

STYLEUP

FASHION, BEAUTY & LIFESTYLE

Force of nature

Sydney Dance Company's Continuum brings together leading First Nations artists



Ngaere Jenkins,
Continuum.
Picture: Daniel Boud

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TV star guided by his community

NATASHA CLARK

"Everything I do as an artist, as a First Nations person, doesn't happen in isolation," says Nyikina actor Mark Coles Smith.

"It is qualified by my community and my family."

It's a world view which stands in contrast to Detective Jay Swan, the loner cop he plays in *Mystery Road: Origin*.

Adapted from Ivan Sen's films, *Mystery Road* arrived on the ABC in 2018 with Aaron Pedersen as Jay. Set against remote landscapes, it fused crime drama with stories of race, justice and the harmful legacy of colonisation on First Nations peoples.

After two acclaimed seasons, the franchise shifted to a prequel, *Mystery Road: Origin*, tracing Swan's early years at the turn of the millennium.

Its second season premiered Sunday, September 21 on ABC TV, with all episodes available to stream on ABC iview.

We meet Jay again in 2000, newly arrived in Loch Iris, a fading timber town surrounded by karri forests.

Jay and partner Mary (Tuuli



Mark Coles Smith as Jay Swan and Tuuli Narkle as Mary in *Mystery Road: Origin*.

Narkle) are starting over, caring for her niece and expecting a child, while he joins the small local police force.

But his first roadside encounter — a frightened Indigenous boy on the run — hints at deeper troubles.

Soon, a missing girl, buried hospital records, and old wounds in the town resurface, pulling him into conflicts which stretch far beyond his badge.

For Coles Smith, the turn-of-the-century setting matters as much as the plot.

"You don't enter into a new

century without considering what kind of nation you've been," he says.

This season forces Jay to confront the fraught tension of straddling two worlds; his duty to the police force and his ties to community.

Beneath the karri canopy, the show digs into one of Australia's darkest chapters — the Stolen Generations.

"Jay is tested in this season in a way he wasn't before, he's brought to breaking point," Coles Smith says.

But the burden Jay places on himself — trying to fix everything — only deepens his isolation. "Individualism and self-isolation are by-products of modernity, of Western culture; and Jay is a victim of it," he says.

"The reality is that we need each other. Our First Nations culture prescribed a sense of we, not me; working together."

It's a foundation Coles Smith carries into his own life.

"As an artist and as an Aboriginal person, I know I'm always guided, my choices are not just mine alone," he says.

That collective approach also shaped the series itself.



Mark Coles Smith as Detective Jay Swan. Pictures: David Dare Parker

"We had an entire First Nations writing team on this, and the moment when I read the script, I could see the amount of care and consideration that had gone into telling a story that hadn't been told before on television," Coles Smith says.

Season two was co-directed by Wayne Blair (*The Sapphires*) and Jub Clerc, a Nyul Nyul and Yawuru filmmaker. Their

combined vision, alongside the all-First Nations writing team, grounds the new season in cultural authority and continuity.

For Coles Smith, embodying Jay isn't just about playing a detective; it's about carrying story, culture and responsibility together.

"No story happens in isolation," he says. "And neither do I."

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We are proud to be actively involved with our local communities to build a better future.

Hancock Iron Ore's Community Grants offer up to \$10,000 in funding for eligible groups to deliver community activations and outreach initiatives. Applications are open from 1 October to 30 November 2025. Together, we create the best.



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Ambitious art enters spotlight

PHOEBE BLOGG

Opening in Canberra on December 6, the 5th National Indigenous Art Triennial: After the Rain, will see the vision of artistic director, Tony Albert, of the Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji peoples, come to life through 10 multidisciplinary installations by contemporary artists from across Australia.

Albert has brought together artists from as far as Erub in the far north-east of Zenadth Kes/Torres Strait to Ntaria/Hermannsburg in Central Australia and Naarm/Melbourne to create ambitious projects responding to the theme of After the Rain.

