

2019 REGIONAL TOUR TO VIC, NT AND QLD

Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo
15 – 16 February

Geelong Performing Arts Centre
21 – 23 February

West Gippsland Arts Centre Warragul
2 March

Araluen Arts Centre Alice Springs
7 – 9 March

Cairns Performing Arts Centre
15 – 16 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, 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, New York and Tokyo.

Photography by Daniel Boud

REGIONAL TOURING

Regional touring is a crucial part of the company's annual calendar, connecting Bangarra with the communities that inspire its stories, as well as exposing new audiences to a positive representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

BANGARRA EXECUTIVE

Artistic Director Stephen Page

Executive Director Philippe Magid

BANGARRA DANCE ENSEMBLE

Elma Kris

Tara Gower

Beau Dean Riley Smith

Nicola Sabatino

Rikki Mason

Rika Hamaguchi

Tyrel Dulvarie

Glory Tuohy-Daniell

Baden Hitchcock

Ryan Pearson

Lillian Banks

Bradley Smith

Courtney Radford

Jye Uren

Kassidy Waters

Kallum Goolagong

Gusta Mara

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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
& EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHILIPPE MAGID**

Regional touring is an intrinsic part of the company's annual calendar, and every year we strive to share our work with as many different communities as possible across Australia. It's exciting to begin our 30th anniversary year with an extensive tour of our landmark production *Bennelong*, as we present this work for the first time in regional centres across Victoria, the Northern Territory and Queensland in 2019.

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 are proud to take this epic historical narrative work on the road with a world-class ensemble of 17 dancers, with five new

dancers joining the company and taking to the stage for the first time as part of this tour. As part of our commitment to nurturing and developing emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative talent, we warmly welcome all our new dancers, and in particular Gusta Mara and Kallum Goolagong as Russell Page Graduate Program recipients in 2019; thank you to all of our donors and those who support this important program.

We couldn't deliver this tour without the support of the Australian Government; through the Australia Council for the Arts and through Playing Australia, and our Regional Touring Partner, Boral - to which we thank you.

We look forward to working with the Victorian Government over the next three years to present our stories to regional communities. Thanks to their support, we have been able to bring together our next generation of cultural leaders from across Victoria to experience this powerful work through our impactful youth outreach initiative, Rekindling, as well as invite international presenters from Europe to develop, extend and promote intercultural dialogue and exchange.

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 the stage in 2019, as part of a five-stop tour across Australia to Bendigo, Geelong, Warragul, Alice Springs and Cairns.

Following the extraordinary success of *Bennelong's* premiere season in 2017, and a sold-out season at Adelaide Festival in 2018, 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 conflicted 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 appropriately honoured at the 2018 Helpmann Awards, with the company receiving seven awards in the 2017-2018 judging period, including the prestigious title 'Best New Australian Work' for this production. Bangarra dancer Beau Dean Riley Smith was the recipient of both the Helpmann Award for 'Best Male Dancer' and 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 consultant) 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

