



Sydney, 2 June 2026

Arab Council Australia Hosts Landmark Art and Identity Conversation

Arab Council Australia (ACA) successfully hosted its **In Conversation “Art & Identity”** event on Thursday, 28 May 2026, bringing together a diverse audience for an engaging evening of dialogue, reflection, and creative exchange. The event forms part of ACA’s quarterly *In Conversation* series, launched in February 2025.

Held at the ACA Community Room in Fairfield East, the event featured a dynamic panel moderated by industry icon, Lena Nahlous, CEO of Diversity Arts Australia. The panel brought together prominent Arab artists from across disciplines, including Lebanese Australian producer Maya Ghattas, Sudanese-born artist and curator Ghassan Saaid, and Palestinian actor and producer Hazem Shammass.

The evening opened with a compelling contribution from Alissar Chidiac, widely recognised for her collaborative Arab Australian cultural practice and award-winning work across diverse contexts, setting the tone for thoughtful and engaging discussion.

In addition to the panel, the program featured a poetry recital by Hemat Malak, winner of the 2025 Bruce Dawe Poetry Prize, and a vocal performance by soprano Ayse Goknur Shanal, who blends opera with Middle Eastern storytelling traditions.

The event explored the intersection of art, culture, and identity, offering personal insights into storytelling, creativity, and lived experience. Panellists reflected on the vital role of the arts in expressing cultural identity, fostering mutual understanding, and strengthening connections within and beyond the Arab Australian community. Discussions also addressed themes of representation, belonging, and the transformative power of creative expression.

The event attracted strong community interest and participation, reaffirming ACA’s commitment to creating inclusive platforms that amplify Arab voices and celebrate cultural diversity.

Arab Council Australia extends its sincere thanks to all participating artists, partners, and attendees for contributing to a successful and inspiring evening that showcased the richness and diversity of Arab artistic expression.

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media release