

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**  
**18 November 2017**

**Bangarra stronger than ever in 2017 with two brand-new works**  
*Bennelong and ONES COUNTRY – the spine of our stories: now on sale!*

Bangarra brings two brand-new contemporary dance seasons to the stage in 2017, marking one of its biggest years to date. Charged with creativity after a successful 2016, the company is ready to do what it does best: generate engagement with all Australians and illuminate the art of storytelling. ***Bennelong***, choreographed by Artistic Director Stephen Page will tour nationally, while ***ONES COUNTRY – the spine of our stories***, has been commissioned especially for our second Sydney season at Carriageworks.

Artistic Director Stephen Page says that 2017 will be significant for Bangarra:

“Bangarra’s backbone lies in its ability to carry the power of Australia’s first cultures – blending old with new – and embracing the diversity and strength of our people. Next year we bring two transformative new seasons to the stage, which embody exactly this.”

“I’m really looking forward to cultivating our storytelling in the studio and above all, sharing it nationally and internationally with Australia’s finest artists by my side.”

“2016 has been challenging, but our art-form is a powerful medicine and it has helped us to heal. We will have a special celebration of our brother David Page’s life at the Sydney Opera House in June.”

Says Executive Director Philippe Magid:

“The company’s strength is its capacity to create inspiring and positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences for all.”

“Next year’s footprint provides us with incredible opportunities to connect with all corners of the country, with one of our biggest years of creation and delivery on record.”

***BENNELONG***

The national tour of *Bennelong* will premiere on 29 June at Sydney Opera House, before travelling to Canberra, Brisbane and Melbourne. Choreographed by Artistic Director Stephen Page and inspired by true events, this work delves into the life of Woollarawarre Bennelong, a senior man of the Eora Nation, from the Port Jackson area in Sydney.

In a tumultuous time of Australia’s history, Bennelong and the Eora Nation transcended “first contact”, leaving us a legacy that is still so tangible in our 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Bennelong* highlights the extraordinary curiosity and diplomacy that led an Aboriginal community to survive a clash of cultures.

As part of this national tour, Bangarra will hold a series of Community Nights across the country, generously

**For all media enquiries, please contact:**  
**Anna Shapiro, Media & Communications Manager**  
Bangarra Dance Theatre  
M: 0417 043 205  
E: [anna@bangarra.com.au](mailto:anna@bangarra.com.au)

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supported by The Balnaves Foundation. Community Nights are dedicated performances for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our way of connecting with those who share the culture and history sewn through our storytelling.

### **ONES COUNTRY – THE SPINE OF OUR STORIES**

This triple bill, commissioned and directed by Artistic Director Stephen Page, will bring together the choreographic talents of Djakapurra Munyarryun, Elma Kris, Nicola Sabatino and Kaine Sultan-Babij. Three brand new works will premiere at Carriageworks from 24 November – 2 December.

Together they will take audiences across Australia, from North East Arnhem Land's red dust, to the waters of the Torres Strait Islands – home of the salt-water creature, the Dugong, to Indigenous urban life looking at gender challenges and the human spirit. This will be the second time the company has performed in this industrial, multi-arts space and meets demand for additional performances by Bangarra in Sydney.

### **RETURN TO COUNTRY**

Bangarra's annual Return to Country ensures that the deep community relationships developed over the years are maintained and continue to inform the integrity of our work. These trips are one of the highlights of the year, with the dancers coming back feeling grounded and spiritually inspired. In August, they will visit the Torres Strait Islands, home to many of our stories and dancers, with a series of cultural exchanges including workshops. The company will also perform *I.B.I.S.*, choreographed in 2015 by Torres Strait Islander duo Deborah Brown and Waangenga Blanco. This will be complemented by screenings of *Dive*, a film created by Deborah Brown, which premiered in 2013 as part of *Dance Clan 3*.

### **INTERNATIONAL TOUR**

In October, Bangarra will embark on their 25<sup>th</sup> international tour to Germany. After the national success of *OUR land people stories* in 2016, the company will present this ambitious triple bill on the world stage as a highlight of *Australia now*, the celebration of Australia in Germany in 2017. Performing at the Berliner Festspiele - a major dance house in Berlin - this will be part of a one-week residency, accompanied by dance workshops, film screenings and talks. The company will have a second European stop on the tour that will be announced in August next year.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is supporting the 2017 international tour.

### **REGIONAL TOUR**

Regional touring is a crucial part of the company's annual calendar, nurturing and forging new relationships with the people and communities that inspire Bangarra's stories. *Terrain*, choreographed by Frances Rings, will be presented in its fourth remount since 2012 from 8 February until 8 March across Victoria and Tasmania, visiting Ballarat, Bendigo, Mildura, Hobart, Geelong and Shepparton.

### **REKINDLING**

Since its inception in 2013, Bangarra's intensive youth program for secondary school students has been delivered in 20 communities across five states with almost 300 students completing the program. In 2017 the program continues to develop and expand, heading to Docker River (NT), Umuwa (SA), Grafton (NSW),

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Townsville (QLD) and Warrnambool (VIC). Auditions will take place in late February and early March 2017. Register online at [www.bangarra.com.au/rekindling](http://www.bangarra.com.au/rekindling).

To purchase Sydney packages, early bird tickets to *Bennelong* and *ONES COUNTRY – the spine of our stories*, and *Terrain* regional tickets, visit [www.bangarra.com.au](http://www.bangarra.com.au).

**SEASON DATES:**

**BENNELONG**

Sydney Opera House: 29 June – 22 July 2017

Canberra Theatre Centre: 3 August – 5 August 2017

QPAC Brisbane: 24 August – 2 September 2017

Arts Centre Melbourne: 7 September – 16 September 2017

**ONES COUNTRY- the spine of our stories**

Carriageworks, Sydney: 24 November – 2 December 2017

**REGIONAL TOUR**

Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat, 11 February 2017

Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo, 15 February 2017

Mildura Arts Centre, Mildura, 18 February 2017

Theatre Royal, Hobart, 23 – 25 February 2017

Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong, 2 – 4 March 2017

Westside Performing Arts Centre, Shepparton, 8 March 2017

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