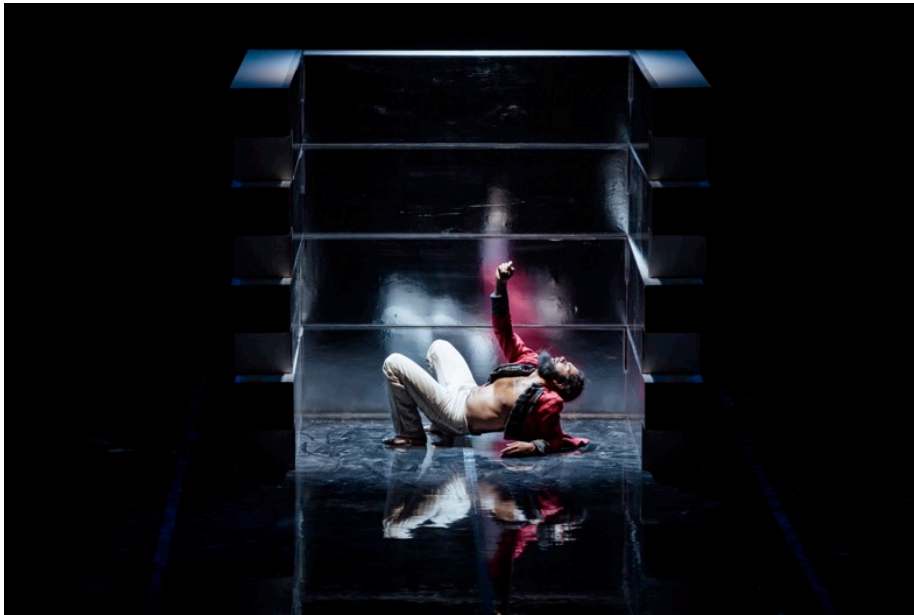




BENNELONG

Bangarra's award-winning production to tour regionally in 2019

"Extraordinarily powerful... a benchmark in Australian dance creativity. It sums up yesterday, today and perhaps tomorrow" ★★★★★ The Sydney Morning Herald



Next year, [Bangarra Dance Theatre](#) will bring our 2017 landmark production *Bennelong* to regional Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory, as part of a five-stop tour across Australia through February and March. Following the extraordinary success of *Bennelong's* premiere season last year, 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* tells the remarkable story of Woollarawarre Bennelong, a senior man of the Eora nation, from the Port Jackson area in Sydney. Bennelong was one of the first Aboriginal men to be taken from his people and, against his initial will, introduced to European ways. He was a traditional man who became an intermediary between his clan and the colonists, and 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.

Bangarra's work was honoured at this year's Helpmann Awards, with the company receiving seven awards in the 2017-2018 judging period, including the prestigious title 'Best New Australian Work' for *Bennelong*. 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.

Renowned for his richly nuanced storytelling abilities, Page selected key moments in Bennelong's life to weave a moving portrait of a complex and conflicted man. Having collaborated with the 18-strong dance ensemble on choreography, *Bennelong* is a monumental work that reverberates with Bangarra'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.

“More than two centuries after his 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. 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 contemporary life.”

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.

Entering its third decade in 2019, Bangarra is one of Australia’s leading performing arts companies, internationally acclaimed for combining more than 65,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture with powerful contemporary dance, immersive soundscapes, music and design. The regional tour will kick off the year and the company’s 30th anniversary, with the national and international touring season to be announced in January 2019.

This regional tour is a rare opportunity to see *Bennelong* re-staged: a must-see dance experience in 2019.

For more information and tickets, please visit <http://www.bangarra.com.au/whatson>

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS:

[BOOK TICKETS](#)

[DOWNLOAD HIGH-RES IMAGES](#) Please credit photographer Daniel Boud.

BENNELONG (2019)

Choreography Stephen Page with the Bangarra dancers

Music Steve Francis

Dramaturg Alana Valentine

Set Design Jacob Nash

Costume Design Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Design Nick Schlieper

Cultural Consultant Matthew Doyle

TOUR DATES

Bendigo | Ulumbarra Theatre, 15 – 16 February

Geelong | Geelong Performing Arts Centre, 21 – 23 February

Warragul | West Gippsland Arts Centre, 2 March

Alice Springs | Araluen Arts Centre, 7 – 9 March

Cairns | Cairns Performing Arts Centre, 15 – 16 March

CONNECT WITH BANGARRA



For all media enquiries, please contact:

Jessica Keirle, Media & Communications Manager, Bangarra Dance Theatre
M: 0438 805 109 E: jessica@bangarra.com.au