

# Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP  
Minister for Jobs and Industry  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples  
Minister for Women



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## STATUES HONOURING ARCHIE ROACH AND RUBY HUNTER UNVEILED

The groundbreaking musical, political and cultural legacy of Archie Roach AC AM and Ruby Hunter will be honoured with a permanent new sculpture unveiled today in Fitzroy's Atherton Gardens – thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins joined members of Archie and Ruby's family, along with representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Yarra City Council, to officially launch the statues which were funded by the Labor Government.

The bronze statues, created by Melbourne artist Darien Pullen, are set in a newly landscaped space, designed by Melbourne-based architect Jefa Greenaway and landscape architect Paul Herzich, that pays tribute to the couple's connection with the area, its rich Aboriginal history and significance to the Stolen Generations.

An accessible path leading to the site from Gertrude Street is etched with the footprints of Archie and Ruby's totem animals, including the pelican, black swan, wedge-tailed eagle and red-bellied black snake.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Yarra City Council worked closely with members of the Roach and Hunter families on the project, with funding from the Labor Government through the Creative Industries portfolio.

The statues honour Archie and Ruby's impact on Australian music, their contribution to Indigenous rights, and the mark they made on the country's broader political, social and cultural landscape and the lives of many people.

Archie was posthumously appointed a companion of the Order of Australia (AC) for his services to the performing arts, to Indigenous rights and for supporting First Peoples artists. His song, *Took the Children Away*, became an anthem for the Stolen Generations.

Ruby's 1994 album, *Thoughts Within*, was the first solo album to be released by a First Peoples female artist and earned an ARIA Award nomination. In 2020, she was inducted into the National Indigenous Music Awards Hall of Fame.

Since its establishment in 2014, the Archie Roach Foundation has had a significant impact on the lives of countless First Peoples artists and young people.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins

*"Archie and Ruby were legendary musicians and leaders in the Aboriginal community and this stunning public artwork is a wonderful tribute to their achievements."*

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

*"Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter had a profound impact on Australia's music landscape and showed the enduring power of music to change lives and minds. This statue is a fitting tribute and, together with their music, will ensure their legacy lives on for future generations."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Sheena Watt

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*“These statues honor the incredible legacy of Archie Roach and Aunty Ruby Hunter, celebrating their great contributions to music, culture, and community while creating a place for reflection and unity in the heart of Fitzroy.”*

**Quotes attributable to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation**

*“Wurundjeri Corporation is incredibly proud to have been involved in the development and installation of this beautiful memorial to two legendary First Nations Music Icons and advocates.”*

*“It continues and builds upon the legacy of significance this area holds to not just Wurundjeri people but to many different mobs, including Uncle Archie Roach and Aunty Ruby Hunter, who are honoured here, that found family and connection to community in these streets.”*

**Quotes attributable to Aunty Myrtle Roach**

*“Atherton Gardens will always be a place for me and my family. Fond and treasured memories of a bygone era for the ole parkies like myself. It’s only fitting my brother’s statue and dear Ruby find its permanent place there for all my people and the community to share. We as a family feel both a sense of sadness and excitement as we celebrate two legends and so much-loved members of the Roach and Hunter family.”*

**Quote attributable to Uncle Jeffrey Hunter**

*“I’m very proud of Ruby and our brother-in-law Archie for their beautiful music and sounds over the years.”*