From large-scale murals and video works to intimate painting and soft sculpture, After the Rain includes projects by Alair Pambejan, Aretha Brown, Blaklash, Dylan Mooney, Hermannsburg Potters, Itja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre, Vincent Namatjira, Jimmy John Thaiday, Naminapu Maymuru-White, Thea Anamara Perkins, Yarrenyty Arltere Artists, Grace Kemarre Robinya, and Warraba Weatherall.

Albert has been working with the artists to challenge them to produce their most ambitious works to date. These projects celebrate inter-generational legacies and cultural warriors of the past, present and future — representing rebirth, cycles of cleansing and new beginnings.

The art will stay on display until April 26.



Kutcha Edwards.
Main picture:
Suzanne Phoenix

PHOEBE BLOGG

For one night only, multi-award-winning songwriter Kutcha Edwards and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra will transform the Sydney Opera House into a river of sound and ceremony with Ngarli-Wangu (Our Song).

Coinciding with the second anniversary of the Voice to Parliament referendum, the event celebrates truth-telling, cultural stewardship, and voices too often unheard.

A respected Elder and Songman, Edwards has curated this special event and will host and perform throughout the evening alongside leading First Nations artists, including vocalists Dr Shellie Morris AO, Emily Wurramara, Kankawa Nagarra, Ray Dimakarri Dixon,

and dancers. He will also premiere My Favourite Drop, a poem he wrote at age 13 inspired by the river that carries his people's story.

With conductor-in-residence Benjamin Northey at the podium, Edwards, guest artists and the orchestra will bring to life anthems spanning four decades of Blak artistry.

"Imagine an 18-month-old Aboriginal boy born on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River being wrenched from his mother and father in 1967 and denied his rightful journey in life. The course of the river in him was redirected," he said.

"Imagine now the river in that little boy has made its way to the famous concert hall at the iconic Sydney Opera House in a collaboration with the renowned Sydney Symphony

Orchestra. And ironically two years on from the day of the failed Voice Referendum on 14 October 2023, we present Ngarli Wangu (Our Voice). He now has his own voice." Since 1991, Edwards has woven activism and songwriting together.

He has performed with Black Arm Band and Blackfire, and cultivated a solo journey that blends his "Bidgee" blues with the traditional songs of his people.

His proud Mutti Mutti heritage and his experiences as a survivor of the Stolen Generations have shaped his diverse creative output, which has seen him collaborate with Australian music luminaries including Paul Kelly, the late Archie Roach AC, Judith Durham, and Emma Donovan.

Edwards has also pioneered

projects such as Beyond The Bars — a live prison radio series that earned a Human Rights Award.

The concert promises a multi-sensory journey through Country. A soundscape recording will greet audiences as they take their seats while the orchestra surges through the concert hall, transforming the stage into Lake Mungo. Interpretive dancers will perform ceremony around a side-stage bush fire, and projections of Edwards' Country will illuminate his storytelling.

Edwards and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra will perform on Tuesday, October 14 at 7pm in the concert hall at Sydney Opera House.

Tickets are available at tinyurl.com/2xllalmo

Baker Boy channels the rage

PHOEBE BLOGG

With the release of Baker Boy's new album Djandjay fast approaching, the multi-award-winning Yolngu star unveiled new single Thick Skin this month.

The song, from the star's highly anticipated second album — out on October 10 — is an anthem of survival and solidarity.

Thick Skin features a powerhouse Blak choir that includes Thelma Plum, Emma Donovan, Kee'ahn, and Jada Weazel.

Born from the pain and frustration after the 2023 Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum, the track confronts the ongoing presence of racism in Australia.

"It wasn't anger at the result as much, I think it was the way mob became a topic of conversation and mottos like 'if you don't know, vote no' encouraging ignorance. It

highlighted the everyday experience of being Yolngu, being Indigenous in this country and that hit me hard," Baker Boy said.

The track features rapping in the Yolngu language while leaning into punk. "I had been wanting to explore the punk sound for a while and this felt like the perfect track for me to let loose in that space," Baker Boy said.

"It's not natural for me to express anger through my music. I have this reputation for positivity, but I think the punk-inspired production allowed me to really say what I wanted to say.

"It has let me express these feelings, express the anger, the chaos and frustration in a way that's new and experimental for me but also in a way that was really authentic. It just came out of me."

