

2020  
SYDNEY COLISEUM THEATRE,  
WEST HQ  
13 & 14 MARCH

### ABOUT BANGARRA

Bangarra is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and one of Australia's leading performing arts companies, widely acclaimed nationally and around the world for our powerful dancing, distinctive theatrical voice and utterly unique soundscapes, music and design.

Led by Artistic Director Stephen Page and Associate Artistic Director Frances Rings, our dance technique is forged from over 65,000 years of culture, embodied with contemporary movement. The company's Dancers are dynamic artists who represent the pinnacle of Australian dance.

Our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are at the heart of Bangarra, with our repertoire created on Country and stories gathered from respected community Elders. It's this inherent connection to our land and people that makes us unique and enjoyed by audiences from remote Australian regional centres to international cities such as Paris, Berlin, Toronto, New York and Tokyo.

Discover more about Bangarra at [www.bangarra-knowledgeground.com.au](http://www.bangarra-knowledgeground.com.au) where you can explore our productions, delve deeper into our stories, enjoy profiles of our Dancers, Creative Team, and Cultural Consultants, and immerse yourself in our 30-year history.

### BANGARRA EXECUTIVE

**Artistic Director** Stephen Page  
**Interim Executive Director** Tony Grybowski  
**Associate Artistic Director** Frances Rings  
**Rehearsal Director** Daniel Roberts

### BANGARRA DANCE ENSEMBLE

Elma Kris	Lillian Banks
Tara Gower	Bradley Smith
Beau Dean Riley Smith	Courtney Radford
Nicola Sabatino	Kassidy Waters
Rikki Mason	Kallum Goolagong
Rika Hamaguchi	Gusta Mara
Tyrel Dulvarie	Kiarn Doyle
Glory Tuohy-Daniell	
Baden Hitchcock	
Ryan Pearson	

### PRODUCTION TEAM

**Director, Technical & Production** John Colvin  
**Production Manager** Cat Studley  
**Company Manager** Claudia Elder  
**Stage Manager** Lillian Hannah U  
**Head Electrician** Ryan Shuker  
**Head of Wardrobe** Monica Smith  
**Head Mechanist** David Tongs  
**AV Technician** Emjay Matthews  
**Production Assistant/Assistant Stage Manager** Stephanie Storr

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Photography by Daniel Boud

Bangarra Dance Theatre would like to pay respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather. Bangarra also wishes to acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose customs and cultures inspire our work.

# BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

# BENNELONG

“An extraordinarily  
powerful work”

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD



**A NOTE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
STEPHEN PAGE & INTERIM EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR TONY GRYPBOWSKI**

Every year we strive to share our work with as many different communities as possible, and this March we are delighted to present our award-winning work, *Bennelong*, to Greater Western Sydney at the newly-unveiled Sydney Coliseum Theatre, West HQ.

*Bennelong* tells the remarkable story of Woollarawarre Bennelong, a senior man of the Eora nation, from the Port Jackson area in Sydney. He was a traditional man who was, against his initial will, shown a European way of life, and became an intermediary between his clan and the colonists.

As Australia's only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Major Performing Arts company, we take our role as custodians of our people's stories very seriously. More

than two centuries after Bennelong's death, telling his extraordinary story and sharing his journey is a powerful reminder that there is still a long way for us to go before we can say we're at a place of true equality.

We exist because of the communities who trust us to share their stories; because of the audiences who embrace the importance of their spirit; and because of the people, partners, governments and organisations who believe in the vision and passion of Bangarra Dance Theatre.

At Bangarra, everything we do is inspired by our land and our people. We celebrate the sharing and passing down of knowledge, and hope you enjoy our performance of *Bennelong*.

# BENNELONG

Bangarra is proud to bring our monumental and award-winning work *Bennelong* back to Sydney for the first time since its sold-out premiere season in 2017.

Following the extraordinary success of this season in 2017, a sell-out return season at Adelaide Festival, and two successful regional tours, the production is regarded by many as the strongest and most compelling work to have emerged from Bangarra in its 30-year history.

Directed by Bangarra's Artistic Director Stephen Page, *Bennelong* serves as an archetype of first contact and a timeless voice in the ongoing debate of the impacts of colonisation. Woollarawarre Bennelong, a senior man of the Eora nation, was a traditional man who became an intermediary between his clan and the colonists. He was one of the first Aboriginal people to have their life story recorded and documented through the early diaries of the British military, even travelling to London with Governor Arthur Phillip who ordered his initial capture.

Renowned for his richly nuanced storytelling abilities, Stephen Page selected key moments in Bennelong's life to weave a moving portrait of a complex and convicted man. His collaboration with Bangarra's dance ensemble on choreography results in *Bennelong*, a monumental work that reverberates with the company's signature authenticity and spirit.

Stephen Page says that Bennelong is in all of us, as we navigate the ancient and the contemporary elements of our lives.

"The remarkable story of Woollarawarre Bennelong is one that resonates deeply. Never quite belonging to his new tribe, and earning suspicion from the old, Bennelong paid the price of first contact by being exiled from both communities. With extraordinary curiosity and diplomacy, Bennelong led his community to survive a clash of cultures and left a legacy that reverberates through life today."

*Bennelong* was honoured at the 2018 and 2019 Helpmann Awards, with the company receiving seven awards, including the prestigious title 'Best New Australian Work' and 'Best New Australian Work', and 'Best Regional Touring Production' for our 2019 regional tour. Bangarra dancer Beau Dean Riley Smith was the recipient of the Helpmann Award for 'Best Male Dancer', and the Australian Dance Award for 'Outstanding Performance' in 2018 for his captivating lead role of Woollarawarre Bennelong.

*Bennelong* showcases outstanding Australian creative talent with Jacob Nash (sets), Jennifer Irwin (costumes), and Nick Schlieper (lighting) bringing their impeccable aesthetic to the production, and Steve Francis (composer) delivering a moving and inventive score. *Bennelong's* theatrical richness was shaped by Muruwari/Eora man Matthew Doyle (cultural consultancy) and delivered through Alana Valentine's expertise (dramaturgy).

**CREDITS**

**Choreography**  
Stephen Page

**Music**  
Steve Francis

**Lighting Design**  
Nick Schlieper

**Costume Design**  
Jennifer Irwin

**Set Design**  
Jacob Nash

**Dramaturg**  
Alana Valentine

**Cultural Consultant**  
Matthew Doyle

