

Press Release
For Immediate Release



**BANGARRA ANNOUNCE 2021 NATIONAL TOUR FOR WORLD PREMIERE OF
SANDSONG:
*STORIES FROM THE GREAT SANDY DESERT***



In 2021, Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts company, Bangarra Dance Theatre, will present the world premiere of a powerful new contemporary program, *SandSong: Stories from the Great Sandy Desert*. *SandSong* will tour to Sydney, Canberra, Bendigo, Brisbane and Melbourne from 10th June to 4th September.

Created by Bangarra Dance Theatre in consultation with Wangkajunga/Walmajarri Elders from the Kimberley and Great Sandy Desert regions, *SandSong* has been choreographed by Bangarra Artistic Director, Stephen Page, a descendant of the Nunukul people and Munaldjali clan of the Yugambah Nation, and Bangarra Associate Artistic Director, Frances Rings, a descendant of the Kokatha Tribe from the West Coast of South Australia.

Under the vast Kimberley sky, the red pindan dust stretches across the desert homelands of the Walmajarri, where the ancient knowledge of People and of Country is preserved through Songlines that have endured for hundreds of generations.

SandSong tells the unique story of this Place and the survival of its People, where between the 1920s and 1960s, Aboriginal people were removed off their Country and forced into hard labour for no wages and minimal rations. Despite this displacement and cultural disruption, the people of the Western Desert have maintained unbroken connection to their Land, keeping stories and kinship strong.

This is also the Country of Wangkajunga woman Ningali Josie Lawford-Wolf (1967-2019), an acclaimed performer and an important cultural consultant and artistic collaborator of Bangarra, whose spirit, stories and artistic contributions have inspired a number of the company's works, and enriched the broader arts landscape. *SandSong* honours the legacy of Ningali, and her family – past, present and future.

Bangarra Artistic Director, Stephen Page said: “In 2020, when we started the research for *SandSong*, the world was a different place. Our remote Indigenous communities, once described as “lifestyle choices”, became more crucial than ever as they functioned as refuges to protect our most precious resource: our Elders.”

Bangarra Associate Artistic Director, Frances Rings, said: “*SandSong* is a glimpse into the world of the Walmajarri & Wangkajunga people from the Great Sandy Desert, who survived incredible disadvantage to keep strong a lasting cultural bedrock for future generations.”

SandSong will also include immersive soundscapes composed by Steve Francis, exquisite stage designs by Jacob Nash, atmospheric lighting designs by Nick Schlieper and stunning costume designs by Jennifer Irwin.

Shared through a dance theatre language that is truly unique in the world, and performed by Bangarra's internationally-acclaimed dance ensemble, *SandSong* is a journey into ancient story systems framed against the backdrop of ever-changing government policy, and of the survival of people determined to hold strong to their Culture.

Tickets for Bangarra's 2021 national tour are available now from <https://www.bangarra.com.au/>.

SANSONG: STORIES FROM THE GREAT SANDY DESERT TOUR DATES:

VENUE	DATES
Sydney Opera House, Sydney	10 th June to 10 th July
Canberra Theatre Centre, Canberra	15 th to 17 th July
Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo	23 rd and 24 th July
Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane	12 th to 21 st August
Arts Centre Melbourne, Melbourne	26 th August to 4 th September

-ENDS-

Images are available for download [here](#).

For further information and images:

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