CHAPTER 1: BREAK IN THE DANCE CONTINUUM

There is absolutely no record of any form of dance, being a part of the lives of non-traditionally living Aboriginal people, once British colonialism began to take effect. It wasn’t until AISDS was established that the problem was effectively addressed. Of the many reasons for the break in the dance continuum, the acts of detribalisation were the most devastating. Detribalisation moved people from their cultural base, and in many cases from their families. This totally destroyed the reason and function for the dance. This was not true for everyone but many of the extended family clans were either annihilated or separated from their homeland. The dance culture that had existed for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander could now only be found among in certain areas of the country, among isolated groups. Those who had been separated from the traditional dance ceremonies were also restricted in their participation of mainstream white society.

The imposed influence of South Sea Island dance culture on the Torres Strait Islands, by the Christian invaders, promoted a noticeable difference to the dance form: which on the Islands was still strong. But for the most part, Torres Strait Islanders suffered much the same fate as mainland Aboriginal people. By the 1970’s there was a real need for some solution to the cultural devastation of Indigenous Australians. And, via the 1970’s movement for land rights, it began to come about. It was during this time that urban arts development began to shape a new dance expression, new stories and new art.

BREAK IN THE DANCE CONTINUUM

With the coming of Captain Phillip to the east coast of Australia in 1788, colonisation and the subsequent European migration commenced. From the beginning of British occupation, everything the dance culture was based on changed. New migrants began to encroach upon sacred homelands and move Indigenous people off. This provoked a cataclysmic disruption to the fundamental reason for dance, which was primarily motivated by their link to their homeland. In Australian Indigenous societies, the home-country was the foundation of their ceremonies. Land + Dance + Identity were inseparable.

It is difficult for a person reared in western European-based culture to comprehend the full significance of the land to an Aboriginal. Traditionally aboriginal societies were composed of small mobile groups that moved from place to place within areas of land with which
they and their ancestors had been identified from time immemorial, and which for them had deep religious significance. Many Aboriginal groups believed that through their land passed the pathways followed by totemic and spirit ancestors in the 'Dreamtime'. These ancestors had moved through the land creating its physical feature and the creature including man, who lived within it. They laid down for all time the pattern of life for these creatures, their relationships with one another and with the land itself, expressing these relationships in rituals to be performed. The purpose of these rituals was to protect the lands, to ensure the renewal of its resources and to acknowledge and honour the presence within it of the spirit ancestors themselves. The performance of these rituals was therefore both the justification and purpose of life and the claims of the ceremonial life built around them took precedence over all other claims. A sense of identity with his ancestral land was therefore the core of Aboriginal life. (Coombs, 1978:8)

After British occupation the “sense of identity” with “ancestral land” was no longer “the core of Aboriginal Life” (Coombs). The differences between the two cultures (European and Indigenous Australian) were as night and day. And the function of dance in Indigenous societies had little meaning to the coloniser. The home-countries that provided the reason for the danced rituals were, by the mid 1900’s, turned into pastoral land holdings, cattle stations and country towns. Eventually large cities covered the Dreaming places. By that time detribalisation was in full operation and the traditional dance was totally eradicated for many people. This was most likely for the reasons described by the Brendt’s in the following passage:

The detribalization and almost complete extinction of many of the aboriginal peoples of Australia has been due to the white-man's engrossment with economic pursuits, his disinterested attitude and extreme apathy towards natives in general, and the belief of missionaries that they “were gradually civilizing the Aborigines and making them into God-fearing men and women who might one day be fit to associate with the white man” - but even the word “associate,” in the undefined future, holds some reserve. This is on the whole the position in Australia to-day. (Berndt, R. & C., 1942:52)

By the 1940’s, when the Brendt’s wrote this, Indigenous Australians had become “one of the most managed people of the world”, to quote Harold Blair⁴. Official ‘government managers’ had created unfamiliar racial and lifestyle categories, which were imposed on them. This took many even further from their homeland and increasingly isolated them from their dance continuum. They were no longer divided by regional groups each with a unique and distinct
culture, dance form, language and religion; but by their physical proximity to the European migrants and by the government’s latest policies about Indigenous people.

Racially based categories defined them as full blood, half-breed, quarter-caste, etc. Indigenous Australians who used to have distinct clan names, (e.g. Kamilaroi, Wudjari, Thargari or Malak Malak), that linked them to their home-country, and the knowledge encoded in their dance form; were now known as ‘traditionally living people’; the ‘Stolen Generation’; ‘Fringe Dwellers’, or they were a part of the ‘invisible urban population’. Each had a different level of “functional, factual” knowledge of their traditional dance, with many having no experience of it at all.

TRADITIONAL LIVING PEOPLE SURVIVE
Traditionally living people are mainland Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders who have been able to maintain a connection to their home-country, and who continue to practice the religious rituals and ceremonies that keep their dance continuum alive. They have chosen a number of ways to do this. A few, to some extent, were still hunter-gathers. Others were able to live and work in close proximity to their ancestral lands and would often go ‘walk-a-bout’ to maintain their ceremonies. This was more likely to happen in areas least affected by European occupation, (e.g. the Northern Territory, Central, South and Western Australia). In the below statement by Dr. Coombs, the Anangu people of northwest South Australia living at Mimili (Everard Park) were an example of people still functioning in the traditional life-style well into the late 1970’s.

......life for the Mimili people still centres around their traditional social and ceremonial life. The people have links with communities to the north and west and, for men’s and women’s rituals, small groups travel between these centres planning, co-ordinating and carrying out ceremonies. From time to time major ceremonies known as inma involving a number of communities, designed especially for the education of the young, make it necessary to move entire communities sometimes for several weeks. (Coombs, 1978:109)

Other examples include the Yolgnu of Arnhem Land, Tiwi Islanders, Mornington Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders, all of who (at the beginning of the twenty first century) still have full knowledge and practice of their dance culture.
These Indigenous people are politically astute. They have developed a powerful base in conjunction with western society, which includes them in decisions about their cultural identity and their way of life. They have a separate but equal existence with mainstream culture and society. While functioning within the traditional form, they make full use of contemporary technology as well. Young people growing up in these communities have knowledge and experience of both ‘old’ and new ways. Their artists have a choice of cultural dynamics to create from: functioning within the ceremonial world of their ancestors or that of the commercial world of contemporary western society. One example of, successfully operating with the use of both cultures, is the musical group *Yothu Yindi*, founded by Mandawuy Yunupingu.

I am Mandawuy Yunupingu. I am a crocodile man. I am also the singer and lead singer with the band Yothu Yindi. My name Yunupingu means a rock, a rock that stands against time. Fire is my clan symbol. Fire is my life force.

We operate in two aspects of reality. One is restricted (sacred); the other is unrestricted (public). That’s why I find it easy to come into the white man’s world and operate, then go back to my world without fear of losing it. I’m using white man’s skills, Yolngu skills and putting them together for a new beginning. ([Yunupingu, www.yothuyindi.com/mand.html](http://www.yothuyindi.com/mand.html))

Because *Yothu Yindi* incorporates the dance of the *Yolngu* culture in their performances, the contemporary people have had first hand exposure to traditional Aboriginal dance from Arnhem Land.

**REMOTE MISSIONS AND GOVERNMENT RESERVES**

Other examples of Indigenous people who have managed to maintain some semblance of the traditional dance form are those living on government missions and settlements. In 1977, when Dr Coombs wrote, *Australia’s Policy Towards Aborigines, 1967-1977*, Aborigines living on remote missions and government settlements were probably in close proximity to their homelands and, to some degree, continued to participate in their traditional ceremonies. The missions and settlements referred to in the report are in areas of the country where British invasion and the following European migration had not completely destroyed the culture.

Away from the cities and towns Aborigines have continued to live in ways much closer to the pattern of life of their ancestors. Most have been concentrated in Mission communities and in Government-administered settlements as their land has been encroached upon and
rendered unable to sustain their traditional lifestyle as hunter-gathers. However, some remained on land with which their ancestors had been identified but which had been taken up on leasehold by white pastoralists. (Coombs, 1977:6).

The control of government and religious administrators over the lives of institutionalised Australians, did not allow for much contact with any form of dance, except simple European folk dances, if that. However, there is no record of a thriving dance culture being present in the lives of institutionalised people, Black or White. It’s to be assumed that, for the most part, it did not exist for them; especially not at the level it did within their original culture.

**NON-TRADITIONALLY LIVING PEOPLE: FRINGE DWELLERS – STOLEN GENERATION – URBAN GHETTOS**

There is a mixed bag of knowledge about the traditional culture among Fringe Dwellers, the Stolen Generation, and Indigenous people living in the urban centres. People growing up in the forties, fifties or sixties say there were not even social dance opportunities to speak of. Carole Johnson often mentions that the only dance that she witnessed in 1972 in urban and country areas, were the rehearsals and preparations for a ‘Ball’. Balls were set up to acknowledge the ‘coming-of-age’ of young people. The event was a ‘rites-of-passage’ or a coming out party for the young people. This was a regular dance activity that only occurred when there were enough young people to participate. They would rehearse a formal circle dance, maybe a few other European dances (waltz, fox trot, etc.), and everyone would attend. She saw no other consistent social dance activities in the cities or rural areas during this time.

In the country towns the Indigenous people were relegated to the outskirts or fringes of the town. The inhabitants of fringe areas were usually the Indigenous people, minority ethnic groups, the poor or undesirables. They lived on the parameters of mainstream society. Often they attended the same schools and shopped at the same stores as the white population, but did not mixing socially.

In Australia these communities evolved out of the complicated, personal, political and economic interests of mainstream inhabitants. Goodall claims one reason to be the Federal governments answer to white racism, in the case of Southeast NSW.

By the mid-1960s the Board was beginning to acknowledge that its failure to break down rural segregation was the result of white
hostility and obstruction. It chose to increase further the pressure on rural Aborigines to leave their communities to settle in industrial cities. At the same time, as the conditions under which Aborigines were living had become more public through Aboriginal and white agitation, the Board made a last attempt to minimise the isolation of some Aboriginal communities and to be seen to be addressing the health and housing crisis. Some large and remote stations were closed and a series of housing settlements were rapidly built on small pieces of reserve land at the edge of towns like Brewarrina, Bourke, Kempsey and Moree from 1964 to 1966. All cheap and jerry-built, this makeshift housing at least allowed the Board to call them ‘town settlements’ rather than reserves’. These white towns had all won their battles to keep Aboriginal families outside municipal boundaries, but the Welfare Board then simply dumped large Aboriginal populations in overcrowded and badly built houses on the very edges of the towns, exacerbating anxieties and tensions. (Goodall, 1996:319)

Even though the original dance culture was not part of the everyday life of Aboriginal people living in fringe ghettos, Coombs states, “they fight all the harder to keep what makes them a proud people with a measure of self-esteem even if that is only through half-remembered dances and songs or by learning to play the didgeridoo”98, which is not an instrument used in all Australian Aboriginal cultures, but came to serve as a cultural icon for all.

Among those who still live in a rural context about a third live in and on fringes of country towns, often in camps of varying degrees of poverty and squalor. These fringe-dwellers have largely lost contact with the traditional religion and culture of their ancestors, although fragments of that heritage linger in a strong sense of identity with the land and the maintenance of close family relationships. Sometimes these fragments are still expressed in broken remnants of traditional languages and in half-remembered stories. This fringe-dwelling pattern of life emphasises mutual dependence and acceptance of one another amongst Aborigines, and reinforces their alienation from white society. (Coombs, 1977:6)

In country and fringe areas, Black people were secluded from most activities, including the dance clubs that were in town. Plus they had the added hardship of opposition about them having their own. The lack of organized dance activities and social opportunities in one country area were explicitly documented in the anthropological work of Marie Reay. Her (1945) article for the journal Oceania was titled: “Half-Caste Aboriginal Community in North-Western New South Wales”. The author comments on the lack of social opportunities for Aborigines living ‘within a 30-mile radius of Walgett’. Ms. Reay and a friend (Ms Grace Sitlington) attempted to introduce dance and other social activities to the community. Her
work accurately records the hopeless situation of having even the simplest social opportunities available for Aborigines during the forties.

There is a definite need for a creative social life to develop the solidarity which is necessary for these half-castes to face white hostility and contempt with confidence. No native community life has survived here and they long to participate in this aspect of white culture. While at Walgett, Miss Grace Sitlington and I organized dances, concerts, swimming parties, etcetera on the aboriginal station and demonstrated that the formation of an active social life develops self-confidence and helps to banish apathy in these people. (Reay, 1945:305)

During the period of Reconciliation in the late 1990’s, half-castes and people of the stolen generation have been voicing their experiences. They seemed to have lived in an in-between world. Sometimes they were considered to be aboriginal and at other times, not. Sometimes they were negatively referred to as ‘Abos’ or ‘Spear Chucker’, separated from mainstream white communities and required to carry passes. And at other times, they were required to prove their Aboriginal identity. Nor was it always easy to reunite with traditionally living people, even if they were your own family. The following quote from the report on the stolen generation, Bringing Them Home, are examples of this dichotomous situation.

You spend your whole life wondering where you fit. You’re not white enough to be white and your skin isn’t black enough to be black either, and it really does come down to that. Confidential evidence 210, Victoria. (ATSIS, 1997:203).

I felt like a stranger in Ernabella, a stranger in my father’s people. We had no identity with the land, no identity with a certain people. I’ve decided in the last 10, 11 years to, y’know, I went through the law. I’ve been learning culture and learning everything that goes with it because I felt, growing up, that I wasn’t really a blackfella. You hear whitefellas tell you you’re a blackfella. But blackfellas tell you you’re a whitefella. So you’re caught in a half-cast world. Confidential evidence 289, South Australia: speaker’s father was removed and the speaker grew up in Adelaide. (ATSIS, 1997:203).

Aboriginal and Islander people were also attempting to rectify the lack of community social activities. In the 1950’s a group of Aboriginal people successfully established a club for the community to have social dances. The opposition and difficulties they faced were accurately portrayed in the documentary The Coolabah Club, produced by Penny Roberts and directed by Roger Scholes (1995). The events of the documentary take place in Perth. At that time Aboriginal people were totally isolated from the white community by curfews, passes and
were certainly not permitted to attend white dance clubs. The documentary illustrates the level of harassment to the community establishing a club where they could dance and socialize.

In urban centres where small communities of mostly poor Indigenous people live, the traditional way of life (the old ways) has been completely suffocated. The only cultural remnants to survive the acts of genocide, rape and murder, were partially remembered stories kept alive by the older generation, who had somehow managed to survive themselves. But the dances and arts that re-enacted the Dreaming lore and - via strict laws of ownership determined the political structure within extended family clans - were no longer practiced in Sydney or the other urban centres. They no longer had the dance, music, chanting, storytelling, sand paintings, ritual objects, carvings, basket weaving or body designs of the Dreaming; all of which gave Aboriginal people a functional connection to who they are.

The cultural practices and dances provided specific knowledge of who they were as Gadigal, Wangai, Bidigal, Gamarraigal or Eora. With completely foreign life-styles and definitions of identity imposed on them, few Indigenous people maintained contact with their cultural source, or participated in the traditional dance continuum in any functional or meaningful way. For them, the dance continuum had been completely annihilated by the 1970’s.

The period of detribalisation continued well into the nineteen seventies as children were still forcibly being taken from their families. Some were taken so young that they grew up not knowing they were Aboriginal or Islander and some were afraid or ashamed to identify as Indigenous Australians. “...I remember that Aborigines passed themselves off as anything but Aborigines. They became Maoris, Indians, South Sea Islanders, anything to get into a hotel. Now that this is allowed, they can start to think about becoming proper people again” (Lester).

I didn’t know any Aboriginal people at all — none at all. I was placed in a white family and I was just — I was white. I never knew, I never accepted myself to being a black person until — I don’t know — I don’t know if you ever really do accept yourself as being... How can you be proud of being Aboriginal after all the humiliation and the anger and the hatred you have? It’s unbelievable how much you can hold inside. Confidential evidence 152, Victoria. (ATSIS, 1997:200).
Finding someway to bring dance back into the lives of people, who had been so seriously damaged, was made even more difficult when the negative images and self-hatred become an integral part of the person. As stated by Kevin Gilbert, the absence of positive role models made it easier for the anger and psychological self-hatred to build within his people.

Race relation’s legislation can officially decide that there will be no untouchable caste in society but such laws won’t make a scrap of difference to the self-perceptions of those who have already been conditioned to see themselves as untouchable. They have already been patterned into living that stereotype and they do live it. That is why the image of ‘dirty, lazy, bludging, alcoholic Jacky’ will take some shifting especially as we have not yet created the images of some positive Aboriginal folk heroes. Ask white or black Australian kids to name a heroic Red Indian chief or a famous Indian tribe most will be able to do so because of comics and films. Ask them to name an Aboriginal hero or a famous Aboriginal tribe and they will not be able to do so because Aboriginal history is either unknown or negative. (Farbury, 1986:127, cites Gilbert, 1978:2-3).

Serious thought to professional dance studies and careers certainly could not have been a major concern for Indigenous Australians. They were primarily struggling to survive colonialism, health and legal problems, racism, the lack of education and economic disadvantages. However, by the 1970’s, the situation began to change as Dr. Coombs states, it was the isolation, discrimination and poverty that set the climate for change:

Those in the cities usually live in the poorest and most depressed areas, tending to cling together in the face of ostracism from white society. The resulting isolation has encouraged them to identify themselves with other deprived minorities abroad and to pick up from them political ideas and patterns of behaviour, which give added strength to their alienation and justification to their bitterness, but provide also models of political action and enable them to place their cause in a more universal context. (Coombs, 1977:6)

Not only were Indigenous Australians looking for political strategies from overseas as suggested by Dr. Coombs, but a few cultural artists like Harold Blair, did manage to get to New York and study Opera with a Black American teacher in Harlem in the 1950’s or 1960’s; and Rosalind Watson maintained a professional dance career, after studying and working with the Queensland Ballet and with Arthur Mitchell’s Dance Theatre of Harlem, in New York City in the 1970’s.

There was a massive job ahead if Indigenous Australians were to re-educate themselves about their own history and culture and participate as full citizens in their own country. The job
would entail developing ways to heal the mental and physical pains within themselves and their community. There was a considerable need to promote a positive image and find a way to create a contemporary Aboriginal dance form. However, it was not until the establishment of AISDS, that the Indigenous population could even consider a career in dance to be a real possibility. After the void following the 1967 Referendum18, Black Australians took control of their situation; their message began to reach a wider audience. The erection of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was a stand for justice and Land Rights, which stimulated the birth of Indigenous urban arts development.
CHAPTER 2: 1972 ~ DANCE IN THE POLITICAL CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Nineteen Seventy-Two was a year of dynamic change for Indigenous Australians and indeed for the whole country. These changes would drastically effect the growth of contemporary indigenous dance and were instigated by three major events: The erection of the “ Aboriginal Tent Embassy” (a symbol of protest for human rights and ‘Land Rights’), The arrival of Carole Y. Johnson (the Founder of the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme) and, the support of the Whitlam Government for Aboriginal Rights and Arts development. It was this politically charged environment that initiated urban, Indigenous expression in the performing arts and created the possibility of careers in dance to be a reality for Indigenous Australians.

The chapter marks the events that stimulated the birth of contemporary urban dance development for Indigenous Australians. The year began with the erection of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, then the arrival of Carole Johnson with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, and the beginning bond between Indigenous Australians and the African American dance artists. As Carole stayed, she continued to work with Indigenous people; a dance workshop was started, which was later named The Dance Club. These workshops, combined with dramatic acting skits, became part of the rallies and demonstrations to protect the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. By the end of 1972 Whitlam’s Labour Government had come to office, and The Dance Club had managed to produce its first informal public showing.

A NEW PROTEST

The early 1970’s were a time of new beginnings for Indigenous Australians. The writings of Goodall\textsuperscript{11}, Parbury\textsuperscript{12} and Coombs\textsuperscript{13} document the rise in the urban political movement, which some attribute to the growing population of educated Indigenous urban youth that began to emerge after the 1967 Referendum.

A generation after the admission of Aboriginals to the public education system, more and more young Aboriginals were now educated and politically aware, and the Freedom rides had shown the value of direct action. (Parbury, 1986:131)

Some of what Indigenous Australians wanted to accomplish had already been tried and tested in the African American conflicts of the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s and in some cases became
models for Australian Blacks to follow. The Freedom Rides were one example of Black Australians attempting to bring attention to the hidden face of racism in the country towns.

In the summer of 1965, after the Freedom Rides for black people in the United States, Charles Perkins, Chicka Dixon and students from Sydney university, with the help of Ted Noffs of the Wayside chapel, hired a bus and set off on a freedom ride through northwest New South Wales. Their aim was to publicize discrimination against Aboriginal people in the country towns. (Parbury, 1986:128)

People were finding new solutions to the problems confronting them by looking for answers overseas. Their challenge to government apathy became less tolerant, more confrontational and internationally visible. It was during this period that it became possible for Indigenous Australians to travel abroad. In the early 1970’s a small group had visited China to gain a view of the Cultural Revolution, another group had gone to the United States to gain a closer look at the work of groups like the Black Panthers. Those who stayed at home continued to work in their own communities to promote activities and pride among their people.

In Sydney they were working very hard on Social welfare programs and politics. People like Chicka Dixon, Garry Foley, Billy Craigie, Garry Williams and Tony Korrie began to develop their speaking skills with the growth of the political movement. I understand Chicka had been running some talent shows for Aboriginal people but I never saw the talent shows because they had ceased by the time I came in 1972, but I was told a lot about them. (Johnson, 1995:Interview)

**THE ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY**

The contention for Land Rights, which had been occurring since the early days of colonialism\(^4\), came to a head with the erection of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. It was set-up on the biggest national holiday, Australia Day, on January 26, 1972, on the lawns of Parliament at the nation’s capital in Canberra. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy was an aggressive, visual symbol that captured international media attention\(^5\). It was also a strategy, instigated by ‘young Black activists’ – as they were called – to bring attention to the years of mistreatment, genocide and abuse suffered by Black Australians’. But, the situation that most infuriated the Black community and brought them into action, was the Liberal government’s Aboriginal Policy presented by Prime Minister McMahon, in 1972. Prime Minister McMahon stated that:

There was no admission that Aboriginals had any right to land or compensation, because land rights would “threaten the security of tenure of every Australian”. Aboriginal communities were to be granted only special purpose leases if they could demonstrate
adequate economic or social use for them. Mining was to be allowed on Aboriginal reserves. The London Times headlined the story “Australia’s New Rejection of Aborigines”. (Parbury, 1986:131-2)

The Prime Minister delivered this statement “against the advice of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs” (Parbury), which was headed by Nugget Coombs16 - a trusted advocate of Aboriginal rights. Dr. H. C. Coombs (Nugget) was a highly respected champion of Aboriginal people17, who fully understood the need for land rights. He had worked under several Australian government leaders as advisor on Aboriginal issues. He became involved with Aboriginal rights earlier in his life when he worked as a teacher where he noticed and was affected by the unequal treatment of Aboriginal children. His writings reflect an understanding of the frustrations confronting Indigenous Australians and their need for resources and voice in their own affairs.

From Nugget’s work in Aboriginal affairs come consistent themes—of trusting people themselves; listening as well as hearing and of taking their aspirations into account; of insisting that real change can come only from the people themselves—change that will not occur unless the resources become theirs and that they have a stake in the transformation of them into Aboriginal capital; a strong belief that Aboriginal culture and tradition, particularly in the more traditional communities, is a strong and under-utilised resource. Implicit in all of this is the need for Aborigines to improve their bargaining power, politically, economically and socially.

The basis of building up bargaining power is control over land and in developing economic self-sufficiency. (Waterford, 1995:30)

After all the protracted years of Aboriginal struggle, the Tent Embassy became a symbol that the whole country could rally behind. The intrusion of an Aboriginal Embassy on the lawns of Parliament House focused immediate attention to issues of self-determination and land rights. It also created a platform for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal supporters to contribute to and participate with the cause. Its presence brought international attention to the fact that Indigenous Australians were still alive and functioning in the contemporary world and it paved the way for contemporary performing arts expression.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy provided a way for Indigenous Australians to come together and be involved on many different levels. People were participating on committees, at political rallies, new political and cultural leaders began to emerge from the community, along with writers, speechmakers, dancers, actors, painters, storytellers, etc. Writing and
oratory skills began to develop. Theatre and dance skits were prepared for the rallies and demonstrations. Out of this initial exposure it became very obvious that there was a scarcity of trained, skilled urban Indigenous artists, especially in the area of dance. There was also an unspoken debate as to whether non-traditionally living people should be considered Indigenous or Aboriginal. This was so even though what they expressed in their songs, paintings, stories, dramatic skits and dances were about their lives as Indigenous Australians.

BEGINNINGS OF INDIGENOUS, URBAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE, SYDNEY

There were several events that fostered urban dance development in Sydney by 1972. Besides the change of government from McMahon (Liberal) to Whitlam (Labour), at the end of 1972, there was real grass-root work being done by people like Nugget Coombs, Jenni Isaacs and Jean Bastersby, all of whom were working on the government level to encourage and develop Aboriginal arts and culture. On the community level the Bostock family, Charles (Chicka) Dixon (and many others) were like the glue keeping performing arts activities in continuous operation. However, it was the work of Carole Yvonne Johnson and the Founding Members of AISDS that made – what seemed an impossible dream – a reality. Carole came to Australia with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, in the midst of the struggle to maintain the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

At this point in the history, the relationship between Black Americans and Black Australians is highly beneficial to the development of urban arts in Sydney. The people interviewed, Bob Maza, Lester Bostock and Chicka Dixon – who Carole often speaks of as highly supportive of what she was trying to build – were there during the difficult beginning years. They did all the hard work and were very knowledgeable of this period. These people speak very highly of the contribution offered by Eleo and Carole, and refer to them as being decidedly with Black cultural politics. However, in later periods of the history, resentment about African American participation increases. The fact that an African American, Ronne Arnold, is the Course Director of the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) – an outgrowth of organization started by Carole – is still a sore point among some Aboriginal people.
ELEO POMARE DANCE COMPANY

Media coverage concerning the Aboriginal Tent Embassy is what confronted the Eleo Pomare Dance Company on their first trip to Australia. They arrived in February/March of 1972, when the police were attempting to remove it, and the people, from the lawns of Parliament House. This event inundated television and news media during the Company’s stay.

Having to contend with racism in the United States of America (USA), the Dance Company intimately identified with the Aboriginal situation. The battle for human rights in America and Australia were vastly different, however, the issues of racism and maintaining a cultural identity uniquely your own were the same. One similarity was the work African American dancers had done – to build acceptance and recognition in the dance world – also occurred at the height of political upheaval for equality and human rights in the USA. This was the dance environment of the 1960’s in New York. The major difference was: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were still living in close proximity to their ancestral home-country. Their focus was naturally concerned with land rights as well as building a uniquely contemporary urban dance identity. In some ways the relationship of urban Indigenous Australians, to their dance heritage, was totally broken under the institution of Colonialism, than to African Americans, who had survived the institution of Slavery.

African Americans, being removed from their ancestral homelands and transplanted in other countries among people of different cultures, had maintained a strong relationship with their dance continuum and, in America, were campaigning for basic recognition of ‘human rights’ and ‘civil liberties’. This was a situation some African American choreographers took seriously and their work reflected the current level of contention in America. The works of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company was an example of the kinds of contemporary urban issues facing African Americans, which was expressed through a blend of African and Modern dance traditions and techniques. Eleo’s dance training was grounded in a tradition of Modern Dance, which had grown from the work of dance pioneers who were changing the thinking and approach to contemporary dance from the old European dance system of ballet to a ‘new dreaming’, one concerned with contemporary human issues. Eleo wrote of his respect for this period of American dance history:
I am from, and have been influenced by, the artists from what I consider one of the richest periods in American modern dance history. A period when individualism was so important that you went to concerts to see another point of view. It was exciting to go to dance concerts. We grew through our different-ness, white artists, as well as black artists. My focus is on the Black Artist. (Pomare, 1995b:1). (Appendix, p. 23).

These early American pioneers and innovators of modern dance schools were artists who understood the power of dance and the responsibility and integrity required to go against the norm. They were artists who took their work seriously and instilled in their students the same integrity and respect for the art.

In the early days of American Modern dance the list included Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus, both of whom were African Americans who began as anthropologists. Dunham, concerned with the systemizing of African dance for African Americans, created a school of thought and technique that formalized the diaspora of African movement and dance expression. The Dennis-Shawn school provided another environment for the development of American dance artists. Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey grew from their guidance, and in turn inspired others such as Charles Weidman, Jose Limon, Lester Horton and Helen Tamiris, all of who initiated a variety of different schools of modern dance thought during the time of Eleo’s schooling. He wrote of their contribution and of the foundation of indigenous dance forms that inspired the approach of these modern dance innovators.

...finding inspiration and motivation in indigenous dance forms, folk dances from Native Americans and Blacks, then called “Negroes.” Japanese folk dance elements can be found in the work of Martha Graham. Other folk elements or thematic material can be seen in:
- Doris Humphrey – “Song of the West”
- Helen Tamiris – “Negro Spirituals”
- Charles Weidman – “Lynchtown”
(Pomare, 1995a:1). (Appendix, p. 11).

Eleo had studied with many of these pioneers while a student at the High School of Performing Arts in New York City (NYC). But his centre of attention gravitated to male practitioners such as Jose Limon, Louis Horst, Curtis James, Asadata Dafora, Kurt Jooss in Germany and Harold Kreutzberg in Switzerland. In 1961 he was awarded a John Hay Whitney Fellowship to study...
in Europe. While there, he met and worked with Elizabeth Dalman who brought his Company to Australia in 1972. In time he formed a European company, touring the continent with great success\textsuperscript{18}. On his return to the USA he revived and expanded his New York Company, which he wrote was dedicated to "the creative utilization of Negro talent and ability in Contemporary Modern Dance in an effort to break away from confining stereotypes of Negro or Primitive dance". (A brief biography of Eleo and the dance company has been included in the Appendix, pp. 20-22).

Through the efforts of Elizabeth Dalman the Pomare Company was invited to perform at the Adelaide Festival in 1972. They were scheduled for performances in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. However, because of a disagreement concerning the theatre venue, they only had time to do the Adelaide Festival and few performances in Sydney. Basically Eleo felt the theatre was a "sub-standard" performing venue and was extremely displeased. He concluded that the choice of venue was part of the "colonialist attitude towards the black dance companies" appearing at the Festival. Rejecting the theatre caused front-page coverage in the Adelaide papers. THE NEWS wrote:

\textit{DANCERS REJECT CHEQUERS STAGE.} Premiere now called off. The Eleo Pomare dance company today refused to perform at its premiere tonight in Chequers Theatre, Prospect, because they say it's unsafe. The company's artistic director, Mr. Eleo Pomare said tonight's performance was "definitely off." (Lewis, D., 1972:1)

Carole, commenting on Eleo's reaction to Chequers, said:

When he saw the theatre he was quite disappointed. He didn't think it was of the quality that would adequately show his works.

They had extended the stage by building platforms on the sides, which meant the balconies were directly over the wings. This would have caused serious accidents and I remember the floor being very noisy to dance on. Plus the sightlines were extremely poor.

There was a Black Brazilian company there as well and Eleo felt that they had purposely put all the Black companies in that theatre. (Johnson, 1994: Interview).

Eleo wanted the situation rectified and was annoyed with how he and his company had been stereotyped by the Festival:

Well, I was brought here for the Adelaide festival but basically it's like I was here, but I was not suppose to be a part of the festival really. The real festival was to have been the stuff coming out of
Europe. And the exotica element was to have been Brazil and Blacks from the USA.

We were put into a theatre that was about the size of my kitchen. I refused to appear in it and it started creating a scandal because I told them I wouldn’t appear unless they found a proper theatre for me. It took about two weeks to find a theatre. In about a week they had to remodel a complete movie house that had been dormant for years. They had to reupholster seats and everything. It became daily newspaper headlines. (Pomare, 1995: Interview).

A complete selection of news articles have been archived in the (Appendix, pp. 28-32).

ABORIGINAL, ISLANDER - AFRICAN AMERICAN CONNECTION

With the constant newspaper articles on the Pomare Company the Indigenous community became aware of their presence. However, it was Eleo’s insistence that Aboriginal people be invited guests to his performances that began the connection between the Dance Company and urban Blacks in Adelaide and Sydney. He had the first three rows reserved for them. This, according to Carole, “was a first.”

……On opening night in Sydney, a group of blacks told me after the concert they were proud to be at the theatre, and especially on opening night. It allowed them to think of whites and say to themselves “you might not want us here, but here we are anyway.” They said just being there was a very important thing. This group saw Eleo’s Blues for the Jungle and wanted their entire community to see it. It was the first time many of them ever thought of dance and theatre as ways of expressing themselves and their social concerns. Actually, for most, it was their first time in a theatre. (Johnson, 1974d:11). (Appendix, p. 67).

The invisibility of Aboriginal people in Australian theatre as performers, or even as audience was also noted by another Modern Dance personality, Vera Goldman, who also happened to be in Australia in the early 1970’s.

To feel the pulse of the town, I went to the theatre! There, I looked and asked: Why are there no Aborigines in the audience? There are none? Never? Why? How incredible..., all the wonderful expressive talent of the Aborigines – not used any more for tribal ritual – would find its best outlet and fulfilment in staging and attending theatricals, plays, pageants! (Goldman, 1972:3)

Eleo’s acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians plus the socio-political message of his choreography generated an intimate connection between the Indigenous community and the
African American dance company. By the time the Company arrived in Sydney, a group from the community were there to welcome them.

When we closed the night in Sydney, they brought flowers and rocks with messages on it. They just went berserk. The stage was just full with presents. I didn’t realise what was being said culturally. In all honesty I didn’t realise it until I’m back this time. (Pomare, 1995: Interview).

Eleo’s choreography illustrated the value of social comment in dance choreography. One example is illustrated in the above picture of a work performed at the Festival, Burnt Ash, (based on the violence of War). His choreography was testimony to the kinds of issues confronting Black Americans, and promoted a view of dance that Black Australian’s could also work from. The program included some of his most famous works: Blues for the Jungle (A historical view of the Black experience in the U.S.A. from the slave auction block to the present time) and Las Desenamoradas (based on Garcia Lorca’s play, The House of Bernarda Alba). This second work allowed expression of Eleo’s Spanish heritage as well. (For a view of the full program see Appendix, pp. 16-19).

Up to this point, Indigenous Australian’s relied heavily on the spoken word to convey their message. Now the idea of dance was being introduced to people who had lost all contact and knowledge of their own dance heritage. It was now possible to see dance as another way of getting their message across, which put the art form in the same context as traditionally living people had used it, to document what had happened in the lives of their ancestors. It preserved information-succeeding generations needed in order to maintain order within the society.

It was the first time anything like that had happened, and people like Chicka Dixon, Paul Coe, Phemie Bostock had come. It was the first time most had seen live theatre and certainly live dance. They had seen political events and church functions, but live theatre, No! It was also the first time most had seen social comment being done in dance. Before this most of there attention had been on plays and verbal drama productions. Most had seen little, if any, of their traditional dance either. (Johnson, 1995:CV, p. 1) (Appendix, pp. 293-end).

According to Bob Maza, the influence and inspiration he received from Black artists like Eleo was invaluable to the growth of Black Theatre in Sydney. He acknowledges his relationship
with African, African American and Papua New Guinea artists had aided his growth and helped him understand the power of art.

When we met people, like Eleo, or the African groups that were here (there were Papua New Guinea groups here as well) when we were talking to people like that, they made us very aware that what we were dabbling in was very serious business. We had to stop treating it so lightly and understand that it was a fantastic tool if used properly. We became much more conscious of using theatre. That certainly didn’t come home to me until I went to the States and then I saw what Barbara Ann Teer was doing with the National Black Theatre and then I said, ‘Ah’, that’s what they’re talking about, that’s what they meant. Now there were a lot of things they could do there with 10,000,000 Blacks for audience, that we couldn’t do. But we did accommodate a lot of those ideas especially with the language in the writing. (Maza, 1995:interview)

CAROLE YVONNE JOHNSON

By the time Carole came to Australia she had an established reputation as a soloist; had created a number of organizations to promote African American dance knowledge and employment opportunities. In New York she was a well known for her skill as a dance administrator.

By the time I was in my third year at Juilliard, I was beginning to wonder what I would contribute to dance that was different and special. Like many young people studying ballet I dreamed I would become the greatest ballerina in the world. Working in Australia to help Aboriginal Australians to achieve their dreams of a career in dance was certainly not my career plan. Yet in my first performing visit to Australia I started developing the vision, program and team that brought about a national acceptance of Aboriginal modern dance as a universal representation of the Art of Dance. Twenty-four years later, it was not only possible but natural for Stephen Page, an Aborigine, to represent Australia as choreographer in the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. (Johnson, 1998b:1)

She was born in Jersey City, New Jersey in the USA. She lived the first 4 years in Baltimore, Maryland and then the family moved to Philadelphia Pennsylvania, where her father accepted a new position as the Director of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). It was with her father that she began learning about administration and office skills.

I use to just watch him. I was mostly stuffing envelopes, reading his reports and looking at how he calculated attendances and things. Because he always had to justify (he was a YMCA executive) and he had to justify in terms of numbers what was going on. So I was seeing all of that and just absorbed it. (Johnson, 1994:interview)
She began her dance training at The Sydney King Dance School in Philadelphia under the direction of Sydney Gibson King. While attending the Philadelphia High School for Girls, she began studies with the Ballet Master, Anthony Tudor. Tudor travelled weekly from New York to Philadelphia to conduct dance classes for the cities most promising students, Carole being one of them. This was a time when the Philadelphia Ballet Guild allowed African Americans to attend classes when other ballet schools in the city did not.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE USA

On receiving her academic diploma, Carole went on to Adelphi College in Garden City, New York and then moved to the ‘Big Apple’, New York City to attend the Julliard school of Music where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree. Completing Julliard it was now time to begin her life’s work. She was qualified to compete for work as a dancer but her interests were more concerned with the needs and development of African American dance as a whole – this meant promoting employment opportunities, dissemination of information and professional exposure. She now had the education and the personal determination to be effective.

I’ve always been interested in the politics of dance and why Black people don’t seem to have anything. I remember the first aeroplane ride I took, which was with Eleo’s company, I looked around the airport and just thought; well, this was built by people, people had a dream or something, and I said; why can’t we build things like that? (Johnson, 1994:interview)

As survival in the 1960’s was a rough and turbulent situation for African Americans, her objectives would be difficult to achieve. It was a time of great upheaval and change for Black Americans, a time of mass action to address inequities and grievances. There were overwhelming daily challenges that evolved out of the Civil Rights movement, the Freedom Rides, the Sit-ins, the Montgomery Boycott, the emergence of dynamic Black Leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, Angela Davis, Bobby Seal, the Black Panthers and many others.

The socio political activity of the 1960’s and 1970’s in the United States both inspired and challenged the burgeoning Black dance community in New York City. Out of the intensity of the 1960’s socio-political struggle, we began to mould a contemporary dance expression,
saturated with the events of our history that would later inspire urban Australian Black people. Dance Companies like Alvin Ailey’s American Dance Theatre, Arthur Mitchell’s Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Eleo Pomare Dance Company and others came into being. It was out of this period that Carole, not only began to develop her reputation as a performer, but as the architect of projects that would inform and politically benefit African American dance growth.

She, along with white modern dance artists, was trying to find ways to support the growth of American modern dance. This was a new American dance form, which was in need of a structured system to support its survival.

I found a stronger forte doing organisational work and listening and hearing what people were saying. I didn't talk very much because I didn't have the background and I didn't feel very powerful, one person doesn't make much of a change. You needed more than one person and there were very few Blacks at dance meetings. But at least there was somebody there listening and then I could report back or talk about what was going on to others.

However, the White dancers didn't know very much about what to do and how to go on either because dancers at that time were just coming of age, particularly Modern Dancers. They didn't have the structures; they didn't have the incorporation and all of those kinds of things. Government was just beginning to put in place grants for the arts. The New York State Council for the Arts initiated this; they began offering grants to artist before the Federal government. This was in the '60s. (Johnson, 1994:interview)

Carole was not shy about advancing African Americans needs in this new wave of government funding. In the process, she also founded and helped to establish a number of organizations that would provide an exchange of ideas and information about the Black American dance community. They were the Association of Black Choreographers (ABC); the Modern Organization for Dance Evolvement (MODE), a Black American dance magazine The Feet and eventually became the Producer and Director of the ‘Summer-on-Wheels’ (Dancemobile) program. She also worked with the New York State Council for the Arts and for the Harlem Cultural Council.

Basically I was trying to assist Black people become more empowered in terms of developing their own connections and audiences and knowing that, that related to being able to organise shows and programs. So that's what I had been doing in the States as well as empowering the dancers themselves through the organizations such as the ABC, which use to meet at Pearl Reynolds’s studio, down from
Eleo’s studio on Sixth Avenue – now called Avenue of the Americas. (Johnson, 1994:interview).

In 1967 she joined Eleo Pomare Dance Company, eventually becoming a soloist and stayed with the Company until their trip to Australia in 1972. While working as a dancer with the company, she assisted the managing director, Michael Levy with the company’s tours and bookings. At the same time she developed a solo lecture and performing tour that was assisted by the United States State department.

By the time she left the United States for her first trip to Australia in 1972, Carole had provided a legacy of dance organizations to serve the Black American dance community: The Feet, MODE and The Dancemobile still exist today, at the turn of the twenty first century.

CAROLE’S FIRST TIME STAY

At the conclusion of the Pomare engagements in Australia, Carole informed Eleo of her intention to quit the Company.

“...I told them I was going to stay. They were going to tour America on the West Coast but I said I would stop. Because I had just returned from Africa and I wanted to tour around South East Asia. I was interested to see what the effect of colonialism was on South East Asia after having seen what it was like in some of the countries in Africa. (Johnson, 1974:interview)”

She stayed in Sydney and was introduced to Jenni Isaacs who provided her with employment. Jenni was working for the Australian Council for the Arts (ACA). She and Carole – who eventually became long standing friends – were introduced by Bauxhau Stone, a Black South African Australian who had followed the Pomare Company and had introduced the dancers while in Australia. Jenny has it that:

“It was just a pure coincidence, by inner city friends Carole was introduced to me. She came around, we had a talk, she told me she’d be here anyway, could she work here. I said Redfern mob would love to see your performance; we organized a bus to get people there. Within 2 weeks we drummed up a grant application for Carole to stay on the basis that she would be doing workshops. That was the ‘flavour of the month thing’, to have ‘workshops’ in church halls. (Isaacs, 1996:interview)”

A letter was sent 14th April 1972, confirming Carole’s employment with the Australian Council for the Arts. (Appendix, p. 3). There were no absolute definitions of what her specific duties were to be. It was suggested she spend time becoming familiar with the diversity of
Black Australian communities and she would also be conducting dance workshops. In the following passage Carole reveals her thoughts of this time:

The Australian Arts Council – probably the most forward government agency in relation to the Aborigine – gave me a small grant to remain in Australia after the Pomare tour, but no one told me what to do with it. It was supposed to be an experiment for the Council to see what would happen when a black American dancer came into contact with the Aboriginal people. (Johnson, 1974d:11) (Appendix, p. 67).

What I had planned to do, with the grant from Jenny, was travel around and maybe do a few workshops in different places. This would enable me to see the country and see what the situation was in the different areas, especially for Aboriginal people. But I ended up working more intensively in Redfern and setting up something that was regular and on going there. (Johnson, 1974:interview)

She did manage to conduct a few workshops in the country areas of NSW and was able to travel to Weipa and Darwin in the northern part of the country and west to Perth. In May “She saw the Northern Territory and Queensland Aboriginal ballet on its way to dance in Fiji and was very impressed”, (News, 1972:6). (Appendix, p. 33). It was during this time that she briefly met Roslyn Watson, who was eighteen at the time and in her second year of study at the Australian ballet.

Two newspaper articles chronicle her activities during this time. The Advertiser (1972:6) quoted her observation that; “...there is a basic similarity between the Negro in ghetto conditions in New York and the urban Aborigine”. It also confirmed that Carole “…has set up an Aboriginal modern dance workshop in the Sydney suburb of Redfern” and noted her intention “…to visit Aboriginal communities to study their dance”. (Appendix, p. 35). The News (1972:33) wrote of her teaching and performing in Adelaide with Elizabeth Dalman’s, Australian Dance Theatre. (Appendix, p. 34).

The first traditional community she visited was Indulkana in South Australia where the Anangu people live. Bauhaux Stone (Ba) was able to introduce her to the people, as he was working with them at the time. In Darwin she met Bob Randall whose music she would later use for her choreography. His daughter, Dorathea would also become one of the Founding Members of the organization that grew out of the workshops she initiated in Redfern.
FIRST DANCE WORKSHOP

During Carole’s initial investigations to get an idea of what was happening in the Black communities and acquire an experience of the traditional culture, she found very little available for Indigenous Australians, especially in urban and rural areas. This was particularly true of training in the performing arts, and, as far as dance training, there was nothing at all for the Black communities in 1972.

The only thing that I found, through some of the Advancement Association Leagues, were Balls. They would teach the kids a few dances to prepare them for the Ball night. They would do social dances at parties and things but that was about it, in terms of dance. (Johnson, 1974: interview)

Even in the theatre Indigenous actors were noticeable missing. A few movies had been made that used Aboriginal characters or subjects. Some even used Aboriginal people to play themselves like ‘Jedda’, produced and directed by Charles Chauvel in 1955. But the norm was that white actors ‘blacked up’ and performed most Aboriginal roles.

It was out of this unconcealed invisibility that Carole began her first training classes for the Redfern community. In her article published in February 1974 in the Catalyst, she describes how the classes began: “...I was planning a series for my class in Sydney when some of the children came in and started doing what I was doing. They watched and copied, and a few ran out to get some others.” (Johnson, 1974d:11-12).

In these classes urban Aboriginal people learned how to create dances to express their social concerns, were introduced to traditional movements and began to explore ways to fuse traditional Aboriginal movements with modern dance movements. These workshops initiated the practice of inviting Aboriginal Elders to connect with urban Aboriginal youth. Although white university students had been encouraged to meet and learn from Aboriginal elders before this, formal opportunities for Aboriginal people to learn from Elders had been mostly unavailable to urban Aboriginal people. (Johnson, 1998b:2. Archived in the Appendix, pp. 36-43).

The classes started in May of 1972 and were scheduled for twice a week. They were composed of children and adults, from 11 to 30 years of age with the content geared towards keeping the group inspired and interested.

I inverted the conventional modern dance class by starting with movement—runs, walks, hops, skips, contractions—to Afro-American music for the most part. I would build these movements into routines, or combinations, and after we learned a sequence we would practice
it. Eventually, we strung these sequences together into dances. At the end of each class, we would do some exercises to build strength and consciousness of the body. I held exercises until the end because I felt they were the most important part and I wanted everyone in the class to be there so we could at least end together even if we did not start that way. (Johnson, 1974d:12). (Appendix, pp. 67-69).

The dance workshop eventually settled into a consistent group: Euphemia Bostock, her daughter Tracey, Wayne Nicol, Norma Williams (Ingram), The Vesper sisters, Elsie and Joanne, “who were down from Lismore”. “One was very, very blond and one was dark haired” (Johnson). These were the people Carole remembers forming the early core group of consistent participants. The workshop was recorded in a short film called Sharing the Dream, which showed the students participating in Carole’s classes in 1973. The film was produced and directed by Milena Darnyanovic, released in 1974 and was premiered at the ‘International Women’s Film Festival’ in Sydney, 1975.

SYDNEY BLACK THEATRE WORKSHOP

Even though this history is to trace the events that led to the establishment of AISDS, it is important to acknowledge the close relationship with Black Theatre (BT) during this period. The major reason is clarify the anger and distress caused when the dance group – after years of working close with the development of BT, even sharing the same premises and at times, the same name – officially created its own identity and broke its close ties with BT. The segments about BT are to make available the issues and events that lead to bad feelings with some members of the Indigenous community. This situation has been aggravated by the different memories people have of this time.

What has been documented of the original drama class that later evolved into BT, was the workshop being conducted by Jenni Van der Steenhoven in the early 1970’s. Paul Coe, an Aboriginal person concerned about the lack of activities for the youth, approached Jenni about conducting regular drama classes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She obviously accepted because in February 1972 (just about the time the Pomare Company arrived in Adelaide), a request was submitted to the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee for the continuance of drama workshops taught by Jenni Van der Steenhoven.

The Committee considered this submission made by Mrs. Van der Steenhoven for support of theatre workshops for Aboriginal people in Sydney. Mrs. Isaacs reported that the workshops have already
commenced and that people concerned seem enthusiastic in their 
response. The Committee recommended that a grant of $870 be 
provided for preliminary costs and that the workshop co-ordinator be 
asked for a report in due course before further assistance is provided. 
(AAAC:5.1.10, 1972:6)

BOB MAZA

A little after Carole began the dance workshop, Bob Maza 
arrived in Sydney. He had come from Melbourne, where he had 
been working with Jack Charles at the Aboriginal Nindethana 
Theatre. Carole has it that:

Bob Maza had a grant and he decided to move up 
from Melbourne. With the formation of the dance 
and theatre group in Sydney, the centre of activity 
began to change from Melbourne to Sydney. He 
was lively, energetic, very charismatic and worked 
very hard to get the idea of Black Theatre going. 
(Johnson, 1974:interview)

Bob explained that he was actually invited to come to Sydney by Jenni Van Der Steenhoven. 
He had worked and studied in Harlem, New York, for about six months and on his return to 
Australia he worked with Nindethana Theatre. While there he began developing sketches for 
plays. Jenni saw his work, read them and invited him to come to Sydney to work with BT. He 
gives a bit of a background of Black Theatre at this point.

When we came back (from the United States) Paul Coe had gone back 
to his studies leaving Jenni on her own. She wrote me and said that 
she was doing some workshops with some of my plays. Now I had 
written some gamin plays (I was using them in workshop situations). 
They weren't plays as such they were just a few sketches. But Jenni 
got a hold of them and she said, "Oh, I like this". So Jennie brought 
me down here. (Maza, 1995:interview)

Once in Sydney he actively set out to improve his theatre skills, by participating in an 
apprenticeship program for directors and actors at the Nimrod Theatre. He and Jenni acquired 
premises from which the workshops and rehearsals could function and where people could 
live, as that would have been a major concern for them.

What happened was that Jenni and I, with our last bits of money (we 
were all on the dole, by the way) paid a month’s rent at the premises 
of 174 Regents Street, Redfern. This became the NBT headquarters. 
We started off doing street theatre and sometimes we’d combine with 
Carole’s group.
Garry Foley, Jerry Bostock etc. were all living on the premises and doing street theatre and writing our material. The Cherry Pickers was the only Black material around at that time. So we started modern stuff. (Maza, 1995: interview)

Carole attributes Bob with having introduced the concept of Black Theatre, a concept he acquired from Barbara Ann Tee in Harlem, New York City (NYC). Barbara was the founder and director of the National Black Theatre (NBT). In 1970 Bob had gone to the United States to attend the Pan African Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. After the conference he travelled through the country and finally made his way to NYC. He, along with Sol Bellear, went to Harlem, found NBT, were invited to participate in the classes and travelled everywhere with the group, especially to their performances. He described the trip and explained that his experience of NBT is when, "I became very, very interested in theatre".

In 1970 I went to the States with Jack Davis and Patsy Kruger, Sol Bellear, Bruce McGuinness. We went to Atlanta for the Third Pan African Conference and we were their guests. We were sent over by the Australian Students Union. David Hill who was one of the head people at ABC (television) was on the Student Union Committee at that time.

I saw a lot of performances and Sol and I ended up in New York. Everyone else had gone home. We were the guests of National Black Theatre in Harlem directed by Barbara Ann Tee. Now that’s when I became very, very interested in theatre, when I saw what the NBT was doing.

I remember going to one of their performances in Albany. It was a ‘lily-white’ audience; Barbara Ann Tee’s group got up there and they put down some revolutionary stuff, and “I said, we’re not going to leave this town alive”. But the amazing thing was at the end of the evening she had all those White people holding hands and marching out the door singing. And I went “Uh-ahh!” this is one hell of a magical thing. (Maza, 1995: interview)

THE CHALLENGE – EMBASSY DANCE

Within the first year of their existence, Carole Johnson had created a rough draft of a work that documented an important period in the history of Indigenous Australians’. It was a work-in-progress titled, The Challenge – Embassy Dance (The Challenge). The Challenge had been constructed in a hurry, to be a part of the Black Moratorium to save the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. It was the workshop’s first work of social comment, which identified the unjust situation, condition and feelings of the people; as such it stands as an identity marker in the continuum of urban dance expression.
At the start of the dance workshop in May 1972, Indigenous people from all over the country began to prepare for the Black Moratorium. The Moratorium was meant to bring pressure on the government to address the problems facing Indigenous Australians and to support the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. It was scheduled for the National Aborigines Day on the 14 July 1972 and was instigated by the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee, which identified the day as NAIDOC Day. Traditionally, this had been a day of celebration, one day during the year when white Australians recognised Aboriginal people, a day for parties and dancing. Now everyone was preparing for a Moratorium and a day of mourning, instead of a celebration.

The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) sponsored a fund raising program to provide funds for people to travel to the scheduled demonstrations in Sydney and Canberra. FCAATSI was a national organization that was instrumental in supporting the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. Carole had danced for their conferences and established a connection with the organization. She also actively participated in the demonstrations, during and following the destruction of the Embassy.

Just six days after the Moratorium, the Federal Australian government violently destroyed the Aboriginal Embassy - which had been erected by White supporters as well as Black and for the first time on television, thousands saw police beat up people, who were simply protecting their symbol of human rights and quietly protesting their inequitable treatment.

I stood with them on that day and saw their fear turn into a proud determination no longer to sit and wait for white reform or contain their seething feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

The Embassy is re-erected a few times and eventually dismantled for 20 years. The result of this effort was a bit of government funding of a few more Aboriginal programs. (Johnson, 1997: interview)

In spite of the destruction of the Embassy, people’s feelings stayed strong about presenting Aboriginal/Islander grievances and their representation in Australia. People continued to demonstrate after the Aboriginal Embassy had been destroyed. The fourteenth of July was declared a Day of Mourning and a Moratorium for Black Rights was organized. The organizers promoted the Aboriginal phrase ‘Ningia a-na: We are hungry for our Land’, to
emphasize its mission. Goodall explains how the term came to be the rallying cry of the Black Moratorium on NADOC day.

(Milli Boyd) had responded to a question about who owned Muli Muli reserve by first describing the APB managers’ distribution of rations, meeting one type of hunger but at the same time demanding subservience and creating dependence. But these rations had not met a deeper hunger for the Bandjalang, their desire to protect and hold onto their land: “They gave us rations, a little bit of rations when the managers were here, but we still want this ground. We are hungry for our own ground”.

Her words were chosen to represent the theme of the coming demonstration. They were linked with a central Australian word meaning ‘land’ which had been transcribed by New South Wales activist Pat Eatock on a recent trip to Alice Springs. The intention was to suggest the unity of purpose to achieve land rights across the continent, from the most heavily colonised regions to the most remote areas. So ‘Ningla a-na: Hungry for our land’ became the rallying call for the thousands of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, along with Maori and Tongan supporters, who marched through the streets on National Aborigines Day, 14 July 1972. (Goodall, 1996:349-50)

The importance of this event was captured in a documentary film of the same name, Ningla A-na (Hungry for our Land), produced and directed by Alessandro Cavadini.

The idea of a film of the Aboriginal Land Rights Movement first occurred to Alessandro Cavadini in early 1972. Cavadini decided to go in search of committed political attitudes in Australia, and originally intended to film various radical groups as separate unconnected entities. One aspect was to be the Black Power movement, but after his first meeting with the aboriginal spokesmen Cavadini realised that a social revolution was taking place, and that political ideology was only a minor part of the movement.

In addition to the pressing problems of land rights, Cavadini wanted to show the efforts to develop a new black consciousness that related to urban conditions, but also regenerated strong tribal and community traditions. (Cavadini, 1972)

Cavadini was in the midst of interviewing Carole about the participation of dance in the ‘land rights’ struggle, when the news came about the government order to tear down the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. The write-up of the intention of the film is like a journal of events, which illustrates the support for the Aboriginal Embassy and how the news affected the people involved:

The following week (July 14) saw the Black Moratorium on land rights in Sydney, where black marchers were joined for the first time by massive white support. This was expected to provoke a reaction
from the establishment. While shooting an interview with Gloria Fletcher and Carol Johnson on the future of black expression in arts and theatre, the news of the destruction of the Embassy was flashed on the radio. Cavadini and Stocks filmed the reactions of the black community in Redfern. Bobbi Sykes and others returned fresh from the battle at Canberra and worked through the night to raise finance and support for a re-erection the following weekend. That night’s shooting also included filming the ABC news direct off the TV set, as a Government minister tried vainly to prove that the police had only executed the law. The ordinance under which they acted was three months later ruled invalid by the Supreme Court. (Cavadini, 1972)

Cavadini’s film also documents an important moment in the evolvement of the dance workshop, which marks its contribution to the history of contemporary Indigenous dance. Ningla A-na, records a work-in-progress prepared by Carole for the dance group, The Challenge – Embassy Dance, which became a signature piece of the dance group well into the 1990’s. The Challenge portrays the violence and brutality that existed in Aboriginal life and was first performed on the 30th of July on the steps of Parliament House in Canberra. It eventually developed into a suite of three dances. Following the historical development of the work one can see the transformation of Carole’s cultural reference from African American to Aboriginal, especially with her choice of music. Once she became familiar with contemporary Aboriginal artists like Bob Randall, the words and music began to reflect energy and feelings of Indigenous Australians. The following picture of Carole being supported by Bob Maza and Michael Anderson is from The Challenge – Embassy Dance.

Cavadini’s write-up of the film lists an impressive mixture of people Australia and abroad who participated with the film and has been archived in the (Appendix, pp. 1-2).
The strong connection between political and cultural issues brought real purpose to the beginnings of urban dance and drama in Sydney. In many ways, because the theatre and dance of this time came from a place of community purpose and function, it was much like the traditional culture, with its strength coming from the reason and purpose for the dance as it relates to community\textsuperscript{25}. The performing arts began to take on real meaning within the context of personal expression and cultural change:

\begin{quote}
Those who were not political celebrities found they could become involved as actors and dancers etc, and that they could show their convictions in this way. Many had not realized the political force that the theatre represented. (Bostock, L., 1973:13-14)
\end{quote}

**DANCE WORKSHOP'S FIRST PRODUCTION**

While dance and drama continued to find its place in scheme of political and cultural happenings, Carole continued to develop the dancers. In about four months from the start of the Dance Workshop in May, the students had their first full evening presentation. It was performed at the Friends Quaker Meeting House in Surry Hills on the seventh of September 1973. Lester Bostock felt the show\textsuperscript{27} was the first "professional performance by Black Theatre", which strongly identifies the dance group with Black Theatre. This was probably because the Bostocks' would do the most to keep it going once Carole left. The success of this performance would assist future requests for financial support; but in the long run, the documented link became 'a bone of contention' for the dance group. However, at this moment the performance had a profound impact on the Sydney Black community.

The first professional performance by Black Theatre was from the dance group, where on the 7\textsuperscript{th} September of this year, under the direction of Carol Johnson, in the Quaker Hall, Surry Hills, Sydney. They made $60. Members of the dance group choreographed some of the dance sequences. The main item in this performance was the Embassy dance performed this time incorporating traditional Aboriginal movements. (Bostock, L, 1973:13-14)

The performance at Friendship House was probably the second showing The Challenge - Embassy Dance and, as indicated by Lester's comment, marked a definite change in the cultural direction, with the inclusive of traditional Aboriginal movements.

The final indication of the dance workshop's progress was a report on the performance at Friendship House. It was written by Ann McCarthy for the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee (AAAC) of the Australia Council. The full report has been archived in the
(Appendix, pp. 9-10). McCarthy's report confirms the importance of the event; “everyone present sensed that this was a very significant event for the urban Aboriginal community”. It was at the last minute that the students decide in favour of doing the show. Carole put together a presentation of class material, works-in-progress and material prepared by the students. McCarthy felt one of the values of the program was, it gave the audience a chance to view basic Modern dance training, “many of who knew nothing of Modern dance”. The rest of the program was a mixture of Jazz and a fun piece that adapted traditional Aboriginal movements titled, Bird Dance. This was the student’s first experiment with adapting or fusing traditional movements and style with contemporary Modern dance. In later proposals prepared by Carole she often mentions the idea of creating a unique Australian dance form created by the fusion of traditional and contemporary dance. McCarthy felt the Bird Dance was repetitive and made allowances for the short preparation time. However, in viewing the structure of Aboriginal song lines and the overall structure of the Aboriginal choreographic form, repetition is an integral part of the methodology of the ceremonial dance drama. For example, song lines communicate (or get their message across) by first stating the subject in a phrase of so many lines, each time they return to the subject they add more of the story, continuously building to its conclusion by repetition. The repetition of the Bird Dance would be very much in line with traditional Aboriginal choreographic style and methodology.

This was the dance clubs earliest investigation of both the traditional and modern dance forms and its usage to express contemporary urban issues, which had an impact and validity for them. It gave a place to begin the work of building their own dance style from what they were learning with Carole. “Phemie says: In the classes we were able to take from our tradition and express it in a contemporary urban way.” (Johnson, 1972a). (Appendix, pp.4-4a)

McCarthy’s comments of the last work, Awakening – a further development of The Challenge – Embassy Dance – categorises, the work as dance-theatre, not straight dance and further suggests, “dance-theatre with a social relevance will obviously be the kind of medium which the group will concentrate on in the future”, “this is where they would be most effective”.

She also noted the “egalitarian” nature of the dance group in that the students had a variety skills, ability and talent, and pointed out the “talented” performers such as Wayne Nicol and
Elsie Vesper. She was quite impressed with the level of enthusiasm and the “degree of confidence shown by dancers who had never had any dance training at all, prior to the Workshop”. What she noted was needed for the future was, “intense training”, if the group were to move from street theatre to the stage. McCarthy closes with a glowing recognition of Carole’s contribution:

It is highly doubtful whether the group will be able to find someone of Miss Johnson’s ability, dedication and social awareness to continue this work, but it is essential that it be continued because it would be a tragedy, not only for the dancers, but for the entire urban aboriginal community (which has shown such pride in the group and such identification with it) if these Workshops were to fall through. (AAAC/McCarthy, 1972:2)

This was the embryonic period in the history of the dance group, and Carole had accomplished a great deal in a short time, but the students were very enthusiastic about the workshop, her, and their personal success evidenced by the performance at Friendship House.

It was now time for Carole to leave but before she did, she prepared one last draft of a proposal for the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee. It was for “An Aboriginal Community Cultural Arts-Education Centre in Sydney”. The proposal encapsulated the wants and needs of the Black community. The primary need being, consistent arts training courses for the development of traditional and cultural arts. The proposed Cultural Centre should have the space to conduct classes, rehearsals, a stage for productions, an arts gallery and a canteen. It was to be a showcase for visitors, lecturers and film showings with regular concerts and trips for the community with a special youths program. All of this was desperately lacking in Redfern, which Carole tried to introduce in the proposal. She headed one section of the four-page document, “Some Thoughts”. This was her personal observation of the plight of Black people in Sydney. The statement demonstrates a real need for social outlets and cultural and training programs, which did not exist in Redfern. The only mention of a place where Aboriginal people could socialize or have meetings was the Foundation, but it wasn’t really their place. Carole remembers it primarily housing Aboriginal artefacts and its location was a ways from the community.

At present none of the above is available to Aboriginal people in Sydney. The only place they have to meet socially is the hotels (bars) or each other’s homes. Football is the only regularly organized social activity. Aboriginal people generally have problems renting a hall for dances and receptions. Although various churches and the union halls
allow meetings of various kinds to occur on their premises, there is no one place that the people immediately think of as their meeting place. There is always some consideration and search for a place to meet.

In all the time I was in Sydney, the only outing that I had with Aboriginal people was the time we went to the sand dunes to do a film. It turned into a picnic and a time where some people from out-of-town got to meet some Sydney people in a relaxed, attractive and happy out-of-doors atmosphere. In retrospect, that an outing such as that happened only once is a sad commentary on the urban life of a people who by tradition love, respect, and are at one with nature. Perhaps this is why they need to return so often to their country towns. I mention this because the people themselves mentioned that there ought to be a way to have more outings of that kind. (Johnson, 1972b:2). (Appendix, pp. 5-8).

By the end of her first term of employment with the Australian Council for the Arts, the AAAC was singing her praises. “Miss Johnson’s pioneering work has shown real results and as well as the Dance Workshop she offered advice on the general operations and planning of the National Black Theatre.” This was noted at their twelfth meeting in October, in which they also considered a proposal to appoint her as a Consultant to the Australian Council for the Arts on her return in March of 1973. “The Committee discussed this proposal in detail and authorised the commencement of negotiations with Miss Johnson.” (AAAC, 5.1.12:8). As a consultant she would be, “responsible for initiating urban arts programmes for Aborigines”. (AAAC:5.1.12, 1972:26).

CAROLE FIRST TIME GONE – THE DANCE WORKSHOP CONTINUES

Carole left Australia in September 1972 to continue her personal investigation of the maintenance and survival of the dance cultures of Southeast Asia. She had just completed a similar study in Africa prior to coming to Australia with the Pomare Dance Company. She also needed to return to the States to complete her work with the Modern Organization for Dance Evolvement (MODE), one of the organizations she started to aide the development of African American dance artists. MODE was about to produce the first National Congress of Blacks in Dance, scheduled for June of 1973 at the University of Indiana in Bloomington.

Shelby Freeman had firmly established details for running the Congress..... They had already effectively organised the Eastern and Southern states and Alicia Adams was editing The Feet. My job was to make personal contact with dance leaders in the Western United States. This historic conference drew more than three hundred people from coast to coast, with representatives from every dance company
and every dance idiom in which African Americans participated. (Johnson, 1998a:5. Archived in the Appendix, pp. 44-48).

After her departure, Phemie Bostock and Wayne Nicol – the most consistent members of the group – took over the coordination of the Dance Workshop with most of the work being accredited to Phemie. Of all the Indigenous workshops in Sydney being supported by the Australia Council, the AAAC noted, “that this group has shown most solidarity of all workshops”. This made it all the easier to acquire the funds to continue.

The person acknowledged by the AAAC, as the first teacher after Carole was Vera Goldman, an Israeli dancer on a short visit to Australia. Vera had arrived in the country around the same time as the Pomare Company, and was one of the few dancers to make an effort to search out and learn from Aboriginal people. During her time here she visited and exchanged performances with the Tiwi people of Bathurst Island.

An application for a grant had been submitted to continue operations of the dancers workshop. It was recommended for approval and included as part of the Black Theatre budget.

There are seven permanent members of the Dance Group. As Miss Johnson plans to come back in March, the dance group is applying for funds to cover professional services and some small pieces of equipment for six months. At the moment they are being taught by Vera Goldman. (AAAC:5.1.12, 1972:22)

By October Black Theatre (BT) was under the direction of Bob Maza who was publicly acknowledged for his dynamic work in developing Black Theatre in Sydney. BT was operating out of house in Redfern at 181 Regent Street, and was now known as the National Black Theatre (NBT) as stated in the minutes of the NSW Arts Council. Both drama and dance workshops were functioning there. Lester Bostock was now manager and they were gaining favourable support from the AAAC.

Stemming from the move of Bob Maza to Sydney, the work of Carole Johnson and Jenny Van der Steenhoven, the National Black Theatre has now been set up at 181 Regents Street, Redfern. As well as providing a central source of information, publicity and work for Aboriginal actors who have already had some experience, the N.B.T. are running workshops in theatre and dance and plan to set up a writer’s, technical and art workshops. (AAAC:5.1.12, 1972:21)
Even though the Dance Workshop was beginning to be addressed as the National Black Theatre Dance Workshop, the AAAC was careful to ask for individual accountings from the two workshops functioning under the umbrella of NBT. The reason being,

In order to insure adequate supervision of funds it was recommended that the grant to both the dance workshop and theatre workshop be made to these two organizations separately and accounted for separately. (AAAC:5.1.12, 1972:7)

WHITLAM BRINGS POSSIBILITY AND SUPPORT

1972 ended on a high note for Black Australians with E. Gough Whitlam’s Labour government being elected to office. Prime Minister Whitlam brought hope to the Indigenous struggle for land rights and for arts development in general. The good feelings Indigenous Australians expressed about the short-lived Whitlam government was noted in the 1976 black newsletter, Kooka-Bina:

The year 1972 wasn’t a great year for blacks, but it was a helluva lot better than the previous 23. In 1972 a labour government led by Gough Whitlam was elected on a platform of reforms, particularly reforms for Aboriginals, and Australia began to emerge out of the dark ages.