The video for Thick Skin features strobe-heavy visuals, building to an unexpected, gospel-like moment of

release. The final minute of the video is a powerful moment when the choir comes together, delivering with unflinching honesty and solidarity: "I won't be broken, you can't tear my thick skin, we'll always sing our song."

Directed by Aurie Indianna and Jordan Ruyi Blanch, the video is the fourth in a five-part visual series filmed within the historic Werribee Mansion. Once a grand symbol of colonial wealth and power built on dispossession, the mansion now becomes Baker Boy's stage for reclamation, its walls reverberating with voices and stories they were never built to hold.

As seen in previously released videos, each one occupies a different space in the mansion, progressively reclaiming and recontextualising the colonial estate. Together, they channel the album's emotional, thematic, and sonic range.



Artwork for Baker Boy's Thick Skin.



Above:
Naiara De
Matos and
Ryan
Pearson.
Below:
Naiara De
Matos.
Pictures:
Daniel Boud



Weaving connection of land, sea, sky and spirit

PHOEBE BLOGG

Sydney Dance Company's *Continuum*, a triple bill bringing together two of Australia's most renowned First Nations artists, alongside two exciting voices in contemporary choreography, opens on October 22.

Continuum explores the spectrum of human experience — from the ephemeral beauty of twilight to the elemental force of breath.

In a highly anticipated return to Sydney Dance Company, Stephen Page AO, descendant of the Nunukul people and the Munaldjali clan of the Yugambah Nation, premieres *Unungkati Yantatja* (one with the other), created in collaboration with acclaimed Kalkadunga composer and leading Yidaki player William Barton.

The partnership brings together two groundbreaking First Nations artists to share a story rooted in Barton's dedication to his father. Page's choreography embodies Barton's composition, calling out to land, sea, sky and creature, weaving a profound connection to the spirit of creation breath. Barton will be joined live on stage by the award-winning Omega Ensemble, who commissioned the powerful score.

Blown gently across the stage, *Unungkati Yantatja* is a tribute to the force of earthly breaths, intrinsically connecting audiences to Country, each other, and the continual rhythm of life.

Page said he is looking forward to returning to Sydney Dance Company this October, where his career began.

"Returning to Sydney Dance Company is deeply personal, it's where my career began and walking back into the studio feels like coming full circle. I

love telling stories and creating, especially in the world of dance and caring for William's story is a gift," he said.

"I don't think there is a contemporary clan in the world as strong as Sydney Dance Company and to work with these dancers as they embody this story with William weaving his energy through the whole experience, carrying it forward to be felt by audiences is going to be really special."

Continuum also includes Sydney Dance Company artistic director and celebrated choreographer Rafael Bonachela presenting *Spell*, a bold world premiere in part developed during the company's residency at Italy's prestigious Orsolina28 Art Foundation this year.

Bonachela's signature style reaches new heights of precision and passion with five distinctive worlds, each a vivid "spell" that together create dance alchemy. Set to an evocative score featuring Olafur Arnalds, Bryce Dessner, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, and Alice Smith, *Spell* is an exhilarating fusion of movement, light and sound, inviting audiences to experience dance as a potent and primal force.

"It is a privilege to share the stage with Stephen Page, whose extraordinary work has shaped Australian dance for decades, and to welcome back Tra Mi Dinh, whose bold voice presents an exciting new perspective. *Continuum* is about connection — across generations, creative expression, and lived experience — and I can't wait for audiences to experience the beauty and power of these three works together," Bonachela said.

The triple bill also features a reimagined work by rising choreographer Tra Mi Dinh



Left: Sam Winkler.
Below: William Barton and Dancers

called *Somewhere Between Ten and Fourteen*. The work's hypnotic rhythm captures the transience of life's continual fluctuations and the beauty found in change.

"I'm thrilled to be returning to Sydney Dance Company to expand my 2023 *New Breed* work," she said. "The invitation to dive back into this world and reimagine it for a larger cast of dancers is a rare gift — one that affords me the opportunity to enrich and develop its choreographic language."

