



MEDIA RELEASE

13 November 2024

Diversity Arts Takes Steps to 'Shift the Balance' of NSW's Arts Leadership

Diversity Arts Australia Launches Shifting the Balance Leadership Program to Empower Leaders in the Creative Sector

Diversity Arts Australia recently launched Stage 1 of the new Shifting the Balance Leadership Program, supporting 20 arts and creative sector leaders from Greater Sydney and regional NSW.

"This is a new and much-needed initiative to empower mid-career professionals from culturally, linguistically and racially marginalised backgrounds across NSW's arts and creative sectors," said Diversity Arts Australia's CEO Lena Nahlous. "Programs like Shifting the Balance are critical for supporting leaders from marginalised backgrounds, building networks, and strengthening individual practices across the creative sectors."

Twenty emerging and established leaders, hailing from Greater Sydney and regional New South Wales, represent a variety of creative industries, including film, theatre, music, writing, and visual arts.

Stage 1 of the leadership program, **run in partnership with TAFE NSW**, offers accredited leadership training, masterclasses, and workshops led by industry experts, including the distinguished Dr Amrit Versha and award-winning arts leader Dr Paula Abood.

"The program is a heartwarming experience for me as a recently migrated artist in Australia," says Piumi Wijesundara, Program Manager, the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). "It's not every day you get to dive into leadership led by real-life experiences that resonate with our journeys. I left feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, inspired by everyone and empowered to make my voice heard in this vibrant community."

It is affirming to know these practitioners are actively working to be better leaders so we may build a brighter world," adds Lucia Nguyen, Senior Editor of Currency Press.

Lena observes the strong need for the program: "We received over 60 applications for just 20 spots. This highlights the need for programs designed for culturally diverse leaders working in the arts and creative sectors."

Successful applicants include:

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[diversityarts.org.au](https://www.diversityarts.org.au)

ABN 54 119 220 209



- Ali Ibrahim (Conservator, Western Sydney Project, Chau Chak Wing Museum)
- Athésia (Singer/Songwriter/Presenter/Producer/Actor)
- Belinda Jombwe (Producer/Writer/Actor)
- Coti Cibils (Multidisciplinary artist/Movement Therapist)
- Danielle Tuwai (Cultural Projects Coordinator, Cultural Infrastructure, City of Sydney Council)
- Jonathan Chan (Performer/Co-Chair, MEAA Equity Diversity)
- Juan Guillermo Robayo Gómez (Artist/Filmmaker)
- Laura Luna-Zamora (Community, Arts and Cultural Leader)
- Lucia Tường Vy Nguyễn (Senior Editor, Currency Press)
- Lusiana (Lusi) Austin (Writer/Composer/Director, Lemon Tea Theatre)
- Maissa Alameddine (Interdisciplinary Artist/Arts/Worker/Creative Producer)
- Marian Abboud (Multilingual Programs Artistic Director, Think+DO Tank Foundation)
- Moones Mansoubi (Community, Arts and Cultural Development Worker)
- Neel Banerjee (Founder/Creative Director, Nautanki Theatre Company)
- Nicole Pingon (Multidisciplinary Artist)
- Oumi Karenga-Hewitt (Chair, Western Riverina Arts)
- Piumi Wijesundara (Theatre Practitioner/Public Programs Producer, Cultural Facilities Corporation)
- Talia Smith (Coordinator Programming, Blacktown Arts)
- Vanessa Andres (National Program Manager, Story Factory)
- Yuki Kawakami (Creative Learning Programs Producer, Art Gallery NSW)

Shifting the Balance Leadership Program is supported by Create NSW, City of Sydney, Creative Australia and TAFE NSW.

Diversity Arts Australia is [fundraising](#) to support Shifting the Balance's continuation and expansion. Stage 2 will launch in January 2025 and offer participants career-enhancing projects, including internships, fellowships, and tailored project opportunities.

To learn more about the program or for media enquiries, please visit [Diversity Arts Australia](#) or contact info@diversityarts.org.au.

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