

# ReconciliationNews

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**The art of**  
reconciliation

**Ethical trade in  
Indigenous art:**  
it's part of a  
reconciled nation

**Bangarra's  
Ochres**  
returns to the stage



**Reconciliation**  
AUSTRALIA

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Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

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Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation. Your active contribution and financial support helps us develop innovative programs and resources.

This magazine is compiled by Reconciliation Australia to share reconciliation stories, issues and opinions.

Cover image: Ochres by Bangarra, Leonard Mickelo. Image by Edward Mulvihill.



**Reconciliation**  
A U S T R A L I A

# CEO's message

The second half of 2015 has been a tumultuous time for Australian politics with a new Prime Minister and Ministry appointed in September. I am very pleased that the new look Federal government has committed to being thoroughly consultative and that history has been made with the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP becoming the nation's first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander frontbencher. I look forward to working with Prime Minister Turnbull and Cabinet to progress reconciliation for our nation.

Over the past few months, I have been fortunate to meet with communities across Australia to discuss reconciliation action. In August, I travelled to Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) launches in Gunnedah, Perth and Melbourne; and was privileged to make an address on the Recognise campaign at the Shark versus Cowboys NRL match. In September, I joined some of our Board Directors in the Torres Strait to meet with the Torres Shire Council, the Torres Strait Regional Authority and community members; and then with a number of organisations who have responsibilities in both Cape York and Cairns. All of the engagements have shown me that there is much support for reconciliation and a strong commitment to find ways to progress it.

As you will read in the pages that follow, the arts have played a key role in the historical political struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This edition of Reconciliation News explores how the arts can act as a powerful tool to build reconciliation in Australia today, as well as how it has been used to create change in the past. This edition also features short stories from some of our innovative RAP program partners that are making waves in the arts; developing programs that breakdown barriers and bring us all closer to a reconciled nation. You'll also read about projects by Bangarra Dance Theatre, Sydney-based muralist Hego, Opera Australia and ethical art trading organisation the Indigenous Art Code.

I hope you enjoy reading this, our last edition of Reconciliation News for 2015. After a well-earned break, we'll be back in 2016 to commemorate some major reconciliation milestones. Next year, we'll be leading the celebrations of 25 years of formal reconciliation; 15 years since Reconciliation Australia began and 10 years of success in the RAP program. We will also be focusing not just on our past milestones, but our actions for the future and building a national conversation about reconciliation.

**Justin Mohamed**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia



Justin Mohamed. Image by Hilary Wardhaugh.

# Reconciliation Australia welcomes Glen Kelly



At the September Board meeting in Cairns, Reconciliation Australia welcomed a new Board Director, Mr Glen Kelly. Glen is a Noongar man and until recently worked as the CEO of South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council where he oversaw the negotiation and authorisation of the Noongar Native Title Settlement. He has 21 years' of experience in Native Title and land related issues and has held a number of senior positions in community organisations and within government agencies.

The staff and Board of Reconciliation Australia are pleased to have Glen as part of the leadership of our organisation. We look forward to working with him to advance reconciliation across the country.

**Reconciliation Australia Board Member  
Mr Glen Kelly. Image courtesy of Glen Kelly.**

## Celebrating 25 years of formal reconciliation

Next year is a big year for Reconciliation Australia and the reconciliation movement more broadly. Throughout 2016, we're planning a year of recognition and celebration to mark three significant reconciliation achievements—the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation; 15 years since Reconciliation Australia began and 10 years of success in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program.

'...our events aim to reflect on our reconciliation achievements today, take stock of the present and consider what the future looks like for reconciliation.'

In addition to our annual National Reconciliation Week celebrations and biennial Indigenous Governance Awards, Reconciliation Australia will be hosting a range of events and activities. All of our events aim to reflect on our reconciliation achievements today, take stock of the present and consider what the future looks like for reconciliation.

Keep an eye on our website for further details of our 2016 celebrations.



# The art of reconciliation

By Justin Mohamed

**The arts play an important role in building any modern democracy. In its many and varied forms, art is not only a mode of self-expression and a chronicler of our times, but also an equaliser and a means for social commentary and change. It allows us to express our opinions and advocate for change. The arts have particular significance for our mob—they have always been at the centre of our cultures. Paintings, carvings, dance, song and other forms of art acted, and continue to act, as a way to pass on ancient stories, histories and knowledge across generations. For more than 60,000 years art has connected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to heritage, land and spirituality, and to the past, present and future.**

In more recent times, our people have used the arts to challenge negative stereotypes, generate conversation and find success and recognition. The arts have, in many instances, provided a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to communicate their opinion or to raise issues with a society and government that hasn't always understood its First Peoples.

The Yirkala Bark paintings are perhaps the most famous example of the power of the arts as a tool of advocacy. During our mob's political struggle for recognition over land rights in the 1960s, the Yolngu people created these bark paintings to represent their law and connections to land. These paintings were presented to parliament as the first petition from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and paved the way for recognition of Aboriginal land rights. This is just one example of many that highlights the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have leveraged for social change.

The arts also provide a platform to engage non-Indigenous Australians in the more difficult aspects of reconciliation and, in particular, the colonial history of our nation. This understanding of our shared history is critical if we are going to become the reconciled nation we want to be. Films, artworks, music, dance and literature addressing the historically poor treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been embraced and applauded by mainstream society and have facilitated understanding and acknowledgement. These artistic efforts provide an accessible entry to the reconciliation journey for many Australians, who may otherwise have no interaction with the histories, cultures and contributions of this country's First Peoples.

Today, the arts have an equally influential role to play in building a contemporary, reconciled Australia. Over the years, our Indigenous Governance Awards have shined a light on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations making change through the arts, including Martumili Artists, The Marruk Project and Tjanpi Desert Weavers to name just a few. We see this tradition continuing today through Bangarra's works, Opera Australia's interpretation of the story *The Rabbits* and film and television like *Who We Are: Brave New World*.

These artistic endeavours are modern examples of the power of the arts in challenging mainstream perception. As we move toward reconciliation, and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our Constitution, the arts will continue to play a key role in giving our mob a voice. Art has a very specific power to bring us together and to better understand each other as individuals and as a nation.

**Martumili staff member Kathleen Sorensen with artist Mabel Warkarta in the painting shed at Parngurr. Image by Wayne Quilliam.**





# RAPs and the arts



The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) community is a diverse and ever evolving one. Together our 600 RAP organisations reach every corner of Australia and are making change in their own way and in their own sector. We are very proud to have a growing contingent of arts organisations in the RAP program. Many arts organisations develop RAPs in recognition of their unique and powerful role in allowing all Australians to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions, and to take their place on the reconciliation journey.

Below we highlight the work of a few diverse arts organisations from across the country, all united by their common goal of progressing reconciliation through artistic endeavours.

## Connection to Country for Country Arts SA

Country Arts SA launched its Reconciliation Action Plan in February 2015 and, as part of this plan, commissioned well-known weaver Yvonne Koolmatrie to create works to represent reconciliation in regional South Australia. For Country Arts SA, the artworks have come to represent a lot more.

Working in the traditional coil-bundle weaving technique with river rushes from the Murray River, Yvonne is a renowned master weaver and internationally esteemed artist with an artistic practice spanning three decades. Yvonne has produced imaginative and elegant forms that are held in major public and private collections throughout Australia, and the world. The technique and style of Yvonne's work is unique to the local Ngarrindjeri people and reflects Country Arts SA's commitment to regional South Australian communities—reconciliation is woven through all aspects of its business practice.

Yvonne's first piece for Country Arts SA, *Sister Basket*, represents two sisters joining together for a shared practical purpose. This is indicative of the Country Arts SA reconciliation aim of different cultures coming together to achieve a common goal and maintaining purpose in the outcome.

*Weapons Basket* is Yvonne's second woven piece for the organisation and relates to holding and sustaining weapons or tools. Country Arts SA works hard to gather the most effective tools, people and resources needed to support the creation of works in regional South Australia.

These two woven pieces, formed from the land and waters, demonstrate the culture of regional communities' connection to their Country. It also serves as a daily reminder to Country Arts SA staff that we are all reconciling with the land and waters, as well as with each other.

**Yvonne Koolmatrie's work for Country Arts SA. Image courtesy of Country Arts SA.**

## Simon Rose and his internship at Blackfella Films

As part of its RAP, Film Victoria is committed to exploring shared opportunities and providing skills development to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen practitioners. This commitment was put into action this year when Simon Rose began an Indigenous Factual Researcher Internship at the Melbourne office of Blackfella Films—Australia's leading Aboriginal owned film and television production company.

The Indigenous Factual Researcher Internship was supported through Film Victoria's Screen Skills initiatives, Blackfella Films and the SBS Traineeship Program.

"When I first saw the position advertised I was so excited at the many possibilities the role presented," Simon said.

"I would have the chance to work with Blackfella Films—a team who are so experienced in Indigenous content and who have produced award-winning work."

'These two woven pieces, formed from the land and waters, demonstrate the culture of regional communities' connection to their Country..'



"Now that I've started my internship, I'm thrilled to be at Blackfella Films and working with producers, directors, writers, cast and crew who are passionate and committed to exploring factual Indigenous content in this country."

The 12 month internship provides Simon with the opportunity to develop his skills as a researcher and work with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous media professionals.

**Homeground celebrates the best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Image by Prudence Upton.**

"There are a lot of Indigenous filmmakers out there who need more professional development opportunities," Simon said.

"The community has many talented writers, directors, actors and producers. Development schemes such as this one are a fantastic way to invest in these people."

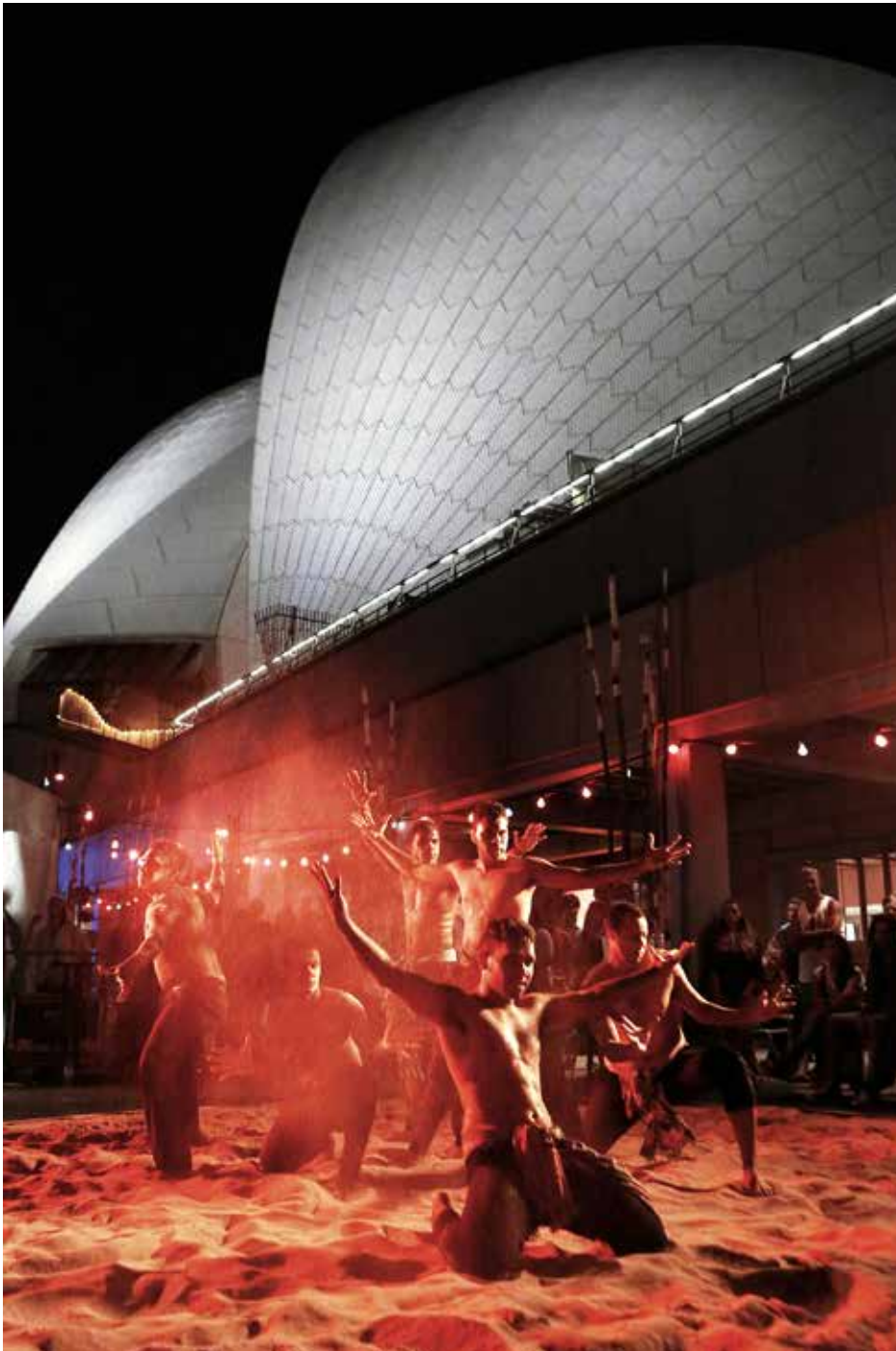
For those looking to start out in the film industry, Simon has these words of advice:

"Be proud of your mob, don't give up, and don't be afraid to ask questions. And practice, practice, practice ... in the end you have to love what you do!"

## **Dance Rites: Australia's national Indigenous dance competition**

Celebrating and supporting the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, culture and communities through artistic programming is a key action in the Sydney Opera House RAP. As an international performing arts centre, the Opera House has a clear leadership role in relation to reconciliation. It is a role the Opera House takes seriously and will be realising in 2016 through the soon-to-be-developed fourth Opera House RAP.

**'In 2016, Dance Rites—a national Indigenous dance competition—will be at the forefront of the Opera House's reconciliation activities.'**



In 2016, Dance Rites—a national Indigenous dance competition—will be at the forefront of the Opera House's reconciliation activities. It is a ground-breaking national project to revitalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and increase participation of Indigenous Australians in cultural life. The project aims to reinvigorate a range of cultural practices including dance, language, traditional instruments and skin markings to ensure they are passed on from one generation to the next.

Inspired by the highly successful Pow Wow Circuit in North America and Kapa Haka festival in New Zealand, the project involves working with dance groups to research and develop cultural material for





Homeground Festival 2014. Image by Prudence Upton.

the Dance Rites competition. Each dance group participating in the competition will present three dances—a welcome and a farewell dance, which includes a chant in local language, and a third ‘wildcard’ dance of the group’s choosing.

Registrations for the 2015 event closed in September with 10 groups, 160 participants in total, from across NSW, QLD and the Torres Strait Islands participating. All participants performed at Sydney Opera House’s Homeground festival on Sunday 22 November with the winner receiving a \$15,000 prize and the opportunity to perform at the following year’s festival.

## RAP snapshot

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program is stronger than ever with over 1100 organisations either having an endorsed RAP or in the process of developing one.

A further eight organisations have stated their commitment to developing a RAP during 2015/16:

- JLL
- OfficeMax Australia Limited
- Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority
- Sureway Employment and Training
- BAE Systems
- CIVMEC Construction and Engineering Pty Ltd
- Cancer Institute NSW
- QSuper
- Pathfinders LTD
- SECOM Group



# Teaching our difficult past with opera





Teaching children about the more difficult aspects of Australia's history, including colonisation and the Stolen Generations, can be a daunting task for educators and parents alike. However, *The Rabbits*, a moving new opera by Opera Australia and Barking Gecko Theatre Company, aims to make this process a little less daunting for Australian educators.

*The Rabbits*, is a new and uniquely Australian production for kids, based on the popular book of the same name by John Marsden and Shaun Tan. *The Rabbits* tells the story of colonisation, incarceration and displacement through the clever metaphor of native marsupials being displaced by white colonial rabbits.

*'The Rabbits is clearly a powerful conversation starter and Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team believe that teachers play a key role in ensuring that important conversation reaches the next generation.'*

Throughout 2015, Opera Australia and Barking Gecko Theatre Company have brought the story to stages across the country in an hour long opera. The production not only provides children with their first foray into opera, but also a stark insight into just how difficult and harrowing some elements of our history really are. Using memorable songs and engaging set and costume design, the opera makes the harsh realities of history a little more approachable, without shying away from difficult topics. For example, Kite Song, features a scene filled with box kites, marsupial babies and their mothers, who

despair as their children drift away. It is a captivating representation of the raw pain felt by members of the Stolen Generations.

However, the opera isn't entirely focused on the mistakes of the past. The last scene of the opera sees the two species—a rabbit and a marsupial—come together under the stars to overcome their errors and to work toward reconciliation. It is a timely reminder that we all have a role to play in our future together.

*The Rabbits* is clearly a powerful conversation starter and Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali team believe that teachers play a key role in ensuring that important conversation reaches the next generation. "*The Rabbits* opera is a valuable resource for educators, especially those who may not feel confident in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures," said Narragunnawali program manager Alex Shain. "The production is an accessible means to delve into the tough issues of our past in a way that can sometimes be difficult in the classroom."

Teachers across Australia are certainly realising its potential for educating the next generation. Earlier this year numerous schools attended the performance at the Melbourne and Perth Festivals, including the author of the original book John Marsden, who attended with the school he heads up. To ensure teachers aren't alone in tackling the teaching of *The Rabbits*, our Narragunnawali team have worked with Opera Australia to develop resources for teachers and students to better understand the themes addressed. For the upcoming school holiday performances at the Sydney Festival, there will be a special guide for parents and carers. For many Australians, *The Rabbits* opera, and its accompanying resources, will be their first step on the journey to reconciliation—a step which may not have happened but for the allure of the arts.

*The Rabbits will be showing at the Sydney Festival from 14 to 24 January 2016.*

The cast of *The Rabbits*.  
Image by Jeff Busby.

# Who We Are: Brave New Clan





**In recognition of the power of film to inspire deeper inquiry into the histories and cultures of Australia's First Peoples, Reconciliation Australia recently worked with CAAMA Productions to adapt the *Who We Are: Brave New Clan* documentary into a series of short films suitable for school and early learning classrooms.**

*Who We Are: Brave New Clan*, screened on Foxtel earlier this year, follows the lives of six exceptional young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they share stories about their communities, history and cultures in contemporary Australia.

Through warm story-telling and the visually rewarding medium of film, viewers connect with a new generation of high achievers as they navigate life in fast-paced urban environments and on Country. The young people reflect with pride on where they came from, the courage they needed to get where they are, and with optimism on where they are going. This brave new clan will inspire audiences to face Australia's history with strength and share in our collective future.

As part of their contemporary lifestyles, these inspiring young Australians showcase music, politics, careers, histories, bush medicine, language and stories. From the bustling streets of Sydney to the aquamarine vistas of the Torres Strait, their stories span a diverse population across the country and share common themes of resilience, courage, optimism and success.

"*Who We Are: Brave New Clan* celebrates diversity across Australia and we hope it inspires audiences to find out more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place

names, peoples, languages and cultures in their own local area," said *Who We Are: Brave New Clan* Director Leah Purcell.

It was this potential for education that inspired the Narragunnawali team at Reconciliation Australia to adapt *Who We Are: Brave New Clan* into short films and accompanying resources for schools and early learning services. The short films are aligned directly to both the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework, enabling a focused pathway for the films into Australian classrooms and assisting teachers in meeting curriculum requirements around teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The films are accompanied by guides to assist teachers and educators to engage in discussions with students and children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, families, kinship, community, Country/place, cultures, spirituality and histories.

*The Who We Are: Brave New Clan films and resources for schools and early learning services are available at [www.reconciliation.org.au/schools](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/schools)*

**Miranda Tapsell in *Who We Are: Brave New World*. Image courtesy of CAAMA Productions.**



Filming of *Who We Are: Brave New World*.  
Image courtesy of CAAMA Productions.



# Ethical trade in Indigenous art: it's part of a reconciled nation

By Gabrielle Sullivan



Lizzie Ellis Minyma Tjukurla 75.5 x 75.5cm acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the artist and Tjalirli Art.



**The Indigenous visual arts industry has seen enormous growth over the last decade. It has significant cultural value and represents a large part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories. It also has become a valuable commodity with the potential to provide significant benefit to artists, their families and their communities.**

Senior Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the National Gallery of Australia, Franchesca Cubillo believes it is important for all Australians to have an understanding of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts. “I believe it is integral that this nation has an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our culture and our arts. Our art is a part of this land, it is part of the original peoples of this land, the people who were formed from this country by their ancestors, the ones who live today and look after and maintain their connection.”

‘It establishes a set of industry standards, provides a benchmark for ethical behaviour and gives consumers greater certainty that the artworks they buy come through ethical processes.’

The remarkable cultural and economic value of Indigenous visual arts has meant that there are some instances of unethical, misleading or unconscionable behaviour in the trading of arts in Australia. This unethical trading exploits individual artists and impacts the entire industry.

The Indigenous Art Code aims to overcome these challenges, by ensuring fair trade with Indigenous artists. It establishes a set of industry standards, provides a benchmark for ethical behaviour and gives consumers greater certainty that the artworks they buy come through ethical processes.



**The Indigenous Art Code public forum.**  
Image courtesy of the Indigenous Art Code.

Commercial art dealers in Australia and internationally show their commitment by becoming a signatory to the Code.

Earlier this year, the Indigenous Art Code held a public forum, in partnership with Leichhardt Council, to increase awareness of ethical trade in Indigenous art. The Forum was moderated by author and social commentator Jane Caro, joined by curator Franchesca Cubillo, artist Elizabeth Marrkily Ellis, collector Geoff Hassall, dealers Christopher Hodges and Adrian Newstead and ethicist Christian Barry. The forum identified a number of scenarios illustrating potential unconscionable conduct in the Indigenous art trade with a focus on the consumer and artists as the victims. It was Leichardt Municipal Council's identification of popup and online auctions as a potential source for forgeries in its local government area that instigated the forum and highlighted the key role local government can play in promoting ethical practice.

“Local government can, and should, take a position in this discussion and help to promote ethical practice as best practice,” said Mayor of Leichardt, Councillor Rochelle Porteous. “We want to make that conversation accessible and discuss how the relationship between artist, dealer and gallery actually works.”

Ensuring greater transparency around the trade practices of businesses selling Indigenous art will make this space easier for the consumer to navigate and for the artists themselves to understand how the people they are in business with operate. The Indigenous Art Code believes that one of the most effective strategies to achieve this transparency is to raise awareness of the Code with consumers. The Indigenous Art Code aims to develop a responsive website with updated information about dealers and dealer types and work to educate and inform consumers on purchasing Indigenous art ethically. All of these efforts aim to ensure dealers respect the significant contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists make to the Australian visual arts sector and the economy.



# The positive power of street art for story telling

By Hego



March 2015: This 15-metre-long work was made up of 99 paper panels and shows 18 servicemen of WWI who came from the Meningie region in South Australia. The mural depicts other WWI Ngarrindjeri soldiers who enlisted alongside Alfred Cameron Junior. Copyright Hego.



**Hego is a Sydney-based artist, filmmaker and activist practicing in Australia, America and South Africa. His murals are 'wheat pasted', which is a traditional form of poster using enlarged photographs printed on paper that are then stuck to walls using glue.**

At the end of 2013, I stumbled across a poem called *Black Anzac* by Cecil Fisher, which highlighted the lack of acknowledgement Aboriginal soldiers had been given when returning from conflicts overseas. The second last stanza really drew me in:

*"His medals he keeps hidden away from  
prying eyes*

*No one knows, no one sees the tears in  
his old black eyes*

*He's been outcast just left by himself to die  
Recognition at last black ANZAC hold  
your head high."*

Wanting to find out more, I then came across a book about 21 Aboriginal soldiers who served in WWI from South Australia called *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, written by Doreen Kartinyeri. I decided to do a mural right there and then. I felt the medium of street art was the most effective

**April 2014: Alfred Cameron Jnr stands tall at the entrance to 'The Block' in Redfern, Sydney. The first of three wheat-pasted murals Artist Hego produced of Aboriginal soldiers from WWI. Copyright Kimberley Low.**

way to engage with the general public, to help spark that interest in the broader public to discover more about the subject.

The Aboriginal soldier I chose to appear in the mural was Alfred Cameron Junior of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, South Australia. I used his photo at complete random, for the simple reason of how it was orientated. The photo of Alfred standing straight up would fit the wall I had secured for the mural.

I wanted to draw the public's attention to the sacrifices made by modern, as well as traditional Aboriginal warriors, in conflicts overseas and domestically, but that were never acknowledged in a prominent way, if at all. So, I strategically positioned Alfred next to the Pemulwuy sign at The Block in Redfern, Sydney. I had never heard at school about Aboriginal soldiers serving in WWI, let alone the resistance fighter Pemulwuy from the first fleet days.

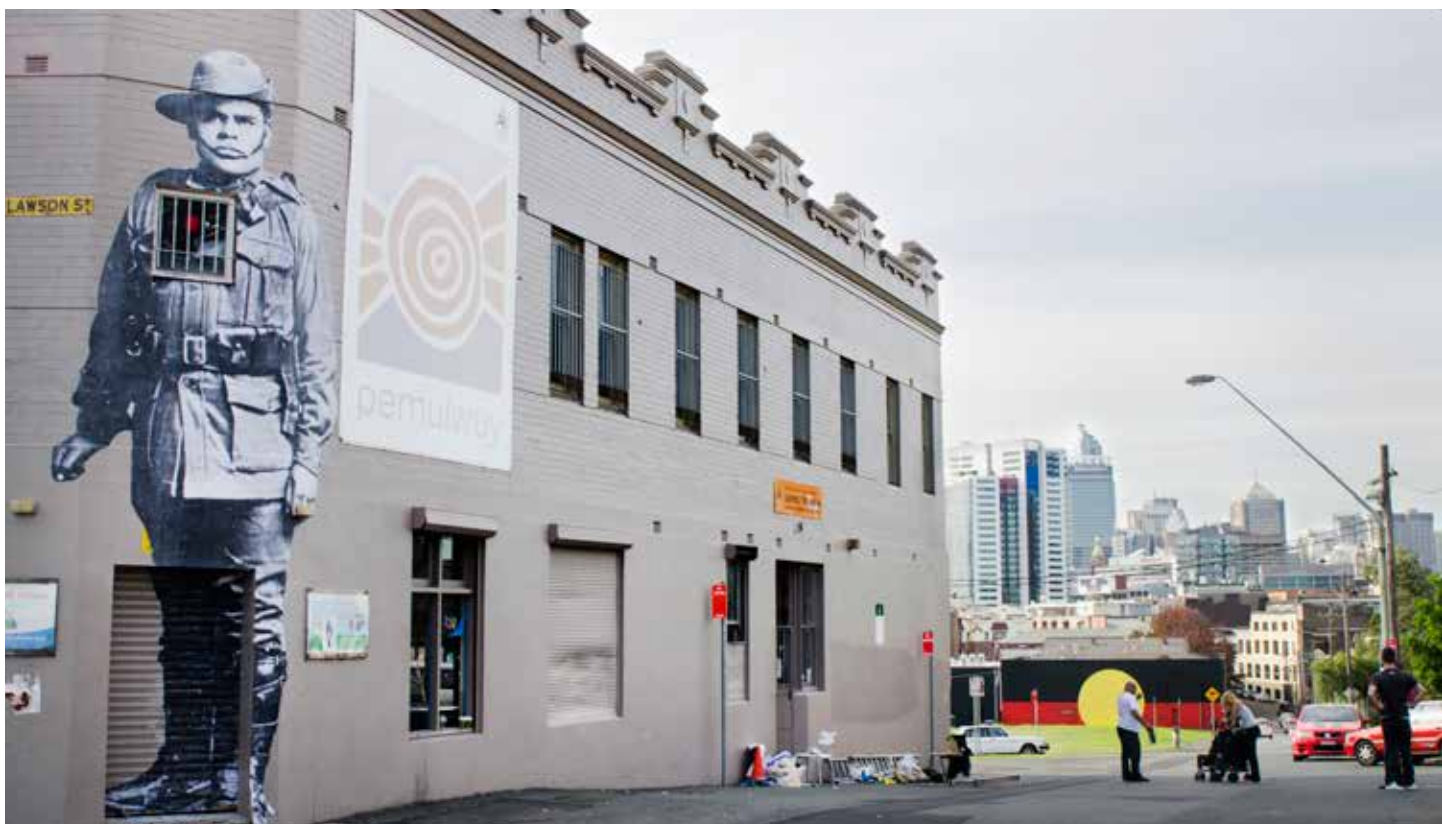
On the day I was installing the mural, in time for Anzac Day 2014, a passer-by snapped a photo of the mural and posted it online. It got 50,000 likes and hundreds of comments

in just a couple of hours. The artwork had struck a nerve and the conversation I hoped to help initiate had well and truly started.

