

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA LIMITED

Tel: (02) 319 4560 • Fax: (02) 319 4569



NEWSLETTER

No 2 1991



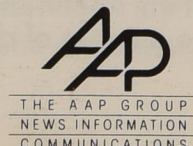
Jimmy Gagai

Photo: Paul Sweeney

Proudly Sponsored by —



**ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES
STRAIT
ISLANDER
COMMISSION**



→ **WELCOME TO ALL
OUR FRIENDS,
SUPPORTERS AND
NEW READERS**

While 1991 has been a year of survival for Bangarra, positive changes have occurred within the company which indicate dynamic growth.

→ **SURVIVAL**

We have largely existed on self-earned income generated through school shows and private performances. Minimum funding has been forthcoming from arts bodies for one-off grants. We are indebted to the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) for partly subsidising the salaries of the dancers and two administration staff during the year. Bangarra could not have survived without DEET, and we thank them for their support. Thanks also to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) for their financial support throughout 1991.

The company has survived the tough times with courage and determination –we are here to stay !!

→ **GROWTH**

There are now 12 exceptional performing artists with Bangarra, and we are ready to make the company a flagship for Australian indigenous performing artists.

We will need your **support** to achieve this goal.

→ **BUILDING URGENTLY
NEEDED**

Bangarra is in desperate need of a building to house the whole company.

The administration is now located at 245 Chalmers Street, Redfern (We now have an office and don't work from people's homes anymore!). This has brought us closer to the dancers – there's only Redfern Park separating us instead of a few suburbs – but our goal is to be in the same building.

→ **INADEQUATE
REHEARSAL SPACE**

The dancers are still rehearsing at the South Sydney Police Citizens Youth Club in Redfern. While we cannot thank the SSPCYC enough for rehearsal and storage space at a nominal fee, this space is becoming grossly inadequate with the increase in the number of dancers.

There is only one rehearsal room for their use.

This room has no mirrors.

There are no showers.

The building; and the room; are shared with numerous other community groups.

It is a credit to the dancers that they have worked and coped with these facilities to achieve their goals – it has not been easy working under these conditions.

→ **CATCH 22**

To move the dancers, and the administration, into a building with better facilities is a priority. Extra space is necessary to be able to bring on other administration staff to adequately service a growing company. We are in a Catch 22 because we don't have the money to pay the rent.

**DOES ANYONE KNOW OF A BUILDING
OR WAREHOUSE SPACE FOR
PEPPERCORN RENT ?**

Our basic requirements are–

- total floor area must be a minimum of 3,000 square metres
- distance between floor and ceiling minimum of 4 metres
- wooden floor in good condition for rehearsal studios
- bright natural light if possible

It can be an open space that can be converted into offices and rehearsal studios. A central location near the Sydney city and close to public transport is desirable.

If you know of a suitable building please contact us.

→ **IS THERE ANYTHING
I CAN DO ?**

We're glad you asked. Like any fledging enterprise the dance company needs the support of its friends. We are looking for corporate and private sponsorship. So, talk about the company wherever you are. You never know who may be listening. If you have any friends or relatives who are connected with the building industry or just super handy let us know. If you have any good fund raising ideas please contact us, especially if you're willing to work to make them happen.

All donations are much appreciated. Thank you for caring. With lots of love from everyone, we'll see you next issue.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT !!

Below are the company's activities since September –

- Tour of the New South Wales South Coast and Western areas
- Teaching residency at Brewarrina in north western New South Wales
- Performance for Sydney's Olympic Bid for the Year 2000 at the Opera House. Bangarra was the only act to perform twice, presenting a traditional and contemporary piece
- Year 9 NSW Aboriginal Students Seminar
- National Aborigines Day at Bondi Junction Plaza, Sydney
- Contemporary Performance Week at Sidetrack Theatre, Marrickville
- Opening of National Arts Week at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- Short Sydney Season at Sidetrack Theatre with special guest artists La-Donna Hollingsworth and Markum Galut. La-Donna is a graduate of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, Adelaide. Markham is a senior actor/dancer/mime artist with the Papua New Guinea National Theatre, based in Port Moresby. Markham was in Australia on a cultural exchange program involving the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Association (NAISDA) and the Redfern Dance Company as well as Bangarra. A special performance was given for 20 members of the Yirrkala community, sponsors and special guests
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sports Awards at the Convention Centre, Darling Harbour in Sydney
- Koori Football Knockout in October
- New South Wales North Coast/Brisbane Tour targeting Aboriginal and Islander communities
- Numerous school shows throughout NSW and the Sydney metropolitan area

STEPHEN PAGE

Stephen joined Bangarra as Principal Choreographer in September. Stephen has directed and choreographed two productions for Bangarra this year – "Gapan Sanal" (Ochre Footprint) and "Up

← *Until Now*". "Gapan Sanal" played to Canberra audiences before the company took the production to Indonesia. "Up Until Now" was presented to Sydney audiences at Sidetrack Theatre during October before the company took it on tour to the North Coast and Brisbane. Stephen has collaborated with Dorothea Randall and the company on an Australia Council Creative Development Grant.

