Press Release
UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 4 NOVEMBER 2026 AT 6.00AM AEDT

BANGARRA UNITES ELDERS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS IN POWERFUL NEW PROGRAM *GENERATIONS*

Touring Nationally in 2027

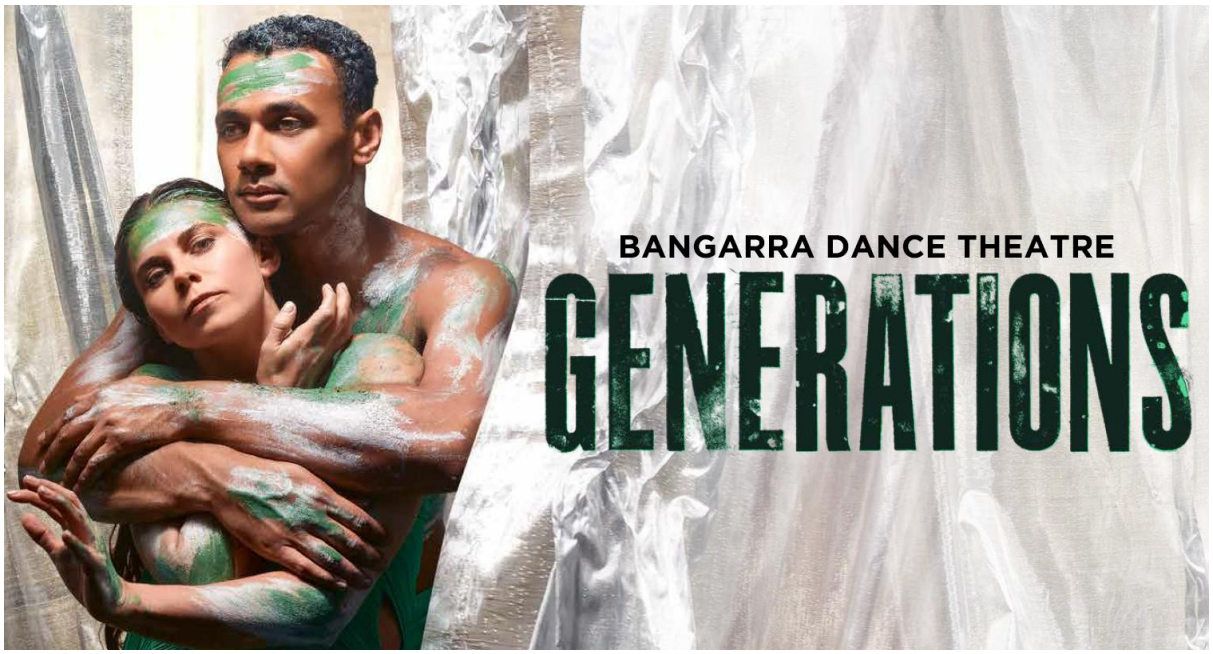


Photo: Kassidy Waters and Zeak Tass, Bangarra Dance Theatre. Photographer: Daniel Boud.

Memory. Presence. Possibility.

4th November, 2026: After receiving the prestigious Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Dance earlier this year from the dance division of the Venice Biennale, Australia's leading First Nations performing arts company, **Bangarra Dance Theatre**, moves into 2027 with a program of two brand-new powerful works on an epic national tour.

Grounded in wisdom of the past, and charged by voices of the future, ***GENERATIONS*** is a bold new double bill curated by Mirning woman **Frances Rings**, Bangarra's Artistic Director and co-CEO. The new work brings together First Nations cultural leaders with acclaimed contemporary artists in a unique dance theatre experience.

Renowned Yolŋu songman and artist of the Wangurri clan **Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun**, a much-loved Bangarra dance artist and cultural consultant across many productions and known for his performances at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, joins Kullilli man and longstanding Bangarra company member **Rikki Mason** to create ***Sever · Rom Bukthunami,*** a powerful exploration of fractured belonging. Where do you belong when you live between worlds? How does culture take root in urban landscapes? How can young people reconcile ancestral knowledge with emerging technologies? Through Munyarryun's songline, ***Sever · Rom Bukthunami*** explores these urgent questions, tracing the tensions between cultural inheritance, identity and the search for connection.

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Pipalyatjara Elder **Josephine Mick** is a respected healer, artist, irrepressible songwoman and champion of the tjakura (Great Desert Skink). Like all women of the Aṉangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, she carries a profound responsibility for Culture, Country, Community and Family. Working with acclaimed choreographer and former Bangarra dancer **Jasmin Sheppard**, and Josephine's daughter **Sally Scales** as cultural consultant, ***SpearHead · Kunpu Kanyini*** celebrates the strength, leadership and enduring power of Central Desert women. It is a dynamic ceremony of song and dance, set against an ancient desert landscape brimming with life, and a deep commitment to caring for Country.

GENERATIONS serves as a powerful reminder that the future isn't a distant destination, but already unfolding within us. Awakened by the voices of the future, ancestral knowledge shapes a vision for what lies ahead: alive, evolving and ready to be danced into being.

