to both their career and company growth – we welcome and invite your interest in applying for the role.

DEBRA MILLER, CHAIR

ABOUT

Established in 1993 - the Year of Indigenous People - **Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company** was founded to provide an artistic outlet for positive self-determination within the Aboriginal community. What began as a small initiative with three staff members has since evolved into a nationally respected cultural leader in Aboriginal theatre.

Our patrons are highly recognised and awarded Western Australians, with strong Community, Cultural and business connections – Founding Patron, Dr Richard Walley OAM, Danny Ford OAM and Prof. Fiona Stanley AC.

Over three decades, four Artistic Directors have contributed to the program, prominence and creative life of the company, including founding Artistic Director David Milroy, Kyle Morrison, Eva Grace Mullaley and Maitland Schnaars, who was appointed in 2023.

Yirra Yaakin has produced award-winning, internationally distinctive theatre, commissioning and premiering more than 50 major productions, including landmark works such as *Waltzing the Wilarra*, *One Day in '67*, *Aliwah*, *Windmill Baby*, *Cruel Wild Woman*, *Hecate*, *The Sum of Us*, *Panawathi Girl*, and *Operation Boomerang*. Our collaborations with esteemed Aboriginal writers—includes David Milroy, Sally Morgan, Derek Nannup, Mitch Torres, and Dallas Winmar - have further cemented our reputation for excellence and innovation.

Lingo-Lah-Lah. Photo by Dana Weeks.

Over the years, Yirra Yaakin’s productions have been presented by major theatre companies in Australia, festivals and venues, including Bell Shakespeare, Ilbijerri, Moogahlin, Black Swan, The Blue Room, *Performing Lines*, Perth Festival through to international presentations in Germany, and Kia Mau Festival in New Zealand. Touring to regional, national and remote communities remains a core company objective.

Over the next five years, the company will present up to three mainstage productions. Additionally, the company will present one primary and one high school incursion, the Metro Writers’ Group, and Yirra Yaarnz, Ngalaka Daa “Our Tongue” Ensemble, together with significant touring and new collaborations, celebrating and honouring the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, families, language and culture.

At our core, we believe that Aboriginal theatre must remain under Aboriginal control. We are committed to providing opportunities for First Nations artists at every level of theatre creation and production. Our education and community engagement programs support Indigenous trainees, ensuring they are mentored, develop essential skills, and thrive in the Australian theatre sector.



Lingo Lah Lah by Adam Edwards and Peter Docker | 2023
Photo: Dana Weeks

OUR PURPOSE AND VISION

Yirra Yaakin
creates, shares
and celebrates
contemporary
Aboriginal theatre,
performance and
stories.

VISION

Centring Aboriginal ways of being and doing so we can create and share stories that resonate across the world through our eyes.

We lead by honouring the past, investing in the future and embracing the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre. We respect the generations past and invest in a thriving future for our artists and arts workers.

We collaborate on and tour high quality contemporary theatre works to grow our audiences, our reputation and secure our financial sustainability.

We invest in and support highly skilled and culturally respectful leadership across our people, governance, artistic program and operations.

THE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT UNDERPIN OUR FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE INCLUDE:

- Being Connected to Community, culture and place
- Supporting Strong governance and strong leadership
- Being Creatively Ambitious
- Being Respectful
- Fostering Holistic Empowerment
- Strengthening Sustainability

Download ↓
2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan

FUNDING

Yirra Yaakin has an annual turnover of \$2.3m and generates its revenue primarily from grants from federal, state and local government/s. The remainder is derived from self-earned sources, including ticket sales from performances, corporate sponsorship and philanthropy support. The company maintains its reserves ratio above 20%, carefully monitored by its Financial Advisory Committee.

The company has a four-year investment agreement (2025-2028) with Creative Australia, the Australian Government’s principal arts investment and advisory body, and is a multi-year funded organisation with the WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Regular surpluses provide confidence and financial stability in the company’s ability to deliver on its strategic plan, and increase its international reach following recent appearances at the Kia Mau Festival in New Zealand and a minority language theatre conference in Germany.