"I'm stoked to be presenting my work in this season alongside two heavyweight Australian choreographers."

Sydney Dance Company is Australia's leading contemporary dance company, presenting new works in Sydney, around Australia and internationally, with studios on Gadigal Land.

Continuum will run from the October 22 until November 1.



Winning art has a distinct voice

ALEXANDRA GIORGIANNI

Gamilaraay artist Juanita McLauchlan has won the MA Art Prize at the Sydney Contemporary art fair, with her work *Mandaymanday / String of Stars* praised for its innovative use of materials and distinct Australian voice.

Sponsored by MA Financial, the prize recognises and supports emerging and early-career artists in Australia. It returned this month for its third year with a record-breaking number of entries and an increased prize of \$15,000.

McLauchlan is a proud Gamilaraay artist based on Wiradjuri Country in Wagga Wagga. Primarily involved in printmaking, she has been recognised for her talent across a variety of awards and programs. She previously received the National Regional Arts Fellowship in 2024 and participated in the McCahon House x Bundanon Exchange earlier this year.

Speaking at Sydney Contemporary's opening day,

she expressed surprise at her win. "Thank you so much. I appreciate it, and I'd just like to thank MA Financial Group, Sydney Contemporary and Carriageworks for holding this space, but also, I'd like to thank and congratulate the other finalists," said McLauchlan. "I had no idea I was going to win, and I'm still in shock. I thought I was a winner just being a finalist."

Mandaymanday / String of Stars explores the balance between chaos and control in printmaking — using complex textures and layered processes to embrace the qualities of the medium. Using domestic fabrics such as vintage blankets as a base, she incorporates organic materials such as leaves and animal pelts to print, eco-dye, and encourage active interaction with her audience.

This experimental approach to both materials and ideas is deeply informed by her Indigenous heritage, which McLauchlan uses to shape and guide her practice.

Andrew Martin, managing

director and head of asset management at MA Financial Group, said the company was proud to support emerging artists through the MA Art Prize, and praised McLauchlan's work.

"It is extraordinary. In person, you can see the passion and love that's gone into the work," he said.

"(Her work) stood out for its originality and distinctly Australian voice. Intertwining native and colonial materials to create an impression of Wiradjuri Country, Wagga Wagga, NSW... and symbolising connections of bloodlines across generations is unique and inspiring."

Mr Martin said the prize was not only a recognition of rising artistic talent, but also an opportunity to support a professional career.

Fair director Zoe Paulsen commented that the breadth of works displayed at this year's showcase is the product of 116 galleries and over 500 artists from all over Australia, Aotearoa, other Asia countries and beyond.



Mandaymanday / String of Stars

"As we all know, at the heart of Sydney Contemporary are our artists and gallerists ... These programs reflect the ambition, diversity and vitality of Sydney Contemporary — not just an exhibition, but a cultural

destination and a celebration of art in all its forms," she said.

McLauchlan is currently presenting an exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales which will run until October 19.

environment plan

seeking relevant persons' input



Chevron has been operating in Australia for more than 70 years – creating enduring benefits and delivering reliable, affordable energy. We welcome feedback to enhance our environmental management measures as we progress offshore activities to support the ongoing supply of natural gas to Western Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

our activities

Chevron Australia, on behalf of the Wheatstone Project joint venture participants, operates the Wheatstone Project in Western Australia. Wheatstone is Australia's first natural gas 'hub' – with capability for third parties to process gas through its facilities.

To date, Wheatstone's two LNG trains have been supplied with gas from the Chevron Australia-operated Wheatstone and Iago fields, as well as gas from the Woodside-owned Julimar and Brunello fields. At the completion of an asset swap between Chevron Australia and Woodside, Woodside will transfer all of its interest in the Julimar-Brunello Project (65%) to Chevron Australia. We are now revising our Wheatstone Start-Up and Operations Environment Plan (the revised EP) to incorporate the Julimar-Brunello field production system.

The feedback we receive during consultation will inform and enhance the revised EP, which will be assessed by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

environment that may be affected (EMBA)

As part of our environmental assessment and consultation process, Chevron Australia creates an EMBA map to provide geographical context for stakeholders to determine if their functions, interests or activities may be affected by an offshore activity during operations or in an emergency scenario.

