

MEDIA RELEASE

3 May 2024

Opera Australia announces new Development Director

Opera Australia today announced the appointment of Becca Kitelinger to the company's executive team in the position of Development Director.

Ms Kitelinger comes to Opera Australia from the Washington National Opera (WNO) based at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where she has served as Chief Development Officer since 2018.

Opera Australia CEO Fiona Allan said Ms Kitelinger will be responsible for the development function of Opera Australia, leading the strategic direction of the team and stewarding the current base of generous benefactors and corporate partners with a keen eye towards the growth of the development function in the long term.



"Following a global search, I'm delighted that Becca will lead our development team and identify new opportunities aligned with our values and our strategic direction.

"Opera Australia enjoys very generous support from our community of existing partners, patrons and donors and we look forward to introducing Becca when she commences with us in August," Ms Allan said.

Ms Kitelinger's development leadership at the WNO helped raise over \$10M annually through the strategic expansion of the development team's functions and size, leading to a steady growth of its donor base each year. She said her passion for opera contributed to this success.

"I fell in love with the artform because it's a visceral way to tell stories about humanity. It's the one artform that combines many – the power of human voice performing right in front of us in the most athletic way, with acting, dancing and the orchestra all coming together to share timeless stories about what it is to be human."

Ms Kitelinger is well placed to achieve success aligned with Opera Australia's strategic direction. Before leading the WNO's development team, she was in charge of the individual giving team and significant community events such as the annual *Opera Gala*, *Opera in the Outfield*, and WNO's first Ring Cycle.

Ms Kitelinger's 16-year fundraising career has focused on raising gifts for various performing arts organisations with a focus on opera companies and regional theatre including the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Skylight Music Theater. Ms Kitelinger earned her B.A. in Theater from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and Opera America.

Ms Kitelinger believes the future of opera lies with those companies who are working hard to find ways to share the classics in new and different ways while honouring the timelessness of what it is to be human.

"We need Puccini and we need Mozart in our lives. Indeed, young people *want* to hear Puccini and Mozart, along with the stories of our time.

"The organisations that will be most successful will find ways to continue producing Mozart while also holding up and supporting artists and creators from our communities, telling stories that truly reflect our time, our challenges, all while celebrating the diversity of perspectives and people that tell these stories," Ms Kitelinger said.

"I'm absolutely elated to be joining the wonderful team at Opera Australia, known the world-over for its celebrated productions, iconic performing locations and incredible artists, musicians, and staff and I am honoured and humbled to become a part of the team at Australia's national opera company," Ms Kitelinger added.

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