

MEDIA RELEASE: 31 October, 2019

**A POWERFUL AND POIGNANT STORY OF FIRST CONTACT**

**Bennelong (Thu 6 Feb – Sun 9 Feb)**  
**Bangarra Dance Theatre**



Image: Daniel Boud

**‘Bennelong is an extraordinarily powerful work, a benchmark in Australian dance creativity.’**  
– Sydney Morning Herald

Internationally acclaimed **Bangarra Dance Theatre** celebrates one of history’s most iconic Aboriginal figures in their ravishingly beautiful **Bennelong**.

After a triumphant national tour and seven Helpmann Awards, Bangarra brings *Bennelong* to Perth as a highlight of Perth Festival’s opening week of entirely First Nations performances.

*Bennelong* tells the story of senior man of the Eora, Woollarawarre Bennelong, who led his community to survive a clash of cultures after the arrival of Governor Arthur Phillip’s fleet in 1788.

Through striking dance language, soul-stirring soundscapes and exquisite design, Bangarra unpacks Bennelong’s legacy and its reverberation through contemporary Australian life.

Choreographed by Artistic Director **Stephen Page** with music by **Steve Francis**, *Bennelong* is Bangarra at its best. In a unique Australian dance language, the company celebrates the continuation of life and culture through the power, brilliance and passion of its outstanding artists.

Bangarra Dance Theatre is acclaimed worldwide for its authentic storytelling, distinctive voice and moving performances.

**Perth Festival Artistic Director Iain Grandage** says, "Keeping true to our Festival theme – Karla, the Noongar term for fire – *Bennelong* is a beautiful performance which celebrates Indigenous song, dance and spirituality with a fiery passion. We are thrilled to present *Bennelong* at Perth Festival and to showcase this incredible production from Bangarra."

### About Bangarra

Bangarra is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and one of Australia's leading performing arts companies. The company is widely acclaimed nationally and around the world for their powerful dancing, distinctive theatrical voice and utterly unique soundscapes, music and design.

Led by **Artistic Director Stephen Page**, the company is currently in its 30th year but its dance technique is forged from over 65,000 years of culture, embodied with contemporary movement.

The company's dancers are professionally trained, dynamic artists who represent the pinnacle of Australian dance. Each has a proud Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, from various locations across the country.

**WHAT:** Bennelong

**WHERE:** Heath Ledger Theatre

**WHEN:** Thu 6 Feb – Sun 9 Feb

**HOW MUCH:** \$39 - \$79

**BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO:** perthfestival.com.au

[Click here for images](#)

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***Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise their values, language, beliefs and knowledge on their kwobidak boodjar.***

***They remain the spiritual and cultural biridiyangara of this place and we honour and respect their caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.***

***Perth Festival***

*Founded in 1953 by The University of Western Australia, Perth Festival is the longest running international arts festival in Australia and Western Australia's premier cultural event. The Festival has developed a worldwide reputation for excellence in its international program, the presentation of new works and the highest quality artistic experiences for its audience. For 66 years, the Festival has welcomed to Perth some of the world's greatest living artists and now connects with hundreds of thousands of people each year.*

*Iain Grandage is the Artistic Director 2020 – 23.*

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