



FAREWELL TO SIX EXTRAORDINARY DANCERS

Bangarra announces departing dancers, performing for the final time in [Dubboo – life of a songman](#)



Photo: Waangenga Blanco and Tara Robertson performing Kinship. Photo credit: Tiffany Parker.

As another incredible year for Bangarra draws to an end, we say goodbye to six of our much-loved dancers: **Waangenga Blanco, Daniel Riley, Tara Robertson, Kaine Sultan-Babij, Luke Currie-Richardson and Yolanda Lowatta.**

A number of our departing dancers will be retiring after many years with the company, while others will be taking the next step in their creative journeys. Each of these brilliant performers has made a unique and valuable contribution to the company, and will always be part of the Bangarra family.

Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre **Stephen Page** said *“It has been a privilege to have worked with each of our talented and hardworking dancers, who have given so much to Bangarra. Their stories, songlines and spirit are the lifeblood of the company, and each of our departing dancers have shared their deep love and connection to Country and culture with audiences across Australia and around the world. I wish them all the best for the future as they take the next step in their creative journey.”*

Bangarra’s Executive Director **Philippe Magid** said *“I would like to congratulate Waangenga, Daniel, Tara, Kaine, Luke and Yolanda on their incredible achievements during their time with the company, and thank them for their vital work in sharing their culture and traditional stories through dance. In 2019, we will welcome new dancers to the company and, in addition, through the generous support of the Sherry-Hogan Foundation and a group of our donors we are well on our way to being able to provide an incredible opportunity for two emerging Indigenous artists to join the Bangarra ensemble through our Russell Page Graduate Program.”*

Audiences will have the opportunity to farewell our departing dancers, who will perform for the final time with Bangarra when the company presents [Dubboo – life of a songman](#) next month; a special celebration of our beloved brother and songman **David Page**.

Dubboo – life of a songman will see the departing dancers perform excerpts from some of Bangarra’s most celebrated repertoire. The full company will perform *Brolga*, an excerpt from our 2001 production *Corroboree* that illustrates the concepts of ceremony, connection and transformation between a human spirit and the spirit of a creature. Dancers Waangenga Blanco and Tara Robertson will perform for the final time as a duo, dancing ‘Lust’ from *Brolga*. The company will also dance excerpts from *Fish* (1997), *SPEAR* (2002) and

Bush (2003) honouring David's musical ingenuity and original scores.

Bangarra deeply thanks each of the departing dancers for their contributions to the spirit of the company and wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

- **Waangenga Blanco** joined us in 2005 and over the last 13 years he has inspired audiences and the company through culture and dance. The most rewarding experiences for Waangenga have always been returning to Country and sharing culture with communities. In 2015, he made his choreographic debut with *I.B.I.S* as part of the *lore* program. He won an Australian Dance Award and Green Room Award for his performance in 2014's *Patyegarang* and was nominated for a Helpmann Award and Greenroom Award for Male Dancer of the Year in 2012. Waangenga's dance journey continues as he moves on to perform in *Pigalle*, which will premiere at Sydney Festival in January 2019. Waangenga is looking forward to pursuing new opportunities and spending time with his family and baby boy. He will continue to share the strength of his culture as a leading voice for contemporary dance.
- **Daniel Riley** has been with the company since 2007 and has flourished as a dancer, choreographer, teacher and director during this time. His career highlights include choreographing *Riley* (2010), *Scar* as part of *Blak* (2013), *Miyagan* (2016) and *Dark Emu* (2018). He has received nominations for 'Best Male Dancer' at the Australian Dance Awards in 2010 and 2013, and for 'Deadly Dancer of The Year' at The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Deadly Awards in 2010, 2012 and 2013. Daniel is proud of the connections with community he has made across the country and will cherish these relationships as he leaves the company. He is excited for the next step in his career, and will be exploring numerous opportunities in the upcoming year.
- **Tara Robertson** joined Bangarra in 2011 and has enjoyed being part of the creative process of developing new work, teaching company classes, hosting workshops and performing in regional communities across Australia and on the main-stage around the world. Her career highlights include sharing her culture with international audiences, including the 2011 multi-city tour in Germany and places such as Paris, Copenhagen, Berlin and Bonn. A personal highlight was playing the lead performance in *Brolga* in Darwin, her hometown, and performing *Ochres* for the 21st anniversary of the work. Tara has a bright and exciting future as she continues her journey exploring new pathways around the world.
- **Kaine Sultan-Babij** has toured extensively around Australia and the world with Bangarra after joining us in 2011. Representing the company in places like Tokyo, India, Copenhagen, Berlin, Bonn, New York, Mongolia, Vietnam and Holland, Kaine has enjoyed seven rich and varied years with Bangarra. In 2012 he was nominated for a Green Room Award for 'Best Male Dancer' for his role in Frances Rings' *Terrain* and in 2017 he made his choreographic debut with *Place* in *ONES COUNTRY*. Kaine is a versatile and talented performer and will continue to impress audiences into his future.
- **Luke Currie-Richardson** is an influential role model, particularly for young people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Luke joined Bangarra in 2012 as a trainee dancer and has enjoyed many career highlights during his time with the company, including dancing *Black* from *Ochres* all over the world and performing for his people in remote communities. Luke is excited to pursue other passions in the year ahead, including connecting deeper to his cultural roots through documenting his experiences on Country.
- **Yolanda Lowatta** joined Bangarra in 2015 as the inaugural recipient of the Russell Page Graduate Program. In 2016 Yolanda won a Helpmann Award for 'Best Female Dancer' in *Sheoak* as part of the *lore* program. Yolanda is moving on from the company to explore other arts avenues and to spend time with her family.

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