



**bangarra**  
DANCE THEATRE



# REKINDLING

## YOUTH PROGRAM



**EXPLORE  
STORIES**

**CONNECT  
TO CULTURE**

**DEVELOP  
PERFORMANCE  
SKILLS**

**CREATE  
DANCE  
THEATRE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
VISIT [BANGARRA.COM.AU/COMMUNITY/REKINDLING](http://BANGARRA.COM.AU/COMMUNITY/REKINDLING), OR  
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## INTRODUCING REKINDLING

### VISION

Rekindling is Bangarra Dance Theatre's Youth Program, which aims to inspire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to:

- have pride in their cultural background
- have a strong sense of kinship and connection to their communities and country
- understand their role as the future custodians of their culture
- establish the foundations for positive career choices

### BACKGROUND

Bangarra is Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts company and fulfills a dual role of creative producer and cultural agent. 2019 marked three decades of Bangarra's work within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through its performance and workshop programs. We know that rekindling traditional knowledge and ownership of culture amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people is a vital, positive and effective means to instill a sense of pride and self-worth in 'who they are' and 'where they come from' as a result of their connection to cultural knowledge and practice passed down by their Elders.

The Rekindling program is tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenagers in regional and urban communities. As we know, for many young people the choices they make and the activities they engage with in their teenage years can have an impact on their entire lives, as well as affecting their families and communities.

*We need to bring up young people with purpose, passionately loyal to their communities, with a sense of belonging to their traditional country, with skills needed to assert themselves in our time while drawing strength from their heritage.*

- Michael Anderson, Euahlayi Elder, North West NSW & South West QLD

*If you can rekindle some of the stories, knowledge and energy from my community and share it in a positive way that still protects it, that's very important.*

- Aunty Di McNabo, Elder, Wellington NSW



## THE REKINDLING TEAM

Rekindling has been developed under the direction of Bangarra's Artistic Director, Stephen Page and Sidney Saltner, one of Bangarra's most acclaimed artists.

Sidney leads the Rekindling Team as Youth Program Director, along with Youth Program Coordinator Sani Townson, who are joined on the road by former Dancers and guest artists.

### Youth Program Director

**Sidney Saltner** is from the Wulli Wulli people of central Queensland, and graduated from the National Aboriginal Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College in 1991. He joined Bangarra in 1997, and after 15 years, stepped down from his full-time performing career in 2011 to assume the position of Youth Program Director. With over thirty years of experience, Sidney has performed and taught alongside Australia's most notable choreographers and dance companies, as well as taking up the roles of Rehearsal Director and Assistant Director with Bangarra and AIDT the Company.

### Youth Program Coordinator

**Sani Townson** is a descendant of the Saibai Koedal and Samu Clans of Saibai Island. He trained with NAISDA Dance College for four years before joining Bangarra in 2001, performing all company repertoire from 2001-06. Sani continues his practice as a Cultural Ambassador and Artist and has worked extensively both throughout Australia and internationally in dance, music, acting and writing.

## THE PROGRAM

Rekindling is delivered in partnership with each local community and starts with the Rekindling team spending time in onsite, developing relationships with local Elders and the community. They establish support for the program and invite the Elders and community representatives to tailor the program to meet the needs of their local community. In doing this, the Rekindling team consults with the Elders about stories and language they choose to provide that would be appropriate to share with the young people and the broader community, and developed into a dance work. The Rekindling team works with the Elders to ensure the practice of appropriate protocols are observed and permissions are adhered to at all times.

The Rekindling team seeks to establish relationships with key stakeholders within the community, to deliver the program during school terms and hours. We find that the encouragement from schools has enhanced participants' attendance and attitude towards learning, and at the same time supports their cultural awareness within their communities. The program begins with an audition workshop process, during which the Rekindling team and local Elders work together to select participants for the program. It is important that the group represents a mixture of participants' backgrounds, levels of cultural awareness and involvement, and personal interests so that the participants can learn from each other's experiences.

## THE WORKSHOPS

### THE REKINDLING GATHERINGS

The Rekindling program is divided into three Gatherings, each with specific aims and objectives.

**Gathering One | Three day workshop** – an introduction to culture

The program begins with a traditional Welcome to Country, by local Elders. The objective of this first Gathering is to lay the foundations for the program, highlighting connections to and between land, people, and Country, breaking down barriers, and create a nurturing space for the participants to get to know the Rekindling team, each other, and the Elders. They are introduced to the process of shared learning and exchange, and begin to explore the cultural knowledge of their Elders – their country, language, and family. Traditional and western dance styles will be taught, as well as other skills from Bangarra's performance repertoire to discover the process of storytelling through movement.



**Gathering Two | Four day workshop** – exploring creativity and expression

The participants engage in creative tasks to explore movement, music, design, and creative development. While specific dance skills are explored, they are used as a vehicle to open up broader discussions of culture, creativity and storytelling. Exploring the themes ‘who you are’ and ‘where you come from’, the young people research and gather stories from within their communities and begin discussing themes for their group performance. They are shown different techniques for how to make movement using rhythms, floor patterns, and use of objects to tell their story.



**Gathering Three | Five day workshop** – preparing for performance

The participants continue their skills and movement development and prepare for their own creative work. They are introduced to production elements and skills – props, staging, sound, and costume. The program culminates in a public community presentation to celebrate the achievements of the participants and to share their cultural learnings with their peers, families, schools, Elders, and the broader community.



**RETURN VISITS**

The Rekindling Return Visits are a one-day workshop designed to reconnect with participants, Elders and community members. Bangarra’s Return Visits provide the Youth Program team with a very special opportunity to revisit communities in which Rekindling has already occurred, and see what participants have been doing in their communities since taking part in the workshops. At this final stage of connecting with participants, we give them the opportunity to also being a friend to the program, broadening the program’s reach. On the day, the Rekindling team delivers a dance warm-up, provides new choreography, and offers an opportunity for the participants to catch up with Elders and community leaders, sharing with them the work and learnings they have made both within and outside of the program.

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

In 2013, Bangarra successfully raised funding to develop and deliver Rekindling through the generous support of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, the George Hicks Foundation, the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation and the Australian Government's Office for the Arts. This provided the necessary resources to develop the program and the Rekindling team, engage in community consultations, implement the program, and develop an evaluation process.

Bangarra continues to secure key partnerships with funders who share the Rekindling vision, so that we can ensure the long-term sustainability for the program. In addition to project funding from our partners, Bangarra also commits its own resources to supporting this important program. Bangarra and its supporters see this as an exciting opportunity to help shape the evolution of the Rekindling program that can contribute to stronger engagements between young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their Elders, and their communities.

## WHAT YOU BRING TO THE PROGRAM – COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Rekindling program requires support from each community to source resources for aspects of the program, and to generate community involvement. The Rekindling Program is conducted in communities around Australia who seek and are able to secure funding to support participants and community staffing, for example, payment of Elder's fees, accommodation, venues, meals, and transport for participants and other necessary items. The communities are not required to cover the costs of travel, accommodation, wages or per diems for the Youth Programs team. The support required is solely to ensure that the program has the abovementioned resources to run the program.



### CONTACT US

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