

Rhoda Roberts AO

Actor, Creative Director, Writer, Producer & Arts Consultant

Rhoda Roberts AO is a significant force on the Australian arts scene. A member of the Bundjalung nation, Widjabul clan of Northern NSW and South East QLD, Rhoda heads the First Nations Programming for the Sydney Opera House, is Festival Director of the Boomerang Festival / Bluesfest, Creative Director of the Parrtjima Festival (NT) and an Associate of Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA).



A much awarded arts executive, Rhoda received an AO for distinguished service to the performing arts, leadership, advocacy and promoting contemporary Indigenous culture. In 2019, she was recognised with a Ros Bower Award from the Australia Council; in 2018, she received the Helpman Award - The Sue Natrass Award; in 1998 she received a Deadly Award for Broadcasting and in 1997, she was recognized with a Sidney Myer Facilitators award.

With a diverse range of international and national industry experience within commercial, community and non-profit organisations, Rhoda is a sought-after speaker and performer in theatre, film, television and radio.

More about Rhoda Roberts:

Rhoda was a radio broadcaster with the National Music program *Deadly Sounds* for 21 years and a reporter and host for the Radio National Program *Away* before being appointed to produce the weekly national program *Deadly Voices from the House*, with live talks and monthly podcasts.

An ambassador for the Archie Roach Foundation, she has written, directed and produced several documentaries, including *In the Gutter No Way* for SBS TV (1989). She was the first Aboriginal to host a national prime time current affairs program, and a co-founding member of The Aboriginal National Theatre Trust (ANTT).

She currently conducts Rhoda Roberts Cultural Retreats and as a playwright her recent production *Natives Go wild* was staged at the Sydney Opera House, October 2019. She is currently writing the new production, *The Indigenous World Art Orchestra*.

She is currently directing the feature documentary for NITV and Wild Pacific Media - *Balang (The story of Tom E Lewis)* and has two films in Development, *Bukal - (the story of Henrietta Maree)* and *Wizard of the Wire - (the story of Con Colleano)*.



Rhoda's consultancy work has included many large scale events recently including, Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Glow Festival QLD, Dubai Expo 2021, Vivid and the lighting of the Pylons 2020-21. She was appointed by Destinations NSW for Vivid in 2016 as the first Indigenous curator for the Lighting of the Sydney Opera House sails. She was commissioned by Opera Australia to direct and write Yarrabah the Musical following the success of her direction of the international Opera *Miracolo a Milano* by Italy's Giorgio Battistelli for the Brisbane Festival 2009. She was the Artistic Director of the Festival of the Dreaming staged in the lead up to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and Creative Director for the Awakening Segment Sydney Olympic Games 2000, the Opening Ceremony of the Rugby World Cup in 2003, the Athens handover ceremony, the opening ceremony of the Musee Du Quay Branley, Paris, the Japan Expo, and World Youth Day events. She was the founder and Artistic Director of Sydney Dreaming Festival and the Dreaming Festival (1995-2009). She was the co-founder and Artistic Director of the QPAC Clancestry Festival and the Garma festival director 2010.

For Australia Day events she developed and directed the Woggan ma Gule annual ceremony for ten years. Since 2016, she has worked on the bridge and pylon creative strategies for the City of Sydney New Years Eve events.

In 1998 she co-wrote and performed the one woman show *Please Explain*. Her solo production *Bible Boxing Love* toured the east coast of Australia in 2008. She has written the novel *Tullymorgan* and featured in the film *A Sisters Love* (produced and directed by Ivan Sen). Rhoda's consultancy work includes, advisor with the SPC Secretariat Pacific Communities, Festival of Pacific Arts.

Rhoda hosts and develops stories for the television health series *Living Strong* and the NITV series *In the Frame*. She has hosted *First Contact the Reunion* for SBS and is well known for her work with SBS television as a journalist and presenter for the current affairs program, *Vox Populi*. She has also worked for Network Ten and ABC Radio as a producer and journalist.

She is renowned for coining the term Welcome to Country "establishing a focus on protocol manuals and welcomes by local custodians for the arts and media industries".

Rhoda Roberts currently sits on the Welcome to Country.com board - NORPA Performing arts Board and Screenworks Board . Previous board appointments include: Indigenous Tourism Australia, The Australia International Cultural Council (AICC) Playwriting Australia (Chair) Wantok Music, Sydney Opera House Trust, The Dreaming Festival Board, NSW Australia Day Council. Darling Harbour Authority, The National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, Actors Equity, Aboriginal National Theatre Trust, and The Yothu Yindi Foundation Garma Festival Board.

Client testimonials



“ Rhoda was dynamic, engaging and professional. The workshop she conducted was excellent. She is a powerful woman and her stories and words were inspiring. It gave me a deeper insight into what the lives of Aboriginal People are like and the problems they have to overcome... Thank you Rhoda.

- New England Regional Development of Education & Training - Workshop Participant

“ Brilliant presentation style... gave me insight into so many issues and also added the visual perspective to learning and relationships.

- New England Regional Development of Education & Training - Workshop Participant

“ What an inspirational person. So passionate and yet so grounded, honest and open-minded! Her workshop was refreshing and offered a totally different way to discuss such an important and sensitive issue. A brilliant choice for a keynote speaker, well done!

- New England Regional Development of Education & Training - Workshop Participant

“ Rhoda was fabulous to work with and her delivery was exactly as per my pre conference discussions. She strongly set the mood and theme of the Educational Conference and stimulated the participants to reflect critically on Aboriginal Education and their own personal perceptions. A genuine speaker who reaches out on so many levels!

- Aboriginal Educational Team

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