A graduate of the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre in Sydney, Stephen danced with the Sydney Dance Company during 1986 – 1988 and 1990 – 1991. Stephen's last work with SDC was as choreographer of "Mooggrah", a work in "The Shakespeare Dances" earlier this year.

Stephen returned to the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT) as a senior dancer in 1988 and toured with AIDT to Germany, Finland and the Spoleto Festival in Melbourne. In 1989 he choreographed, taught and directed the end of year show, "Kayn Walu".

We are indeed fortunate to have such an exciting, dynamic and talented Aboriginal artist working with the company.



David, Stephen and Russel Page – working together at last!

NEW DANCERS

← Welcome to Pinau Ghee, Banula Marika and Jensen Warusam who've performed with Bangarra before, and to Patricia Handy, a new member of the Bangarra family.

Jensen is from Saibai Island and Pinau is from Murray Island. Both are in the Torres Strait Islands off the tip of the Cape York Peninsula. Banula is also a long way from home – Yirrkala in north eastern Arnhem Land. Jensen and Banula have taught their respective traditional dances at NAISDA. Pinau graduated from NAISDA in 1989 and has toured with AIDT to Germany, Finland and the Spoleto Festival in Melbourne. Patricia hails from Newcastle, north of Sydney. She did classical Royal

Academy of Dancing at the Doreen Baldwin School of Dance for 8 years and studied at NAISDA.

Bangarra only employs dancers who have had previous professional training in dance/theatre.

→ **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

There are presently eleven dancers and one musician/ composer employed full-time with Bangarra – this is double the number employed by the company during 1990.

→ **UPCOMING PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF BANGARRA DANCERS**

JANUARY 26TH, 1992 → CAROLE JOHNSON

**Festival For Survival
"A Celebration for
Koori Culture"**

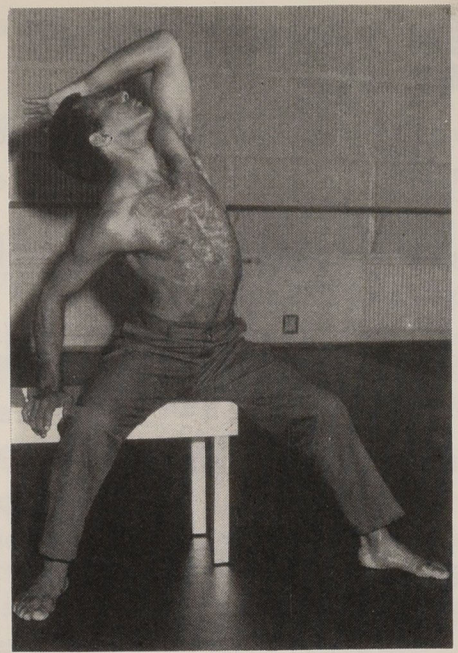
**Yarra Bay Football
Oval, La Perouse**

NOON & 3.00PM

Along with Bangarra, the day will feature music from Kev Carmody, Archie Roach, Bobby McCleod, Mixed Relations Toni Janke and other Koori singers. There will be arts and crafts stalls and an activities tent for children.



Jensen Warusam



Richard Talonga

→ **CAROLE JOHNSON**

Carole is no longer working with Bangarra. She has moved on to develop other areas of her career.

Carole has worked tirelessly within Australia and overseas for Bangarra to establish itself as a leading force within the performing arts.

We thank Carole for the energy, knowledge and ideas she has contributed to the company and wish her well for the future.

→ **AUSTRALIA COUNCIL**

As announced in the previous newsletter, Bangarra received their first grant this year from the Australia Council via the Performing Arts Board for Creative Development. Roslyn had to withdraw due to ill health. Fortunately, Dorothea Randall was available to collaborate with Stephen and the group on this project.