After 1972 Aboriginal demands for equal rights, land rights, decent housing and health services became legitimate. Aboriginal services, covering housing, health and legal services, were funded, if sometimes in a stingy way, and were able to meet needs that Australian governments in the past would not.

Three years under a Labour government was a very enlightening experience for blacks, especially for those trying to build the Aboriginal services. For most of us, by virtue of being able to compare our lives now with our standard of living in the past, racism became a very tangible and identifiable thing. We knew that things were better if just because we were allowed to, and given funds to do things our own way. (Kooka-Bina, 1976:2)
ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY
To the right people are camped out on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra, as part of The Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

DAY OF MOURNING
“In 1970 Australia celebrated the bicentenary of Captain Cook’s landing at Kurnell. At the other end of Botany Bay, on the site of the old Aborigines Protection Board reserve at La Perouse, Aboriginal Australia staged a ceremony of mourning.” They carried placards with the names of all the tribes wiped and threw wreaths into the Bay. (Parbury, 1986:131)
"FREE BLACK AUSTRALIA" DEMONSTRATIONS

July 31 1972

Above, people of all races have gathered to protest the unfair treatment of Indigenous Australians.
CHAPTER 3: 1973-74 ~ URBAN ARTS DEVELOPMENT

After decades of invisibility and apathy, nineteen seventy-three and four exhibited a noticeable change in the area of urban performing arts for Indigenous Australians. After the impact of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Indigenous arts organizations began to blossom. Nineteen-seventy three saw the formation of the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB); a national seminar for Aboriginal Arts was conducted; training programs were the flavour of the month; being set-up; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people were beginning to work in mainstream theatre; and the new Labour government, under Whitlam, made big promises and were getting them done.

For dance and drama it was a time of real highs and lows, crossing paths and battles for leadership in this new environment of support and experimentation. It was a time full of energy, of creating and discovering an Indigenous urban expression, and of maintaining consistency. New organizations were formed for students to grow, learn and build skills in dance and performing arts. The diversity of interchanging relationships between dance and drama, at this time, makes it difficult to separate the dance and only speak of it. Except that for the dancers there was a big surge towards re-identification with tribal links, while setting up the training that would lead Australian Indigenous artists to their own urban voice.

GOUGH E. WHITLAM

It wasn’t until the 1970’s that full-scale national concern for Indigenous arts development in the urban centres was seriously promoted. The new Whitlam government, which came to power in December 1972, offered a glimmer of hope and support for Indigenous cultural and political advancement. In his autobiography, Whitlam makes a strong commitment to improve the condition of Indigenous Australians and set about instituting projects towards that end. The party’s intentions were:

We undertook to establish a separate Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs; to pay all legal costs for Aborigines in all proceedings in all courts; to legislate to establish for land in Federal territories which is reserved for Aboriginal use and benefit a system of Aboriginal tenure based on the traditional rights of clans and other tribal groups and, under this legislation, to vest such land in Aboriginal communities; to establish an Aboriginal Land Fund to purchase or acquire land for significant continuing Aboriginal communities and to appropriate $5 million per year to this fund for the next 10 years; to prohibit discrimination on
grounds of race, to ratify all relevant UN and ILO conventions and to set up conciliation procedures to promote understanding and cooperation between Aboriginal and other Australians; and to enable Aboriginal communities to be incorporated for their own social and economic purposes. (Whitlam, 1985:466)

THE ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

In support of arts development for the entire community of artists, Black and White, Whitlam wrote that he made the following changes to the established system of funding for arts programs:

I undertook to establish a single statutory council, based on a number of boards, with the broad objectives of promoting standards of excellence in the arts and widening public access to them, establishing and expressing an Australian identity through the arts and promoting an awareness of Australian culture abroad. (Whitlam, 1985:558)

However, in order to find specific remedies for the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists, Whitlam based his initiatives on the advise of Dr. Jean Battersby, the Executive officer of the Australian Council for the Arts and Dr. Coombs who knew a great deal about the wants and needs of Aboriginal people.

Dr. Battersby stated that the Prime Minister wanted to know what should be done to assist the promotion of Aboriginal Arts, and wished the Board to advise the Government in this area. With Aboriginal Arts, the Prime Minister wanted to do something different. He felt Aboriginals should give advice from their wide range of experience in the Arts. (AAB:1.1.1, 1973:2)

Dr. Battersby and Dr. Coombs prepared a paper for Whitlam, presenting the inefficiency of the present system and offered their ideas. Whitlam affirmed that, “The subsequent structure of the Australia Council owed much to their thinking and advice”.

One of the Boards of the arts council was the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB), which was to replace the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee (AAAC), which had functioned from 1968 to 1973. The AAB, commonly referred to as ‘the Board’, was one of eight Boards representing each art discipline. The Prime Minister made it very clear that the AAB would operate solely based upon the advice of Aboriginal people. To fulfil that objective he started the AAB with strong tribal representation by appointing Goobala Thaldin, “rough seas”, or Dick Roughsey as chairman. The Board was one of the few Aboriginal organizations that
could sign its own cheques and, "In its own field it is the policy making body of the Federal Government's Australian Council for the Arts." (Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, p. 8).

Although this was a big change of direction for the government in its relationship with Indigenous Australians, some things still remained the same. Even though the Board was composed of Indigenous people who had power to create what they wanted, the administrative staff was all white. The power over final production of minutes; the signing of cheques; Board recommendations were in their hands. However, even with this situation important projects were recognized, supported, and implemented. One of the most important was the inclusion of Torres Strait Islander representation and participation as part of the Aboriginal Arts Board. It was discussed at length and approved at the Board's first, historic meeting.

THE NATIONAL SEMINAR FOR ABORIGINAL ARTS

The AAB's first project was The National Seminar for Aboriginal Arts, which occurred over four days from 21 to 25 May 1973. The seminar was set-up to investigate the needs of Indigenous arts and; "More than 200 people, including tribal elders and Maori, American Indian, Indian, African and New Guinean art and crafts experts" offered their advice, suggestions and presented papers. (New Dawn, 1973).

Highlight of the week's activities including lectures and screening of film-making in urban and tribal areas; an exhibition of Walbiri-Pintubi paintings; reports on Aboriginal literature and theatre groups and on the work of the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation in preserving traditional dance and song; performances by the black Nindethana theatre of Melbourne and by traditional dancers and singers from Northern Australia; and a performance by the Adelaide Aboriginal Orchestra. (New Dawn, September 1973:1)

The September 1973 issue of New Dawn did a spread on this seminar, which included an outline of the seminars objectives. (Appendix, pp. 50-57).

Whitlam's opening statement at the combined session of the AAB and the National Seminar, re-confirmed his government's commitment to take responsibility to support Indigenous people and bring about a general improvement to their situation.

"There can be no qualification about my Government's commitment to the cause of the Aboriginal people. We are determined that the long record of injustice, repression, neglect, the record that has marked our
treatment of the Aboriginal people for two centuries of white civilization on this continent, will be brought to an end.” “We regard the Aboriginals’ rights and dignity as more important than the white man’s reputation.” ‘The Aborigines are a responsibility we cannot escape, cannot share, cannot shuffle off.’” (Whitlam, 1973:2)

Whitlam’s speech was printed in New Dawn, September 1973. (Appendix, pp. 78-79).

THE DANCE GROUP PRIOR TO CAROLE’S RETURN
There is no mention of the dance group taking part in the National Seminar; they seemed to have busy trying to keep their head above water. After Carole left Australia, the dance group was able to continue through the efforts of Phemie Bostock, who had taken on the position of convenor for the group. This was not an easy job because, “After Carole left Australia, interest in the dance seemed to die off and came to a stop for about 4 months” (Phemie). In order to find solutions and revive interests in the classes, Phemie contacted the International Theatre Institute (ITI) with the hope of attracting another skilled professional dance artists. She was probably looking for someone who offered the same dedication and multifaceted background in dance as Carole Johnson. In the past both she and her brother Lester had made good use of ITI’s services to build connections with other Indigenous and Third World artists. (Letter archived in the (Appendix, p. 62).

Despite of the inconsistencies in attendance and the difficulties with finding a teacher Phemie did manage to obtain the services of excellent international and Australian dance artists. As mentioned in the previous chapter the AAB had approved a grant for Vera Goldman, an Israeli dancer, to continue the dance workshop after Carole left. However, it has never been substantiated in any other documents that Vera actually took-on the position. What is true is that Phemie was diligently working to maintain a regular schedule of classes but, for the most part, no one was able to stay. Teachers would come and do a few special workshops or classes for a short period and then move on.
One of the teachers Phemie was able to bring in was David Gulpilil, a fully initiated member of the Mandalhingu group of Yolngu people. David was highly respected for his tribal knowledge and as a contemporary artist throughout Australia. Internationally he was well known for his movie roles; Storm Boy, The Right Stuff, Walkabout by Nicolas Roeg and Peter Weir’s The Last Wave. In an article of his national dance tour in 1974, he expressed a need for a “national Aboriginal dance company”. The article titled “Gulpilil dreams of a black dance troupe” mirrored the thoughts of some of the dance workshop members as well. In the article the reporter listed a few of David’s credits:

Australia’s most famous Aborigine, has danced at festivals in Paris and been a guest of honor at film festivals in Tehran, Copenhagen and Cannes” (Seeby, 1984:3)

Ronne Arnold, another key participant in the history of AISDS and NAISDA, also taught during this early period. He came to Australia in a production of West Side Story from the United States and built a reputation as an excellent jazz teacher, choreographer and performer. Intending to stay in Australia, he founded and established his own dance company, The Contemporary Dance Company of Australia. Ronne is currently the course director of NAISDA. To the right is a picture of Ronne Arnold and Gail Mabo, as a student

Robina Beard, a well-known Australian performing artist, also worked for a short period with the dance group before it became established and returned to staff in the late 1980’s. Her valuable instruction supported the continuance of the group during Carole’s absence.

Phemie was also attempting to prepare herself as a dance teacher. This came about after meeting Mark Primus; one of the people Lester and Phemie had come in contact with through ITI. Mark had attended the National Seminar on Aboriginal Arts and presented a paper on, The National Black Theatre in Harlem. In Phemie’s letter to Carole, she wrote about the steps she had taken to prepare herself as a dance teacher:

Have you seen Mark (Primus)? Give him my regards, for it was Mark who said to me, we, “won’t get far till we start developing our own
teachers”. I am doing 2 placement and one character class a week, but I have been given a grant from the Arts Council to pay for these classes. As soon as it comes through I will pay for extra classes for I want to become a teacher for children. (Bostock, E., 1973b:3)

Phemie also informed Carole of her intention to study with Margaret Walker, a folk dance teacher who would later develop professional and personal ties with AISDS. The AAB had approved her grant for “Dance lessons – Euphemie Bostock: The Board agreed to make a grant of $175 for dancing lessons as outlined in the application”.

In the end Phemie spoke of her anticipation of Carole’s return to Sydney, and that she had finally located a dance teacher who was consistently instructing the classes for the dance workshop at BT. (Letter archived in the (Appendix, pp. 59-61).

I will be so happy when you come, for altogether we have been working slowly and learning from our mistakes, we need someone with know how in theatre on a community basis. (Bostock, E., 1973b:2)

LUCY JUMAWAN TAKES THE CLASSES FOR BLACK THEATRE

It was not until Phemie came across Lucy Jumawan that a regular schedule of classes began, during this period of Carole’s absence. Lucy had been led to believe that she was the first teacher to work for BT. This is probably true as the classes were now being conducted as a Black Theatre workshop. It is also true that Carole and Lucy arrived in Australia around the same year. However, the documentation from that period clearly identifies Carole as the originator of a dance workshop, which at this point in time is being convened by Phemie, under the banner of Black Theatre. Lucy said that she met Phemie and began teaching in 1972, which means she probably taught before David Gulpilil, Ronne Arnold or Robina Beard, however there is no dated documentation to establish who did what, when. It is true that Lucy worked with the dance group the longest and most consistently and stayed with them until after Carole’s return in November 1973.

Lucy’s first trip to Australia was in 1972, the same year Carole had arrived. A friend, Professor Shona McTadish, had persuaded her to come Australia, believing she would really benefit from her visit. At some earlier time, Shona had taken on Lucy’s classes at Suliman University in the Philippines. These were classes Lucy had initiated at the University. Lucy
had traveled to the United States to fulfill her dream to study with Ted Shawn at Jacobs Pillow in Lee, Massachusetts.

By the time Lucy came to Australia she had twenty years of teaching and training experience to her credit. She started her dance studies in her hometown of Donegheitti with Minerva Gregoria and continued with Ebanoff, once Gregoria left. After both teachers left, her mother persuaded Lucy to continue training the students. Her parents built a studio and Lucy began her long teaching career at the age of thirteen, which she continued non-stop for close to forty years, until her retirement in 1997 from the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre, Redfern31.

Lucy thought she’d come to Australia for a short two-week visit but ended up staying almost two years. During that time she built a reputation as an excellent teacher and made a number of close ties with people in the Australian dance world. Among them were Margaret Chappel and Les Humphries, who helped develop the Bodenweiser dance studio on City Road in Sydney. Both Margaret and Shona McTadish were members of Madam Bodenweiser’s dance company. It was also during this period that Roslyn Watson began classes at the Bodenweiser studios with Lucy. Roslyn was the best-known Aboriginal working towards a career in dance at that time32, eventually becoming the first Aboriginal woman to work professionally as a ballerina in a major company33. She came to trust Lucy and eventually worked on a few projects that included Lucy and AISDS.

As concerns Lucy’s contact with Phemie, Lucy believes it was her interview on Mike Wallace’s program that brought her to the attention of Phemie Bostock. She said of their meeting:

One day in 1972 Phemie came and she introduced herself. I had not heard about Aboriginal people, and I didn’t know she was Aboriginal because she’s my skin colour.

She said, "Will you come with me?" It was very strange and I did not resist. When she took me there, there were a few kids and the brother Lester, and she said, “Will you teach us dancing”? 

There was a kind of feeling inside I could not explain. It was like I was entering a dream, it was not very real to me. (Jumawan, 2000:interview).
Lucy took on the classes, which she described in an interview with Gabrielle Dalton for Dance Australia:

They were dance workshops, not only for mature people or any particular group, but open to all ages. They were just sessions where everyone got together and danced. I carried on classes in the backyards of churches and sometimes - because there were so many people and so little space - even in the streets!

It was a kind of free-form dance, a rejoicing only. We were not at this stage, after, “you’ve got to stretch your legs, straighten your backs, watch your focus: and all these things. It was just joining hands and enjoying expressing ourselves through dance. (Dalton, 1985:31)

Lucy said she worked with the classes until she went back home to the Philippines in 1974. Phemie had told her about Carole but they had met only once during this time. Carole had come to see her teach, they spoke briefly and that was their only contact until Lucy came back to Australia in 1976. This was probably during Carole’s second trip to Australia in 1973, just before Lucy left to return home to the Philippines. However, Phemie told Lucy that Carole was only here on a visit and had not taught during this period. This is partly true as Carole did very little teaching on her second trip to the country.

According to Phemie I was the first who taught dance. Apparently before Phemie saw me, Carole came but at the time, she did not conduct classes, did not do workshops. Carole came for a visit and left. Now this is Phemie’s story to me. This is how she told me. “Lucy this is why I’m interested to meet you, because there is an American Carole Johnson, but she’s not here she’s in America. She just came to visit. (Jumawan, 2000: interview).

Unfortunately, Phemie has not been available for an interview about this situation, but it does seem to be a matter of timing and personal memories, with Lucy and Carole coming and going all about the same time and the different memories people are holding of the events. However, there can be no doubt of Carole’s input as there are lots of written and verbal accounts of her work with the dance workshop. There is also an abundant amount of media documentation mentioning her as the originator of the dance workshop in Sydney. The record of her activities in Australia is also clearly recorded in the minutes of the Aboriginal Arts Board, so there can be little doubt of her key involvement as the initiator of the dance group.

CAROLE RETURNS

Carole got back to Australia in November 1973. By the time she returned the AAB had been formed and a sub committee, (the Urban Theatre Committee, UTC), had been formatted to
concentrate on urban arts development. Even though she was not present at National Seminar of Aboriginal Arts, she had been acknowledged at this historic gathering, as having “initiated the Aboriginal Dance workshop in Redfern, now part of National Black Theatre”.

Carole had returned to take up the consultancy position with the UTC, approved by the AAB in 1972. On this second trip her duties as a consultant were to assist and review the progress of Indigenous urban arts development in performing arts. This meant a great deal of her attention was focused on the needs of the Black Theatre organization in Sydney. This left her very little time to continue the development on the dance group.

I know that second time I came I wasn’t nearly as involved in teaching dance. In fact I hardly taught dance at all, because the place that we had wasn’t really conducive. It was on Neher or Maughen Street, at a little Medical Service (not the Aboriginal Medical Service). Most of the period was spent trying to find a building for Black Theatre. (Johnson, 1994: Interview)

NATIONAL URBAN THEATRE PROGRAMME

Even though her attention was on the progress of Black Theatre in Sydney, it was the overall training, and the institution of arts programs for the urban, rural and country areas that she and the other consultants were concerned about. Carole and Bryan Syron, both of who had extensive backgrounds in the performing arts, continued to address the problems of training and skill building of performing artists. One of their ideas, submitted to the AAB, would later set the groundwork for performing arts development in Sydney for Indigenous Australians. The idea was to create a National Urban Theatre Programme (NUTP). The primary objective was to bring expert training to aspiring actors, dancers, writers and others interested in careers in the performing art, directly to each of the capital cities: “a small team of professional and traditional artist to conduct training and workshop sessions on a national scale”. It was envisioned that funding for the project would come from other sources as well as the Board, as some of the artists earmarked for the program would be coming from overseas as well as Australia: Brian Syron, David Gulpilil (Australia), Djimo Kouyata (Senegal) with Carole Johnson and Mr Ken Snipes (African Americans). The proposal was “deferred pending detailed consideration by the Urban Activities Advisory Committee” (AAB: 1.1.7, 1974:24).

Some of ideas were altered and the project re-named a few times before it met with approval, but the idea created a format for training on a large scale, which would include the entire
country. It was re-submitted in December 1974 with the intention of operating for 8 weeks as a:

.....cultural and performing arts training programme to be conducted in major centres throughout Australia. It was a workshop programme to up-grade existing Black Theatre in Australia. Funds should come from Department of Education and other Government agencies. The application was for ‘approval in principle’. A committee was set-up to investigate, the Board would recommend ‘approval in principle’ on submission of the committee’s report. (AAB:1.1.10, 1974:47). (Appendix, pp. 64-65).

It was finally approved as a Six Week Performing Arts Training Program (also referred to as the Six-Week Training Program or the Six-Week Workshop) that was scheduled to take place in Sydney in 1975. This Six-Week Training Program became a landmark in urban performing arts development and created the groundwork from which AISDS would evolve.

NEW DIRECTORS AND NEW PROBLEMS FOR BLACK THEATRE, SYDNEY
In this period (1973-1974) the development of NBT in Sydney became of major concern for the AAB. In almost one year’s time from December ’72’ to November ’73’, the management of NBT had changed. Lester Bostock was now the director of the organization, as Bob Maza, running into problems with the tour of Basically Black, was no longer directly involved. The circumstances of tour to the NSW’s country areas was the major reason for his leaving. There was an issue about the mismanagement of funds, part of which concerned the booking agent, who had run off with the box office receipts. The other aspect had to do with the unfamiliarity with grant and funding procedures. This was not an unusual situation for a new group.

Mis-managing it in the sense of not always using it for exactly what they say or said they were going to use it for..... It wasn’t being used personally but it was just not always following the procedures..... People hadn’t had much experience with the handling of grants and the administration of them. (Johnson, 1994:interview)

To add to NBT’s problems, the Board reports from the consultants of the UTC, while supportive, were concerned about their ability to fulfil their mission effectively. Chicka Dixon reported that since the grant, approved in 1973 (which was to cover two years rent and a few workshops), “significant changes had occurred in its governing committee. Lester Bostock had been dismissed and replaced by Tony Coorey”.

Mr. Dixon explained that since the grant of $16,000 had been recommended for National Black Theatre, significant changes had
occurred in its governing committee. Lester Bostock had been dismissed and replaced by Tony Coorey.

Mr. Wallis explained that National Black Theatre was not a legally constituted body and in the absence of a person vested with that authority, there had been no alternative but for the Board to freeze their funds.

Concern Over use of Building: Mr. Dixon expressed concern that the children of Redfern would lose a meeting place because of the inability of the governing committee to resolve their differences. It was explained that rent on the premises was being paid still and that the Urban Theatre Advisory Committee would report on how it could best be used.

Need for Action: Mr. Edwards said there were two alternatives for the Board. The funds could be reallocated to another administering authority so that the projects planned by National Black Theatre could be funded separately or the grant could be withdrawn and re-allocated for another purpose.

Mr. Dixon asked for more information on the building. Mr. McGuigan explained that $26,000 had been provided to lease the building for two years and a further $10,000 set aside by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for renovations. The Department recognised the importance of having a cultural centre in Redfern and had decided to retain the lease. An Architect had costed the necessary renovations.

Mr. Dixon suggested that re-organization of the people who run National Black Theatre was necessary.

It was moved Mr. Dixon, seconded Mr. Marika, “That Mr. Widder’s and Mr. Dixon meet with the Urban Theatre Advisory Committee and National Black Theatre representatives in an attempt to find a solution to the problems of Black Theatre and further that the $16,000 grant be held in abeyance until such time as a recommendation could be made.” The motion was carried. (AAB:1.1.5, 1974:22-23).

Pertinent to the dance group, which at this point in time was operating as a Black Theatre workshop, was Charles Perkins’ statement at the fourth Board meeting in November 1973 (AAB:1.1.4, 1973:30). He “felt strongly that the National Black Theatre should concentrate its efforts strictly on theatre” (meaning drama only). This certainly would have left the dance group to continue by their own devices, without the umbrella of NBT. However, it would also allow NBT to properly develop one aspect of its program (drama). The situation came out of the Board’s discussion of a large grant for administration and workshops, which NBT had submitted. The general consensus was that too much funding in Sydney would limit funding to other Black Theatre groups. At the time there was a Black Theatre unit in Brisbane, Perth,
Darwin and Palm Island, all would have been applying for funding as the same time. It was also true that even though the dance workshop was the most consistent workshop functioning at BT, drama was far more acceptable. Drama, along the lines of Western theatre, was an art form familiar to most and was being encouraged by the Arts Board, the consultants and the community. Dance, on the other hand, was not as easily knowable to urban people. Even though dance played a key role in the ritual dramas of the traditional cultures, among urban communities, there were no established dance institutions or practitioners that Indigenous Australians could work or train with, within their own communities.

The problems confronting BT were examples of issues likely to surface during the beginning stages of any Indigenous urban theatre. Urban arts development was going through growing pains and would take a while defining itself. Being mindful of the fragile nature of Indigenous urban theatre, the Board was ready and willing to continue encouraging the development of projects. However, there were serious concerns about how to solve the problems.

Unlike traditional art, urban theatre was experimental. Those involved were continually breaking new ground and it was to be expected that many projects would be unsuccessful. Concern was expressed on whether applicants for funds had a clear understanding of theatre techniques. Experience had shown that in some instances Arts Board grants had led to quarrels and the collapse of theatre activities.

(AAB:1.1.8, 1974:30-31)

**BETTY FISHER JOINS THE BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE**

Even though NBT had experienced some difficulties between 1973 and 1974, by July 1974, when they had their official opening, they were a recognized organization operating out their new space. They had also changed the name from the National Black Theatre to the Black Theatre Arts and Cultural Centre (BT). Now that Bob, Lester and Toni Coorey were no longer running BT, they were sorely in need of a new director. Moving on a suggestion of Chicka Dixon, Carole arranged a meeting with a woman Chicka thought would be available and interested in the position, this was Betty Fisher.

Betty was a member of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs (a centre for Black people near Central Station). She was a veteran singer and well known among Aboriginal people to be a "passionate militant" (SMH). In an article run in the SMH Betty was reported to be a person
of very strong views about the images, produced within the commercial world about Aboriginal people and the ripping-off of Aboriginal art and culture.

White people don’t understand the way Blacks think. It angers me to see Aboriginal art on a tea towel. The people who print them don’t understand what they mean to us.” “I’ve seen a tea towel with a sacred painting on it. I’ve seen fibreglass boomerangs with instructions written on them. That angers me.” (SMH, 1975:9)

Betty accepted the position to run BT and she got the building cleaned up operating and running. BT was now located on Botany Street in Redfern and was described in the paper as being:

......a scruffy looking, two-storey former printing works. Its faded green façade is plastered with posters and slogans. It’s not much to look at – but Bettie Fisher loves it. “The centre for me is my blood, my guts, my heart and my soul, for my people and their culture.”

“I’m a very emotional person as far as this centre is concerned.” She said, “Because there is a helluva big need for it.” (SMH, 1975:9)

Carole was really impressed with what Betty had achieved with the building.

She became involved and actually took it up and got the building all together and started in some kinds of activities. Chris McGuigan was involved at that time. (Johnson, 1994:interview)

On July 26, 1974 BT official opened their new facility, with Roberta Flack and Russand Roland Kirk being among the celebrates to attend35.

CRADLE OF HERCULES

Even though the majority of Carole’s time had not been with the dance group, they did manage two important events during her second trip to Australia. One was the collaboration with Anthony Horler on a film of the National Black Theatre Dance Workshop36. This is the first filmed document of the dance group.

Application for $364 for post production costs of film by Anthony Horler on National Black Theatre dance workshop. Anthony Horler had collaborated with Carole Johnson and members of Black Theatre in bringing the film to roughly edited stage. It was expected that the Board would require two prints of the completed film. (AAB:1.1.7, 1974:33)

The other was the production of Cradle of Hercules. Carole’s rough notes of this production has been archived in the (Appendix, pp. 70-77)
This would be an eye-opening event for Carole and everyone involved, as it was one of the rare moments when Aboriginal and White Australians were working together. *Cradle of Hercules* was a Sydney Theatre Company production scheduled for the Drama Theatre at the Sydney Opera House in November and December of 1973. The production would provide employment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in mainstream theatre. Carole said “it was an attempt to stand Anglo-Saxon and Aboriginal aesthetic values side by side and was the first time an establishment theatre company used Aboriginal people, both urban and tribal, to play Aboriginal people”. It was “about the coming of the first English settlers in 1788” and, “it was about Benelong”³⁷ (Carole). The Aboriginal performers were David Gulpilil, Zac Martin, Alana Coorey, Sylvania Doolan and Jack Charles.

Two serious problems came to the forefront during the production of *Cradle of Hercules*. The production did not create the problems but exposed inherent situations related to combining vastly different cultures: Aboriginal and European Australian. The first had to do with foreigners, non-Aboriginal people or uninitiated people attempting to perform the traditional dances with no prior knowledge of the culture. This included Aboriginal people from other clans, tribes and from the urban centres, as well as Whites and other non-Aboriginal people. The second problem was the attitude and feeling of some urban Aboriginal people towards foreigners (Carole in particular) and her participation with Aboriginal culture. This was especially true, as her position would be involved with contemporary Aboriginal aesthetics and creative expression. This second problem intermittently reared its head during Carole’s tenure with AISDS, causing friction that, at times, interfered with student/staff relations and threatened the continued development of the organization.

Carole originally accepted the position with some concerns about, what she expressed as the, “ticklish political position” it would pose. “Should I, an African American dancer, become involved in a play that would attempt to stand Anglo-Saxon and Aboriginal values side by side?” With this consideration, she accepted the position on the condition that David Gulpilil, who was already contracted as an actor/dancer, also be employed as choreographer and be given choreographic recognition. This would be their first time working together. Commenting on her ability to contribute to the production in such a politically charged environment Carole wrote:
I thought my first year in Australia had adequately prepared me for the task of choreographing an Aboriginal ritual for the Western stage. In addition to working extensively with the city people, who sensitised me on Australian Black-White relations, I had read a great deal about the traditional culture, saw more traditional dance than most city-born Aboriginals, and lived on several reserves. I found that this dance job put me in closer touch with the realities of the Australian cultural clash than any other experience..... (Johnson, 1974e:3)

In clarifying what her job would be she hit upon some very important issues concerning racial attitudes that Australians had been living with up to this point. These issues made the goal of "mixing the two cultures unattainable" (Johnson, 1974a) for this period in Australian history. Much of the problem came out of the remaining mystique of the White Australia Policy38, which still plagued the relationship and trust between Whites and people of colour in Australia. In the end Carole felt:

Since many white Australians are beginning to realize that Aboriginal people are still alive and believe that the culture should not die out, but that it is the secret of what will eventually be the Australian Identity. The play was not a matter of mixing the two cultures. Mixing Aboriginal and Western forms so that something neither Aboriginal nor European but Australian emerges, just has not happened. So far both groups are too rooted in their own traditions to allow or be able to make that happen.

My job, as it turned out, was to make Aboriginal Dance useful and workable on the Australian stage. I was to extract from David, ideas and the forms needed, and help him find a way to adopt it to the needs of the play. (Johnson, 1974e:4)

David Gulpilil, having extensive knowledge of both Western performance and the Dreaming ceremonies of his people, was in a totally different position from the rest of the cast. Unlike him, the majority of Aboriginal performers were untrained with no background in Western theatre or traditional performance. They were just beginning to gain the training and expertise necessary to comprehend the creative process involved in Western theatre. Nor did the Aboriginal performers have the skills to quickly absorb the traditional movements of David's culture. This made it difficult for both Carole and David to teach and create the dance portion of production. The movement quality, style and meaning of the traditional experience were totally new to city performers, even for the professionals. Carole wrote that it was even more difficult for David:

He had to bring a Black American, urban Aboriginals and Whites into his cultural aesthetics, assumptions, references and make something
that would not conflict with his beliefs but what was right for Western style theatre. (Johnson, 1974a:4)

The play was not a big success in the theatre world but it did allow problems that had been unapproachable in the past to be worked on. The production was certainly a warning about the types of issues that would confront the Dance Group and Carole in later years. Cradle of Hercules seemed to have opened a multitude of unseen but inherently serious matters, concerning the use of the traditional culture and working with Aboriginal people. These were the types of issues that would become part of the environment of AISDS as it evolved.

CAROLE LEAVES AND RETURNS FOR THE LAST TIME

In May 1974, Carole left Australia for the second time. She didn’t know if she wanted to return, and, if she did, for how long. She said, “I was involved in stuff in the States. My mother just said I should go back and complete what I started. It wasn’t complete, because there wasn’t anything that was on-going in place”. Phemie had kept in touch and had requested she consider returning. At the December 1974 meeting, the Board approved an extension of her consultancy for a further nine months on a full-time basis and commented that, “Members expressed enthusiasm for the work Ms. Johnson had done for urban theatre in Sydney” (AAB:1.1.10, 1974:48).

She had mixed feelings about returning to Australia but considering the advice given by her mother, ‘to complete what she’d started’, she decided to return and really get dance on solid ground in Sydney, as no one else had the interest or qualifications to do it. The one thing she was sure of was the affinity she felt towards Australian Indigenous people and their struggle. In a paper she delivered at the Black Dance Conference held in Philadelphia Pennsylvania in 1995, she expressed her thoughts about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is the dance that knits our respective beings within the two communities. Dance (its totality music, story and movement) is the method the indigenous Australians who retain their continuum, continue to retain their continuum..... Dance and music is the way Black Americans today maintain their unity, identity and spiritual connections.

I truly felt a kinship with these urban Aboriginal people. As I think about it now, I believe that it was on a spiritual level and our mutual understanding of that broken continuum with our respective ancient
roots. Upon analysis, I believe I was called to remain there, to assist my new friends in re-establishing (in a tangible and functional 20th century way) connections to their ancient heritage, being denied them by the Australian power structure. (Johnson, 1995a:1)

Carole thought it would take maybe three years to give the students what they wanted, a professional dance company for Indigenous Australians. But in actuality it took an additional fourteen years, (between 1975 and 1989), before the goal was totally fulfilled, with the establishment of Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia, in 1989.

Judging from the next few agendas of Board meetings, Carole had a limited amount of time to fulfil what she had returned to do. A month after her return in November the AAB had its final meeting for the year. In that meeting three agenda items were considered under New Applications – Performing Arts. All related to Carole and projects for the development of Urban Theatre and the Dance Group.

The first item titled, Carole Johnson – Urban Theatre Consultant, approved funding for her to continue the position as a consultant from 24 March to 29 November 1975, a period of thirty-six weeks. This would give maximum support to the AAB and the artists preparing for the upcoming 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Cultural (FESTAC) in Lagos, Nigeria. FESTAC was a big event for the entire Aboriginal and Islander artistic community. They had just missed out on the Indigenous world cultural festival held in Iran, and all energies were now focused on sending a large contingent to the African festival, which was scheduled to take place the following year in 1975; and then Carole’s work would be “considered as complete”.

Ms. Johnson will continue her work as consultant to the Aboriginal Arts Board for developing urban Aboriginal community arts programs with a special emphasis on dance until the Nigerian Festival. At that time her work will be considered as complete. (Johnson, 1974a). (Appendix, p. 63).

The Board was very specific about the length of time of her employment but as things worked out the Nigerian festival was postponed for two more years until 1977. By that time Carole had officially established the ‘Careers in Dance’ course, which was functioning with a five-day training schedule and an Advisory Board of Founding Members. She had begun the process to have the course accredited as a tertiary course, under the Commonwealth Higher
Education Board. The ‘Careers in Dance’ course combined with the student-performing unit, (the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre, AIDT) were fast becoming household names throughout Australia. At this point in time it would be difficult to halt the momentum of the above activities, which was to form the foundation of the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS).

The second item on the agenda was about the further development of the National Urban Theatre Program’s “Eight Week Cultural and Performing Arts Training Program”, which had expanded its objectives and provided the dates, time and place for the proposed national training program. The objectives were:

- To stimulate a more organic development of urban theatre that will be based on the real experiences of people participating in the program.
- Allow people from each state to function at Black Theatre in Sydney, where they will see how a culture centre functions with workshops, special events, and plays.
- To create something visible happening in each city or town.
- Create a model for training program and a standard for the running of workshops which Aboriginal people will develop to fit their own particular needs.
- To create in each capital a small group of people who have training and will have a specific project which they can take back to their own city. (Johnson, 1974c:1). (Appendix, pp. 64-65).

The final agenda item was for the dance students to conduct their First Urban Dance Theatre Tour of NSW Country Towns. There were three objectives set out for this project.

The Dance Workshop at Black Theatre will take their concert and visit a country town on a scheduled weekend. In addition to the performance, people in the town will be able to watch the workshop take its class and rehearse. On the following day they will conduct a workshop so that interested people in the town have an opportunity to participate.

The project is designed to fulfil the concept of creating a model that can later be followed. It is also designed to stimulate Aboriginal people in the country towns and show them what can be done in theatre. And, it is designed to help prepare the urban dance performers for the Nigerian Festival. (Appendix, p. 66).

This explosive period of New Beginnings, between 1973 and 1974, was about to expand in 1975 with the “Eight Week Training Program” on the agenda. Even though the program was
only approved for six weeks, it was the first national exposure to performing arts training for Indigenous Australians and from it many new beginnings would blossom.
CHAPTER 4: 1975 ~ SIX WEEK ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER CULTURAL AND PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM

Nineteen Seventy-Five was a very important year in the development urban Indigenous performing arts. With the implementation of the Six Week Aboriginal-Islander Cultural and Performing Arts training Program – commonly referred to as the Six Week Workshop – Indigenous Australians were able to continue the exploration for a contemporary urban identity in the arts. This was a goal that was fully supported by the government agency, the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB). The Six-Week Training Program was the AAB’s second most important event since its inception in 1973. The first was the National Seminar of Aboriginal Arts, which opened the dialogue for urban arts development.

There were also major changes for the performing arts consultants of the Urban Theatre Committee (UTC). It was a year of break-ups and serious confrontations between the Dance Group and the Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts Community Centre (NBT)\(^9\). However, by the end of the year, the increase in trained urban Indigenous performing artists far outweighed the divisions, splits and contentions.

THE DANCE GROUP CONTINUES

It was during this year that the Dance Workshop changed from a casual workshop to the ‘Careers in Dance’ course, or (the Course). This was first step towards building an educational institution that would soon be known as the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS). The change from a workshop to the course was due to Carole’s insight. After a period of indecision, as to whether to stay in Australia, Carole finally made the commitment to work with the students and build a strong base for their dance aspirations. This meant they would have access to a regular schedule of classes, with a highly skilled teacher who would look after their technical and creative needs. With Carole’s extensive and varied background, the students would also have access to performing and employment opportunities.

The year commenced with an interesting event, which began to define their place in the continuum of Australian Indigenous dance. The event was a joint program, with Pastor Brady’s Yelangi Dance Company and Stephen Mam’s, Torres Strait Island Dancers (the
Waiben Dancers)\(^6\), which was presented at the NBT, in February. This show, along with a short performance on the 6\(^{th}\) of April, was to introduce funding bodies to the work being accomplished at the NBT. It was one of those rare moments when the dance group—working within the idiom of modern dance and addressing contemporary issues confronting Aboriginal and Islander people—were seen alongside the traditional dance cultures. This combined program presented a view of the dance continuum, from the ancient past to the present; and visually identified the place of the Sydney Dance Group within the dance continuum. For example, the Yelangi dancers and the Torres Strait Islander dance group covered the primordial dance cultures that grew from a 60,000-year tradition. As these groups maintained that tradition, the Sydney dance group brought into existence a new Dreaming. They identified issues confronting the past and present existence of Indigenous Australians, within a contemporary context, and sometimes fusing traditional and contemporary styles. With the existence of all three performing units, Indigenous Australians, whether urban or traditionally living people had a place within the continuum where they could function and contribute. There are several memos that document the preparations for this event. (See the documents titled, ‘Trip to Brisbane Part I & II’ archived in the Appendix, pp. 97-99).

**UBERN ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM**

The Consultants had prepared a number of proposals with the hope of generating a consistent training program. One was presented as a Memo to the AAB, for “A Permanent Structure and Staff in the Urban Cultural Centres, (Archived as Appendix, pp. 81-82). This supported the energy being put into the National Black Theatre and was a request for a larger administrative and artistic staff. But the most important event to aid the development of urban performing arts was the Six Week Aboriginal-Islander Cultural and Performing Arts Training Program, (the Six-Week Workshop). This training program, of which little is mentioned today, had a profound impact on the participants, and was probably the most important ingredient in the beginning stage of urban performing arts, in Sydney.

The Six-Week Workshop evolved out of a plan presented to the Board in 1974, to establish a continuing training scheme as part of the National Urban Theatre Program. The original plan was for eight weeks but the purpose and goals remained the same: to begin the training process for careers in performing arts and communication skills; and, in the case of the Dance
Group, to study the traditional dance culture along with contemporary dance skills and techniques.

Of all of the art disciplines offered during the 6-week training program, the Dance Group was the only one to incorporate the traditional culture within its continued training formula. There was a course on Aboriginal language but the only discipline to incorporate the traditional as part of its training was the dance. One reason for this was, those art disciplines heavily dependent on language (writing and drama) were already functioning within a common language, English. They had a common language through which their stories could be shared. Even though it was on a small scale, the Indigenous identity had already begun to appear in stories and poetry and to a small part in dramatic roles. At this point in time, what they needed was in-put from Indigenous artists.

On the other hand, Ballet, Modern and even the popular dance forms from America were not part of the accepted dance vocabulary of Indigenous Australians. This meant that dance artists had to find an identity that characterised them as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and, at the same time, contemporary. By the end of the twentieth century, examples of Indigenous contemporary dance expression, based on traditional and contemporary rituals, forms, techniques, styles, nuances and choreographic approach⁴¹, are easy to find. But, in he the 1970's there were no examples or models dancers could build their dances around.

The primary architects of the Six-Week Training Workshop were Carole Johnson and Brian Syron. They were the only consultants on the Urban Theatre Committee (UTC) with extensive backgrounds in performing arts, Carole in dance and Bryan in drama. Both were intimately familiar with performing arts skills, as well as the needs and desires of Indigenous Australians. Understanding how to equip Indigenous Australians with knowledge of both traditional and western theatre culture, they came up with the idea of the Six-Week Workshop the would service the whole country. Six weeks would only be an introduction, but that would be a start. The initial six-week training would nurture interests, new ideas and demonstrate the need for the establishment of a permanent course or school to continue the process.
TRAVELING THEATRE

To set the Six-Week Training Program in motion, the consultants devised a series of mini-workshops to be conducted in three capital cities, prior to the full Six-Week Workshop in Sydney. The workshops were to be a condensed version of the upcoming Workshop, scheduled for June. These were to: "introduce people living outside of Sydney to some of the applications needed in learning to write, act, dance, or the art of karate" (Johnson). It would also build support networks between urban, rural and country areas that would maintain Indigenous Arts growth. Because the tutors for the workshop would be travelling from city to city, the mini-workshops were occasionally referred to as the Travelling Theatre, bringing live theatre and training directly into Aboriginal and Islander communities.

COURSE AND INSTRUCTORS

The mini-workshops were to be conducted over one weekend in each city and would offer a combination of activities. The main focus was on training with an extra-added performance from the instructors, at the end.

The instructors had a unique task ahead of them. This was because; to date there were no established systems of training that incorporated the nuances of Australian Aboriginal or Islander temperament, character, language or expression. Understanding this Brian Syron, the drama instructor, was aware that modifications of mainstream Western acting and writing techniques would be essential, to accommodate the specific expressive qualities and needs of the Aboriginal and Islander participants. This must have been a concern for all of the instructors but his approach was to draw from the students:

The organic reaction, rather than going to the ac-ka-ting as such. It's a totally different technique than going directly to the words. It's a way of going to the humanity first. (Reese/Syron, 1975:Film)

Carole was to teach the dance workshops, with the assistance of one of the Founding Students of AISDS/NAISDA, Wayne Nicol. Being aware of his sincerity and talent, Carole took Wayne under her tutelage to increase his communication and teaching skills. She did this because; it had always been one of his goals to bring something back to his community, in Cairns, as an alternative to crime, drugs and petrol sniffing. At this point Wayne needed encouragement to continue with his dance interest; firstly, because he was the only male in
the Dance Group, and secondly, he had received very little support with his funding requests for dance projects from the AAB.

Andréa (Andee) Reese, an African American film director and writer, conducted the writing courses. Tom Rosser, a computer innovator with knowledge of martial arts, taught Karate. Karate was not an essential European or Aboriginal/Islander performance skill, but was a way of encouraging students to expand their range of movement and cultural experience. The martial arts are, after all, a part of the training of many of the world’s great performance traditions.

RESULTS OF MINI-WORKSHOPS
In the end the mini-workshops were conducted in Brisbane and Melbourne only. The Adelaide community requested a postponement, as the present workshop schedule would coincide with the school holiday break, which they felt, “would be a bad time to come”. (AAB:1.1.12, 1975:39)

Members of the Board noted that the proposed programme excluded Perth. Mr. Colbung explained that New Era Activities was at present conducting workshops in Perth, but would be interested in a follow-up from the National Theatre Programme at a later date. (AAB:1.1.12, 1975:39)

Brisbane hosted eight sessions during the weekend, which was attended by thirty people. Each of the art disciplines met twice, servicing a total of two hundred and forty people, at an estimated cost of $2.85 per person, per session.

Melbourne hosted six sessions, with fifteen people in each session. A total of ninety people participated over the course of the weekend; this was at an average cost of $7.35 per person, per session. Incredible!

In explaining why the attendance was larger in Brisbane, Carole noted in her final report to the AAB, a difference in attitudes concerning urban Aboriginal politics, in 1975 between the two cities.

The people in Brisbane seem to have a spirit and a sense of working together that allows them to function in groups that are not defined by one particular family group and their friends.
......(They) are also basically politically minded. They are very much involved in trying to smash the Queensland Acts. Actually the Black Theatre of Brisbane was established to be a vehicle to help educate the people.

In Melbourne there are essentially two differing family groups and friends that dominate the cultural scene. In the case of this workshop we actually serviced only one group. This is why the numbers were half of the Brisbane Workshops. The other group did not participate although I am told, they knew about it. (Johnson, 1975i:1-2). (Appendix, pp. 106-107).

She suggested that this inter-state training be continued with Brisbane in mind as the next centre of operation.

Brisbane would be the next place where the Board could successfully attempt developing a cultural centre once the Sydney Workshops and concepts get off the ground. This is provided there is a consultant or someone really knowledgeable in organizing arts projects working full-time there. I would suggest that real strong efforts toward developing these could be projected for about 1977. (Johnson, 1975i:2), (Appendix, pp. 106-107).

Carole’s assessment eventually came to pass some twenty-three years later. In 1998, (Australia’s bi-centenary year), the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) was established in Brisbane. This came about through Michael Leslie’s participation with Keating’s cultural advisory committee. The project, introduced under the Keating Labour government, was to be the ‘National Indigenous Institute of Performing Arts (NIIPA). The government initially attempted to move the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association, (NAISDA), to Brisbane to achieve this goal. However, the director of NAISDA, Jon Alderman, refused the offer. This was because NAISDA had an established twenty-two years of tenure in Sydney, which was a larger centre for arts than Brisbane. When NAISDA refused the move, Michael was approached to take over the directorship of NIIPA, which was renamed the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA), which was “jointly sponsored by the Wayne Gough Queensland Labour Government; the Keating Federal Labour Government and the Brisbane City Council” (Leslie).

In the end, the mini-workshops accomplished several significant objectives. To begin with the workshops provided quality training outside of Sydney; it gave a realistic picture of what was involved in performing arts training; created a preliminary formula for future support and
networking, and, successfully promoted trust and good feelings about the up-coming Six Week Workshop; to be conducted in the Black community of Redfern in Sydney.

**THE SIX-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM**

In nineteen seventy-five, Carole wrote the following assessment of what she thought to be lacking in performing arts training for Indigenous Australians. Her statement might seem as if the project were totally based on her ideas; but in fact, Carole was very good at keeping accurate notes, and during her time as a consultant for the UTC, she did most of the writing. The idea for the project came from the members of the UTC. However, her personal assessment grew out of what she had witnessed of Indigenous Australians, and was coloured by her arts expertise, which was considerable.

...When I came to Australia, I found that real knowledge of how to make something happen on the administrative level; as well as knowledge of all the supports and how to create the supports that are necessary, to make an art product available (to SHARE) to the rest of the community, is lacking in the bulk of Aboriginal people who are interested in cultural revival. Thus the frustration of urban people especially and their high rate of failure.

.....I was thus concerned that individuals begin to experience a greater degree of success in their endeavours, and that their actual achievement matched their own high vision of quality. (Johnson, 1975c:1). (Appendix, pp. 103-105).

The Six-Week Workshop was the first step towards the possibility of on-going performing arts training, for Indigenous Australians, which definitely addressed some of Carole’s concerns, in the above quote. The workshop was a workable project for the time, not too overwhelming, nor insignificant of purpose. It would take the participants some time to master any of the art disciplines. But the intention was to supply what Indigenous people had requested, a way to gain visibility and employment in the performing arts. It was time for Aboriginal and Islander people to play themselves, to be working behind the scenes, to be technicians, teachers and performers.

A formal request, to conduct the Workshop at the Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts Community Centre (NBT), was presented to the new director, Betty Fisher. It was agreed that the project would run June/July 1975.
Twenty-eight participants from all areas of the country enrolled in the training program. Five left early, leaving twenty-three to complete the experience. Six enrolled from each of the following states: NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland; three were from Western Australia and one from the Northern Territory. It was an intensive course with classes held five days a week, twelve hours each day for the first four weeks. Everyone participated in every class during that time. By the last two weeks they separated into the particular art discipline of their choice and concentrated their energy on preparing for the closing performance.

At the end, the participants appeared in a performance of their own works, and were the subject of the award-winning documentary, *Tjintu Pakani - Sunrise Awakening*, produced and directed by the writing instructor, Andee Reese. The final report to the AAB, written by Carole, explains the purpose, funding, costs, recruitment, enrolment, course content, trips, housing and the results of the Course. This report has been archived in the, (Appendix, pp. 83-88). However, it was *Sunrise Awakening* that documented the daily training, rehearsals and activities of the entire Six-Week Training Program.
COURSE CONTENT AND PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Instructor/Assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Brian Syron assisted by Ann Swan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Stephen Costain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights &amp; Sound</td>
<td>Ian McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Dance</td>
<td>Carole Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Dance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Torres Strait Island</td>
<td>Eddie Pau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mornington Island</td>
<td>Henry Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Andee Reese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karate</td>
<td>Tom Rosser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terry Widders who was assisted by Paul Murphy conducted Pitjantjatjara language class.

THEATRE EXCURSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Play/Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opera House</td>
<td>Importance of Being Ernest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble Theatre</td>
<td>The Good Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Theatre</td>
<td>The Festival Ballet Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chequers</td>
<td>Dimboola</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Aborigines Day Ball.

PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUCTORS & PARTICIPANT OF TRAINING PROGRAM

BRIAN SYRON, (TOP LEFT), SHIREEN MALAMOO, (TOP RIGHT)

EDDIE PAU, (LOWER LEFT), ANDEE REESE, (LOWER RIGHT).
FUNDING & SUPPORT
Funding came from three sources, the Aboriginal Arts Board, the Aboriginal Study Grants section of the Commonwealth Department of Education (CDE), with the space, staff support and in-kind services provided by the NBT; “(W)ithout the staff and in-kind services of the three organizations this project could never have happened.” (Johnson, 1975d:1)

The AAB funded the day-to-day expenses for lecturers, teaching staff, administration, student housing and equipment for the course, with major funding provided by the Aboriginal Study Grants Section of the CDE. The CDE provided a living allowance for the participants, which included round-trip transportation and individual fees for student equipment. They also funded a facilitator, Paul Murphy, who did the liaison work between organizations and the participants. During the training program Paul took care of the general arrangements and needs of the participants. He met them on arrival, got them settled in their motel and made the travel arrangements for their departure at the end of the workshop. In the following document, “Some interesting figures concerning Arts Board involvement in Six Week Workshop”, Carole estimated the cost to be $615.00 or $21.00 per day per person. Not so today! (Appendix, pp. 89-96)

TJINTU PAKANI - SUNRISE AWAKENING
Tjintu Pakani – Sunrise Awakening⁴⁶ is the only visual record of the Six-Week Workshop. Documenting each class while in progress, (acting, speech, writing, traditional and contemporary dance), the film documented the development of the project from class to rehearsal, climaxing with a live performance. It was conceived, produced and edited under the direction of Andee Reese who also taught the writing workshop. Sunrise Awakening won a Greater Union Documentary Award at the 1976 Sydney Film Festival. The value of the film was noted in an Aboriginal newsletter of the time, Kooka-Bina.

……a six week course in all aspects of theatre was held at Black Theatre in Sydney. All the trials and joy of self discovery and accomplishment are captured in a film “Sunrise Awakening”, directed by a black woman, Andee Reese, who was also the script-writing tutor at the course. We are very proud that this film won the Australian Documentary Category of the Sydney Film Festival.

……we can say confidently that at last, there are some enlightened people out there who realize that Australian history is not just a history of Anglo-Saxon conquest. (Kooka-Bina, June 1976:12)
Commenting on the documentary, a reporter for *Koori-Bina* felt the film had finally presented Aboriginal and Islander people in a positive way. *Sunrise Awakening* captured a rare insight into the feelings, thoughts and personal experiences of Indigenous Australians. On a whole the training program was a constructive experience, which produced a valuable showcase for the participants. They created their own scripts and choreography, which provided a rare view of Black Australians. The film also exposed old wounds. It uncovered the hidden pain of the participants', concerning their treatment as Indigenous Australians. Personal feelings, that had been buried and never expressed, began to surface. Some of the participants were overwhelmed by this experience, which the documentary brought to light. For example, Roz Forgan gave a personal testament of her lack of relationships with other Black people, until this event. Her statement confirms the destruction caused by the acts of government separation under colonialism, referred to in Chapter 1. Roz made it quite clear that the Six-Week Workshop had literally changed her:

> I would consider this course one of the most important things that’s ever happened to me. I suppose it’s best being expressed as a culture shock, in so far as I’ve never had so much to do with blacks in one place at one time. It’s helped me work through a lot of my problems and given me a lot of confidence especially for my writing. I think it’s been brilliant. (Reese/Forgan, 1975:film)

Viewing *Sunrise Awakening* it is evident that, even though the participants came from diverse backgrounds with varied degrees of arts and communication skills, everyone accomplished more than just skill building in the performing arts. Some had grown up in politically aware communities and were confident with their heritage and culture, others had not. Some were victims of the stolen generation and were just discovering they were Aboriginal or Islander. For a few, this was their first exposure to an all Black experience. For others, the lack of education was an issue, and for some the lack of self-esteem and confidence was a serious problem. The inter-relationships seemed to have been a soul opening experience; providing a new place for Aboriginal and Islander people to know themselves, and a new dimension from which creative expression could begin.

At the end of the documentary the participants were filmed in the process of an informal discussion. The director/interviewer, Andee Reese, posed the following question:

> How do you feel about the film crew invading the space? This film is supposed to reflect you. How do you want to see your image
projected? What you have to say about it is up to you. This film is being made of the workshop, for the workshop and it’s responsible to the workshop. (Reese, 1975:Film)

Maureen Watson’s response identifies the invisibleness of Black people in the film industry, and in performing arts in general. Her comments are an inditement of Australia’s past racism, racial favouritism and the alienation of Black Australians, which some Australians take no responsibility for even today⁴⁷:

The main question that should be asked is, why aren’t they Black? Why haven’t we got black technicians? Where is the structure we can fit our own black thing into.

I was thrilled with being told that I could be an actress, maybe even a good actress, by somebody who ought to know what he’s talking about, I’m not too sure yet⁴⁸.

I don’t see anything in place. Every where I look it’s White, White, White. If there was a Black thing going, if I know I could be active with blacks, if I could be directed by Blacks, if it was a Black thing, a Black story about Black people’s lives, the things we care about. About a culture that’s over forty thousand years old and we’re the living examples of what is left of today, and we’re losing more and more and more. We haven’t found a place to put this, to bring it out.(Reese/Watson, M., 1975:Film)

The performance, at the end of the training program, made it possible for the community to view performing arts as a real career path. The tangible results of the program were the body of works created, directed and performed by Indigenous Australians that Maureen Watson had commented on above.

For the dancers there were a few important outcomes of the Six-Week Training Program that still affect the school today. First was the cohesive working together of both traditional cultures – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – and the experimental fusion of Indigenous and western dance forms. Second was the exploration of themes relevant to their lives as contemporary people, and the use contemporary Aboriginal music for their dances. This seemed to have made a considerable impression on the reporter for Koori-Bina.

This is the first time contemporary Aboriginal songs are used in choreography. The first; Bobby McLeod’s ‘Mangy Ol’ Dog’, the second; Bob Randall’s ‘Brown Skin Baby’. (Koori-Bina, June 1976:12)
AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAM

Even though the Six Week Workshop had come to fruition out of the community's aspirations to develop a Black Theatre performing unit, it was the dance that continued to expand and utilize the national network of support initiated by the project. This was probably because, as the dance group grew into an organization its primarily focus was that of an educational institution, whose main form of recruitment was from the community it served. However, both Bob Maza and Lester Bostock stated that, "Most of the actors were working almost straight away after the workshop." The fact that the actors were in demand and employable in such a short period could be attributed to a number of things. In the 1970's dance was not a big draw-card and few mainstream Australians viewed dance as a serious career pathway.

In comparison, in traditionally living societies everyone dances. Human communication through dance was and is a familiar activity, which is essential for the preservation of the Dreaming. It occurs regularly over the course of a person's life, as it functions at the core of the Dreaming ceremonies. Where traditionally living people saw a real need to invest heavily in the arts, as a way of preserving their culture and identity; the Australian government could not justify investing in the long and arduous training required to build dancers. The saving grace, as far as government officials were concerned, was tourism. It might be said that, had dance not promised to be a valuable tourist attraction, little support would be forthcoming.

Workshop participants did not confine themselves to just dance or drama and went on to create successful careers in other areas of the performing arts. Jack Davis who already had a reputation in Australian Aboriginal literature, began to carve a name from himself as a playwright; Christine Donnelley founded, and is now the director of the Aboriginal Dance Theatre, Redfern46; Maureen Watson is a storyteller; Wayne Nicol worked in London, England with the Prime Movers Dance Company before returning to Cairns to teach the young people of Queensland; Cheryl Stone became the booking agent for the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre and Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia; Maroochy (Yvette Isaacs) is known for her starring role in the Australian opera Black River (1989) written and composed by Julianne and Andrew Schultz. She and her husband, Ade Kukoyi, have established a recording and music publishing company Daki Budcha. Many of the participants used the training to create their own special niche in the arts.
The Six-Week Training Program was a successful project for everyone; the participants; the Commonwealth Board of Education; the Aboriginal Arts Board; the Department of Aboriginal Affairs; the Redfern community and NBT. However, in spite of the success of the training program the community’s fortunes were about to reverse. In almost a year’s time, Whitlam had been removed from office and his government’s support for land rights and the arts came to a halt. The new Fraser government re-defined funding sources of Aboriginal arts projects, which almost crushed the survival of many groups, including the Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts and Community Centre in Sydney.

The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, announced earlier this year that cultural activities involving Aborigines would no longer be helped by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, but would become the responsibility of the Australia Council. But no extra funds were granted to the council for its additional responsibilities. The manager of the Black Theatre, Mr Lester Bostock, said today the theatre had applied to the department and to the Australia Council for assistance, but had received no reply. (SMH, 1975:24)

However even with this unfortunate development the participants of the Training Program had received intense exposure to the performing arts for six whole weeks, and were hanging out to gain more training. They were enthusiastic and impressed with the training course, and the dancers wanted further studies to prepare them for the professional world. Carole writing about their feelings noted:

..... if they were to become professional actors, dancers, writers or technicians, six weeks barely touched the surface. They requested a longer course in which a person could specialize in his/her field of interest. ((Johnson, 1983:3).

CAREERS IN DANCE

One outcome of the Six-Week Training Program was a plan for a further “two to three year training programme in the performing arts and communication”. Both Terry Widders and Carole had worked on this application. However, because of the change in government, the Board was unsure of its budget for the upcoming year (75/76). They agreed to defer the request until the new government could confirm its financial commitment. It was also agreed that the dance and drama portion of the Training Program continue. These two workshops were to be funded for three months, from October to the end of December. It was also
proposed that Carole and Brian take charge of the supervision and instruction of these two courses.

......the meeting proposed that, in association with the Department of Education (as with the six-week Aboriginal and Islander Cultural and Performing Arts Training Programme, 2 June - 11 July) two sections of the proposed training programme, Drama and Dance, begin as scheduled (or soon after) under the supervision and teaching of the two Consultants to the Board; the Director to make the necessary financial provision for the initial part of the programme. (AAB:2.1.2, 1975:54)

It was this three month funding that supported the beginning of the Careers in Dance course. The Course began operation on the 20th of October 1975 and has continued to the present day. It began at the request of the members of the dance group. They were serious about becoming professionals and, after their experience with the Six-Week Training Program, could see the possibility of real options for employment, and their usefulness in Australian dance. This was not a common believe in 1975, as dance in Australia functioned primarily in Vaudeville theatre only White performers. Much later on, in 1998, Carole wrote about the beginning of the Course, and the negative attitude and feedback she encountered to the idea of dance as a real career path for Indigenous Australians. The survival of the Course she attributes to the Founding Students of AISDS/NAISDA.

When we started in October of '75, with a three month grant from the Aboriginal Arts Board and study assistance from Aboriginal Study Grants section of the Commonwealth Department of Education, it was not thought that we would be in existence this long. Did the Australian government agencies, who were assisting, expect us to last? “Dance?” they questioned, “Is that a serious endeavour?” The Founding Students said, “Yes”, and here we are today, a professional company. (Johnson, 1988:Program)

BREWING CONFLICTS

Unfortunately, problems began to surface between Carole and Betty Fisher, the director of NBT. Carole has always maintained that the problems had to do with access to the building more than the difficulties of working with Betty. These problems began to threaten the goals and continued survival of the ‘Careers in Dance’ course, which made it impossible to function there. The conflicts had to do with the difference in objectives between the two women. As the focus of the ‘Careers in Dance’ course was on skill building and training, Carole felt it needed a regularity that would ensure the students progress. On the other hand, Betty was intensely concerned with the political struggle that, for the most part, involved the
organization in constant street demonstrations. As a cultural centre, NBT had not developed any new programs or workshops, as they actively participated on the front lines of the protests and rallies.

Another problem had to do with Carole taking on the job as program developer for NBT. This was not part of her job description but she felt it was needed to assist the growth of the organization. No one had taken on program development, which was essential to the survival of NBT. Without an on-going itinerary of cultural programs, there was nothing the community could participate in. Nor was there anything to fund, except the 'Careers in Dance' course and the drama workshop, both of which had been approved for only three months. As Carole was still a consultant for the UTC she put her observations about the situation in a written report to the AAB.

From about January to March, I began working in the capacity of Program Developer for Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. I saw a need to help develop programs and there was no staff available to do it because of the lack of funds. However, I have gradually ceased functioning in that capacity as I realise I go beyond the experience of the administrator. By going beyond a person’s experience, there is no firm basis. The activities are not seen as part of that person and thus all would cease once I left. I think it better that activities happen more slowly and thus more concretely. (Johnson, 1975c:3). (Appendix, pp. 103-105).

It seems a bit vague as to why these particular problems could not be worked out. However, it is conceivable that Carole and Betty, being very strong willed women with sincere interests and objectives would be totally unwilling to compromise. Because of this irreconcilable situation, the 'Careers in Dance' course operated at NBT for only seven days, from the 20th to 27th of October, before moving to Bodenweiser Dance Studio, in Chippendale on City Road, with a few classes scheduled for the Seymour Centre.

Judging from the variety of classes offered, by the Careers in Dance course, it is obvious that Carole had envisioned it as more than just dance workshop from its very inception. Even though most of the classes listed on the graph on the following page are dance related, the schedule and variety of classes go far beyond the capability and goals of just a dance school. The students were to be offered everything from traditional dance to ballet, history, music,
dance composition and drumming. To view the full October to December Term Report, see the (Appendix, pp. 89-96).

The move from Redfern was viewed as a separation from the Black community, which caused a tremendous breach with a portion of the community, who were annoyed and upset about the split. One year after the move, the Aboriginal newsletter, *Koori-Bina*, reviewed the school’s first full end of year show, *Forward to the Dreamtime*. The reviewer brings-up questions that still harbour resentments about the move.

Before an Aboriginal with some political convictions can give a fair assessment of the dance season, the history of the dance group should, I feel, be brought to the public’s attention. Needless to say, the only “public” I particularly am concerned about, is that of the Aboriginal people ourselves. Towards the latter part of last year, the dance group broke away from the Aboriginal Black Theatre to form its own identity. The reasons for the breakaway are somewhat obscure except for the dominating factor that there appeared to be something of a personality clash between Carole Johnson, the Black American “Coordinator and Artistic Director” of the Dance group and the former administrator of the Aboriginal Theatre, Ms Bette Fisher. However, there has been a time lapse of some four months since Bette died, and as far as bringing the Dance group back to their own theatre, there has not been any effort to do so. So one is inclined to pose the question of whether or not the cause of the break-away was justified in being attached to “personality clashes”. One is forced to question the motives of having Carole Johnson involved in the Aboriginal community. Whilst Aboriginal people have been forced to recognise the objectives of white people coming into our community “to help” we must always be in the position of assessing Blacks from other countries and the value of the contribution to our Self-determination and Aboriginality. (*Koori-Bina*, September 1976:9)

It would have been easy for Aboriginal people to strongly identify the dance group as a NBT project. In many of the minutes of the AAB it is often referred to as the Black Theatre Dancers or Black Theatre Workshop. At one point they’re identified as a workshop under the umbrella of NBT. Even Carole has referred to the dance group as the Black Theatre dance group. But even with the problems caused by the name, the Aboriginal Arts Board did require separate accounting for funds of the only two operating workshops at NBT (Dance and Drama) and so, operationally speaking, they had quite separate identities.

It is also a fact that by the end of December 1975, the Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts Community Centre, was receiving questionable assessments of its operations. The
survival of the dance group would have been in serious jeopardy had they continued under the umbrella of NBT.

**Shortcomings in Programme of Activities:** Mr Chicka Dixon reported on recent activities at Black Theatre. The Theatre had been completely equipped but little attempt was being made to allow it to develop as a workshop theatre, which had been the original intention of the Board. The Centre was no longer available to the Urban Theatre Training Programme, and its role as a community centre out of which professional work could develop, was being undermined by commercially-oriented activities. No ongoing programme of activities had been developed, and a haphazard schedule of fashion parades, rock shows and other such activities had little to offer urban people. It was further noted that although previous Board support had been generous and enthusiastic, few of the projects had developed successfully and none of the grants had been acquitted. (AAB:6.1.14, 1975:81)

In hindsight, as NBT no longer exists and hasn’t for quite some time, the question of the survival of the dance program was an important issue that would have been paramount in the minds of the Founding Members. Another concern for the dance group was the fact that the Board (composed mostly of men) had no real knowledge, and very little interest in contemporary urban dance. From The Board’s inception in 1973 up to 1975, only Carole, Elizabeth Dalman and Vera Goldman had submitted applications for contemporary Aboriginal dance projects. Carole’s initiatives were the only ones to succeed. This was due to her contacts in the Black community, her work with the UTC, plus her knowledge, skill and persistence, which eventually managed to launch an on-going institute: regardless of people questioning the “motives” of having a non-Aboriginal working for the Aboriginal cause. And, in spite of posing questions like: “Dance? Is that a serious endeavour?” (Johnson)

On the other hand, the conflicts between the dance group and Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts Community Centre, did open the possibility of having more than one urban-Indigenous dance group, drama group, painting school, etc. Even though there was more than one traditional dance group, the Board saw no reason to approve an application for Christine Donnelly to start another contemporary dance workshop for the NBT. The AAB also noted that NBT had additional funds that had not been expended. The unexpended funds could have allowed NBT to set-up their own dance workshop, after the Careers in Dance course left. In time it became clear that Carole’s decision to move was a very wise one, considering the outcome of NBT.
A grant was approved at the Ninth Meeting held in October 1974, to establish a dance workshop at Black Theatre. The present application was for continuation of this workshop, with classes to be conducted by Ms. Christine Donnelly. Black Theatre had received a grant of $932 for traditional dance workshops. It was noted that this grant was unused and that of a previous grant for urban dance workshops funds had not been fully expended.

Members asked whether the proposed workshop was connected with the Urban Theatre Training Programme. The Director said it was a separate project, being conducted by Ms. Carole Johnson. Classes had formerly been held at the Redfern Centre, but due to personal differences classes now were being held at the Bodenweiser Dance Studios.

It was agreed that the application be rejected, as continued funding of both dance groups would be a duplication. (AAB:6.1.13, 1975:81)

Funding was a serious problem the Careers in Dance course. The Board would not meet again until March 1976. This left the Dance Group totally vulnerable, from the start of 1976 until after the Board’s meeting in March. This situation would leave the Course in a bind, as it had been funded for only three months and would have to maintain itself for six.

**CAROLE AND BRIAN TERMINATED AS CONSULTANTS**

During her time as a consultant for the Aboriginal Arts Board’s Urban Theatre Committee, Carole’s work was highly praised. In spite of her contribution, the Board agreed to, “not continue” her position as a consultant to the UTC, along with Brian Syron. In an unusual ‘closed board meeting’, in August 1975, the following occurred:

Prior to departure from Yirrkala the Acting Chairman handed the Director the following resolutions carried at the special meeting: The meeting agreed that the two consultant positions to the Board, currently filled by Mr. Brian Syron (Urban Theatre) and Ms Carole Johnson (Urban Dance), be not continued when the respective terms of the Consultants finish. It was agreed also that the two consultants be involved in supervision and teaching the proposed training programme. (AAB:2.1.2, 1975:103)

It seems as if the Board was making a ‘trade off’, the Careers in Dance course would be funded with Carole as instructor, if she were no longer a consultant for the UTC. It was further stated that:

The grant had been approved to enable continuation of the dance and theatre training programme following the Board’s decision not to renew contracts of Board consultants in Urban Theatre and Dance. It had been agreed that a budget approved by the Director subject to
commencement of the project, would be provided. The director reported that subsequently the “Careers in Dance” budget had been accepted. It was understood that the grant approved at the August meeting would allow the present “Careers in Dance” programme to continue until the next meeting. The former Dance Consultant, Ms Carole Johnson, was presently employed as dance tutor in this training course which had been re-located to the Bodenweiser Dance Centre in Sydney. (AAB:2.1.3, 1975:77-8)

Considering the invaluable work done by Carole alone, it is difficult to understand why these two outstanding assets to the UTC were being terminated as Consultants. They were the only consultants for the UTC with first-hand knowledge of the performing arts. Their projects, especially the Six-Week Training Program, increased the number of trained Indigenous performers in a short period of time. This was accomplished at minimal cost. Plus, the participants had increased their employability from their involvement with the Training Program.

