

NAISDA NEWS

EDITION THREE: NOVEMBER 2010



Cultural Tutors Tony Mudalyun Ganambarr and Heather Mitjangba Burarrwanga

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NAISDA – proudly dancing on Darkinjung land

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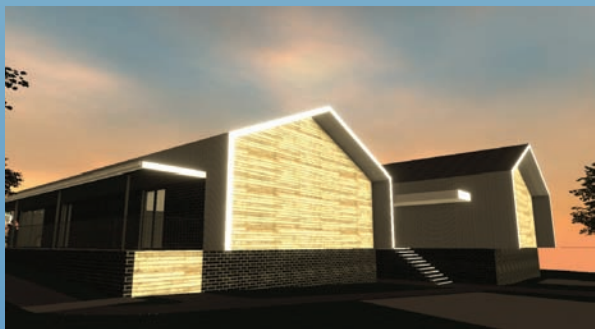
our students ... our future

WELCOME:

As 2010 draws to a close, we can reflect on considerable achievements this year.

An extremely significant development this year has been the rewriting of our course structure that will guide the teaching and philosophy of NAISDA over the next five years. The new course will have added streams that give our DAs a clearer career path and bring us in line with state-of-the-art technology through a grant achieved through NSW DET and DEEWR. The major change is a recognition that not all the Developing Artists want to pursue a mainstream performance career. We have created two new courses, the Certificate IV and Diploma in Community Dance Practice. This will make the course relevant to a wider group of young people. NAISDA owes a major debt of gratitude to the Advisory committee and the consultants who worked on this mammoth task.

Finally we are getting close to a date for the construction of our new building facilities that will finally see NAISDA's purpose-built dance studios for our Developing Artists. We are working with the consultants and architects on the final details. We hope construction to be completed by the end of 2011.



Sam Rutherford, Project Manager, St Hilliers Construction
Andrew Tesoriero - Visualisation Artist
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NAISDA's end of year production is the highlight of our year. With Wildfire – Old Voices, New Ways NAISDA DAs once again surprise and delight. I am particularly proud that Stephen Page, Deon Hastie and Jason Pitt as well as Maori artist Charles Koroneho and contemporary dance legend Graeme Watson contributed choreography to this

show. Thanks too to Dean Walsh for mentoring DA Beau Dean Smith in his first work.

This year has seen a wonderful group of people from the Central Coast form themselves into a Friends group to provide outings and pastoral support for the DAs. Just one example of the 'Friendly' activities are the volunteers from Coast Shelter who cook breakfast for the DAs every Friday morning. From 2011 there will be a roster of Friends cooking dinner one night a week for all the DAs. They do this with food donated by Coast Shelter. Their generosity and sincere interest in our DAs is quite inspiring and I thank them all, particularly Maree Roberts, Laurie Maher and Louise Duff.

The young people's training and advocacy service *Youth Connections* is gradually consolidating its activities here at Mt Penang and a wide variety of opportunities will become available for our DAs. One program being developed is a *Sisterspeak* program for the female students that will teach living skills but also encourage the development of positive self identity and belonging. Local Aboriginal women will act as mentors for the program. A similar program for the male students, *Brospeak*, is in development.

NAISDA is now a Company Limited by Guarantee. This will take the organisation in new directions with the development of the NAISDA Foundation focusing on achieving new accommodation for the DAs over the coming years.

Accommodation continues to present challenges to us, with the current cottages in poor condition and artificially limiting our student intake as private accommodation in the area is extremely difficult for students to access. Accommodation has been identified by incoming Chair, Warren Mundine, as a priority issue for him and the focus of the new NAISDA Foundation's fundraising efforts. If you are interested in assisting the Foundation's work, please contact Jennifer Dakers by email j.dakers@naisda.com.au or telephone (02) 4340 3121.

Four Developing Artists, Steven Smith-Ince, Eric Avery, Ann-Janette Phillips and Travis De Vries will complete their Diplomas at the end of this year.

They are all wonderful young artists who will have fantastic careers. I am very proud of them and proud of the work NAISDA has done to develop them into the dancers they are today. They set a high standard for our new intake of twenty two Developing Artists who will be joining us in February 2011.



Kim Walker
Executive Director, NAISDA Ltd

CULTURAL RESIDENCY DHAMBALA



Ceremony and dance were at the heart of the Cultural Residency held at Dhambala homeland on Elcho Island in September. Led by Tony Wuduku Ganambarr and Heather Mitjangba Burarrwanga, with family members, Developing Artists continued to deepen their knowledge of the bunggul (dance) and manikay (song) of the Datiwuy clan.

They were welcomed by traditional owner, leader of the Garrawurra clan and senior artist, Richard Ghanduwuy Garrawurra who explained to the DAs how the Datiwuy and Garrawurra clans are connected through ceremony, land and marriage.