The map shows the operational area (OA) and the EMBA, which is based on a worst-case environmental scenario, which in this case is an unplanned release (oil spill) resulting from a major defect in a flowline or trunkline.

The EMBA has been defined through combining multiple simulations for the unplanned release scenario under different weather and ocean conditions.



This means that in the highly unlikely event an unplanned release does occur, a geographical area much smaller than the EMBA would be affected.

The majority of the impacts or risks directly arising from planned activities would occur within close proximity of the OA. Chevron Australia has systematic control measures to prevent and mitigate emergencies and to reduce the impact of planned activities on the environment, including ecological, social and cultural sensitivities.

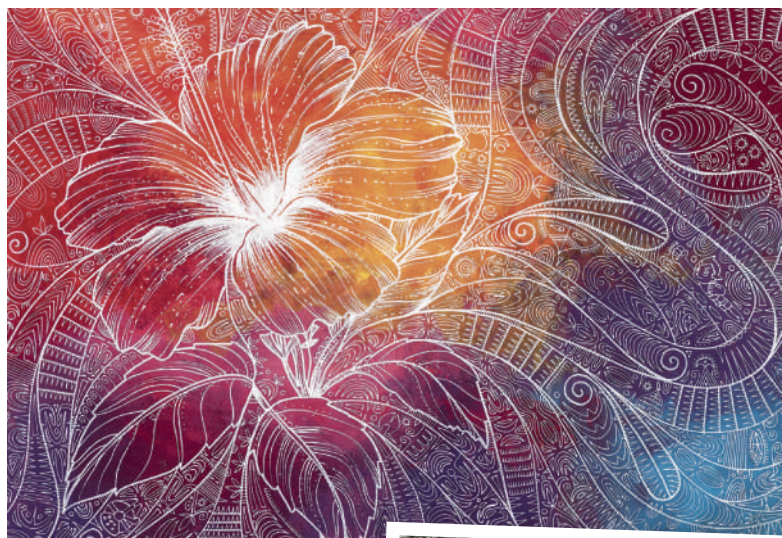
we want to hear from you

We are now seeking feedback and input if you consider your functions, interests, or activities may be affected. This may include Traditional Owners and Custodians with a spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea Country, local community members, and those involved in commercial or recreational fishing and tourism.

Please contact us by **16 October 2025** to be included in consultations. Visit australia.chevron.com/feedback, call tollfree on **1800 225 195** or scan the **QR code** for more information.



Blend of ancestry and sci-fi



PHOEBE BLOGG

Acclaimed artist Brian Robinson unveiled his new exhibition *Ur Wayii (Incoming Tide)* recently at the Australian National Maritime Museum.

A Waiben (Thursday Island) artist who also has Maluyligal and Wuthathi heritage, Robinson's work explores imagery drawn from ancestral iconography of the Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait).

He uniquely interweaves this with images from popular culture and science fiction.

Robinson uses these references as metaphors for colonisation, juxtaposing the ancient and modern to create powerful allegories which examine the moral and psychological impacts of how empire has reshaped ideas about Australia's future.



Robinson is of the Kala Lagaw Ya and Wuthathi language groups of the Torres Strait. Now Cairns-based, he is known for printmaking and public sculptures, using a variety of techniques to make bold, innovative works.

His work has contributed significantly to Cairns through major public art installations, including his monumental stainless steel woven sculptures installed on the Cairns Esplanade in 2003.



Brian Robinson's new exhibition *Ur Wayii (Incoming Tide)* is at the Australian National Maritime Museum. Left: Robinson's *Efflorescence Hibiscus* and *One Fish Two*. Picture: Saul Steed

"I work in a diverse range of media, including painting, printmaking, sculpture, design and public art to produce works of art that echo my Indigenous heritage," Robinson said.

"My creations are seemingly incongruous concoctions where many motifs and characters are co-opted into the spirit world of the Islander imagination, which are then intertwined with historical narrative, personal history

and humour." Australian National Maritime Museum manager of Indigenous programs Matt Poll said Robinson's work was a living document of resilience.

"Brian's art shows the living, evolving, maritime worlds of Zenadth Kes. It is not just aesthetically compelling; it is a living document of resilience," he said.

"It celebrates the survival of ancient traditions, demonstrates the power of

adaptation, reclaims historical narratives, and asserts a confident, contemporary Zenadth Kes identity."

Ur Wayii (Incoming Tide) is a multi-disciplinary exhibition spanning printmaking, sculpture, video and graphic design. It is a complex tapestry woven from traditional knowledge, historical narratives, and a keen engagement with the contemporary globalised world.

Dance group marks its 30th year of theatre

PHOEBE BLOGG

In celebration of 30 years since the premiere of its inaugural work, Marrugeku recently returned to Gunbalanya — the community in West Arnhem Land where the company began with its first-ever production, *Mimi*.

To mark the occasion and remember the Kunwinjku Elders who guided the work, there was a screening of *Mimi* in conjunction with the Stone Country Festival, Gunbalanya. Now Australia's leading intercultural and trans-Indigenous dance theatre company, Marrugeku is globally recognised for work of extraordinary quality incorporating theatre, and multimedia installations.

With its first tour of *Mimi* in 1996 across Arnhem Land and its second tour in 1997 to Europe, the company captured national and international attention. The need to communicate in different ways to diverse audiences defines its practices and production values, and it has toured works around the world.

Marrugeku plays a vital role in raising global awareness of the diversity of Indigenous experience, confronting the complex social realities of contemporary Indigenous life

while meeting the urgent need for truth-telling about Australia's past. Founded in 1994 to create *Mimi*, Marrugeku began with an ambitious collaboration based on an idea by Gamilaroi and Mandandanji choreographer Michael Leslie and directed by co-artistic director of Stalker Theatre Rachael Swain. Commissioned for the 1996 Perth Festival, *Mimi* was developed in Gunbalanya with Kunwinjku storytellers, musicians and dancers, West Australian Indigenous performers, and physical artists from Stalker Theatre.

"After discussions with Michael Leslie and Rachael Swain, the Festival commissioned the new company to develop its first work, *Mimi*, for ground-breaking performances at the 1996 Festival," Henry Boston, former general manager, Festival of Perth, said. "It was the first time that the stories of the Kunwinjku people of Western Arnhem Land had been presented in Perth and the audiences loved the show."

"Since then, Marrugeku has gone from strength to strength, under the leadership of Rachael and Dalisa Pigram, to become a very special intercultural company and a great ambassador for Australia across the globe."

First Nations designers' work to go on show in Fashion Week

PHOEBE BLOGG

Melbourne Fashion Week will return soon with showstopping runways, fashion moments, industry talks, exhibitions and more.

First Nations designers including Clair Helen, Grace Lillian Lee, Ngali, and banbu will showcase their garments.

Running from October 20-26 with the theme *Come As You Are*, the event invites guests to be part of a citywide celebration of self-expression.

This year the program features six premium runways across Naarm (Melbourne), including the new sustainable 1 Hotel Melbourne, the dining hub *il Mercato Centrale*, the Melbourne Recital Centre, 101 Collins Street, Kensington's Youngusband, and a return to Little Bourke Street with Emporium Melbourne.

Showcasing a mix of emerging and established designers, MFW continues its focus on sustainability and inclusivity while celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures and Australia's diverse fashion community.

This year's program will feature the largest number of independent events to date, with more than 40 experiences including pop-up regenerative stores, vintage runways, retail events, fashion markets, talks, open studios, and projections.

Five Fashion Capsule exhibitions will bring colour and style to city streets and centres, showcasing the works of more than 30 designers, stylists and artisans.

The MFW Conversations series will return with sessions led by industry experts.

Acting Lord Mayor of Melbourne Roshena Campbell said Naarm would "cement its place as Australia's fashion and retail capital, with bold new runway locations and a spotlight on local designers, artisans and creatives", noting more than 100,000 people were expected to flock to the city.



Sene Maluwapi wears *Mumred* on the 2024 MFW ganbu marra runway. Pic: Naomi Rahim



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