Obviously the Board preferred to use Carole and Brian as artists and not as artist/consultants. However, their dismissal may have been a blessing in disguise. Once Carole was free of the diversity of job responsibilities as a consultant for the UTC, she could then dedicate all her time to implementing a strong base for urban Indigenous dance. No one else was doing this work and it would take an exceeding amount of time to create a secure entity.

By the end of 1975 the Careers in Dance course was on its own, with no affiliations, no funding and no ties with any other group. By the start of 1976, the primary concerns would be to build a syllabus that would support both training and performing experience, and the funding to support the program. The remaining years of the nineteen seventies were about hard work, dedication and determination for Carole and the Founding Students of AISDS. In order to actualise their dream, of creating a Black Dance Company, they would have to broaden their support base, starting with the Indigenous community and moving out into the world.
CHAPTER 5: 1976 ~ STREAM 1, CAREERS IN DANCE

This would be the first full year of operation for The Careers in Dance course (the Course). As it had already decided that the primary direction was that of education, the major concerns for Carole, as Director, were: defining its objectives and goals; the preparation of a syllabus that would address the emotional, academic and artistic needs of the students; finding and hiring an artistic and administrative staff; building a relationship with the traditional communities; balancing performance and workshop requests with study requirements; funding and student accommodation. Besides this, were unforeseen threats to the survival of the Course that emanated from the new government. And, the sensitive issue of non-Aboriginal leadership, that seemed to trouble urban Aboriginal people. This would be the background from which 1976 would unfold, but first there was the issue of a name that would identify the organization and the performing unit.

In May/June 1976 the Careers in Dance course officially became a subsidiary of The Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS). It was a name agreed upon by the Founding Members for what would later be, a multifaceted organization with the primary focus on the establishment of an educational institution. Within the same year the Founders also decided to have a separate name for the performing unit, which would now be known as, The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT).

POLITICAL CONCERNS

As an Indigenous organization AISDS would be forced to grapple with a multitude of issues essential to its purpose and survival. Briefly they were: the preservation of the traditional dance cultures of the mainland and the islands of the Torres Straits; the creation of an environment where traditionally living and urban people, could function and exchange their respective cultures and histories; the establishment of a curriculum that would support literacy and numeracy development, as well as build dance skills, create performance and promote research. Without fail, it would need to gain national and international support, recognition and visibility to ensure its survival and autonomy.

This job was complicated by the invisible status of the Indigenous cultures. Up to this time, Australian Indigenous cultures were treated as the ‘other’ cultures of Australia. Their dance
was the unseen, unmentioned part of the country. This meant that AISDS would have to lift the image of Indigenous Australian dance and at the same time incorporate mainstream dance within the structure of the curriculum. It was out of this quagmire that the Careers in Dance course began to blossom into AISDS. It was as stimulated by these challenges as it was hindered. The newness of the organization and what it was attempting to do revealed unimaginable difficulties and problems that helped define the objectives and goals. Some of these difficulties come from negative and uninformed attitudes about dance and Indigenous people.

At the moment AISDS was just a scheme, which was conceived as functioning within two streams. Stream I was the educational flow and Stream II, employment. Stream I was to build practical skills via literacy, numeracy studies and dance training. Stream II, the subject matter of Chapter 8, was to focus on performance, community out-reach and the eventual creation of employment vehicles for the graduates.

By its very existence the Scheme was a confrontational endeavor, because it opened the possibility for urban Aboriginal and Islander people to learn first hand from the keepers of the traditional culture. The scheme would bring Indigenous people together. This was after successive governments had spent so much time, money and energy separating them. The Australian Government’s duplicitous scheme to divide ‘tribal’ people from those of mixed heritage; or those reared in government institutions; or in urban and rural centers, was now being over-turned by a bunch of dancers attempting to re-gain their dance heritage. This portion of the scheme (the inclusion of the traditional cultures) opened the possibility of creating a rich new tradition that the students could use as a springboard to a new Australian dance form, as Carole saw it.

Through the input of dance educated Aboriginal/Islander people, a fusion should eventually emerge, which gives the world a new form. (Johnson, 1983:59)

The Course was also to be an autonomous organization, in order to keep the power of decision-making and the organizations identity in the hands of Black Australians. It needed to be defined and protected by the people it served and not get swallowed-up by the political
goals and definitions of others. And, it needed a safe environment, where issues of proving oneself would not be a constant threat to the learning, inter-relationship or survival of Aboriginal and Islander people.

What is important is that The Course remain a centre where Aboriginal/Islander people predominate and will feel free to experiment and create, and are not hampered by psychological problems that are the result of the cultural imperialism that the European, and also American colonial powers have imposed on traditional cultures throughout the African, Asian and South Pacific world. (Johnson, 1983: 58)

Aboriginal people wanted to be visible in the performing arts. They wanted to be instrumental in defining themselves as they saw themselves. This meant control over how they were educated, portrayed and marketed. What the organization would construct to fulfil the above needs was important but, more important, was who would be interested in properly funding and supporting the visibility and longevity of Aboriginal/Islander dance? In today’s world, at the time of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Aboriginal culture is a big commodity, but in the 1970’s that was not so. Proper financial support was as essential to its growth, as it would be for any performing arts institution, eg. NIDA®.

WHY AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION?

My idea was to form a school because in order to get the training and achieve the excellence a school is always your jumping off point. For research, for development, personal and group and everything else. So until, you can have the very basic training that leads you from step 1, to step 2, to step 3 to the profession, you can’t develop. (Johnson, 1995: interview)

For the students to arrive at their primary goal – a professional dance company – they would need time, a place and the administrative and community network to fulfil this goal. Time was required for the intensive physical training to be a dancer, a minimum of five years but in reality more like ten. This was especially relevant since many urban Aboriginal/Islander people were being exposed to the rigors of professional dance training in there twenties, when dancers in most cultures begin as children. A formal educational environment would not only provide the components necessary to nurture and build dancers, but also create a place that people could gravitate to and support. Attracting financial assistance for educational advancement, which guarantees tangible results (i.e. employable people) was a distinct
possibility. It was a goal agreeable to government, to Indigenous communities and later, to private sponsors.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Unfortunately, unlike subsequent years no annual report was found for 1976 that would provide in-depth information on the objectives of AISDS. However, there were four documents from 1976 and one from 1983 that clearly define the objectives of AISDS. All have been archived under the following Appendix numbers:

- "B1. Details of project for ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD Meeting of November, 1976" (Appendix, pp. 139-146);
- An undated student handbook (Appendix, pp. 108-124);
- An undated information sheet about AISDS, “Fact Sheet” (Appendix pp. 124-125);

In brief, the objectives were to:

1. To give basic dance training;
2. To build literacy and numeracy skills;
3. To build a group self-image in dance through the creation of a performing company;
4. To provide the basic training necessary to be able to benefit from exposure to traditional Australian styles of dance;
5. To give the students the basic training necessary to begin to recreate and develop dances based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance forms;
6. To eradicate the prejudice against hiring Aboriginal/Islander people for work as dancers, choreographers, teachers, arts administrators, historians, ethnographers, etc.; and,
7. To maintain continuity.

In working with the students it became increasingly clear that the objectives could not solely focus on training and skill building. AISDS must consider building self-confidence within the
students, as some had begun to internalise the negative image promoted of Black people. This was reflected in the Student Handbook, probably written in the early to mid eighties, where the objectives begin to drastically change to include altering “the present Australian image of Aboriginal/Islander people, and especially urban Aboriginal/Islander people as no-hopers, dependent people without a culture; to one of creative, independent people contributing to Australia”.

Another important area of concern that influenced the direction of the objectives pertains to the function of the organization in its relationship to the Indigenous dance cultures. In that respect the Student Handbook expressed the role AISDS in the following way:

To establish a centre which serves as a repository of traditional dances and thereby becomes: a) A starting point for new creative directions, b) A place where others can learn Aboriginal/Islander dance for teaching the general community, c) A reason for each cultural group to maintain within its community its own style of dance. (AISDS, Undated:1-2)

By 1983 the Director makes it clear that the formation and choice of objectives were based on the desires, aims and goals of Aboriginal and Islander people.

The Course objectives were first determined not in terms of academic needs, which in themselves could be sterile, but in terms of needs of the Aboriginal/Islander community, as seen by responsible Aboriginal/Islander people and other Australians. (Johnson, 1983:53).

The above quote was originally in a document prepared for the NSW Higher Education Board (HEB). It was included in the appendix of the 1983 proposal to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), which also listed a detailed history of why these objectives were selected. In the end the objectives fell into four main categories: Education and Skill building, Community Access (National and International), Historical and Cultural Self Knowledge and Employment. This document has been archived at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra (AIATSTS).

THE GENERAL CURRICULUM
The first term of the “Careers in Dance” course in 1976, operated from February 2nd to April 30th. Carole wrote, “This was the first time our term was a complete thirteen week term. All terms will from now on comprise twelve to thirteen weeks”. The syllabus for 1976 was completely dance oriented. At the same time Carole was working to expand the syllabus to fit
a three-year course, which in the future would engage the students in five areas of study. The first, were basic literacy and numeracy subjects; The second, were the dance courses, which included both contemporary dance techniques (ballet, jazz, modern) and the traditional dance cultures, (for 1976 that included the Lardil culture from Mornington Island and dances from South Sea Islands\(^1\)); The third, were creative development courses (improvisation, composition, choreography, repertoire/rehearsals); The fourth, were related technical courses such as anatomy, Labanotation, music (the music subjects for 1976 were theory and drumming), speech, stagecraft (which was listed as sound); and, The fifth were courses that focused on Indigenous arts and history as well as courses for the development of human potential and self-esteem.

The literacy and numeracy courses were not included in the Course during the 1975/1976 periods. No system or funding had been arranged for their inclusion. At this point in time, the curriculum included only dance techniques and arts related courses with some of the schedule devoted to practical performance experience, cultural programs and classes in self-awareness and self-knowledge. As performance was a major part of the Course for the more advanced students, the majority of their studies were focused on performance and related subjects. To view the schedule of classes see the following documents.

- Details of project for Aboriginal Arts board meeting of November 1976. (Appendix, pp. 139-144);
- Dance Training Course, (Johnson/Lennon). A report submitted by the Aboriginal Section of the Commonwealth Department of Education (CDE) to AAB. (Appendix, pp. 153-156).
- Term Report, of the first term of 1976 (Feb. 2\(^{nd}\) - April 30\(^{th}\)). (Appendix, pp. 157-168).

**THE DANCE CURRICULUM**

The *Careers in Dance* course seeks to impart a coherent perspective, and understanding of the structure, basic concepts, skill and thought in one major area of human endeavour, THE DANCE. The acquisition of a variety of dance styles, dance and music theory as well as allied courses, ensures that the students acquire a body of knowledge about
themselves, their cultural heritage (European and Aboriginal/Islander) and the social institutions that govern their lives, as well as their physical and biological environment. (Johnson, 1981:2)

Over time the dance training at AISDS has become a mixed bag of dance techniques. Being dance students of the late twentieth century, they would automatically be inundated with a variety of contemporary techniques and cultures that make-up the fundamental profile of many dancers of this age. Dancers today are well versed in a variety of dance systems and styles, which include the three primary systems of ballet, modern and jazz. These are an expected part of a contemporary dancer's body of knowledge and Indigenous Australian students need to have a command of them as well.

Those students interested in the Indigenous dance systems of the Torres Strait Island or mainland Aboriginal societies, would have the added responsibility of knowing the languages, the stories, songs, instruments, ritual body decorations, ground painting, props, the meaning and reason for the dance as well as the movements and dynamics that express the intention of the choreographer or, as in the case of Aboriginal culture – the Dreaming.

The dance curriculum was conscientiously chosen to give the students an in-depth experience of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island dance and cultures and also prepare the students in the three major contemporary European dance systems (Ballet, Modern and Jazz).

The Course emphasises traditional Aboriginal and modern dance equally. To insist that the Course be one or the other in terms of dance form is to miss the point of the aim of the Course. (Johnson, 1983:58)

THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE SYSTEMS
The contemporary dance curriculum was to make available, what Carole refers to as an "international mix" of dance systems. This was to provide a broad basis from which to construct a unique contemporary dance expression. Plus, she was concerned with supplying the tools that would allow them to:

Form choices and give them a good basis so that they would be able to build up something from any direction they wanted to go. They would have the skill and a variety of choices to come from. (Johnson, 1994:interview)

The international mix would include the dance systems of ballet and modern. With modern dance studies the students would have the opportunity to expand their creative abilities, which
would promote exploration with cultural adaptation through composition and choreography. It would also connect the students with 20th Century developments with art, music and literature. The popular dance forms would also be included in their body of dance knowledge.

They should have a similar knowledge of the popular dance system which is done on television and that’s a combination of your African and your European, through what you call jazz dance, being a hybrid. So I felt, not to study jazz so much, particularly because there weren’t many teachers here at the time, but if they got an understanding, got some of the way we teach academic African dance, what they call all sorts of names, comes from the Dunham technique and they’d have some jazz as well. (Johnson, 1994:interview)

Whenever a teacher could be found, the Dunham technique was always. This was to provide a strong foundation for the popular African American dance forms, such as jazz, break-dance, vogue, etc. Because of Dunham’s anthropological work with African/Haitian religious ceremonies, which had been theorised and taken into the mainstream, a model had been provided for the adaptation and theorisation of Indigenous dance systems. This might also be useful to Australians as well.

**THE TRADITIONAL DANCE SYSTEM**

The long-term objectives underpinning the traditional studies were: to give the students a thorough education in the traditional dance cultures; to establish the machinery to re-connect urban and traditional people; to function as a repository for the traditional culture, and to assist the traditional people in maintaining their dance culture, via person-to-person contact, research, study and field trips, outlined in the student handbook. (Appendix, pp. 108-124).

The Course you are undertaking has been designed to assist in the preservation, knowledge and dissemination of as much historical and traditional Aboriginal/Islander art and culture as possible, so that it can be understood and then applied to present day living. (AISDS, undated/b:1)

The common ground that included all the students (whether tribal, urban, literate in Western terms or from an oral tradition) was the dance, and the dance of the Indigenous cultures in particular. The secular songs and stories, of mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island societies, could be taught as they had always been taught, via the oral tradition. This allowed room for everyone to participate. This was an essential aspect of the curriculum as some of the students had little to no reading or writing skills. In the long term, the Course aimed to produce trained dance practitioners who, if interested, would be eligible and qualified to
continue on with higher education and university studies. The cultural studies would give the students a basis to further their knowledge as dance ethnologists or anthropologists and allow them to participate in the preservation of the traditional dance continuum. The tutors of the Torres Straits, and the Lardil people of Mornington Island encouraged these AISDS. They seemed to have seen the value of what Carole and the Founding Students were creating.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND LARDIL PEOPLE
The first traditional group to actively participate as tutors with the Course were the Lardil people of Mornington Island. During the early nineteen seventies, a dance group called Woomera had been performing throughout the country, to raise money for community needs, and to encourage a move to have traditional as part of the grade school curriculum. Because of the match between their own special interest in education and the aims of AISDS, a strong bond began to flower between the Lardil community and AISDS, which Carole declared.

This course is designed to develop special relationship with one Aboriginal Culture group that still has a relatively strong on-going relationship with their pre-European influenced traditions. The elders of Mornington Island have taken an interest in this programme. The relationship started in the Six Week Course when Henry Peters, an elder from Mornington Island working with Woomera Dance Company, agreed to teach for two weeks and Daryl Williams a young man from Mornington island, registered to participate in the course. The desire of Mornington Island people to share their dance and knowledge, so far has been very successful. (Johnson, 1975d:3)

The fact that Woomera was in Sydney at the time of the Six-Week Training Programme, and during the October term, made it feasible and possible to offer Mornington Island dance, as a subject. Woomera was accessible and enthusiastic about what was happening with the dance program, and Carole wrote, “That every effort is made to continue this positive exchange.” As a result, the Lardil dance culture has consistently been included as part of the curriculum up to the present day.

A positive result of the relationship between Woomera and AISDS was the participation of a young man from Mornington Island, Daryl Williams, who stayed on and enrolled in the October term of the Careers in Dance course. His participation greatly encouraged the bond between AISDS and Mornington Island people. By mid 1976, the trust between AISDS and
the Lardil people had grown, and, other young people were sent to participate in the Course.

AISDS students were also invited to Mornington Island.

Daryl Williams continued from the Six-Week Course for one and a half terms and will possibly continue this term on completion of a film that he is in. It is understood that he has been given special commendation in the Mornington Island corroborees. This is something that does not usually happen for a person of his age.

Henry Peters and Jackson Jacobs were pleased with the course and what Daryl had learned so they asked if they could send other young people down. The June 1976 term now has five people from Mornington Island participating in the course.

The Mornington Island elders invited the group from the Dance Training Course to Mornington Island so that they could show other Mornington Island people what they had been teaching. (Johnson, 1976a:4)

To continue the participation of traditionally living people, as student/tutors in the Course, Carole began to design a course of study that was adaptable to their needs. It would not be easy as there were many community obligations and ceremonies these students were obligated to abide by at home. However, it was set-up for them to participate in the Course as both teacher and student, and, at the same time, help to maintain their cultural dance form while performing with the students.

The participation of initiated young people began to open the experiences of all the students. For the country and city folks the relationship developed a realistic and intimate knowledge of traditional people, which they sorely needed.

Most of the people in the urban and rural communities have no contact with Aboriginal people from tribal areas. Their knowledge is scanty and often incorrect, based on emotionalism and wrong information. The urban people in the course are having continued contact with the Mornington Island people and are learning in detail the specifics of the culture. This they can then pass on to other people in the Aboriginal community. (Johnson, 1976b:3)

For the traditional participants, the Course offered a way to experience life outside of the traditional area, in an environment composed of other young Black people. By their participation with an urban organization, they were learning to live with and cope in a “predominantly white Australian culture” (Johnson). They could also see for themselves, that both urban Indigenous people and Europeans highly valued their culture. Their participation
also provided feedback to the community as to what was happening at AISDS and how their dance culture was being used.

In the long term the plan was to alternate between different societies, concentrating on one mainland and one Torres Strait Islander group for an intensive period of three to four years. At the same time lines of communication would be set up in other areas with other groups, eventually alternating between many. It would take some time for the plan to be fully operational, but it would set up a system for future access to a larger segment of the traditional culture.

**THE STUDENT BODY**

During the interim period between October and December 1975, the syllabus was the same for all students, as they were all on the same level. The four who had enrolled in the Six-Week Workshop (Wayne Nicol, Dorathea Randall, Cheryl Stone and Darryl Williams) continued in October with two new students joining them, Michael Leslie and Richard Talonga. By the end of 1976 the enrolment had grown to eighteen. The new enrollees were Malcolm Cole, Steve Talonga, Leone Malamoo, Kerry Upkett, Ann Gundy, Sharon Coffey with Debbie Dennis, Laurence Dennis, Robert Kitchener and one other student who stayed for one week, Hue Foot.

AISDS was moving really quickly with student enrolments and many of the necessary items, for an educational organization, was not yet in place. An important one was living accommodations, especially for the new students who would be coming from small country areas. Many had never been to a big city, never ridden a plane and would be lost in the “Big Smoke” (Sydney). As there was no student hostel in 1976, AISDS was required to rent accommodations from the private market to house the incoming student body. To provide a more controlled living situation for the students in the future, Carole recommended that:

> As the programme grows with more people, it will need additional living quarters. The A.A.B. should contact Aboriginal hostels to see if they will be able to assist with the housing for people in the programme. (Johnson, 1976a:10)

In the mean time renting from the private sector continued until 1977 when AISDS acquired its first hostel to house new students and the traditional tutors, whenever they were in Sydney.
THE FOUNDING STUDENTS

By the end of the thirteen-weeks, twelve students had completed the first term and seven of the nine Founding Students had begun the Course, they were: Malcolm Cole, Michael Leslie, Wayne Nicol, Dorathea Randall, Richard Talonga, Cheryl Stone and Darryl Williams. The remaining two, Kim Walker and Sylvia Blanco, would join the Course within the next two. The Founding Students were those who had joined the Course between 1975 and 1978; had a sincere interest in the profession; completed the three-year course and took-on all the hard work to see the organization through the difficult years.

They were a group of young people who really wanted to dance and had been trying to find ways to do so in one way or another, in one form or another. They didn’t necessarily have modern dance or ballet training but they’d had some sort of training. They were committed to dancing as a career. They weren’t just coming to experiment, they really wanted to learn and perfect their skill. (Johnson, 1994: interview)

Of the founding students Wayne Nicol had the longest tenure under Carole’s tutelage, beginning in 1972. Cheryl Stone, Lillian Crombie and Dorathea Randall started with the Six-Week Training Programme in 1975 along with Daryl Williams from Mornington Island; Michael Leslie and Richard Talonga arrived during the interim-October term in 1975; Malcolm Cole and Kim Walker in 1976 and Sylvia Blanco 1977. These were the core group, who, along with Carole and Lucy Jumawan were considered Founding Members of the AISDS. These were the people the Director said:

They did all the hard work to keep the Course going. They had been doing various forms of dance before coming to the Course. None had extensive training but they were serious and worked hard. Their progress made me think that things could be accomplished a lot faster then they were. Many of the students who came after them, came with no training and a number of other problems as a result of how they were treated as Aboriginal people. It slowed the process down taking care to give them, of what they needed, as much as we could. (Johnson, 2000: interview)

The following is a graph of the student continuity from the 6 Week Training Program, in 1975 to the June 1976 term.
### "Careers in Dance"

#### Student Continuity Chart

**June 1975 ~ June 1976**

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<td>1</td>
<td>Wayne Nicol</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Dorathea Randall</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Cheryl Stone*</td>
<td>West Australia</td>
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<td>Darryl Williams</td>
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<td>Richard Talonga</td>
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<td>Sharon Coffey</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Malcolm Cole</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ann Gundy</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>Leone Malamoo</td>
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<td>Steve Talonga</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Joan Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kenneth Jacobs***</td>
<td>Mornington Island</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Student assistant not on dept. Education Study Grant.
** Hospitalised unsure of return.
***Unable to adjust to city life & was sent home after 4 weeks. May return with new students.
THE STAFF

Carole has often maintained that the difficulty with proper funding for adequate staffing and other necessities was because; the ‘powers that be’ didn’t believe the Course would last or succeed. It is also true that AISDS was a totally new concept for Australian in 1976. There were no accredited dance courses at this particular time. As a matter of fact AISDS was the first degree Course in NSW.

In order to provide the necessary staff to create the kind of organization she envisioned, the students were required to handle a number of administrative and other work tasks. This in turn became part of their learning experience.

The course was arranged so that students take over administrative and other responsibilities relating to the running of the entire program. So that students have the experience in actually doing the things that keep an organization functioning. The duties rotate term to term from student to student so that each will have a total experience of running a group project. (Johnson, 1976a:9)

It was arranged in this manner, Cheryl Stone was responsible for the Bookkeeping. She did the requisitions, staff time sheets, did the double entry cash flow, billings, and petty cash and distributed cheques. Dorathea Randall was Registrar, keeping attendance records and was also responsible for costumes. Wayne Nicol and Malcolm Cole were in charge of student accommodation, making sure that personal relationships, property repairs and rent were in order. (Appendix, pp. 146-148).

The artistic staff were part-time, casual employees, who took care of the daily teaching requirements for the students. They were composed of the following artists that covered a wide range of dance and art disciplines.

1. Carole Johnson  
   Director, Administrator, teacher
2. Edmond Wesley  
   Guest teacher, full-time teacher.
3. Penny Williams  
   Soul Dance
4. Jane Pike  
   Modern Composition, Ballet
5. Stephan Costain  
   Speech
6. Graham Jones  
   Modern Dance
7. Albert Laguerre  
   Drumming
8. Jackson Jacobs  
   Traditional Lardil Dance & Culture
9. Enid Jacobs  
   Traditional Lardil Dance & Culture
There was a lot to accomplish that could not properly be done with Carole as the only full-time staff member. In her reports explained the following increases to staff.

It is evident that the programme needs a staff of at least two full-time teachers. A regular contingent of part-time tutors will always be necessary. However, a second full-time teacher is needed for the programme to develop and fulfil its goals of:
1. Relating to other sections of the Aboriginal Community,
2. Taking care of the day to day responsibility of teaching,
3. The individual development of the participant.

Edmond Wesley who carried out the job of full-time teacher for a period of 3 weeks, made evident that the person who deals directly with student and daily programme continuity cannot maintain administrative continuity in the wider text. (Johnson, 1976a:9). (Appendix, pp. 157-168).

Some of the problems with the shortage of staff were alleviated with the arrival of Lucy Jumawan, who had just returned to Australia from the Philippines.

**LUCY JUMAWAN RETURNS**

When Lucy left the first time in 1974 she said, “...I went thinking that I would not be coming back. But when I reached the Philippines I felt divided – I had so many thoughts for the people back here” (Dalton, 1981:1). (Appendix, pp. 131-133).

Margaret Walker and Bodenweiser sent me letters of invitation to come back to Australia. When I arrived in 1976, I was teaching at Bodenweiser, I was working with Margaret Walker and I was teaching at Sydney University, giving classes here there and everywhere, including Redfern. (Jumawan, 2000:interview)

Hearing Lucy was back in Australia, Carole offered her a full time position. Even though Lucy was in the midst of a heavy teaching load, she accepted and began working for AISDS sometime around May or June 1976.

Carole had heard of my work while I was here and although we had not met for long, she invited me to come back and teach with her in her new school. In the short time we had had together, it was clear that we understood each other’s approach to dance and would be able to work together creatively. I knew how long it would take to build, from my previous experience, and I said to her “I will give you five years”.

I have been the principal teacher and choreographer of the school for five years, and it really has given new meaning to my life. It has been pioneering work. The five years have gone by and now I would like to continue to help. (Dalton, 1981:31-32).
Her primary duties were to guide the development of the more advanced students, whose curriculum was heavily centred on performing and teaching. She was to be in charge of their training; preparation of new choreographic works; travelling with the company and meeting with sponsors while on tour.

Lucy, like Carole, also had a variety of art skills under her belt, from teaching to the administration of dance projects. Her presence greatly relieved the teaching load carried by Carole and freed her to concentrate on establishing links with the Sydney College of the Arts, prepare proposals and develop avenues of growth for AISDS. (The Dalton article in Dance Australia about Lucy Jumawan and Michael Leslie has been included to the Appendix, pp. 131-134).

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

The original financial support from the AAB was to keep the impact of the Six-Week Training Program going. At their meeting in March 1976, the director of the AAB, Robert Edwards, noted that funds approved in August 1975 for the Course, “would be overspent at the time of the current meeting”. It was also discovered that by the end of January 1976, funds administered by the Australia Council of the Arts (Federal Division) had not all been used.

...It was proposed to reallocate these unspent balances for the ongoing Urban Theatre Activities Program.

...The proposed reallocations would cover this over-expenditure and, in addition, provide funds to 30 April, so that students enrolled this term in the Careers in Dance program could complete their course. (AAB:2.1.4, 1976:56-57)

As AISDS had continued operations between October 1975 and March 1976, without any funding, this reallocation must have brought a sigh of relief. However, it seems the Course had been advertised as a three-year program, which implied the AAB had officially approved it for that length of time. This was discussed at the March meeting:

During discussion of continuing Board support to the course, members expressed concern that organisers of the Urban Theatre Training Program had advertised the course as one of three years’ duration. While the Board wished to see the program continue, it was doubtful that provision could be made for an increased level of support on a continuing basis; concern was also expressed that students had been encouraged to undertake a course without an assurance that continued funding was available. It was also felt that the Board was being placed
in a position where possible failure of the program would reflect unjustifiably on the Board. (AAB:2.1.4, 1976:63)

The Board felt their position needed to be made clear concerning this matter.

It was not possible for the Board to take responsibility for sole funding of the program and, until a feasibility study recommended at the last meeting had been completed, to make any firm ongoing commitment. (AAB:2.1.4, 1976:63)

Even though the Director of AISDS had already submitted a proposal to the AAB covering the Course up to mid 1977, the only firm commitment The Board was agreeable to, was to the end of the term in August of 1976. The Board also stipulated that, “funding should enable only the present level of activity to continue” (2.1.4, 1976:63), implying no expansion or growth should be undertaken. As an educational organization has to pre-plan its activities, especially enrolment, this statement from the AAB was not encouraging. Also, in light of the fact that the AAB had made serious changes to its criteria for funding in regards to on-going training for both individuals and organizations, it was really time for AISDS to rethink its funding options. The Board changes went into operation during the 1975, 1976 fiscal year. These changes would greatly influence the operations of AISDS and demanded an immediate shift in thinking concerning on-going support for education or skill building. The changes were listed as:

Funding of individuals/groups for the purpose of training or learning a cultural skill should take into account the nature of the application e.g. applications could be divided into three categories:

- No training/experience (Department of Education)
- Some training/experience (should be funded either by Department of Education or Aboriginal Arts Board)
- Extensive training/experience should be funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board. (AAB:2.1.1, 1975:41)

The majority of students enrolling in the Course would fit the first category. AISDS would have to focus its efforts for funding on educational agencies and the Board could now concentrate on project oriented requests and slowly eliminate the continuous funding for on-going training, which was essential in the beginning years of the AAB in 1973 but impossible to continue forever.

A further concern of the AAB related to the return of AISDS to Black Theatre. The Board felt:
...that Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre remained the most suitable venue for the course and that every effort should be made to establish the course as a permanent activity within the Centre. (AAB:2.1.4, 1976:63)

Carole was unwilling to comply with this strong suggestion. In October 1977, one year after this request, it was agreed that Black Theatre be “dissolved”. If AISDS had complied with the Board’s suggestion, to return to Black, it would have ended the dance school as well.

Mr. Dixon reported that Field Officer, Mr. Candy Williams had visited the Centre frequently in an attempt to encourage greater and more significant activity. However such visits had met with a lack of response and a general resistance on the part of the present administrators. Mr. Williams reported that although it was considered the Centre still had great potential, further assistance under the present management could not be justified. Mr Dixon said that although the Board would be concerned for the Aboriginal community in Redfern, under its present structure the Centre did not have community support and was not providing a service. (AAB:2.1.5, 1977:53)

The death of the previous director of Black Theatre, Betty Fisher, around mid 1976, meant new management for BT. Even though it might have been easier for the Board had the Course become a part of Black Theatre, it was certainly not an environment where AISDS could easily have expanded or thrived.

**COURSE THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION**

It was a turbulent year for the school’s survival. It kept moving on but it was a touch-and-go situation for a greater part of the year. Up to this point funding had come from the AAB, which was to be a temporary situation as the Board had now officially changed its criteria for funding of training projects. Carole emphasizes this point in the term report. (Appendix, pp. 157-168):

> The Board is trying to maintain the Course until it can establish itself as an educational programme and get continuing funds from the appropriate sources. The Aboriginal Arts Board took on this arts education programme as a temporary project because of the state and nature of the Aboriginal Community. That is, there are many Aboriginal/Islander people, especially the rural and urban people, who have a lot of ideas and a desire to do something. But, they have no skill or methodology for achieving a specific aim. People were applying for grants to do arts projects but there was no knowledge, or discipline behind the desire and thus the high failure rate was inevitable. (AISDS, 1976a:11).
Additional assistance came from The Aboriginal Study Grants Section of the CDE, but this only covered the students’ fees. For AISDS to really progress it needed regular ongoing, year-round funding. The training course had been designed to cover three-years but at the moment it was funded by the term. This made for a very stressful situation. To improve the situation the Administrative Director (Carole), applied to the government Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) to assist with this dilemma, there response was shocking to say the least.

With the assistance of the Aboriginal Arts Board and the Commonwealth Department of Education, the course has looked to the D.A.A. including a meeting in which Bob Edwards, Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board and Mrs. Gladys Foster, Assistant Director of the Australian Department of Education participated. Not only has the application for funding been refused by the D.A.A., but the D.A.A. has told any subsidiary agency that might support us not to support the course. (AISDS, 1976a:11)

To compound the problem the Fraser Liberal government obstructed the funding for arts programs, including funding for Indigenous arts, which was beginning to show real progress. The era of hope and support under Whitlam’s Labour government had completely vanished. In order to support the plight of AISDS, the Sydney Morning Herald published the following to bring attention and support for the school.

..."It’s tragic that these dancers who are now able to stage highly-professional productions should now be forced to disband.

"It’s a serious reflection on Australia that this small, but crucial attempt to communicate something of the priceless Aboriginal heritage should be so ruthlessly killed off (Johnson).” (SMH, 1976:8). (Appendix, p. 170).

The effect of the Fraser government is further demonstrated in the following quote from a document printed in Education, an educational newsletter.

Bob Edwards, the director of the Aboriginal Arts Board, has announced that, because of Fraser cuts, there will be no more money for the company—only nine months after the Board made the first money available!

Special Education, which handles Aboriginal Education in the N.S.W. Department of Education, has a spillover from last year’s funds. They would be probably interested to assist the Company, if they got the go-ahead.

But the Aboriginal Arts Board has said “no”. What possible reason can there be for this extraordinary insensitivity?
Do orthodox white culturists still see Aborigines as artefacts to be put in glass cases and taken out for royal visits and TV ads? A company like this impacts tens of thousands of pupils in a way that books, learning aids, culture kits and lectures can not. Their educational value cannot be measured in terms of money. (Education, 1976:348).
(Appendix, p. 169)

With the threat of no further funding from the AAB at this time, it was put to the Founding Members whether they wanted to continue with the Course or not.

The Course gave the choice to the students to stay or leave. Those totally committed, who had tried previously to train on their own, elected to stay even though funds to the Course were virtually cut off by the Aboriginal Arts Board. (Johnson, 1981:15)

At this point the students were personally and politically connected to AISDS and valued the training they were getting from Lucy and Carole. Both offered expertise and a quality of training and dedication the students could not get anywhere else in Australia. They were not only sharing their teaching expertise but providing a performing experience via the student-performing unit (AIDT). The students were learning first-hand about the politics of survival in the dance world, especially as it related to Black people.

This was the way Carole had learned as a young dancer in America. From seeing what was missing in Black American dance, she designed strategic organizations to protect, advance and ensure that the dissemination of information on Black American dance was current and available. Now it was time for Australian Black people to invest in their dance continuum. To that end they had the best instructors to help them along with Carole and Lucy. Fortunately the dancers stayed and became the stepping-stones for future generations of Australian Indigenous students wanting a career in dance or the performing arts. Their decision supported the idea of an urban Aboriginal/Islander contemporary dance future.

By the following year (1977) the situation had eased up a bit. The AAB had written, “given the Board’s past support for this project and its desire to see it continue, it is submitted that the Board approve an additional $15,000 for the 1977 calendar year”. It is a good thing that the staff and students were able to maintain. The good intentions of the AAB were corroborated in the following documents. (Appendix, pp. 153-168 & p. 171).
FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME

The year’s focus was very much involved with survival issues. But the Founding Members and the staff did manage to maintain classes and fulfil a large itinerary of performing engagements for their first year. Carole wrote “They have performed on missions, in country towns of New South Wales (Walgett, Brewarrina, Moree) and in Canberra at the Aboriginal Country and Western Festival” (February 29th at Narrabundah Oval, which was nationally televised). These performances were for Indigenous communities and Carole’s comment in the Report to the Urban Theatre Committee indicates the appreciation of the community for the work of AISDS, which demonstrated a real need for this organization at the time.

These performances have been inspiring for the people who are proud of the students. In all the towns, the group has been asked to return by people in the community. (Johnson, 1976b:2)

They also did performances for the general public that the Director noted in the same report that were for “Predominantly White Audiences”. These took place at Girraween Primary School, Orientation week at the Wollongong Teachers College, and the NSW Art Gallery and Stanton Library. Their appearance on the television show, “This Day Tonight” on the 6th July, introduced the organization to a nationwide audience.

Their first ‘end of term’ mid-year show was at Bodenweiser Dance Centre on April 30th. This performance provided the new students with performing experience, and was done with a special contribution from the Mornington Island Tutors.

Jackson Jacobs received permission to teach the group a special series of dances from the Wallaby Song Cycle. These dances are not done anymore and are almost forgotten. He thought if the group does them when they go to Mornington Island it would make the old people happy and perhaps awaken their memory. (Johnson, 1976a:8-9), (Appendix, pp. 157-168).

This production was a pre-rehearsal for the schools first official ‘end of year show’, Forward to the Dreamtime, which was made possible by the support of the AAB and the Aboriginal Study Grants Section of the CDE. The Director’s statement in the program mentions the combination of dance cultures involved. This was an indication that the school was already moving closer to one of its goals, (that of cultural blending that would eventually manifest an contemporary Indigenous dance form). (The full program of Forward to the Dreamtime has been archived in the Appendix, pp. 126-129).
This season at BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE is the first performance series in the Sydney Aboriginal community. In this year of operation the group has been able to create a fifty minute production that for the first time combines traditional dance, modern dance and the spoken word. This blending works well to produce an exciting, entertaining evening that gives insight into Aboriginal ideas and emotions of their traditional past and their present status in society. We have called the production FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME since one can only move forward when returning spiritually to one’s roots and traditional heritage. (AISDS, 1976:Program)

The performances took place at Black Theatre for two weekends from the third to the twelfth of September, including one outside performance at the Sydney Opera House. It was directed by Steven Costain, the speech coach. The program was a mixture of contemporary dance, with the following traditional dances from Mornington Island: Goorie Rangle (Lightening Dance), Wallaby Hunting Dance, Mermaid Dance, Sea and Rock Dance & the Shake-a-leg. Daryl Williams, a student of AISDS from Mornington Islander, maintained these dances. However, even with Daryl assisting the students in learning his cultural dance form, it became obvious to the Director that the students needed intensive contact with the traditional owners, for urban students to properly understand and learn the dances of the Indigenous cultures.

......it took a year of study with the elders from Mornington Island for the young people from the cities to be comfortable with the traditional Lardil song and dance that is included in the performance. For the students who make up the audience, seeing young black people perform is a source of inspiration and identity to the Aboriginal school child. In addition, the program certainly gives him or her, as well as the others in the audience, insight and knowledge in an interesting and exciting way of this culture which is unique to Australia. (Johnson, 1996:interview)

The media reviews and articles were mostly enthusiastic and supportive but there was mention, in the Aboriginal newsletter Koori-Bina, of an un-professional situation that occurred with one of the dancers. The newsletter concerned with issues important to Aboriginal pride, self-image and identity, publicly exposed and scolded one student who showed up drunk for the performance; and urged the students not to let professional attitudes slide, when so much is dependent on their success.

The students have yet to learn the importance of “BEING PROFESSIONAL”. When they go “professional” they must learn that nowhere will they be tolerated for turning up for a show DRUNK and they will certainly not be tolerated for back-stage drinking. One particular student went home of his own accord one night when he realised just how rotten drunk he was. He was duly brought back and
made to go on stage in his deplorable condition. I don't think that more need be said with regard to how he hindered other dancers on stage with his misjudgement and timing. Not even "technique" could save him that night. (*Koori-Bina*, 1976c:9-10)

The most important aspect of the *Koori-Bina* article was that it brought to the forefront, extremely sensitive issues for the school to consider in the process of adapting the traditional culture. Fusion of the traditional dance culture was a new process for Indigenous Australians. As AISDS was the only urban dance school in Sydney dealing with contemporary dance training for Indigenous Australians, they would have to deal with all the nuances of this process as well as the ridicule.

......pain of seeing traditional people performing modern disco dances, nobody from the dance group is going to make it big unless they have a real appreciation of their traditional dancing...... (*Koori-Bina*, 1976c:9)

......if there is going to be participation in the workshop classes of Blacks from other countries, then they should not occupy a star role in anything that is tagged "Aboriginal". More importantly, the question arose as to whether or not blacks from other countries should be participating at all. (*Koori-Bina*, 1976c:9)

......the government should never support any non-Aboriginal (Such as Ms. Johnson) who would seek to divide our own people by setting up a dance group for Aborigines at any place save that of our own Centre. (*Koori-Bina*, 1976c:10)

The other issue of including non-Indigenous people in projects funded for Aborigines was not a new one for Carole, the first being the production of, Cradle of Hercules. As far as non-Aboriginal assistance for Aboriginal projects, there were two sides to the story. At this time, in Australian Indigenous history, there are no Indigenous people with the expertise or knowledge to build an arts organization, for dance. In hindsight the thing to consider is, unless Carole and Lucy had given their time and expertise, it is arguable whether anything would have happened at all. There was a real need for Aboriginal people to go with Carole Johnson. This was especially true because she had been invited back on two occasions to achieve what local people could not achieve at that time.
Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre

PRESENTS

ABORIGINAL ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE

IN

"FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME"

Directed by: STEVEN COSTAIN

SEPTEMBER 3rd through 6th
and
10th through 12th
at 7:15 p.m.

Program Cover

1977 'End of Year Show',

Forward to the Dreamtime
ALLIANCE WITH THE SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

At least 1976 ended on a good note. Carole had been working to establish The Course as a three-year Associate Diploma with a Certificate for those completing one year of the Course. In order to go on with this process, the Course needed to be endorsed by the Indigenous community. There were some who didn’t agree with the way AISDS was operating but there were many more who were extremely supportive. To ensure community support, practical steps were considered to bring people and agencies functioning directly with AISDS.

The Arts Council of Australia is in the process of setting up an Aboriginal/Islander Trust Committee for the course. The committee thus formalizes the position of the course so that it is clearly a part of the Aboriginal/Islander community and is run by them independent of the various government bodies that fund the course or that might fund it in the future. The committee can be viewed as a step towards incorporation if it feels that it needs to do so at a later date. The committee will have broad purposes. Its specific project will be the stabilization and perpetuation of the Dance Course. Members of the committee will be Paul Murphy, Elsa Dixon, Wayne Nicol and Carole Johnson. (Johnson, 1976a:11).

AISDS also needed some clarification as to the type of agency it was. Up to this point it had mostly applied for funding from the Arts Board, which indicated that it was an arts agency. The work to establish AISDS as an accredited educational institution would take a number of years to complete, but it was in process.

The Course needs to be recognized as an educational programme. As long as it is totally associated with the Arts council of Australia as well as funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board, it appears to be an arts programme. This is rightfully an educational programme because its aim is the development of individuals to contribute to society at some time in the future. It is not trying to improve the state of the art of dance. The director of the Course has had several meetings with the Guild Teachers College to try to become associated in some way with that institution. If the Course can establish itself with this institution or some other accredited educational institution, that should help establish the educational nature of the Course. (Johnson, 1976a:11).

In December the Director had set a meeting with the Principal of the Sydney College of the Arts, Mr. Peter Baily and Dr. Peter Martin of the Higher Education Board. The result of this meeting was a letter from Mr Baily to the Director of the AAB, Robert Edwards, requesting the Board consider continued funding to, “ensure the Group’s continuance until it can come within the advanced education system”. Baily’s letter had made it clear he was “most interested in pursuing the prospect” of an affiliation with AISDS.
Two days after this promising commitment, Robert Edwards wrote the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme, Department of Education, G. Green stating, "it would be appreciated if assistance within the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme provided by your Department could be continued". Both letters have been included at the end of this chapter. (Appendix, pp. 130-134).

As a good part of the year was involved with trying to maintain the Course and the organization's continuity, the Director made a point of informing the AAB of the "Benefits of the program to the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal Arts Board". Traditionally it's been difficult for Aboriginal people to be accepted as contemporary urban people, even today. In 1977 the idea of non-traditional, contemporary Aboriginal dancing would have been a contradictory idea to put across; particularly since the government and the tourist industry perpetuate a limited image of Indigenous Australians. The battle to sustain the school during the 1970's was an act of persistence, while at the same time, producing tangible results. (Appendix, pp. 135-138).

If this group is killed, the Aboriginal Arts Board will probably lose the possibility that, in five to ten years' time, they will have produced a company that can be part of the international dance scene, and be more exciting and sought after than any of Australia's national 'white' companies can ever hope to be.

As a group, the students in the course contradict all the stereotypes about Aboriginal people. These students are in contact with many whites who have a positive relationship with them on a basis of similar interest, the dance. These white people will be able to contradict the statements of other whites from their own direct experience of working and studying with the Aboriginal students. (Johnson, 1976b:1).
OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE, KIM WALKER IN FOREGROUND
THE ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE AT MARRIVILLE HIGH SCHOOL IN A TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL DANCE.
THE ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE AT MARRICKVILLE

GIRLS HIGH IN A CONTEMPORARY DANCE WORK.

The 1977 Annual Report displays an immense increase in performing activities for the student-performing unit, the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT). After the previous year’s funding insecurities the Founding Students, who would increase to nine during the course of the year, were still with the Course; the student body had doubled; funding for salaries had been promised for the entire year; a full-time secretary/assistant joined the staff of part-time dance instructors and guest lecturers, and the performing unit was about to embark on its first international engagement to Lagos, Nigeria in West Africa, then to the South Sea Island countries of Tahiti and Noumea, and later to Papua New Guinea. These were amazing achievements after only one year of operations, but this was the only dance group of its type in Australia and there was a high demand for Australian Aboriginal art and culture, so long hidden from public view. A detailed view of the performance itinerary has been included at the end of this chapter, titled ‘Summary of Activities’, and is in the (Appendix, pp. 179-205).

With the high demand for AIDT, demonstrated by the expanding performance itinerary, Stream II could begin to fulfil its objectives, which pertained to performance, community involvement, national and international exposure, visibility and, a long way down the line, the development of a professional dance company. The demand for Aboriginal performance not only provided on-the-job-training and broadened career possibilities for the students, but also made it easier to see dance as a real career option. It was difficult to explain the real time needed to create professionally qualified dancers, teachers or choreographers, to funding bodies. Because of this, the pressure on staff and the Founding Students to develop both the educational and employment streams simultaneously was great. Employment prospects were an essential consideration, especially for government funding, visible results needed to be a reality at the end of a three-year training program and government investment.

Something would have to come out of the training, be the end results. You couldn’t tell funding agencies that after three years of training the students would have the basis to be dancers. They would have to be ready for work at the end of the training period. It was difficult to get them to understand the time it takes to be a professional dancer or choreographer. (Johnson, 1994: interview)
It would be possible for the students to work as teacher’s aides at the finish of the three years but the entire student body couldn’t go into the teaching profession, nor were they all interested in just teaching. According to Cheryl Stone, “We wanted to dance in a professional Black dance company”. By the end of 1977 this was a distinct possibility.

In the beginning Carole believed the development of a professional company would begin maybe three years down the line, this was prompted by the quick rate of achievement of the Founding Students, who worked hard and were sincere about their studies. However, because of the wide demand from the international market for something uniquely Indigenous of Australia, and the desperate need of the remote rural areas, the student-performing group, AIDT, was instantly in demand. The demand was growing so quickly that it was difficult keeping a balance between studies and satisfying the country and world interest in Indigenous performance. The interest in AIDT was even greater because they provided both contemporary and traditional dance in their performances. However, they could only perform the traditional works when a representative from the culture was with them, or if they had been given permission to do the material on their own.

THE INTERNATIONAL ITINERARY
The beginning of the year started with preparations for FESTAC. After many years of negotiation and planning, which began around 1974, Nigeria’s First African and Black World Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) was scheduled to proceed in Lagos, Nigeria in January 1977. This was the second of its kind in the world but the first for Nigeria. A contingent of traditional Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and urban artists were to represent Australia’s Indigenous cultures, including AIDT. The report by the Australian committee coordinating Australia’s participation, wrote:

The Black community of Australia regards its participation in the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture as an extremely important step in forging an Aboriginal identity. This will be the first occasion on which Australia has been represented at an International event by an all Black Delegation. (AAB, undated:2). (Appendix, pp. 173-175).

It was the first international exposure for the performing unit. The students had been preparing, organizing and rehearsing for this event for most of 1976 but only the following four were able to attend: Lillian Crombie, Michael Leslie, Wayne Nichol and Richard
Talonga, with Roslyn Watson travelling as senior dancer in charge of the student-performing unit.

The traditional owners attending the conference would be representing their particular dance cultures. This left the contemporary dance for AIDT. Their program illustrated the feelings and frustrations confronting urban Black Australians. The Challenge – Embassy Dance, created around the violence and demonstrations to save the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, portrayed images of the stolen generation, deaths in custody and police dominance. Roslyn presented a work from her repertoire, a contemporary version of the Brolga dance she had learned with David Gulpilil. The balance of the program consisted of the works of Lucy Jumawan. The Marcia Hines Suite, which was created to the music of the African American singer living in Australia. The Harold Blair Suite, created as a tribute to the late Harold Blair, was a selection of Aboriginal songs arranged and sung in a contemporary style.

This was an exciting event for the students as it was their first trip abroad as representatives of the Black community. It offered them an opportunity to see how things were done in the rest of the world, particularly in the colonized world of Africa.

SOUTH PACIFIC FESTIVAL
A different group of students were chosen to represent the school at the South Pacific Festival of Dance in Tahiti. This event was closer to home, culturally as well as physically. And it allowed for the possibility of continued contact and exchange among the people and dance cultures that proliferated the South Sea Islands, many of whom still had their original dance cultures in tact.

The Festival took place in April with special arrangements made by the staff for additional engagements in Noumea, at the request of the Australian Government. Lucy Jumawan supervised the group composed of Malcolm Cole, Lillian Crombie, Michael Leslie, Richard Talonga and Cheryl Stone. They performed for four thousand people in a total of five performances. (A rough translation of the following reviews of their shows is in the Appendix, p. 215).
Le groupe de danse contemporain, qui puisson son inspiration dans le folklore, sa grande qualité chorégraphie montre l'évolution de leur costume à la vie moderne. (Noumea Demiere, 1977: April 27)

Mais la troupe, nous l'avons dit, est intelligente et sensible, jamais elle ne tombe dans l'outrecuidance et le gratuit, elle est sincere, a creditable. Et les ballets, eux, restent beaux, continuent a emouvoir. (Journal de Tahiti, 1977)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The third and final international engagement for the year was to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for their Independence Day Celebrations. Lillian Crombie, Wayne Nicol, Dorathia Randall, Richard Talonga and Kim Walker did thirteen performances for 10,000 people. All of the above tours and engagements were funded by special grants from the Australia Council.

In this year AISDS students had gone beyond the boundaries of Australia, an accomplishment not easily available to previous generations of Aboriginal and Islander Australians. The importance of travelling and familiarizing the world of Indigenous Australian dance was highly acknowledged by a traditional elder of the Lardil people from Mornington Island, Mr Larry Lanley.

Our people are proud that the young are taking this opportunity to become professional dancers and that we are beginning to have our groups travelling the world. Aboriginal people should do these things so others can see what our life is about and come to respect it as a proper way of living. This will help to keep us strong but it will also help other Australian people to see this country in an Aboriginal way. (AISDS/Lanley, 1980:1)

NATIONAL TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

The national tours were just as important in achieving the goals and objectives of Stream II as the international appearances were. These objectives were to build performing, teaching and organizational skills; and, to create a realistic, visible image of Black Australians.

It was also a fact that outback rural and country Australia, in both Black and White communities, were just as hungry for Aboriginal performance as others in the world. Even though there were a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies, which were still functioning within their respective dance cultures in 1977, they were no more visible or
accessible to Australian’s than they were to people abroad. The Australian market was ready and eager to be developed and AISDS took on the job in a big way. They did a total of 14 different engagements, covering the country from New South Wales (NSW) to far Northwest Queensland; spanning seven months of the school year, from March to mid December. Including the African and Black Arts and Cultural festival in Lagos in January, the students toured every month of 1977, except February and May.

Involvement with the Indigenous communities was an important goal of Stream II, which was to be accomplished via the student-performing unit, AIDT. Fortunately AIDT was being approached by both Black and White communities for workshops and performances, which freed them from having to scout around for performing opportunities:

The Course is slowly being recognized by Aboriginal people as a resource for performances. All performances of the term were as a result of requests by Aboriginal people and their organizations. (Johnson, 1977a:17)

One request, which came from the White community, was an invitation for AISDS to participate in the Lismore Festival in NSW. The students selected to represent the school were, Cheryl Stone, Michael Leslie and Malcolm Cole. They attended the Festival and after conducted workshops and performances at the Aboriginal mission in the Lismore region. The importance of this invitation, the work the students did and the contacts they made were documented in a report prepared by Cheryl Stone that was included in the Annual Report.

Since this was the first time that the Lismore September Festival had incorporated Aboriginal representation, I feel it is very important to participate there every year during the Festival. It brings to mind that around this area the Aboriginal culture and life was very strong and alive many years ago. (Johnson/Stone, 1977a:23-4)

Cheryl also felt that the strongest part of their participation was the contact and training they brought to the young people. This was exhibited in the pride of the community at seeing their children in a productive manner, as the workshops were conducted at the mission. The image of Black people in positions of authority and leadership was a positive and constructive experience for everyone involved, which Cheryl noted in her report:

This indeed was a very unique and rare occasion for black performers in Australia. Even with the audience there was a strong link since most of them were black themselves. It meant that they could identify with all that was happening and at the same time feel a sense of pride and dignity. Almost the whole of the Box Ridge Community had come
with their children. The children could relate what we had taught them. Who knows, there may be just one or two of those children who would one day follow the footprints we had made for them. (Johnson/Stone, 1977a:23-4)

Michael Leslie’s report of Wauchope, NSW offers a different example of Aboriginal communities in rural Australia. The neglect and isolation of these communities was one reason the work AISDS students were performing were in demand and of great value. He stated, “We found the community of Wauchope very small”, but he noted the excitement caused by their presence in the area. “A majority of Aboriginals attended the performance, coming from as far as Kempsey, Taree and Port Macquarie."

Michael was to perform Nullarbor Prayer, a work choreographed by Carole Johnson. He describes the setting as being difficult but the event was highly beneficial to both the community and himself as a performer working under unusual circumstances. Many of the performing conditions were a challenge in the 1970’s, but the community always appreciated them. And the experience helped to polish both their performing skills and a strong unpampered professional attitude to their work.

The service and performance were held at a timber town. This was a reproduction of a lumber town of the olden days. Here they hold a bullock demonstration during the day. It went well except for the ground being rough and dusty from bullock hoofs. In some cases, I found difficulty keeping my balance because of the hoof prints in the ground. In some parts I had to slap the ground with the dust flying everywhere as if I were in the desert dying of thirst. But this is what the dance is about.

The children performed “Bus Stop”, a disco dance I had taught them. They coped very well for their first performance in front of an audience. The community enjoyed them. They were very proud of their children dancing. (Johnson, 1977a:25-6)

Lucy Jumawan guided the students in Lismore and Wauchope, but there were times when the students had to ‘hoof’ it on their own. The Founding Students were beginning to build the self-confidence and skill to take charge of the engagements on their own. It was not usual for the students to work without a professional with them, but in the case of Cowra, AIDT services had been double booked and Michael Leslie and Dorathea Randall had to take charge.

The beginning students went to Cowra for a weekend to perform for the Aboriginal community’s first Arts Programme. Five of the six
beginning students were accompanied by Michael Leslie and Dorathea Randall, two of the older students who acted as stage-manager and dance director. This is the first time that older students have gone out on their own and been responsible for a programme. (Johnson, 1977a:20)

QUEENSLAND REMOTE AREA TOUR

It was during 1977 that arrangements had begun with the Australian Ballet to assist Roslyn Watson on a Queensland tour. Opposite is a picture of Roslyn, Lillian, Michael, Richard and Wayne. The Queensland tours were very important in the history of both AISDS and AIDT. Most of the student body had come from Queensland, but more important was the fact that the students would be working with Rosalyn. Rosalyn had achieved what they were working to acquire, a career as dancers. This tour would eventually become a regular itinerary item for AIDT.

It developed from a desire of Rosalyn to bring quality performance and training to Aboriginal people. The tour was arranged and managed by Harry Haythorne, the artistic Director of the Australian Ballet, who had organized the tours as a special project for Roslyn. She did the project for possible two years on her own with excellent results, indicated by the following report of the AAB.

It was reported that in 1975, the Queensland Ballet Company had arranged for Ms Roslyn Watson, a member of the Company, to visit Cooktown, Weipa, Hopevale, Kowanyama and Edward River, to conduct a series of dance workshops in primary schools. The project had been funded by the Theatre Board of the Australia Council.

Reports from schools visited had been very enthusiastic and it was hoped to repeat the project in 1976. It was also proposed that the visit be followed up by an invitation to the most interested and talented children to attend the Queensland Ballet’s vacation school to be held in Townsville in August. Mrs. Dick reported that workshops held at Weipa South had been very successful. (AAB:2.1.4, 1976:60)

As the tours expanded it become increasingly more difficult for her to handle the tours on her own. Lucy Jumawan said, Rosalyn spoke to her about the difficulties and requested Lucy
come with her. Lucy agreed and spoke with Carole about the project, suggesting AISDS students work as apprentices on the project. Lucy chose Wayne Nicol and Dorothea Randall to participate as student teachers. The tour targeted Aboriginal communities and provided them with workshops and performances. But part of the goal was to seek out promising students and invite them to attend the dance vacation camp, run by the Queensland Ballet School. This would give Indigenous young people the opportunity to be exposed to excellent Ballet training. It was also a way for AISDS to increase its contact with the Indigenous communities and advertise the benefits of the Careers in Dance course as well. This was the beginning of the Queensland tours that are now regularly rostered on the years performing itinerary.

**SUMMARY OF THE 1977 NATIONAL TOUR ITINERARY OF AIDT**

The performance and workshop itinerary for 1977 took the students to the following Aboriginal communities in NSW and Queensland: Normanton, Kowanyama, Weipa, Lockhart River, Hopevale, Newcastle, Taree and the Middle Harbour School. In addition to the above engagements, the students performed at Blacktown, Rooty Hill and Darlington Schools, Bodenweiser Dance Centre, Cabramatta Public School, the Film & Television School, the Chippendale University Settlement and a special performance with Kai Tai Chan's, One Extra Dance Company, at the Seymour Centre in a production of Vanishing Species. In a few cases sponsors paid for the workshops or performances. The Commonwealth Board of Education and or the AAB paid a portion of some, but many were free to the community.

The dancers had fulfilled approximately thirty-six engagements as well as completing the full term's curriculum. The performances were a highly effective way of providing AISDS students with performing experience, self-confidence, aided their social and business communications skills and cultivated community organizing and touring skills, which made them the tours a perfect vehicle to achieve the objectives of Stream II.

**CONTINUITY OF STUDENT GROWTH**

The performing and workshops of Stream II were going well but AISDS (the umbrella agency that encompassed both the school and the student-performing unit AIDT) was having problems. Even though the funding had been promised for a full year's operation, it was not a
certainty until the beginning of the year. This stopped any prior work to increase student enrolment, until the situation had stabilized.

(B)ecause of the funding uncertainties until the beginning of January 1977, we had only one new student starting in February. We discouraged all people who made enquiries prior to that time. (Johnson, 1977a:15)

Because of this situation Term I proceeded with only the previous year’s students ready to continue the Course, with new applicants being discouraged. AISDS did accept Wendy Roberts from the Northern Territory as she had started the Course at the beginning of 1976 but dropped out before the second term of that year, and was now returning. The Course year was now operating three terms of approximately three months each. Once the funding came through new students did enrol during the second or third term. This was an unusual and difficult situation, but it would have been disastrous and destroyed the credibility of the organization to accept new students without the certainty of funding. Having the incoming student body begin at anytime during the school year was not an ideal situation but one that AISDS would have to continue for a while longer, until funding became consistent and internal structures could be strengthened. It had been projected that this situation would work itself out by the beginning of 1979.

In 1977, the Course has had to accept new students each term. Ideally, the Course should only take in new students at the beginning of the year. For 1978, the Course will accept new students in February and June terms. By 1979, the Course should have so organized its in-take procedures that it can have a selective group coming in the February term only. (Johnson, 1977a:18)

At the beginning of Term II (June 6 to August 26), five new students joined the Course: Chandra Baban, Mervyn Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Ingrim (later dropped out) with Kerry Upkett and Leone Malamoo who were returning and Sylvia Blanco and Shane Williams beginning in Term III. The “Continuity of Students” graph at the end of the chapter illustrates the growth in student enrolment from Careers in Dance course in October 1975.

EXPANSION OF STAFF AND CURRICULUM
Throughout the years, AISDS has had the good fortune to acquire high-profile instructors from among the traditional owners, mainstream Australian dance as well as African American dance artists. 1977 was no exception. With the increase in the student body, the staff and curriculum also expanded to include Ronne Arnold33; Jenni Isaacs, who along with Jean
Battersby and Nugget Coombs were instrumental in promoting Aboriginal Arts in the early 1970's; Andee Reese had won the film award for documentary on the Six-Week Workshop, Sunrise Awakening in 1975, joined the staff as writing instructor; Kai Tai Chan, the director of The One Extra Dance Company, Gerard Sebri; Frank Knowles and Don Secomb were all part of the team for 1977.

There were also a variety of professional people who were invited to give lectures as part of the year's educational experiences. They covered topics from their own personal achievements to the survival of other Aboriginal cultures in world, as well as Australia.

Guest speakers, Ulli Bier, "from New Guinea spoke on the Modern Art movement in New Guinea and Street Art in America". Pat O'Shane, Aboriginal lawyer who spoke on her experiences in getting an education. Lorraine Randall, spoke on her experiences living in Mornington Island and the work she did in South Australia as a lecturer taking a bit of Aboriginal culture to non-Aboriginal audiences. Roslyn Watson, spoke on her experiences as she developed into the only Aboriginal professional ballet dancer. (Johnson, 1977a:19)

With the new staff and increase in students the syllabus had expanded to offer a variety of dance and arts related courses illustrated in the following chart, "course and Credit Hours" (Johnson). The chart illustrates the division of curriculum subjects into two levels of students (first and second year) that AISDS now accommodates. Group "A", are continuing second year students and Group "B", are the incoming first year student body.
The traditional curriculum had also grown to include Philippine dance, as well as a variety of traditional mainland and Torres Strait Island dance forms. The tutors from Thursday Island were, Eric Mariko and Arthur Kebisu who graciously left a series of dances for the students to keep in the repertoire. These were secular dances that the students could perform at any time, without the traditional tutors being with them, as long as they were kept up to standard.

The teachers from the Torres Strait Islands spent two weeks with the students and put together a fifteen-minute programme made up of nine traditional dances. They have given us permission to perform them. We consider the time spent with these teachers only a beginning because it takes a great deal of time to perfect the style. (Johnson, 1977a:15)

For the first time, the school had arranged for people from Yirrkala in the Northern Territory to work with the students. The Yirrkala community sent Peter Yikaki Maymuru and David Wuyal Warrpanda, who joined the staff in the second term. While in Sydney they also conducted a few master workshops that were open to the general public. Their presence meant that the students now had experience of two completely different mainland Aboriginal dance forms, those of the Yolgnu people of Yirrkala and the Lardil people from Mornington Island.

Two teachers from Yirrkala spent three weeks, July 11 to August 1 with the Course. They were Peter Yikaki Maymuru and David Wuyal Warrpanda. The Aboriginal Arts Board made two weeks possible and

Raymond S. Robinson (Wanaga)
MA Honours Thesis
the Department of Labour asked that they remain and teach in the hostels. (Johnson, 1977a:16)

ACCREDITATION BRINGS AAB AND HEB SUPPORT
The issue of accreditation was a very important one in the development of AISDS. It probably is the most important reason it hasn't fallen by the wayside. It meant AISDS could continue to take care of training, which was sorely needed. And, begin the process of maintaining the traditional dance culture. It also meant the student would have some credentials on leaving.

It was encouraging to note that the Higher Education Board (HEB) had initially suggested AISDS become accredited, and a plan had been discussed as to how to accomplish this. It was understood that the most effective way to proceed was for AISDS to be affiliated with the Sydney College of the Arts (SCA). It would then be possible for 'crossover funding' to be arranged, so that those segments of the curriculum that met official tertiary level requirements could be administered by the SCA. As the HEB was actively supporting the association between AISDS and the SCA, an interview had been arranged for Carole to meet with Dr. Martin of the HEB. Dr. Martin was the Deputy Secretary in charge of academic development. A brief of the interview has been archived in the (Appendix, pp. 211-214).

As the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) had changed its funding criteria (excluding training as an on-going funding area), the Director of the AAB, Dr. Edwards, had been kept informed of the progress of this association between AISDS and the SCA, and of the backing of the HEB. It was understood that AISDS would need further support from the AAB while the accreditation process was in progress. In order to facilitate the process, Dr. Edwards requested that Jane Thynne, an AAB staff member, “prepare an agenda item for submission to the Board at its next meeting”. He understood that Carole was preparing a detailed submission to the AAB and that the situation was urgent: “In view of the limited funds available to the program at the present time, it is essential that a decision be reached in this matter at the next meeting”. (AAB/Edwards, 1977). (Appendix, p. 176).

By March Carole had advised Thynne of the AAB, that arrangements with the College for the Arts, to administer AISDS funds, should be in place by mid 1977 and future AAB funding should be made payable to them.
In view of the agreement on the part of the Sydney College for the arts to incorporate the program into its curriculum, it is necessary to present to the Board a case for the continued support of the program until such time as it can become the responsibility of the College. (AAB/Edwards, 1977). (Appendix, p. 176).

However, the process would not be in place within the next two years, by 1979. As a matter of fact, Carole envisioned the whole process being totally in place by 1982 "because the HEB functions in a triennium" (Johnson), or 1983 "if the wheels of government procedures take too long" (Johnson). She continued to explain that support from the Board would be essential until the budget for the Dance Program could be totally incorporated into the budget of the SCA.

This, however, could not eventuate prior to 1979, and the program will need to continue seeking funds from the Board and the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme until that time. (AAB, 1977: agenda item).

At the conclusion of Term I in May 1977, progress with the proposal for permanent funding from the HEB was well under way.

The proposal for permanent funding by the Higher Education Board will be completed by the end of June. This is a lengthy document which describes in detail the course: its educational validity, its objectives and methods of operation and its staffing and facility needs. (Johnson, 1977a:15).

By the end of the second term in August, the document for permanent funding from the HEB was complete and the Director stated, "A copy has been given to the Aboriginal Arts Board" (Johnson, 1977a:16).

1977 SUMMARY

The change in orientation from performance to education made a quantum difference in the survival of AISDS when other groups had failed. The organization had managed to survive two years (a very short time) under a great deal of pressure and insecurity about their future. Judging from the precise and thorough documentation set-up by the Director, there are several indications as to how they managed to do it.

First were Carole's arts administration skills, and her personal concern for the development of programs and agencies that would advance Black dance and culture. No one at that time in Australia had taken on the job. Respected people in Australian dance such as Keith Bain and
Robina Beard had expressed amazement that Carole was able to pull it off. They have commented that others have thought about it but it was always relegated to the ‘too hard basket’.

The Director’s persistence and dedication inspired the Founding Students to stay with the project, even when there were no guarantees of a future. Their persistence began to materialize in only two years time. For example, even with the uncertainty of no funding for basic needs like paying their rent and buying food, they continued to participate in the classes and with the development of AISDS. The performing itinerary more than doubled, by the second year of operation in 1977. They had fulfilled international engagements in four countries, which included arranging bookings, preparing contracts, the preparation of a publicity package and raising the funds. Their base of support had increased both nationally and internationally and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organizations were tremendously impressed with their growing public profile.

The Founding Students were willing to try things that were way beyond their capacity, ability and skills. Without any prior evidence that a Black Australian dance company would eventuate, they stuck to the program and created two agencies (AISDS and AIDT) that were greater than the politics of racism and funding favouritism. It was the combination of these ingredients that saw the project through difficult times. The hard work was not over but these first two years were the testing ground that showed the nine Founding Students were serious.

The year ended on a good note with a request to the AAB for a part-time secretary, whose job description would have been difficult for anyone to carry out on a part time basis, but was obviously necessary daily activities. This was put to AAB as an urgent plea, which seemed to have been approved for as a fulltime position.

To date I have been acting as administrator and secretary doing all the day to day detail work including typing some letters and reports. The duties have become so detailed and extensive that they have encroached totally on my teaching time and I cannot even begin to think of doing any creative work with the students. For the next six months I would like approval of a part-time secretary typist that can grow into the position of administrative assistant. (Johnson, 1977b:2)
The school had also managed to put together an impressive entourage of people to function as a ‘Board of Advisors’ for AISDS. They were: Wayne Nicol (Student Representative), Pat O’Shane (the first Aboriginal female Barrister to become a magistrate), Bob Maza (attributed with being the founder of Sydney’s ‘National Black Theatre’), Bobbi Sykes (writer, teacher and political activist for Aboriginal Rights), Elsa Dixon and Terry Widders (educator). Their names were included on the cover sheet of the AAB’s application form. (Appendix, pp. 206-210)

The crowning achievement of 1977 was the acquisition of a home base for AISDS and the performing unit. They would now be housed in Glebe at St John’s Hall. These were the premises of the Anglican Church, which had been rented to the school at a minimal fee. This was communicated to the AAB in a memo to Jane Thynne. (Appendix, p. 178):

Carole Johnson rang to advise that the Dance Training Programme had found premises for next year in a church hall in Glebe. The hall which had rooms for two studios and a lecture hall, as well as lounge and kitchen facilities, had been used previously as a dance studio, but would need additional barres and mirrors installed. (AAB/Thynne, 1977b: File Note)

AISDS remained at St John’s Hall until the mid 1990’s when the organization moved its premises to the Rocks, near Circular Quay. At the moment the Glebe home was a Godsend.
THE NEW HOME
SAINT JOHN'S HALL, GLEBE
FOREGROUND: WAYNE NICOL
Nigeria

November 1975

- Are you an Aborigine or a Torres Strait Islander?
- Do you dance, sing, act, paint, weave, write, or play a traditional musical instrument?
- Would you like to travel to Nigeria next year to take part in a Festival of Arts and Culture?