Stephen and Dorothea workshopped the fusing of traditional Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island and contemporary dance styles to begin to create a unique Australian choreographic technique. They have worked on this technique before, but this was their first opportunity to develop it with a professional dance company.

"We need more time and financial support to research and create this technique so we can eventually share it with other companies. I just hope this idea will collect other Aboriginal and Islander dancers minds so we don't lose the vision", Stephen said.

Dorothea is one of the founding members of the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, in Glebe, Sydney. A resident of Canberra for the past four years, she has her own performing group – the "Glowworms".

DID YOU KNOW...

Sylvia Blanco-Green, on leave in New York with her husband Roger, is expecting a baby. Our love and best wishes to them all across the miles.

Richard Talonga is no longer dancing with Bangarra, and is taking a well-earned rest in Mackay, north Queensland.

TRADITIONAL DANCERS

Bangarra respectfully acknowledges the valuable contribution of traditional dancers Banula Marika, Douglas Munyarryun and Janet Munyarryun from Yirrkala, as well as Jensen Warusam, Jimmy Gagai and Pinau Ghee from the Torres Strait Islands. Each dancer is fully steeped in traditional customs and are allowed by their communities to "hold" songs and dances they share. They ensure that each dance is performed correctly.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This newsletter would not be complete without a big thank you to the people who you may never see, but who play a vital role in the functioning of this company. To Jim Mann, Production/ Stage Manager and John Locke, Sound Engineer – what can we say? They not only make our performances look and sound good, but their humour and common sense is invaluable when the unexpected happens and the show must go on!!

Another big thank you to the Board of Directors who volunteer their time to attend Board Meetings and who give generously of their time and expertise whenever required.

ON TOUR IN INDONESIA

Bangarra returned to Australia earlier this year after a successful and exciting four week tour of Indonesia. The company was chosen by the Australian and Indonesian Government's culture exchange program – Australia Indonesia Institute (D.F.A.T.) to represent Australia in the Jakarta Festival '91 and the Bali Arts Festival.

For Bangarra this was not only an exciting prospect to represent the Australian Government in their cultural exchange program, but an even greater honour to be the first non-Indonesian group to ever appear in the Balinese Arts Festival.

The Jakarta Festival is an annual international event to promote cultural exchange and world peace among nations. As the logo that decorated the streets, halls, schools and theatres aptly expressed, "a melting pot where East meets West."



Bangarra and their guides

Although there were participants from the United States of America, The Netherlands, Morocco and Scotland, primarily indigenous groups from the Pacific and Asia basins were represented. To my knowledge this was the first time Australia has sent an indigenous dance group to participate in the festival.

Originally the company was required to present traditional dancing as well as give a full evenings program of traditional and contemporary dances as part of the Jakarta Festival. They were also to give school workshops and take part in other exchange programs with Indonesian dance groups within the Jakarta area. This being the first time Australian Traditional dancing was to be performed in that part of the world, interest developed in other cities and inquiries as to the dancers availability to perform in other local festivals was sought. As a result of this through the efforts of the Australian Cultural Counsellor for Indonesia, Dr Jennifer Lindsay, a four week tour was organised for the company to perform and present workshops with other major centres that included Bandung, Yogyakarta, Ubud and Denpasar.



Janet and David outside the theatre in Yogyakarta

The tour was an overwhelming success. The company performed to full houses wherever they appeared and the contemporary works were received as enthusiastically as the traditional dances. Wherever the dancers went they were recognised and praised for their dancing by people they met who shouted, "Australi the first", "Aborjin Australi the greatest" or just "Bangarra the best".

The school workshops and exchange programs were equally successful and the interest the members of Bangarra showed in learning Javanese and Balinese dances was equal to the Indonesians learning Aboriginal and Islander dancing.

One of the many highlights of the tour was when Bangarra performed and held a discussion concerning Aboriginal Culture at the Ethnography Exhibition for the Anthropology Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana (the Universities anthropological department faculty) in Bali. They received a plaque, on behalf of Australia, from the University in recognition of their contribution and participation in the Bali Art Festival.

→ DANCE WEEK 1991

Dance Week earlier this year saw Bangarra performing in Canberra in a hectic week of school shows and performances.