Yirra Yaakin is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) and has DGR (deductible gift recipient) status. Using impact evaluations, the company presents strong cases for support from strategic partners, foundations, trusts and donors that focus on youth, mental health, employment, Aboriginal arts and language.

[DOWNLOAD ↓](#)
Latest Annual Report

Image. Photo by XX.



Hecate adapted by Kylie Bracknell | Perth Festival 2020
Photo: Dana Weeks

GOVERNANCE

Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, with charitable status.

The Board of Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation has responsibility for upholding and achieving the objectives of the Corporation on behalf of the Aboriginal membership and community. It is respondent to and incorporated under the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (CATSI) Act 2006.

The Board is ultimately responsible for the following areas:

- Strategic Planning and Policy Development
- Financial Management and Fundraising
- Risk Management and Succession Planning
- Compliance and Governance

Led by the Chair the company is governed by a majority Indigenous Board of Directors who meet six times a year, supported by three sub-committees: Finance Committee, Governance Committee and Artistic Advisory.

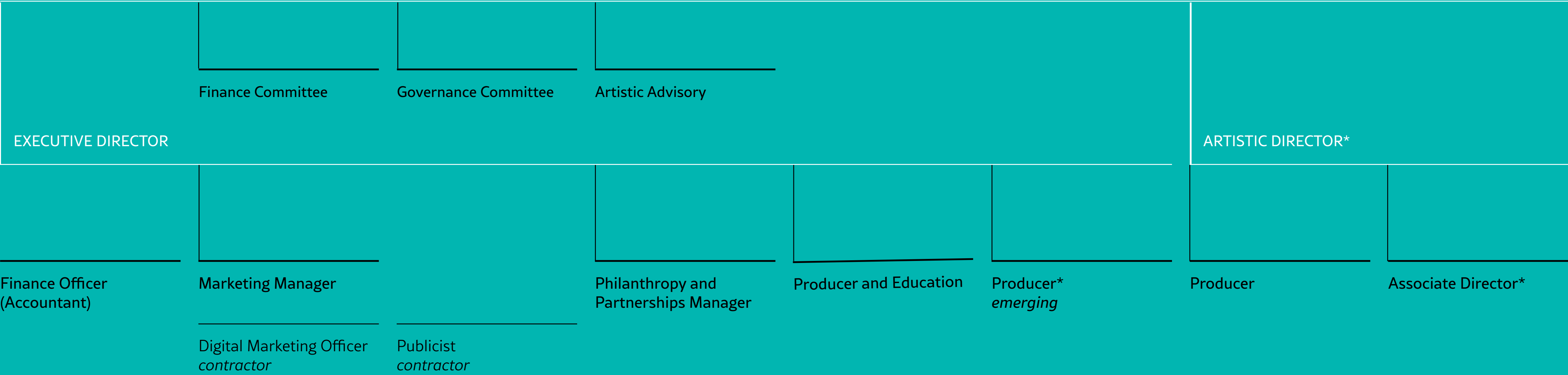
BOARD MEMBERS

- Debra Miller, Chair
- Barbara Hostalek, Vice Chair and Treasurer
- Paul Clowry
- Maree De Giambattista
- Terry Grose
- Kobi Morrison
- Dan Mossenson
- Derek Nannup
- Rachael Pearson
- Rosemary Walley

The Leadership team comprises the Executive Director and Artistic Director. The Executive Director manages five functional areas including Education, Marketing, Finance and Commercial. Yirra Yaakin has 10 FTE ongoing and fixed-term employees, and engage over 140 artists and arts workers every year, with close to 100 Aboriginal people..