Frances Rings, Artistic Director and Co-CEO of Bangarra says,
"It has long been a dream to bring together a Cultural Leader and a Bangarra artist to create a meeting place where knowledge, artistry and spirit can move as one. GENERATIONS is that dream taking form. This program honours the preservation of knowledge while looking boldly toward those who will carry it forward. It speaks to the way memory can travel through bodies, creativity can bridge generations, and the impact of collaboration unifying many voices into one enduring message of survival. I am deeply proud to support Rikki Mason as he creates alongside Bangarra's own living legend, Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun. Jasmin Sheppard's choreographic voice has always held a powerful resonance for me, and I am beyond excited to see her work with APY leader and matriarch, Josephine Mick."

Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun says,
"I'm a proud Yolŋu man from the Wangurri clan in North East Arnhem Land, connected to Dhalinybuy. My cultural knowledge has been shaped by generations of family and Elders who taught me song, dance and the responsibilities I now carry as a Songman. I see myself as a role model for young people, especially the kids, because they're the ones, they're the future. I want to pass on the song, dance and cultural knowledge that my parents, brothers, sisters and Elders taught me and teach young people to listen to the old people and follow in their footsteps. Our knowledge has many layers, and even now, I'm still learning."

Josephine Mick says,
"I am a Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara woman from Pipalyatjara Community, Aralya Country in the APY Lands. Our manta (land) holds the stories and songs of our Tjukurpa, and I carry that knowledge and responsibility with me. As a senior Anangu ngangkari, leader and song woman, I have a responsibility to pass our songs, ceremonies and cultural knowledge on to our children and grandchildren. Our old people kept our culture strong for us. Now it is our responsibility to keep it alive for the generations still to come. One day we will be gone, but I want our songs, stories and culture to live on through our young people."

Tickets are on sale to the general public from 17th November, 2026, following exclusive presale access for Community and Bangarra subscribers. For more information, to join Bangarra's Songlines eDM list, and purchase tickets, visit **bangarra.com.au**.

GENERATIONS TOUR DATES:

NGUNNAWAL COUNTRY	Canberra Theatre Canberra Theatre Centre	27th – 29th May 2027
GADIGAL COUNTRY	Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House	9th – 19th June 2027
MEANJIN	Glasshouse Theatre,	1st – 10th July 2027

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	Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane	
GARRAMILLA	The Playhouse AANT Centre, Darwin	6th – 7th August 2027
WURUNDJERI COUNTRY	Playhouse Arts Centre Melbourne	18th – 28th August 2027
WHADJUK NOONGAR BOODJA	Heath Ledger Theatre State Theatre of Western Australia, Perth	9th – 12th September 2027

-ENDS-

Images available for download here.

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EDITOR'S NOTES: ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun
Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun is a respected Yolngu Songman from Dhalinybuy in North East Arnhem Land. In 1991 he joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as both Cultural Consultant and Dance Artist, and contributed to numerous productions including *Praying Mantis Dreaming*, (1992), *NINNI* (1994), *Ochres* (1995), *Fish* (1997) and *Boomerang* (2005). Munyarryun performed in the Bangarra and The Australian Ballet co-production Rites (1997), which went on to tour to New York in 1999. Following his acclaimed performance in *Rites* he was the recipient of the inaugural Australian Dance Award for outstanding performance by an individual.

Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun and his sister Guypunura (Janet) Munyarryun, led the Munyarryun clan in *Laka Bunkul* - a performance in Bangarra's inaugural Dance Clan (1998) series which showcased short works choreographed by Bangarra Dance Theatre members.

Munyarryun was a featured performer in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. He also performed in *Tubowgule*, the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Arts Festival and in Bangarra's *Skin* which was created for this festival.

In 1993, he played the water spirit in Kevin Lucas' operatic film *Black River* which won the Grand Prix award in Paris for best feature film in 1993 and also appeared in the film *Breaking Through* - an Imax 3D film produced for Expo '93. He performed with Yothu Yindi, Christine Anu and David Page in the ABC special Songlines and in 2015, featured in Stephen Page's film *Spear*.

Douglas Djakapurra Munyarryun created his work *Ngathu* in 2017 for Bangarra's end of year season at Carriageworks, *ONES COUNTRY - the spine of our stories*.

Rikki Mason
Rikki is a Kullilli man from SouthWest Queensland. He was born and raised in the country town of Inverell on land of the Gamilaraay people. He began his dance journey at 17, after having been a junior world champion fighter and representing NSW Country in Rugby League and NSWCHS in touch

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football. Rikki formally trained at the Australian Dance Performance Institute in Brisbane before continuing his development at world renowned L'École-Atelier Rudra Béjart in Switzerland.

In 2014, Rikki joined Bangarra Dance Theatre, where he danced for over a decade, becoming a senior member of the company. Under the mentorship of acclaimed choreographers Stephen Page and Frances Rings, Rikki's artistic evolution has been profound. He also had the privilege of performing works by internationally acclaimed choreographer Jiří Kylián.