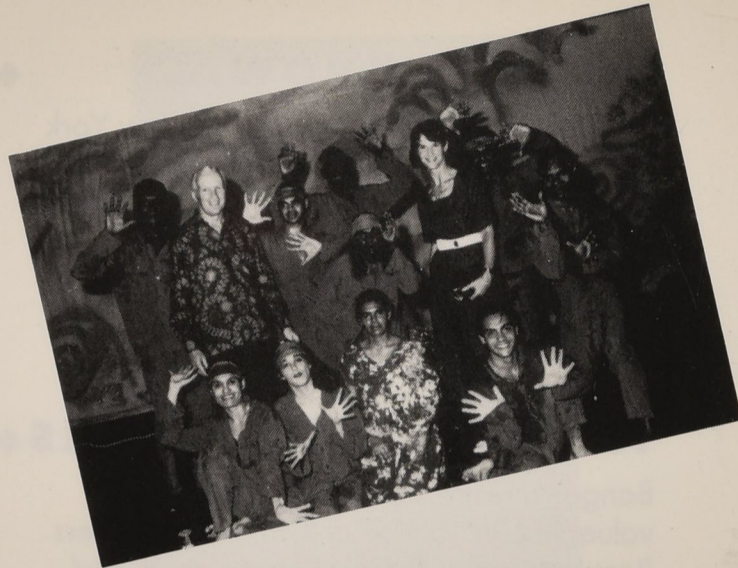
The focus for the week was on indigenous dance, and Bangarra, at the invitation of the Australian Association for Dance Education (AADE), were the featured company.

This year's emphasis was placed on dance which is ultimately bound up with the daily life of people, something which Jennifer Kingma, AADE's Canberra Executive Officer feels we have moved away from.

Bangarra was an excellent choice!!



Street parade in Denpasar, Bali

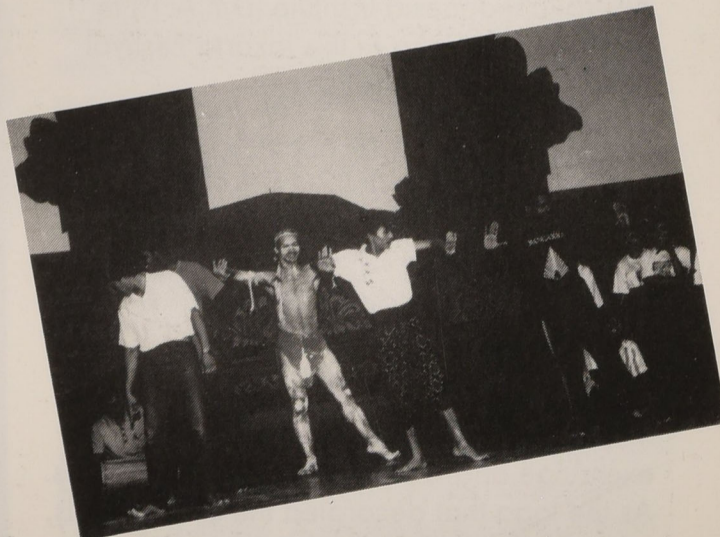
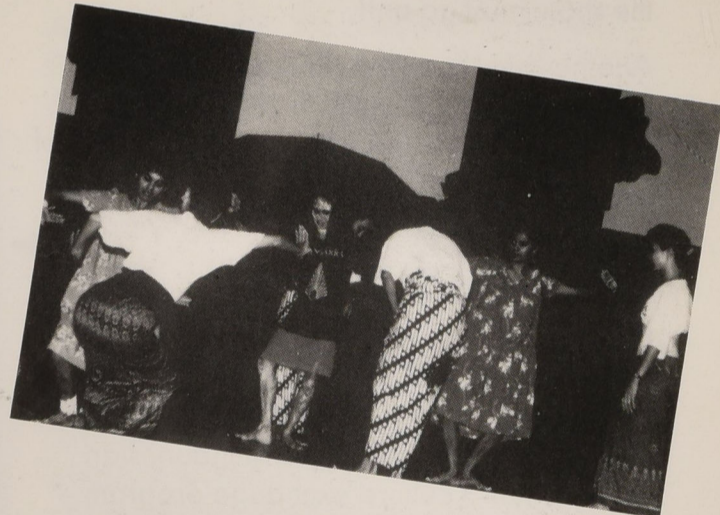


Cultural exchange with Balinese Dancers

Through Bangarra's performances at the National Gallery, workshops and media coverage, Canberra audiences were exposed to a feast of traditional and contemporary dancing.

Dance Week proved to be an exciting week of performances, films, workshops and lectures from other groups such as the Meryl Tankard Company and the Canberra Dance Theatre as well as freelance dancers and choreographers.

Bangarra's participation in Dance Week was funded by a grant from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.



