

15 September 2023

### **Statement from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra regarding Mob Tix:**

The MSO stands by its decision to make the music we create inclusive of all members of the communities we serve.

Mob Tix and our other inclusive ticketing strategies are designed to assist in removing financial barriers which can be a factor in preventing access to our programs. Of those tickets purchased to MSO performances through Mob Tix, 77% are first-time ticket-buyers. Mob Tix is a well-established concept and is just one example of our suite of ticket offers designed to make performances more readily accessible including discounts for young people, students, people living in rural and regional areas and free tickets for carers. The MSO also provides access to our performances online and through the ABC.

As a leading arts organisation in Australia we are committed to the principle that our audience and our organisation should reflect the world in which we live.

Whilst our musicians' skills may be honed to an elite standard, our approach to audiences and programming is driven by our commitment to making the arts inclusive and accessible to everyone. By achieving this aim the MSO fulfils its commitment to building a cohesive and emotionally mature society in Australia.

### **Statement from Prof. Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, MSO First Nations Creative Chair**

At the MSO we are constantly working towards addressing the undisputed historic and ongoing injustice First Nations Australians have suffered. One important way in which we are making a difference is by making our programming more inclusive and the access to performances more affordable.

The argument presented in The Australian this week was somewhat confusing, accusing the MSO and other organisations of being inclusive and exclusive at the same time. Ticketing strategies such as the one brought into question in this article are not new and so the timing of this scrutiny can only be viewed as part of the fear campaign being supported by certain sectors of the media ahead of the October 14 referendum.

Ensuring that First Nations Australians feel welcome, included and valued is an essential step towards Closing the Gap. To this end I will be proud to stand on stage with the MSO on the evening of October 14 to present *Eumeralla, a war requiem for peace*. This work commemorates the resistance war fought by the Gunditjmara people (1840 - 1863) against the colonisers who came to dispossess them of their traditional lands. An estimated 9000 members of the Gunditjamara clans lost their lives in this conflict. This performance will feature First Nations singers and instrumentalists and members of Dhungala Children's Choir alongside over 200 MSO musicians and choristers. Together, with our audience, we will face our collective future whilst confronting Australia's brutal past on this momentous night in Australia's history.