More than 20,000 indigenous people from all over the world will be taking part in the Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos, Nigeria (West Africa) in November next year. Australia has been invited to send a group of up to 100 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Fees, accommodation and expenses are being paid by the Australian and Nigerian Governments.

Sections of interest to Australian Aboriginal performers and craftsmen include:

- Pottery
- Weaving
- Drawing and painting
- Carving
- Exhibition of books and writings
- Musical instruments
- Dance
- Films

If you or your performing group believe you have the talent and skill to represent your people at the Nigerian Festival, please write a letter, stating your proposals, and any financial assistance or support you may need in the preparation of your presentation or exhibits, to:

Mr. Vince Copley,
Secretary,
Nigeria Co-ordinating Committee
c/o Department of Aboriginal Affairs,
Box 17, P.O.,
Aden, A.C.T. 2600
### Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme

#### Dance Theatre

**Summary of Activities**

**KEY:**
- **F** = Free
- **E** = Expenses only through Dept. of Education
- **A** = Salaries & Expenses to Dancers through Special Australia Council Grants
- **P** = Paid Performance - dancer paid

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>No. of Performances</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. January</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. March 20</td>
<td>Sydney - Stanley Palmer Centre “Battle Rites”</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3. April 9,10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. April 13-23</td>
<td>Tahiti &amp; Noumea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<td>5. April 26</td>
<td>Stanmore Public School, S.E.W.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>6. June</td>
<td>Film &amp; T.V. School Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. June</td>
<td>Stanley Palmer Centre &quot;Vanishing Species&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>8. July 2*</td>
<td>Newra S.E.W.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
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<td>9. July 3*</td>
<td>Woy Woy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. July 4 – Aug 13</td>
<td>Queensland Workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4. July – August 13</td>
<td>Normanby</td>
<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Knowarama</td>
<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welpa</td>
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<td></td>
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*Summary of Activities* (1)
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<td>13 - 15</td>
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<td>Rosevale</td>
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<td>11. July</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. July 16*</td>
<td>Taree</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td>Newcastle H.S.W.</td>
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<td>14. September 7</td>
<td>Middle Harbour School</td>
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<td>15. September 13 - 21</td>
<td>New Guinea</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>Lismore Workshop N.S.W.</td>
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<td>Friday 16</td>
<td>Box Ridge Mission</td>
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<td>Saturday 17</td>
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<td>20 children x 2 sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday 18</td>
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<td>Tuesday 20</td>
<td>St. Mary's College</td>
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<td>Wednesday 21</td>
<td>Community School</td>
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<td>Lismore 5th Primary School</td>
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<td>Rainbow Ridge</td>
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<td>Coffs Harbour H.S.W.</td>
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<td>22. October 27</td>
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'SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES' (2)
Summary of Activities (cont)

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<td>Chippendale, University Settlement</td>
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<td>Bodawiser Dance Centre</td>
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<td>27. December 14-17</td>
<td>Seymour Centre in One Extra Dance Co.</td>
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* Involvement with N.S.W. Aboriginal children

'SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES' (3)

PELICAN DANCE
MORNINGTON ISLAND,
OUTSIDE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
BODENWEISER DANCE STUDIO
TORRES STRAIT ISLAND TUTORS
LFT: ARTHUR KIBESU ~ SITTING: ERIC MARIKO

RICHARD TALONGA STUDENT (RT)
MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY
TORRES STRAIT ISLAND TUTORS
ARTHUR KIBESU ~ ERIC MARIKO
THE ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE
GRADE SCHOOL SHOW
CLASS OF 1977

DORATHEA RANDALL ~ CHERYLE STONE ~ KERRY UPKETT ~ RICHARD TALONGA ~ WENDY ROBERTS ~ KIM WALKER ~ LILLIAN GROMBIE ~ MICHAEL LESLIE ~ CHANDRA BABAN ~ MALCOLM COLE ~ WAYNE NICOL ~ MERVYN FITZGERALD
CHAPTER 7: 1978 ~ THE FINAL YEAR

1978 was the third and final year for the first graduating class. Over the past two-years the Founding Members had travelled through an intense period of uncertainty but despite the hardships, the Course was slowly becoming a reality. The success rate of AISDS and the performing ensemble, AIDT, was undeniable and must have inspired the students with a sense of success and the thought that, just possibly, this Course would continue. True, this was only the beginning of the third year, but with the amount of activities they were about to undertake, concrete demonstrations of their value would begin to replace the constant dialogue that nothing Black lasts.

From the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972, to the beginning of the Course in 1975, to the present time, 1978, it was never an established fact that they would succeed. However, by 1978 AISDS was one of the most encouraging training projects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Firstly, it was the only one concerned with dance. Over the three-year Course, the students were exposed to the best teachers and acquire excellent training in Indigenous Australian and contemporary dance forms, pedagogy, choreography, some production management, community organizational skills with extensive performing experience. But, even with this extensive variety of skills, the end of the three years would only mark the beginning of their dance training and career. The next few years would determine their acceptance and employability not only in Australia but also in the world.

The Careers in Dance course was improving and growing but still needed certain things to be worked out. They had to do with: the overall curriculum, staff and student needs; access and contact with the traditional owners; the HEB proposal and the affiliation with the Sydney College of the Arts; a hostel for the incoming students and an agent or manager for the community requests for AIDT workshops and performances.

The course was now regularly functioning over a three-term year. Twenty-one students enrolled in 1978, with sixteen finishing the year; an administrative assistant (Caz Villiers) had been hired, and, a home base had been acquired in Glebe, which provided space for the development of a community outreach program.
A NEW HOME, ST JAMES HALL

By Term I 1978, AISDS had moved from Bodenweiser Dance Centre on City Road, Chippendale, to St. James Hall 153 Pyrmont-Bridge Road, Glebe, about 15 blocks away. It was a two story Rectory Hall owned by the Anglican Church. It was meant to be a shared accommodation with a theatre group, The Rocks Players, and others.

The Course rents (at donation rate) the second floor of an old church hall in Glebe which provides an office and one studio. Within the two storey building there is access to a kitchen, toilets and additional studio space. The entire facility is shared with various theatre and dance groups that use the building in the evenings and weekends and is also hired out by the church for public gatherings, dances and receptions. (Johnson, 1983:61)

The Rocks Players had use of the lower level, with AISDS functioning on the floor above. The office continued to operate out of the Student Hostel at 263 Glebe Point Road until the end of the year, when it also moved into St James Hall.

The move of the Course to the premises of St. James Hall where it can operate on a full-time basis, has helped to consolidate the Course for the students. Far from causing an isolationism, and that had been feared, the effect of having a home that is primarily for them enables the students to be more expansive. (Johnson, 1978:19)

With the use of other church facilities for extra classrooms, which were in walking distance to the Hall, AISDS had access to three rooms large enough for dance studios. As the student body grew, and more space was needed for classes, rehearsals or performances, the Seymour Centre and Bodenweiser were also available. However, on many occasions, classes, especially the traditional classes, were conducted at the H. J. Foley Park across the street, to the delight of the neighbourhood.

Several years later The Rocks Players moved out, leaving the entire building for AISDS operations, but it was always understood the building was to be available to other community groups as well. St James Hall provided space for two dance studios in the main building, offices, class rooms, storage space, toilets, a kitchen, it even had a small stage and eventually a sound room was built behind the first floor studio. If more professional equipment or space was needed it was quite often provided by the Sydney College of the Arts or, as Carole wrote, “the Margaret Walker Dance Centre, located in Chippendale, provides non-professional, do-it-yourself equipment and place for making tapes”. St James Hall was a great space for the
organization, in a good location that served AISDS for the next eighteen years before NAISDA changed its location to Millers Point in 1996, and then to the Rocks in 1997.

THE GLEBE COMMUNITY LEISURE AND LEARNING PROJECT

During its first year of occupancy at St James hall, AISDS started work on another of its projects, The Glebe Community Leisure and Learning Project. There were several reasons and benefits for the creation of the Learning Project. One was to introduce AISDS to the Glebe community, by arranging classes specifically for the community without interfering with the Careers in Dance curriculum. What this project did was to introduce a series of special courses, open to adults who lived in and around the Glebe area. And, it brought community and artists together.

The Scheme has always been eager to participate in community activities, and following a successful experimental six week dance course at the Glebe community Care Centre, it was decided to establish evening classes in visual arts and dance to fulfil an apparent need in the Glebe area.

The project received a grant from the Board of Adult Education to establish the programme and classes began in November, 1978. Georgina Bier, a noted artist who has worked extensively with the people of New Guinea and Africa, taught the art classes and Aku Kadogo, together with Peter Yikaki Maymuru from the Northern Territory and Eddie Captain from the Torres Strati Islands, taught the dance classes. (Johnson, 1978:50)

The Leisure and Learning Project functioned for a few years, stopped for a few years, and then continued in the late 1980’s, first under the direction of Aku Kadogo under the new name of the Dance Now Centre: then with myself (Raymond Robinson) as coordinator. The Dance Now Centre functioned with the same purpose of running a regular schedule of classes open to the general lay public but also developed a series of live Sunday afternoon ‘Tea Concerts’ that expanded the relationship between the local community and AISDS.

STAFF

The Administrative Staff was beginning to meet the specific needs of the organization. Besides the Director, Carole, Lucy Jumawan was the principal teacher/choreographer for the performing unit, AIDT. Cheryl Stone, a Black South African, had trained as a bookkeeper and took charge of financial records. As Cheryl’s family had migrated to Australia from South
Africa, she was not qualified for an Aboriginal Study Grant. Her staff work was in lieu of tuition.

Joining the staff was Caz Villiers who was hired as an administrative assistant to the Director. Caz was responsible for secretarial work, but also managed the general operations within the building. Over time she developed a close bond with the students, which filled an important gap in the staff structure and helped the new students acclimatize themselves to the Course and the ‘Big Smoke’ (Sydney).

I filled in all the gaps and there were lots of gaps. Carol used to call me the glue, which held everything together, which was the most unusual reference I ever had, ‘Perkin’s Paste’, but it was very descriptive of what I did.

I never really had a title that I can remember, I am sure somebody made up something later, for funding purposes. It was my favourite kind of job, actually. I’d rather have one where you can be flexible, where you can do different things. The more it got organised the more boring it became, as we hired more people to take up positions that I had filled. (Villiers, 1995:interview)

As Carole explains, the addition of Caz to staff was a welcomed benefit for the day-to-day operations and student needs, which freed her to move the organization further.

With the employment of a full-time secretary typist, the Course now has an office that is beginning to operate more efficiently. This regularity makes the students, who desire a more formalized atmosphere, feel they are attending a school that can meet their requirements. The students want a great deal of personal time and need to have people around that can help them reflect and build habits that will enable them to cope successfully in the world outside of the Course and Aboriginal society. In addition to the staff, the Course Director has had time to seek help from several outside organizations. This includes the Department of Education, the Health Commission and Glebe Community Care. (Johnson, 1978:19)

In some ways Caz, who describes herself as being a typical Australian with typical Australian views, was an unlikely candidate for this organization. She had no prior knowledge or work-experience in dance, or with Aboriginal or Islander people before she came to AISDS. But she was excited about the work, and got right into it. During her interview she spoke frankly of Australian attitudes about Aboriginal people in the 1950’s.

I had never met an Aboriginal person in my life before I went to work there. I grew up in Sydney, in Maroubra, which is very close to La Perouse and we used to go there on the weekends, so I was aware there were Aboriginal people around, because you would see them.
There used to be an Aboriginal Settlement on the very street I lived on. There was also an old speedway that they blew up, and a dozen Aboriginal families moved up to this area and lived there.

We knew nothing about Aboriginals at school, except that they were these strange natives that had no brains. It was just a normal, Australian education in history. We were taught that they were really not worth even thinking about, they had nothing to offer. The American Indians on the other hand had all these wonderful arts and crafts and sand paintings. We learned about them, but the Aborigines were just not even to be considered. This was in the 50's and 60's. None of them went to my school it was all White. I reached the age of 30 in Sydney without knowing an Aboriginal person. (Villiers, 1995:interview)

The Teaching Staff was still composed of the ‘crème-de-la-crème’ of Sydney artists: Kai Tai Chan, Mira Mansell (new), Gerard Sebrit, Peggy Watson, Don Secomb, Howard Spicer and Steve Costain, with Jack Wilkie replacing Andee Reese in written communication. Faye Nelson55 took the Aboriginal Arts and Culture course and Bobbi Sykes56, Personal Development.

This was organized as part of the need for students to become more aware of themselves and their relationships with other students and people. She plans to add another course that will give them an historical perspective and statistical facts on Aboriginal people in Australia. (Johnson, 1978:22)

Aku Kadogo57, an African American performing artist, had just arrived in Sydney. She with the production of Ntozake Shange’s play, For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, when The Rainbow is Enuf. While in Sydney Aku and other members of the cast conducted a few dance workshops and lectures for AISDS students. In November she joined the teaching staff taking the students in modern and Dunham Technique and also taught for the adult Glebe Community Leisure & Learning Project, which was another agency of AISDS, open to the general public. Aku eventually migrated to Australia, married an Australian, Jim Mann, who also developed a long working relationship with AISDS and NAISDA.

Between the work of the Founding Members and the Staff, AISDS was now moving smoothly enough to begin to address rising problems with the new student body.
STUDENT CONFLICTS

The student body was beginning to grow beyond the Founding Students who, for the most part, were willing to do whatever it took to get the school going and establish a performing company. As Black Australians they understood it would be difficult to attain something big enough that could not to be pushed aside. They would have to build tremendous stamina to accomplish goals that went far beyond themselves. Building AISDS put everyone under stress. The curriculum and the intense teaching and performing itinerary for 1977 and 1978 are examples of what they attempted to accomplish, in just two years with limited staff. However, in spite of the stress, everyone worked hard to realize the high goals set by the director. This meant people wore many job hats, worked long hours and, at times, things would fall apart and break down.

The breakdowns produced intense conflicts between the students and staff. The breakdowns were not the norm in the beginning years but they did happen on a regular basis by the 1980's. One of the first examples occurred on a Remote Area Tour to Queensland. This particular situation occurred over the differences in opinions and ideas about how to work with Indigenous people.

Some of the students had very strong feelings about how AISDS should interact with Aboriginal people, especially in the rural communities where pub life is the centre of country life. This was demonstrated in an argument that transpired between Malcolm Cole and the principle teacher, Lucy Jumawan. The disagreement was around the issue of grog and socializing with the community in a pub environment. It ended with Malcolm walking out of the tour leaving Lillian and Lucy to continue on their own. Caz Villiers explained the event this way:

Malcolm came back early because he had had some political disagreement with Lucy at one of the communities that they were visiting. I think Malcolm had been spending too much time socializing with the communities, drinking and whatever, staying up late. He was criticizing Lucy for not speeding enough time with the community in this sort of way, which is not Lucy’s style at all. Lucy was not going native, while Malcolm thought that that was a very important part of the whole teaching and workshop process. Anyway they had this big fight, and Malcolm came home early and left Lillian and Lucy to carry on, on they’re own, very unprofessional really. (Villiers, 1995: Interview)
There have been a number of student strikes and problems, most occurring after the period of this history, in the 1980’s. Most were promoted by insufficient staff; the diversity of cultural mixtures in staff and students; lack of funds; lack of accommodation; having non-Aboriginal people in leadership roles; and differences in opinion, as to who should make the decision as to what the organizations goals should be, and how they should be achieved. Both external and internal instigators and politics provided the fuel to the troubles.

Caz, who definitely thought highly of Carole, certainly disagreed with her at times especially about the speed at which AISDS was expanding. She had sincere concerns about student housing and the organizations ability to keep up with the growth and direction of the Course as an educational organization.

A lot of students coming in didn’t have their High School Certificate or equivalent. We didn’t want that to be a necessity, but it looked like it was going to have to be.

That’s another thing, it was going to have to be a certain scholastic achievement before they were accepted, which was going against what the whole thing was about. Here we’ve got people leaving school often through no fault of their own, victims of the whole system, we were going to have to do this. It was incredibly hard to find out how it was going to work. Where was the best way for it to fit in? We kept running up against these things all the time. (Villiers, 1995: Interview)

Her statement brought up the issue of whom AISDS was to serve and how it should do it. Should it continue to fit into the established educational structure? If not, then what? There was no getting around the fact that an educational organization could offer more to more people in the long-term, including career opportunities in professions other than performance. Caz’s concern that; “Satisfying scholastic standards as going against what the whole thing was about” was not really true. AISDS has always had an educational Stream as part of the Scheme. It is not clear as to what was wanted in place of the educational structure, but the path had begun. Educational, arts and private funding bodies were accepting it as a training Course. It would have been hard to change it now.

**STUDENT HOUSING**

Student housing was a real big problem, especially when tensions were at there worst. The incoming student body was growing fast and the staff was finding it difficult to take care of
rental accommodations, plus seeing to proper meals that would support the rigorous of dance training.

The need still exists for a real hostel with staff management. It is obvious that all the problems in the Course stem from inadequate housing and supervision of young people who are living in a large city and away from home, often for the first time. (Johnson, 1978:22)

According to Carole “all new students except one” were staying at the house at 263 Glebe Point Road. This house had been rented by AISDS to serve as office and living accommodation for them. To get out of having to take care of collecting rent from the students and worrying about their meals, Carole was diligently working to secure a ‘third party hostel’ for their living needs. At the moment the staff had to chase after students to collect their rent. During Term I, she did manage to get the Department of Education to deduct the rent from the students’ study grants, which took the load off the staff.

The Department of Education has finally agreed to deduct rent from students’ allowances. This then frees the director from the worry of making the accommodation pay for itself and the need to chase students for their money when they invariably fall behind. Most of the old students found accommodation elsewhere and all new students, except one, occupy the premises. (Johnson, 1978:19)

The School did not acquire a third party Hostel until the following year, 1979.

TRADITIONAL EXCHANGE
Access and exposure to the traditional culture was an essential aspect of the course but a difficult process to arrange. Pre-arrangements with the cultural owners, community advisors and funding sources could take a few years to put in place. There was a lot to work out with no pre-existing agency to use as a model. Being the first agency of its type to offer contemporary and Australian traditional dance, a multitude of issues and problems particular to cultural exchange began to surface. There were a vast gulf of differences concerning the reasons for dancing; the differences in purpose for education and the concepts and terminology used in contemporary western societies had no equivalent meaning or relevance to traditionally living Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

At this point in time the Director of AISDS, Carole, was making the arrangements with the traditional owners of the culture. However, there was no way she would be able to continue as both the Director of AISDS and the liaison person between the organization and the
traditional communities. By January 1980 Jim Mann took on the position of liaison person; setting up lines of communication and protocol between government agencies, the cultural owners and AISDS. He began work after the period of this history, but because of his intimate knowledge of the job, and his close relationship with Aboriginal people, his experiences are a clearly illustration of what had to be confronted at the time. If not properly handled, serious problems could easily develop that would alienate AISDS from this important aspect of the Course. This was especially true as some traditionally living people were wary of outsiders exploiting and then bastardising and their culture.

During his tenure as liaison person, Jim experienced many of the hidden issues and problems that would need to be acknowledged and worked-out, if the Indigenous cultures were to be shared with the school. The first obstruction was the way the cultural owners were perceived by establishment agencies in regards to credentials and qualifications.

Take for example the traditional tutors coming to the school. There was no concept that they had anything to offer. What’s their qualification? Does he have a BSC or something?

Someone like Nipper Tabergee58, he can’t be classed as a lecturer because if he is, he has to have his masters. It just didn’t apply, so you’d have to find a way to get him into the school because he couldn’t be employed as a teacher or lecturer. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

Surely there was no else who could teach the culture, but at this point in time no system had been set-up that acknowledged ‘life experience’. Until AISDS was officially accredited, other terminology had to be employed. Once it was accredited, their work with AISDS would set precedent for traditional owners to be viewed as lecturers and instructors of their own culture.

Another unforeseen situation was contacting the traditional community, which was handled in different ways. Sometimes the students from AISDS or Tranby College59 would tell you who to contact, or put you in touch with the correct people. However, it was difficult getting the idea across as to what AISDS was, even to community advisors who were intermediaries employed by the government.

Trying to contact a community advisor, from Broome or something, who might suggest someone to contact in the community, who might then give you permission to come. But even if you thought, from down here (Sydney)60 when you were doing the arrangements, you might say;
We're coming up from the dance school.

Oh! Right oh!

Even if it sounded like it was understood, when you get there, even the community advisor didn't know what it (AISDS) was about. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

AISDS was a totally new idea in the 1970's and no paradigm existed in Australia that could lead the organization through the process. Most of how it was to happen was a vision in Carole's head, which was not easy to explain, even to urban people. There was nothing in dance to compare it with in Australia. This caused a great deal of contention and mistrust among people who couldn't comprehend what she was working towards, or the method of achieving it, or the necessity for it.

The difference in teaching and learning concepts, which existed between contemporary western and the traditional cultures, was another situation that needed to be addressed. Each had their method of educating, which was not easily understood or accepted by the other. For example, on inquiring as to how the teaching and learning occurred among Indigenous people, Jim spoke of the reason for the dancing happening first. The differences between the people had to do with the area that inspired the Dreaming ritual, but the commonality was that dance happened as a part of the system to maintain the cultural phenomenon of the Dreaming, and as such the reason for the dancing took preference. This is quite different in Western institutions, which begin with technique and skill building first, based on concepts of body structure and conceptualisations about dance.

What I observed is the reason for the dancing would take place and that would be where you'd learn to dance. You'd start at the outskirts of the knowledge and gradually you'd be accepted into a fuller knowing of the culture and the dance.

No one would say, go with the old men and they'll teach you how to do this. You'd be a little boy and the reason for the dance would happen and you'd become familiar with that, and then you'd be taken in a bit further, then you'd be participating in it. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

Jim also explained that the concept of a tutor in the traditional community was a foreign idea. The owners of the tradition were not referred to as teachers or tutors in their own communities, but were known to have the knowledge.
A lot of the traditional tutors weren’t teachers at home. There was no such thing as teaching. They just had the knowledge and that would be imparted somehow. But they would not necessarily be doing teaching in any sort of structure, not just the Western one. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

Making sense of AISDS to traditionally living people varied from place to place. Different communities had different levels of understanding and exposure to western concepts of dance. At Yirrkala, Mornington Island and among some Torres Strait Islanders who had constant contact with AISDS, their concerns “were more on the physical problems”: Who was to stay with whom? Who had permission to teach the dances? With others, trying to get across the concept of dance in a big city like Sydney brought-out unforeseeable questions, again dealing with the reason for the dancing. The vocabulary just didn’t seem to be sufficient.

That was the most difficult thing to get across. What’s the reason for the dance? Why are you dancing? Is it a ceremony? There must be a reason for doing this. And, why would do you go to a building in Sydney to have this reason.” (Mann, 1995: Interview)

These were the kinds of concerns and queries the Indigenous people had. The idea of going to a building in Sydney to teach and learn dances that had no ceremonial purpose had no real meaning to them.

Just the concept of a dance school was a foreign idea. I remember on Christmas Creek and other places, the terms and things used just didn’t apply. The school was viewed as a kind of work camp and they’d want to know, “why would you teach dance at a work camp? Why the dance? The dance is no different than the song or waking up in the morning. Why would you isolate just that one little thing and have the work camp where you go over it: seems like an incongruous sort of idea. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

The idea of coming to a dance studio in Sydney to teach the traditional dances of the desert people of Pitjanjatjara, or the mystical devil dances from Yirrkala does, from their perspective, seem to be an incongruous notion. It took time and negotiations to build the trust and put the people at ease as to how they and their dance culture were to be used.

In explaining how he convinced them to try the experience and come to the School, Jim explained:

I think they had a tremendous amount of trust and it was more about establishing trust, then saying, ‘there’s something I’d like you to experience’. 
I was trying to pick-up the way they looked at dance and frame my explanation around that but it wasn’t easy. Sometimes I had more success than others, but it was mostly about trust. (Mann, 1995: interview)

The value of this project to Indigenous communities was also in question. Those who had the opportunity to come and work with the students could see its value and worth. However, those who did not have an on-site experience of AISDS and what it was trying to bring to the students, had a profound mistrust of the organization, and rightly so. They thought the organization might be trying to rip-off their culture, which had happened so often in the past.

The ones involved thought it was fantastic and they couldn’t believe that the students would actually pay attention and would learn it. They thought, ‘it’s impossible’. They were quite stunned by all that.

But often, the one’s who weren’t involved would say no they’re taking our culture and stuff, which is quite a legitimate view really. I do think that it’s a danger of the school, if it starts, or individuals begin to see itself as an authority on that dance. (Mann, 1995: Interview)

An example of the difference in thinking after contact with AISDS is written in a statement by Larry Lanley, an elder from Mornington Islander who served as Chairman of the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1980. It was his son, Phillip Lanley, who became a highly productive student of the Careers in Dance, course.

It is good to see young city people taking up the traditions and looking for their identity which has been long lost. The traditional people are proud to see the interest the young are taking in their culture and the young men are proud to teach the traditional dances to the city people. It is most important that the culture continues to be taught to city children so they can have both ways and not become lost. (AISDS/Lanley, 1980:1).

Fortunately, the traditional owners held Carole and Jim in high regard. In time the traditional participation with the school, was respected and supported by them and the establishment.

TRADITIONAL COMPONENT EXPANDS

In 1978 expansion of the traditional participation was a hit-and-miss situation. However, two important events occurred that did aid growth of the curriculum. The first was the enrolment of two students from Elcho Island, Bob and Leo Munyarryun. The enrolment of young people from the traditional areas was an aspect of the Course that Carole wanted to develop.
Bob and Leo were not the first to enrol with knowledge of the traditional culture. Because of the close relationship with the Lardil people of Mornington Island, Darryl Williams was the first traditionally living young person to participate in the Course. He was followed by Phillip Lanley, also from Mornington Island and currently enrolled in the Course. There was also always a number of the Torres Strait Islander students were also knowledgeable of their traditional dance culture.

Some of the problems confronting traditionally living people in participating in the course were: the foreignness of city life, the constant need to return home to fulfil ritual and community obligations and, at this point in time, the Hall and most of the places where the classes were held were too cold for young people used to desert or tropical climates. This was a condition the Director was trying to improve for the following year.

Heat for the 1979 winter. This can be done relatively inexpensively by the purchase of gas heaters and bottled gas that can be put outside with copper piping running through the windows. Permission would have to be obtained to place the bottles near private property on the Glebe Point Road side of the Hall. (Johnson, 1978:24)

The second fortunate coincidence to the traditional curriculum was the unexpected arrival to Sydney of Peter Yikaki Maymurru and Gary Marika from Yirrkala. These traditional tutors had worked with AISDS before and were very familiar with instructing urban people, which was a foreign idea to many traditionally living people in the 1970’s.

The Course learned that Peter Yikaki Maymurru from Yirrkala, who had worked with the group in 1977, would be returning to work for three months with Margaret Walker. The Course used part of the grant to pay Peter Yikaki and Gary Marika on a casual tutor basis for five weeks.

The students thus had the advantage of consistent daily work over a long period and also were able to do five performances with Mr. Maymurru and Mr. Marika. (Johnson, 1978:25)

The funding which had been provided by AAB to bring the traditional tutors to Sydney could now be used to increase the amount of time and contact the students would have with them. Peter and Gary were able to work three to four times per week at AISDS and their physical presence in Sydney allowed Lucy to include the dance culture of Yirrkala in her new choreographic work, Aboriginal Awakening, which was also the title of the End of Year Show for 1978.
As an added bonus Wijendji Nunngula (Jacob Roberts), an elder of the Alawa people in the Northern Territory, was also in Sydney and was included to the faculty during Term III. This gave the students an opportunity to experience more than one mainland culture.

Wijendji Nunngula..., has come to us and given us a scenario for a ballet he would like to see developed. He also gives lectures in Aboriginal Culture from his tribe. (Johnson, 1978:22)

CHANGING THE CENTRE OF LEARNING

Carole was finally able to produce the first field study trip to Mornington Island with the help of the Aboriginal Study section of TAFE. In the early 1970’s AISDS was not seriously considered an educational institution, which meant that terms like ‘field trip’ wouldn’t have been understood in relation to the Careers in Dance course. In order to support AISDS with travelling to the traditional areas for further study, Prue Lennon and later Sue Rutter introduced the term “changing the centre of learning” to identify this aspect of the program. The change brought AISDS the backing they needed to actualise the field and study trips to the traditional areas.

Prue Lennon was the first one to use the term but then Sue used it as well and they were both with Aboriginal Study Grants and they were really supportive in trying to get the school started.

You had to justify every single move that you were doing and you had to make them understand it was really serious and that it was educational. That was a big move. Now you can do it, because it’s accepted. (Johnson, 2000:Interview)

Judging from the following quote, changing the centre of learning was a perfect way for the students to learn first hand from the culture owners. The students got the opportunity to experience the stories and dances in the places of the Dreaming.

“A” group students finally made their study trip to Mornington Island. They arrived on August 31 and departed September 12. In those thirteen days the group camped with the people, visited sacred sites and were told the stories by uncle Henry Peters.

During the second week, the group performed almost every night. They travelled to different people’s homes. After the modern dance performance, people went home to dinner and then returned after dusk for the corroboree. Dancing and singing usually lasted up to 11 PM or 12 midnight. It appeared that the group brought a good feeling to the community. We also held workshops at the State School on three mornings, teaching the older students “Cut the Cake” (boys) and the group dance from “Charlie Pride” (girls). Malcolm Cole, Philip
Lanley, Kim Walker, Lillian Crombie and Bronwyn Thompson did most of the teaching. The trip was possible as part of Aboriginal Study Grants principle of “Change of centre of learning”. (Johnson, 1978:25)

This was the beginning of the study ‘field trips’ that no longer have to be justified by ‘changing the centre of learning’. Each year the students spend time at the home-country of different groups of traditional people and the traditional tutors come to Sydney and participate with the students in the production of the ‘end of year show’. The field trips are still to both Torres Strait Islands and mainland Aboriginal communities.

AIDT: VISIBILITY ~ IMAGE ~ COMMUNITY
The student-performing unit, AIDT, was now servicing a number of communities and organizations throughout the country, with a performance schedule as intense as the prior year. The itinerary carried the students and staff through 30 major teaching activities for 5,000 people in 68 performances serving approximately 17,000 Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australians. They travelled through communities in NSW, The Northern Territory and Mornington Island with Queensland as the major supporter. Even the students’ families were beginning to help with the smooth running of the tours.

QUEENSLAND
Queensland was a constant source of support for AISDS: it represented half the student body. Communities and organizations from educational and religious bodies were requesting the services of the dance company. The Queensland Ballet was in constant contact with Lucy Jumawan and had included them in their special project for the year. The students had filled 58 days of engagements in Queensland. A detailed chart of student enrolment by state has been included at the end of Chapter 9.

The students travelled to Queensland on two separate occasions this year. The first was an invitation by Harry Haythorne of the Queensland Ballet, to attend their Festival/Seminar at Rockhampton in May. Lucy described the project as, “a two week extravaganza of dance, incorporating theatre productions and a teaching seminar”. A full report of this event has been included on page twenty-eight of the Annual Report. (Appendix, pp. 216-270).
The project was to offer Ballet students an intensive experience in classes and nightly performances. The students came from as far as NSW, with fifteen AISDS students invited to attend. Lucy praised the students’ level of participation in the Ballet classes:

I personally commend our students doing the “B” stream work. Teachers were impressed with their good technique and strong dance background. Two of our students, Cheryl Stone and Wayne Nicol, were selected to participate in the workshop presented at the end of the seminar. (Johnson/Jumawan, 1978:28)

Lucy along with Jennifer Barry (who had returned to Australia in 1972 as a member of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company) had been employed to take the Modern classes with Lucy also teaching Philippine dance. For AIDT the performance at the end of the Festival/Seminar was the first they shared the bill with professional mainstream dance companies: Queensland Ballet Company, The Dance Company of N.S.W. and The North Queensland Ballet Company.

The second Queensland project was also the result of Haythorne. It was a repeat of the 1977 tour set for Roslyn Watson. This year it was Lillian Crombie & Malcolm Cole assisting Roslyn Watson, with Lucy to oversee the project. They worked the same towns they did the year before: Burketown, Normanton, Kowanyama, Mornington Island and Weipa, from mid June to July and were funded by the Department of Education, the Queensland Arts Council and the Queensland Ballet. (Appendix, p. 248).

Lillian’s assessment of the tour has been included in the Annual Report. Her report presented a personal account of the community care of the group.

(In Normanton) the teachers took us sightseeing during the weekend. They took us to this place where crocodiles dwell. Shane, one of the teachers, was good enough to take us in his Kombi van. After parking the van on a dirt track, we walked through bushes and shrubs. The ground was covered with long, dried reeds and bushes but we were unaware that under all this were big potholes. So you can imagine all the screams and shouts when we landed in one of them!

We finally reached our destination. Very quietly we crept through the bushes, knowing that the crocodiles would certainly hear us if we cracked a bush or a piece of twig. We sat high upon a dry bank and watched carefully as a boar on the other side of the river drank peacefully, not knowing of our presence. Just up the bank we could see the crocodiles lying lazily on a sand bar in the middle of the river. Finally the boar heard us and shot off into the bushes, leaving behind
him a cloud of dust. Roslyn took some pictures of the crocodiles and some nearby Kangaroos, who also shot off into the bushes. We arrived home exhausted. (Johnson/Crombie, 1978:45)

As mentioned earlier, the Queensland Tour expanded over time and continued as part of AIDT’s permanent itinerary. The students benefited immensely from this experience and grew in confidence and maturity.

**AURUKUN AND DARWIN ENHANCED BY FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

On some occasions students were able to work in their own hometowns. This was the case for Sylvia Blanco whose family was living in Weipa. She and Shane Williams had just joined AISDS in September of the previous year, 1977. In an interview with Sylvia she told me she had seen AIDT on their last trip to Broome and Weipa in 1977 and was blown-away by the experience. It was the first time she’d seen Blackfellas in a dance company. This inspired her to leave her job and audition for AISDS while they were in the area.

It was customary for the school to audition perspective students as they travelled around the country. Organizations such as the Aboriginal Islander Catholic Council provided the space and time for the auditions. But in some areas AISDS staff had to make a special trip to hold auditions for incoming students. In the minutes of the AAB they commented on the “Fees and expenses for two students and one teacher to conduct workshops in capital cities as an aid to recruitment of students for professional training”. (AAA:8.1, 1978:2). At that time it was the most efficient way for applying students to be viewed in a class situation. There was no system set-up to bring them to Sydney, provide accommodation, meals and excursions as they do now.

Shane and Sylvia must have been exceptional students to be trusted with conducting workshops on their own without the guidance of a staff member. They had to meet the sponsors, possibly helped select a proper space and conducted the classes, which were arranged to take place at Weipa South and the Aboriginal mission at Aurukun.

Fortunately Sylvia’s family were there to help with the introductions, which is probably one reason the Director felt safe with them going on their own.
Sylvia Blanco and Shane Williams were selected to go to Weipa and Aurukun to teach dance and to try to begin to research tribal dance in the area. They were assisted by relatives in their need to meet the local people. They were not able to obtain much information on tribal dances in either area. However, they did teach the young people and built up support in the communities, which could lead to study of the tribal dances in the future. (Johnson, 1978:26)

In her report Sylvia mentions the help they received from her family on this trip and gave an idea of their teaching itinerary, which was augmented by an unscheduled performance at the request of the community.

On September 6 my mother and grandmother accompanied Shane and me to Aurukun on Bush Pilot Airways. There to meet us was my uncle who then organized for Shane and I to meet the principal to get acquainted. At 1:30 until 2:30 PM we conducted a class with grades 5 and 6, with a total of 30 students and two teachers. On September 7 from 9:00 until 10:30 AM grades 9 and 10 attended class. Then from 10:30 AM until 1:30 PM we conducted two classes for grades 4 to 7 with approximately 35 students.

The teachers of Aurukun Mission requested Shane and me to hold a performance, to give them a brief idea of what our Course holds for students who might wish to join. Later in the night, the elders did Shake-a-Leg to the Woom-lee-Ra, which is the traditional song used for this dance. Pup-a-Retta-Retta is the song used for quick Shake-a-Leg. We also got permission from Uncle Donald Peinkinna, the Chairman of the Aurukun Council plus another councillor to learn traditional dances to perform in Sydney. (Johnson/Blanco, S., 1978:47-8)

Shane and Sylvia were also supposed to locate the tribal people from the area and study with them while there. This must have been a daunting experience for these two new students, who had only one year’s training. This experience is an example of the high demand for the services of AISDT, the lack of staff and proper funding and the level of commitment of the Founding Students. It is also an example of the kind of challenges staff and students had to contend with during these early days of the schools development. Sylvia was a highly self-motivated person and would take on what ever was put in front of her to do. She was exactly the kind of ideal student AISDS wanted to service without rejecting others of less motivation.

If a student showed promise they would be encouraged to develop skills they probably didn’t know they had. Sylvia ends her report confirming what she felt about this situation. “This
being my first project with the Course, I found it was successful, considering the amount of
time Shane and I had trained for.” (Blanco)

DARWIN
Two other examples of student/family support occurred on the Darwin trip in September,
which helped support the first study field trip to Mornington Island. This trip was extremely
successful and extended beyond what was originally planned.

The trip was originally planned for two students (Wayne and Dorathea) and one teacher
(Lucy) to attend the Darwin Eisteddfod for three days in August. Carole wrote that it was
arranged for the students “to see the tribal Aboriginal section at the Eisteddfod”. While there
Dorathea made arrangements for the “A” group (third year students) to return to Darwin in
September to perform and give workshops in the Aboriginal communities.

By the end of August, Wendy Roberts and her mother had organized a series of school
workshops and performances, with an additional two Cabaret shows at the Dolphin Hotel in
Darwin on the 15th and 22nd of September. The Cabaret shows drew a combined audience of
600 people. With a total audience count of 1,700 people (children and adults) the trip to
Darwin proved a profitable success with the suggestion that AIDT tour all of the Aboriginal
communities the following year.

NEW SOUTH WALES PERFORMANCES
There were thirty-eight performances in NSW in 1978. The few noted below were high
profile engagements that helped achieve one of the school’s major objectives, which was to
improve the visibility and image of Aboriginal and Islander people via the dance company,
AIDT. The following engagements expanded the reputation of AIDT and uplifted the image
of Indigenous Australians.

1. The group had performed at the Aboriginal Country Music Festival in Dubbo, NSW,
which is probably the first time Dubbo has had this festival.
2. In August Wayne Nicol and Kim Walker were hired to perform at the annual David Jones Fashion Show Awards. This was a highly prestigious event and the school was very proud of their inclusion.

"Wayne Nicol and Kim Walker participated as dancers in the fashion parade at the Wentworth Hotel which also was broadcast as a T.V. special. This is the first time that Aboriginal people have functioned in this way. Kim was also asked to perform for an additional period in the David Jones stores as part of their promotion." (Johnson, 1978:24)

3. NADOC Day, (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day of Celebration.) was held on the 7th of July at the Sydney Opera House. The entire student body would have affected by this performance as it was about Aboriginal sharing and pride.

4. On the staff Chronology chart, "Introducing.... Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre, (Appendix, pp. 274-281), there is a listing in November for a performance at the Seymour Centre of the premiere performance of Lucy's Infusion, and Dorathea Randall's Devil Dance, performed by Richard Talonga. This would have been the first official performance of the Sydney Dance Umbrella Series, originated by Norman Hall. There is also a listing in the 1978 Annual Report of a performance at the Seymour Centre, but does not indicate whether it is for the Umbrella series. Norman has no recollection of AIDT being part of the Seymour Centre showing, but obviously the students were being considered in mainstream dance events.

**FUNDING**

AISDS was an ambitious scheme that was rapidly expanding due to a real need for the services of AIDT. In order to continue with the present touring itinerary, they would have to travel with large amounts of equipment and the organizational structure of a professional performing company. This included sound and lighting equipment, publicity packages and personnel to take care of travel arrangements, negotiations with the communities, schools and local organizations.

Funding from the AAB remained the same as the previous year's allotment. But the Director felt that the programme had "proven to be on-going and effective", so she was able to acquire funding from a variety of other sources, eg. NSW Cultural Council, The Department of
Education, Personal Gifts and Grants, Performance Fees, Box Office Receipts, Class Fees, the Minister’s Office of Education. All of this was to keep AISDS expanding and moving ahead, even if the support had to come from a variety of sources.

Fund raising to meet budget requirements still takes too much of the director’s time and energy. The Aboriginal Arts Board held its grant to the 1977 level. However since the programme has established itself as on going and effective, other sources will now help supplement the yearly allotments provided by the Aboriginal Arts Board and the Commonwealth Department of Education. These limited funds given for very specific purposes, add scope and content that would not otherwise be possible. (Johnson, 1978:19)

It’s understandable that the Director felt overwhelmed by the amount of grants and proposals needed to support the total vision of AISDS. It wasn’t only the writing that took the time but, as Caz mentioned, “She would often go to the meetings and sit and wait for hours for Board members to take a break, so she could present her proposal and lobby their support”.

She was amazing, for example, with proposals and getting money, my god. She was also a total workaholic, which at that point was essential for something like that (AISDS). It needed somebody who was going to put that amount of passion and dedication into it. (Villiers, 1995:Interview)

ABORIGINAL AWAKENING

Aboriginal Awakening was the End of Year Show for 1978 and the first held at a major mainstream venue, the Recording Hall of the Sydney Opera House. They did six performances between the 24th November and 1st December. As an added plus for Sydney audiences, the traditional tutors participated in the performance with the students.

This End of Year Show was an important event for the students and the school. It was the final year for some of the Founding Students and as such it was an important showcase and celebration for the first graduating group.

Planning and rehearsing for the Course’s first Concert series to be held in the Recording Hall of the Sydney Opera House was the major goal for this term. The regular schedule was altered to meet this need.

This special project was the first major concert for the group. Lucy Jumawan created two new ballets, one called Infusion for the B group, which adopted Aboriginal bird movements and rhythm patterns into modern dance, and Aboriginal Awakening for A group, which culminated in tribal dancing led by Peter Yikaki and Gary Marika. (Johnson, 1978:25-6)
The students get a great deal of experience performing for the community in schools, festivals, shopping centres and at such events as requested by various groups. A season at a place such as the Opera House provides added professional training for the would-be performers. It is also important that the public sees the high quality of work that the students produce. Performances of this nature help continue the growing awareness of Aboriginal people and prevent stereotyping into one particular category. (Johnson, 1978:43)

The students were also beginning to create works of their own that were featured in the production; some would became part of repertoire for AIDT. One of these, Witchery, was choreographed by Dorathea Randall and became an ideal role for the female students. This was the second work included in the repertoire of AIDT by Dorathea.

One weak area for the organization, which would affect future shows, had to do with publicity. It wasn’t that it was poorly handled but performance automatically requires publicity and the trained staff to design and implement a proper image, which Carole found to be lacking at the moment.

Publicity was a weak area, partly because of lack of money and partly because there weren’t enough workers and a person totally in charge. In spite of problems, a small team of workers was created to produce publicity and assist in general. The need is to start all work much earlier. The term’s schedule became a weekly schedule all geared around the rehearsing and producing of the work. (Johnson, 1978:43)

In the Annual Report the director recommends the End of Year Show become an annual project for the Course. By the mid 1980’s the End of Year Shows produced by AISDS became one of the highlights of Sydney entertainment.

THE FUTURE

As this was the final year of the three-year program, for the graduating class, the Director had serious concerns for their future. Four of the students, (Wayne Nicol, Cheryl Stone, Michael Leslie and Richard Talonga), would no longer have protection and guidance of AISDS. Even though they were the crème-de-la-crème of the student body, they had little more than three years training and would now have to fend for themselves in mainstream dance. As there were no contemporary Indigenous dance companies at the time, they would have to compete with those who had years of study, since childhood. The indigenous dance companies were
cultural oriented and only used members of their cultural community. There were other avenues but non-had the high profile of the student ensemble, AIDT.

The Director felt the future of the graduating class was a situation that needed working on. There were two areas she wanted to develop for them. The first was to add “Two additional years professional training for developing specialists in teaching and performing” (Johnson). The second was to continue the performing unit as a learning vehicle for those students who had completed the three-years of study. This could be accomplished under the auspices of the Department of Industrial Relations, National Educational Adult Training Scheme, (the N.E.A.T Scheme).

The end of this term marks the end of the first three years of the Course. Four members will have completed nine terms and will try to remain to establish the professional company so that quality and consistency of performance level increases. (Johnson, 1978:26)

The two-year extension of the Course would provide the proper amount of time for students to acquire basic training plus a certificate for the first two years of study, and an UG3 from the NSW Higher Education Board, for the three years of work. This was to be the work ahead, for 1979.

**HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD DEVELOPMENTS**

Carole was still working to have the Course approved by the HEB for tertiary status. On the 27th of April 1978 a special meeting was arranged for representatives from the AAB, the HEB and respected members of the dance community to spend a day at he school to review the Course. At the end the committee made two recommendations. One was to increase the traditional component of the curriculum and the other was to establish an affiliation with a college of Advanced Education. Towards the second recommendation, the Director was still pursuing the affiliation with the Sydney College of the Arts (SCA). The negotiations with the SCA were still in progress and they were committed to having AISDS as an affiliate agency under its auspices. She noted that the representatives were “exceedingly impressed” with what they saw at the school and would be backing their application for accreditation.

The members included Dr. F. Sharpe; Mr. K. Bain; Mr. R. Edwards; Mrs. S. McKechnie; Mr. G. Murphy and Mr. M. Walker. Exceedingly impressed, the committee is going to recommend that the Course be accepted as a tertiary course subject to the conditions that it increase its content of traditional Aboriginal dance and that it become
affiliated to an established college of Advanced Education. (Johnson, 1978:19)

This graduating class must have understood the value of their work as Founding Students of AISDS. They began with the sincere desire for a professional dance company and wound up with an educational institution that awarded both a certificate of study, and a UG3 from the NSW Higher Education Board for themselves and future graduates; a performing unit that was gradually changing the image and visibility of Indigenous people; they had represented the country and Australia’s Indigenous population at international engagements; and, they had managed to survive in a climate where there was little understanding of dance and what they were about as contemporary Indigenous dance artists.
MODERN CLASS AT GLEBE STUDIO
TEACHER: MURIEL MANSELL
GLEBE STUDIO
CHERYL STONE ~ MALCOLM COLE ~ WAYNE NICOL
TRADITIONAL DANCES
ABORIGINAL COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
TRADITIONAL DANCES
ABORIGINAL COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
DUBBO ABORIGINAL COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL DANCE
CHAPTER 8: 1979 ~ THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

After three-years of dedicated hard work to maintain the Careers in Dance course, four of the Founding students – Wayne Nicol, Michael Leslie, Cheryle Stone and Richard Talonga – would be receiving their Undergraduates (level 3 award) from the NSW Higher Education Board. After all they had lived through: to maintain the survival of AISDS; uplift the image of Aboriginal people; establish the reputation of the performing unit, AIDT, and build their dance skills and knowledge of the profession, the completion of the Course must have been an amazingly satisfying triumph. Not only did they have a sense of completion that all graduates feel, but these students also had concrete evidence of their contribution to the continuum of Australian Indigenous dance. By all indications their work had ensured that AISDS would be an on-going educational institution that could be, if properly directed, instrumental in the preservation of the traditional dance cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, these Founding Students would not receive their awards until well into the 1980’s. Accreditation had not yet been approved, but when it was it would be retroactive to include the members of the first graduating class as well.

AISDS had arrived at the following plateau: the dance curriculum was functioning with a regular schedule for beginners, intermediate and advanced intermediate students; the traditional curriculum was beginning to recognized and supported by funding bodies as an integral part of the Course; the student body had grown with eighteen new students enrolling for the year, (Regina Choolburra, Steven Christian, Lois Cook, Paul Kyle, Elizabeth Morgan, Sharon Smith, Jeffrey Toby, Bill Wallace), and AISDS had acquired its first hostel for the new student body.

But what of the future of the graduating class? The Directors immediate concern was for them. The question was; had they received enough training in three years of study, to maintain themselves in the profession? The Director felt, not only was there a need to give them more time and training, but they had exhibited apparelled skills in leadership and performance. The Founding Students would be worth holding on to. If they stayed, their services would provide AISDS with a body of trained workers, knowledgeable of what this organization was about.
In the previous year’s 1978 Annual Report, the Director mentions the level the students are at, at that time, and how it could be arranged for them to further their education and at the same time re-invest their skills with the ‘Mother Ship’, AISDS.

Now that the three years are almost complete for the original students, the Course and indeed the Aboriginal community, suffer if they totally leave. In addition, they still need further training in order to be able to really work. In effect, the first three years only prepares the students to think about and become ready to enter some area of specialization.

If the Course can demonstrate that jobs are available for the students once they complete a professional training course. The N.E.A.T. Scheme could see the feasibility of adding this Course as one of its training schemes. (Johnson, 1978:21)

THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SCHEME
The National Employment and Training System, the (NEAT Scheme), was a Federal government initiative of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The NEAT Scheme was set-up to support formal educational and on the job training programs that would specifically lead to employment. Monica Stevens stated that it:

Started out of the Kincaid report in the early 1970’s, which came about because of the rise in unemployment, due to the oil crisis? It was the first national program of its kind. (Stevens, 1995:Interview)

The Commonwealth Government introduced the NEAT Scheme in 1974. The main objective was to support, training that would lead to employment or the development of on the job training or work-study possibilities.

Its basic purpose was to supplement existing training arrangements by a system, which, while recognising the community’s need for skills, improved the opportunities for individuals (particularly the disadvantaged) to obtain stable and rewarding employment. The NEAT scheme involved both formal training in educational and training institutions and subsidised in-plant, or on the job, training by employers. (Bureau of Labor Market Research, 1974:1)

The Director thought to utilize the NEAT Scheme to gain three benefits for the students: to build additional teaching skills; to improve performance, and, more importantly, to support outside studies in performing arts and other related fields of interest to the students. The ‘outside studies’ would put Indigenous Australians in direct contact with mainstream institutions, employers, artists, etc. The Director explained:

This would give an experience of going into another dance studio; or if they wanted any other special training, like music, singing, acting
or if they had another interest they could get that on the outside.
(Johnson, 1994: Interview)

The dance company, AIDT, fitted both the educational and on-the-job training aspects of the Scheme. However, in the early days of the NEAT Scheme, a previous work history was required to be eligible. Students who had worked one year were eligible, but some students would have enrolled in the Course directly after completing High School, which was the case with Monica Stevens. Because of this stipulation she was not accepted by the NEAT Scheme until her fifth year in the Course. During her interim fourth year she existed on unemployment, did a bit of teaching and or worked in the school office. Fortunately, AISDS students only needed the Scheme for two years. After Monica’s time, the parameters were changed so that students just out of school no longer needed a prior work history to qualify.

Participation with the Scheme meant slight changes to AISDS’s award set up. It meant the first three years of their education could be devoted to building dance skills and the physical stamina and flexibility needed to be a performer, plus fulfil the literacy and numeracy requirements of a tertiary educational institution. The literacy and numeracy portion of the Course had not yet begun, and wouldn’t until the affiliation with the Sydney College of the Arts and TAFE were in full operation in conjunction with AISDS.

With the extra two years under the NEAT Scheme, the Course had increased to five years in total. Students would now receive a certificate for the completion of two years of dance study and a UG3 from the NSW HEB on completing the remaining three. Those entering with prior dance training or higher academic qualifications could go through sooner, but most would have five years to acquire basic intermediate dance skills. The final two years, which dealt with on-the-job training and included outside classes and apprenticeship work with professional dance companies, would provide the students with a higher ‘work-study’ grant under the NEAT Scheme.

**NEAT SCHEME CO-ORDINATOR**

In order for the students to receive the most from the program, a person who could create a suitable syllabus; be able to counsel student’s individual needs and manage government requirements was needed to oversee the development of the fourth and fifth year program.
This person would have to expose the students to employment possibilities, monitor their progress, develop apprenticeship relationships with mainstream and professional dance companies nationally and overseas, as well as provide counselling on extra curricula courses. The Director wrote about the need to:

Have a full-time teacher for graduates on the Neat SCHEME who are able to function as performers and part-time teachers in the community, but do not have enough real work experiences to function totally as workers. The development of these teaching and performing projects should lend to, if not part-time, full time positions throughout Australia. (Johnson, 1979b:attachment B)

In the beginning, the graduate students and the NEAT Scheme were managed by existing staff members, Carole, Caz or Lucy, with student help. It took a few years to get a teacher whose job focused only on their needs and the development of the program. Paul Saliba was first hired for that purpose in 1980.

Ann Greig took over the position in the late 1980’s, building this component of the Course to its highest level.

Ann Greg was the first one who really acted as a good supervisory teacher: really organizing and coordinating a program, and understanding how to coordinate a program. (Johnson, 1994:Interview)

**AIM HIGH**

The first project set-up for the students under the NEAT Scheme was the publication of an Aboriginal newsletter, which the students re-named AIM, the Aboriginal Islander Message. The regular publication of a newsletter was an unusual project for dance students to handle. It would have been the first time any of them had done anything involved with publication: the raising of funds, writing regular articles, finding others to contribute articles, distribution, sales, etc. It was certainly a daunting project but it did integrate the students’ lives, as Black Australians, with their studies and gave them the opportunity to publish their opinions while still students. This was an unusual opportunity for dance students, especially at their level of learning.

As the full literacy and numeracy portion of the syllabus had not yet been fully instituted, the project also provided a way for the students to continue to build their writing skills. Actually,
writing was the only on-going literacy subject in the curriculum. It had been a part of the students' education since the 1975 Aboriginal-Islander Cultural and Performing Arts Training Program, from which the school evolved.

AIM was originally called *Kooka-Bina*, A Black Australian News Monthly. *Kooka-Bina* was published by The Black Women's Action Committee, and was initiated by Dr. Roberta Sykes (Bobbi Sykes), Marcia Langton and Sue Chilli. It was a paper with strong views about the problems facing Black Australians, as illustrated by their first issue in June 1976: “LYNCH FRASER NOT BLACKS” and “Murdoch Slanders Aboriginal Housing Company”. By the second issue, September 1976, the name of the newsletter had changed to *Koori-Bina*. When the students took charge of it, March 1979, they re-named it AIM, the Aboriginal Islander Message.

The first issue of AIM continued the direction of the newsletter established by the founders *Koori-Bina*. There is a picture of the students on the front page, and a variety of articles from uranium mining in N.S.W., to a visit of the United States Ambassador, Andrew Young to Australia. There were articles on arts, sports, community interests and introductory student biographies. The following page is an example of their first editorial. It states their political commitment and illustrates the overwhelming issues confronting Black Australians in the 1970's.
AIM HIGH

What do you do when you see so many things happening which will be bad for the Black community, and as an individual, or even as a group such as ours, you do so little to stop them?

What do you do when you can see the Government making new laws and changes, which will bring havoc to the Black community, and you know you can’t stop them?

What do you do when there are so many things happening that make you feel small and ineffective?

And how can you let Black folks everywhere know what’s happening, and how you and many others are ready and willing to help when you can?

Our group, the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme, decided to start a newspaper – to effectively help organize to publicize what changes will come about from the Government’s new laws, to let people know what other people are doing, who needs help, and who is willing to help.

(W)e thought, AIM HIGH. So we borrowed a typewriter, begged paper, got a loan for our first print expenses, and we are in hock to start. But, with you behind us, we’ll make it through, come good, and go from strength to strength.

Regina Choolburra, Steven Christian, Lois Cook, Theresa Creed, Rosemary Evans, Darren King, Paul Kyle, Libby Morgan, Lesley Randall, Wendy-Sue Roberts, Linsay Saunders, Sharon Smith, Bronwyn Thompson, Kerry Upkett, John Williams, Shane Williams put this issue together.

The project began under the guidance of Dr. Roberta Sykes, (Bobbi Sykes). She worked the students for a period of about a year, and then left to further her studies at Harvard University.
After Bobbi left, sometime between 1980/81, Gabrielle Dalton was hired to run a creative writing course. Her main duties were to help the student develop their skills with the newsletter.

I was asked to work there as the creative writing teacher. And was told that the central project for the students would be ‘to be thrown in the deep end’, so to speak, and create each issue. I thought it was a fantastic idea, very empowering for the students. And took it on as central to my course, with enthusiasm. (Dalton, 2000: Interview)

Gabrielle had been working with Aboriginal secondary students and Kirinari Hostel running a variety of creative workshops in art and drama. She was a freelance journalist and a community theatre director, who also worked in film. To assist with the project she engaged Paul Bayfield, a journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH). He and Gabrielle did “the behind the scenes work” as they both had extensive publishing and layout experience.

He showed the students how to do cut and paste layout, guided them (as I did) with writing articles, he would let students know about press conferences and take them, guiding them through the ropes. We would have a sort of editorial meeting with the students for each issue – helping anyone with ideas to bring them to copy stage – and also put a lot into stimulating them to come up with ideas and stories, like the press conferences, encouraging them to go out and do interviews, or get people in to do them – generally, of course, it was a matter of us trying to stay in the background, trying to bring out the voices of the student writers – and I think we did do this well.

For every article we would sit with and work through the final draft with the student-writer. Not in an editorial capacity – they could say whatever they wanted. More in a mentor capacity, where we could show how a sentence could say the same thing more effectively, if restructured: That sort of thing, the craft of writing and journalism. Naturally, some had flair, and others were not so keen on writing, but we tried to free everyone up and made a lot of fun of it. I felt every student involved learnt a lot, and we always got an enthusiastic session going each week. (Dalton, 2000: Interview)

Gabrielle and Paul also handled the overload work when the students were involved with their dance obligations.

For every issue I worked on, there was always an overload, which Paul and I would carry between us when students had to go back to their dancing, which was, after all, their most important focus. We would often still be sticking in columns and laying out the paper, while the students thumped the floorboards overhead! Paul used to take off the finished articles and bring them back typeset and calumniated. Remember this was before word processors were commonly owned. I think he took them back and used the SMH facilities to do this. I would take the finished layout to a printer in
Marrickville, who specialised in small run papers – this was already established before I came – and pick up the finished copies.

AIM financed itself by subscriptions and we had everyone help with the mail out, when we had a new issue finished. We did this around the table while we talked about what could go in the next issue.

All, or most of the photography was provided by non-students supporters, of AIM and the school. Elaine Kitchener did most of it, and donated her efforts and expenses, I think. She was a supporter and friend of Bobby’s and had been brought into it by her. She also did most of the dance photos for programs. (Dalton, 2000: Interview)

Elaine Kitchener also took-on distributing the newsletter after they were complete. Over the years she has compiled a photographic history of AISDS and AIDT, part of which is archived in the NSW State Library.

Gabrielle stayed with the project for almost two years and felt she had given the students, “Empowerment with language and the media. And it was exciting! You could see this happening!”

PERFORMANCE AND THE EXPANDING REPERTOIRE
The NEAT Scheme also made it possible for the 4th and 5th year students to take over the bulk of performing and workshop engagements, which were steadily increasing. This meant that their major focus was on touring, managing tours and communities, teaching and performing. This left the in-coming student body, involved in the 3-year Careers in Dance course, free to concentrate on their dance and academic studies.

The following selection of events is a brief of the performing engagements for 1979. According to the staff ‘Chronology/Fact Sheet’, which listed the year’s performing itinerary, it shows the students participating in a variety of different venues from prisons to he first Dance Umbrella series.

➤ March: The Aboriginal Concert Tour of NSW’s prisons, which was organized by Aboriginal people.
Between August and October: The yearly Queensland tour. This was the third year the advanced students were involved in the Queensland Remote Area Teaching Tour. It was now totally an AISDS project and this year the proposal was for a six-week tour with a request for advance work and publicity of the tour. The tour was reported with a photographic essay in the August 1979 issue of AIM.

The Aboriginal Arts Board was still quite pleased with the work coming from AISDS and the performing unit AIDT. The Board was constantly acknowledging their contribution: “Members agreed that the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme had become a most effective organization and should be commended for the good results it had been showing.” (AAB:2.1.7, 1979:67)

According to a staff chronology “Introducing.... Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre, (Appendix, pp. 274-281), there were two Dance Umbrella concert series in 1979. The first was listed for March and premiered a work by Lucy, Unseen Images. However, Norman Hall, the originator of the series, has no recollection of this.

The second series is listed for October (16 to Nov. 3), which Hall did confirm. It featured a further development of the Harold Blair Suite also choreographed by Lucy. Jill Sykes, the dance critic for the Sydney Morning Herald, reviewed this second program. She strongly praised the work of AIDT, writing that the appearance of the company changed her mood about the concert; “Just as I was despairing of this Dance Umbrella series, the Aboriginal and Islanders Dance Theatre gave it a reason for existence”. Jill gives high laurels to both The Challenge—Embassy Dance, “as an inspired example of using dance to make a strong social point” and the Harold Blair Song Cycle because it was “a strong, cleanly honed work, that expressed a great deal in relatively simple dance terms” (Sykes, J., 1979a:8). (A full review has been included to the Appendix, p. 288).

Modern dance was still a relatively young art in Australia in the 1970’s. AISDS students, with only four years training, were quite impressive as Modern dance performers. The choreography, usually prepared by the staff or the more advanced students, was certainly of a high standard due to exposure to well-known Australian and American Modern Dance
pioneers. This allowed them to reach the highest level of Australian Modern dance of the time.

The Challenge – Embassy Dance was also performed earlier this year in July at the second National Aboriginal Day Concert at the Opera House. The Challenge has been part of the repertoire since the early work-in-progress in 1972, when it was performed on the steps of the town hall. It was now fully developed and had become a trademark of AIDT.

THE RAINBOW SERPENT
A new kind of choreography was beginning to emerge due to input of the traditional elders. Henry Peters, the traditional elder from Mornington Island, created a dance work derived from traditional Mornington Island lore and composed of their traditional dance movement vocabulary. The work was the Rainbow Serpent. The Director gave the following background and assessment of the experience.

By invitation of community, participation in Mornington Island Dance Festival. Purpose: to show Mornington Island community work what Lardil Elders had done in Sydney with group. Creation of first Aboriginal traditional Ballet, ‘The Rainbow Serpent’ by Henry Peters. Significance: “to my knowledge, first time a ballet is created with beginning, middle and end in a contemporary theatre style, using totally traditional movements and music.” (Johnson, 1981:4)

In May, the Mornington Island community invited AISDS to participate in the Mornington Island Dance Festival. The purpose was to show the community the work the Lardil Elders had been doing with the students in Sydney, which was an honour for the Course.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT
One aspect of the Course that needed far more work and attention was recruitment. Recruitment was still a bit of a problem with staff and students having to either; arrange auditions while conducting workshops on tour, or by setting-up touring projects specifically for recruitment purposes. As noted in the September 1979a proposal, the Board of Education had previously been contacted about the idea of supporting “Intensive Workshops in each capital city for purposes of recruitment and nationwide involvement with the programme at the local level” (Johnson, 1979a:2). It was agreed in principle that the workshops be conducted and they (the Board of Education) would pay: Transportation and room and board
for twenty-five students from each state requested and provide minimal fees for tutors. It was further stipulated that AISDS, as the organizing body:

...must work with the local authorities and take responsibility for all organizing. This included finding a suitable venue in each state and co-ordination with Aboriginal organizations. In some cases we might also need to find additional assistance for rental of necessary equipment, airfares and living allowance for tutors. (Johnson, 1979a:2)

This would be a huge job that the school was not properly staffed to handle. But there was a proposal for a Field Officer to take care of future arrangements for the workshops and recruitment in each state.

A field officer will travel to Queensland stopping in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns to meet with people there who have been working with us and asking for both workshops and performances. The work will include but not be limited to organizing workshop and performing venues, setting dates and finding co-operating agencies and people.

The officer will also travel to Yirrkala to discuss with Council and elders what's being done in Sydney and arrange future study tours, to Darwin, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth for organization of workshops etc. There will probably be three separate trips originating from Sydney to cover all these places. (Johnson, 1979a:2) (Appendix, p. 283).

Part of the proposal had been rejected and is noted in the following excerpts from the explanatory letter from the AAB. (Appendix, p. 271)

At its meeting on 6-8 June 1979 the Aboriginal Arts Board considered your various submissions for funds.

Due to the severe limitations on funds available the Board members felt they had to reject the following: - Field officer program $4,200, Production of publicity material $2,725.

It is to be hoped that you might be able to obtain funds from other sources for those projects. (Edwards, 1979:Correspondence)

Even though this portion of the proposal was not funded, other requests were. In a letter to Ms Jenny Bott, the Administrator of the Arts Council of Australia (Federal Division), Dr. Edwards wrote, “As the Board is able to make grants payable only to incorporated bodies, it would be appreciated if your organization would consider administering these grants”. The approved portion were for, “basic general costs for the period from 1979 to December 1980,
$35,000"; the “tribal tutor program, $9,000”; to “upgrade the library, $500” and a few other items. (Appendix, pp. 272-273).

The request for a Field Officer had been rejected but AISDS was still able to operate portions of the recruitment program with the help of another organization, The Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council of Queensland. This organization had submitted a proposal for their sixth Annual State Conference in Toowoomba, which had been approved by the Board. The Catholic Council requested AISDS, along with dance teams from Palm, Bathurst and Melville Islands, to perform and give workshops at their conference. According the minutes of the AAB this was a very successful event that encouraged the enrolment of five new students.

The Board noted that a report received from the State Secretary of the Council, stated that all who attended the conference were most impressed with the performances of the dancers, and as a result of the workshops, five young people subsequently joined the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme at its centre in Sydney. (AAB:2.1.9, 1979:14)

The selection of new students was obviously a concern that needed monitoring during the recruitment process. The Director expressed unease about the motivation level and of the attention needed by the incoming students. The original students were highly motivated about dance careers and come to the Course of their own volition. They were also really hard workers. New students meant a greater diversity of talent and reasons for joining the Course.

With the amount of work needed to operate all aspects of the Course, the majority of students would need to have a real interest in dance careers, and the school needed students with the “personality, motivation and ability to persevere” (Johnson), through the intensive dance course.

This recruitment aspect, which underlies the purpose of the entire tour, is extremely important because the on-going success of the Course rests on the quality of the students we take in. Although practically all Aboriginal people have talent in dance, often the personality, motivation and inability to persevere makes them unsuited for a long intensive professional course. It is important to the Course, and the future development of Aboriginal people, that we select for the intensive training those people most suited and still give a bit of experience and uplift to those with more limited motivations. (Johnson, 1979a:2) (Appendix, p. 284)
THE FIRST HOSTEL

In March of 1979 AISDS was able to acquire its first Third Party Hostel from Aboriginal Hostels. It was located on Liverpool Road in Enfield. Within the next few years, they acquired another accommodation base a short distance down the road, also on Liverpool Road in Enfield. These buildings were used to house in-coming and undergraduate students and the traditional tutors, when they were in Sydney.

It was a two story home right on the highway. Unfortunately, this made it quite noisy but the kids were o.k. A lot of them had come from the country and they adapted very well. It had about six bedrooms upstairs, a self-contained flat at the front for the house parents, a large kitchen and large dining area. A large living room, balcony around the back and then the backyard. It was good, with a big garage, we had ping pong tables there. (Villiers, 1995: Interview)

It was now a matter of finding proper managers who could take care of the special needs of dance students. Most hostel managers work a very set routine that does not include bringing food to students when they are rehearsing late, or are in performance. There were also the special nutritional needs for dancers that hostel managers were unused to.

It wasn't like a normal Aboriginal hostel, and most people that applied for the job, that is what they expected. Now when we had a performance or a show of any kind, that the kids needed to rehearse for, it was expected that the hostel parent, if the kids were not coming in that night, that they would bring the food into them. It was above and beyond the call of duty for everyone. (Villiers, 1995: Interview)

Caz remembers Graham Mooney as being the first hostel manager at Enfield. However, Carole has Dennis Jard as the first hostel manager, staying a year or so, with Graham Mooney coming after. Graham worked with AISDS for some time and was staunch supporter of the school and a great role model for the students. Members of his family had attended the school and he has served as a counsellor and big brother for them to talk with. He has also served as a member of the school's Board of Advisors, and quite often mediated in student conflicts with AISDS and when upsets got out of hand.

HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD AND SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

The Director was still working on the affiliation with the Sydney College of the Arts. As the process was taking longer then originally thought, a proposal was submitted to the AAB stating the problem and requesting consideration for funding until 1981, when the HEB and
Sydney College of the Arts would be prepared to take over. The Director outlines the history of their progress towards the affiliation in the following proposal to the AAB.

On Dec. 14, 1979, the Course received a letter from the NSW Higher Education Board, which stated that the Course be recommended for accreditation when certain conditions where fulfilled. These included affiliating with an established institution and clarifying specific aims of the Course. In April, 1979 the Sydney College of the Arts accepted our request for affiliation. It is now projecting into its 1981 calendar year Budget, to the NSW Higher Education Board funds for our Course. In a meeting, with Dr. Peter Martin, executive officer of the Board, in February 1979, he noted that they would be able to fit us into their funding no earlier then 1981 and after NIDA (the 25 year old dramatic institution, once funded by the Australia Council) had been absorbed. (Johnson, 1979b:2) (Appendix, pp. 272-273)

RIGHT NOW – END OF YEAR SHOW

Each year we have initiated a production ideas within the conceptual, technical and performing means of our students. Each of these past productions, Forward to the Dreamtime (1977); Aboriginal Awakening (1978); Right Now (1979), have been concerned with establishing the contemporary Aboriginal identity. This has been accomplished by presenting traditional dance exactly as it has been taught by the elders, concentrating on danceable social concerns that have affected people in this country, and dancing to the upbeat swing of disco/jazz and country music that is the basis of today's popular culture. (AISDS, 1980:Program, p.1)

According with Caz Villiers, Right Now was “the first big production” for the school. It was performed at the Union Theatre (now know as the Footbridge Theatre) at the University of Sydney, which seated about eight hundred people. It ran from the weekend of the 30th of November to December 2nd. A Flier advertising the program has been archived in the (Appendix, pp. 216-270).

Caz was in charge of the overall production and as such had to be responsible for the funding.

I had to do those awful, blasted proposals. Every year we have to put in a proposal for an Aboriginal show to the Premier's Department. You had to work out proportions of how many seats were subsidized. (Villiers, 1995:Interview)

She arranged for Bob Maza to prepare a script that would bind the concept into a coordinated full evening production. “It was a concept show with a story and a central theme to bind it together” (Villiers). Philip Lanley portrayed the central character and dealt with the trials and tribulations of a young traditionally living fella coming to the big smoke for the first time.
Right Now! Is a hotch-potch of dance numbers loosely linked by the presence of an Aboriginal who leaves his traditional life to make his way in the city.

This thematic device enables the group to mingle their traditional dances with those influenced by just about every other available style, classical to disco. (Sykes, J., 1979b:8)

The “hotch-potch of dance numbers” were the contribution of several choreographers. One was Robina Beard, who had taught during the early days of the dance club.

We had some really good choreographers that year: Robina Beard, she didn’t have much time, but she choreographed this piece for the students that was really simple. Because a lot of them weren’t the best dancers, their technique wasn’t fantastic. The piece used their skills to the utmost but not beyond, not trying to do something they couldn’t, they loved it. (Villiers, 1995:Interview)

Robina Beard showed what could be done with the kinds of routine that scores on television – and which is entirely valid in this program in that these dancers are learning commercial skills. (Sykes, J., 1979b:8)

Another of the choreographers was Kai Tai Chan, who prepared who prepared a work titled, Playtime at Mornington Island. In ‘Playtime’ he employed the ideas and experiences of the students.

Working with the cast’s ideas. Kai Tai Chan created Playtime at Mornington Island, evoking some strong atmospheric sections, which were cleverly portrayed in traditional and contemporary movements, and providing the marvellously funny sight of a Swan Queen – pink satin point shoes, white tulle and all – who was not only shot by the hunters, but plucked as well. It was painfully funny and gave Lillian Crombie one of her several, well used opportunities to display her abilities as a comedienne. (Sykes, J., 1979b:8)

Jill Sykes, the reviewer for the SMH, made special mention of, “Richard Talonga and Philip Lanley were outstanding, with several other boys and girls showing real talent”. She also takes into account the close relationship between the program and the school’s curriculum.

This program is an ideal way to pinpoint the ideas and styles that are going into the training of these dancers. The material is raw, but this does not detract from the performance. On the contrary, it adds an urgency to the message that permeates all this group’s work: Freedom of choice for the Aboriginal. (Sykes, J., 1979b:8). Full review (Appendix, p. 289)

From the production of Right Now, the End of Year Shows begin to take a turn for the better. Not only was this a sign that the students were improving but the faculty were investing time...
with the school. By the late eighties the End of Year Shows became a highlight of Sydney theatrical events. By that time Andee Reese had returned to work as publicist for the shows and for the international tours as well. With her input the shows were packaged much more professionally.

SUMMARY

By the end of the seventies, AISDS was on its way to becoming one of the most successful and well know dance organizations in the country. This was quite an accomplishment for four years work. This decade began as a struggle for human rights and land rights. It began with the hope and support of the Whitlam government and fell really low within a few years. The threat of extinction hung over AISDS before they even really began. Because of the perseverance of the Founding Students, and the knowledge of the Director, AISDS made it to the end of the decade in pretty good shape. Through the efforts of this organization, Indigenous Australians were fast gaining visibility and a respected image in and out of the country. It was also becoming apparent that a contemporary Australian Indigenous dance style was beginning to emerge. These were some of the stated goals of the Course.

By the end of the 1970’s, the question was, what of the future? In an article printed by the Bulletin, the Director intimates what she sees as important for the future of the students. And also addresses the issue of her remaining the Director of AISDS.

She says there are now enough trained dancers to form a full-time company, although “from a money point of view it’s a long way off.” She sees nothing odd about her directing the Aboriginal group. “Why not?” she says. (Armstrong, D., 1979:6). (Appendix, p. 290).
DAVID GULPILIL
TEACHING AT GLEBE SCHOOL
MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY
THE ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE,
WAYNE NICOL ~ KIM WALKER ~ RICHARD TALONGA
LUCY JUMAWAN
CHILDREN FROM ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
GRADE SCHOOL WORKSHOP
TOP: CHERYL STONE ~ DORATHEA RANDALL ~ SYLVIA BLANCO
BOTTOM: CHERYL STONE ~ LILLIAN CROMBIE
PHILLIP LANLEY
PERFORMANCE AT NORMANTON
"RIGHT NOW"
END OF YEAR SHOW
KIM WALKER ~ PHILIP LANLEY
Chapter 8: 1979 ~ The First Graduating Class

CLASS OF 1979
AT THE GLEBE SCHOOL
OUTSIDE OF SAINT JOHN’S HALL
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By the end of the decade, both the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS) and the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT) were quickly becoming familiar ideas in Australian communities (Indigenous, non-Indigenous, government and business). By the beginning of the Twenty First Century, Twenty years later, there are very visible signs in Australian dance and Australian urban culture of the achievements of these organizations. Students are performing with mainstream companies; grade school children in every state and the Territory have been exposed to efficient, well-trained teachers and performers who, through their work, were helping to correct previously held negative stereotypes about Aboriginal and Islander people. School children can sing songs and do dances from the Torres Straits Islands and are knowledgeable of the dances of mainland Aboriginal people. This was not due to AISDS alone but to the combined work of all Indigenous artists and educators.

By 1990 AISDS had moved into another stage of its development. Firstly, the organization acquired a new Aboriginal Director, Jon Alderman, who had spent the last few years of the 1980’s working alongside Carole with the understanding that AISDS would employ an Aboriginal person as its Director. Secondly, the name was changed to the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA). This came out of many years of trying to replace the Founder/Director with an Aboriginal person, hopefully one with a strong background in arts administration. Thirdly, before Carole left the organization she attempted to change the status of the student-performing unit, AIDT, into a professional dance company. However, Jon Alderman, the Director of NAISDA, decided to keep AIDT with the organization. As the numbers of graduates were increasing, the need for a professional employment vehicle also augmented. In 1989 the Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia was launched to satisfy this need, thereby fulfilling the Founding Students original objective, to have a Black Dance Company of their own.

OBJECTIVES
The fact that AISDS/NAISDA has lasted some twenty-five years, into the Twenty First Century, is an indication of its success. However, it is really the fact that its students have accomplished amazing goals, once they were given the tools to support their own imaginative expression and talent. The fact the students have demonstrated their employability, their
standing and inclusion in Australian society is now very evident. However, the fact that by the end of the 1970’s AISDS had put into practice every one of its very clear objectives ensured the success of its students. Monitoring the following four objectives, as they relate to the accomplishments of the students, is one way to demonstrate that they were clearly met:

1. The training and building of skills in one area of human communication and art, the dance, with the objective of producing competent and qualified students, who are capable of competing for employment in dance fields or in whatever direction they should choose.

2. To create a positive, visible image of Aboriginal and Islander people by their successful participation in mainstream and Australian Indigenous dance.

3. To create a new identity for Australian Modern dance, based on the Indigenous culture and the experiences of the students, and,

4. To participate in the preservation and maintenance of the traditional dance culture of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

ONE: TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
Training and employment were the primary objectives of AISDS. The building of skills was partly to support the students in competing with others in mainstream dance; in educational fields; in administrative and leadership positions or in any career they wished to pursue. It was essential that the students be employable at the end of their term of study. It was a goal of the students, the funding bodies and for the survival of the organization. Through education the Founder was able to secure longevity for the students and AISDS throughout the course of its development.

In the 1978 report to the Higher Education Board (HEB), it was noted that the training was to prepare the students to be artists/dancers, choreographers, teachers, dance ethnologists and dance therapists. The committee who came to review the eligibility of the Careers in Dance course as a tertiary Associate Diploma course, wrote:

The committee questioned the ability of the course to meet all its proposed objectives, as some seemed to be overly ambitious. The committee considered that although the course may produce students
capable of becoming dancers or choreographers, the production of teachers and dance ethnologists required many years of further study and was beyond the scope of the course. Similarly the role of a dance therapist was beyond the capabilities of the course graduates. (HEB, 1978:2)

AISDS was an ambitious scheme. But, the Course was designed to provide grounding and preliminary exposure to a few areas of dance, so that students had access to further choices that could be furthered with additional education. The aim of the Course was to introduce a number of different career possibilities and give the students a firm foundation in related areas of dance, with a concentration on dance technique and performance. This was augmented by the work-study approach to learning. By the completion of the three-year Course, plus the extra two years of on-the-job-training, the students had a thorough grounding in performance, front and backstage production and community organizational work. The intense exposure to teaching, over the five years, went far beyond what most teachers acquire at university. Counting their studies with the traditional tutors they also had some basic exposure to fieldwork, which is the basis for ethnographic work.

At the end of their time with AISDS they would need to continue at university to qualify as dance ethnologists, certified teachers or dance therapists, but continued training and study is a ‘given’ for performers and choreographers as well, as art is an on going, never ending process. Even though some of the objectives seem “overly ambitious” (McCarthy) and some students were catapulted into work situations before fully completing their studies, AISDS has produced a high level of successful students (that means students still working in the arts and education) over its twenty-five year existence.

TWO: VISIBILITY, IMAGE VIA DANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A very important objective of AISDS was ‘to change the negative image of Indigenous Australians and increase their presence and visibility in mainstream arts’. From 1972 to the year 2000 there has been a definite increase in the visibility of Indigenous Australians, especially with the work for Land Rights Reform and Reconciliation for the Stolen Generation. These issues have involved the entire country bringing about a heightened awareness of Aboriginal and Islander people. It has created contact between all Australians and presented a visible Indigenous Australian.
From its very beginning AIDT has had a profound impact on Australian society in moulding a change in attitude towards Black Australians, which has influenced most areas of the country and many parts of the world as well. The contributions of AIDT in this area of image and visibility have been greatly improved by the close involvement of the students with individual communities (both Black and White). As teachers and performers they have worked closely with other teachers, principals, students, parents and local businesses. Through their work, the world has been exposed to responsible, capable, Aboriginal and Islanders people in roles of leadership and organization.

As all of the Founding Students were able to continue in performing arts careers on completing the Course, the work they started as students continued as well. This was promoted by the work undertaken by AISDS and NAISDA to forge close bonds with high profile, mainstream dance companies, who have been very interested in employing both student and graduate.

One of the first to show a real interest in employing the graduates was the director of the Sydney Dance Company, Graeme Murphy. The first to be approached was Richard Talonga. Richard auditioned and started with the company but opted to work with the One Extra Dance Company under the direction of Kai Tai Chan, instead. He had performed with this Company while a student of AISDS and admired Kai Tai’s approach.

On graduating Kim Walker took on the position with the Sydney Dance Company and eventually became a soloist with this Company. Another to join that Company was Stephen Page, who came to AISDS in 1983. “After graduating I was asked to train with the Sydney Dance Company for six months which lead to a two year contract under the direction of Graeme Murphy” (NAISDA/Page, 1989:3).

Because of the over saturation of female dancers in the dance field, Carole was concerned that it would be difficult for the women to gain employment as performers. With that concern she created employment possibility within the structure of AISDS. One was the performing ensemble, but mostly it was the central agency AISDS itself that students could always return to, to gain employment and re-invest their skills and energy.
The abundance of female performers did not stop everyone from working outside of AISDS. The following list is a small group of female graduates who went on to establish successful projects and careers in dance and theatre.

- Lillian Crombie developed a reputation as an actress with a keen ability for comedy and has worked in a number of productions on completing the Course (1976–1979).

- Kristina Nehm, who joined the Course in 1980, also went into acting and obtained the lead role in Bruce Bereford’s 1986 film Fringe Dwellers.

- Maroochy Baramba (Yvette Isaccs) on completing her course at AISDS (1987-1992) continued with her singing. Maroochy had always expressed the desire to be an opera singer. She acquired a starring role in the Australian opera Black River (1989), by librettist and composer Julianne and Andrew Schultz. She and her husband, Ade Kukoyi, have established a recording and music publishing company *Daki Buditcha* and were associate producers of a documentary video on Carole Johnson, Moving with the Dream (1997). This was for an American television station in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The documentary was co-produced by two African American women, Nadine & Marlene Paterson and Directed by Nadine.


- Lily Shearer (AISDS, 1981) went on to the university of Western Sydney and now has her own dance company *Bunda Bumah*.

- Francis rings (1988) is the host of the Aboriginal Television Magazine Show ICAM.
Chapter 9: Summary of Accomplishments

- Christine Anu (1988) has been very successful with her career as a songwriter and singer. Christine acquired the role of Mimi Marquez, in the 1998 Australian production of the musical drama, Rent.

- Josephine (Josie) Lawford, (Ningali-1988), went on to work in Western Australia with a production of the first Aboriginal musical to tour Australia, Bran Nue Dae. On completing her engagement with Bran Nue Dae, Ningali, in collaboration with Angela Chaplin and Robyn Archer went on to devise a one-woman show, Ningali. It was based on her experiences as a traditionally living person who grew up with no contact with white people; her experiences as an international exchange student and her strong connection to her home-country of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley’s. The production did successful engagements to sell out audiences in Edinburgh, London, New York and Australia and brought international visibility to Aboriginal Australians as a living, thriving contemporary people.

- As well as being positive role models for the young, all of these women have contributed to the visibility and positive image of Indigenous Australians. Because of the concerted effort of the establishment (government, press, etc.) to continue the image of the “White Australia Policy”; the visible accomplishments of Aboriginal and Islander Australians are presenting a totally different image to the world; that they are not a dying ‘stone-age’ race but are still alive and functioning on all levels of Australian society.

TEACHING
Some of the students have continued on as teachers, re-investing their skills with their community or with AISDS/NAISDA. After the five years of training they certainly had a great deal of experience in that area. Some dance artists take to teaching either as their primary career or as a way to pay the bills. For AISDS students, the added demands from family and the Indigenous community were so high that teaching was an immediate option, which could either be a benefit or detrimental:

The need for talented responsible people to work for the Aboriginal community or for their families has been so desperate that more often than not pressure is applied so that students leave their studies and work before they are truly ready to provide long term contributions. (Johnson, 1983:55)
Percy Jackonia (1981-1986) is one example of a student bring his skills back to the community while upgrading his qualifications as a teacher. On completing the 5 years he returned home to Cairns, to work at Parramatta Primary School teaching dance and assisting with English for Torres Strait Island students. He is currently (2000) completing, through TAFE’s Remote Area Teacher’s Aide Program (RATAP), his courses for a Diploma in Education.

Percy was not the first, from AISDS, to work in Cairns. Wayne Nicol (1972-1979) worked for a while with the One Extra Dance Company under the direction of Kai Tai Chan. He then left for England to join Prime Movers, a Black dance company, before returning home to teach the young people in Cairns at Parramatta Primary School, prior to Percy.

The assessment of the review committee for the Higher Education Board, made it very clear that the training of teachers seemed to be too ambitious a goal for AISDS students. However, one of the Founding Students, Malcolm Cole who was working as a laborer before coming to the dance Course, was a highly sort after teacher. Malcolm was so admired and respected for his personality and encouraging teaching style that after his death a scholarship fund, for young dance students was instituted in his name. In most cases further education certainly would not hurt. For Malcolm he did his job without it.

**CHOREографERS AND ARTISTIC DIRECTORS**

Another example of the profile of AISDS/NAISDA students in mainstream Australian society is their success as artistic directors and choreographers.

- The best known is the Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia, Stephen Page, who was the choreographer for the closing ceremony of the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta Georgia and for the Indigenous portion of the opening ceremony of 2000 Sydney Olympics.

- Both Stephen and Kim Walker have had the opportunity to choreograph while members of the Sydney Dance Company. Kim has operated his own Company, until taking up the position of Artistic Director with the Flying Fruit Fly Circus in 1999.
Michael Leslie is the Founder/Director of Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) in Brisbane. He was the first of the students to receive a Fellowship, which took him to New York City to study with Alvin Ailey's, American Dance Theatre.

Raymond Blanco (AISDS, 1980) took over the artistic directorship of AIDT after NAISDA re-claimed the Dance Company in 1988. In 2000 he was appointed Artistic Director of the 2000 Pacific Arts Festival, hosted by Nouméa in October.

Marilyn Miller (1985-1989) assisted Raymond for this event and was also Artistic Director for the 2000 Sydney Para-Olympic, torch-carrying ceremony.

Looking at this long list of accomplishments of AISDS/NAISDA students alone, it seems almost impossible that, before the 1967 Referendum, Indigenous Australians were considered no-hopers and unable to function in Australian society.

THREE: A NEW IDENTITY IN AUSTRALIAN MODERN DANCE

The creation of a new identity in Australian modern dance influenced by the Indigenous cultures is an objective that has been written about in a number of ways by the Director/Founder, Carole. She sees the possibility of a fusion evolving out of the combination of the Indigenous dance combined with European and American Modern and popular dance forms. To date no contemporary dance technique has evolved out of the school from the student body. That being the case, the influence on mainstream Australian dance has come directly from the traditional culture, and the choreographic works that have evolved from the student and staff participation with the traditional owners. This is just as it should be, and indicates that Indigenous performance is a power to be reckoned with.

The personal experiences of the students articulate, 'what it is to be Black Australian'. Their experiences put to dance have promoted choreographic explorations, which have stimulated new dimensions of movement, form, style and expression and in time may produce the beginnings of an Indigenous Australian dance technique. Some examples are; Witchery (the picture to left is of Sylvia Blanco in
Dorathea Randall’s 1978 female solo) and Devil Dance (male solo) also choreographed by Dorathea Randell. Witchery utilized the mystery and style of the traditional form. By adapting traditional dance Dorathea created a timeless piece of a witchery woman.

Examples from later years are: Anthony Luff, who began AISDS in 1987, choreographed his work, Turtle. It was premiered in the 1993 end of year production, A Place Where Spirits Go. Anthony said Turtle was motivated by his experience of the field trip to the Torres Straits Islands, he had witnessed the slow death of a turtle, which was being prepared to feed the students, while still alive. He put this phenomenon into dance, using only two people and the slow, crawling movements; he investigated a situation particular to Island culture, within a contemporary dance framework.

Christine Anu (1988) presented a strong blend of Saibai Island dance with contemporary moves. She combined the actual Bow and Arrow dance and songs of Saibai Island, her homeland, to depict the image of a warrior who appears in a dream as a protector of the dreamer.

Full-length productions include: Preying Mantis Dreaming (1992) choreographed by Stephen Page for Bangarra, is a narrative incorporating both traditional and contemporary dance. The central theme concerns the journey of a young woman, whose totem or dreaming protector is the Preying Mantis.

It was not only the students who have been profoundly affected by the power of the Australian Indigenous dance cultures. Staff members have also produced excellent material based on their experiences eg: Paul Saliba, Out There – 1977, Aku Kadogo, No More Boomerang – 1987, based on the poem of the same name by Kath Walker (Ooderoo Numural), Chris Jannides, in collaboration with Raymond Blanco, Prisoner – 1982, Raymond Sawyer, Aboriginal Peace Trilogy – 1986, are examples of works choreographed year after year for the students. All have been possible both because of the traditional culture and the existence of AISDS/NAISDA in attempting to maintain and preserve the traditional dance continuum.
FOUR: PRESERVATION OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURES

The preservation and maintenance of the traditional culture as explained by the Director was, "to assist in the preservation, knowledge and dissemination of as much historical and traditional Aboriginal/Islander art and culture as possible" (Johnson, 1983:55). The Director saw AISDS functioning both as a repository and a laboratory that would ensure the survival of the Indigenous cultures in the following ways.

1. Anyone can come to study the traditional forms in their purity.
2. There is expertise in more than one traditional form and there is a thorough knowledge of the differences in the various traditional styles.

The dance laboratory will function as follows:

a) Aboriginal people from various traditional cultural backgrounds who might not otherwise have contact can learn other traditional styles and thus maintain their own dance and expand the movement vocabulary of the traditional dance.

b) Aboriginal dancers interested in the fusion and development of new techniques can experiment with the mixing of modern and traditional forms.

c) Modern choreographers interested in working on Aboriginal themes with dancers who are trained in two Aboriginal themes with dancers who are trained in two styles, will have access to dancers trained in the various styles.

Some of the groundwork has already been accomplished for the above objectives but if the traditional experience is in fact "fast disappearing", as stated earlier by Jim Mann, then serious attention to this objective needs to be augmented as soon as possible. There are some elders who are aware of the value of NAISDA as a place where the dance culture can be maintained. The current Course Director of NAISDA, Ronne Arnold, has mentioned that the Segur Kab⁶⁵ and Kab Kar⁶⁶ dances, which are a part of the Mer Island dance continuum, have been donated to the school to look after, by Uncle Henry Kabire. Uncle Henry as the owner and keeper of these dances has designated that responsibility to the school for these ancient dances that are no longer performed within the community. But much of what has been outlined by Carole is still a long way off. To date NAISDA is still only open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and there has never been, as far as I'm aware, the kind of opening or exchange described by Carole. Hopefully it can occur before the older more fragile communities have disappeared. Fortunately, there are some communities that are politically
strong and are very active in keeping the young involved in the traditions, which ensures the preservation of their dance continuum.

**FUTURE WORK INTO THE 1980’S**

By the end of 1979 AISDS was at its beginning, being only four years and three months old. At that time, how the organization was meant to function was something only Carole understood, and was increasingly finding ways to elaborate on paper.

By 1981 she began to create charts for the Annual Reports that would illustrate how the organization should be structured to function efficiently. The chart and explanations at the end of the chapter are illustrations of what she envisioned. For the most part, the three full-time employees, Carole, Lucy and Caz were already doing the work noted on the charts. The Founding Members, who are totally unfamiliar and untrained for much of the work, assisted as part of their education and exposure to different career paths. In the long-term AISDS is their legacy, but in the 1970’s there was no time or staff for the Founding Students to function only as students.

By 1981 there was more of an idea of how the organization should be structured to carry it to its full potential, but it is also apparent what was missing. The following list of employment gaps in the structure was a big concern for the Director, which she saw as a threat to its continuance. What was needed by 1980 was: a Board of Advisors; a Skills Development Committee; Community and Professional Development Committee; Traditional Aboriginal/Islander Development Committee; a Dance Chairman; a Manager and the Non-Artistic Support Staff for the emerging performing ensemble, AIDT.

The struggles of the next twenty years were fraught with many of the same hardships and difficulties that existed in the past. There were many areas of the curriculum and staff that would need to expand, if AISDS were not to stagnate and fade away as some sort of 1970’s relic. The problems and needs for the next twenty years were very specifically oriented towards growth and stability. These problems and areas of growth would have a profound impact on the history of the next twenty years and were generally pertained to:
- The lack of understanding about the needs of an educational performing arts agency for Black people;

- Racial attitudes that never seem to disappear, even when they seem to be getting better;

- Issues of Aboriginal staffing;

- Issues of African American staffing;

- The acceptance of African American people teaching dance to Aboriginal people;

- Student conflicts;

- The development of the numeracy and literacy syllabus and instituting it in the schedule;

- The continued connection and development of the traditional curriculum;

- Funding for its expansion continued to be of big concern in the 1980's as indicated in the note on AISDS by Roslyn Watson (Appendix, p. 292);

- Supplying the growing demand for Australian Indigenous performance, nationally and internationally;

- The establishment of a professional performing unit to comply with performing requests;

- Staffing for touring and management of a professional dance company;

- Justification for Aboriginal and Islander people doing modern dance or jazz or any contemporary dance form, among some;

- Finding a qualified staff person to develop the fourth and fifth year program;

By the end of the 1970’s, the presence of Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme marked a big change in the continuum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance. Carole
had recognized and understood what it would take to keep the Indigenous dance continuum alive, active and useful to the wide gamut of Indigenous Australians that existed after colonialism. Its place within the continuum had begun to be defined. Principally, AISDS was a training ground for those who had lost contact with the specifics of their dance culture. It was an educational institution where both Mainlander and Islander could leave their dances for posterity and safekeeping. Carole Johnson’s contribution is unmeasurable, especially compared with the obstacles facing the beginnings and continued development. The people who lived through the period understood what it took to do this, and acknowledged her for it. Two who did were John Newfong and Jenni Isaacs. John Newfong wrote of her intimate contact with Black Australians:

There have been a lot of big names from the black entertainment world pass through Sydney and Melbourne in the last few years but many of them didn’t even know there were black people in Australia.

Some did and some have wanted to do a handshake or two. Earl Grant, Harry Belafonte and a few others have stopped by at the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs to say “Hello”. Shirley Bassey has party-talked about benefit nights and Winifred Atwell has actually done them. But nobody has gone down to Redfern and mixed it with the blacks the way Carol Johnson has. (Newfong, circa 1972:33) (Appendix, p. 291).

Jenni provided a clear picture of the particular obstacles Carole had to confront, being a woman and being Black.

I think she’s done a remarkable job. Not just as a dancer but as a single woman. The sorts of obstacles she’s had to overcome. First, ‘white racism’, and then to fight those continuous battles, which began to emerge about her being Black American vs. Black Australian. To see the long range, she had to just stay there quietly supporting, and survive that, and not take offence, which miraculously she seemed able to do. It probably took its tole at various points in the whole saga but it (AISDS) certainly wouldn’t exist, from my perspective, in the same form without her. Because, there simply weren’t enough trained people, to know enough about the political hoops, to keep it maintained. It was a huge thing. It still is the biggest arts organization in the Aboriginal community, in the country. When the students graduate they don’t necessarily only become dancers. So she had to fight all those battles. Even from my perspective. (Isaacs, 1996:interview).

By the end of the 1970’s AISDS had taken the first steps towards firmly planting itself in the midst of Australian culture and society. Increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Islander people from diverse situations and backgrounds were attracted to the organization. For some it was a
safe haven where they could acquire education and training in a variety of dance styles, and at the same time re-claim some aspect of their dance heritage. For others it was a place where they could share their dance culture in an environment that brought them respect. In only four years of operation, AISDS unquestionably demonstrated a need for its services that eventually would become a valuable asset to the least of its understanding patrons.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES


3 This is from a speech written by Harold Blair and presented by his daughter Nerida at the first Australian Black Dance Conference, sponsored by the Aboriginal Dance Theatre of Redfern and the Power House Museum in 1995. Harold Blair was a prominent Aboriginal singer with a keen interest in Opera. During a time when it was difficult for Aboriginal people to travel outside of Australia, Harold Blair managed to get to Harlem to continue his studies as an Opera singer. Long after returning to Australia he served on the AAAC of the AAB.

4 This is a term used quite often in the writings and interviews with Carole Johnson.

5 “Everard Park is a cattle property in the arid north-west of South Australia which the Aboriginal residents have decided will for the future be known as Mimili, the ancient Aboriginal name of its homestead area. The community associated with Mimili is perhaps the least ‘Europeanised’ of that area” (Coombs, 1978:108). For further data on this community see the PhD Thesis of Anne Marshall, Ngapartji – Ngapartji (2001), University of Western Sydney. She has a close connection with this community.

6 Mandawuy was named 1992 Australian of the year, in recognition of his commitment to forge greater understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and because of his burgeoning role as an ambassador for all Australians.

In 1989 he served as principal of the Yirrkala Community School where he implemented a radical both-ways curriculum, combining Balanda (European) and Yolngu (Aboriginal) educational processes designed to present students with the best aspects of both cultures.

7 The author (Goodall) writes, “...the creation of these reserves signified the recognition of Aboriginal property rights in land”. “They were the rights of private, material property, which could be converted entirely into a monetary ‘equivalent’ to achieve compensation for dispossession and colonisation.” It was to their advantage - in this case the New South Wales Government - to begin to dismantle the reserves and classify the Indigenous population as ‘town settlers’.

8 Bruce Beresford’s 1986 Film, The Fringe Dwellers, provides an accurate representation of Fringe Dwellers in a country town, in the 1970’s.

9 These were the original traditional owners of the Sydney area.

10 The 1967 Referendum was spearheaded by the work of Aboriginal/Islander organizations in an on-going struggle for land rights exemplified by the Gurindji strike in the Northern Territory, (read Parbury (1986) and Goodall (1996). The Referendum was meant to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the census for the first time. Prior to the Referendum “They counted dogs and they counted animals but they didn’t count the traditional owners of the country” (Scott interviewed by Patterson). It was also meant to take the power for Aboriginal affairs out of the hands of State governments and give Federal government authority of a unified plan for Indigenous people (this probably included South Sea Islanders). After a resounding “Yes” (Parbury and Goodall) vote throughout the country, everything went back to a state of apathy.
See Bibliography.

Ibid.

Ibid.


John Newfong presented the Embassy’s five-point plan for land rights:
1. Control of the Northern Territory as a State within the Commonwealth of Australia; the parliament in the NT to be predominantly Aboriginal with title and mining rights to all land within the Territory.
2. Legal title and mining rights to all other presently existing reserve lands and settlements throughout Australia.
3. The preservation of all sacred sites throughout Australia.
4. Legal title and mining rights to areas in and around all Australian capital cities.
5. Compensation monies for lands not returnable to take the form of a down-payment of six billion dollars and an annual percentage of the gross national income. (Newfong, 1972:1-2)

The Council for Aboriginal Affairs began at the suggestion of Dr. H.C. “Nugget” Coombs under the Holt government. After the 1967 referendum the Federal government became responsible for decisions concerning Indigenous Australians. Holt hired Coombs to help with that situation and Coombs suggested a ‘Council’ be set-up to do research into what was wanted and needed. The ‘Council’ functioned as a part of the Prime Minister’s department of Aboriginal Affairs, which was given no budget or any power to make decisions. The ‘Council’ became official, 2 November 1967 but did not go into full operation until July 1968. Coombs accepted the invitation to Chair the Council with W.E.H. Stanner and Barrie Dexter serving with him.

For detailed information on Dr. Coombs and his work for Aboriginal people read Kulinma, Australia in Black and White and Australia’s Policies Towards Aborigines 1967-1977.

These are people who are very important to the development of Political and cultural growth. See The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia for in-depth biographies of Charles (Chicka) Dixon, Paul Coe and the Bostocks.

Sydney Gibson King along with Marion Durham Cuyjet, were originally assistants to Essie Marie Dorsey, a Ballet personality in the Black community of Philadelphia. Richard A. Long wrote (p. 21); “King and Cuyjet opened a joint studio” (Long, 1989:21). In time each opened their own.

Anthony Tudor, born in London, is said by his biographer to have “re-created himself as a dancer and choreographer in the 1930s with the experimental Ballet Rambert, before leaving England for American Ballet Theatre. Tudor was the best, of the best, being a contemporary of George Balanchine and Sir Frederick Ashton.

The full article has been archived in the (Appendix, item 25).

The National Black Theatre, Inc. founded in 1968 is the first revenue generating Black Theatre Arts Complex in America. It is located on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 125th Street in the heart of the Harlem Community’s Business District. It is a Cultural and Educational Institution, which addresses the concerns of the cultural crisis of people who live in Inner Cities in African American communities across America...a relevant showcase for the dramatic Black American experience of “Soul” to grow and prosper. (Teer, undated), National Black Theatre Institute of Action Arts)

Historically NAIDOC Day began with a petition from William Cooper in 1932, signed and supported by the Australian Aboriginal League (AAL) and the Aboriginal Progressive Association (APA).
William Ferguson, (the first Aboriginal to stand for Parliament) worked with Cooper to plan the first Day of Mourning. Ferguson plus J.T. Patten, the APA president, created a pamphlet explaining what they wanted. "Aborigines Claim Citizen Right". The pamphlet condemned the Aborigines Protection Act (1909-1936) of NSW and the Aborigines Protection Board and appealed for a new Aboriginal policy: full citizenship status, equality and land rights. Cooper also suggested there be a permanent Aborigines Day.

In 1940 NADOC began with the first Aboriginal Sunday celebration; 1955 Aborigines' Day was made official; 1957 the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee was formed; 1974 the committee became all Aboriginal; 1975 it became a week long celebration; 1985 the day was changed from July to September, which was not widely accepted; 1991 the National Committee decided to revert back to the second Friday in July commencing in 1992; 1988 Committee's name change to acknowledge Torres Straight Islanders'. See the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia for further details.

25 Aboriginal Protection Board

26 An example of this is demonstrated in the work of Marshall, Anne Ph. D. (2001). Ecologies of Performance in Central Australia, and the Minha Punka (Wallaby Dance) of the Wanan people included in Chapter 1.

27 This first show of the dance group, seems to have been a lecture demonstration to highlight the groups achievements, with further developments of The Challenge – Embassy Dance

28 David Gulpilil, born 1952 in the Northern Territory at Remingrida.

29 Mark Primus had delivered a paper on the National Black Theatre in Harlem where Bob Maza had travelled with for a short period before returning to Australia to formulate the National Black Theatre in Redfern.

30 Phemie does not use Primus's last name in the letter. It has been added in the brackets to identify who she is referring to.

31 An Aboriginal dance school founded in 1979 by Christine Donnelly in Redfern, Sydney Australia.

32 A note of interest: Even though most Indigenous Australians were inhibited about attending professional mainstream dance schools, there were others who were beginning to approach these schools for training. For example Michael Leslie also studied at Bodenweiser before joining AISDS. Anne Marshall worked in the children's chorus of the Boranvansky Company in the 1950's, and with other companies in the 1960's. During her audition for the Australian Ballet, she distinctly remembers another Aboriginal girl being there as well.

33 Roslyn acquired her dance experience from the Australian Ballet School and later joined the company and that of the Dance Company of NSW. In September of 1974 she received a grant from the AAB to study with Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem in New York City.

34 Brain Syron was a well-known Actor, director, producer of stage and film who, at the age of twenty-two got himself to New York to study at the Stella Adler acting studio. He stayed in the United States for eight years, working in on and off Broadway productions; started a theatre company in Saratoga Springs, New York, then returned to Australia in 1969 to help found the Australian National Playwrights Conference in 1972. Prior to his death Brian had a long list of theatre credits that can be viewed in the Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, p. 104.

35 July 1975, Identity did a spread announcing the official opening of the Black Theatre Arts and Cultural Centre in which Roberta Flack and Russand Roland Kirk are featured in the photographs.

36 At this point in time the dance group did not have an official name. Carole and Phemie would have used the name National Black Theatre Dance Group until an official name was chosen. This is why it appears on AAB grant applications.
37 Bennelong Point is where the Opera House was built. Bennelong was of the Cadigal tribe in NSW. He was originally kidnapped by Governor Phillip, escaped, went back and was eventually taken to London. There he became a curiosity and returned home but was "rejected by his people for being too much a white man" (Parbury, 1986:48). He became an alcoholic and died in a tribal fight in 1813.

38 The White Australia Policy was an attempt to restrict Chinese immigration to the goldfields. It was the Labour Party’s immigration platform of W.M. Hughes in 1901. It was indirectly eliminated in 1966, by allowing highly skilled non-Europeans to settle in Australia and give those here permanent residencies, but in actuality the Policy continued into the 1970’s.

39 In this document the abbreviation NBT, National Black Theatre, will continue to used to identify the Black Theatre Cultural and Performing Arts Community Centre.

40 Carole Johnson gave the name of Stephen Mam’s dance group as the “Torres Strait Island Dancers”, however, in Identity, an article dated July 1972, pp. 18-23, identifies Stephen Mam as the leader of the Waiben Dancers from Thursday Island. It is not clear if they are the same group but probably are.

41 For examples, see the works of AISDS/NAISDA’s ‘End of Year Shows’, Bangarra Dance Theatre and of the graduates of AISDS/NAISDA: Raymond Blanco, Steven Page, Bernadette Walong, Christine Anu, etc.

42 The New Era Aboriginal Fellowship, Inc. is located in Perth, WA. Carole had been approached in 1975 about doing a series of classes for their students, whom Gerry Atkinson was working with at the time. (The letter of request has been included in the Appendix, item 1.)

43 Michael Leslie is from the first graduating class of AISDS and is attributed with being one of the Founding Members.

44 The National Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) changed its name from the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS) in 1988 by the then Director of the organization Jon Alderman.

45 Michael attributes the beginning of ACPA as evolving from a training program established in Perth, WA. These training programs were to prepare Aboriginal and Islander young people for the numerous plays that were being developed in Perth in the mid to late 1980’s (No Sugar, Bran New Day, Sista Girl). However, Michael said they didn’t continue in WA because “They didn’t get the support and the Queensland government made me an offer to relocate”. NIIPA was then renamed ACPA in 1996, in 1997 Michael moved to Brisbane and after a three-month preparation period to get set-up, ACPA commenced operations in January 1998.

46 ‘Tjintu Pakani - Sunrise Awakening’, is a 16 MM film, a ‘first’ for contemporary, urban Aboriginal/Islander performing arts.

47 Present day examples of people who take no responsibility for their privileged position in Australia due to coloniast racist legislation are: the present Prime Minister, John Howard, who finds it too difficult to even apologize for what went on in the past, which still affects the psychology of Indigenous people today; and Pauline Hansen, another white politician privileged by the racial disadvantages towards Indigenous Australian’s, sees no reason for special educational or social benefits for grossly disadvantaged people.

48 Maureen is teasingly alluding to the acting instructor and coach for the Workshop, Brian Syron. The fact that she had never considered her abilities as an actress is mostly likely due to a number of things, but one would definitely be the lack of a positive role models as well as personal exposure to the industry.

49 Christine Donnelly, to serve the Redfern and inner city Aboriginal Community, founded the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern (ADTR), in 1979. “It offers a full-time certificate course accredited by the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board...” “The Course introduces students to a variety of dance styles and forms...” (ADTR). It has, to date, hosted three successful National Aboriginal Dance Conferences in 1995, 1997
and 1999, which have endorsed the establishment of the National Aboriginal Dance Council Australia, a national network and advocacy organization for Indigenous dance.

50 The National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) started in 1958 by Hugh Hunt, Robert Quentin and John Sumner. The Elizabethan Theatre Trust of which Dr. H.C. Coombs was the chairman supported the ideas. It became an independent Company in 1959.

51 AISDS was not set-up to include, as a part of its regular curriculum, the dance cultures of the South Sea Islands. During 1976, the inclusion of South Sea Island dance was probably a fortuitous circumstance. The school was set-up to incorporate the traditional cultures of mainland Australia and those of the Torres Strait Islands only, as these were part of Australian territory. However, as South Sea Islanders had been brought to Australia, to work as slave labour on the sugar plantations, and had intermarried with the Indigenous population, many identified as Indigenous Australians.

52 (W)e have recently lost three outstanding people from the creative arts. Sadly missed are Betty Fisher, Yirrawalla and Harold Blair. Betty dreamed the Black Theatre and now she has left her dream to us. Harold Blair, who graduated from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, devoted his life to blacks. (Koori-Rina, 1976b:12)

53 Ronne Arnold took a leave of absence during Term III, to perform in the production of A Chorus Line in Melbourne, and was unavailable for the next 2 terms.

54 The people of Yirrkala live at the northern most tip of Australia in Arnhem Land. This is the first time that the first time they have worked with the Course. They are the second Aboriginal culture to work with AISDS. The first being the Lardil people, from the ‘Gulf of Carpenteria’. Both are still active with NAISDA today (2000).

55 Faye Nelson was the Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council until the beginning of 2000.

56 Dr. Roberta Sykes has just completed an autobiographical trilogy, Snake Dreaming.

57 Aku Kadogo, originally from Detroit USA, lived six years in New York studying with the Dance Theatre of Harlem and also New York University. She came to Australia in 1978 to do the Adelaide Festival with the production of For Coloured Girls. It also toured Melbourne, Sydney, Cairns, and Townsville. (Shearer & Choolburra, 1982:7). Aku directed four of the End of Year Shows for AISDS in the 1980's.

58 Nipper Tabergie is a song man and elder from Noonkumbah, WA. He worked with the students in 1987, teaching them the song and dance culture of Turkey Creek.

59 Tranby College is located in Glebe and offers courses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They also house a library and Black Books, which specializes in books on Indigenous Australians.

60 Added for clarity.

61 Ibid.

62 The Sydney Dance Umbrella series was the inspiration of Norman Hall. As explained by Hall, the Sydney Dance Umbrella was the second in the world. The first was New York and Sydney beat England by one day. The series was an attempt to bring visibility and exposure to the different contemporary dance groups functioning at the time. It started with Hall’s dance group, Busy Bodies, in a “mixed media experimentation” (Hall), in May 1978. But the official first dance series was Nov. 6 to 11, 1978. Appearing were: Margaret Barr’s company; Melbourne State Dance Company, (Marvin Baker and his wife Kristina Slovinska); the Madrid Festival Ballet with Antonio Vargas; The New Dance Theatre, (Ruth Galeane) and Kai Tai Chan’s, One Extra Dance Company.
The original series went for two years. In 1980 the series was sponsored as part of the Sydney Festival and changed to January. At that point, Hall stated: “Out of the blue Kai Tai Chan and Russell Dumas” questioned, What right or what experience did I have to be producing the show? That was the last of it.” (Hall).

Issues of Kooka-Bing, Koori-Bing and the Aboriginal Islander Message, AIM, are archived at the NSW State Library (Mitchell), and at the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

The Book, Music and Lyrics are by Jonathan Larson. ‘Rent’ was first performed at The New York Theatre Workshop in 1996.

“Segul Kab – stand up, song and dance from Mer Island.” (End of Year Show, Bukmug Yolngu Nini: “Still Here”, 2000:program)

“Kab Kar – is a jumping dance that is an old custom style of dance from Mer Island.” (NAISDA, 2000). “Bukmug Yolngu Nini: Still Here”, 2000:program)


Raymond S. Robinson (Wanaga)
MA Honours Thesis
DREAMING TRACKS

HISTORY OF THE
ABORIGINAL ISLANDER
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME,
1972 – 1979:

Its Place in the Continuum of Australian Indigenous Dance and the
Contribution of its African American Founder Carole Y. Johnson

APPENDIX
DIRECTORY

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Master of Arts – Honours (Performance)
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2000
APPENDIX

DIRECTORY
APPENDIX DIRECTORY

ITEM

CHAPTER 2: 1970-72 ~ THE WORK BEGINS

1. Cavadini, Alessandro. *Ningla A-na (Hungry for our land)*. This is a two sheet brief synopsis of a film produced and directed by Alessandro Cavadini on the Aboriginal Land Rights Campaign. 1-2


3. Johnson, C., (1972a). [1972 was a crucial turning point in the affairs of Aboriginal people...]. Rough notes. 4-4a


CHAPTER 3: 1973 - 1974 ~ URBAN ARTS DEVELOPMENT


CHAPTER 4: 1975 ~ SIX WEEK ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER CULTURAL & PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM

28. Colbung, Betty (1975). [I shall be very glad if you are willing…]. Letter, 80 (Aug. 7).


CHAPTER 5: 1976 ~ STREAM I, “CAREERS IN DANCE” COURSE


39. AISDS (undated). Fact Sheet.


44. Johnson, C. (1976). Benefits of the program to the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal Arts Board. Report,


CHAPTER 6: 1977 ~ THE ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE


CHAPTER 7: 1978 ~ THE FINAL YEAR


CHAPTER 8: 1979 ~ FIRST GRADUATING CLASS


66. AISDS (undated). Introducing... Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre. Chronology & Fact Sheet.


Appendix Directory


CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS


74. Watson, Roslyn (Undated). [From the time of my first.....]. Letter of support,

MISCELLANEOUS


Raymond S. Robinson
MA Honours Thesis
NINGLA A-NA
(HUNGRY FOR OUR LAND)
A film by Alessandro Cavadini on the Aboriginal Land Rights Campaign

The idea of a film of the Aboriginal Land Rights Movement first occurred to Alessandro Cavadini in early 1972. Cavadini decided to go in search of committed political attitudes in Australia, and originally intended to film various radical groups as separate unconnected entities. One aspect was to be the Black Power movement, but after his first meeting with the aboriginal spokesmen Cavadini realised that a social revolution was taking place, and that political ideology was only a minor part of the movement.

A movement already existed that was far in advance of white groups calling themselves pacifists, anarchists, etc, because blacks live in an area of oppression and poverty, while whites are isolated by their relative wealth and security.

In addition to the pressing problems of land rights, Cavadini wanted to show the efforts to develop a new black consciousness that related to urban conditions, but also regenerated strong tribal and community traditions.

Without finance to start the film, Cavadini met Ian Stocks and drew up a low budget. Meanwhile, an Aboriginal Tent Embassy had been standing on the lawns of Parliament House for almost six months, and was under threat of removal from a new ordinance being rushed into effect. It was obvious that no more time could be lost, and sufficient funds to begin filming were raised privately. The first weekend’s shooting was with Gary Foley, Bob Perry, and Ambrose Golden-Brown, at the Embassy in the cold Canberra winter. On the Sunday Bob Perry returned to his old home — Cowra Mission — for the first time in ten years, to talk to black children.
The following week (July 14) saw the Black Moratorium on land rights in Sydney, where black marchers were joined for the first time by massive white support. This was expected to provoke a reaction from the establishment. While shooting an interview with Gloria Fletcher and Carol Johnson on the future of black expression in arts and theatre, the news of the destruction of the Embassy was flashed on the radio. Cavadini and Stocks filmed the reactions of the black community in Redfern. Bobbi Sykes and others returned fresh from the battle at Canberra and worked through the night to raise finance and support for a reerection the following weekend. That night’s shooting also included filming the ABC news direct off the TV set, as a Government minister tried vainly to prove that the police had only executed the law. The ordinance under which they acted was three months later ruled invalid by the Supreme Court.

For the first time in Australian history aboriginals prepared to fight for their rights on a national basis. Police repression is a fact of life for most blacks, and in a mood of fear and anger they prepared to face heavy odds at the centre of Australian political affairs. Two busloads of Brisbane blacks, led by Dennis Walker, were already on their way to Canberra, and on Friday night another contingent left Sydney with white supporters.

The events of the weekend are clear enough on film – an overwhelming police force designed to cow and terrify the protesters - a policy of disabling or injuring aboriginal leaders – a refusal to negotiate on any terms with what was called an ‘unrepresentative group’. Also apparent was the lack of heavyweight support for the protest – the politicians and most Australians were content to sit back at home and watch it on TV, and it was up to students and blacks to fight it alone. The resulting spectacle was enough to embarrass even the Liberal Government, as beefy cops slugged it out with blacks, students, women, and girls over the symbolic raising of a few square yards of canvas and some tattered flags.

There were many arrests, some broken bones, above all the Government attitude to blacks had been publicised at last - they were a nuisance, an eyesore, an embarrassment. But the effort of putting them back in their places was even more so.

As the protesters regrouped during the third week for another attempt, it was obvious that government policy was hurriedly changing. As the crew were filming less spectacular evidence of black social needs and solutions – the breakfast program, the Aboriginal Medical Service – the Minister for the Interior was trying to strike bargains with the black spokesmen.

Ignoring calls for ‘patience’ and moderation, black communities prepared to march again the following week, expecting even more violence. Instead, perhaps because of growing public sympathy, the situation developed a carnival atmosphere, with black theatre being performed before an audience of supporters, press, and police, and the tattered symbol of the Embassy being hurled onto the steps of Parliament House in derision.

For the first time in 200 years of white domination, aboriginals had confronted the Government at a national level, and, in the words of Bobbi Sykes, ‘scored a political victory’.
Dear Miss Johnson,

I would like to confirm with you the invitation made to you by the Australian Council for the Arts to work with Aboriginal groups during your stay in Australia. The Council has recommended to our Minister that a grant of $3,000 be made to the Arts Council of New South Wales to administer a 6 month programme and to pay you a salary. We hope that performances, lectures and workshops will be arranged amongst urban Aboriginal groups.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Ken Farish
Asst. Executive Officer

Miss Carole Johnson
Volta
Alexandra Lane
GLEBE POINT, N.S.W. 2037.
1972 was a crucial turning point in the affairs of Aboriginal people in Australia.

Most Australians are only aware of the push of urban people through the political
demonstrations that occurred in Canberra and other capital cities as
symbolized by the establishment of the various embassies. Yet 1972 was also the
year in which some traditional Aboriginal groups made a CONSCIOUS decision to begin
cultural change in the light of their experience since the coming of the Europeans.

For Urban, people the following happened:

Bob Maz a, an actor from Queensland, brought the idea of Black Theatre to Australia
at a period when urban Aboriginal people were seeking a creative and positive way
to establish the new identity.

In this year of change, Carole Johnson, American dancer, came into the Sydney urban
community. Through the establishment of a dance workshop, she was able to
give a form to the sentiments of the people and demonstrate a method of
expressing cultural ideas through the arts and specifically the dance.

This is a record of the first contemporary dance workshop that ever existed in
an urban Aboriginal community. It met two days a week at an old church in
Redfern. What you are seeing is a rehearsal of the program that we developed
in the classes.

Phase Westock, one of the members of the group says that workshop and the
final programs were important to her because it was a modern expression of
urban people. Until recently urban people had very few outlets for expressing their everyday concerns with the social issues.
Yet dancing about everyday life experiences and beliefs is a natural
part of the traditional Aboriginal way of life.

In the classes we were able to take from our tradition and express it in a
contemporary urban way. The chaacha was a fun piece that gave us experience
with Latin American rhythms.
The piece that we called the EMBASSY DANCE is how we understood:

*The Challenge: Dance as the Cultural Movement.*

The piece that we called the EMBASSY DANCE is how we expressed the Black B
Monitorium and the demonstrations for land rights and human rights.
The tent Embassy at Canberra which is seen in the dance was the urban symbol for
the constant reminder to both European society and to urban people of the need
for change.

We later found that in traditional Aboriginal society of the people in the
Cape York peninsula, the erection of the spear was the symbol of the challenge.

*An Aboriginal writer described this piece which we think was an important
milestone as follows*: "it was not only a symbolic re-erection of the tent
Embassy, but it portrayed the whole history of Aboriginal
European conflict and gave powerful expression to the emotions of that
event."

Some people from the Western desert saw this first dance program of urban Aboriginal
people, and their smiles seem to reflect that they understood this new cultural
expression. They called it *The Corroboree of City People.*
AN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CULTURAL ARTS-EDUCATION CENTER IN SYDNEY

PURPOSES:

1. To provide a centralized Center for the development of traditional and cultural arts.

2. To provide a place where there is a free and creative atmosphere so that each individual can discover and develop his creative potential by participating in classes and public performances.

3. To establish a continuity of programs where inconsistency has been the rule.

4. To have an adequately equipped building where visiting professionals (both traditional and modern) can come to share their knowledge and skills.

5. To build community cohesion through the initiation of programs of social interest.

6. To stimulate the development of new creative leadership and artistic talent.

7. To provide an outlet for the display and production of creative work.

8. To serve as a capital city base for cultural activities and programs in other towns of New South Wales.

9. To have a center that has been organized, built and developed by the people in the community and thus each person knows the center and that its programs belong to him. (Establish a place where people feel they belong.)

NEEDS FOR SYDNEY:

1. A facility to house a permanent multi-purpose cultural center for formal and informal activities.

2. A permanent home theater and rehearsal area for National Black Theater - a fully equipped stage.

   NOTE: A multi-purpose Cultural Center is the first step in getting a home for the Theater. Eventually (five years, perhaps) a professional theater will need its own facilities for professional programs and training.

3. A gallery for art displays - both traditional and contemporary.

4. A lounge or lounge where people can get together informally.

5. A continuous and on-going program developed and planned over a ten-year period.
6. Specialists (especially non-English speaking Aboriginal people) coming in to teach traditional and cultural skills such as:
   a. Digeridoo players and dancers from the Northern Territory and Queensland.
   b. Teachers of Aboriginal languages.
7. Specialists from foreign countries in all of the creative arts should be able to meet and share skills with Aboriginal people interested in the arts. Drama, music, dance, visual arts, and writing would be highlighted.
8. Lecturers on various subjects of interest to the community such as health, nutrition, family planning, history, philosophy, and business skills for the layman.
9. Film showings.
10. Classes and training programs or clubs in writing, drama, dance, music, photography, film, silk screening, painting, and etc.
11. Regular concert series.
12. Trips and outings to family groups, friends and new people in town can meet.
13. Space for Friday or Saturday evening dances.
14. Place to develop ability to use and eventually have access to the media: such as starting a radio program; getting T.V. time.
15. Special youth programs and classes.
16. Serve as a base for tours and activities to go to small town and missions in N.S.W.

SOME THOUGHTS:

At present none of the above is available to Aboriginal people in Sydney.

The only place they have to meet socially is in the hotels (bars) or each others homes. Football is the only regularly organized social activity. Aboriginal people generally have problems renting a hall for dances and receptions. Although various churches and the union halls allow bookings of various kinds to occur on their premises, there is no one place that the people immediately think of as their meeting place. There is always some consideration and search for a place to meet.

In all the time I was in Sydney, the only outing that I had with Aboriginal people was the time we went to the Sand Dance to do a film. It turned into a picnic and a time where some people from out-of-town got to meet some Sydney people in a relaxed atmosphere and happy out-of-hours atmosphere. In retrospect, that an outing such as that happened only once is quite necessary in the urban life of a people who by tradition love, respect, and care of one another. Perhaps this is why I tended to return so often to their own town. I realized this because the people themselves mentioned that there ought to be a way to have more outings of this kind.
The dance classes that I held were in an old Church on Regent Street (extremely dirty). This church was totally unsuitable for a family to think of using as the place for the funeral of their relative even though the relative had grown up in the Church.

GOALS:

FIRST YEAR

Establish Cultural programs and classes. Find a building.

SECOND YEAR

Solidify program of first year. Start a radio show.

THIRD YEAR

Establish PROFESSIONAL THEATER - growing out of workshops of previous two years - AN APPRENTICE TRAINING PROGRAM in which about 50 people (adults 18 and over) are salaried to train and work in the theater arts - actors, dancers, musicians, theater technicians (lighting, sound, costume design, carpenters, and etc.), and administrators.

The full time job would be to go to classes to improve the craft, rehearse for programs, and tour programs and present them in the home theater.

This should be a part of the Educational Program for funding purposes and should be done in conjunction with one of the schools or universities.

TYPE OF FACILITY NEEDED:

Must be large and have several rooms or be able to be divided into several rooms so it can contain:

1. Theater
2. Classrooms for dance
3. Classrooms for drama
4. Dark-room
5. Offices
6. Workshop for art and film classes
7. Cooking facilities
8. Gallery and reception area
9. Toilet facilities

SOME OF THE BUDGET ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Rent for Building
Maintenance and Upkeep
Transportation (must have own vehicle as well as funds for hiring buses)
Administrative Expenses
Office Expenses
Program Expenses
Salaries for Teachers

Equipment - theater, art supplies, etc.

Documentation

ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Within the program there must be an immediate training program so that an Aboriginal person will be prepared to take over the directorship and also program directorship.

The project should be organized in such a way and a budget allowed so that any person, who is interested in a particular activity or skill and can get a group of people together, can initiate the activity and there will be program money for it.

Prepared by: Carole Y. Johnson

8/72
Sydney, Australia
Performance by National Black Theatre - Dance Group:

(Tutor: Carole Johnson)

This performance was given on September 7th at the Quaker Meeting House, Surrey Hills. I think everyone present sensed that this was a very significant event for the urban Aboriginal community and the considerable numbers of modern "Koories" present bore this out. This workshop group had only been in operation for some twelve weeks prior to the performance and only towards the end of this period was the idea of giving a public performance even contemplated, so what was presented was quite remarkable given an understanding of the background. It was also remarkable to see the degree of confidence shown by the dancers who had never had any dance training at all prior to the workshop. The credit for this must go largely to Carole Johnson's immense talent and her personal commitment to the group.

The programme incorporated some basic modern dance movement exercises set to rhythm. This was a good idea as it gave the audience (many of whom knew nothing of modern dance) some idea of the rudiments of modern dance training. The group seemed very much at ease with one jazz number beginning with a congo-line - they had an obvious affinity for the jazz rhythms and movements. One "fun number" they performed was an adaptation of movement found in traditional Aboriginal dance - they called this "Bird Dance". I felt at the time it was a shame that they kept repeating the one movement over and over - it would have been interesting to see what they could have done in the way of adapting a sequence of traditional movements, but given the time-factor this had probably not been possible.

The group emerged most strongly in a piece known as "Sakening" which "grew out of the moods and atmosphere of the struggle to re-establish the
Embassy in Canberra". This number was really "dance-theatre" rather than straight dance, and all dancers performed with great dignity and conviction. I feel that dance-theatre with a social relevance will obviously be the kind of medium which the group will concentrate on in the future, and I do feel this is where they would be most effective.

From a dance viewpoint, this group needs further intensive training with special concentration on contraction and release of the rib-cage, the basis of all modern dance work. A number of the dancers had obvious faults needing correction, e.g. too rigid shoulder-lines and over-stretched necks. The posture of one blonde-haired girl was particularly bad, and her movements were quite agonizingly clumsy, but it was perhaps a strong point of the group to include even such an untalented, but obviously enthusiastic member, because this egalitarian attitude clearly shows that participation in the Workshop is open to everyone, and not just a talented elite. A couple of the dancers (the boy called Wayne and a small dark-haired girl) had an ease of movement which stood out from the others.

As it is at present, this group will obviously be able to make an impact in the "street theatre" situation upon sympathetic audiences, but to get their point across to an audience which is not initially sympathetic, they will need to do some intensive training on their dance technique. Their point will come over much better once their dancing and ensemble precision has been improved. It is highly doubtful whether the group will be able to find someone of Kiss Johnson's ability, dedication, and social awareness to continue this work, but it is essential that it be continued because it would be a tragedy, not only for the dancers, but for the entire urban Aboriginal community (which has shown such pride in the group and such identification with it) if these Workshops were to fall through.

Anne McCarthy.
Modern dance, like jazz music, is pure product that is definitely "American." It grew out of opposition to the rigid codified approach of classic European dance. Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, Helen Tamiris, Lester Horton all looked away from Europe finding inspiration and motivation in indigenous dance forms, folk dances from Native Americans and Blacks, then called "Negroes." Japanese folk dance elements can be found in the work of Martha Graham. Other folk elements or thematic material can be seen in:

- Doris Humphrey - "Song of the West"
- Helen Tamiris - "Negro Spirituals"
- Charles Weidman - "Lynchtown"

As far back as Ruth St. Dennis, inspiration came from ritual dances of Egypt, India, and the Far East. Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey are products of the Denishawn School.

Most of these pioneers went on to develop styles or techniques that bear their names. Some of them were early feminists, some of them, revolutionaries who were gutsy enough to confront social and political realities. These schools formed their own unique orthodoxies and celebrated drastic different-ness, but in the large majority they maintained white companies. People of color, especially those with dark complexion, were often thought of as upsetting the aesthetic balance of these companies. Lester Horton is among the pioneers of integration of people of color into Modern Dance. Martha Graham brought us Asian women and Black women. When the white men started leaving to form their own companies, Black men, especially the ones who were good at lifting, started gaining visibility.

Telephone: 212-924-4628
Katherine Dunham was to be the first choreographer to bring African, Latin and Caribbean movements to the concert stage. Like Graham, she created her own technique, rooted in the Black Diaspora. A technique that is inclusive of many disciplines, this technique has become a mainstay in American Dance and has influenced dancers and choreographers globally.

Katherine Dunham is the contributor, and is responsible for the wealth of Blacks in concert dance, an arena in which it was more possible to shed some of the stereotypes and stigmas. Tap dancing became only one of the many styles that a Black dancer could become specialized in. Black dancers were no longer "just entertainers". There was no funding available and government support for the arts was a long time away. It was not unusual that in some smaller companies, dancers had to chip in their quarters to rent a studio, to by records for music, and to make their own costumes. In spite of the handicap, everyone knew that this new freedom had to be used. It was a period of keeping your hand on the plow. Everyone was busy making dance, writing poetry, and painting. Producing art which fed on the expression of our world. Creating a cultural tool towards the unity of that Black world and beyond. Towards understanding, not only our Black humanity but of world humanity.

Pearl Primus, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Geoffrey Holder, Louis Johnson, and Talley Beatty -- these artists have been exponents of various artistic schools and aesthetic schools, of varying political and philosophic viewpoints, and represent a variety of geographical locations. Although they do not necessarily share the same ideology, nor see the functions and values of art in the same way, their common ground is that they share an African heritage, and are the great forerunners and explorers of the "new freedom" and provide not only variety and entertainment, but enlightenment as well.
With the coming of the Civil Rights movement funding arrived. It began on the meager side for Blacks in dance. With the Civil Rights movement raging I guess some of the empowered had a tinge of guilt. Their pittance, meager as it was, was well used. Always just enough to insure that you would not achieve your goal. I call it exclusion money. If you meet the demands they make, you will be helping them to hang you. But Black choreographers and dancers of color are relentless, very much like insects that tend to grow stronger as killing agents increase their powers, they become resistant to extermination so that a fresh, strong breed of dancers can appear well-armored and aware of where they are coming from. Dancers of color have digested all of the American dance forms, modern, jazz, and yes, ballet. Mediocrity is never tolerated in the underdog.

With funding from government subsidy, also came aesthetic and political control. The future was now in the hands of cultural arbiters, empowered with the authority to define "quality", what themes were acceptable, and when to change paradigms. In other words, they decide who and what was "in" or "out" and when to create or lift boundaries. The feature article in the November 10, 1994 issue of Time magazine heralds: "Black Renaissance. African, American artists are truly free at last." I wonder who made that grandiose decision!

Blacks have always been the precocious stepchildren of concert dance and so far have been kept under control. This control of boundaries has achieved the creation of a gap, somewhere between then and now are people who have or have been systematically minimized in dance history. The current trend is to just skip over them. I would like to remind our community that history is written about empowered people - by, for, and glorifying themselves - not about the disenfranchised. What happened between then and now? Many of our artists in all of the various dance forms have been silenced because their voices possibly became too strong.
Dianne McIntyre
Gus Solomon Jr.
Raymond Sawyer
Rod Rodgers
Joan Miller

I include myself on this list. How often can we afford a concert, never mind, a season. How many of their works have not been seen often enough, not provided a chance to live, while their white contemporaries, often of lesser talent, have been provided the opportunity to flourish. These grants and funds are from our tax moneys. Forget acceptance, how about equal returns?

Between then and now some artists with minds like bear traps are being eradicated and replaced by very controllable people: People who fall into the hands of the arbitrators and pray for handouts before they can continue their mission. As new arbitrators replace others, they set up new paradigms with self-serving definitions:

  New Wave
  In the Face
  Cutting Edge

Their movement is launched, boosted by the media. Their icons are created, then the "Golden Boys" are created, and we are to accept them. Because the folks in the media have declared something as good, it is good. Only those declared good will receive the funding and support to continue. So, *Time* magazine says:

"...black artists have escaped from the aesthetic ghetto to which they were once confined, where the patronizing assumption was that they would find inspiration only in their own milieu. As they move from the periphery to the mainstream, they are free at last to follow their various muses."

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Page 4
Thus speaketh *Time*, therefore it is true.

Other voices ring more true to my ear, such as the voice of Woodie King, Jr. in the January, 1995 issue of *Black Masks*:

"We Black artists are so hypocritical. We create our Eurocentric art, our gay art, our feminist art for White consumption and when they refuse to buy it because of racism homophobia and sexism, we try to sell it to the Black community. There are still many of us who opt for easy answers to our dilemma. Yet the answer can be found in our own literature, films, plays and art when it relates to the truth of who we really are; when we make art about what we really love, i.e. our mothers, fathers, ancestors, nuclear family and indeed our community."
Programme One

Monday, March 20; Tuesday, March 21; Friday, March 24. 8.15 p.m.

1. Missa Luba

Choreography: Eleo Pomare
Music: Congolese

Image of: priest, christ, idol

Eleo Pomare *, Frank Ashley †

Mary

Jennifer Barry

Celebrants

Lillian Coleman, Dyane Harvey, Roberta Pikser, Strody Meekins, Martial Roumain, Henry Yu Hao Yen


(1967)
Choreography: Eleo Pomare

Music: Traditional

Inspired by the life and music of the great Bessie Smith

Carole Johnson *, Roberta Pikser †

— intermission —

The Eleo Pomare Dance Company gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Foundation for the Vital Arts (U.S.A.), without which these performances would not have been possible.

The Australian Tour by the Eleo Pomare Modern Dance Company has been assisted by the Australian Council for the Arts.

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74 Parade, Norwood — Phone 63 3380
3. MOVEMENTS  
(1970)  
Choreographer: Eleo Pomare  
Music: Morton Subotnick

A study in abstract dance patterns and groupings

- Movements for Two  
  Strody Meekins and Dyane Harvey

- Movements for One  
  Roberta Pikser

- Movements for Threes  
  (in order of appearance) Henry Yu Hao Yen  
  Frank Ashley, Roberta Pikser, Strody Meekins  
  Lillian Coleman, Dyane Harvey

-- intermission --

4. BLUES FOR THE JUNGLE  
(1962, 1965)  
Choreography: Eleo Pomare  
Music: Traditional; Oscar Brown, Jr.; Harry Belafonte; Charles Mingus  
Musical continuity and sound effects: Michael E. Levy

A dance portrayal of the Black experience in the U.S.A.  
from the early days of the slave auction to the present time.

In The Beginning  
Eleo Pomare, Carole Johnson and Company

From Prison Walls  
I Got a Hammer  
Strody Meekins, Martial Roumain, Henry Yu Hao Yen  
Night Spell  
Frank Ashley *, Eleo Pomare †

From The Soul  
Moan  
Strody Meekins, Dyane Harvey, Lillian Coleman  
Carole Johnson, Martial Roumain, Roberta Pikser

I am a Witness  
Carole Johnson

Shout  
Company

For Now  
View from a tenement window  
Lillian Coleman and Strody Meekins  
Junkie  
Eleo Pomare  
Long hot summer  
Just Tired—L. Coleman; Boxer—M. Roumain; The Token—S. Meekins; Sister Salvation—D. Harvey; Congo Blonde—C. Simpson; "Die Schwarze"—C. Johnson; Junkie—E. Pomare; Trapped—F. Ashley; Sister in Red—D. Harvey; Social Worker—R. Pikser; Policeman—H. Yu Hao Yen

--- intermission ---

PROGRAMME TWO

Wednesday, March 22nd, 8.15 p.m.; Thursday, March 23rd, 8.15 p.m.;  
Saturday, March 25th, 2.15 p.m.

1. PASSAGE  
(1969)  
Choreography: Eleo Pomare  
Music: V. Fellegara  
Jennifer Barry *, Dyane Harvey †

2. RADIANCE OF THE DARK  
(1969)  
Choreography: Eleo Pomare  
Music: Edward Hawkins Singers

... and memories of choir voices  
Strody Meekins, Lillian Coleman, Dyane Harvey

... going through  
Frank Ashley and Lillian Coleman  
Ode for Prophet Jones ‡  
Eleo Pomare *, Martial Roumain †

Two sisters digging it from outside  
Dyane Harvey, Lillian Coleman  
Celebration  
Company

‡ A religious leader prominent in the 1950's and early 1960's, who was imprisoned on charges of racketeering and perversion. (Prophet Jones died in August 1971.)