Cultural exchange with Balinese dancers

BANGARRA

Bangarra – dance like the fire
flickering in the night
You weave your spell,
the audience is mesmerised
by an inner feeling that's alien to them.
Your dance reaches touches
and embraces their souls.
They are stunned
as you tantalise – hypnotise,
with a spirituality
born of our Mother,
our Spirit Creators,
living on and on
infinitely to you.
Bangarra – you've danced
your way to freedom,
broken the chains of oppression,
sung and chanted in time
until you've unlocked the prison
whiteman's imposed on our minds.
Let your flame leap higher
fill us all with warmth.
Show the world our beauty,
our peace and serenity.
Our Ancestors from the Dreaming
are smiling in your glow.
They know, they told me.
You've embodied our truth
to care, share and teach.
Dance Bangarra dance,
dance with cultural pride.
Your flame burns eternally,
as you glow into the night.

**BURRAGA GUYA
(KEN CANNING)**

ESSO

The production of newsletters in 1991 has been partly funded by ESSO. Our thanks to ESSO for their sponsorship contribution.

**Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia
Wishes You
a Safe, Healthy and Prosperous
Christmas And New Year
Thank You for Your Valuable Support.
The Good Wishes of Our Sponsors And
Friends Has Kept the Bangarra Flame
Burning Throughout 1991**

Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia Limited

A.C.N. 003 814 006

Application For Membership

Name: _____

Nominee: _____

(Corporate Member Only)

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____ (bus.) _____ (home)

Class of Member: **Member/Associate Member/Corporate Member**
(Delete whichever is not applicable)

"Members" means members of the company who are:

- (i) Aboriginal or Islander;
- (ii) employees or ex-employees of the company;
- (iii) those members invited by the committee to be Members.

"Associate Members" means those members of the company who are not Members or Corporate Members.

"Corporate Members" means those members which are corporations.

I hereby apply for membership of the Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia Limited and agree to be bound by the Memorandum & Articles of Association provides that I am liable to contribute an amount not exceeding \$10.00 (Ten Dollars) to the assets of the Company in the event of the Company being wound up.

I attach payment of the first Annual Subscription of Twenty Five Dollars (\$25) (Member, Associate Member), or One Hundred Dollars (\$100) (Corporate Member).

I am over the age of eighteen (18) years and am not an undischarged bankrupt.

Signature _____
(of Proposer)

Signature _____
(of Secunder)

Signature _____
(of Applicant)

Dated _____

OFFICE USE:

Membership No. _____

Date of Receipt: _____

DR JENNIFER LINDSAY HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT BANGARRA'S TOUR IN INDONESIA . . .

INFO: AII
COPY NO. 1

INWARD CABLEGRAM

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TOR 17.22 19.06.91

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TO:
PP CANBERRA/9691

FM. JAKARTA / FA

U N C L A S S I F I E D

AII : BANGARRA TOUR

1. THE BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE TROUPE RETURNED TO AUSTRALIA ON JUNE 18 AFTER A MOST SUCCESSFUL ONE MONTH TOUR OF INDONESIA. THEIR PERFORMANCES WERE ALL TO FULL HOUSES. THEIR MEDIA COVERAGE (BOTH PRINT AND TV) EXTENSIVE, AND THEIR WORKSHOPS WITH INDONESIAN ARTISTS A MOST FRUITFUL TWO-WAY EXCHANGE. VIA PERFORMANCES, MEDIA AND PUBLIC PARADES, ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER DANCE WAS INTRODUCED TO AN INDONESIAN AUDIENCE OF MILLIONS.

2. THE BANGARRA TOUR COMMENCED ON MAY 24 IN JAKARTA WHERE THE GROUP WERE GUESTS OF THE JAKARTA FESTIVAL. AS PART OF THIS FESTIVAL THEY PARTICIPATED IN THE LARGE STREET PARADE AND TOOK PART, TOGETHER WITH GROUPS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, IN VARIOUS GROUP PERFORMANCES. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE FULL BANGARRA PROGRAM AT THE JAKARTA ARTS CENTRE (TIM) WAS TO A STANDING-ROOM ONLY AUDIENCE AND WAS WIDELY REVIEWED, INCLUDING THE MAJOR NATIONAL PRINT MEDIA AND NATIONAL AND JAKARTA TELEVISION. BANGARRA ALSO PRESENTED DANCE EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS AT THE JAKARTA ARTS INSTITUTE AND AT THE STUDIO OF WS RENDRA.

