



Media Release Friday, 2 February 2018 – for immediate release

### **Dance is for everyone – let's get moving**

Big Dance is the largest dance celebration in the world and it's hitting Australia on International Dance Day (29 April 2018) where thousands of people will dance together in some of the most iconic places in the world.

Encouraging people to be active through dance, Big Dance is a free large-scale participatory celebration open to everyone of all ages, all abilities and all experiences.

In the months leading up to Big Dance, Ausdance Victoria and New South Wales will motivate aspiring dancers and community groups to learn the Big Dance 2018 routine in a series of fun free dance workshops.

The Big Dance 2018 routine includes versions to suit a variety of capabilities and circumstances, including standing, seated and suggestions on adapting the choreography for different abilities.

Online tutorials will be available where the Big Dance 2018 routines are guided and taught by developing dance college artists from National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) and the dance cues will also be provided in an easy-to-follow learning guide.

Created by acclaimed Indigenous choreographer Frances Rings and New Zealand born Craig Bary, and with an original score by Huey Benjamin, the Big Dance 2018 choreography is a five-minute contemporary Indigenous routine that anyone can learn.

Rings explains that all Australians have a shared connection to this land, "We are lucky to live in an incredible country that still emits ancient energy and incredible living culture. This year's Big Dance choreography represents our bloodlines, our culture and everyone coming together as we acknowledge the red earth as our spiritual centre. Big Dance will connect everyone through movement and bring people together to share their stories and experiences with pride and from any dance form."

As people dance across the world on International Dance Day and with performances by local dance companies, the key Big Dance 2018 events will be hosted in Sydney, Federation Square in Melbourne, Castlemaine as part of the Regional Centre for Culture program and Lilydale, as well as other locations throughout Australia.

Founded in 2006 and led by the Mayor of London in partnership with People Dancing and a network of leading dance organisations, the Big Dance legacy has now been passed to Australia – in 2016 over 42,000 dancers from 44 countries across the globe participated in Big Dance (previous choreographers include Akram Khan and Wayne McGregor CBE).

#### **Quote attributable to:**

**Michelle Silby – Executive Director Ausdance Victoria and New South Wales**

"I believe dance is for everyone and everyone can dance! Big Dance provides fantastic opportunities for people of all ages, cultures and abilities to come together to enjoy and celebrate dance through free workshops and events."

#### **Quote attributable to:**

**Jerril Rechter – CEO VicHealth**

"Dancing is a wonderful way for people to get their hearts pumping and meet their 30 minutes of daily physical activity, while also having fun and meeting new people. VicHealth is proud to have helped bring Big Dance to Victoria and we want Victorians to kick up their heels and join the fun on International Dance Day."

**Feb – Apr 2018**

Fun free dance workshops and online dance tutorial available

**Sunday, 29 Apr 2018**

Big Dance on International Dance Day

**[bigdance.org.au](http://bigdance.org.au)**

### **Big Dance 2018 routine**

- The Big Dance 2018 routine is only five-minutes and can be learnt by anyone.
- There are versions to suit different capabilities and circumstances, including standing and seated.
- Ausdance Victoria and New South Wales will host a series of fun free workshops to teach the Big Dance 2018 routine.
- Easy-to-follow online tutorials of the Big Dance 2018 routine are available as well as a learning guide with dance cues.
- The Big Dance 2018 routine is divided into three different sequences that represent a different colour.
- The three colours (sequences) symbolise the:
  - Indigenous people;
  - Non-Indigenous people; and
  - Spiritual heart of Australia (bloodline and lineage) – the connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
- Participants will be allocated a colour (sequence) at workshops or can choose which sequence to learn from the online tutorial.
- A guide to adapting the choreography for different abilities is being developed in partnership with Deakin University's AllPlay Dance program and will be released in March 2018.

### **Current workshop locations – hosted by Ausdance Victoria**

- Bendigo – Seven Turns Dance Collective
- Braybrook – Braybrook Community Hub
- Melbourne – ArtPlay & JETsport
- Ringwood – Maroondah Federation Estate
- Southbank – National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)
- South Morang – Terrace Lawns Civic Centre
- South Melbourne – Temperance Hall
- Upwey – Burrinja Cultural Centre

Big Dance Victorian teachers include Luke Alleva, Ngioka Bunda-Heath, Lydia Connolly-Hiatt, Chloe Dobson, Dani-Ela Kayler, Gülsen Özer, Gretal Taylor, Josh Twee and Gerard Van Dyck.