3. LAS DESENAMORADAS  
(1967)  
Choreography: Eleo Pomare  
Music: Coltrane

Inspired by "The House of Bernarda Alba," Garcia Lorca's play about  
the frustrations of five sisters confined to their mother's manless  
household: heartless pride and sterile convention destroy love and life.

Mother  
Carole Johnson

Daughters:  
To Be Married  
Carole Simpson  
Hunchback  
Roberta Pikser  
In Love  
Lillian Coleman  
Defiant  
Dyane Harvey  
Watchful  
Jennifer Barry  
The Imagined  
Strody Meekins, Martial Roumain, Henry Yu Hao Yen  
Suitor  
Frank Ashley

--- intermission ---

4. NARCISSUS RISING  
(1968)  
Choreographer: Eleo Pomare  
Music: Collage by Michael E. Levy  
(Music Source: Blues Project)

An attempt to capture the "psyche" of the modern "leather-and-cycle"  
man.  
Eleo Pomare

--- intermission ---
5. 'NOTHER SHADE OF BLUE

Choreographer: Eleo Pomare
Music: R. Flack, J. Collins, L. Nyro, Traditional

"When a woman gets the blues, she runs to her room and cry,
When a man gets the blues, he takes a train and ride."

Early Morning Rain       Lillian Coleman, Dyane Harvey, Jennifer Barry
Been on My Mind           Jennifer Barry
Key to the Highway        Martial Roumain
First Time                Frank Ashley, Lillian Coleman
Empty-bed Blues           Dyane Harvey
Pretty Polly              Jennifer Barry and Strody Meekins
Travelling                Frank Ashley, Strody Meekins,
                          Martial Roumain, Henry Yu Hao Yen, Lillian Coleman,
                          Dyane Harvey, Roberta Pikser

ELEO POMARE was born in Cartagena, Colombia, and raised in Panama. He came to New York City at the age of 10 and graduated from the High School of Performing Arts as a dance major in 1956. Within two years he had formed his first American dance company and, in 1961, won a John Hay Whitney Fellowship to Europe. Like many Negro artists before him, he was to receive recognition abroad before achieving success in the United States. From 1958-64, his newly formed European Company performed in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Mr. Pomare's teaching positions included the National Ballet and Scenpo Ballet Companies in Holland, Stockholm University, and the First International Dance Seminar of the Royal Dutch Ballet. On his return to the U.S. he revived and expanded his American Dance Company which has toured since throughout the country. Among the company's notable successes has been "Blues for the Jungle," which was created as a tribute to Harlem and shown in rehearsal and performance on a unique ninety-minute TV special by National Educational Television. In 1967, Mr. Pomare helped create New York City's first Dance Mobile and served as its choreographer and artistic director. In 1968, he founded a Dance Workshop—first affiliated with Clark Center, and, since 1970, with the American Dance Company—which provides training in dramatic dance and live performance experience for talented dancers. Mr. Pomare has choreographed for the theatre and television in Europe as well as in the United States. He is also a frequent lecturer and panel member on modern dance, the black artist and his heritage.

THE ELEO POMARE DANCE COMPANY, an integrated but predominantly Negro dance company, was organized in New York City in 1958. From the outset, the company took as its purpose "the creative utilization of Negro talent and ability in Contemporary Modern Dance in an effort to break away from continually stereotyped images of Negro or Primitive dance." Reorganized and expanded in 1965, after Mr. Pomare's return from Europe, the Company has expanded its repertoire and touring activities every year. In addition to appearances on television the Company has performed to great critical acclaim at the New York City Center and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, on Broadway at the ANTA Theatre as part of the 1971 American Dance Marathon, at the Delacorte Theater as part of the 1971 New York Dance Festival, and in numerous coast-to-coast college tours throughout the U.S.A. The Eleo Pomare Dance Company is the only American dance company invited to appear at the Internationally renowned biannual Adelaide Festival of Arts in 1972 as part of a four-week Australian tour by the Company.

6. BURNT ASH

Choreographer: Eleo Pomare
Music: Collage by Michael E. Levy

"Herod the King"
In his raging
Charged he hath this day
His men of might
In his own sight
All children young to slay . . ."

(Covered Carol)

Entire Company

Wednesday and Saturday Matinees; † Thursday.

There's plenty of life in

ACTIL®

SHEETS & PILLOW CASES
Artistic Director and choreographer of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, Mr. Pomare was born in Colombia, South America and arrived in New York at the age of 10. After graduating from New York City's High School of the Performing Arts, he formed his first dance company in 1958. A John Hay Whitney Fellowship took him to Europe in 1962 where he studied, danced, choreographed and formed a second company which toured Germany, Holland, Sweden and Norway. In 1964 he returned to the United States, revived and expanded his original American dance company which has since toured throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the West Indies, Australia and Italy. His company has challenged the sensitivities of sophisticated dance audiences at Broadway's ANTA Theatre, Washington's John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, New York's City Center, Florence Gould Hall, and the Joyce Theater, Montreal's Theatre Maisonneuve, and the Adelaide Festival of Arts in Australia.

The Company has frequently participated in Artists-in-the Schools projects throughout the nation including San Juan, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and St. Croix, Virgin Islands; Kansas City, Missouri; Ft. Myers, Florida; Baltimore, Buffalo, and Chester, Pennsylvania.

The Company has also appeared on the Fiorello Festival, Summer Stage in Central Park, DanceMobile in the five boroughs, The Nantucket Dance Festival, Schimmel Center for the Arts, and the Harkness Dance Center.

In March, 1996 Mr. Pomare's Raft, a work featuring three female figures symbolizing the rape of Haiti's refugees, was performed at the Museum of Modern Art -- the first time dance has been shown there. The Eleo Pomare Dance Company performed an expanded version of Raft at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, March 27, 1997. Most recently, Mr. Pomare has embarked on a project to add two new pieces to his Company's repertory, both inspired by works of Garcia Lorca; Yerma and Blood Wedding. In April of 1999 the Yerma work was presented as a work in progress at the Harkness Dance Center.
Choreography on Other Companies

In addition to maintaining his own company, Mr. Pomare has choreographed works for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the Maryland Ballet Company, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, the Cleo Parker-Robinson Dance Company (Denver), Alpha and Omega Dance Company, the National Ballet of Holland, Balletinstituttet (Oslo, Norway), the Australian Contemporary Dance Company, and the Ballet Palacio das Artes (Belo Horizonte, Brazil). His classic, "Las Desenamoradas," has been mounted on the Cincinnati Ballet.

Early in 1991, as adjunct professor of dance at Hofstra University, Mr. Pomare created a new work called "Epitasis" on the graduating class in the dance department. Since that time the work has been performed by several companies including a critically acclaimed performance by the Eleo Pomare Dance Company. He is presently once again serving as adjunct professor in the dance department at Hofstra University through the Spring, 2000 term.

Three of Mr. Pomare's outstanding works have been reconstructed to document them as classics of "The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance," a project of the American Dance Festival supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. They include: "Las Desenamoradas" a work inspired by Garcia Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba;" "Blues for the Jungle" a work first choreographed in Europe about 1962 under the title "Harlem Moods;" and "Missa Luba" a dance pageant set to a Congolese version of the Catholic Mass. "Las Desenamoradas" was performed at the 1988 American Dance Festival at Duke University, "Blues for the Jungle" in 1989, and "Missa Luba" in the summer of 1990.

Mr. Pomare's "Hex" was chosen to appear on the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble's Spring, 1994 season. "Plague" appeared on the 1995 and again on 1996 season of the same company. Mr. Pomare was invited to Adelaide, Australia as guest choreographer for the 1994 Spring term at Adelaide's Centre for the Performing Arts. There he choreographed a major new work entitled, "A Horse Named Dancer." He returned to Australia in the Fall of 1995 as the featured teacher and choreographer at the Mirramu Dance Festival near Canberra. Mr. Pomare is currently working with the Alpha Omega Theatrical Dance Company where he has been commissioned to create a new work for their Spring, 2000 season.
Eleo Pomare
325 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011-5959

Lectures and Personal Public Appearances

- Mr. Pomare has been, and continues to be, a frequent lecturer on modern dance, black artists and their artistic heritage including lectures at the Alvin Alley International Student Exchange, New York Public Library, Tisch School for the Arts (New York University) and Young Audiences. He has also lectured at the Brooklyn Museum, the Schomberg Library, and at numerous colleges and universities.

Special Recognition, Grants and Awards

- The National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts have been yearly contributors in support of the Eleo Pomare Dance Company. Other contributors include the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, the Avon Corporation, and McGraw-Hill.
- In addition to the John Hay Whitney Fellowship, Mr. Pomare is a Guggenheim Fellow. He is the recipient of numerous other awards acknowledging excellence in his art. These include the New Voices of Harlem.
- David Dinkins, declared January 7, 1987, "Eleo Pomare Day" for New York City in honor of Mr. Pomare's contributions to the cultural life of New York City.
- Presented with the Key to the City of Messina, Italy, 1986.

Theatrical Nominations, and Awards

- The TOR Superior Artistry Award 1983.
- The TOR Award for Direction and Choreography.
- The AUDELCO 1983-84 nomination for Excellence in Choreography for "Destiny in My Hands".
- The AUDELCO 1983-84 nomination for Excellence for Director/Musical Production for "Destiny in My Hands".
- The New Voices of Harlem award for Artistic Achievement, 1988
- Alpha Omega Theatrical Dance Company, Salute to Living Legends, 1993
- The International Conference of Blacks in Dance Outstanding Achievements in Dance Award, 1994
- Award of Appreciation for Professional Contribution to the John Dewey H.S., Brooklyn, NY, 1999

Professional Positions

- Artistic Director and President of Board of Directors, Eleo Pomare Dance Company (1958-2000)
- Executive Planning Committee, International Conference of Black Dance (1992- Present)
- Board of Advisors, American Dance Festival (1992- Present)
- Founding Committee, CODA/NYC (1994-1997)

Studied Under

- Jose Limon, U.S.A.
- Louis Horst, U.S.A.
- Curtis James, U.S.A.
- Asadata Dafara, U.S.A.
- Kurt Jooss, Germany
- Harold Kreutzberg, Switzerland

Telephone: 212-924-4628
Preserving Our Aesthetics and Traditions in Dance

I am from, and have been influenced by, the artists from what I consider one of the richest periods in American modern dance history. A period when individualism was so important that you went to concerts to see another point of view. It was exciting to go to dance concerts. We grew through our different-ness, white artists, as well as black artists. My focus is on the Black artist. We are not all alike. We were not alike then and should not all be alike now. All art comes from a peoples' customs and culture -- the music we make, the dances we do, the poetry we write, the paintings we paint, are reflections of our realities as well as our dreams and aspirations. Black people are multi-faceted -- though we might share similar complexions, similar social and political situations and pain -- the wide variety of our experiences leads to different perceptions. Our handicap has been the way we are portrayed by the media, controlled by the dominant white heterosexual male culture -- dehumanized, demonized, exoticized to become toys which white society uses to titillate itself. Our finest qualities are ripped-off and assimilated into the "mainstream" Americana in order to enhance or revitalize faded European aesthetics. Once absorbed, we become invisible. Witness the jazz and gospel traditions in music and jazz, tap, Afro-Caribbean traditions, and other forms in dance. Visibility is difficult to maintain and is our constant struggle.

Many writers have lumped dance created by Black choreographers into "Black Dance."
That means that "we" all do the same thing -- no need to see us as individuals since we are all the same race and color anyway. Some of our own writers and historians are guilty of perpetuating these lies by copying the opinions and attitudes of the white press. Why are quotes

Telephone: 212-924-4628
Eleo Pomare Dance Company

February 25, 1995

from the New York Times, The Village Voice, The Washington Post, and Dance Magazine so sought after? Black dance has already been defined by the white press and we have been going along with it. Some of us know our point of view, what our aesthetic ideals are, and search for the lines in the reviews that we can use on a poster or on a brochure. For Black dancers, companies, and choreographers, there is a "special" vocabulary. The quotable words are frequently: "sizzling," "athletic," "inexhaustible energy," "gyrating antics," and on and on. Not that these words aren't used elsewhere, and I am not saying that they are not intended to be positive comments, but these white writer's on whom our success or failure often depends, draw from a different pool of adjectives when reviewing white dance.

During my stay in South Africa I had the opportunity to teach in many places. I decided to put emphasis on exploration - not bringing movements - not leaving with movements. This was the first time that a white company had ventured into the township to take a dance class. The teachers carried notepads and camcorders. I asked them not to tape or write notes during my workshop. I did not teach Jazz, Graham, or any of the other techniques recognizable to them as American, but rather, I focused on the local African dancers. We worked with native movements, first improvisationally, and then compositionally on variations - dynamic levels. They had never thought of using their own heritage in order to expand to its infinite possibilities. The majority of white dancers were perturbed when I asked then to work out of a frame that came from an aesthetic that was not synthetic, as in classic ballet - but instead worked with authentic movements motivated by ritual, religion, and the life style of the indigenous people. Their instructor resented the fact that I explained that I was not there to impose European aesthetics on the township.

Worse yet, I had the nerve to treat the local aesthetic as if it were art. I was not upset when these teachers wrote a letter to the African Arts Fund which brought me to South Africa, protesting AAF's support for me as an artist. Their complaint was that I was insulting to "South African" (read that "European") culture. Only three dancers of the forty from the township were willing to venture into the city to take ballet lessons at an otherwise all-white studio. All of the people
including the ones from the place where I was teaching wrote glowing reports and they have all made requests for my return. It would be an enriching experience to return. However, I ain't ready to die yet and definitely not in Johannesburg. A shocking related incident, is that the director of the white company got a young black man, whom they promised a position in their company, to sign his name to the letter. The young man was the only Black male in the all-white modern dance company. The company claimed by his token presence to be "multi-cultural" and tossed in an African movement in their work now and then to prove it.

Is it conceivable that a Black artist can create works which are not identifiably white, not gay, not Latin, not Asian --but pull from all of these aspects of his or her heritage and in that way address universality? My answer is, "Yes, there are many of us right here at this conference who have rich backgrounds that transcend the pigeon-holing that leaders of the arts' establishment would like to impose on us."

Our cultural institutions are still mainly white and self-serving - elitist - that support the European view that all art coming from outside their perimeters is inferior. Grant applications classify this art as "other" and provide only the crumbs as the reward for applying. I would like to emphatically announce to the establishment that other parts of the world did not wait in darkness for Europe to bring them the Light. The rest of the world did not wait in darkness for Europe to bring them culture, an infinite variety of music and dance, or the creative use of clay and color. I would like to announce to this audience that in order to survive, we have to move from "How do they see us?" to "How do we see us?"

In a 1971 issue of Vogue magazine George Balanchine, then artistic director of the New York City Ballet Company, gave a description of what the ideal ballet dancer should look like, "Their skin should be pale...you know, the color when you first peel an apple." He went on to emphasize the need for a small head, long extensions, perfect arches, and so on. In September of the same
year Billy Wilson responded to Mr. Balanchine in *Feet* magazine. He said that however poetic Mr. Balanchine's metaphor of the "pale apple" might be, the whole truth is that the apple begins to turn brown as soon as its inner self is exposed to the world. Little Black minstrels need not apply to be performers in Mr. Balanchine's company, but by all means, come by to take lessons. This attitude still permeates dance from Copenhagen to Rio De Janeiro. Ballet like any other dance form is concerned with a particular kind of movement, not with a particular complexion. Thanks and much respect goes to Arthur Mitchell and the dancers of Dance Theatre of Harlem for proving that. Thanks to him, color has swept through the heretofore lily-white ballet world.

What we know today as "jazz," a strictly American phenomenon that Broadway has adopted as its dominant vernacular, comes from the pioneering work of such choreographers as Katherine Dunham, Talley Beatty, and Louis Johnson. Although not much is said or written about it, Michael Olatunji changed and clarified the face of what was once called, "primitive." Chuck Davis carries on the torch in this tradition.

Once I thought that the Black tap dancers working the vaudeville circuits should be given the opportunity to choreograph and experiment with that form. Even tap is now telling stories.

Thank you Bo Jangles, Peg Leg Bates, and Coles and Atkins. Mercedes Ellington is now expanding the horizons of this traditional style. Some of her works remains faithful to tradition, others use the traditional as a springboard and incorporate other dance forms.

Keeping the torch lit by forerunners like Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, Asadafa Dafora, Charles Hoskins, Donald McKayle and Alvin Ailey -- people who transformed plain anthropology and pain into beautiful live art -- will remain inspirational springboards keeping the river of our culture flowing. We have a history. We have voices, but our songs are different. We were not alienated. We thought in terms of "Let's do something together."
Aesthetics deal with the nature of that which is beautiful, artful, tasteful, and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. There is a Black aesthetic. It is not only beautiful, but powerful and influential. I love to tell a personal story about Martha Graham in regard to the power of the Black aesthetic. Martha confirmed to me that she once told Pearl Primus, "Don't show me anything that you don't want me to steal." Study the art of West Africa, Benin -- Ife, Ashanti. Then study the works of European greats who studied the masks and colors, and sculptures of these so-called Primitive people -- Picasso, Brancusi, Modigliani.

This is a time for re-grouping, studying more about our history and heritage and to encourage our dancers to be more well-rounded. Read more, see paintings from the past and present, become more interested in the other art disciplines, and in general enrich yourselves. Your have a rich heritage from which others have borrowed liberally. It's yours, don't let it slip away from you. High extensions and 6 o'clock stretches will not make you an artist. Being well-rounded and well-informed will help. So turn off the M.T.V. mentality NOW!
DANCERS REJECT CHEQUERS STAGE

Premiere now called off

The Eleo Pomare dance company today refused to perform at its premiere tonight in Chequers Theatre, Prospect, because they say it is unsafe.

The company's artistic director, Mr. Eleo Pomare, said 'tomorrow's performance was "definitely off."'

It is understood about 1,000 people had booked for the premiere.

Late today, Mr. Pomare and Festival organizers were exploring the possibility of the group performing at the Warmer Theatre, King William Street from either tomorrow or Wednesday night.

This morning the Festival of Arts director, Mr. Michael Levy, said the group was "unavailable and they confirmed this yesterday after some equipment of the Philipines Banganga Dancers had been checked.

As a result, Mr. Pomare has agreed to perform at another venue for the show.

Managing director of the Eleo Pomare dance company, Mr. Michael Levy, said Chequers was "absolutely unsuitable" for their modern dance group.

Venues

"It is not consistent with artistic integrity and it would be dangerous to our dancers," he said.

The dancers often rush off stage, sometimes carrying another dancer, and they would be in danger of injuring themselves because of the stage design.

"We have some half a dozen artists around the world for this," Mr. Levy continued. "Chequers Theatre is just not good enough. I understand other productions have to do with the theatre and issues they have been given—but we cannot do this.""}

Dr. Levy said he, the artistic director, Mr. Pomare, Mr. van Eysen and Mr. Robertson had made a tour of the city the day before in an attempt to find a suitable theatre.

When the group went to Chequers Theatre on Friday, the day after their arrival, they considered it would be unsuitable, but they were told a venue would be available.

"By David Lewis"

Dr. Levy, who is also the president of the American Foundation of Vital Arts, said it would cost about $15,000 in transportation costs alone by the time the group returned to the USA.

This was being paid by the foundation, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, and the organizers, he said.

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ECONOMY FORECAST

Manufacturers forecast the Australian economy could pick up in about six months.

Hostages held

An invalid pensioner threatened to shoot five hostages in a Sydney suburb today.

FESTIVAL REVIEWS

Our critics review more attractions at the Adelaide Festival of Arts.

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THE NEWS

Adelaide: Monday, March 20, 1972

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ELEO POMARE
DANCE COMPANY

This exciting company, under the artistic direction of choreographer Eleo Pomare, toured Europe extensively and met with wild, enthusiastic acclaim wherever it appeared. The Pomare Company is an integrated but predominantly Negro company with its home in New York. It breaks away from conforming stereotypes of Negro and primitive dance, presenting instead a striking programme of contemporary dance. Their Festival programme will include Eleo Pomare’s “Blues for the Jungle,” “Burnt Ash,” a memorable anti-war piece and “Radiance of the Dark,” featuring Eleo Pomare in the lead. South Australian Jennifer Barry, at present with the company in New York, will make a guest appearance with them during the Festival.

“Elean Pomare introduced a large public to a strange dance world last night. This performance brought the audience to their feet in a storming ovation.”
—Nieuw Eindhovense Krant, Holland.

“A most powerful dance work, full of remarkable images of despair, anger, Savagery... his subject—matter is man, ability.”

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Festival artists fly BOAC

FESTIVAL ARTISTS FLY BOAC
Negro dancer Eleo Pomare is brilliant in more ways than one. He arrived at Adelaide Airport yesterday with 11 members of his dance company, dressed in gold and red tapestry pants, maroon sweater and cocky gold velvet hat. His dance company was formed in 1938 in New York and, using Negro talent, performs contemporary modern dance.

In the company's dance, "Blues for the Jungle," the backing is classical, mixed with noises of the Jungle.

One of the dancers, Lillian Coleman, is pictured with a rose after her arrival in Adelaide.

A "surprise" member of the group is Adelaide-born Jennifer Barry, 23, who is studying dance in America on an Arts Council of Australia scholarship.

She will dance with the group in its Australian tour and return with it to America.
Two views of the moderns

DANCE

rate company can present modern ballet with dance interpretations which have the artistry of a thoroughly professional finish. They show, too, how it should all be done when only a bare stage with few props are used, and the only color is that in costume and lighting: just the right amount to highlight the drama of the dance.

Bellowing cloaks of electric blue, green, and red, sweep across the stage in "Missa Luba," while in "Movements" beautiful bodies clad in next-to-nothing write and glide in perfect union, with just a dash of bright color giving their lines. "Gin, Woman, Distraction" is a tragic gem danced in the confines of a spotlight by Carole Johnson clad in black frock and blonde wig and the strong "Blues for the Jungle," a social commentary, uses telling theatrical effects to get its message over.

The overall result is artistic and exciting and deserves the highest praise, but I do wish the sound could be toned down a little.

Modern dance with its usual accompaniment of penetrating unusual sound, is a powerful form of expression and even when handled expertly can be exhausting to watch and to listen to.

especially if a sequence is too long!

The West Australian company, showed its capabilities in a pleasant, well-balanced program made up of two modern ballets and the ever-popular "Pineapple Poll."

"Woman of Andros" choreographed by Garth Welch to the music of Men's Bedings, is danced smoothly and efficiently by the whole company. Marilyn Jones has fine stage presence and her well-disciplined performance is outstanding. "The Glaze," choreographed by the artistic director of the company, Rex Reid, cleverly suggests the Japanese idiom and is executed with gentleness, flowing grace.

Robin Haig's tender interpretation of the wife is most appealing in contrast to Laurence Bishop's sensual, virile bandit. "Pineapple Poll" brightened as it went along to become the gay, happy ballet which is such an audience pleaser.

Warm and colorful

The second Eleo Pomare Dance Company program was even more impressive than the first.

The music adjusted to the right tone was a warm, appropriate accompaniment to the dance, and the use of color was exploited fully to gain maximum effect. Every item is worth mentioning, but particularly outstanding are Eleo Pomare's modern leather - jacket - costume in "Hecuba's Rising," with its glittering, swaying body silhouette in a spotlight on the backdrop behind him;

Jennifer Barry's exquisite interpretation of "Passage;" and the final, "Burnt Ash," which tells of the killing of mankind since Herod sent his "men of might ... all children young to stay ..." What begins as a train being pushed around the stage becomes a large black coffin up-ended on wheels.

The sequence is danced by the whole company who move among the audience at the end touching their hands and murmuring "peace" ... "peace" ...

Eleo Pomare has a remarkably fine sense of theatre.

Marian de Boehme

BOYCOTT BY DANCERS

An upset Mr. Pomare said he was very disturbed about the planning venue for his dance group.

"They knew what we would be putting on," he said, "It is disappointing, to say the least, for us to find ourselves in this position."

Mr. Pomare said that if a suitable theatre could not be found, the group would go on to its next scheduled appearance in Canberra without appearing here at all.

The dance group was booked to appear at Chequers from tonight until the end of the Festival - Saturday night.

Dr. Levy said that if the show went on, they might arrange matinees or extend their stay to Sunday to allow people to see them.

One of the members of the group is a South Australian, Miss Jennifer Barry, of Leabrook.

Miss Barry, who is with the New York-based dance company on a grant from the Australian Council for the Arts, said: "If Adelaide wants its Festival to grow and continue bringing our international companies, it must give them proper theatres in which to perform."

Dr. Levy, who is also president of the American Foundation of Vital Arts, said it would cost about $15,000 in transportation costs alone by the time the group returned to the U.S. This was being paid by the foundation, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and the Festival organisers, he said.

Lottery 340 tomorrow

Drawn at 9 a.m.
Emotional dancing
by Pomare group

The second programme by the Eleo Pomare Modern Dance Company of New York of the Warner Theatre last night covered a wide range of emotions powerfully expressed.

Pomare's gripping exposition of Lorcza's dramatic play, "The House of Bernardine Allen," conveyed the mother's domination and the frustrated passions of the five daughters with staggering effect.

Flashes of color were superimposed on the black pattern by Carole Simpson in white and Lilian Coleman as the young girl in love, while the Spanish style of the three men and the sultriness (Frank Ashley) heightened the impending sense of tragedy.

In "Narcissus Rising," company's story were evident in the cleavage between "Radiance in the Dark" and "Passage," with an illuminating soundtrack by the Harms most realistic.

It was while on a scholarship to Europe that negro dancer Eleo Pomare began to win acclaim.

And it was there that South Australian dancer director Elizabeth Dalman met him and later became a disciple of his art.

Her program for the Australian Dance Theatre have included many of choreographed works.

One of her company's most brilliant students, Jennifer Barry, is studying with him in New York now.

Miss Barry will return with the company in March. Although Pomare's company is mainly negro it includes whites.

Among his works the company will perform at the Adelaide Festival of Arts are "Burning Ash" and "Blues Jungle" — the work that brought him his first acclaim.

The work traces the black man's history from the times the first slaves arrived in U.S. to one man's cry of anguish

THEATRE

live in the Harlem Jungle. It traces their despair and anguish.

One U.S. critic says of it: "The Jungle that is Harlem makes the street scenes of West Side story look like a Sunday school picnic."

She went on to add that behind the bare-breasted slave auction, the violence and sexual connotations from tene-ment windows there existed some of the most cogent and brilliant dancing on the American platform today.

This dance, which mirrored the misery of junkies, alcoholics and loneliness, was screened in the Australian Dance Studios two years ago.

It saw it and was overwhelmingly impressed. Never have I seen such moving and dramatically different dancing before.

Much of Pomare's dances are potent shock pieces. Sexual sadism, masochism and the grotesque are part and parcel of his work. There is also great beauty and sensitivity.

What he is trying to show is the feeling of being trapped and imprisoned and the frantic struggle to get out.

Pomare, born in South America, brought up in the slums of New York, knows the feeling well. He conveys it with a raw abrasive quality in his dances.

This company, which has electrified U.S. and Europe with its disciplined power charged dance drama pulls no pretty stunts.

Neither is it jungle beating primitive. "We don't want to show white crowds how charming, strong and folkloric negro people are," says Pomare.

But Pomare, who claims he is a teacher rather than an entertainer, says he is not the typical angry man.

"I don't think I'm so much angry as alert." Like many artists, he won his distinction over-
BLACK DANCE TEAM PLANS

MELBOURNE.— It won’t be long before Australian Aboriginals have their own dance company, says American star modern dancer Carole Johnson.

"I decided, at the invitation of the Australian Council of the Arts, to teach modern dance techniques to your black people."

Carole is black power, believing that black is beautiful.

"This concept of black power is having results in the States," she said.

"It is giving black people more confidence in themselves, a new approach to life, and today more opportunities are opening up for them than ever before.

"It is so much better than violence and its effects are far-reaching."

She said the Northern Territory and Queensland Aboriginal ballet on its way to dance in Fiji, and was very impressed.

"Some of the dancers are brilliant," she said. "They are fascinating."

"What a nucleus for a permanent black dance company here."

Carole, Johnson, slender, black, with definite features, was at the Australian Ballet Centre in Melbourne to meet the Australian ballet modern dance master, Jack Manuel, and to arrange a short school. Later on, to teach her modern dance techniques and dance to his pupils.

She met the 18 year old Aboriginal ballet student Roslyn Watson, from Queensland, in her second year with the Australian ballet.
Dynamic U.S. modern dancer Carole Johnson flew into Adelaide today and soon after was showing her acclaimed style at a city studio (ABOVE).

And she brought with her some definite views on Aboriginal problems in Australia.

Miss Johnson is currently working among Aborigines at Redfern, Sydney, on a study grant from the Australian Council of the Arts.

She is in Adelaide to appear with the Australian Dance Theatre tomorrow, Friday, and Saturday night; and next week to conduct a special course in modern dance at the Elizabeth Dalieman School of Contemporary Dance.

Miss Johnson said Aboriginal problems in urban areas were not generally greater than those of other minority groups.

"Housing, conditions, land rights, and jobs are some of their main problems," she said.

In Sydney, Miss Johnson is teaching modern dance to Aborigines, and studying traditional Aboriginal dance.
Negro helps Aborigines

By a Staff Reporter

An Aboriginal artistic revival is underway in Australia.

One of the revivalists is Miss Carole Johnson, a Negro dancer who was with the American dance company of Ello Pomare.

She is in Adelaide to perform with the Australian Dance Theatre tonight.

Since her appearance with the Ello Pomare company at the Adelaide Festival of Arts, Miss Johnson has set up an Aboriginal modern dance workshop in the Sydney suburb of Redfern.

She has received a $5,000 grant from the Aboriginal Arts Development division of the Australian Council for the Arts to establish a black theatre.

She said yesterday there was a basic similarity between the Negro in ghetto conditions in New York and the urban Aborigine.

"They need a central community activity, and they can relate to music and dance," she said.

"Miss Johnson said she would tour Australia for three months to study traditional Aboriginal dances.

Carole Johnson... "similarity between Negro ghettos and urban Aborigine."
DANCING WITH THE ABORIGINES
"An Overview of the Work of an American Dancer with Indigenous Australians"

By Carole Johnson

By the time I was in my 3rd year at Julliard, I was beginning to wonder what I would contribute to dance that was different and special. Like many young people studying ballet I dreamed I would become the greatest ballerina in the world. Working in Australia to help Aboriginal Australians to achieve their dreams of a career in dance was certainly not my career plan. Yet in my first performing visit to Australia I started developing the vision, program and team that brought about a national acceptance of Aboriginal modern dance as a universal representation of the Art of Dance. Twenty-four years later, it was not only possible but natural for Stephen Page, an Aborigine, to represent Australia as choreographer in the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

My work in Australia started early in 1972 - some five years after I had become a soloist in Eleo Pomare's Dance Company and discovered I had an organisational flair unusual for a dancer. To make sure the company had work, I helped Eleo's manager organise performance bookings. Later, as part of the founding group of the Association of Black Choreographers, I worked on its projects. In 1967, Emory (Ed) Taylor, of the Harlem Cultural Council, approached me with the idea of Eleo's company creating a dance work for a Dancemobile, a concept of taking dance performances to New York City neighborhoods on a flatbed truck.

Ed Taylor assured me the Dancemobile would be easy to arrange because State and City funding agencies were interested. He then introduced me to Doris Freedman, director of NY City's Office of Cultural Affairs, left me with some notes about the Dancemobile idea and then went away on a summer performing job. I was excited because the project would give Eleo Pomare's Dance Company summer performing work. Immediately, I started tackling the tasks necessary to achieve the City's first ever Dancemobile. Money was the first challenge. I made a budget, and then with Doris' help, coordinated funding through Ken Dewey of the NY State Council on the Arts and was introduced to Hoffman Beverage Company who became our commercial sponsor. Ken helped me arrange a bank loan because the government money would not be available until after the summer ended.

While making sure the financial resources were secure, I began all other tasks associated with producing. This included negotiating contracts with builders, a trucking firm, dancers and musicians. A small office and technical staff for the project had to be hired and performing locations coordinated. The Harlem Cultural Council was a volunteer community organisation with no permanent office or staff and so administrative procedures had to be developed since its officers, who worked all over the city, signed the checks. In addition, I worked closely with Eleo on the artistic content and rehearsed because I mostly I considered myself a dancer on the project. After doing all of the above and getting the Dancemobile on the road for some thirty performances, I learned that this project had been considered for several years by the Harlem Cultural Council, but had been put into their "too hard basket". The Dancemobile continued to be an annual summer project for NY City for the next twenty-four years.
Meanwhile, I continued to perform and tour whenever Eleo had work. In between I supported myself by performing with other companies, teaching and consulting. Gradually organising work took precedence over teaching. After coordinating the Dancemobile another year, I established Modern Organisation for Dance Evolvement (MODE) in order to promote African-American professional dance. Through MODE I initiated and edited, THE FEET, the first monthly magazine devoted to Black Dance. In 1971 as Affiliate Artist to NY City's Department of Parks and Recreation, I began creating a solo performance program and developing public speaking skills. By late 1971, Modern Organisation for Dance Evolvement (MODE) had developed a strong committee that began to plan the first national dance conference for Blacks in dance.

My interest in performing was beginning to lessen by the time the Pomare Company had been invited to participate in Adelaide, South Australia's prestigious international arts festival. I had taken a three months leave of absence to go on a study tour of dance in three countries of West Africa. This was made possible by a fellowship from the New York State Council on the Arts. At Eleo's request, I returned to perform with the company in Australia. I would then leave the company and travel to South East Asia to look at dance and the effects of colonialism on the people and institutions. Little did I imagine that I would become committed to Aboriginal Australia’s struggle for self-determination.

The Pomare Dance Company arrived in Australia in March about six weeks after the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established on the lawns in front of Australia's national Parliament House in Canberra. We stayed one month performing in Adelaide and Sydney. The company’s socially relevant performances alerted Aboriginal cultural leaders that modern theatrical dance was another way to express political issues.

The Tent Embassy, which remained in place from January until the end of July, influenced me greatly. This symbol of Aboriginal resistance captured the imagination of the national and international press. I still hold vivid memories of the Australian television coverage of the erection of the Tent Embassy. Four months later I would be seen on television as one of the crowd of supporters defying the Commonwealth government's hastily made law that enabled police to tear it down. For the first time ever, viewers saw Aborigines being beaten by police as they forcibly removed the tents and people. This action initiated two Demonstrations to replace it and I participated in both. It was finally removed, though not permanently because it is up now as a reminder of that period and the current struggle to maintain the 1992 High Court's overturning of the concept of "terra nullius" – that the continent was empty, unowned land before 1788.

As previously planned with Eleo, I left the company and, encouraged by an invitation from the Arts Council of Australia, chose to remain in Australia. In the next five months I visited rural and traditional Aboriginal communities and initiated regular workshops with Sydney's Redfern Aboriginal community. In these classes urban Aboriginal people learned how to create dances to express their social concerns, were introduced to traditional movements and began to explore ways to fuse traditional Aboriginal movements with modern dance movements. These workshops initiated the practice of inviting Aboriginal Elders to connect with urban Aboriginal youth.
Although white university students had been encouraged to meet and learn from Aboriginal elders before this, *formal* opportunities for *Aboriginal* people to learn from Elders had been mostly unavailable to urban Aboriginal people.

As a guest of the Australian government, I had access to traditional Aboriginal culture denied most urban Aboriginal people. For instance, at a reception at the Australia Council where I performed Eleo’s “Bessie Smith”, I saw — for the first time — traditional Aboriginal dance as performed by masters skilled in their craft. David Gulpilil, seen in the US in the films *Walkabout, Storm Boy, The Last Wave, and Crocodile Dundee* — was the first of many Aboriginal dancers who so impressed me that I decided to find a way for people in the US to see this unique dance. Likewise, I realised that my urban Aboriginal students would also like to see what I had seen. Later with the help of Jennifer Isaacs, then an officer of the Council, we organised an opportunity for the urban dancers and others to see a performance of traditional dancers who were going to Fiji to participate in the South Pacific Festival of Arts and Culture. Usually such performers passed through Sydney having no contact with Sydney’s urban Aboriginal population.

Working in Redfern, Sydney’s urban Aboriginal community, I was surrounded by fearless Aboriginal people intent on opening Australia’s eyes to racist and oppressive policies that kept them repressed. Students from the fledgling dance group I started were part of the political action. We participated in a street protest organised for National Aborigine’s Day in early July. The group and I took part in the demonstrations that occurred later in July and August 1972 when the Tent Embassy was torn down three times by the Commonwealth police.

Eventually I would evolve a dance work, patterned after Eleo’s – “*Blues for the Jungle*, portraying this major turning point in Aboriginal people’s political struggle for recognition of their prior ownership of the land. The dance group presented a second version of “*Embassy*” in the first modern dance concert held at the Friends Meeting House in Surry Hills just before my September, 1972 departure.

The first version had been part of the demonstration to protect the Embassy in Canberra. The third version of the work – “*Embassy: The Challenge*”, retained the basic structure but replaced the American music of Sun Ra, Bernice Regan and Gary Barts to Aboriginal music by Bobby Mcleod, Bob Randall, Harry Williams and the Country Outcasts and traditional Aboriginal music and spoken words. New solos and connecting transitions were created. It was premiered in 1978 in the Recording Hall of the Sydney Opera House as part of Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre’s (AIDT) annual End-of-Year Show.

The first modern dance show of 1972 must be remembered as a milestone for urban Aboriginal people. The students who had never had any dance training presented the first politically relevant dance work that grew directly from their participation in the Canberra Tent Embassy demonstrations. “*Embassy*” and other works included the first attempts of a continuing Aboriginal exploration of blending and adapting traditional dance movements within modern dance. About fifteen years later audiences at “AIDT” and “Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia” performances and critics such as Jill Sykes began to acknowledge that a *fusion* style was emerging and augmenting, as works of former students became professionally recognised.
After five months in Australia, MODE was demanding I return to work on the Black dance conference. I still delayed and fulfilled my desire to visit South East Asia by proceeding with a State Department solo performance tour of three countries. My overseas interests in dance and politics were keeping me from issues directly connected with organising the final stages of the First National Congress of Blacks in Dance, the conference sponsored by MODE. Its committee and administrator of the project, Shelby Freeman, had firmly established details for running the Congress, which was to be held at the University of Indiana in Bloomington in June 1973. They had already effectively organised the Eastern and Southern states and Alicia Adams was editing The Feet. As artist in residence visiting various West Coast cities, my job was to make personal contact with dance leaders in the Western United States. This historic conference drew more than three hundred people from coast to coast, with representatives from every dance company and every dance idiom in which African Americans participated.

Again Australia called. The dance club that I had started in Redfern was now the major workshop of Sydney’s Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. It was going to lose its teacher, Lucy Jumawan, a Filipino ballet dancer/teacher who had studied many dance forms including modern and African forms at Jacob’s Pillow, a world famous dance summer school and festival established by Ted Shawn in Lee, Massachusetts. Euphemia Bostock - a dedicated member of the group, wrote me in hope that I would return to assure the continuity of the group. It had taken them nearly six months after I left in 1972 to find Lucy, an inspirational teacher who continued their development.

I missed the five day National Seminar On Aboriginal Arts (May 21-35, 1973) called by the new federal government to formulate goals and principles of the newly established Aboriginal Arts Board. I heard from Brian Syron, an Aboriginal Actor who had studied in the US, the story of an unexpected major political outcome. For the first time Aboriginal Artists - traditional, country and urban - from all over Australia met each other at an official level. In the midst of the seminar there was an emotional outburst from Andrew Jackomas, an urban Aboriginal filmmaker seeking acceptance of his identity as an Aboriginal person. In a special meeting, urban Aboriginal people of mixed heritage were accepted as Aboriginal people by Aboriginal elders who told the government that anyone who recognised their Aboriginal blood, must be accepted as Aboriginal. Their statement initiated an official acceptance of urban Aboriginal people as 'Aboriginal' regardless the percentage of Aboriginal blood.

Before taking up the invitation to return to Australia, I completed post conference work of the First National Congress of Blacks in Dance (June 1973). Then I went to Iran in September as a U.S. delegate to the UN’s International Theatre Institute’s Third World Theatre Committee’s Conference/Festival. Finally, in November 1973, I returned to Australia. I needed relief from organising pressures in the U.S. This time my work primarily supported Lester Bostock, the interim director of Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. My activities included assisting him to obtain the building for the Centre; limited dance teaching; and finding a permanent director, who turned out to be Betty Fisher. My major artistic accomplishment was choreography for “Cradle of Hercules” a play about the establishment of the first colony in Australia (Premier, March 1, 1974 at the Ole Tote Theatre).
Aboriginal people resented that they were almost never employed in theatre or television - even to play Aboriginal people. I related strongly because as an African-American dancer, I was part of our fight to open doors in the US theatre, film and television industries. It was significant that the director of this play decided to use Aboriginal people to play Aboriginal people. In addition to creating a minuet to represent English Culture, I was asked to stage an Aboriginal burial using urban Aboriginal dancers/actors from the recently established Black Theatre. Urban Aboriginal people seemed more removed from Aboriginal traditional dance than black Americans were from African dance movements. I thought, "How can I, an American, do this?" As choreographer, I found myself in a position similar to that of Agnes DeMille who was hired as choreographer of several of the Black Broadway shows. From listening to stories of dancer friends who were in these shows, I came to find out that she had relied heavily on the creativity of the Black dancers/choreographers hired as dancers only ... so I took the tip.

David Gulpilil, a master dancer, was one of the Aboriginal people hired. He taught me about traditional Aboriginal culture, dance and music. We worked closely together. Because he functioned as my teacher, as a consultant in staging the scene and virtually choreographed his own dance, I felt both morally and politically bound that his role be publicly acknowledged. I recommended that he receive program credit of assistant choreographer. From the reactions of management at that proposal, I presume this may have been the first time an Aboriginal person received such credit in Australian theatre. Shortly after the premier I returned home.

In November 1974, I returned to Australia to assist the year and a half old Aboriginal Arts Board. Brian Syron and I were consultants to its Urban Theatre Committee. Following the resolutions of the May 1973 Seminar, we evolved a program of dance and drama workshops which we took to the Capital Cities. This groundwork led to the 1975 Six Week Performing Arts Workshop held at "Black Theatre." Twenty-six people from all over Australia completed a course that had a final performance as its outcome. The award-winning documentary, Sunrise, Awakening, by American filmmaker Ande Reese, used Andrew Jackomos as one of the cameramen. It shows the dance, drama, writing, Pitjantjatjara Language, karate workshops, the culminating performance and a final discussion in which the participants state clearly that six weeks is only an introduction to the type of training required to launch people into professional careers.

It took three trips between the US and Australia to commit me to work permanently with black Australians. Since 1972/73 three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Wayne Nicol, Euphemia Bostock, Dorathea Randall) and a South African (Cheryl Stone), had been regular students dedicated to becoming professional dancers. Within the current Australian system each had been unable to obtain consistent training and nurturing required to become a dancer. Because I began to see my future in building the possibility of a dance career for them and their children. I remained in Australia to start a training program. The course, which I called "Careers in Dance," started in October 1975. About a year later, community leaders and I named and established the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS) to provide an organisational structure for the course. Now I was ready to settle permanently even though, in establishing a school, I would be doing what I had sworn I would never to do.
In the years that I had been performing I stayed as far away from teaching as possible. It had become painfully obvious to me that I was a much better administrator and organiser than teacher. I had planned to work with professional dancers and to find ways to assist the African-American community to support dance. The Dancemobile, Black Expo, Summer on Wheels, the Association of Black Choreographers’ projects, Modern Organisation for Dance Evolvement (MODE), The Feet, the First International Congress for Blacks in Dance - these were all projects designed to build African American professional dance and community participation. However, to realise my dream of bringing to America Australian Aboriginal dance that included urban Aboriginal people, a structure was needed that included such a representative group as per the Seminar’s statement.

As there were no permanent companies nor dance schools anywhere in the country committed to training Aboriginal dancers, I accepted the fact that if it was going to be, I would have to begin it. So I started doing what came naturally. As a person in the middle, I heard both Aboriginal people’s and government officers’ needs and then designed a program that met both community and government funders’ needs. Thanks to nearly ten years performance experience with Eleo Pomare and Margaret Black’s teaching style, I had, by this time, finally become a good dance teacher and could inspire my Aboriginal students to strive to reach their potential.

After only a year of full-time training, the dancers had developed to the point that I believed we might have a professional dance company within five years. (It actually took thirteen.) However, we were encouraged by being part of Australia’s performing arts contingent to the African and Black Culture and Arts Festival held in Lagos in 1977. Prior to this, mostly traditional arts and artists were sent to represent Australia. From the Lagos Festival onwards, urban Aboriginal people with their new modern style of dance performances have always been included in international festivals where diverse groups of dancers are required.

As the years progressed, the students were introduced to a variety of styles of indigenous dance and a fuller range of modern choreographic styles including ballet, tap, modern, jazz, African styles and European folk dance. Overcoming the many obstacles of government and local Aboriginal community resentment strengthened the resolve of the determined students. We listened only to community leaders who helped me focus the vision, and we moved from strength to strength. Everyone knew the goal was to make the professional dance training course permanently available for future generations and to create an independent professional dance company.

In addition to dance, music and literacy skills, the course developed practical programs including a regular end-of-year show. This yearly season promoted as Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT) was a major educational tool. It introduced the students to the rigours of professional theatre and also introduced Sydney audiences to a wealth of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (TSI) dance styles and positive urban Aboriginal images that had heretofore been inaccessible to the general public.

Significantly we established several practical programs that provided interaction between Aboriginal people from urban and traditional communities. To study traditional Aboriginal and
TSI dance, we brought Elders to Sydney to teach urban Aboriginal students. I adapted Albert Opoku of Ghana’s concept of shifting the centre of learning from the City to the traditional community. By visiting communities, students experienced at the source the traditional dance learned in the City environment. After about six years of finding ways to make sure our budget provided for Elders to come to the City and for students to annually visit the community whose dance they studied, the traditional program was finally officially funded as part of the course.

The Remote Area Teaching Tours, initially established by Harry Haythorne of the Queensland Ballet Company (for Aboriginal ballet dancer, Roslyn Watson who had studied at NYC’s Harlem Ballet School) became a regular part of our practical teacher training curriculum. Both syllabus items had added benefits of providing services to ‘outback’ North Queensland Aboriginal and TSI communities and of reinforcing the importance of dance training to the students, their families and urban communities who saw immediate practical results.

In the fifteen years – from 1975 to 1990 - with the ten dedicated founding students and Aboriginal community leaders who supported the work, we accomplished a near miracle. This group through its successes was now convinced that modern dance was a powerful tool for self-development and community building. Additionally, the community realised the dancers helped to make their political struggle known nationally and internationally. In an environment where most white people left school at 10th grade (unless preparing for university) and Aboriginal/TSI people were being encouraged to consider only trades and clerical jobs as careers, we put dance on the government and Aboriginal community leaders’ agenda as a practical and important educational and career possibility for Aboriginal people. By 1979 “Careers in Dance” was the only dance course in NSW to have higher education accreditation (albeit at an Associate Diploma level, the lowest award possible). The Course was finally incorporated in 1987 as National Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA).

With an excellent student performing record, we had created an environment for dance employment. Still, the goal of forming a professional dance company remained elusive. Even the special grant of 1985 could not change AIDT (Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre) from a student group to the full time professional dance company, which we felt was imperative.

Finally 1988! - Australia’s Bicentennial year. 1988 for the white Australian establishment was a time to celebrate two hundred years of settlement. For Aboriginal people it was a time to mourn their losses or to state it positively - to celebrate two hundred years of survival under a genocidal system. Aboriginal people were divided into two camps: those that believed they should use the funds available to build upon and those who insisted that there should be no accepting ‘blood money’. That is there should be no participation whatsoever in any activity funded by the Bicentennial. These differing political ideologies were reflected a school which was itself a political statement.

Funding and ideological differences made it crucial to separate AIDT - (the student training company that had evolved into a company of graduates, traditional dancers and sometimes fifth year students) - from the school. The Company was now generating enough work to keep dancers fully employed and therefore the tasks related to running a company began to drain the
administrative resources of the school. Since there was an able Aboriginal administrator, Jon Alderman, willing to commit running the school, separating would make it clear to funding agencies that the company was not using school funds. The special grant, for touring N.S.W. to be available in 1989 for a company, would provide for company administration. Politically, the reason for separating was that community activists had threatened the safety of students of the school if the company participated in the Bicentennial. Though sympathetic to the Company’s desire to work, the Board became fearful that any participation in Bicentennial funded activities could put the students in jeopardy because they would be identified with the company. This threat limited 1988 company activities which would have at the least included participation in the Bicentennially funded film about dance groups of Sydney.

In partnership with three of the early NAISDA founding students (Cheryl Stone, Richard Talonga and Sylvia Blanco), committed graduates and community supporters, I established what was to be named “Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia” in 1989. By 1991 Australia’s first independently incorporated Aboriginal modern dance company had acquired the structure necessary to be a world class company and find its artistic voice. I was confident that it would survive and grow strong under predominantly indigenous leadership. Robin Bryan, a mature aged business graduate, and Cheryl Stone, who had studied and worked with me as a student, took over the administrative leadership. Stephen Page, a graduate of NAISDA who had been a member of the Sydney Dance Company, became its artistic director by 1992.

At last, I could take a rest from administrative pressure that I originally came to Australia to find. Feeling proud of the work of all the students who passed through NAISDA and the work of Bangarra, I have finally reached the age to explore a career possibility long ago put aside. Instead of writing about African-American dance, I am starting with my story of the beginnings of Australia’s indigenous modern dance training school and the companies and programs that have radiated outward in the creation of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance industry.

Completed: July 16, 1997
(Note: this version exactly the same as 9 except added date of 9 to this version so clear when completed. Also changed underlines and some quotes to italics and a few phrases to agree with circulated copy.)
Adopted and Adapted Dance since 1967

Contemporary theatre dance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (TSI) peoples whether in traditional styles or modern styles began shortly after the 1967 Referendum when people in remote communities and in urban areas began simultaneously but independently using dance as a practical means of maintaining and reawakening pride in their traditional cultures. The two streams of dance theatre, traditional and modern, run parallel and at times intersect or merge. Traditional dance, made up of two distinctive movement vocabularies one from mainland Aboriginal cultures and the other from Torres Strait Islander cultures, remained within community cultural practices until faced with the impact of Australian culture. Traditional Aboriginal dance movement vocabulary and form is based upon the still practiced ceremonies of the Dreaming. TSI dance comes from their traditional religious and social practices. Aboriginal modern dance vocabulary is developing from the urban life-style of Aboriginal people enmeshed in secular Australian culture and several generations removed from the laws of the Dreaming.

Ceremonial dances from Dreaming practices were allowed into the secular arena and adapted for contemporary dance theatre by elders from remote communities of northern Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland who despaired that cultural practices of the Dreaming were in conflict with Australian ways. To save their cultures, they decided to adapt their dance for contexts outside of the spiritual ceremonies. Darwin’s Aboriginal Theatre Foundation, incorporated in 1970, enabled the elders such as Albert Barunga, a sailor who had seen foreign places, to adapt selected ceremonial dances as secular performing art. Performances at local festivals were a means of training young people so that they would have a basis for deeper knowledge needed to perpetuate their social and religious ceremonies. Dancers who had participated in these festivals and had learned their cultural laws were thus prepared to function globally representing their elders when they performed and taught nationally and internationally.

While Arnhem Land Aboriginal elders realised that adapting their dance for secular theatrical purposes would assist them to maintain their culture, southern Aboriginal people, mostly from New South Wales, Victoria and southern Queensland, were disturbed because specific details of their traditional heritage were nearly lost to their youth. Settlement policies and several generations of city living prevented them from living on and caring for their lands. Disintegration occurred because the need to maintain ceremonies ceased. Revitalisation of their cultures through researching their dance and learning the styles of northern Aboriginal peoples enabled southern Aboriginals to develop a contemporary traditional dance theatre. This traditional style dance is evolving from the new situation among which the purposes are for psychological wholeness and racial solidarity. Though some dances are adopted from the Dreaming, urban performers, permitted to do them, are not tied by heredity to the dances performed. Sometimes sequences of dances are changed and mixing dances of different cultures within a series might also occur. This use of traditional movement vocabulary with drastic changes to meet secular performing needs could be considered as a new urban traditional or neo-traditional.

Pastor Don Brady, born on Palm Island of Kuku-Yalanji descent, attracted national
attention with the urban traditional performing group he developed in the late sixties. He believed teaching traditional dances to urban youth of Brisbane would help them find purpose in life. He met and assisted Steve Mam, a Torres Strait Islander born on Moa Island. Together they renewed their respective traditional heritage's enabling the youth to experience traditional dance's neuro-muscular patterns and the power of movement styles of the peoples of the North. Both groups performed independently and sometimes jointly at church picnics, community events and functions of various political organisations such as FACAATSI or OPAL. From these beginnings in the sixties many Aboriginal and TSI communities have since developed their own dance group performing traditional style dances adopted for contemporary presentation.

Prior to 1972 Aboriginal peoples had not considered dance as a vehicle for social change or building culture. With the exception of a few entertainers and Roslyn Watson, a classical dance student at the Australian Ballet School in Melbourne, most Aboriginal people found it impossible to study modern dance forms in Australia. The modern dance style, introduced in 1972 by Carole Johnson, an African-American from Eleo Pomare's New York dance company, provided a place in dance for those Aboriginal people who could not perform traditional dance or who were attracted to modern. Indigenous Australians were now participating in three clearly identifiable forms of contemporary dance theatre. The first is Adapted traditional as performed and developed by custodians who born in a particular Aboriginal or TSI culture retain their language and cultural practices. Neo-traditional as adopted or reconstructed traditional dance performed by English speaking urban Aboriginals renewing and revitalising nearly lost traditions and cultural practices is the second, and the third is Modern dance which adapts international contemporary dance movement vocabularies to explore Aboriginal issues and themes while incorporating obvious traditional movement patterns.

In 1972 six major national and international events, introduced mainstream Australian audiences and Aboriginal people to these three approaches marking 1972 as the start of indigenous contemporary dance theatre. Clearly traditional is the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation's production, organised by Stephen Haag and presented at the University of NSW before performing at the 2nd South Pacific Festival of Dance in Fiji. With assistance from the Aboriginal Arts Office of the Australia Council, many urban Aboriginal people of Sydney including the dancers in the newly established modern dance club, were able to see a performance produced for overseas audiences that included dance of several Arnhem Land communities. Second, Keith Glennon, another established Sydney dance producer, assisted the Lardil people of Mornington Island to bring their dance to Sydney where they performed at shopping centers, museums, libraries, and universities. In 1998 this group, (Woowera) which worked regularly throughout NSW and Victoria for nearly twenty years before relocating to Townsville, will have its 25th anniversary.

Third, the neo-traditional event was a week of performances in Brisbane's Twelfth Night Theatre by Yelangi (Aboriginal) Dance Group and the Torres Strait Island Dance troupe who shared a double bill. This first major performance in an established mainstream theatre of the two urban traditional dance groups who had been performing reconstructed traditional dance mostly for community and political events was sponsored by Joan Willey, manager of the theatre. The Yelangi Dancers performed traditional dances of North Queensland language groups including the Berriguba, Gabiegubie, Galyadoong, Wakemanken, Yumula and Woomienagie groups while the Torres Strait Island Dancers
performed mostly Western style Torres Strait Island dances recreated by Steve Mam and others.

Fourth, Sydney’s dance club performances at the Aboriginal tent Embassy Demonstrations of July and August 1972, introduced Aboriginal people and their supporters to the possibility of modern dance expressing pressing social and political concerns. These modern dancers found community purpose when performing at the Tent Embassy protests before thousands of people including Aboriginal community leaders from Adelaide to Cairns. A few weeks later in September the modern dance club presented its first theatrical show in a community hall in Sydney. This contemporary dance performance, explored traditional dance motifs, social issues relevant to the Aboriginal community and jazz dance. This is the first performance that consciously begins a process of fusing contemporary and traditional dance styles. Fifth, Roslyn Watson graduated from the Australian Ballet and was employed as a dancer by the Dance Company of NSW in 1973.

(note: I’ve shifted tenses in next paragraph because also true today, not sure what to use)

The sixth occurrence was the participation of cultural specialists from the North who were permitted (encouraged?) by their clans to come south to teach or perform for Australian mainstream institutions who increasingly were requesting these services. Dance specialists who have had rigorous on-going training are trustees of family owned ceremonies that have been practiced for generations. They have been entrusted with responsibilities of teaching selected dances from the Dreaming Cycles believed to be safe for women, children and outsiders to see without diluting the power of their ceremonies. Though specific design of movements, steps and ground patterns (choreography), differ there are commonalties of dance types that are part of the Dreaming of many different Aboriginal cultural groups. There are imitative animal dances such as the kangaroo or various bird dances such as brolga, sea gull, emu, or fish and crocodile dances. There are dances of daily life such as berry picking or oyster gathering or stylized fighting dances. The various spirit dances (devil dances) are another distinctive form. Kinship relationships have standard abstract arm positions.

Contemporary dances dreamed since Australia’s settlement with a movement vocabulary and style recognisable as traditional Aboriginal have been taught to urban groups. From Yirrkala there are dances on themes of smoking or driving a tractor; dances have been created dealing with the lack of food supplies such as “No Store” of Mornington Island and another similar one from Roper River; the Bombing of Darwin by the Tiwi people is a popular and well known dance coming from their experience of the Second World War. These dances and many others which started out as secular dances still have place and ownership under the Dreaming law.

TSI song and dances such as Taba Naba Norem, Banana, the Bow and Arrow dance and rhythm dances to drums and without song have been taught and are done by Aboriginal and TSI peoples throughout Australia.

By 1973, after the Whitlam election, Aboriginal organisations had funds and could also invite dance specialists to teach their youth. These specialists who worked with the sanction of their elders and habitually informed the home community about the dance and song they were sharing, often performed with Aboriginal groups they were teaching. David Gulpilil, one of the early dancer/actors who frequently worked in Southern capital
cities and overseas, found in 1973 an urban home at Sydney’s Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre where Lester Bostock had invited him to teach Koorie youth as part of the Centre’s Dance Workshop cultural out-reach program. Ralph Nicholls, son of Sir Douglas Nicholls, brought specialist dancers from a variety of Eastern Arnhem Land communities to teach and perform in Victorian schools, to perform overseas and to work specially with Murri youth in Aboriginal organisations in Victoria. Bob Randall, writer of the song Brown Skin Baby, grew up in Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory. In 19____ for his job with Adelaide’s ____________, he organised cultural programs for the school system and Aboriginal organisations. He often contracted specialist dancers and musicians from NT communities to work in his South Australian cultural program. (Did Ken Colbung do the same in Perth when he went there?)

Urban dancing has shifted from ceremony to stage and dance hails. Contemporary indigenous theatre dance is growing from a synthesis of three main traditions: the ancient Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and the new Australian culture that is being developed from contemporary international popular dance and theatre forms of Australia’s many sub-cultures. As with traditional dance that grew from community cultural life, so too does modern dance have many influences. Dance has always been a popular form of social entertainment. Regular Weekend dances using the latest recorded music or music of live bands had become by the 1920’s a customary release for people living in towns from Perth to Adelaide, and throughout coastal and country cities and towns in Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

From the sixties onwards most Koories, Murris and Noongas in large cities such as Sydney, Melbourne and Perth have grown up with the primary society influences that come from radio, movies and now mostly television. Fred Astair/Ginger Rodgers movies or programs such as television’s Bandstand were popular, and many people watching wished that they or a talented relative could work in film, stage or television. DORATHEA RANDALL, daughter of Bob Randall, felt a ballet teacher had demeaned her and so quitting lessons, she taught herself by watching films and television. In the 70’s, she performed in night clubs with Fijian dancer Penny Williams making up dances to the latest disco beat. Growing up in both Northern and Southern communities, Doratha Randall is the first urban modern dancer to adapt a traditional Eastern Arnhem Land devil dance form to create on RICHARD TALONGA, a modern male solo called ‘Devil Dance’. Later she created, ‘Witchery Woman’, the female counterpart specifically for SYLVIA BLANCO, a NAISDA founding student. The traditional influence is recognisable, but the choreography is contemporary and appreciated by all as modern dance. Both the traditional and contemporary dance converge in her so that today, she creates traditional and modern style dances for young performers she teaches.

The Dance Club started in 1972 continued through the efforts of EUPHEMIA BOSTOCK and WAYNE NICOL so that in 1975 after a Six Week Performing Arts Workshop at Sydney’s Black Theatre and Culture Centre, NAISDA (then AISDS) started as a full-time dance training course for indigenous Australians and several black Australians who functioned within indigenous communities. WAYNE NICOL, LILLIAN CROMBIE, MICHAEL LESLIE, DORATHEA RANDALL, Mornington Island dancer DARYL WILLIAMS replaced by PHILIP LANLEY who graduated, MALCOLM COLE, RICHARD TALONGA and South Africanborn CHERYL STONE made NAISDA into a structure in which they and children of the future could comfortably learn dance forms that would lead to employment. Teachers, such as Lucy Jumawan,
Carole Johnson, Kai Tai Chan, Robina Beard, Aku kadogo, Paul Saliba, Chrisi Kolai, Dorothy Hall, Ronne Arnold were main influencers between 1972 through 1988 and beyond. They provided a range of modern dance techniques and choreographic approaches. The students learned international techniques of European classical ballet, modern techniques such as Graham, Limon, Dunham, Horton, tap, jazz and African movement vocabularies. Margaret Walker, mother to adopted son, Kim Walker (one of the founding students of NAISDSA), taught European folk dance. This eclectic range of dance styles was provided so that indigenous Australians, who required the same dance techniques for employment as other Australians, would have a contemporary foundation and indigenous dance background for creative purposes.

By the mid 80's break dancing and rap had traveled over the ocean, air waves, and via satellite to Australian communities. Aboriginal youth like Russell Page, Graham Blanco, Shaun Choolburra, (?David Albert ?) became exciting break dancers and entered modern and neo-traditional theatrical dance via their participation in street dancing. Matthew Doyle, a Sydney teenager who had very little contact with his Aboriginal heritage became a keen break dancer and organised his own group and teaching business as early as ___ years of age. At fifteen he entered NAISDA, where introduced to Aboriginal dance, he could concentrate on traditional dance styles offered at the college. In 1997 he began exploring stories and visual records of the area of NSW from where he comes and choreographed a full-length program, "(Lyre Bird?)", based on his research and knowledge of the kinesiology of traditional dance movements.

New work practices, drugs, alcohol, violence in the community and family, political aspirations, dreams of an Aboriginal continuity, social events such as football, barbecues, family solidarity, racial harmony and disharmony, love of nature and bush, these are the elements of their new culture from which creative expression is drawn. Though the sacred ceremonies are gone, a family approach to survival in a racially hostile environment units urban Aboriginal people. Steven Page, artistic director of Bangarra Dance Theatre, created Praying Mantis Dreaming, a ballet that explores some of these themes. Together with Bernadette Walong and Djkapurra Munyarryun of Yirrkala and composer brother, David Page, they collaborated to create Ochres, a benchmark work in the ever evolving fusion style. In addition to concert dance, modern dancers who perform both traditional and modern styles are used in plays and opera to create dream sequences and relationships with the past and present such as Richard Talonga's role in Sally Morgan's play, Sister Girl or Raymond Blanco in the opera, Voss.

Aboriginal/Islander dancer/choreographers who received formal training in modern dance and traditional dance are competing in the contemporary dancer job market performing, teaching, choreographing and contributing to the development of Australia's new modern dance style. Whether chosen traditional samplings performed by traditional owners or a creative dance evolved and performed by urban people far removed from religious cultural practices, that which is distinctive of indigenous modern dance comes from Dreaming traditions which have been handed down for generations and to a lesser extent TSIs traditional dance. All indigenous people have total respect, if not functional understanding, of the laws of the Dreaming. Understanding the bounds of borrowing and sharing, which is totally different than the European way, is important for artists evolving a new modern dance style that is an amalgam of multi-national creative/commercial forms. Today there is often controversy surrounding borrowing another group's expression. None-the-less
Australia's indigenous traditional dance combined with international dance forms is the basis from which a new creative indigenous modern dance is being developed and from which Australia's new international modern dance technique will probably evolve.
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

"ABORIGINAL ARTS IN AUSTRALIA"

National Seminar
21-25 May, 1973

Aboriginal Arts Board
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

NATIONAL SEMINAR

"ABORIGINAL ARTS IN AUSTRALIA"

MONDAY, 21st MAY - FRIDAY, 25th MAY

To be held at the Australian National University, Canberra

OBJECTIVES

- review existing support for Aboriginal arts programmes in tribal regions, fringe dwelling areas and cities,
- examine roles to date of different government departments involved in this field.
- examine ways of providing a range of creative experiences and gainful employment for fringe dwellers and urban people.
- make recommendations as to the best way of assisting traditional and emerging Aboriginal art forms,
- formulate programmes to train Aboriginal children in traditional culture.

A DOCUMENTARY FILM RECORD OF THE SEMINAR WILL BE MADE BY BRUCE McGUINNNESS AND HIS TEAM OF FILM MAKERS FROM MELBOURNE.
The Canberra Theatre Trust
by arrangement with the Aboriginal Arts Board
and with the co-operation of The Canberra Times, 2CA and CTC-TV
presents

Dancers of Northern Australia

At the CANBERRA THEATRE
Saturday, May 26, 1973

Traditional dance and song by Aboriginals from
Cape York, Arnhem Land, Bathurst Island and the Kimberleys,
selected and arranged by the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation
DANCERS OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

PROGRAMME

PART I

A  MOWANJUM (near Derby, Kimberleys, W.A.)
   Albert, Laurie, Nelson, Paddy, David, Daisy & Amy
   1  Nowana (spirit dance)
   2  Bayrra (mother looking for sons)
   3  Warnggal (tribal marriage)
   4  Dyalini (lighting totem)

B  YIRRKALA (near Gove, northeast Arnhem Land, N.T.)
   Wandjuk, Alfred, Stewart, Robert, Peter, Bruce, John
   1  Young girl song
   2  Snake Dance
   3  Kangaroo Hunt
   4  Morning Star
   Owl Dance
   Purukupali
   Heron Dance

C  BAMYILI (south central Arnhem Land)
   Djoli

D  BATHURST (Bathurst Island, north of Darwin)
   Christopher, Raphael, Dulun, Simon

E  MANINGRIDA (northeast Arnhem Land)
   David, Dick, Tulbert

F  CAPE YORK (Arukun & Edward River on west coast
    of Cape York Peninsula)
   Mackie, Eric, Stingaree, Joe, Paddy, Bob, Alfred
   1  Winchanam
   2  Mungkas & Dog Dance
   3  Wanam & Wallaby Dance
   Night Fishing

G  PORT KEATS (between Darwin & Wyndham)
   Harry, Cyril, Kevin

PART II

H  BROLGA DANCES

J  SPIRIT DANCES

K  WEIPA (north Cape York)
   Kitty, Dick

PART III

L  PLAY-ABOUT SONGS

1  Funny Man – Declan
2  Mimi Dance – Djoli
3  Sugarbag Song – Cape York
4  Baby Dance – Declan
5  Tractor Dance – Yirrkala
6  Old Woman or Sick Man
7  Mulpa, Cape York

There will be no interval

Staging and lighting by Stefan Haag

The Canberra Theatre Trust expresses appreciation
for assistance from the Australian Council for the Arts
DANCERS OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIA
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7 Mulpa, Cape York

There will be no interval

Staging and lighting by Stefan Haag

The Canberra Theatre Trust expresses appreciation for assistance from the Australian Council for the Arts
Prior to its January meeting in Melbourne, the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australian Council for the Arts had announced a further series of grants totalling more than $130,000.

Although the number of applications being submitted to the Board is increasing, its budgeted funds for performing arts have been almost fully committed in both traditional and urban categories. Emphasis is now being placed on the field of visual arts among tribal groups.

The recommendations made by the 400 participants in the National Arts Seminar have reviewed favourably by the Board and in many instances written into policy.

One of the resolutions already implemented is the formation of an advisory committee on Urban Theatre, Film and Video. This Committee is composed of Brian Syron, Eileen Lester and Lester Bostock of Sydney; Bruce McGuinness and Harry Williams of Melbourne; and Mrs Ruby Hammond of Adelaide.

The Committee held discussions with Mr Charles Perkins and has obtained support from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for the lease of extensive premises in Redfern for the Sydney Black Theatre group. Community arts projects involving dance, drama and writers' workshops, pottery and crafts are being developed.

The Committee has recommended support for Black Theatre groups in all capital cities rather than the concept of limiting development to the Sydney and Melbourne groups.