3. IN BANDUNG THE GROUP AGAIN PERFORMED TO A CAPACITY AUDIENCE AT THE DANCE SCHOOL AND RECEIVED REMARKABLE LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE. AS IN JAKARTA, THEY PRESENTED A WORKSHOP FOR ADVANCED DANCE STUDENTS AND THEMSELVES TOOK A WORKSHOP IN WEST JAVANESE DANCE.

4. IN YOGYAKARTA, AS IN BALI, THE LOCAL MEDIA BUILD-UP PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE GROUP WAS REMARKABLE. IN YOGYAKARTA THE BANGARRA MEMBERS WERE FETED LIKE ROCK - STARS AND THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE WAS AGAIN STANDING-ROOM ONLY TO AN AUDIENCE OF OVER 1000. A PUBLIC PRESS MEETING WAS ARRANGED FOR THE GROUP, AND NUMEROUS RADIO INTERVIEWS AN EXCHANGE WORKSHOP OVER TWO DAYS WAS HELD AT THE STUDIO OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHOREOGRAPHER, BAGONG KUSUDIARDJO.

5. THE BALI ARTS FESTIVAL IS THE MAJOR ANNUAL PUBLIC EVENT IN BALI, ATTRACTING A LEVEL OF PUBLIC INTEREST SIMILAR TO A MAJOR SPORTS EVENT IN AUSTRALIA. THE FESTIVAL IS AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF BALINESE TRADITIONAL ARTS WHICH OCCASIONALLY INVITES APPROPRIATE FOREIGN PARTICIPATION. AUSTRALIA WAS THE

DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

INWARD CABLEGRAM

INFO: AII
COPY NO. 1

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ONLY FOREIGN PARTICIPANT AT THE 1991 BALI ARTS FESTIVAL AND BANGARRA WAS AN EXCELLENT CHOICE. THE TRADITIONAL DANCE PRESENTED BY BANGARRA AT THE OPENING PARADE AND AT THE SHORTER PERFORMANCES WAS VERY WELL APPRECIATED, WHILE THE FULL EVENING'S PERFORMANCE, WHICH INCLUDED CONTEMPORARY DANCE, PRESENTED AN INTERESTING CONTRAST AND PICTURE OF CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL AND ISLAND IDENTITY. MEDIA COVERAGE IN BALI WAS AGAIN EXTENSIVE AND THE HIGHPOINT WAS A FULL HALF-HOUR STUDIO RECORDING MADE BY TVRI AND BROADCAST BY TVRI BALI THE NIGHT BEFORE THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE. THE FESTIVAL WAS OPENED BY THE MINISTER FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, RUDINI, TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNOR OF BALI. THE GOVERNOR ALSO ATTENDED BANGARRA'S PERFORMANCE. BANGARRA ALSO PRESENTED TWO DANCE WORKSHOPS IN BALI.

6. THE BANGARRA GROUP WERE AT ALL TIMES WELL ORGANISED AND EXCELLENT IN THEIR FRIENDLY AND RESPECTFUL DEALINGS WITH THEIR INDONESIAN HOSTS. IN PARTICULAR, THE GROUP MANAGER MR JIM MANN DESERVES PRAISE FOR HIS FULL-TIME WORK AS ORGANISER AND AS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR. HE WAS ASKED TO SPEAK PUBLICLY ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS AND ALWAYS DID THIS WELL.

7. THE SUPPORT GIVEN THIS BANGARRA TOUR WAS AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT. BANGARRA MEMBERS WERE FIRST CLASS AMBASSADORS FOR AUSTRALIA AND THE INTEREST SHOWN EVERYWHERE BY INDONESIAN AUDIENCES IN TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CULTURE WAS TRULY REMARKABLE. CLEARLY THE ISSUE OF PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURES WHILE DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY IDENTITY IS A COMMON ISSUE THAT RESOUNDS DEEPLY IN INDONESIA. THE COMMUNICATION ESTABLISHED BETWEEN BANGARRA MEMBERS AND INDONESIAN AUDIENCES AND ARTISTS WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR A LONG TIME TO COME AND PROVIDES A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER EXCHANGES IN THE FUTURE.

ACTION: DEP FOREIGN + TRADE
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL T/T

D.A.S.E.T.T

ACTION: CRB

SEC DEPSEC-BARRATT LACB
DEPSEC-COSTELLO EXB
SSB FAS(PAD) OIB DEPSEC-FIELD FAS(ASD) PAO-ASD
AII CRO

DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK