

MEDIA RELEASE
Tuesday December 1

Indigenous dancers return from School Spectacular.

Twelve Koori students from Cowra High School's Wagambirra Dance Group have just returned from 'an experience of a lifetime', where they performed in the Aboriginal Dance Ensemble at the Sydney Entertainment Centre as part of Schools Spectacular 2009.

For this little dance group from the bush, performing as part of a group of 150 Indigenous dancers under the spotlights and in front of audiences, numbering 8,000 to 10,000 in 4 separate performances, was certainly an experience they will never forget.

The Aboriginal Dance Ensemble with their Welcome, One Mob Corroboree was the opening act of the show, following the National Anthem. The group left Cowra early last Wednesday 25 November and had 2 days of rehearsals prior to the public performances on Friday 27 and Saturday 28 November.

This year was the first time that Wagambirra (meaning to dance and play in the local Wiradjuri language) had auditioned for Schools Spectacular and they were delighted to have been accepted. Over 3,000 students from public primary and high schools across NSW took part in the 26th Schools Spectacular, which this year had the theme of "Reaching Out".

To top off their wonderful experience, on the Friday night, the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, stopped to chat with teacher Cheryl McAlister and her Cowra High students before the show. The Governor was most encouraging and supportive of these students in proudly celebrating their Indigenous culture. The participating students and staff sincerely thank the many individuals, businesses and organisations in the local area who donated funds to allow the group to have this magnificent opportunity. Particular thanks goes to Arts Outwest who was our major sponsor.

In addition to the twelve Aboriginal dance students, Cowra High was also represented by seven students who were part of the Combined Choir and another seven drama students who were part of the group from Drama West who provided the foyer entertainment prior to each show and during interval.

Schools Spectacular was certainly a spectacular experience for the Cowra High students. The show was filmed by ABC TV and will be shown on ABC1 on Sunday 13 December (shortened version) and a longer version the following Sunday 20 December on ABC2.

The schools participation at School Spectacular was financially supported by Arts OutWest through funds from the Central West Contemporary Dance Development Project.

ENDS

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Photo 1 (DSCF 1895) - Wagambirra Dance Group members who went to Schools spectacular - back (l - r) - Tarcia Kennedy, Blake Murray, Harley Tarrant, Sarah Williams, Bianca Reed, Williams Reid, Matilda Lambshead, front - Kieren Murray, Maddison Simpson, Chaydin Reid, Kerri-Anne Cutmore, Shawn Townsend

Photo 2 (DSCF 1898) - Cowra High Aboriginal Dance Ensemble members with Governor NSW - (l - r) - Sarah Williams, Kerri-Anne Cutmore, Governor NSW, William Reid (head only), Harley Tarrant, Matilda Lambshead, Kieren Murray and Bianca Reed (up high above rest on right side).