ORGANISATIONAL CHART

BOARD MEMBERS*



*Current Aboriginal staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB PROFILE

THE ROLE

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board and works collaboratively with the Artistic Director. The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for organisational reporting, leadership and company performance, and direction of effective day to day management and enabling business functions to ensure Yirra Yaakin delivers on its strategic vision and financial success.

The Executive Director is responsible for the realisation of the Artistic Director’s vision, building brand and profile, developing audiences, increasing financial viability, overseeing the company’s scheduling and operations, developing and supporting the talents of staff and First Nations artists.

Supervising business operations including finance, marketing, development, education and producing, this role actively nurtures and role-models a positive and safe organisational culture, ensuring that planning, governance, risk management and compliance processes are professionally supported. Leading a small, committed management team, the Executive Director works closely with each Manager in order to maximise results in their area and to ensure excellent relationships between departments.

Vingettes. Photo by Dana Weeks.



Yirra Yaakin Vignette Series / What A Night by Andrea Fernandez | 2022
Photo: Dana Weeks

KEY PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BOARD

This role has a close working relationship with the Board and its subcommittees. The Executive Director must form and maintain trusted and working relationship built on listening and leveraging Board expertise to unlock value.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Executive Director is responsible for delivering the budget and will ensure rigour in commercial operations and that the Company is run efficiently with a mindset of sustainable growth, building financial reserves to cover contingencies.

GOVERNANCE

The Executive Director will ensure best practise and excellence in all aspects of governance, compliance and risk management. They will promptly provide the Board and funders with all necessary reports, managing all forms of risk, including workplace health and safety. They will ensure **Yirra Yaakin** has a set of up-to-date policies available to and adopted by staff.

STRATEGY

The Executive Director will lead corporate strategy and implementation within the timeframes required. This will include an ability to understand and integrate a variety of complex information to frame strategic options to ensure both sustainability and growth.

RELATIONSHIPS

As a theatre company, the constructive, symbiotic partnership between the Artistic Director and Executive Director is essential. The Executive Director must maintain a collaborative working partnership with the Artistic Director, complimenting one another’s skills with an appropriate mix of support and challenge.

BRAND

Yirra Yaakin is one of Australia’s most distinctive theatre companies. The Executive Director is responsible for collaborating with the team to ensure the company’s quality, profile, reputation and values continue to be seen as a national brand of stature.

KEY PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AUDIENCES

Yirra Yaakin’s success is underpinned by its productions, talent and storytelling and importantly its ability to understand its audiences and market. The Executive Director, with the Artistic Director, ensures that artistic decisions are balanced with commercial realities and data insights to inform programming, production, marketing and education decisions. Collectively, they will continue to broaden, engage and retain audiences into the future, online and onsite.

TEAM LEADERSHIP

The Executive Director will be jointly responsible with the Artistic Director for hiring, motivating, developing and retaining a high-calibre team of professionals and specialists. They will nurture collaboration and cooperation while fostering a sense of unity, shared accountability and an audience-focus. Success will be marked by an environment within which people feel happy, valued, respected, safe and supported; a work environment in which staff are able to challenge and contribute ideas, whichever function or position they may be in. The Executive Director will continue to drive diversity and inclusiveness on and off the stages, with a particularly focus on Indigeneity.

STAKEHOLDERS

This role has close inter-relationships with a vast number of stakeholders, partners and donors across the community, including with government and industry at large. Alongside the Artistic Director and Chair, the Executive Director will act as a spokesperson and ambassador for Yirra Yaakin. The Executive Director will sustain and enhance resilient, collaborative relationships with funding bodies, particularly Creative Australia and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. The Executive Director must also foster and maintain collegiate and trusting relationships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, venues, media, marketing and tourism agencies, education institutions, cultural and artistic communities.

RAISING FUNDS

Supporting the Philanthropy and Partnerships Manager, the Executive Director will drive the diversity of funding sources, including grant submissions and reporting, overseeing increased gifts from philanthropic donors, trusts, foundations and corporate sponsors - supporting Board-level fundraising, annual giving, and making approaches to prospective and existing sponsors who align with the company’s values. The Executive Director - with the Board - will act as ambassadors to instil loyalty, passion and commitment.