The Ancestral beings, the Djan'kawu sisters, travelled across this land creating the places and sacred freshwater holes at Dhambala. These sacred sites are extremely significant for the Dhuwa clans and the freshwater holes can be seen bubbling up through the saltwater – a constant reminder of the Dhan'kawu travels, even today.

Next, for each DA, came the demanding task of memorising and correctly pronouncing the Yolngu name, Skin name and Clan they had been given, along with those of the other 22 members of the group, all under the watchful supervision of the Elders! All the hard work was worth it when the following day at Shepherdson College, the local school, as each DA introduced themselves to the students, there were loud cheers as the young Yolngu recognised DAs who now belonged to the students' own clan groups.

After observing the DAs in their bunggul performance, the Elders invited them to participate in the first stage of a Dhapi, or initiation ceremony, for two of the young boys at Dhambala. This ceremony was performed as a promise that the full ceremony will take place next year. DAs were painted up in gapan, the white clay, along with the other men and women of the family who led them through the

performance of the songline that accompanied the story being re-enacted.



The focus then turned to perfecting the technique of the Datiwuy dances in preparation for the Closing Bunggul to be performed before a large crowd of community members. This involved hours of demanding rehearsals led by Tony and Heather and mentored by male and female family members and private rehearsals held in the bush and on the beach away from visiting community members to ensure that correct practice of these dances would be totally respected. Then, final paint up and the evening performance took place to great applause and huge acknowledgement from the Elders.

Alongside the bunggul, the girls worked on developing their skills in weaving pandanus baskets and making jewellery and the boys supported them with their emerging hunting skills – huge crayfish for late night supper and even breakfast – and fish large enough to feed the whole group! All that coordinated by NAISDA Artistic Coordinator Jasmine Gulash, Uncle Percy and Robyn Heras who accompanied them on the trip.



Our thanks go to all the Datiwuy and Garrawurra families for their generosity, their commitment to teaching the DAs and for the privilege of being able to share in their amazing culture.

Written by Robyn Heras

NEW BOARD MEMBER CAMERON CHEETHAM



Cameron is a Senior Associate with law firm, Clayton Utz. He has practised commercial law in Australia and the United Kingdom at Clayton Utz, Herbert Smith and Mallesons Stephen Jaques for more than 15 years, particularly disputes regarding equitable

rights and banking and insolvency law. Cameron has acted for leading financial institutions, insolvency practitioners and Government departments and statutory authorities in a broad range of litigious matters and has extensive experience in acting for and advising pro-bono clients including matters concerning sexual assault privilege and representing clients of the Disability Discrimination Legal Centre in Sydney. Outside the law Cameron's interests include cricket, music (jazz and rock), Rugby Union and League, painting, ballet, film and his five and three year old children. We welcome Cameron to the Board.

CONNECTED

Fifty indigenous students from Western Sydney had the opportunity to reconnect with their culture at NAISDA's second ConnectEd camp in September. The week long camp, called *Matjabala* or 'Coming Together Sharing' was sponsored through Communities Arts NSW and saw students learn a variety of important cultural traditions that they are unable to learn in school, such as indigenous dance and didgeridoo playing.

"At school we don't dance and we don't learn much on our culture," said a year nine student who attended last year's camp.

"*Matjabala* provides students with the unique chance to revisit their indigenous roots in an environment in which they can feel comfortable," said Mr Walker.

Throughout the camp, students engaged with cultural leaders who have been successful in keeping these roots alive including Aunty Kathy Marika, Guest Performer and Cultural Consultant to the famed Bangarra Dance Theatre. During the camp students also learnt dances from the Torres Strait Islands as well as working with artists from the Indigenous Hip Hop Project, an organization that works to spread the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through dance around Australia.

The climax of the week was a special dance performance held by the students, which provided them with an opportunity to showcase their new-found skills.

Matjabala allowed participating students to consider a future with NAISDA, while providing them with transformational learning experiences.

HOMESTAY FAMILIES NEEDED FOR 2011



NAISDA Dance College is seeking Homestay Families for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students from communities across Australia while they are studying for a Careers in Dance at NAISDA.

If this sounds like something you may be interested in and would like more information, please return the response slip below, or alternatively you can contact the Developing Artist Support Officer, Celeste Yarnold on (02) 4340 3100 or c.yarnold@naisda.com.au.

Our family is interested in finding out more information on the NAISDA Dance College Homestay program for 2011.

Name/s (please print): _____

Phone Number: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Send to:

CELESTE YARNOLD
DEVELOPING ARTIST SUPPORT OFFICER
NAISDA DANCE COLLEGE
PO BOX 7103
KARIONG NSW 2250

NAISDA Ltd
31 The Avenue, Mt Penang Parklands
Kariong NSW 2250 Australia

PHONE (61) 2 4340 3100
FAX (61) 2 4340 3160
FREECALL WITHIN AUSTRALIA 1800 117 116
EMAIL naisda@naisda.com.au
WEB www.naisda.com.au

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ABN 19 177 937 206