Of the applications considered by the Aboriginal Arts Board, the following are those which it has recommended to the Prime Minister for approval:

**PERFORMING ARTS**

(i) *Traditional Theatre*

- Aboriginal Theatre Foundation
  - Administration and operation expenses for north Australia traditional music and dance.
  - $56,256

(ii) *Urban Theatre*

- National Black Theatre, Sydney
  - Administrative expenses and funds for workshops to be carried out in theatre building rented by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
  - $16,185

- Arts Council of Australia (Victorian Division)
  - Director's salary and administrative expenses for Nindethana Theatre for 6 months.
  - $6,700

- Arts Council of Australia (Queensland Division)
  - Assistance for theatre productions by Torres Strait Island Dance Company in Brisbane.
  - $2,550

- Arts Council of Australia (Queensland Division)
  - Assistance with first production by Black Theatre Company on Palm Island.
  - $1,000
Smoke Signals

ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD GRANTS

The Prime Minister has recently approved a series of grants recommended by the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australian Council for the Arts. A total of about $200,000 in all was approved for fifty-six projects covering the fields of theatre, music, visual arts, films, literature, crafts, etc. Among the grants were: $450 to the N.S.W. Aboriginal Land Rights Council to cover the transport costs of tribal dancers and elders to Woodenbong; $6,500 to the N.S.W. Division of the Arts Council to cover Miss Carol Johnson’s salary and expenses for 6 months as a consultant on urban Aboriginal arts programme; $3,700 to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust to cover Rosalyn Watson’s fares and living allowance while attending a 1-year course to the Dance Theatre of Harlem; $175 to the National Black Theatre to cover Mrs Euphemia Bostock’s lessons in modern dance instruction; $3,000 to the Arts Council to cover Gerry Bostock’s living expenses and secretarial assistance for 1 year while preparing for publication of a manuscript on the visit of the Aboriginal delegation to China; and $3,000 to Moree Aboriginal Advancement Association to cover the establishment of an Arts and Crafts Workshop for the local community. Some of the largest grants included: $10,600 to the Nindethana Theatre of Victoria to perform at the Adelaide Festival of Arts and at three settlements; $44,500 to the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation to cover its activities in theatre and dance across northern Australia; $15,000 to the Bathurst Island Housing Association Inc. to assist the redevelopment of facilities for the local screen printing project; $10,800 to Ompelli Literature to assist Aboriginal authors to produce books in their own language; and $14,100 for the Aurukun Festival Gathering. Enquiries about and applications for grants from the Arts Board can be addressed to: Secretary, Aboriginal Arts Board, Australian Council for the Arts, P.O. Box 302, North Sydney, N.S.W. 2050. Tel.: 920 1271.

GOANNA FARMING UNDER STUDY

Preliminary studies are being made into the feasibility of commercially farming a wide range of native fauna, including emus, goannas and wombats. If the projects could be developed, they would involve conservation principles while at the same time providing employment and livelihood for the people involved, thereby reducing dependence on social service benefits. Other species under investigation are kangaroos, Murray cod, yabbies, marron and other species of fresh water fish. The scheme may be based on that being used for turtle farming in the Torres Strait.

MOVES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH POLICE

Following recent clashes involving police and Aborigines in Redfern and other parts of the country, a special study-group has been set-up to look into relations between the two groups. The study involves Aborigines, a former police officer and State M.L.A., Mr Les Shilton, and social scientists. The group will investigate the causes of the abnormal amount of conflict between police and Aboriginal groups. It will also be responsible

Keith Riley of Dubbo with his two dogs, Dino and Buddy’s Hope.
PLEASE NOTE: p. 57 MISSING
National Black Theatre
127 Bridge Road
Glebe N S W

International Theatre Institute,
243 West Fifty Second Street,
New York City,
NEW YORK, U.S.A.


Dear Black Brothers and Black Sisters,

We are an active theatre group in Australia and we have been operating for the last year. The group consists of Black Australians (Aborigines). Carole Johnson, a Black American from the Eleo Pomare Dance Company was instrumental in starting us off.

We are a struggling group not knowing much about theatre, but we are attempting to do something. I am enclosing a copy of a paper I delivered to an art and cultural seminar here in Australia, which outlines what we are doing.

It was at this seminar I met Mark Primus who was guest speaker to the seminar. It was he who informed me of your organization.

What we would like to know is can we, as a theatre group, affiliate with your organization or have reciprocal affiliation. If so, at what fee.

Would you send us material about your institute, and is there any way in which you could inform us of any Black American artists who may be touring Australia in the future. These artists may be able to advise us and also encourage our group in the development of our Theatre.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Lester SOBICK
Administrator
Dear Carole,

Thanks for the papers from the conference. I was so happy to receive them and everything seems so interesting when you know that so many people are around to give you help and are on the same wave length; it gives me so much more to work towards. Things are starting more and more here now the dance group is the only workshop in working at the moment but we are working towards a drama & writer's workshop getting started. The people that have been left in NBT all work together and help each other in everything. The dancers teacher at the moment is Lucy Jamaican from the Philipines and she knows Cecile, she is doing ethnic dancing and the group are working real hard to get something to put on before she goes home, also we have a building in Redfern big enough to have all workshops and a theatre down at street level. Wayne is wanted to do so much dancing as he can he comes with me every Tuesday to a movement class I am so happy about for a feel that Wayne could go a long way now that he is committed to work real hard.
Towards becoming a dancer, I will be so happy when you come for altogether we have been working slowly and learning from our mistakes but we need some one with know how in Theatre on a community basis. We have six girls and two boys beside the ones that come and go, the room we have at the building for the dance classes is going to be great for waiting groups like those for them to use for practice. I am going out to Mr. Duett on Saturday to talk to some of the Mothers out there who want to see a dance work shop begin out there for the children even if we start in one of the back yards for awhile there is a young Mother out there who writes legends and set it all out of dance she has wrote one on creation the Aboriginal way of belief. Lester has a big house down the road and people who work for the theatre live with him he is keeping a room ready for you in case you may need it. David Gubayke lives with him he was teaching tribal dancing for boys for a while he will be starting again when we move into the building I hope but he seems to be used by everyone we are trying to set up a school program with tribal dances going straight into the school right to the kids have you seen Mark give him my regards for it was Mark who said to me we won't get far till we start developing our own teachers, I am doing
placement and one character class 4 a week
but I have been given a grant from the Arts Com
m to pay for these classes for as soon as it comes to
I will pay for extra classes for I want to beco
a teacher for children well Carole I'll close per
maybe you will get some idea what has bee
happening over here we have had our ups & down
but we are now moving slowly in the right
direction so I'll close till I see you till I s
you God Bless

your friend Phemie.
The Secretary,
Third World Committee,
International Theatre Institute,
254 West 52nd Street,
New York,
New York, 10019


Dear Cecil,

My name is Phemie Bostock. I am the convenor of the National Black Theatre Dance Workshop, a group which was founded by Carole Johnson in May of last year, and I have been in this position since Carole left Australia. I have just received a letter from Carole telling me about the discussions she had with you when she visited the Phillipines.

The dance group was formed to promote Black involvement and participation in all aspects of theatre, i.e. contemporary and traditional dance. At present we are purely an amateur group consisting of urban Aborigines who are interested in dance as a form of demonstrating the Cultural and Social needs of our people and the reality of the degrading life style that the Aboriginal, both tribal and urban, are subjected to.

After Carole left Australia, interest in dance seemed to die off and came to a stop for about 4 months. In June this year we gathered together and, after much discussion, decided to rebuild the dance group and were lucky enough in finding a dance teacher from the Phillipines, Lucy Jamuwan, who is working out here as a guest dance teacher. She has been working with us for about 2 months and is able to communicate with us. We have to rely on people such as Lucy because at the moment we have no aboriginal teachers to fill this role.

I am going to as many classes as possible in an effort to learn all I can and eventually become a teacher myself. I hope that when I complete my training I will be able to go to Black Communities and teach all age groups about dance and self expression.

I am very interested about the SECOND THIRD WORLD FESTIVAL CONFERENCE to be held in Iran in September this year. As the theme of the conference will be concerned with theatre as a creative force for Education and Social Development, I think it is imperative that an Aboriginal representative attend the conference. Unfortunately funds will not be forthcoming from the Australian Council for the Arts because of the late date, however, I would like to be put on your mailing list for any future conference to be held and also for any information that you could forward to me, for I am a person who hadn't previously thought of the Performing Arts as a form of communication and I would like help and any ideas or advice that I could get from the Third World Committ to help our development.

Yours faithfully,
6.4 NEW APPLICATIONS

6.4.1 PERFORMING ARTS

CAROLE JOHNSON - URBAN THEATRE CONSULTANT 11,300

Ms. Johnson will continue her work as consultant to the Aboriginal Arts Board for developing urban Aboriginal community arts programs with a special emphasis on dance until the Nigerian Festival. At that time her work will be considered as complete.

Period of work:
36 weeks - from 24 March to 29 November 1975

Ms. Johnson is asking for full-time salary. She finds herself working beyond full-time as she develops programs, consults with groups, and teaches the dance.

BUDGET:

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<td>Local travel expenses</td>
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<td>Program Expenses</td>
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ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Applicant: Ms. Carole Johnson
VOLTA
Alexandra Lane
Glebe, N.S.W. 2037

Administering Authority:
Federal Division
Arts Council of Australia
77 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060
NEW APPLICATION

6.4 PERFORMING ARTS

NATIONAL URBAN THEATRE PROGRAM

EIGHT WEEK CULTURAL AND PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM

This program for the development of Aboriginal Urban Theatre was prepared by Carole Johnson and Brian Syron. It takes into consideration some of the goals of the Urban Theatre Programme presented earlier, but relates very specifically to the current capabilities what currently exists.

It is intended to stimulate a more organic development of urban theatre that will be based on the real experiences of people participating in the program.

It will allow people from each state to function at Black Theatre in Sydney where they will see how a culture centre functions with workshops, special events, and plays.

It will help make sure time that the consultants spend in cities outside Sydney is really used to its fullest with something visible happening in that city or town.

It creates a model for a training program and a standard for the running of workshops which Aboriginal people will develop to fit their own particular needs.

It will create in each capital a small group of people who have training and will have a specific project which they can take back to their own city.

REQUIRED COURSES:  Pitjantjara language
Aboriginal Dance
Modern Dance and Choreography
Drama
Stage managing
Arts Administration

Elective courses:
Writing
Dance
Art

Participants: 5-10 people from each state and the Northern Territory.

Place: Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre - Sydney

TIME: March 31 - May 28.
BUDGET:

TUTORS AND LECTURERS FEES

- Workshop equipment (Books, Language Lab, etc) $2,000.00
- Costumes and props for $1,200.00
- Black Theatre Maintenance and Overhead $1,500.00
- Publicity and Documentation (video and film) $2,000.00
- Travel $12,000.00
- Living Allowance for Students $19,200.00 (estimate)
- Housing $8,000.00 (estimate)

$55,700.00

Additional Funding Source:
Department of Education

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Applicant: Ms Carole Johnson
Aboriginal Arts Board
P.O. Box 302
NORTH SYDNEY N.S.W. 2060

Administering Authority: Arts Council of N.S.W.
162 Crown Street,
EAST SYDNEY. N.S.W.
6.4 NEW APPLICATIONS

6.4.1 PERFORMING ARTS

FIRST URBAN DANCE THEATRE TOUR
OF N.S.W. COUNTRY TOWNS

$4,027

The Dance Workshop at Black Theatre will take their concert and visit a country town on a scheduled weekend. In addition to the performance, people in the town will be able to watch the workshop take its class and rehearse. On the following day they will conduct a workshop so that interested people in the town have an opportunity to participate.

The project is designed to fulfill the concept of creating a model that can later be followed. It is also designed to stimulate Aboriginal people in the country towns and show them what can be done in theatre. And, it is designed to help prepare the urban dance performers for the Nigerian Festival.

There will be five weekend performances. The estimate is based on travel for 1,500 miles and fourteen people traveling.

BUDGET:

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Applicant: Ms. Carole Johnson
Aboriginal Arts Board
P.O. Box 302
North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060

Administering Authority: Arts Council of N.S.W.
162 Crown Street
East Sydney, N.S.W.
BY CAROLE Y. JOHNSON

Black theater is blossoming in Australia. It is theater that affirms the black skins of the half-blooded, original people of the country. It is theater inspired by the crisis of the urban Aborigine who seeks cultural identity with his black tribal brothers who still live together on government reserves and who still practice many aspects of traditional life. Now less isolated than ever before, the urban Aborigine finds strength in knowing that millions of black people throughout the world are proud of their diverse black heritage.

This black theater rises out of the political struggle for land rights against a white supremacy that denies the black Australian many of his human rights as well. This black theater attempts to give to all Aboriginal people a positive image of themselves and dignity in their traditional and modern cultures.

It was pure coincidence that black theater sprang up in Australia in the spring of 1972 just as I arrived on tour with the Eolo Pomare Dance Company, but it was no coincidence at all that I remained in Australia long after the Adelaide Arts Festival was over and the company had left the country.

On opening night in Sydney, a group of blacks told me after the concert they were proud to be at the theater, and especially on opening night. It allowed them to think of whites and say to themselves “you might not want us here, but here we are anyway.” They said just being there was a very important thing. This group saw Eolo’s Blues for the Jungle and wanted their entire community to see it. It was the first time many of them ever thought of dance and theater as ways of expressing themselves and their social concerns. Actually, for most, it was their first time in a theater.

The Aborigines are very concerned about their culture. The black who lives in the city and who contemplates in English will tell you he has lost his culture. While maintaining some of the traditional values of family structure and respect for nature, he is desperately searching for a way of life in technological society that will not rob him of his basic convictions. In point of fact, the Australian Aborigine does not want to be assimilated into white Australian culture.

What Aborigines do want are useful skills and information about the cultures of other nations, along with a better understanding of their own. So far, Australian whites have managed to keep even urban Aborigines ignorant of both. The Aborigine is starved for contact with the outside world. He wants to express himself and tell the world about his culture and his plight.

Although they really had not thought of it before I arrived, by the time I left Sydney these people felt the performing arts were a way of expressing their discontent, and of educating their own people as well as whites.

The Australian Arts Council—probably the most forward government agency in relation to the Aborigines—gave me a small grant to remain in Australia after the Pomare tour, but no one told me what to do with it. I was supposed to be an example for the Council to see what would happen when a black American dancer came into contact with the Aboriginal people.

One of the rooms had almost no furniture, so I decided to do some exercises. I was surprised when the children would do what was
Aborigines

Continued from Page 1

planning a series for my class in Sydney when some of the children came in and started doing what I was doing. They watched and copied, and a few ran out to get some others.

I could not decide at first whether to plan a tour or try to establish a more in-depth dialogue in one place, so before long I had done a bit of both. I took up residence with an Aboriginal family on a reserve just outside of Sydney and began a dance workshop in the city; but I also managed to fit in three weeks in Adelaide with Elizabeth Dalman's Dance Theater of Australia.

I did not teach that the arts could express social issues. They knew that; until I came, they had no outlet for developing it. The stimulus from the outside pulled them together, and allowed them to express what was uppermost in their consciousness.

In fact, they had only seen the dances of Ebon Pounare, and not all of them at that. They didn't get the idea from what we did in workshop either; we didn't dance our own program until the week before I left. Though I believe that art must express what is happening to people, and must contain their human needs, I think art specifically designed to deliver a political message is dull and far removed from the emotional experience that invites insight on all levels.

What I did do was conduct a dance class two evenings a week for anyone interested. My youngest student was about 11 and the oldest in his late 30's; most were between 18 and 22. I had hoped to have more in the class, but, unfortunately, the one man who would have attracted others was so afraid of dance he scared the others away. I later learned that Aboriginal men are the dancers in traditional culture; perhaps a man would need to teach.

We worked on modern dance. I inverted the conventional modern dance class by starting with movements - runs, walks, hops, skips, constructions - to Afro-American music for the most part. I would build these movements into routines, or combinations, and after we learned a sequence we would practice it. Eventually, we stringing these sequences together to make dances. At the end of each class, we would do some exercises to build strength and consciousness of the body. I held exercises until the end because I felt they were the most important part and I wanted everyone in the class to be there so we could at least end together even if I did not start that way.

1972 marked a crucial turning point in the affairs of the Aborigines. His desperate struggle to establish a foothold in the governance of his country had reached a peak. A charismatic young actor from Queensland named Bob Marley had just introduced the idea of a National Black Theater to urban Aborigines. My workshop represented a significant change in "unofficial" government policy which had always been to keep functional knowledge of contemporary international culture and traditional culture from the Aborigines. I was invited into the Black community because I was a black American who could provide insights into international culture that the whites could not.

To the Aborigines, white help had been a means of keeping him dependent on white leadership, and too many times he had been betrayed.

Excitement and tension had been building in the Aboriginal communities since early in the year when a group of young people from Sydney set up a "test" Embassy on the lawn in front of Parliament House to call attention to the social injustices faced by Aborigines throughout Australia.

My dance workshops began in May at Black Moratorium Committees were gaining momentum. Located in all the urban centers - Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Newcastle, and Darwin - these Committees were planning the first national "Land Rights" demonstration for National Aborigines Day on July 14. Traditionally, this had been a day of celebration, one day during the year when white Australia "recognized" its Aborigines, a day for parties and for dancing. In 1972, however, July 14 was declared a Moratorium for Black Rights - "Ningaloo-Nga" - "We are hungry for our Land."
The first public performance of National Black Theater came out of this political activity. Bob Maza created his introductory piece with the group that had been attending my dance workshop. It was "street theater" developed for television to publicize the Black Moratorium, and it dramatized a specific Aboriginal land rights claim against a Swiss mining company called Nabco. The next performance was "street theater" for the city, as Bob Maza and his fledgling theater troupe led the July 14 Moratorium march through Sydney. National Black Theater had come into being.

"Oh, there's grieving in the plum grove and sobbing in the sand; there's been another (sighing)" sings American Bernice Regan, though her lyrics speak just as directly to the imperishable plight of the Australian Aborigine. The first performance of our dance workshop (which later became National Black Theater Dance Group) was also on the street. On July 20, just six days after the Moratorium, the federal Australian government violently destroyed the Aboriginal Embassy and, for the first time on television, thousands saw police beat up people who were simply protecting their symbol of human rights and quietly protesting their inequitable treatment. Three days later, police likewise destroyed the Aboriginal Embassy in Canberra which had been erected by the support of many Australian people. We spoke with them on that day and saw their fear turn into a proud determination no longer to sit and wait for white reform or contain their seething feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

Dancing in my group were naturally heavily involved in the July upheavals. They were deeply committed to Aboriginal development and most were involved with either the political action committees or with other community education efforts. They joined the street theater because they were anxious to learn new forms of creative expression as well as their traditional ones. They infected me with the spirit of their struggle and I in turn tried to find ways to help them express these feelings through dance. For an Afro-American like myself, dance is a natural part of my cultural experience as it is also for the traditional Aborigines, but these were urban Aborigines and they knew almost as little about their own traditions as they did about mine. We had no problem identifying with one another because we had each experienced racism in our respective countries.

On July 30, our dance group, along with thousands of other blacks, returned to Canberra to reopen the "tent" Embassy. For this demonstration, a few members of the workshop hurried together a piece based on the violence of the preceding weeks and concluded with an adaptation of American choreographer Rod Rodger's "Lament" to a song by Bernice Regan. One Aboriginal writer described the work as "not only a symbolic recreation of the "tent" Embassy, but it portrayed the whole history of Aboriginal-European conflict and gave powerful expression to the emotions of that event.

When we returned from the march, the dance group worked with renewed vigor. We soon decided to present our first indoor public showing which was meant to be a culmination of our three months together in the Sydney community. Our notion was to further develop the idea we had performed at the Canberra demonstration because the reaction it had evoked from the Aboriginal people. Though there were many who did not understand the art form, those who did had become more conscious of the meaning of Land Rights. This time we incorporated some Aboriginal movements and symbols into the dance. We also introduced traditional Aboriginal music and, even though the movements used to this accompaniment were not traditional, the inclusion of the music alone was as much an historic and artistic milestone for the Australian Aborigine as the performance itself.

When I left Australia in September, 1973, National Black Theater, under the direction of Bob Maza, was fast becoming an Aboriginal fact of life. Its first dramatic production, Blizzandy Black, was successfully presented at a theater which would compare to our own Off-Broadway. A few months later, the troupe was on tour playing Aboriginal reserves and black communities throughout Queensland.

Black theater in Australia has its own uniqueness just as black theater in America. It is about black life and is for black people. It is a developing dramatic expression of the urban Aborigine who seeks not only visibility in Australian society but a deeper and more proudful understanding of himself. It is a means of keeping a one-vital culture alive, for no Aborigine—urban or tribal—wants to lose his rich traditions. Even an anthropological study, National Black Theater emerged from this new collective sense of self and I was fortunate to be able to make dance as much a part of it as drama.

IDENTITY, Fall 1972

Carol Y. Joyner

Australia this fall is amazing in Glee New South Wales.
What with the "white Australia" policy still a part of its national mystique, Australia was the last place in the world I thought I would live and work. I arrived in Australia in early 1972 with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company. We were to perform in the Adelaide Festival of Arts and then tour several major cities. The performances had such an impact on Aboriginal community of Sydney that I was invited to remain by Aboriginal people and whites alike as part of a cultural experiment. Eleo's "Blues for the Jungle" and other pieces of social comment really excited the Blacks who saw for the first time how the contemporary arts could be used to convey relevant social messages.

In contrast, establishments' white' Australia was totally uninterested in fact may were revolted by the content and method of Eleo's art. However, they were impressed with my dance technique which obviously combines a strong ballet base with the modern and afro-American elements. It was thus thought that I could be valuable to both the Black community and the Australian dance scene. As a result, in my first year I did some teaching at a University and with a modern dance company, but my choice was to work primarily in the Aboriginal community of Sydney, where I could be an integrated person. These people desired both my content and the dance technique which they learned in the dance workshops we developed.

In that first year I became aware of the culture clash going on in Australia between the Anglo-saxon establishment and the Aboriginal people. In my second year, while working on a play that juxtaposed Aboriginal and European cultures I had a chance to observe elements of the clash in operation. Now after three years in Australia, I have come to understand that psychologically and emotionally the white Australia policy has to do with an extreme fear of cultural change, not a fear of biological mixing.
This policy, a complex issue of immigration having economic roots in the early fears of Asian peoples and their ways disturbing the English ways, denied that there were already colored people on the shores. Though assimilation has been the more recent policy for the treatment of the Aboriginal people, the white Australia policy can be seen as part of this. In spite of the extreme disregard Australians had for the Aboriginal people and their culture, there persisted the belief, until recently, that Aboriginals that lived could be married out and the culture die in that way. This subterranean fear or resistance of Australia to differing ideas is a paradoxical contradiction in view of the fact that in the arts, enrichment from the outside has long been a part of Australia's Cultural Policy. Australia constantly invites artists from all over the world to her shores. Yet, she has not only ignored, but tried to wipe out the indigenous cultures. Enrichment from within which includes appreciation and understanding of the Aboriginal culture is just beginning. Though cultural exchange has long been practiced with the European nations with whom Australia has a natural affinity, it can be seen that it only collaboration exists between nations or people who have if not a an affinity, at least a respect and curiosity about another culture.

Should I, Afro-American dancer, become involved in a play that would attempt to stand Angle-Saxon and Aboriginal values side by side? "Cradle of Hercules", important also because it is the first time an establishment theatre company uses Aboriginal people both urban and tribal to play Aboriginal people, is about the coming of the first English settlers in 1788. It was to be presented at the Drama Theatre the Sydney Opera House. It is unfortunate that a paly so nobly motivated was destined to be unsuccessful in its attempt to g
to give equal value to Anglo-Saxon culture and Aboriginal Culture.

Aware that I could be in a ticklish political position, I finally accepted on the condition that the tribal actor-dancer in the play would also get credit as a choreographer. I expected that he would be of great assistance. I thought my first year in Australia had adequately prepared me for the task of choreographing an Aboriginal ritual for the Western stage. In addition to working extensively with the city people who sensitized me on Australian Black-white relations, I had read a great deal about the traditional culture, saw more traditional dance than most city-born Aboriginals, and lived on several reserves. I found that this dance job put me in closer touch with the realities of the Australian culture clash than any other experience because I too was a part, yet not a part. Sensi Aware of the many pulls, I as an Afro-American with those sensitivities am able to really communicate on an intellectual and artistic and disciplinary level with the European; ability to r t o sense Black people's questions; ability to communicate with the artistic tribal person until the urban people decided to shut the door to such communication; as aware too that I was an American and also a outside r and observer of some of the Black A Australian-white Australian attitudes and thus behavior patterns. This play that involved the use of Black and white people Black people urban and tribal Aboriginal White people Anglo-Saxon and European immigrants and a Black American in the middle of both showed just how important a common frame of reference is for people to collaborate effectively and easily in artistic work even if from different national and cultural origins.
I was to work closely with Davie Gulpilil an accomplished dancer of the \textit{ML} \textit{D} tribe. David, known outside of Australia for his starring role in the film, "Walkabout", says that he is a graduate of his own peoples' university—painter, didgeridoo player, singer, dancer. David is perhaps one of the best performers in a western theatrical sense. Traditionally dance for Aboriginal people is never a performance or a spectacle. It can be participatory in a social sense. Or, it is part of a ritual where the preparation of body and place which might take hours assumes as much or more importance as the dance. The actual movements are usually limited to less than a minuet to perform a full sequence. However this is the dance or corroboree is thus involves the repetition of the same basic movements at intermittent intervals over several hours or even days. David, on the other hand, can take the dances from the brogla totem or the kangaroo or emu or the devil dance and improvise, developing the movements, stage patterns, dynamics so that he sustains interest over an extended period. The audience thus senses a fully developed solo dance that has meaning with a beginning, middle, and end. Though David has taught and developed dances with his own people who know the music, and meanings behind his dances and though he is a veteran performer on the Western stage, this was the first time he would work on an artistic level with people who had no practical idea of his cultural frame of reference. He had to bring us Black American, urban Aboriginal aesthetics, and whites into his cultural assumptions and make something that would not conflict with his beliefs right for Western style theatre.

My job, as it turned out was to make Aboriginal Dance useful and workable on the Australian stage. Since many white Australians
beginning to realize that Aboriginal people are still alive and believe that the culture should not die out but that it is the secret of what will eventually be the Australian identity, a degree of authenticity is needed for a naturalistically styled play. Let The play was not a matter of mixing the two cultures. Mixing Aboriginal and Western forms so that something neither Aboriginal nor European but Australian emerges just has not happened. So far both groups are too rooted in their own traditions to allow or be able to make that happen. In essence this play was trying not to make something new, but to use the Aboriginal forms symbolically to make various statements. This meant they should be as much in tact as possible. One method of doing this was through the dance. Take an European ritual the masquerade ball and a minuet dance. Take an Aboriginal ritual, the burial scene. We can thus see how cultures. I was to extract from David ideas and the forms needed and help him find a way to adopt it to the needs of the play. For the play's purposes I was to function as a creative like the creative teacher that Anton Ehrenzweig talks of in the "Hidden Order of Art". He talks of how Duke Ellington or Dighilev work with "living" tools... that is artists possess in their own minds who seem to make their own independent contribution need the master to produce meaningful results. Though far from being a master, I was aware of what I was doing and so were the whites. However, the urban Aboriginals had no idea of this process of creation. They had no realization that David at that time could not work effectively with any but his own people who all already knew not only the basic dance technique, but the music and play. Inspite of all my book learning and observations of Aboriginal art and dance, the collaborative effort with David showed how
ill-prepared I was to exchange in depth. I found that we were both
teacher and pupil at the same time. In fact he had more comprehensio
of my cultural references than I of his. Movie, television and th
amas media has made that possible.

Not only did the experience of this play demonstrate that a common
cultural frame of reference allows for ease in collaborating artis
artistically, but it pointed up how much the dance is the music is
is the history, is the philosophy and psychology of a culture.

From pre-Back to the Jazz composers, a dance rhythm is taken and music
is created. Many tunes can be put to a specific rhythm. Or somet
sometimes the reverse is true, a piece of music is written an
and a dance is or can be created for it. Many of the 20th centruy
Dances in American came about that way. Even common folk forms fr om
Asia, Latin American, middle East and even Africa give us associations
that can be used symbolically in a play. In production, though
the usual method is to create a dance simultaneously with a specific
music, this usual procedure is not always necessary when people with
the same common cultural understandings are working together. We
say waltz, tango, hora, charleston and automatically actors, dancers
singers have a feeling a costume, nationality, history, mood, rhythm
and perhaps tunes in mind. We can begin to create a dance - music
available or not. Even though we might be in a European culture,
if we mentioned some of the preclasssic dance forms, branle, sarabande
courante, we might not relate to it because only the specialist k
knows these old forms.

David and I had no trouble developing the minuet, which the play
originally called for. We had the music. I knew many of the basic c
but the basic attitude of the dance and was able to add to the cho
coreography. Once he had the miu music in mind. We worked it o
out together and taught "white" actors and aboriginal actors who
could double as English settlers in the masquerade scene. All
All worked together with ease. Then, every single one of us had so
relationship to the minuet. We understood it.

When it came to developing the Aboriginal ritual which as it tu
u turned out was the only dance used in the play, we had many prob
lems. In addition to the political factors, there was the cultural
ignorance. For several days David and I could not communicate. I
In fact I could feel David's frustration. There was no one that he
could discuss his ideas with. The burial ritual and a
fun mockery was chosen to symbolise the Aboriginal vulyural practice:
Burial ritual and the dances associated with it are very a sacred
though not always secret. How could we put a 'make-believe'
ritual on the stage? This was crucial, it was difficult to decide.
Once it was decided how and what then came the execution. I had r
read enough anthropology books including the description of Benelos
wife's funeral to design a sequence which could combine aborigi
and modern dance mov movements. However, the closer we get to Aborig
authenticity, the better. When David finally opened up, he began

th to think of fun dances that could be used. We could, for inst
use some owl dance, some kangaroo and perhaps end with the
devil dance. Now he could say it, but what did this communicate
to me and to the others who didn't even know the steps. We need
music. What music? How were we to get it. We need music he insisted.
I've got to have music. But why David? surely a ritual can be de
designed and the music added later. I finally realized that David
does not think of dance separate from music. But the
music could we begin to have correct body feelings.
Developing the Aboriginal ritual was difficult. In addition to political factors there were the cultural. One because the Aboriginal actors come from an urban environment and were not even trained dancers. In fact, these actors of twenty to thirty years of age probably had less contact with the traditional tribal Aboriginal culture than I, a visiting American of one year. Two, without music David and I could not even begin to talk and discuss the dances. Three, the Aboriginal actors wanted authenticity and there was resentment that a foreign person was involved in the choreography and for, David's experiences in teaching dance was with his own people or with trained modern or ballet dancers who could quickly absorb an outline of the movements and hear the music.

Even though the dances were heavily dependent on David's solo dancing we did manage to get them accomplished. Black American dancer, Aboriginal dancer, Check born designer, English born playwright Australian born director managed to put a play together. Australia is like America is a melting pot where what Australia policy is in its death. Enrichment is coming from within and this include not only European influences, but Aboriginal culture meaning the understanding and appreciation is just beginning. Exchange is beginning at home.
SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL
SEMINARY ON ABORIGINAL ARTS

"There can be no qualification about my Government’s commitment to the cause of the Aboriginal people. We are determined that the long record of injustice, repression, neglect, the record that has marked our treatment of the Aboriginal people for two centuries of white civilization on this continent, will be brought to an end.

“Let there be no illusions about this. Let there be no mistaking our sincerity. Above all, let there be no mistaking our motives. Our commitment to the Aboriginal people is no token gesture to modish theories, no easy device to improve the ‘image’ of white Australia overseas, no comfortable sop to world opinion.

“We regard the Aboriginals’ rights and dignity as more important than the white man’s reputation. I repeat what I said in my policy speech last November: ‘The Aborigines are a responsibility we cannot escape, cannot share, cannot shuffle off.’

“In 1967, the Australian people, by an overwhelming majority at a referendum, gave the
national Government an overriding responsibility for the welfare of the Aboriginal people. We will accept that responsibility; we regard it as a sacred trust.

“The Government has many plans and many ambitions for the Australian people. But if there is one ambition we place above all others, if there is one achievement for which I hope we will be remembered, if there is one cause for which I hope future historians will salute us, it is this: That the Government lead removed a stain from our national honour and gave justice and equality to the Aboriginal people.

“My Government intends to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia the power to make their own decisions about their way of life within the Australian community. We know that most Aboriginal Australians are proud of their heritage, of their long history and of the traditions and culture which have been handed down to them. We know that most of them, in all parts of Australia, want to preserve their identity as distinctive groups within an Australian society which respects and honours that identity.

“Accordingly we see this seminar as an important expression of the Government’s intention. It has been arranged by the newly established Board for Aboriginal Arts within the Australian Council for the Arts. This Board is composed exclusively of Aborigines and is presided over by its chairman, Mr Dick Roughsey. That board has decided who was to be invited to participate in the seminar. That board will determine the conduct of the seminar’s proceedings. I am glad to see that the majority of those present are themselves Aborigines and that those who are not, are men and women of goodwill whose knowledge and experience will be of value in your deliberations. Important among these are distinguished representatives of ethnic groups from New Zealand, The United States and Africa, to whom I extend a special welcome.

“We expect that the work of the seminar will guide the Aboriginal Arts Board in the policies it will develop. My Government intends that the Board will receive greatly increased financial resources so that it can do its work effectively.

“The Board will be concerned to support and stimulate the traditional arts of the Aboriginal people. Gradually, white Australians have become aware of the richness and diversity of these arts—of the bark paintings, the rock carvings and paintings, of the mime, the dancing and the music of the dramatic presentation of traditional myths and stories, of the great song cycles which celebrate the adventures of totemic ancestors in the ‘dreamtime.’ What has tended to be forgotten is that these examples of the cultural heritage of the Aboriginal people have their source in, and derive their inspiration from, the deeply spiritual ceremonial which is of the essence of the Aboriginal way. I hope your seminar will explore this relationship so that the Board’s support may be given in ways which respect and enrich the ceremonial foundations as well as the works of the artists which spring from it.

“It has been fashionable to regard Aboriginal arts as a rigidly unchanging repetition of forms laid down in times immemorial. I believe this is a mistake. There is ample evidence of the influence of change—in subject matter, in materials, in style and purpose. Truly it is an ordered change within a stable but developing tradition. I do not think we should regard Aboriginal arts as a museum piece, but rather as a vigorous expression of the vitality of the Aboriginal way, changing as it will from the effect of outside influences and from its own internal vitality. Authenticity depends upon the arts still being rooted in, and enlivened by, the true spirit of the Aboriginal people rather than by adherence to unchanging forms.

“There are many Aboriginal Australians whose links with the traditions of their ancestors have been broken or become tenuous. Many live in towns and cities, facing the problems of isolation, of prejudice, and a multitude of social and economic handicaps. For them, the arts will take much from white society, and from other racial groups in style and technique. They will be seen in part as a means whereby urban Aborigines are frequently an expression of protest and that they learn much from protest in similar forms from minorities the world over. Such social protest is a proper purpose of the arts and I hope that the Aboriginal Arts Board will strengthen the capacity of urban communities to make their voices heard. Artists are not only those who see and feel most intensely the agonies, the sorrows and the hopes of their own people: they are those who can bring to others the willingness and capacity to comprehend and share these emotions. I have been struck by the distinctively Aboriginal style which is emerging in the writing, the theatre, the visual arts of urban Aboriginal artists. I hope this style will be brought to full flower in the coming years.”
7th August, 1975

Dear Carole,

I shall be very glad if you are willing (and able) to come over to Perth for three weeks or, better still, for six weeks, in the near future.

A group of twelve girls, aged between fifteen and seventeen years, have been doing some work in creative dancing under Gerry Atkinson.

I feel that you would be able to give them a deeper insight into how to bring out their especially Aboriginal talents, and that you would be particularly able to inspire them to maintain their enthusiasm.

I have written to Bob also, on these lines.

I feel I should apologise for having had to leave your class a week early, but Ken needed me back here for our exhibition in National Aboriginal Week: in fact we kept it open for a fortnight! I also had to be present at the formal first showing of our New Era Film Study Group's first film: "Help Yourself". We were very glad to have Bob here for the occasion.

Hoping you can come soon.

Best wishes,

Betty Colbung

Betty Colbung (Mrs)
Director
NEW ERA ACTIVITIES
TO: Bob Edwards, Urban Theatre Committee,  
FROM: Carole Y. Johnson  
SUBJECT: ARTISTS-CONSULTANTS AND THE NEED FOR A PERMANENT STRUCTURE AND STAFF IN THE URBAN CULTURAL CENTRES  
DATE: 14 March 1975

ROLE OF ARTISTS-CONSULTANTS

The need for consultants and artists in Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre or any of the urban cultural centres is not a special need for Aboriginal communities. Rather it must be considered as it really is, a necessary part of any on-going cultural centre.

Cultural Centres almost invariably function with artists, artist-teachers and consultants of various types coming into the Centre to support and add excitement to the existing program. In fact, the more experienced creative people that can come into a centre, the more viable the program becomes. High quality performing art comes out of a social situation where there are many creative people bumping one against the other in close proximity and in this way the artists stimulate each other and the people around in positive ways.

NEED FOR PERMANENT STAFF TO SUPPORT ARTISTS

For the visiting artist-consultants to be really effective, they must work along with the permanent staff and board of the centre. Artist-consultants cannot take the place of this staff. The permanent staff provide the long range planning and deal with the day to day operations that enable the centre to develop. The artists fulfill an immediate need in a long range plan and help to project the plan through their ideas and involvement for the limited periods they are associated with the Centre. The permanent staff in a Centre's structure assures the continuity of the Centre and its program.

PROBLEM AT BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE

Currently, Brian Syron and I (and probably Ken Snipes when he comes) are fulfilling roles that should be carried out by additional staff that are trained to work with the Administrator and the various artists. We are artists and must be viewed as fulfilling the the basic role of adding artistic excitement to the Centre. Assisting in the overall development and coordination is a secondary function. Although we are working closely with the present administrator, the Black Theatre project could have serious difficulties if we left today because there is no permanent staff.
to carry out the functions we now fulfill for the Administrator, Bettie P.

PLANNING TO ASSURE CONTINUITY OF BLACK THEATRE

Brian Syron and I are helping Bettie Fisher, the Administrator, plan the internal strengthening of the Centre, so that the addition of artist-consultants become just one of the many positive assets available to the Centre and its program. This is being done by helping her project her 1975-76 budget for the D.A.A.

RECOMMENDATION

The Arts Board must begin to consider and make plans to be in a position to support the on-going development that the Centres will be demanding. At this point it means a combination of a permanent staff structure and the consultants to assure growth. It must understand the duties and the basic staff that an Arts Centre that has both performing, visual arts and training program in the arts needs. The following is a basic list.

THE ADMINISTRATOR who

Takes care of all the financial aspects (fund raising and reporting), relates directly with the Centre's board and carries out its policies, and sets an overall direction for the Centre.

THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR who

Takes care of all activities in the centre and works directly with the many teachers and volunteers as artists. Activities include: workshops, performances, exhibitions, festivals and the like.

THE TECHNICIAN who

Is in charge of all the theatre equipment and the running of all shows.

THE MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR who

Is in charge of the building: cleaning, repairs, setting up for visiting groups, opening and closing the building.

Though at present some of this staff might start out as part-time as the Centre grows the duties will eventually be spread over several staff people and each of the above becomes a department or separately function section of the Centre.
REPORT

SIX-WEEK ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER

CULTURAL & PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM

THE ABORIGINAL ISLANDER TRAINING PROGRAM, as advertised in the brochure, was a project of the URBAN THEATRE COMMITTEE of the Aboriginal Arts Board. The course consisted of four main faculties – Dance, Drama, Writing and Karate. Speech and Lighting and Sound were part of the Theatre Program. Also a general survey of Aboriginals served as an introduction to Pitjantjatjara language. A copy of the schedules for the first two weeks and the second two weeks is included. At the end of four weeks, the nature of the training program changed, from that of "classes" to "rehearsal groups". During that period the language class, speech class and lighting class continued as scheduled. The students then organised into acting/writing and dance rehearsal groups with the aim of producing a combined production of short plays, dance pieces and a karate demonstration. The short plays produced were those developed by various writers in the training program. In addition, several dances were created.

FINDING

This project was made possible with the co-operation of three organizations:

The Department of Education
The Aboriginal Arts Board
Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre.

Although the major funding of the project was provided by the Department of Education, Aboriginal Studies Grant Section and the Aboriginal Arts Board, without the staff and in-kind services of the three organisations this project could never have happened. The following outlines the roles of the co-operating organizations:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Department provided, living allowances, transportation, equipment allowance for all participants in the project. In addition the Sydney office assigned a special staff person to the project. This person, Paul Murphy, co-ordinated with the offices in all the capital cities and with the co-ordinators at the Arts Board in the pre-planning stages. He met the participants when they arrived in Sydney and made sure they got to their motel. In general he took care of the living needs of the students so that they would be at ease and comfortable and able to concentrate on the course. He also made travel arrangements for their return to their homes.

...
ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

The Aboriginal Arts Board provided funds for lecturers and regular teachers, administration, and a subsidy for student housing, equipment for the courses. The pre-planning was done and executed by the consultants and one of the Board members, Mr. Terry Widders, at the offices of the Aboriginal Arts Board.

COST TO BOARD IN TERMS OF PARTICIPANTS

The approximate amount of money spent on each individual in the program in the special grant by the Aboriginal Arts Board is:

$615 per person for the course

or

$21 per day per person.

The exact figures will be known when the audited account is prepared.

BLACK THEATRE ARTS & CULTURE CENTRE

This community organisation provided the home base for the program. The staff of Black Theatre did all it could to make sure that the building was comfortable and in good repair. A kitchen and lounge area was set up for the participants. The classes took place in the two upstairs studios. The final performance took place in its downstairs area that is to be turned into a theatre. In addition the staff introduced participants to the facilities available in the community and the people who could help with problems.

RECRUITMENT

A brochure was prepared and sent to individuals and organizations throughout Australia. In addition, mini workshops were held in Brisbane and Melbourne so that the tutors involved would get a chance to meet people of those areas and so that potential participants would have an idea of what they might expect in the six-week course. (See Report on Urban Theatre Workshops in Capital Cities.) In these workshops Karate was added. In addition to the above method of recruitment, people whom the consultants knew were interested in the performing arts were contacted directly.

STUDENT ENROLMENT

There were twenty eight people enrolled. The Interim Report lists the names of all participants.

The state breakdown of student enrolment is:

- New South Wales: 6
- Victoria: 6
- South Australia: 6
- Queensland: 6
- Western Australia: 3
- Northern Territory: 1

Total: 28
Five participants had to leave the program before it ended because of prior commitments.

**COURSE CONTENT**

The major courses and the tutors were:

- **Acting:** Brian Syron assisted by Ann Swan
- **Dance:** Carole Johnson assisted by traditional dance teachers Ettie Pau and Henry Peters
- **Writing:** Ande Reese
- **Karate:** Tom Rosser
- **Language:** Terry Widders' assisted by Peter Murphy (Pitjantjatjara)

In addition the following courses were offered:

- **Speech:** Stephen Costain
- **Lights & Sound:** Ian McGrath

The major tutors for the program are the ones who are preparing to continue this program on a full-time basis. (See Proposal.)

**TRIPS**

Trips were planned to give students the experience of seeing professional productions and to provide a change from the intense atmosphere of the course.

- **Opera House:** Importance of Being Ernest
- **Ensemble Theatre:** The Good Doctor
- **Capitol Theatre:** The Festival Ballet Company
- **Chequers:** Dimboola National Aborigines Day Ball.

The special guest lecturers to the courses were:

- **John Mulvane:** Aboriginal History
- **Robert Edwards:** The Art of Aboriginal Australia
- **Alice Moyle:** The Music of Aboriginal Australia
- **Peter Sutton:** The Languages of Aboriginal Australia

A teacher from the Centre for the Study of Aboriginal Music in Adelaide.

In addition to these lecturers, there were talks given by a panel of Aboriginal and Islander speakers. The people who participated were: Mr. Victor Sheppard, Mr. Ray Kelly, Mrs. Margaret Tucker, Mr. Len Watson, Mr. Bill Reid, Mr. Harold Blair.

**HOUSING**

Participants were housed at the Angemore Motel in Chippendale. This is a ten-minute walk from the Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre and just around the corner from the Foundati...
It was desired that the participants stay together so that the learning that takes place after organized class session would occur. This is often the best kind of learning. The results of this concept were seen in the camaraderie and understanding that occurred at the final banquet. It was also especially noticeable in the relationship that developed between Daryl Williams, a young dancer from Mornington Island, and Wayne Nichols, a modern dancer. Daryl Williams was able to make a real cultural exchange with Wayne and the other men from the cities with whom he roomed.

RESULTS

I The immediate results of this program were:

AN EVENING'S PERFORMANCE OF DANCE & DRAMA.
In this performance there was also a KARATE demonstration by the one person who came to specialize in Karate. As a result of his involvement and real application to Karate, this person also finally became involved and participated in the drama performance and helped in the production of the documentary film.

II SCRIPTS WERE PRODUCED BY STUDENTS IN THE WRITING WORKSHOP

IRENE CASEY
AILEEN CORPUS
JACK DAVIS
ROS FORGAN
ANDREW JACKOMOS
SHIREEN MALANDO
ZAC MARTIN
GEORGINA TELFER
MAUREEN WATSON

Just Another Day
Black Over Cops
The Biter Bit
Somebody Else's Money (working title)
It's Warm Inside
Winey (Working title)
The Pub With No Beer
Makes No Difference Anyhow
Please, Somebody Hold My Hand.

Of these nine scripts, The Biter Bit, Just Another Day and Black Over Cops were performed on the last evening.

PUBLICATION OF SCRIPTS

We plan to turn these scripts plus the poetry and short stories written by the participants into the First Anthology of Urban Aboriginal Writing. An application for publication will be presented at the next Board meeting.

NEW DANCES CREATED BY STUDENTS

DOROTHEA RANDALL
YVETTE ISAACS
WAYNE NICOLS,
DARYL WILLIAMS,
RALPH RIGBY

A solo to music by Barry White
A solo to a poem written by participant MAUREEN WATSON
A group dance that combined traditional Mornington Island dance with modern dance.*

* This piece was not completed for performance because the men in the program had to spend most of their rehearsal time in the drama production. However, the concept was exciting and these people, especially WAYNE NICOLS, will probably develop the concept at a later date.
IV AN HOUR COLOUR AND SOUND DOCUMENTARY ON THE PROGRAM

(See application and reports for details)

Although this film is being professionally produced, four of the participants, ANDREW JACKOMOS, IRENE CASEY, JOHN BALES, and ROS FORGAN, assisted the film crew on its weekly shooting days.

Prepared by Carole Johnson
for Urban Theatre Committee
Some interesting figures concerning Arts Board involvement in a Six Week Workshop

Indirect funding is sometimes a way to help individuals achieve results.

$615 was spent by the Arts Board on each person who attended the course. Or $21 per day per person for six weeks (actually $20.50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount spent in terms of funds to each state</th>
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<tr>
<td>N.S.W. 6 participants</td>
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<td>Northern Territory 1 participant</td>
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<td>Total 28 participants *</td>
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NOTE: * Calculations based on 26 participants to take into account late arrivals and early departure of some participants.

** $16,000, the rounded budget figure approved by the Board was used in the calculations.

Thus divide 26 people into $16,000 to equal $615 per person.

6 SIX WEEK TRAINING WORKSHOPS at $16,000 per WORKSHOP IS $96,000:

This is for 36 weeks of training in the year.

If the Arts Board maintained the figure of $615 for 50 individuals attending 6 Six-Week Workshops - or a year course

The Cost per person per year is $3,690

The Cost for 50 people is thus $184,500

The total presented for the Year-round Program is $141,000.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

TERM REPORT October to December 19, 1975

CONTENTS:
A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION
B. STAFF
C. SCHEDULE AND COURSE CONTENT
D. RELATIONSHIP WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND
E. CHANGE OF VENUE FROM BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE TO BODENMAISER DANCE CENTRE AND SEYMOUR CENTRE
F. STUDENT HOUSING
G. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
H. ACCOMPLISHMENTS (in form of performances and works created and student progress).
I. PROPOSED TOUR
J. COURSE COST

The Dance Training Programme began officially on October 30 and continued for nine weeks until December 1975. It came about as a result of the six-week Training Programme of June - July 1975.

A. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

a. 5 Full-time students under Aboriginal Study Grant
   Daryl Williams  -  Mornington Island
   Wayne Nicol    -  Sydney
   Richard Talonga -  Mackay, Queensland
   Michael Leslie -  Moree, N.S.W.
   Doratha Randall -  Darwin via Adelaide

b. 1 Student Assistant
   Cheryl Stone

c. 2 Students who participated for two weeks
   Vicky Joan Quinlin - Armidale N.S.W.
   Joseph Watt        - Mornington Island

Total 6 students completed 9 weeks.

It was planned that we take a pilot group of students who had previously danced on their own or who had participated in the six-week course and use them to develop some material that could be presented at Aboriginal functions and in Aboriginal communities so that relatives and friends could see and experience what they had achieved. In addition these people wanted to increase and maintain their skills for the purpose of dancing in companies or teaching dance to children. There were six experienced participants and one person who thought she might like to dance. The one person who said she might like to dance dropped out.
This was her first experience in the demands of daily classes. The ones that had already made the decision that they want to be dancers, dance teachers or form a group have remained with the group; and functioned on a very responsible level and in a disciplined manner. In addition, one person, Joseph Watt, from Mornington Island who visited the session came back from Mornington Island for the specific purpose of functioning with the group for a short period.

Attendance: Attendance by the five full-time students was virtually 95%. Out of 45 days in which the five full-time students spent a total time of 225 days, there were a total of 13 full day absences. Ten of the absences were committed by one person. Leave for performing and teaching is not counted as an absence.

There were times when students did not attend specific sessions; these are not counted in the above report.

B. STAFF

1. Carole Johnson - Artistic Director, Administrator, teacher.
2. Terry Widders - History
3. Graham Jones - Modern dance, Music theory
4. Penny Williams - Soul Dance
5. Jane Pike - Modern Composition, ballet
6. Jackson Jacobs - Traditional Lardil Culture and Dance
7. Tamati Jones, Andrew McGuinness - Accompanists

RECOMMENDATION

The Arts Board must make sure that there is a staff of at least two full-time people for their "Careers in Dance" Programme. A regular contingent of part-time tutors will always be necessary. However, a second full-time teacher is needed if the programme is to develop and fulfill its goals of:

1. relating to other sections of the Aboriginal Community
2. taking care of the day to day responsibility of teaching
3. the individual development of the participant.

The person who deals directly with student and daily programme continuity cannot maintain administrative continuity in the wider context.

C. COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Each student attended a required twenty sessions per week. Each session is an hour and a half long. In addition to the required sessions there were special sessions and required performances that the group attended in the evenings. The attached schedule will give the specific details of the class times, place of the class, and the person teaching.

Jackson Jacobs, teacher from Mornington Island spent two weeks with the group from Monday November 3 to Thursday November 13. The schedule was adjusted during that period so that 70% of Ms. Johnson's classes were with Mr. Jacobs. This gave the group a maximum amount of time with Mr. Jacobs.

The course is also arranged so that students take over administrative and other responsibilities relating to the running of the entire program. This is done so that students have experience in actually doing the things that keep an organisation functioning. The duties will rotate each term from student to student so that each will have a total experience of running a
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For this introductory term, the following duties were given to students:

a. Bookkeeping - making out requisitions, handling staff time sheets, keeping double entry, cash flow, billing, handling petty cash, distributing cheques.
b. Registrar - Keeping attendance of all sessions.
c. Costumer - Maintaining inventory of costumes, making sure they are in good repair; preparing them for performances.
d. Hostel Manager - Taking responsibility for the student housing; including taking rent and writing receipts; handling service people; making sure people obey rules and keep house in good repair; handling personal relationships.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

a. Technique Classes: 1. **Modern**: Based on discovering and the understanding of body placement, body rhythms, and movement flow and phrasing that will begin to prepare student to work on TV, in shows, in international dance companies, or to develop a Modern Australian dance with a traditional Aboriginal base.

2. **Traditional Aboriginal Techniques**: Jackson Jacobs a specialist, Mornington Island taught Lardil and stories.

3. **Ballet**

b. **Composition**: Beginning principles of choreography or how to create one's own dances.

c. **Repertoire**: Dances created for presentation in a production.

d. **Music**: Include learning fundamentals of music theory and music appreciation. Rhythm notation was primarily dealt with this term.

e. **History and current affairs**: A discussion class designed to help students become aware of facts relating to Aboriginal Culture and History and the effect on current occurrences and attitudes.

D. **RELATIONSHIP WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND**

This course is designed to develop special relationship with one Aboriginal Culture group that still has a relatively strong on-going relationship with their pre-European influenced traditions. The elders of Mornington Island have taken an interest in this programme. The relationship started in the SIX WEEK COURSE when Henry Peters, an elder from Mornington Island working with Woomera Dance Company, agreed to teach for two weeks and Daryl Williams, a young man from Mornington Island, registered to participate in the course. The possibility and the strength of the exchange of learning that takes place between the modern dancers and the elder teachers from Mornington Island is possible and effective because of the existence of Woomera Company and the desire of Mornington Island people to share their dance and knowledge. So far it has been very successful.
The exchange continued in this introductory term with Jackson Jacobs teaching full-time during the third and fourth week of the term. Both Henry and Jackson are anxious for the group to come to Mornington Island and to function there. They have also expressed interest in sending additional young people to Sydney to participate in this course. Henry said he had already talked with the Chairman of Mornington Island. He would like Ms. Johnson to come up to meet people and discuss these possibilities with the Chairman and people in greater detail. Daryl Williams has continued in the course.

We therefore are working with young people from Mornington Island and the elders are also working with us. In this way we make Lardil culture an integral part of the course. The young people in the course should not feel estranged from their traditional roots because we actually put emphasis on their culture. This is done in the following way:

1. By allotting time to the study of Lardil Technique not putting it aside for ballet, because ballet is considered more important.

2. By having their elders teaching us.

3. By having dances that we have permission to do in our repertoire.

4. By planning to go to Mornington Island to study further and to include the entire community in what we are doing.

The strength of our relationship will probably be continually possible as long as they (Mornington Island people) are able to maintain the Woomera Dance Company or other totally traditional dance companies.

RECOMMENDATION:

That we have several other young people from Mornington Island participating in the course. That every effort is made to continue this positive exchange.

E. CHANGE OF VENUE FROM BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE TO BODENWEISER DANCE CENTRE

The course started out at Black Theatre & Arts Culture in Redfern. We stayed there for seven days. We then moved to Bodenweiser Dance Centre and to the Seymour Centre in Chippendale. We left Black Theatre because the administration was disrupting the class schedule by closing down the building at a moment's notice. Although it only happened two times - Friday, October 24th and Wednesday October 29th - the general atmosphere was such that I felt it would be more positive for the students to move to a place where people understood that development of any skill means regular practice of that skill.

However, because we thought there was a lot that we could contribute to this Black Centre, the students wrote a letter explaining to the Black Theatre Administration why the group thought it necessary to leave and that they would like to function in Black Theatre. It was thought that perhaps there was only a misunderstanding of aims and goals, and scheduling. If these were clarified, the group thought they would be welcome in the Centre. A meeting was scheduled at Black Theatre for Monday, November 10. All the students attended as well as Jackson Jacobs, the teacher from Mornington Island, Terry Widders, and Carole Johnson. At that meeting Ms. Fisher, Administrator, told the group specifically that Black Theatre was booked out until sometime in March, 1976 there was no space for our classes, as scheduled and that it would not be possible to adjust the schedule.
REASONS FOR MAINTAINING CLASSES AT BODENWEISER AND SEYMOUR CENTRES:

Although the programme will need a home centre, in the future, there is presently merit in the concept of studying in an established dance centre:

1. The students became acquainted with facilities that are available in the city.
2. They meet the people using the facilities. They know that they are welcome and are learning to be comfortable in any venue.
3. They learn how to take advantage of what the city has to offer. (Probably these people won't feel that great gulf between the so-called "white" institution and the protection offered in their home communities)
4. Finally, it is good that "white" people, who don't ordinarily come in contact with Aboriginal people, can see Aboriginal people in a very positive light doing things that are similar to what they do.

Even though remaining in the Black Theatre has the advantage that the participants in the courses help to build a Black institution, the immediate move into the wider community has the advantage of helping the individual involved to develop human relations in the wider community.

RECOMMENDATION:

In order for the students to get the best of both worlds, it would be good if classes could be scheduled so that part of the time is spent at the usual dance centres and a remaining 25% of the class time be scheduled at Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre at a hour when other Blacks in the community could come to watch and participate.

F. STUDENT HOUSING:

The programme has found it necessary to be able to provide suitable accommodation for the participants who come from all over Australia. Many of the students are under twenty and need some sort of family support. Living together helps provide this. We, thus, have rented one house for the students who might not otherwise be able to afford good housing and who would then be spread out all over Sydney. In this way, we have eliminated the problem of students not being able to get to classes because they live too far and transportation to the Centre is bad. We have found that attendance is 100% from the students who live in the hostel. In addition we have found that if the people who are attending the classes live together a positive spirit develops in the group; they seem to strengthen one another; and there is a high degree of responsibility both to the course and to each other. Those people living outside of the provided housing tend not to have the same family feeling and are a little outside of the total experience of the Programme. The students run the house themselves. We are sure that a great deal of learning takes place outside of the class hours, many of which are spent in the house.

RECOMMENDATION:

As the programme grows with more people, it will need additional living quarters. The Aboriginal Arts Board should contact Aboriginal Hostels to see if they will be able to assist with the housing for people in the programme.

G. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Support to five of the six participants came from the Departments of Education Aboriginal Study Grants Section. It should be stressed that without this support this programme would not be possible. The support is in the form of
finance directly to the students and in the form of counselling with the students. This counselling is invaluable and forms an important service to the programme. In addition a fee of $200 per student is to be provided for the course.

The Department proposes to continue support for the participants. There is a possibility that they will provide additional support towards teachers' salaries once they are sure of the Aboriginal Arts Board involvement in the programme on a regular on-going year-round basis. The exact details are still to be developed. This additional support will probably come about sometime in the 1976-77 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Arts Board must make a definite financial commitment for a year and then contact the Department of Education, Aboriginal Study Grants.

H. ACCOMPLISHMENTS (in form of performances)

1. Participation in the Adelaide - Torrens College Festival on Sunday November 8 by Wayne Nicol and Dorothea Randall.
   a. The performance included songs composed by Aboriginal singers - Robert McLeod and Bob Randall.
   b. A modern solo to contemporary music.
   c. Wayne Nicol, from his experience with Henry Peters, a teacher from Mornington Island who taught in the Six-Week Training Program, was asked by the Woomera Dancers to dance with them in the program at this Adelaide Festival.

2. Girraween Primary School November 18, 1975

This school invited the Group to perform in their first international festival night. There were dance groups representing many different cultures - Greek, Italian, Russian, East Indian and Aboriginal. The entire group participated in this performance, doing examples of the following:

   1. Traditional dance work that Jackson Jacob taught and gave permission for us to demonstrate.

   2. A soul dance by Penny Williams.

   3. Brown Skin Baby - Music Bob Randall
      Mangye Old Dog - Music Robert McLeod

3. Bodenweiser Dance Centre December 11 and 12 Christmas Programme

The entire group participated in this programme with other students from Bodenweiser. It was a good experience for them to dance with other people and provided a way for them to feel what they are doing in relation to what other people are doing in dance. The "Aboriginal Country and Western Suite" was completed for this performance.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Although the program does not have a system for grading the students. The staff is pleased with the individual development of each person. The level of achievement ranges from good to excellent.
I. TOUR (Jan. 13-23, 1976)

It is planned that the present group will assist consultants and instructors when they go to recruit new students outside of Sydney. They will go into some of the N.S.W., country towns to perform and demonstrate in the workshops and at dances (balls). We are taking these participants in order that young people can see what other Aboriginal people are doing. It is expected that there will be greater identification if we take some young Aboriginal people. Also it is imperative that the participants relate to the Aboriginal reality which is quite broad and varied. They must go out into the field and perform for Aboriginal people if they are to build dances that communicate the Aboriginal experience. It is through constant feedback of study then performing that the group can grow and find its future Aboriginal identity among an Aboriginal audience.

J. COURSE COST

The total cost of the nine week term was approximately $7,750. This includes the hidden cost of the "Director - teacher" who was on another budget line of the Council. Each student had a possible 180 sessions to attend. This makes the per student cost approximately: $8.60 per session or $172 a week.

The exact details and figures of the actual amounts spent are still to be presented by Peter Maddox, the accountant for the Arts Council of Australia.
TO: Bob Edwards and the Urban Theatre Committee
FROM: Carol Johnson
SUBJECT: Trip to Brisbane 16, 17, 18 March
DATE: 20 March 1975

Brisbane has two performing arts groups. The TSI company has an eight year history and an artistic director, Steve Man, who has held the group together making it relatively stable. Black Theatre, on the other hand, is a nucleus of about five people who have maintained a consistent interest in the possibilities of theatre. Though they really want to develop as a theatre group they lack artistic direction that keeps them functioning consistently. To date these people have had most experience in political action movements. In both groups the desire for excellence is strong, but they lack the expertise to raise them to the level they themselves envision. The leaders recognize this and have been asking for help in the form of people to work with them on a regular basis for as long as I have known them (one year).

OUTCOME OF MEETINGS WITH TSI DANCE CO AND BLACK THEATRE

The groups have agreed to help organize a ONE DAY WORKSHOP in April that will involve:

- A Dance Class
- A Drama Class
- A Karate Class
- Films of Black Theatre activities in Sydney and traditional Aboriginal dance

TENTATIVE DATE: Sunday 13 April
PLACE: OPAL CENTRE

If this is successful, they want the Workshop Training concept to be a monthly activity in Brisbane until such time as a permanent person is placed in Brisbane to help ongoing development.

The Aboriginal Arts Board's Six Week Training School in the Performing Arts was announced.

- Members of the two groups will begin to spread the word
- Lester Bostock will try to develop Department of Education money from Queensland to help send people to the program.
- Steve Man has agreed to teach TSI dance in the course.
The TSI DANCE COMPANY would like a dance season in Brisbane repeating the successful experiment of Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre in Sydney. This was a combined performance of:

- Yalangi Dancers - Black Theatre's Contemporary Dance Workshop
- TSI Dance Company

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE BOARD SUPPORT THE TSI CO. BY PROVIDING FUNDS FOR PERFORMANCES

Now that the Arts Board has begun to pay attention to the development of the TSI Dance Company by providing support in the way of a full-time administrator, it should continue to find ways to support the company so that the artistic level can increase. Only through performing and training activity does the administrator have something specific to administer and the artistic director have the possibility of functioning more effectively.

(See Part II HERE)

THE BOARD NOT ONLY SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE A PREMISES FOR REHEARSALS BUT HAVE ITS STAFF HELP THE TSI CO. GO THROUGH THE D.A.A. AND OTHER SOURCES FOR THE ON-COING OVERHEAD EXPENSES OF A BUILDING AND STAFF.

THE BOARD RECOMMEND THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPLYING A MODERN CHOREOGRAPHER FOR THE TSI DANCE COMPANY

This person must be carefully selected. Time should be taken. He must be able to relate to the people and be able to organise and be able to develop traditional choreography so it fits into a twentieth-century theatre form but does not destroy the traditional meanings.
MEMO

TO: Bob Edwards and the Urban Theatre Committee
FROM: Carole Johnson
SUBJECT: TRIP TO BRISBANE PART II
Conversations with the TSI Company:
Development and the Sydney Experience

DATE: 21 March 1975

It is common knowledge that for a group to develop it needs consistency of performances under the best possible conditions. The 1975 Sydney experiment was an effort to stimulate the development of performances for the TSI Dance Company.

Fortunately the fiasco at Klontarf Beach was followed by a success the next night at Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. Both should have taught a lot. It is the Black Theatre Performance that the company would like to build upon.

The TSI company is unique in that it is people living in an urban situation presenting their traditional dance and culture. They have been functioning in two ways:

1. Within their own culture — THE KUP-MURI
2. For others — THEATRE PERFORMANCES, SHOPPING CENTRE PERFORMANCES, ENTERTAINMENT AT BALLS and etc.

KLONTARF EXPERIMENT

This should have shown that the concept of KUP-MURI is a cultural happening that belongs to the people who are part of a specific culture. It is difficult to simulate (except in very controlled and tightly organized circumstances) when the bulk of the people (audience) don’t know the rules and come to a place expecting to be entertained in the European sense. The traditional KUP-MURI doesn’t have an audience. Everyone is a participant even though they might not be the special performers.

The dance company is as anxious to forget about the Klontarf experience as is everyone else. In addition to too many organizational problems in the Sydney area, the failure seems to be primarily a total lack of communication with misconceptions about the purposes and what was to happen. This includes everyone involved: dancers, organizers and the audience.

BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE PERFORMANCE

This performance saved the trip for the group and possibly has shown the
the way for futuro development of the company. This performance was the first time in eight years that they have performed in a real theatre with lights and the demands of the theatre. The first time was at their inception at Twelfth Night Theatre in Brisbane. It was also the first time in eight years that the women have dance.

Presenting traditional dance for the theatre seems to be the main and best method for developing and sharing cultures with the wider public in the twentieth century. We see examples in such companies as: Indonesian, Senegalese, Philippian, and Russian. Though the theatre performances change the nature of the tradition, it allows for a new kind of growth. Through meeting the demands of theatre which tries often to communicate outside the specific culture group, the company can achieve the international standard and artistic quality it desires. These include:

a. tighter production techniques (entrances, exits, timing)

b. more interesting choreography

c. more highly skilled dancers who are secure in the details of the movements and dance to communicate to others rather than for their own personal enjoyment

d. knowledge of use of stage space and atmospheric lighting

e. knowledge of performing technique

Steve Mam has said that though the performances at the KUP-KORIs and the shopping centres achieve their purpose of spreading the culture, it has not increased the artistic quality of the group. The company wants to improve and sees a possibility of incorporating modern dance into, if not the traditional group, a junior company of younger people. In order to do this they are asking for:

a. A premises where they can:
   hold rehearsals
   have classes
   make their sets, props and costumes
   store their equipment

b. More concerts in theatre situations

c. More regular performing work for a nucleus of the group

d. Knowledge of theatre techniques—especially stage managing and lighting

e. A contemporary choreographer who can work with them for approximately a year to:
   help mount productions
   teach modern dance
   help organize the company along modern lines—concerts, tours, etc.

f. A traditional dance expert from the Islands who can work with the modern choreographer and who can teach the traditional dance, music and songs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

End Part I
MEMO TO:  Bob Edwards; Urban Theatre Committee
FROM: Carole Johnson
SUBJECT: Trip to Canberra - 26 February 1975
DATE: 27 February 1975

PURPOSES

Discussions Concerning Black Theatre
Submissions to the D.A.A. - Principle of Joint Funding

Because there has been no final decision on the submission that Black Theatre
sent to the D.A.A. in August 1974, Bettie Fisher, Brian Syron and I went to
Canberra to meet with Senator Cavanagh and J. Bissaker of the D.A.A.

In addition to the specific need of Black Theatre for capital and overhead
funding, we discussed the principle of joint funding by the D.A.A. and the
Aboriginal Arts Board for cultural activities. We explained that the Aboriginal
Arts Board at present is only able to provide support for program expenses (activities)
and limited funds to meet current developmental expenditures. In order to
maintain continuity of cultural development in the various communities it would
be necessary for ongoing support for capital expenses and overhead to be
provided for the various groups that are beginning to develop. This kind of
support is currently beyond the means of the Aboriginal Arts Board.

We let Mr. Bissaker know that in round figures that the maintenance of Black
Theatre is approximately $125,000 per year. We also mentioned that Ernabella which
also seeks yearly support is approximately $80,000.

Possibility of Purchase of Black Theatre

In view of the high rent that Black Theatre is paying to the Methodist Church for
use of the building, we discussed the need for the purchase of the building. To
make the building useful for activities, there are certain structural alterations
that need to be made. This is not feasible unless there is possibility of
purchase of the building or a guarantee of a long term lease at minimum.
OUTCOME

1. Senator Cavanagh had to cancel his appointment because of an emergency in Perth. A tentative appointment was made for him to come to Black Theatre on Friday 6 March.

2. Now that we have provided some rationale for certain philosophical questions the D.A.A. had in regards to the need for joint funding and the need for the development, Mr. Bissaker thought that perhaps he could have a specific answer by Friday of this week concerning the present submission of Black Theatre.

NOTE: His section was very pleased with the bookkeeping of Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. He said that there was no hold up on that account.

3. Black Theatre should now prepare and send in two separate submissions:
   a. One for March 1975 - June 1975. This will complete this fiscal year.
   b. A submission for the fiscal year July 1975 to June 1976 should also be submitted immediately because the D.A.A. is now preparing the budgets for fiscal 1975-76.