OPERATIONS

Working closely with the Artistic Operations, Technical and Production, Marketing and Finance, the Executive Director will oversee scheduling, budgets, marketing, sales, fundraising and logistics. They will bring experience and operational discipline and ensure a robust risk-management framework for the overall calendar, individual productions, education programs and tours to budget expectations.

EDUCATION AND TOURING PROGRAM

Yirra Yaakin’s education initiatives and touring program takes it far afield from its Subiaco home and represents a critical income stream and reputation builder. The Executive Director plays an important role in supporting the Artistic Director in identifying prospective festival partners and venues, as well as negotiations for, and delivery of the tours.

CANDIDATE PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES

The ideal candidate will be an experienced executive leader with a proven track record from an organisation of similar scale and scope to Yirra Yaakin. While experience in the arts or not-for-profit (NFP) sector is preferred, it is not essential. The successful candidate should have a strong background in working within consumer-focused organisations, which will be crucial for Yirra Yaakin’s continued growth and success.

Prior experience working collaboratively with Senior Leadership and diverse staff will be highly valued. The candidate should bring established networks within the Australasian venue and festival communities and have demonstrated experience in identifying, negotiating, and executing opportunities for domestic, national, and international touring.

The successful candidate will possess strong verbal and written communication skills and an inclusive, and positive leadership style.

Experience working with all levels of government, along with proven fundraising expertise, will be an advantage.

The candidate should have financial management and business analysis skills, including expertise in budgeting, accurate forecasting, and a proven track record in driving revenue growth and diversification. The ability to improve commercial sustainability and operational efficiency will be key. Additional experience in technology, legal issues, and human resources would be beneficial.

This role offers a unique opportunity, and candidates from diverse career backgrounds, including the arts, education, or not-for-profit sectors, are encouraged to apply.

Interested applicants are invited to contact REA for a confidential discussion about the role and their suitability.



Sista Girl by Alexis West and Elena Carapetis | 2024
Photo: Dana Weeks

Sista Girl. Photo by Dana Weeks.

KEY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

REPORTS TO

- Chair, Board of Directors
- Subcommittees of Board

DIRECT REPORTS

- Finance Officer (Accountant)
- Marketing Manager
- Partnerships and Philanthropy Manager
- Education / Producer
- Producer

INTERNAL COLLABORATORS

- Artistic Director
- Associate Director
- Direct reports of staff

EXTERNAL

- Key government stakeholders, including state, local and federal government/s
- Strategic Partners, Donors and Foundations
- Members
- Audiences
- Arts Industry and Project Partners
- Patrons

DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES

PROBLEM-SOLVER

Able to navigate challenges, make tough decisions, and balance competing priorities with evidence for decision-making.

CULTURE

Implicitly understand the value of Yiraa Yaakin’s contribution to Aboriginal culture and the arts.

RESILIENT

Ability to adapt and respond to changing circumstances, shifting demands and/or new opportunities. Adaptive in the face of change.

ENTREPRENEURIAL

Ability to understand the opportunity that new ideas bring and be comfortable with risks inherent in pursuing new projects.

COMMUNICATION

Ability to listen actively and provide high level reporting in verbal and written formats.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1. Accomplished Management (min five-years' experience) in either the performing arts sector, not-for-profit, or customer-focused organisation.
- 2. Demonstrated strategic acumen and success in achieving measurable targets.
- 3. Proven depth of financial, commercial and general management skills.
- 4. Experience working with a non-executive board, compliance with regulatory requirements, and best practices in not-for-profit governance.
- 5. A positive contribution to both organisational and people culture.
- 6. Exemplary interpersonal and communication skills.
- 7. A track record in developing effective partnerships across the cultural, government, commercial and partnership sectors.
- 8. Demonstrated capability of fundraising, marketing and sales acumen.

