



BANGARRA ANNOUNCES EXTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL TOUR TO INDIA AND JAPAN

Bangarra Dance Theatre will embark on a major international tour at the end of the year, with performances at the prestigious Saitama Arts Theater in Japan and an impressive multi-city tour across India, which will include an extensive range of cultural exchange opportunities and a major free outdoor performance in New Delhi.

Bangarra is committed to deepening international engagement and global understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, with cultural exchange firmly at the heart of our practice. In October, the company will travel to India to present three significant performances in **New Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai**. In a milestone event for Bangarra, the company will deliver a spectacular free outdoor performance at the **Qutb Minar** in New Delhi, as a highlight of the Australian Government's *Australia Fest* program. The unique performance will be presented at the outdoor complex on a purpose built stage overlooking the main minaret, and offer thousands of people the opportunity to learn about the history and vibrancy of Australia's first people. Off the stage highlights include a master class workshop in Bangalore with the **Attakkalari Dance Company**, who are known for blending traditional dance techniques with contemporary movement.

Complementing our performances in India, the company will undertake a variety of regional community engagement opportunities with Indigenous groups across the country. Cultural exchanges enable Bangarra to practice cultural reciprocity through the sharing of our knowledge and stories, and also learn from different Indigenous groups around the world. Bangarra will travel to **Purulia**, home of the Chhau mask dance, **Bhopal**, the site of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Humankind), and **Aizawl** in Northeast India, to learn and experience a variety of traditional dances in a series of artistic collaborations with these communities. As cultural ambassadors, we have a responsibility to promote intercultural dialogue and demonstrate the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the world's stage. For the first time, Bangarra will split our international touring party into three groups to deliver this level of community engagement concurrently in all three areas, with six dancers leading dance and cultural workshops in each region.

To complete the tour in November, the company will make their fourth visit to **Japan** to perform as the centrepiece and concluding highlight of the Australian Government's *Australia now* program. To build awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, the company will showcase the best of Bangarra's repertoire in a powerful celebration of culture at **Saitama Arts Theater**.

The company adapts a tailored approach with each international tour, choosing to present distinct works in each country. In India, the company will stage *Spirit 2018*, a powerful collection of dance stories from Bangarra's best repertoire; while audiences in Japan will see *Spirit 2018* alongside Waangenga Blanco and Deborah Brown's *I.B.I.S.*: a colourful depiction and celebration of island life in the Torres Strait Islands.

"International touring is an essential part of our role as ambassadors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and we are excited to be embarking on this significant tour, made possible with the generous support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Communications and the Arts and sponsors of Australia now. Cultural exchange enables us to share, learn and grow as a company, and we are deliberately increasing the number of community engagement activities we undertake to set a new benchmark for the future. We're proud to share the resilience and strength of Australia's First Nation people with other Indigenous communities and groups, and are looking forward to exploring cultural exchange in these remote regions and continuing our tradition in sharing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture globally." said **Bangarra's Executive Director Philippe Magid**.

“The creative industries play an important role in enhancing Australia’s reputation as a diverse, creative and innovative nation. The Australian Government is promoting Australia’s creative industries in Japan as part of our flagship public diplomacy program ‘Australia now’, and in India through ‘Australia Fest’. I am delighted Bangarra Dance Theatre will feature as a highlight of these programs, promoting intercultural understanding, dialogue and exchange and Australia’s performing arts excellence overseas.” said the **Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs.**

“This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase Bangarra Dance Theatre’s talent and share stories from the world’s oldest living culture with international audiences. Bangarra is one of Australia’s leading performing arts companies and its dance, design and storytelling draws on 65,000 years of culture. The Australian Government is committed to Australia’s international arts and cultural presence on the world stage and is proud to support Bangarra as one of our premier cultural ambassadors.” said the **Hon Mitch Fifield, Minister for Communications and the Arts.**

Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the heart of Bangarra Dance Theatre, with its repertoire created on Country and stories gathered from respected community Elders. It is this inherent connection to its land and people that makes Bangarra unique and enjoyed by audiences from remote Australian regional centres to the world’s stage.

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

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TOUR DETAILS:

Purulia (West Bengal), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) and Aizawl (Mizoram), India

Community engagement workshops
19-20 October

New Delhi, India

Qutb Minar, *Spirit 2018*
25 October

Bangalore, India

Dr. B.R. Ambedkhar Bhavana, *Spirit 2018*
29 October

Mumbai, India

National Centre for the Performing Arts, *Spirit 2018*
1 November

Tokyo, Japan

Saitama Arts Theater, *I.B.I.S.* and *Spirit 2018*
9-10 November

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Bangarra Dance Theatre:

Bangarra Dance Theatre is Australia’s leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance company, acclaimed worldwide for its moving performances, distinctive voice and authentic storytelling. Bangarra are 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.

Spirit 2018

Spirit 2018 is a powerful collection of dance stories by Artistic Director Stephen Page, drawn from the company’s 29-year history. Set to a beautiful and haunting score composed by David Page and Steve Francis, *Spirit 2018* takes audiences into a mysterious and secret space to witness nature’s sacred poetry. With stories and songlines drawn from all over Australia, it celebrates the spirit of the dingo, the ephemeral life of the moth, and throughout, Indigenous peoples’ unbroken connection to the land.

In a series of shifting incarnations, *Spirit* has been performed to audience and critical acclaim in Copenhagen, Bonn, New York, Vietnam, Mongolia and China. This is a true celebration of Australia's rich culture and history, fused with outstanding dance technique.

Choreography: Stephen Page

Traditional Choreography and music: Djakapurra Munyarryun

Music: David Page and Steve Francis

Costumes: Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Design: Nick Schlieper, Karen Norris, Joseph Mercurio, Matt Cox

I.B.I.S

I.B.I.S. is a story from Murray Island in the Torres Strait, a beautiful and isolated land of laughter and sunny smiles. This joyful work explores life on the islands: a place where, despite challenges of displacement and climate change, the culture remains strong and the people optimistic. The work was created in 2015 by Deborah Brown and Waangenga Blanco, who were then two senior dancers with Bangarra (Deborah retired from the company in 2017, while Waangenga continues to dance as a member of the current ensemble).

I.B.I.S stands for Island Board of Industry and Services, a little local store on a few of the islands. In this work, Deborah and Waangenga created a fictional *I.B.I.S* store where the people are modern day hunters and gatherers. They charted the evolution of this small trading company to how it's grown through the commitment and engagement of the Torres Strait people to make it the strong entity it is today.

Choreography: Waangenga Blanco and Deborah Brown

Music: Steve Francis

Costume Design: Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Design: Karen Norris

CONNECT WITH BANGARRA



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