Fast forward to October 2015 and my efforts to bring this story to more people's attention has since grown into two more murals and a feature length documentary, which was crowd funded by over 100 supporters. *Black Anzac - the Documentary*, directed by Tim Anastasi from Stationary Movement Film, is just another way to get this story to resonate with the general public. It's about my journey to tell this little known story of Australian history through street art, and the positive effect that has on the broader community.

Although my murals eventually wear down, the completion of our documentary will ensure the story continues to be consumed, shared and pondered for some time to come. And from what I've come to witness over the past 16 months through my projects, I'm optimistic about the future.

[www.blackanzacdocumentary.com](http://www.blackanzacdocumentary.com)  
[hegoartist@gmail.com](mailto:hegoartist@gmail.com)  
Instagram: @\_hego



# Bangarra's Ochres returns to the stage

By Bangarra Dance Theatre





**In October, Bangarra Dance Theatre celebrated the 21st anniversary of Ochres, the work that revealed the company to the world. The original in 1994 represented a watershed moment for Bangarra, bringing national and international attention for its ground-breaking blend of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, fused with contemporary movement. It led to sold-out performances across Australia and around the world and established Bangarra as an important voice in the country's cultural landscape.**

Bangarra's Artistic Director Stephen Page, who choreographed Ochres, reflects on the company 21 years ago.

"When I became Artistic Director in 1991, the company was smaller in size, but it made an early impact with the conviction of our storytelling. Now we're a thriving clan that has multiple dancer choreographers; an Artists-in-Residence program; a Youth and Outreach program; we tour nationally, regionally and internationally and we've just made our first feature film *Spear*—these are aspirations past our wildest dreams," says Page.

Bangarra's relationships with communities are the heart of the company.

"Communities and Elders are the source of our inspiration and creativity, and we're committed to developing the next generation of storytellers and cultural leaders through our Youth and Outreach programs," explains Page.

"It's an absolute privilege to provide a platform for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to strive for excellence creatively and to acknowledge and voice stories from Country."

Page is excited to be reimagining Ochres with a new generation of dancers.

"An array of artists has worked on this production over the years, and all of them, along with our audiences, have experienced the sacred meaning of this show. Our incredible dance artists and creative team, including David Page on the score, Djakapurra Munyarryun as cultural consultant, Jacob Nash on sets and Jennifer Irwin on costumes, will bring a renewed depth to this re-imagining, while honouring the meaning and spirit of the original," he explains.

Ochres is the story of the relationship between Aboriginal people and the land. In all its forms and colours, ochre is essential to the life of Aboriginal communities. This four-part contemporary dance work features a portrayal for each colour of this earthy substance, its myriad of purposes and their spiritual significance to Aboriginal people.

Page thinks the demand for authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories is growing, both locally and overseas.

**'Bangarra's relationships with communities are the heart of the company.'**

"We've been around for 26 years now and the appetite for our stories is just becoming stronger and stronger. Our productions are strong creatively, they have a beautiful spirit, our dancers are world-class, all of that combined is a positive experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and so we've cultivated a very loyal audience.

"To see our audience grow by a third last year with black and white together; to see our office which is 70% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working together with people from many different backgrounds—it's something to be really proud of."

*Ochres is on at Carriageworks from 27 November-5 December. Tickets from [www.bangarra.com.au](http://www.bangarra.com.au)*

**Narragunnawali**  
Reconciliation in Schools  
and Early Learning

**NAKRA  
GUNNA  
WALI**

Our Reconciliation Action Plan  
Developer for schools and early learning  
services is now live.

The developer will help educators  
commit to practical and meaningful  
reconciliation actions in the classroom,  
around the school or early learning  
service and with the community.

Start your school or early learning  
service's reconciliation journey at  
**[www.reconciliation.org.au/schools](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/schools)**



**Reconciliation**  
A U S T R A L I A



**bhpbilliton**  
resourcing the future

Sustainable Communities