Image. Photo by XX.



APPLICATIONS

Thank you for your interest in Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

Yirra Yaakin is an inclusive workplace that promotes and values diversity.

Yirra Yaakin is committed to improving employment opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As a measure to achieve equality and support, Section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA) will apply to this position. **Aboriginal people are strongly encouraged to apply.**

HOW TO APPLY

Your application must include the following:

1. A strong covering letter of no more than two pages which captures:
 - What excites you about this opportunity and working with the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company?
 - Why do you think you are the right person for this leadership role at this moment in time?
 - What knowledge and experience will you bring to the team?

Everyone has their own style of writing. The key is to choose a style of writing that is clearly laid out, concise, which feels right for you and effectively communicates your message. Make sure to customise your letter and pay attention to detail, carefully checking grammar and spelling.

2. A statement of no more than four pages outlining your suitability for the role in response to the key selection criteria on page 15, demonstrating your experience (specific examples of outcome and impact) and how your personal attributes accord with those outlined for the position.
3. A concise CV providing personal details, qualifications, and work history.
4. The names and contact details, including email addresses, of three referees who may be contacted for a confidential report (your permission will be sought before referees are contacted).
5. The earliest date on which you would be available to commence in the role.

LODGING YOUR APPLICATION

Before lodging an application, you are encouraged to contact Vanessa or Richard before **Tuesday 6 May**:

Vanessa Duscio
Managing Partner, REA Arts + Culture
+61 409 977 312
vanessa@reaartsanculture.com

Richard Evans
Principal and Founder, REA Arts + Culture
+61 417 336 507
richard@reaartsandculture.com

All enquires are treated confidentially.

To apply please email your application, consolidated and saved **within a single PDF document** to
vanessa@reaartsandculture.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications are due before midnight, Friday 9 May, 2025.

LOCATION

Yirra Yaakin is a resident company at Subiaco Arts Centre, Wadjuk Noongar Boodja, Perth, Western Australia.

CONTRACT ENTITLEMENTS

Term: 3 year FT contract which may be extended by mutual agreement.

A competitive salary package AU\$125,000 plus super (11.5%), a 38-hour working week and 4 weeks annual leave (pro-rata).

One-off relocation expense package to be negotiated as required.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

As a performing arts company, this leadership position will involve irregular hours including evenings and weekends and flexibility will be required.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

- This process and search is led by REA Arts + Culture, specialists in executive search for creative industry leaders across Australia.
- After applications are received, the Panel will determine who is shortlisted for interview.
- Shortlisted applicants will be notified by REA by 16 May.
- First interviews will be held week commencing 26 May.
- Second in-person interviews will be held in Perth week commencing 2 June.
- As a candidate engaging with REA we understand applying for roles can be an exciting and vulnerable process. We pride ourselves on treating people with respect and discretion, and support you throughout the process.

ABOUT PERTH

Perth is a cosmopolitan city, with wide ethnic and cultural diversity. Over the last ten years, the Western Australian population has become more culturally and linguistically diverse, with the recent census revealing 42% of the population were born overseas.

As the capital of Western Australia, the city centre is on the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) 18 kilometres from the Indian Ocean port of Fremantle. The Derbal Yerrigan is a sacred place for the Noongar people, who have been the traditional owners of the south-west of Western Australia for at least 45,000 years. Aboriginal people make up 89,000 of the Western Australia population.

The city enjoys a Mediterranean climate with some of Australia's best beaches, a thriving contemporary arts community, inner city green parks, outdoor dining and marine adventures.

Perth occupies the same time zone as 60% of the world's population (GMT+8) and has a current population of over 2 million.

Perth. Photo Creative Commons.

EXPLORE

destinationperth.com.au

visitperth.com

westernaustralia.com

Aboriginal arts and culture

History of Subiaco

