BANGARRA GOES BACK TO COUNTRY AFTER RECORD-BREAKING SYDNEY & CANBERRA SEASONS

Bangarra is delighted to announce their recent Sydney and Canberra seasons of *Bennelong* were their most successful ever.

Stephen Page's 24th work for the company resonated strongly with audiences and critics, selling over 17,250 tickets during its sold-out, five-week run at Sydney Opera House. This result surpasses the previous best-selling show, 2014's *Patyegarang.*

The Executive Director of Bangarra, Philippe Magid, said the response to the work had been unprecedented.

"Stephen, the creative team and the dancers have created an absolutely extraordinary work that resonated with a broad and diverse audience – *Bennelong* is a story that needed to be told and clearly the public agree," said Magid.

"A strong innovative marketing campaign, with a focus on providing insights to the creative process via social media content, was crucial to us exceeding our targets in a busy market."

After our most successful four-show season in Canberra over the weekend, this week the dance ensemble fly to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait for their annual on Country residency.

A small group will also travel to remote Mer Island to hold dance workshops with both primary and high school students. NBA superstar and NAIDOC Person of the Year 2017 Patty Mills will also be on Mer Island visiting local schools, alongside his cousin Bangarra dancer Luke Currie-Richardson.

On Thursday Island, the company will hold several dance workshops with local youth – a highlight for the dancers and an opportunity to give back to the community and inspire the next generation of cultural leaders.

They will also hold a free dance performance of *I.B.I.S*, created by dancers Deborah Brown and Waangenga Blanco as part of 2015's double bill *lore*. *I.B.I.S* was inspired by the Torres Strait Islander community and will be a homecoming for the work.

The Artistic Director of Bangarra, Stephen Page, said taking works back to Country is a vital part of the company's cultural creation life cycle.

"Our entire repertoire is inspired by our land and our people. For Bangarra to take *I.B.I.S* back to its origins, and where Deborah and Waangenga's families are from, is incredibly special," said Page.

"It will be the perfect time for the dancers to rejuvenate their spirit and connect to Country during the busy *Bennelong* season."

To round out the trip, the dancers will also take part in a cultural day with respected Elders, with activities such as weaving and fishing. Dancers Elma Kris and Nicola Sabatino will also research their upcoming work *Whistler*, part of the *ONES*

CONNECT WITH BANGARRA

For all media enquiries, please contact:
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COUNTRY – the spine of our stories season at Carriageworks in late November.

After just under a week in Thursday Island, the company will travel to Brisbane and Melbourne to resume the *Bennelong* national tour.

www.bangarra.com.au

WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SAYING ABOUT BENNELONG:

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

"Hits hard... one of the most poignant and shocking endings I've seen in dance" The Guardian ★★★★

"Utterly searing… Moments of sheer brilliance flash and spark all the way through" The Daily Telegraph
★★★★

"Bennelong is a truly dramatic and gripping piece of dance theatre. It is perhaps the strongest and most compelling work to have emerged from Bangarra in its almost 30-year history" The Canberra Times

***BENNELONG* TOUR DATES**

QPAC
25 August – 2 September

Arts Centre Melbourne
7 – 16 September

ONES COUNTRY – the spine of our stories

Carriageworks
24 November – 2 December

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