Throughout his career at Bangarra, Rikki has been part of some of Bangarra's most iconic productions, including Ochres and Bennelong. He was also a featured artist in works such as *Terrain*, *Sandsong, Yuldea*, and *Spirit,* performing *The Call from Walkabout*, and his notable Black Mist solo from *Yuldea*. His performances have taken him to Communities and stages across Australia, as well as internationally, connecting with audiences worldwide.

In addition to his work on the stage, Rikki has featured in high-profile events and campaigns, including those for Qantas, Vogue, Westfield, and the 2018 Commonwealth Games opening ceremony. Rikki's extensive and diverse performance background has enabled him to seamlessly integrate artistic expression across multiple mediums.

Rikki left Bangarra as a dancer in March 2024 before returning that same year as a Rehearsal Associate. In 2025, he's stepped into the role of Rehearsal Director, continuing to contribute to the company's artistic vision while guiding the next generation of storytellers.

Josephine Mick
Josephine was born in 1955 at Alilyangu, near Pukatja, in the Pitjantjatjara Lands, the child of the revered artist Kuntjiriya Mick. She started painting as a young woman, before any art centres existed in the region.

Josephine is a respected Ngangkari (traditional healer) with deep knowledge of bush medicines. She is acknowledged for her work in health, art and land management across two cultures, as a senior custodian of Tjukurpa and as an advocate for her people.

Josephine is deeply involved in cultural business and is a senior song woman of the western desert region. She was the founding Director of the NPY Women's Council in 1982, a former director of Ninuku Arts in Pipalyatjara, and a founding member and director of Ananguku Arts and Cultural.

Jasmin Sheppard
Jasmin is a Tagalaka Aboriginal woman with Irish, Chinese and Hungarian ancestry, she is a contemporary dancer, choreographer and director. Jasmin spent 12 years with Bangarra Dance Theatre, performing numerous lead roles such as *Patyegarang*. She choreographed one work for the company, *MACQ*, on the 1816 Appin Massacres under Governor Macquarie which toured Australian capital cities, regional Australia and Germany (2016,2017).

Other works include, *No Remittance* for Legs on the Wall, 2019 and *Choice Cut* for Yirramboi festival, which made its proscenium arch debut at Ryerson Theatre, CA, at Toronto's Fall For Dance North Festival (2019). Jasmin premiered her first full length work *The Complication of Lyrebirds* in 2021 at Sydney Festival, Campbelltown Arts Centre. This work was also supported by Native Earth Theatre Company, Toronto, and was performed in 2023 at INDance (Sydney Dance Company). In 2021 Jasmin co-directed *Value For Money* for GUTS Dance alongside Sara Black which has toured nationally.

Jasmin created *Given Unto Thee* for Sydney Dance Company's New Breed 2021 program, and was lead performer, movement director and associate writer for the major theatre work by S. Shakthidharan:

宿 (stay). In 2024 Jasmin choreographed *The Cord* which premiered at New Annual festival, was director, and choreographer for *Preparing Ground* with Marilyn Miller and Katina Olsen, (2025) and Co-Creator and co-choreographer for *Two Blood* with Daniel Riley and S. Shakthidharan at Australian Dance Theatre (2025,2026).

Jasmin is the First Nations artist-curator at Critical Path where she curates a diverse program for First Nations choreographers and was the inaugural Balnaves' Artist in Residence at Sydney Dance Company in 2025. Jasmin is currently co Dance Lead at NAISDA. Her work is passionate and political.

Frances Rings

Frances Rings is Mirning woman from the west coast of South Australia. She became Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre in 2023 and serves as co-CEO alongside Louise Ingram.

Frances made her mainstage choreographic debut with Bangarra in 2002 with *Rations* from *Walkabout*, receiving outstanding critical acclaim. Since then, she has created ten works for the company: *Bush* (2003, co-choreographed with Stephen Page), *Unaipon* (2004), *X300* (2007), *Artefact* (2010), *Terrain* (2012), *Sheoak* (2015), *SandSong* (2021, co-choreographed with Stephen Page), *Yuldea* (2023), *Illume* (2025), and *Flora*, a collaboration between Bangarra and The Australian Ballet (2026).

Her choreographic work extends across the industry, with commissions for West Australian Ballet, Leigh Warren & Dancers, and Tasdance. Internationally, Frances has forged significant intercultural collaborations with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre in Six Nations, Turtle Island (Canada), and Atamira Dance Company in Auckland, Aotearoa (New Zealand). She was a guest collaborator and performer in Atamira's 2015 production *MITIMITI*, choreographed by Jack Gray, and in 2018 created a new work for *Kotahi*, Atamira's triple bill program.

From 2016 to 2019, Frances was Head of Creative Studies at NAISDA Dance College, where she directed five end-of-year productions. She then served as Associate Artistic Director at Bangarra Dance Theatre from 2019 to 2022.

Frances Rings has received numerous major awards throughout her career, recognising her exceptional contributions to Australian dance and choreography including six Helpmann Awards (2003, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2017), a Deadly Award (2003), Australian Dance Award (2004) and a Green Room Award (2011). In 2026, alongside Stephen Page, Frances proudly accepted the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Dance for Bangarra Dance Theatre.