### **Current workshop locations – hosted by Ausdance New South Wales**

- Bankstown – Bankstown Art Centre
- Broadway – Shaun Parker & Company
- Darlinghurst – The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)
- Lilyfield – Legs On The Wall
- Newtown – DUTI (Dancing Under The Influence)
- Olympic Park – Australian College of Physical Education
- Parramatta – Riverside Parramatta
- Surrey Hills – Dance Central Sydney
- Sydney – Sydney Dance Company
- Ultimo – Ready Made Works Inc

Big Dance New South Wales teachers include Sasha Lian, Shar Mitchell, Beatriz Occhiuzzi, Lexy Panetta, Feras Shaheen, Josh Thomson, Sarah-Vyne Vassallo (dance coordinator) and Cassidy Waters.

**Additional workshop locations** will be announced and updated at [bigdance.org.au](http://bigdance.org.au)

### **National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA)**

The NAISDA developing artists sharing the Big Dance routine with the Big Dance teachers include: Amy Flannery, Jye Uren and Mendia Kermond.

### Big Dance in Australia

- In 2018, Ausdance Victoria and New South Wales present Big Dance (following ten years in the United Kingdom).
- In 2016, Ausdance New South Wales and Ausdance Queensland partnered with Tracks Dance Company in Darwin to run a Big Dance event.
- In 2014, Ausdance New South Wales partnered with Sydney Dance Company and produced events at Sydney Opera House, Bega and Port Macquarie.

### Big Dance 2018 aims

- Raise participation in and appreciation of dance.
- Deliver a dance program that contributes to social interaction and cohesion, allowing people to feel a sense of community.
- Share Indigenous and non-Indigenous dance and cultures.
- To create a short dance work that embodies and shares Australian culture using contemporary practice.
- To increase opportunities for physical activity through the use of arts to engage and activate a broad spectrum of community members.

### Frances Rings – Big Dance 2018 choreographer

Frances Rings was born in Adelaide, and a descendant of the Kokatha people and is also of German descent. Frances joined Bangarra Dance Theatre in 1993 after graduating from NAISDA Dance College. Frances has choreographed 7 works for Bangarra Dance Theatre and works nationally and internationally as a freelance choreographer. Currently Frances is Head of Creative Studies at NAISDA Dance College.

### Craig Bary – Big Dance 2018 choreographer

Craig Bary is an active member of the dance community in Australia and New Zealand. He has been a founding member of key organisations such as The New Zealand Dance Company and Garry Stewart’s Australian Dance Theatre. Craig has worked with many different companies and choreographers and choreographed works on Sydney Dance Company, Footnote New Zealand Dance, and the iOU collective. Craig regularly works with The New Zealand School of Dance and is currently the Unit Manager for Contemporary Dance and Physical Theatre at NAISDA Dance College on the Central Coast of New South Wales.

### Huey Benjamin – Big Dance 2018 composer

Huey Benjamin has worked as a musician with many top Australian recording artists, including Yothu Yindi, Dragon, Peter Dinklage, Wendy Matthews, Jenny Morris, Ian Moss, Slim Dusty, Anne Kirkpatrick, Deborah Conway and Dave Dobbyn. Huey has composed the original music scores choreographers Narelle Benjamin and Garry Stewart. He has also worked with The Australian Ballet, The Royal Birmingham Ballet Company, Royal Ballet Flanders, Ballet Du Rhin France and Australian Dance Theatre. Currently, Huey is the music and film production lecturer at NAISDA.

**Big Dance 2018** is supported by NAISDA, VicHealth; the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; City of Sydney; Yarra Ranges Council; and the Regional Centre for Culture program, a Victorian Government initiative in partnership with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and Mount Alexander Shire.

**Ausdance Victoria** is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

**Ausdance New South Wales** is supported by the New South Wales Government through Create NSW.



The Regional Centre for Culture is a Victorian Government Initiative