NOTE: The submission to equip Black Theatre that was approved by the Aboriginal Arts Board should be sent in with the Black Theatre submissions.

4. In July 1975, Black Theatre should begin to approach the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to negotiate for the purchase of the building in Redfern.

5. We met with John Morley and filled him in on all of the above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That we continue to try to set up the necessary meetings that will lead to the principle of joint funding for Cultural Centres and activities. This must be made specific by being included in the 1975-76 budget of the D.A.A.

NOTE: We will bring this up with Senator Cavanagh and on the basis of our meeting with him will follow this up. Also, Chris Mcguigan says that he will continue to push for the necessary personal contact which would act as a follow-up of the 24 February letter re Black Theatre and other communications that the Aboriginal Arts Board has sent to the D.A.A.
6. REPORTS & APPLICATIONS

6.1 PERFORMING ARTS

6.1.9 REPORT OF CAROLE JOHNSON, CONSULTANT
TO BOARD – ART SPECIALTY DANCE

The following is an outline of the many and varied activities that I have been involved in as Urban Theatre Consultant to the Aboriginal Arts Board, since my return to Australia in November, 1974. Although dance is my art specialty and I have been involved in teaching dance and working with people interested in the dance, the listed activities will show a much broader involvement.

I have been basically concerned with the overall development of an Urban Performing and Communicating Arts concept that takes into consideration what I understand to be the aims and goals of the Aboriginal community. I have been most concerned with establishing a real base that allows for successful individual and thus group development. I have been concerned that so much of the discussion of arts and culture in the Aboriginal community is on a dream level and that so much of the time no real way to bring these exciting dreams to reality was being proposed or acted upon. Or, if it was, the process of doing was usually done in a way that failure was almost inevitable. I was thus concerned that individuals begin to experience a greater degree of success in their endeavours, and that their actual achievement matched their own high vision of quality. I think this will only happen as people gain more knowledge of how things are accomplished in the rest of the world. This can only happen through the actual experience of doing. As more and more people, with the group vision experience the application and the eventual success of doing, producing something on a good qualitative level, the community base will be built for a real cultural re-creation.

I see my role as primarily administrative. The purpose of Administration to me is to facilitate the goals and dreams of people. When I came to Australia I found that real knowledge of how to make something happen on the administrative level as well as knowledge of all the supports and how to create the supports that are necessary to make an art product available (to SHARE) to the rest of the community is lacking in the bulk of Aboriginal people who are interested in cultural revival. Thus the frustration of urban people especially, and their high rate of failure.

I don't think I would have come to work in Australia if my primary job had been to teach dance or to develop a dance group. At this time a much stronger base has to be developed before an Aboriginal Modern Dance Company is a workable goal. Also, to establish such, would involve a ten to fifteen year commitment. Let me say this is not unusual. For instance, Germany invited John Cranko, South African English trained choreographer, to establish the Stuttgartt Dance Company. This he did and made into a first class international company before he died. So the concept of inviting someone from another country is very often the way something desired can be achieved. However, the Board must assess what is really possible in inviting people to work in Aboriginal communities. I hope my period of consultancy with the Board has helped establish some of the present realities for development in the urban communities.
OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

(Supporting memos etc. are on file)

1. Assisted Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre with some of the administrative details during the production of the CAKEMAN. In addition I took over the box-office for two days when the Administrator, Bettie Fisher, took sick.

2. Developed the Dance Workshop at Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre. Along with teaching dance regularly for three days a week plus much additional rehearsal time, I organised and produced the following performances:

   Sunday February 5, 1975
   Torres Strait Island Dance Company, Yelangi Dance Company and Black Theatre Dance Workshop in a combined performance.

   Sunday April 6, 1975
   Black Theatre Dance Workshop Performance for the Aboriginal Arts Board

The tours that related to the Dance Workshop are as follows:

   March 27, 28, 29
   Canberra
   For the FCAATSI Conference

   May 16
   Dance Workshop participated in a performance at the University of NSW that was for the benefit of the Aboriginal Medical Centre.

3. Along with Brian Syron, I helped to make more firm the relationship and the funding of Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre by the DAA.

   This I saw as part of the policy of co-funding by the Board and other agencies. Though some initial efforts had been started by Board staff to help Black Theatre on this level, no real change in the DAA’s hold-off policy occurred until after the various meetings set up in Canberra with the Minister and the staff concerned by Brian Syron with the supporting paperwork prepared by Carole Johnson. (See memos)

4. Worked directly with the Department of Education in relation to the Dance Development of Wayne Nicols.

   As of November 1974, serious consideration was being given to the withdrawal from the course by the Aboriginal Studies Grant Section of the Department of Education.

   Wayne and I worked together at Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre in classes and in learning dances that could be performed. I also arranged to use him as much as possible as a demonstrator. In this was his confidence and understanding of what it takes and means to be a dancer developed.

   Wayne is now: Teaching migrants at a centre in Newtown, Teaching at Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre, Performing with a degree of confidence and skill that goes beyond his two years of study.
5. Did the day to day follow-through for the Urban Theatre Committee of the Aboriginal Arts Board. (See application and reports.)

(a) Responsible for both paper work and most of the co-ordination of Urban Theatre Training Workshops in the capital cities.

(b) Responsible for both paperwork, organization of the pre-planning, and the follow through of the SIX WEEK ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER CULTURAL & PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM.

(i) Also primarily responsible for involvement of Department of Education, Aboriginal Studies Grant section in the funding of the project. This work was started in the winter of 1974.

6. Organized and taught in the dance program of the ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER CULTURAL & PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM. I was able to transfer administrative responsibilities to Terry Widders, Arts Board member, who was involved in the project after the first week.

7. Currently I am helping plan with Terry Widders, the co-ordinator, the on-going year-round ABORIGINAL-ISLANDER COMMUNICATING & PERFORMING ARTS TRAINING PROGRAM. I am mostly responsible for co-ordinating the paperwork involved with funding.

8. From about January to March, I began working in the capacity of Program Developer for Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre. I saw a need to help develop program and there was no staff available to do it because lack of funds. However, I have gradually ceased functioning in that capacity as I realise I go beyond the experience of the Administrator. By going beyond a person's experience, there is no firm basis. The activities are not seen as part of that person and thus all would cease once I left. I think it better that activities happen more slowly and thus more concretely.

Carole Y. Johnson

August, 1975
6. REPORTS & APPLICATIONS

6.1 PERFORMING ARTS

6.1.8 REPORT - URBAN THEATRE COMMITTEE - PREPARED
       BY CAROLE JOHNSON

       URBAN THEATRE WORKSHOPS IN CAPITAL CITIES

The Urban Theatre Workshops occurred in Brisbane on the weekend of 12, 12 April and in Melbourne on
26, 27 April. These workshops which were preliminary to the six-week Aboriginal and Islander Cultural and
Performing Arts Workshop at Black Theatre, did achieve the purpose of introducing people living outside of
Sydney to some of the application needed in learning to write, act, dance, or the art of karate. From the
classes that were held, in each city, we were able to recruit most of the participants for the course in
Sydney.

The sessions that were held are as follows:

**BRISBANE:**

- **Dance:** Two Carole Johnson, assisted by Wayne Nicols
- **Acting:** Two Brian Syron
- **Writing:** Two class sessions and individual instruction Ande Reese
- **Karate:** Two Tom Rosser

With a total of 30 people attending each of the eight
sessions, we serviced a total of 240 people. The cost per
person for each course was approximately $2.85.

**MELBOURNE:**

- **Dance:** One Carole Johnson assisted by Wayne Nicols
- **Acting:** Two Brian Syron
- **Writing:** Two + individual sessions Ande Reese
- **Karate:** One Tom Rosser

With a total of 15 people attending each of the six sessions,
we serviced about 90 people. Cost per person for each
course averaged approximately $7.35.

Brisbane was better organized than Melbourne. The
people in Brisbane seem to have a spirit and a sense of
working together that allows them to function in groups
that are not defined by one particular family group and
their friends.
The people in Brisbane interested in the arts are also basically politically minded. They are very much involved in trying to smash the Queensland Acts. Actually the Black Theatre of Brisbane was established to be a vehicle to help educate the people.

In Melbourne there are essentially two differing family groups and friends that dominate the cultural scene. In the case of this workshop we actually serviced only one group. This is why the numbers were half of the Brisbane Workshops. The other group did not participate although I am told they knew about it.

We did not go to Adelaide because we were told by people in Adelaide that the time of the school holidays would be a bad time to come. They asked us to come after the Six Week Training Workshop.

We will be asking for reallocation of moneys left from this project for future recruitment trips. (See Agenda Item Reallocation.)

**SUGGESTION:**

Brisbane would be the next place where the Board could successfully attempt developing a cultural centre once the Sydney Workshops and concepts get off the ground. This is provided there is a consultant or someone really knowledgeable in organizing arts projects working full-time there. I would suggest that real strong efforts toward developing these could be projected for about 1977.

Carole Johnson
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

OBJECTIVES & METHODS

The Course you are undertaking has been designed to assist in the preservation, knowledge and dissemination of as much historical and traditional Aboriginal/Islander art and culture as possible, so that it can be understood and then applied to present day living.

It has been designed to provide and assure that its graduates will have employment opportunities and will have had enough previous experience so that they can immediately fulfill demands of employers. It provides a variety of experiences so that you will have choices. These choices are in the form of work possibilities such as teaching, choreographing, research and performing. The choices are also in the form of the style of dance with which you feel the most affinity. It is expected that after graduation you will be able to explore and evolve suitable systems that will be more relevant to the future of Aboriginal/Islander children. A great deal of practice and material is provided so that when you work alone in isolated areas, you will have tangible systems to fall back on as you explore new and better ways to present your material and find additional new material from the areas you are working in. You must come to understand your own body and your Aboriginal/Islander dance forms and styles.

CAREERS IN DANCE is the first attempt at an on-going professional dance training that will enable you to fulfill personal and group goals through the:

1. development of an Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre;
2. individual participation in mainstream Australian performing arts;
3. work in the Aboriginal/Islander community.

OBJECTIVE 1

To give every student in the Course the initial training necessary to function as artists/dancers, choreographers, teachers, dance ethnologists.

OBJECTIVE 2

To build positive, confident, aware and self-critical individuals with good work habits and a personal sense of worth so that they can function within their own sub-culture, in the Australian mainstream community or in a country in which they might choose to live.

OBJECTIVE 3

To bring about a new creative force and artistic identity for Australian modern dance through the input of Aboriginal/Islander dancers who can give Australia its unique world image.

OBJECTIVE 4

To help change the present Australian image of Aboriginal/Islander people and especially urban Aboriginal/Islander people as no-hopers, dependent people without a culture to one of creative, independent people contributing to Australia.
OBJECTIVE 5  To train Aboriginal/Islander people so that they have wider opportunities for theatrical employment and thus contribute towards eradicating the prejudice against hiring Aboriginal/Islander people for work as dancers and choreographers.

OBJECTIVE 6  To maintain continuity, provide a meaningful purpose and future and develop outlets for Aboriginal/Islander people interested in taking the Course or currently taking the Course.

OBJECTIVE 7  To establish a centre which serves as a repository of traditional dances and thereby becomes:
   a. A starting point for new creative directions
   b. A place where dance teachers and other educationalists can learn Aboriginal/Islander dance for teaching the general community
   c. A reason for each cultural group to maintain within its community its own style of dance.

The methods of the Course have been specifically thought out in relation to the personality traits of the Aboriginal/Islander peoples.

The advantage of the Course is that the methods and approach are good for all Australian people.

The following are some of the things the Course does to achieve the objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1  
1. The Course provides you with a comprehensive curriculum that emphasises the mastery of specific skills through a system of structured classes.

2. The Course makes sure you develop and discipline your own natural abilities.

3. The Course enables you to use the knowledge you acquire by being able to perform and teach dance.

OBJECTIVE 2  
4. The Course teaches you to respect yourself and the other students.

5. The Course provides an opportunity for you to work alone or with the leadership of other students.

6. The Course insists that you master the various dance techniques that you study in daily classes and develop your personal growth.

7. The Course provides an opportunity, through part-time courses and invited guest speakers, for students to function in a multi-racial environment. Once you have internal confidence with your basic skills, you will be able to function beside other Australian dancers and artists as an equal.
This is an exciting process which must develop a positive person who has a skill that is respected and admired. You make discoveries as you—

a. Develop a strong reliable technique through constant practice;

b. Grapple with a technique or class that you do not want to learn;

c. Create your own dances and thus put to use your skill and knowledge.

8. The Course provides a separate environment for the beginning Aboriginal/Islander student so that you can learn, grow and create from within your own experience without the pressures and influence of the dominating white majority culture constantly beside you and thus inhibiting that early development.

9. The Course teaches you as much traditional Aboriginal/Islander dance as possible so that you consciously know the styles from which your unique movement quality comes.

10. The Course encourages you to draw from the knowledge of specific authentic traditional dancers and tribal culture to form your own creative base, which will be neither traditional Aboriginal/Islander nor traditional modern.

11. The Course emphasizes improvisation and choreography as much as the learning of techniques and styles of dance so that you can put your special movement qualities and knowledge into new creative forms.

OBJECTIVE 4

12. The Course has established a student performing ensemble that can evolve into a first-rate professional company

13. The Course presents performances in the Aboriginal/Islander community, in schools, in festivals, on television as well as in the international arena.

14. The Course seeks as much publicity as possible for the ensemble so that its work can have a spillover effect on other Aboriginal/Islander people and give them something to be proud of.

15. The Course encourages joint classes (either within the Course or by sending students to other dance classes) so that Australians have the experience of working and studying beside Aboriginal/Islander people who function in the same way as they do.

OBJECTIVE 5

16. The Course makes you learn the meaning of reliability and punctuality, efficiency, etc.
17. By enabling you to function independently (e.g. getting to work without special transportation) and creatively and yet be able to follow directions of director or producer.

18. The Course gives you enough preparatory professional experiences so that you understand the special requirements for theatre, film or television performances.

**OBJECTIVE 6**

19. The Course is associated with the Sydney College of the Arts, a permanent institution with permanent funding so that it has a framework that allows parents of young people to function with the knowledge that there is a place for advanced training.

20. The Course maintains a vital relationship with the Aboriginal/Islander community.

21. The Course trains people to fill jobs such as dance teaching that presently go unfilled because there are no trained Aboriginal/Islander people.

22. The Course will help qualified students who finish the Course get grants for further training as well as develop work projects that take them as dance ethnologists into tribal areas to preserve and/or create dances of the area.

**OBJECTIVE 7**

23. The Course brings as many tribal teachers from as many different cultural groups as possible to teach them their way of dance and culture and laws.

24. The Course provides the opportunity for students to go to the tribal areas to study the dance and culture and gain the approval of the peoples whose dances you have learned in the classroom situation.

**NOTE:** If you or another person desires to pass on traditional dances, you will need to take years to live with the people and become accepted as one of them and become a master of that dance style.

**WHAT DOES DANCE STUDY INVOLVE?**

You will have a continuous and wide variety of movement experiences which reflect the broad range of movement possibilities that can be used for expressive purpose:

1. The emphasis of this Course is on training so that you will become part of the contemporary dance scene. You will study and gain knowledge of several forms of dance.

The specific dance techniques studied will include:

a. Modern (several approaches including Graham, Dunham)

b. Ballet

c. Jazz

d. Many traditional Aboriginal/Islander forms

e. Other ethnic dance styles and forms
When you complete the Course you should be able to perform a wide va
of traditional Aboriginal/Islander dances in such a way that the tribal p
approve of you, a non-tribal person, doing their dances. However, you
remember that you do not necessarily have approval to do their dances
side of the Course structure. See Objectives 3 and 7.

Other ethnic forms and folk forms are studied so that you will have a w
understanding of the meaning of dance to peoples. The study of the folk-gives you a basis for reconstructing tribal Aboriginal/Islander dances in
the spoken word and music. And it will enable you to build a theatrical
formance from traditional Aboriginal/Islander dances that will both meet
contemporary standards of theatricality and ensure the cultural integrit
Aboriginal/Islander people.

2. There will be a minimum requirement of 1½ hours of technical dance
each day. However, you will probably spend over three hours per day in
the dance studio.

NOTE: The development of a dancer with a high quality of performance
is dependent on continuous daily practice of the technique. The daily
of physical practice is to enable your body to move in the assigned
dance style without a conscious muscular effort. This then frees you
to think about:

a. what you are communicating and projecting to the audience;

b. the subtlety of timing, shading and emphasis of each move in
   relation to the entire dance and spiritual, intellectual and
   emotional meanings of the dance;

c. your relationship to the stage space, lights, music, audience
   reactions and other dancers.

3. Every term you will have classes in improvisation and choreograph
that you can understand the principles of composition. It is through
original choreographic work that the urban Aboriginal/Islander peop
thus Australia, will achieve a unique artistic identity. The Course
emphasis will be on the creative process in which dance composition
is taught through the actual making of dances.

4. You will be expected to perform in student workshops and to learn a
required amount of repertory. Material in the workshops will inclu
a. Traditional dances
b. Works by student choreographers
c. Test material especially prepared by faculty
d. Repertory
5. The Course has three levels of students Group A - Year 3; Group B - Year and Group C - Year 1. Each level will have specific projects that will have to be completed. These include:
   a. Specific dances that are assigned - repertory work;
   b. Choreographic projects - the students' own compositions;
   c. Specific ethnic dances;
   d. Student teaching.

6. Although much of your work is done under the constant direction of a teacher you must be able to work independently and with other students. Your leadership and followship role is developed:
   a. in a rehearsal situation where you must teach other students what you have already been taught;
   b. in your own choreographic projects where you must organize your music people and space just as you would have to do in a working situation.

7. In addition to the above physical aspects of dance, there will be study in the non-physical aspects such as dance history, anatomy and kinesiology, dance notation and criticism of existing work and a thorough understanding of music. In all courses there will be a constant integration of theory with practice. It will be expected that you will apply what is learned in the general studies courses to choreography projects.

8. It is expected that each of you will reach a high degree of technical proficiency and will understand and be able to explain verbally as well as demonstrate physically the technique of several styles of dance.

   It is expected that you will realize how little you know and know your own limitations. You must understand that if you, as a dancer/artist, are to remain in the profession it is essential that you continue technique classes for the maintenance of that physical ability for the rest of your life.

HOW SHALL I BE TAUGHT?

The school has developed a special teaching strategy. This relates to the method and objectives as stated. The course of study is intended to achieve the following three things:

a. to provide a broad range of experiences and techniques that will assure that you have a usable skill and also acquire a body of knowledge about yourself and your cultural heritage;

b. to provide the personal development necessary so that you will be prepared to lead a successful life outside of dance studies;

c. to enable you to develop your own organization of specific interest areas so that you can continue to study and work within the broad field of the dance.

The Course is organized so that experiences of each succeeding year are built up the previous experiences. There is a connected development in the fundamental skills, abilities, knowledge and values which are constant in each class. This is why regular attendance is so important.
FIRST YEAR - LEVEL C

Building the Basic Technique

This is regarded as a transition year in which you will adjust to a new living environment as well as a learning situation. You will be working mostly in class level to achieve the basic technique of the dancer.

SECOND YEAR - LEVEL B

Extending Creativity

You now should understand the basic discipline required of a dancer and should have adjusted to the demands of daily physical activity. You also have a rudimentary knowledge of basic technique of the dancer. There will be more emphasis in the beginning to put these skills to use in creative classes.

THIRD YEAR - LEVEL A

Developing Teaching and Performing Techniques

This is the year you will be expected to do a great deal of outside performance. It is through practical work in the performing or teaching situation that you can begin to put what you learnt in the preceding two years to use. You are expected by this stage to be fully responsible as a dance student. Through this emphasis on the practical aspect of the performance and classroom, you will be introduced to what it means to be a professional dancer.

The three terms of the year have the same emphasis as the three years:

TERM I  Building Technique
TERM II  Extending Creativity
TERM III Developing the Performance - the Production Term

The Course emphasizes the learning of specific skills in a formal training program. By giving you usable knowledge, the Course is preparing you to take part in the Australian workforce and to contribute to the development of a high standard of performance for contemporary Aboriginal/Islander performing arts.

COURSE SUMMARY

1. The comprehensive curriculum includes:

   a. Dance Techniques - modern, jazz, ballet, Aboriginal Islander, ethnic forms.

   b. Music Skills - rhythmic analysis, history, dance accompaniment.

   c. Theory and principles of human movement which include anatomy and kinesiology directed to the dancer's need with practical application, dance history, philosophy, anatomy.
d. Creative Skills in dance that bring together an understanding of form through improvisation and small compositional studies that lead to the study of choreograph.

e. Theatre Craft Skills of stage management, lighting, sound and costuming all with practical application.

f. General Academic courses such as: English composition, literature, speech, history, dance art history, anthropology, sociology, criticism, etc.

g. Study of Aboriginal/Islander art, crafts, music and dance with emphasis on specific cultures.

MUST I PARTICIPATE IN ALL THE CLASSES?

All classes are compulsory. You will not be excused from any of the classes offered at your level.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE YEAR?

In a regular five day week there are 32.5 hours of classes.

There are twelve weeks of scheduled classes in a thirteen week term and ten terms in a year.

WHAT WILL MY TIMETABLES BE?

Individual rosters are not given. Because the nature of this Course requires a high degree of flexibility, your weekly schedule of classes is posted on the bulletin board. You are required to check this daily to make sure there are no changes.

In general, classes in the mornings are fixed. They are part of a set curric of studies that continue for the entire term. However, an excursion or other special event could cause a change in the regular morning sessions.

The afternoon sessions are more flexible because they divide into workshop periods in which the emphasis could be traditional dance, drama, improvisation and choreography, repertory, rehearsals and the like.

WILL I GO ON EXCURSIONS?

These are a compulsory part of the Course. Non-attendance will go down an absence and will be counted in your percentage of absences.

Excursions that take place outside of school hours will be considered completely only if you are given a week's notification. If you have made prior arrangement to do something else on an excursion day, you will be given a special assignment to do instead, providing you let the Course know at least five days before the scheduled excursion. If you are absent from classes on the day of the excursion and cannot make it, you can also make that up provided your absence is excused. You are expected to be able to pay for your own transportation from your living allowance cheque and the cost of some tickets.
HOW SHALL I BE ASSESSED?

A. Need for Assessment

The study of dance involves a continuous process of critical self-analysis and self-assessment on the part of the student. To learn to be objective in something that is essentially a subjective experience, is exceedingly difficult yet totally necessary. If you hope to be successful, you must learn to look objectively at your own skills development and also at the work that you create in the compos classes.

1. You will be constantly assessed by the teaching staff and outside theatre and dance experts.

2. Because the Course aim is to produce people capable of functioning in the contemporary world, your behaviour and attitude is assessed in addition to the assessment of skills.

3. During the term there are regular staff meetings in which your progress and problems are recorded.

You are assessed in the following ways throughout the year and each term:

a. Technical development

b. Behaviour and development of professional attitude

c. Project completion

d. Performance examination

e. Classwork record

f. Self-assessment

Each term has its own specific stress in some of the assessment methods. The following is a guide:

TERM I

Interview and self-assessment
Classwork assessment by individual teachers
Project assessment
Development of professional attitudes

TERM II

Classwork assessments
Project assessments
Performance examination by panel of staff
Development of professional attitudes

TERM III

Classwork assessment
Project assessment
Development of professional attitudes
Final performance examination by combination of outside people and staff
Interviews by staff for third year students
WILL I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT TRADITIONAL AREAS TO STUDY?

All graduating students who have an 80% attendance record, good record of behav
and good classwork record will have the opportunity to go to a traditional area to
study in-depth the culture.

This is a major excursion and a requirement for graduation.

WHAT ARE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE
COURSE?

The public performance and teaching in workshop situations are the two major we
you will put your classroom training to use. Participation in these projects is a
requirement of the Course which gives you the opportunity to experience the real
work situation of a dancer. You will be expected to attend rehearsals outside of
school hours in order to prepare for public performances. The extra hours put in
the rehearsal situation can be compared to the ratio of class hours and home
preparation hours in an academic course.

The major emphasis of the third term is the production. This is a performing
season that gives all students an opportunity to find out what performing in a
professional theatre means.

Second and third year students will have performance weeks built into each term so
that they have experience mounting shows and working in the community under
conditions very different from that of the professional theatre. Even though the
performing situation is not theatrically ideal, the student must learn to bring his
professionalism to these places and people who may never have an opportunity to
go to the theatre.

All students will be graded for each performance.

Not participating in performance or teaching projects will lead to demerits which
will eventually pile up and could lead to failure and expulsion from the school.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A SKILLED DANCER?

The Course provides a precise educational preparation for the professional dancer
dance teacher. It aims to produce a skilled, motivated person who understands
that his present training is only a beginning.

Although the Course is only three years with a possible one year advanced training
programme, you must understand that it takes at least ten years to make a dancer,
artist. Only after attending the daily technique classes (1½ to 3 hours a day) for
a period of about five years can you hope to have the muscular control necessary
to execute a dance form with precision, clarity, style and interest. It is the
continuous physical training that will free your mind and the body of the effort in
expressive movement. As a young adult learning the discipline of dance, you must
be very aware of yourself, your movements and your environment. Although
continued practice involves repetitious drill that could be likened to rote learning,
it requires concentration and self-awareness to achieve the ultimate aim.
In the last five years of your initial ten year training period, you can begin to develop yourself as an artist. In the next ten years you can approach being a dance master.

It is in this period that you might be given permission to pass as a traditional Aboriginal/Islander dancer if you have devoted your life to that form as a speciality. After three years intensive study in this Course, you should be ready to specialize in a specific dance style, related non-movement dance fields, or continue the present modern study in order to perform, eventually teach or choreograph.

WHAT ARE THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS?

In order to pass a year, a student must:

1. Maintain 80% attendance
2. Have a good classwork record
3. Take the final performance examinations
4. Participate in 80% of all performance requirements

Students who do not pass a year may be advised to:

1. Repeat the year
2. Leave the Course

ATTENDANCE

Time in practical dance training cannot be made up the next day. Theoretical academic work or some kinds of excursions can be made up because it is a different kind of learning experience. A day out of the practice of the technique is time totally lost. A missed performance cannot be made up. In the context of this Course, exams can only be made up after the satisfactory completion of the course terms or three years. Loss of time can seriously jeopardize your eligibility to pass the year or graduate in three years.

Students are required to maintain 80% attendance.

A student who has health problems and who is not up to the rigours of the Course may be advised to take a leave of absence to take care of his health. These students can return with no penalty. However, your time for graduation will probably be changed.

Staff has the discretion to exempt those students who have an unexpected major illness or accident that requires non-attendance of the Course. It is possible these cases to make up the absence through attendance in approved part-time classes during semester breaks.

Students who do not have major health problems will be given a demerit (a penalty point) if their attendance falls below 80% in any one term. Attendance in part-time classes will not serve to make up the missed sessions but will be looked upon favourably in your review for graduation.
If attendance record for the year is under 80% then the eligibility to graduate within the three years is seriously jeopardized.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS A FINAL EXAMINATION?

There are two final performance examinations each year. These are exceedingly important and each one counts in your eligibility to pass the year and to finally graduate.

Performance examinations are on a specific day and with a panel of examiners. They cannot be made up if you miss one. If you are unable to be present for your final examination your grade for the term or year will be incomplete. You could fail the year and have to repeat.

You must take the required number of examinations in order to be eligible for graduation. Examinations can only be made up after the completion of three years.

EXCEPTIONS

1. If you have had 95% attendance for the year and the staff approve your reason for the absence, your eligibility to pass the year or graduate on time will not be in jeopardy.

2. If you miss your final examination and your attendance is between 80%-95% and your reason for the absence is approved and your classwork for the year has been good, you can continue to the next level but you will have to make up the performance exams in order to graduate. The first available time to make up your exam will be the year after you were originally scheduled to graduate. At that time your level of dance must be equivalent or more than the third year students.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

The main thrust of your dance course is to produce dancers who can work in the mainstream of Australian dance.

The Course provides major experiences in performing for its students and has devised a policy on performing.

Before students can be eligible for graduation, they must have completed and participated in certain activities.

1. Take and pass six out of six possible final examinations. If good work has been done throughout the year and a student is absent for professional or health reasons, he may be excused from one of the exams at the discretion of the staff. Class work and other performing assignments will be more closely examined and judged in place of the exam.

* The number of exams may change as a result of a change in school methods.
2. Participate in at least three major productions.

3. Participate and perform in 80% of all performing opportunities provided by the Course.

4. Participate in one study trip in three years to a tribal area.

5. Maintain an 80% attendance average in each term.

6. Maintain a passing record in regards to classwork for three years (nine terms).

Students who do not meet the requirements may be asked to repeat a year in order to be eligible for graduation.

All students in third year will be interviewed by staff and told if they are eligible for graduation. If a student is deficient in one or more of the above requirements he may be advised that he might have to repeat a year.

There will be two interviews a year, one before the beginning of second term and one in December before the end of third term.

The first interview will advise students if they are eligible to graduate, provided they maintain a good record during third year. It will also discuss deficiencies and how they might make them up to make sure they graduate.

The second interview at the end of December will advise students who were deficient if it is advisable to repeat the last year in order to graduate the following year.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I COMMIT A MAJOR OFFENCE OR CONTINUOUSLY BREACH COURSE RULES?

Demerit System

Students who commit major offences and cannot follow the rules of the Course, v face the possibility of suspension or dismissal from the school.

These offences include:

1. Violence to students, staff or teachers. Reports of violence to people in the community will be investigated and could lead to a demerit.

2. Repeated instances of abusive language to students, staff and teachers.

3. Reported instances of non-observance of rules of the Course and the hostel.

4. Inability to maintain 80% attendance.

Except in cases of violence, students will be given a blue warning letter first. They will then be given a pink letter, notifying them that they have a demerit.
Three pink letters and the student will be suspended from the school. Staff will decide the length of time of the suspension.

Suspension means you will be sent home and your allowance cut off.

If a student who has been suspended once gets three additional pink letters, he/ she will be dismissed from the school.

**PART-TIME COURSES**

The Course wants to encourage students to further their knowledge in dance and other areas of interest. The following are the procedures that will be followed for students desiring special courses outside full-time course hours.

1. **Eligibility**

   Only those students who have maintained 80% attendance in full-time dance course subjects will be approved for additional part-time classes during the school term.

   **Exception:**

   A student will be expected to take additional dance classes when it has been recommended by a teacher and approved by the Principal Teacher. This then becomes a Course requirement for the particular individual involved.

   During school term breaks all students are encouraged and eligible to take courses in any area of interest, including additional dance classes.

2. **Procedure**

   1. Students desiring to take additional courses should discuss this with the Principal Teacher to find out if it will be approved by the school.

   2. When you know you will be approved by the school, you must gain approval of the institution (or person) from which you desire to learn.

   3. Then you should come to the office to fill in an application form if you know the place and time for the additional course or you can make an appointment with the Department of Education to seek advice and fill in an application. If you need to discuss the kinds of course available and places you might take such courses, then you must make an appointment with your Education officer, Caroline Brennan.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I LEAVE THE COURSE?**

The Course is structured to permit students to leave for professional reasons or personal need for adjustment to the rigours of the Course. Students who have been admitted to the full-time diploma course may leave the Course for a maximum of three consecutive terms and still re-enter the Course provided they make a written request asking for a leave of absence. This written request can also be done through a discussion with the director who writes down the students reasons for the leave.
It is then the student's responsibility to write, telegram or inform the Course Director in the "Leave of Absence" request, when he wants to return so that the Course holds his place. If the student leaves the Course for more than 12 consecutive terms, he will be considered for re-admission on an individual basis. Lack of spaces in the Course may preclude re-admission for any future term. A student re-entering the Course should not expect to complete the Course unless he has satisfactorily completed all requirements.

If you are accepted for re-entry, your level will be determined according to:

a. the length of study you originally had;

b. the length of time away from study;

c. the time of year you re-enter the Course;

d. your natural talent and ability.
FACT SHEET

ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 'CAREERS IN DANCE'

Founded 1975 by Carole Johnson after she came to Australia with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company to perform at the Adelaide Arts Festival. She was invited to stay in Australia by the Australia Council. She was instrumental in doing the behind the scenes work between 1972 and 1974 that brought Sydney's Black Theatre Arts and Culture Centre alive.

Carole Johnson was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, received a Bachelor of Science degree from Julliard School of Music where she majored in Ballet and Graham style Modern Dance. Was a soloist for 6 years with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, appointed Standard Oil Co of New Jersey and Humble Oil and Refining Company's Affiliate Artist with the Department of Cultural Affairs of New York City, toured South East Asia for the US State Department, Director of New York City's Dancemobile, Administrator of the Study on Black Dance Development, Consultant on dance for New York State Council on the Arts, Editor of FEET Black Dance News publication, President of Modern Organization for Dance Evolvement, US International Theatre Institute delegate.

Aims
To give every student in the course the initial training necessary to function as artist/dancers, choreographers, teachers and dance ethnologists.

To build positive, confident, aware and self critical individuals with good work habits and a personal sense of worth so that they can function within their own sub-culture, in the Australian mainstream community or in a country in which they might choose to live.

To bring about a new force and artistic identity for Australian modern dance through the input of Aboriginal/Islander dancers who can give Australia its unique world image.

To prepare dancers of Aboriginal and Islander heritage who can fully compete in the mainstream of the dance world.

Dancers from the school have performed overseas in Nigeria, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Canada, New Zealand, Memphis and San Francisco, USA. At home they have appeared in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

The school is affiliated with the Sydney College of the Arts and accredited as Associated Diploma Level by the NSW Higher Education Board.

Funding is by Commonwealth Department of Education, Aboriginal
Arts Board of Australia Council with additional grants from the Theatre Board and this year the Design Board, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Ministry of the Arts, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

Full time staff of 13, other part-time staff.

25 students across 5 levels

Operates a hostel supplied by Aboriginal Hostels P/L for the students in their first 3 years

Operates DANCE NOW CENTRE, a part time evening school open to all

Traditional tutors are brought to Sydney 2 to 3 times a year to pass on their culture. Students make a trip once a year to a remote area to live with traditional people and learn their customs, history and art form and to participate fully in the traditional life style.

Students from the course have been awarded scholarships, including the Churchill, NSW Premier's Department and Aboriginal Overseas Study Grant to train with Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham - as well as traditional native Americans.

The students have been seen on overseas television, national television as well as guests performers and have featured in several documentaries. They have performed in music video tapes for David Bowie, Coloured Stone, No Fixed Address, Stevie Wonder and others. They have worked as models and actors, garners the lead role in "The Fringe Dwellers" and performed with other dance companies. Currently 2 former students are performing with the Sydney Dance Company.

Members of the school are active in schools performances and teaching workshops throughout New South Wales and Queensland.

The school is national and students come from NSW, Queensland, The Torres Strait Islands, Northern Territory, and West Australia.

Currently the school is searching for larger premises. Conditions are cramped, Which requires classes in the park when the weather allows. There is no shower and what is called the dressing room, shared by boys and girls was a storage closet until reclaimed.

Equally important is the need to form a professional dance company. Somewhere the students can see as a concrete goal. Especially the girls who haven't been snapped up by other companies like the boys.
Black Theatre Arts & Culture Centre

PRESENTS

ABORIGINAL ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE

IN

"FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME"

Directed by: STEVEN COSTAIN

SEPTEMBER 3rd through 6th and 10th through 12th at 7.15 p.m.
BACKGROUND

The ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE COMPANY is made up of sixteen young people participating in the Careers in Dance Course. This special course which started in October, 1975 is run by the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Committee. It was funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council. The students who come from all over Australia receive Aboriginal Study Grants from the Commonwealth Department of Education. They live and work from their two houses in Gielbe and they study thirty hours a week at Bodenwieser Dance Centre, a school that has provided a home for the group.

The three year course is uniquely the only full time course in Australia which offers people of Aboriginal and Islander descent the chance to train for careers in teaching dance or performing jobs on stage, T.V. or film as well as for technical jobs in the theatre.

Already the young dance group has taken part in public performances. In January, 1976, the six first term students toured Aboriginal communities in western N.S.W. In addition the group has taken part in the 1975 Canberra Festival of Aboriginal Country and Western music, Wollongong Teachers College and more recently at the N.S.W. Art Gallery's Centenary.

Wayne Nicols, Richard Talonga, Dorathea Randall and Michael Leslie are four advanced talented students who have been able to secure part-time performing jobs as dancers. Daryl Williams performs with the Woomera Dance Company, the traditional company from Mornington Island that tours schools in N.S.W. and South Australia. The dances of the group range from traditional corroboree to modern and jazz ballet and Island dance.

This season at BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE is the first performance series in the Sydney Aboriginal community. In this year of operation the group has been able to create a fifty minute production that for the first time combines traditional dance, modern dance and the spoken word. This blending works well to produce an exciting, entertaining evening that gives insight into Aboriginal ideas and emotions of their traditional past and their present status in society. We have called the production FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME since one can only move forward when returning spiritually to one's roots and traditional heritage.

We are sure you will enjoy this first performance by the students.

Carole Johnson,
COURSE DIRECTOR
Programme

* Friday and Saturday Cast
** Changes in Programme for Sunday and Monday

1. SOUTH SEA ISLAND SCENE
   Directed by Irene Washington
   Traditional

2. PARTING
   Choreography: Carole Johnson
   Ann Gundy and **Wayne Nicol
   Cheryl Stone and **Michael Leslie
   O. C. Smith

3. SHAKEY GROUND
   Choreography: Penny Williams
   Rosemary Evans, Andrea Leigh, Leone Malamoo, Cheryl Stone
   **John Williams, **Daryl Williams
   Temptations

4. TAXI CONVERSATION
   Choreography: Jane Pike
   Readers: Malcolm Cole and Leone Malamoo
   Dancers: Sharon Coffey and Wayne Nicol
   Wayne Nicol, **Michael Leslie, **Richard Talonga
   Sharon Coffey, **Cheryl Stone, **Ann Gundy
   Aileen Corpus

5. CUT THE CAKE
   Choreography: Penny Williams
   Malcolm Cole, Lance Gavenor, Philip Lanley
   Andrea Leigh, Leone Malamoo, Cheryl Stone
   **Steve Talonga, Daryl Williams, John Williams
   Rosemary Evans, Leone Malamoo
   Ann Gundy (Sunday), Sharon Coffey (Monday)
   AVB

6. UNDERWATER STUDY
   Choreography: Carole Johnson
   **Wayne Nicol, **Richard Talonga
   Santana

PAUSE

7. LARDIL SUITE (Wallaby Cycle)
   Entire Cast

INTERMISSION

WELCOME DANCE
Back To The Dreamtime
Male and Female Brogla Dance
Back To The Dreamtime
Lightening Dance (Goorte Rungie)
Back To The Dreamtime
This My Land
Wallaby Hunting Dance

(Sunday & Monday)

Back To The Dreamtime
Brogla Dancing Girl
Choreography: Carole Johnson
Rainbow Serpent Legend
Rainbow Serpent Dance
Choreography: Lacy Jumawan

Back To The Dreamtime
Birth of the Butterfly
Dancing: Ann Gundy, Cheryl Stone, Wayne Nicol
Malcolm Cole

Didgeridoo
Back To The Dreamtime
Fish Dance and Pelican Dance
Back to The Dreamtime
Present and Future
Choreography: Graham Jones

Back To The Dreamtime
Aboriginal Country & Western Suite
Choreography: Carole Johnson

Piccaninnny Lullaby
The Sea
Mermaid Dance and Sea and Rock Dance
Shake-ies
Back To The Dreamtime
Farewell Dance and Song

Entire Cast
Leone Malamoo
Cast
Richard Talonga
Cast
Cheryl Stone
Malcolm Cole
Daryl Williams, Michael Leslie
Lance Gavenor, Philip Lanley
Daryl Williams, Wayne Nicol,
John Williams, Philip Lanley
Leone Malamoo
Cheryl Stone
Richard Talonga
Term 1 Students with Sharon
Coffey, Richard Talonga
Steve Talonga
Wayne Nicol
Leone Malamoo

Malcolm Cole
Cheryl Stone
Cast
Richard Talonga
Michael Leslie (Malcolm Cole)
Wayne Nicol, Richard Talonga
Cheryl Stone, Ann Gundy, Leone
Malamoo (Sharon Coffey, alternate)
Malcolm Cole

1st and 2nd Term students
(5 each performance)
Cheryl Stone, Solo
Cheryl Stone
Richard Talonga
Cast
Ann Gundy
Cast

128
CAST

THIRD TERM STUDENTS:
Micki Lelas, Wayne Nicol, Dorothea Randall, Cheryl Stone, Richard Talou, Daryl Williams.

SECOND TERM STUDENTS:
Stuart Coffey, Malcolm Cole, Ann Gundy, Leone Makimoo, Steve Taloung

FIRST TERM STUDENTS:
Norman Evans, Lance Gavenor, Philip Lanley, Andrea Leigh, John Williams

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF COMPANY:
Carole Johnson

Programme Credits

1. CAREERS IN DANCE STAFF
   Director (Speech Teacher) - Steve Costain
   Assistant (Dance Teacher) - Lucy Junaway
   Co-ordination and Artistic Director - Carole Johnson
   Participating Choreographers - Graham Jones, Jane Pike, Penny Williams, Irene Washington
   Traditional Material - Lardi people of Mornington Island as taught by: Henry Peters, Jackson Jacobs

2. BLACK THEATRE STAFF
   Lester Bostock - Administrator
   Aileen Corpus - Technical Director
   Adol Compton - Trainee Lighting Technician
   Terry Widder
   Bobbi Sykes

3. COMMITTEE for: Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme
   Elsa Dixon
   Bob Maza
   Pat O'Shea
   Wayne Nicol
   Terry Widder
   Bobbi Sykes

4. Poetry for "FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME" Production —
   From issues of IDENTIY
   "Back To The Dreamtime"
   Alan Russell (April 1972)
   This My Land
   Ngilgi Ngilgi (June 1976)
   D. Henry (April 1975)
   Didgeridoo
   Lorna Fisher (January 1975)
   The Sea
   Jack Davis (July 1974)
   ALSO
   The Legends — Rainbow Serpent
   Birth of the Butterflies
   MUSIC for "FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME"
   Traditional Lardi
   Sung by Henry Peters, also
   Jackson Jacob and Joe Watts
   Brodie Girl
   Peter Combe
   Present and Future
   Average White Band
   Aboriginal Country and Western
   Bob Randall, Robert McLead

5. SPECIAL THANKS TO:
   Pien Lennon and Ken Thompson of the Department of Education who assisted and encouraged us so totally.
   Bodenweiser Dance Centre — who provided us with a home and assisted us in every way possible.
   Dorothea Randall — a third term student who had to return early for a job commitment, she was invaluable in coping with the other members of the cast.

6. THIS PROGRAMME HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT OF: Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council, and Department of Education — Aboriginal Study Grants.
JOHN BAILY  PRINCIPAL

JB:es

22 December 1976

Mr. Robert Edwards,
Director,
Aboriginal Arts Board,
Australia Council,
Northside Gardens,
Maclaren Street,
NORTH SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2060.

Dear Bob,

Following our meeting this afternoon with Carole Johnson, I wish to report to you formally that I am most interested in pursuing the prospect of having the Career and Dance Courses of the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre affiliate with the Sydney College of the Arts.

I know that Dr. Peter Martin of the Higher Education Board who was present at the meeting also felt that there is a real possibility of a fruitful future association between us.

I would be most grateful for anything you can do that will ensure the Group's continuance until it can come within the advanced education system.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

John Baily
Principal.
Lucy Lumawang

Lucy, you have had some 24 years of studying, teaching, and performing dance, in various parts of the world. Can you tell me, briefly, something about this background?

I have my own company, and I am the director of my own School of Dance, which is a Department of an American University, Seligman University, in the Philippines. I built the school 17 years, and now it has a company of its own, and my dancers are the ones that I have trained. It is very successful, and I am happy that I have left it to them.

And how did you come to Australia and become involved with the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre?

When I first came to Australia, it was just because a friend of mine said you must come to Australia! I came for two weeks and stayed for two years! That was in 1972.

It was during that time that the Black Theatre in Redfern heard of my dance experience and asked me to come and teach dancing. They were dance workshops, not only for mature people or any particular group, but open to all ages. They were just sessions where everyone got together and danced. I carried on classes in the back of churches and sometimes — because there were so many people and so little space — even in the streets!

It was a kind of free-form dance, a rejoicing only. We were not at this stage, after you've got to stretch your legs, straighten your backs, watch your focus and all these things. It was just joining hands and enjoying expressing ourselves through dance. It was at these workshops that I first met Wayne Nicol, who became one of the first students of the school when it was established in 1975.

Carole Johnson, who is still the Director, established the school. Can you tell us something of her background, and how you came to work together in the AIDT?

Carole is a black American dancer. She was very well known as a choreographer and performer in the United States. She studied at the Juilliard School, where she majored in ballet and Martha Graham style of modern dance, and she was later soloist for six years with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company.

Carole actually came to Australia before I did, and when I came I heard that she had been here and was interested in helping the Aboriginal people to build a dance workshop and perhaps to develop it into a school of dance. During my first two years of workshop teaching, I met Carole only briefly, and she returned to the United States. The time came for me to return to the Philippines, and I went thinking that I would not be coming back.

But when I reached the Philippines, I felt divided — I had so many thoughts for the people back here. Carole returned to the Black Theatre, organised a workshop, and it was very successful. She had a great deal of support and she was able to found a school — which was this school, the AIDT — through the Aboriginal and Islander Development Scheme in 1975. This established a three-year full-time course for people of Aboriginal and Islander descent (which we have now been able to extend to four years, through the NETT scheme). They are assisted in their studies by a trainee allowance from the Commonwealth Department of Education's Aboriginal Grants Scheme.

Even before the full-time course started in 1975, Carole had founded a part-time course, using the Bodenwieser Dance School Premises. It was from this that she found the first five full-time students of the school.

And when did you return to join the school?

Carole had heard of my work while I was here and although we had not tried...
met for long, she invited me to come back and teach with her in her new school. In the short time we had had together, it was clear that we understood each other’s approach to dance and would be able to work together creatively. I knew how long it would take to build, from my previous experience, and I said to her “I will give you five years”.

And you have been with the school those five years now.

Yes, I have been the principal teacher and choreographer of the school for five years, and it really has given new meaning to my life. It has been a pioneering work. The five years have gone by and now I would like to continue to help. But we have graduates like Michael — who really is a special dancer — and I think he will become a real teacher for his people, and for Australia.

What does the course cover, over the three years?

Each year it changes according to the needs of the individuals we have, the teachers we have available, and what we can afford. It is a very difficult task deciding what to give the students. Carole and I always work together on the curriculum. I feel, having been trained in the classical field myself, that classical work is important — it is a requirement. So we have classical. In the modern form we have Martha Graham. We have jazz. They also study other ethnic dance forms — Indian dance, Islander dance, some Filipino dance, and they get a lot of their own culture, which is an essential aim of the school. We have tribal dancers, who are traditional dance teachers of the school, from Northern Territory, Mornington Island, Yirrkala, Torres Strait and.

I teach various parts of the course, and I also teach in a method, which over the years I have devised. It is much more open and free, and more spontaneous, and even after the first hour of dance I am teaching my students to become performers. We do not just do exercises for five years, and then start dancing. Instead, the structure of the course is in a dance format, so that they are already dancing from the start. And by the time the student is only four weeks trained, a small venue performance would be ready. So we are training the students from the outset to perform. But, of course, we take into account the individual and direct their development according to their particular needs and talents. We encourage them to go for broad experience, but to recognise and develop their strengths.

And what does the Aboriginal cultural content of the course consist of?

We have Aboriginal history, music, song, and literature — both contemporary and traditional. We have Aboriginal tribal dance teachers who come to the school. And we take the students to the Northern Territory, and to Mornington Island, to learn and to perform, and to just be able to be with the tribal people and to understand their motherland. Most of our students are urban-born people and they have to learn a great deal about their own culture.

Who are the other teachers who come to the school?

As part of the course we have drama and music history and literature teachers, as well as dance teachers. And we also have many visitors who come to lecture and teach. When the overseas companies who come to Sydney hear of us, they want to show their interest and offer to lecture or teach. I sometimes go to them and when they come they usually become very involved.

Which companies are these?

Most of the dance companies which come to Australia. The Berlin Ballet came and saw us and exchanged and talked. Arthur Mitchell came and gave us a very educating lecture. He thought he would come and speak to us for ten minutes, and he stayed for two hours! And one of the girls from For Colourful Girls . . . (which toured in 1978). Aku Kadogo, stayed on as a teacher and is still with us.

How often do you have your own performances and productions?

Well, we are not really a performing group, as the main emphasis is on training. But we are constantly being asked to perform, all around Australia, and we also have many invitations to perform overseas.

We have an annual performance, at the end of each year. We also do performing tours and workshops in country areas and interstate — these are often during term holiday breaks, to avoid interfering with the study program. We perform at dance festivals, Aboriginal festivals, and do a special workshop program for schools. The students are given consistent practical experience in both performing and teaching, throughout the course. Actually the invitations to perform are usually more than we are able to fulfill.

And what about the overseas invitations?

In 1977 we participated in Nigeria’s African and Black World Festival of Arts and Culture, the South Pacific Festival in Tahiti and the Independence Celebrations in Papua New Guinea. Last year we went to the Philippines and we have also received an invitation to attend an International Festival in Canada.

You started off with five students. How many do you have now?

We now have over 30 full-time students in the course over three years, and we also have, under the NETT scheme work employment program, a special one-year extension to the course for graduate students. So graduates like Michael can extend their training and they are able to choose their own forms of work, depending on whether they wish to teach or perform. We try to help them to fulfill their ambitions, in gaining work experience while still remaining part of the school.

If we could, I think it would be good to extend the training course to five years. It is a battle to teach dance at the age of 16. But we are, all the same, developing dancers who have quality and individual style.

There is a particular loyalty and bond between the students and the school, and it seems that the graduates will always tend to regard themselves as still part of the school.

We’ll, we don’t cease to become students. I myself have taught for over 20 years, and I still think that I am a student. I am still learning a lot from my day to day work. We are all, of course, very interested in each student’s development, and as the graduates go out and get their experience they will come back and communicate this to the
other students of the school, and some will become teachers in the school themselves. There is a great deal of encouragement, togetherness and support from the school, which is very important to both the students and the graduates. It is important that we continue this support.

Finally, what about funding? How is the school surviving financially?

We are funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board, and from other funds for parts of the project, some State and some Federal funding. But our budget is the same as it was when we started — it has not been increased in five years. We now have 37 students and have to apportion it around the three classes. It is very difficult, and money is a problem. We have need of a lot of basic equipment, like some decent arres and a good sound system.

But I just hope that we will be given the chance to continue to do what we do as so important — to find new creative dance forms, to express both the traditional past and modern life, and to encourage and develop these young dancers who have such special talent.

Michael Leslie

Michael, you have been a student of the school since it began. What made you decide you wanted to become a dancer?

When I really started thinking about dancing was a commercial I saw on TV — this was before the workshops or the school. I liked to dance, but I had never seen any modern dancing, except on TV. There was one particular ad that had a lot of dancing, and it made me feel that I would really like to be able to dance like that. So, that is what made me start. But, I thought then it was going to be a lot easier than it actually has been.

When did you become involved in the workshops?

After deciding that I wanted to learn modern dancing, I began part-time in classes at Bodenweiser, with Carole, who was running special classes there for Aboriginal people. In these classes I met Wayne Nicol and he asked me to go over to the Black Theatre, which I later did, and I joined in the workshop group there, which later became the first year of the school.

Did you find it hard to keep up the discipline of dancing when you first started?

Yes. Believe me, even now I find it hard — I really do. But at that time it was even harder. But I enjoy performing and I am now enjoying teaching too.

Last year you were awarded a Churchill Scholarship for overseas study. Where will you be doing that study?

I will be going to the United States in May for a year of study and performance work with a New York company, Alvin Ali, who are a black modern dance group specialising in Jazz. Jazz is my speciality, but I have a lot more experience to gain yet, and this will give me a full year to concentrate on it.

And after that year, what do you see for yourself?

I'll be coming back, and eventually I would like to do something like Carole and Lucy have been doing, working as a teacher for Aboriginal people. And performing, of course — but I want to teach as well.

As well as this, though, what I would really like to do — and so would the others who have now graduated, and also Lucy and Carole — is after we have all been outside for experience with overseas and Australian companies, we want to come together, in a few years, and make this a base for our own professional company — an Aboriginal professional company.

At the moment we need the experience, and we cannot financially afford to extend the school into a professional company as well, but hopefully one day, when we are all ready, it will come.

Last issue we headlined the Aboriginal & Islander Dance Theatre at The Australian & Islander Dance Theatre. Dance Australia apologies for the error.

WENDON

DANCE & COSTUME
SUPPLIES
and
WORK ROOM
RETAIL, WHOLESALE, MAIL ORDER
Enquiries: 233 3100
24 Kingsway
Glen Waverley

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I wish to become a member of The Australian Ballet Society.

I wish to RENEW my subscription to The Australian Ballet Society.

Mr Mrs Miss

Name

Address

Phone

Postcode

Adult membership $15. Husband and Wife $15

Family $20 (Parents & Children under 17 years)

Students (under 26 years) $5 (Proof required).

Subscription year dates from 1st January to 31st December

Cheque or bank draft

Signature

Photo complete and return this form with remittance to The Australian Ballet Society, Room 434, 4th Floor, 1 City Road, South Melbourne 3205.
Mr. G. Green,
Director,
Department of Education,
Box 596, Post Office,
HAYMARKET, NSW. 2000

24 December, 1976
Your Ref: D19/7/19

Dear Mr. Green

RE: CAREERS IN DANCE TRAINING PROGRAM

The Aboriginal Arts Board is reviewing its support for the above program as a result of the recent initiative taken by the Sydney College of the Arts to incorporate the course within its structure at the opening of 1979.

I have been given to understand that an additional sum of $15,000 will be required to maintain the program for the period January to June 1977. Despite the limited funds available for the current financial year, I expect the Board to provide this support so as to ensure that the program becomes an established and accredited course within the College.

This amount will be included in forward estimates of the Australia Council so that a firm commitment is established. The course will need ongoing funding to the beginning of 1979, when it might be expected that the Sydney College of the Arts would accept full funding responsibility. This will be in the order of $45,000 for 1978.

Members of the Board, all of whom are Aboriginal, place great importance on achieving status for programs which involve the training of Aboriginal people in professional areas of the arts.

In view of the Board's support in 1977/78 it would be appreciated if assistance within the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme provided by your Department could be continued.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Edwards
Director
URBAN THEATRE TRAINING PROGRAM
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

REPORT

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM TO THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY AND
THE ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

I. PRESTIGE TO THE ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD & COMMUNITY - THE REAL
POTENTIAL OF THE GROUP IS TO BECOME AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR TOURING
COMPANY WITH AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED LEVEL QUALITATIVELY

Statement: If this group is killed, the Aboriginal Arts Board will
probably lose the possibility that in five to ten years' time, they will
have produced a company that can be part of the international dance scene,
and be more exciting and sought after than any of Australia's national
'white' companies can ever hope to be.

This statement is based on the assumption that the rate of development of
the students will maintain itself at its present rate.

Explanation: The dance in Australia is on a rather uninteresting level from
an international point of view. If these 'white' companies continue their
present rate of development, it will be quite easy for this Aboriginal group
to surpass them. In addition to their modern and classical development, the
group has something unique to offer and that is its Aboriginal and Islander
heritage which is a dancing one by tradition. There is nothing special
that the white companies can offer. Indeed, that special quality that these
white Australian companies can have must come from the absorption of the
Black Australian style over the next fifty to a hundred years.

II. AMBASSADORS FOR THE ABORIGINAL RACE

A. STUDENTS HAVE DIRECT POSITIVE CONTACT WITH WHITE PEOPLE IN CLASS
SITUATION

As a group, the students in the course contradict all the stereotypes about
Aboriginal people. These students are in contact with many whites who have
a positive relationship with them on a basis of similar interest, the dance.
These white people will be able to contradict the statements of other whites
from their own direct experience of working and studying with the Aboriginal
students.

The students demonstrate energy, vitality, warmth, enthusiasm, intelligence,
ability to cope, politeness, cleanliness, and etc. I've never heard or
overheard a negative word about the people in the course. Yet from people
who have not had contact with the students, I am often queried as to how I
find it working with Aboriginal people and isn't it difficult etc. I don't
think such questions would even occur to any of the white people (about 100)
who have had close contact with these students.
B. **PERFORMANCES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE INSPIRE SELF PRIDE**

Three thousand Aboriginal people have seen the group in live performances. They have performed on missions, in country towns of New South Wales and in Canberra at the *Aboriginal Country and Western Festival*. The estimate of the audience for each place is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walgett</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewarra</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,160</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These performances have been inspiring for the people who are proud of the students. In all the towns, the group has been asked to return by people in the community. As yet, we have made no arrangements for returning. That's planned in the next two terms.

C. **PERFORMANCES FOR GENERAL COMMUNITY (PREDOMINANTLY WHITE AUDIENCES)**

In its short existence, the group has made approximately six appearances for a general audience. Approximately 1,200 people have seen them in live performances. These are students from the primary level to the university level and working adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girraween Primary</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodenweiser Dance</td>
<td>225 (2 performances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Teachers' College</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Art Gallery</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanton Library</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,175</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. **TELEVISION PERFORMANCES**

1. The group has appeared twice on television. The ABC televised the entire performance of our group at the *Aboriginal Country and Western Festival* in February 1976.

2. We appeared on *This Day Tonight* on Tuesday July 6, 1976 in a combination interview and short dance demonstration.

This was the real introduction of the group through the news media to a nationwide audience.

It's one of the few times people could see Aboriginal people who were doing something interesting and were not complaining about bad conditions and treatment. We showed both traditional dance and modern dance, and one of the students, Richard Talonga, spoke of his desire to dance for many years and the unique opportunity he now had.
III. ADVANCED STUDENTS BEGINNING TO TAKE ON CASUAL DANCE JOBS - EMPLOYMENT

A. RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPING WITH TORRENS ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Wayne Nicols and Doratha Randall have been asked to go to Adelaide three times to perform and to teach in the schools.

In addition, on two occasions they have performed in the Adelaide Festival Hall.

B. WAYNE NICOLS WORKING WITH MODERN DANCE COMPANY

Wayne Nicols is currently performing with Kinetic Energy, a modern dance company based in Sydney.

C. RICHARD TALONGA WORKING WITH DANCE CONCERT

Richard Talonga occasionally does special performances with Dance Concert, in its school performances. This company specialises in the national dances of all people in Australia.

NOTE: These are the only two companies in Australia that use Black Australian men on an equal footing with the other performers. That is, they are not including the Aboriginal "walk on" for a little authenticity and colour.

IV. RELATIONSHIP WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND

BENEFITS:

(1) The Mornington Island students are learning to live and cope with living in a society that is predominantly a white Australian culture.

(2) Mornington Island students are learning that their culture is valued and appreciated by both white people and urban Aboriginal people.

(3) The way the course is planned, there is direct feedback to the Mornington Island community because the course will spend time at Mornington Island and the community will have an opportunity to participate.

(4) Most of the people in the urban and rural communities have no contact with Aboriginal people from tribal areas. Their knowledge is scanty and often incorrect, based on emotionalism and wrong information. The urban people in the course are having continued contact with the Mornington Island people and are learning in detail the specifics of the culture. This they can then pass on to other people in the Aboriginal community.

(5) Urban people and tribal people are getting to know each other in a positive way (based on mutual interests) and they can break down fears and myths that have developed and been perpetuated over the years.
HOW THE RELATIONSHIP STARTED

(1) Urban people asked for a program where they learned directly from people who practised the traditional culture and could share in its depth. It seemed to the urban people that the tribal people were only going to white schools and organisations. There is a lot of resentment about this.

(2) After the Mornington Island elder teachers, Henry and Dorothy Peters, worked with the young people in the Six-Week Training Course in June, 1975, they became enthusiastic and interested in continuing the relationship.

(3) Daryl Williams, a young man from Mornington Island, came to Sydney with the Woomara Company and asked to take part in the Six-Week Course. He enjoyed it enough to want to continue in the Dance Course.

RESULTS OF THE CONTINUED CONTACT

(1) The Mornington Island elders invited the group from the Dance Training Course to Mornington Island so that they could show other Mornington Island people what they had been teaching.

(2) Henry Peters and Jackson Jacobs were pleased with the course and what Daryl had learned so they asked if they could send other young people down.
   - The June 1976 term now has five people from Mornington Island participating in the course.

(3) Daryl Williams continued from the Six-Week Course for one and a half terms and will possibly continue this term on completion of a film that he is in. It is understood that he has been given special commendation in the Mornington Island corroborees. This is something that does not usually happen for a person of his age.

Prepared by CAROLE JOHNSON
for CAREERS IN DANCE COMMITTEE
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

1. Details of project for ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD MEETING of November, 1976

The Dance Course currently operates two distinct levels, a beginners and an intermediate. Students in each level are required to take twenty (20) sessions per week. Each session lasts a minimum of 1½ hours.

The course subjects currently include:

1. DANCE TECHNIQUES
   Ballet
   Modern
   Jazz
   Lardil (Koomiling Island traditional dance)
   South Sea Island styles

2. SPEECH
3. MUSIC
   Theory
   Drumming
4. CREATIVE DANCE and IMPROVISATION
5. COMPOSITION (Choreography)
6. STAGECRAFT (Sound)
7. ANATOMY
8. EXPATRIATION AND REHEARSALS *

* These enable older participating students a chance to demonstrate through performances which help them learn performing techniques and share immediate experiences with the Aboriginal and Australian Community.

See following pages for OBJECTIVES and more detailed explanation with sample daily schedule and yearly schedule.
ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDERS

CULTURAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

TRAINING PROGRAM

DANCE PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES:

1. To give participants basic training necessary to be able to function internationally and individually as they desire.

2. To give participants an opportunity to build group self-image in dance through the creation of a performing company.

3. To give participants basic training necessary to benefit from exposure to traditional styles of dance.

4. To give participants basic training necessary to begin to be able to recreate and develop dances based on tradition.

Dance is time consuming activity. (See sample schedule)

About 3-4 hours per day must be spent just in making the body a creative instrument that has freedom for one's own creations and will be useful for other people's creations.

Participants must realise that their total commitment is to self and group development through the dance for 3 years.

This means that almost all time is devoted to classes, practice, creating, rehearsing, performing.

(Practically this means there is little time for any kind of social life or political activity.)

    Practice = working by oneself
    Rehearsing = working with a group

It is about a 12-hour per day commitment in which one eats, sleeps and drinks the art.

COURSE CONTENT:

Over a 3-year period participants would have intensive training in:

1. Dance Techniques - Modern, Traditional, Character
2. Dance Composition
3. Music
4. Production Techniques - includes learning repertoire, rehearsing, and acquiring knowledge of stagecraft.

In addition, there would be classes in Acting, Make-Up, Dance Notation, History, Literature and Visual Art Appreciation.
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

(a) Technique Classes:

(1) **Modern**: Based on discovering and the understanding of body placement, body rhythms, and movement flow and phrasing that will begin to prepare student to work on TV, in shows, in international dance companies, or to develop a Modern Australian dance with a traditional Aboriginal base.

(2) **Traditional Aboriginal Techniques**: Specialists will come from various areas to teach their dance, song and story. Plans will be made for 2nd and 3rd year students to have opportunity to go to these areas to study.

(b) Composition:
Beginning principles of choreography or how to create one’s own dances.

(c) Labanotation:
A system of writing movement which will be taught so that students can begin to analyse what the body does in general language terms rather than in the terms of specific dance style.

(d) Repertoire:
Dances created for presentation in a production.

(e) Music:
Will include learning to play the drums, fundamentals of music theory and music appreciation.

TERM PROJECT GOALS:
The specific goals that will be set out for each term are both individual and group.

For the **Individual** it is the development of one’s creative ability and physical technical facility (the body).

For the **Group** it is working together as a PERFORMING TEAM that is prepared to perform for student projects, in the theatre, and for community organizations.

FIRST YEAR

Term I

**Individual Creative Projects:**

1. Learning one dance
2. Composing a Solo Dance
3. Composing Another Solo & Teaching.

**Group Performance Goals:**

1. A production of student works at the end of 8 weeks.
2. A production of a professional level at the end of the term.
Term II

The individual creative projects would involve two people:
1. Continuing to learn repertoire
2. Composing a duet
3. Composing a second duet and teaching it to others.

Performance Goals:
1. Student production
2. A two-day evening production, involving performing two days successively.

Term III

The individual creative projects would involve three people:
1. Participation in group works
2. Composing a trio - this is more involved and would probably take the entire term.

Performance Goals:
1. A third student production
2. An extended Dance season at Black Theatre
3. A tour of one week to country towns.

SECOND YEAR

Term IV

The individual creative project would involve creating a group work using four or more people.

Performance Goals:
1. Student production
2. Season at Black Theatre
3. Community performances or extended tour.

Term V

Exchange Visit (Special Project):
At the end of the fourth term, those students who have shown most application will be invited to go to another area such as Mornington Island, Maningrida, Mowanju, to work and learn for a 4-6 month period.

Term VI

Would be a continuation of creative work and performing.

Note: From Term IV 2nd year on, participants would be prepared to answer local requests from communities to perform at various functions. Also, tours would be developed according to requests, or alternatively set one for 2nd and 3rd year students.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAMPERS IN DANCE"

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Students currently take over administrative details of day-to-day management of course. This is part of their preparation for future management.

The outline that follows will give an even more detailed description of the project from the point of view of all that goes into its maintenance.

STAFF

See Job Description for details of duties.

In this budget we have omitted the accompanists and dietian and added a second assistant part-time teacher. This is necessary because of the two distinct levels. In addition it is cheaper to have a permanent second person functioning in a more all-round way than to have many casual tutors. The duties of this second teacher are similar to number 2 - the Full-time Teacher-In-Charge - Choreographer.

If there is any possibility of additional funds we will add the accompanists.

We will look for special assistance for the dietian, Cooking teacher, House Mother. We still find that this is an extremely important function that is not being fulfilled.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAREERS IN DANCE"

BUDGET EXPLANATION

December 20, 1976 to November 30, 1977

I. INCOME SOURCES:

- Department of Education Fees (estimate) $18,000
- Aboriginal Arts Board Grant 35,000
- Other (Under direction of Albert Bagley of N.S.W. Ministry of Education) 6,000

Total $59,000

2. EXPENSES:

Budget Summary

A. Salaries $48,460
B. Program Expenses 6,628
C. Studio Hire and Office Costs 4,000
D. Accommodation Subsidy 4,000

Total $63,088

DETAILS + EXPENSE EXPLANATION

A. Salaries:

- Co-ordinator $13,000
- Teacher-in-Charge December 20 – January 28 – $900
  January 31 – December 30 – $9,600
  10,500
- Assistant Teacher $135 per week 7,020
- Clerical Assistant 3,900
- Tutors (20 sessions at $16.50 maximum 38 weeks) 12,540
- Tribal tutors (12 weeks 1 person or 6 weeks 2 persons at $125 per week) 1,500

Total $48,460

* See Job Descriptions for details of work load.

We are asking the Aboriginal Arts Board to provide a minimum of $35,000 towards salaries.
**B. Programme Expenses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Fares Tribal Teachers (6 trips at $390 per trip)</td>
<td>$2,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also one tutor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living away from home allowance ($49 for twelve weeks)</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Air fares – Adelaide Canberra etc.</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment (an amplifier, tape recorder or repairs)</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Transportation</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Aids (books, records, tapes)</strong></td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costumes</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Props</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excursions</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,628</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Based on 1975–1976. Studio usage and the additional classes with a third group.

**D. Accommodation Subsidy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent ($200)</td>
<td>$10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gas and Electricity</strong></td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone bills and installation of Red Phone</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional supplies for maintenance and student up-keep</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,850</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INCOME:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent from Students</td>
<td>$7,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated deficit</td>
<td>$4,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAREERS IN DANCE"

COURSE ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

A. BOOKKEEPING
B. HOSTEL MANAGEMENT
C. STUDIO SUPERVISOR
D. BOOKING MANAGER
E. HISTORIAN
F. COSTUME MAINTENANCE

A. **BOOKKEEPER:** (responsible to course director) **Leonie**

a. Responsible for total financial record keeping of course
b. Managers of studio hire, teacher time sheets, and hostel all co-ordinate through Bookkeeper.
c. Collect all bills and time sheets each week.
d. Make out all requisitions and see that they get to the Arts Council on time.
e. Distribute cheques and post out ones required.
f. Keep double entry cash flow.
g. Prepares final financial report in conjunction with accountants of the Arts Council.
h. Hands petty cash and keeps records.
i. Types correspondence necessary for course when needed.

Teacher Time Sheets (responsible to Bookkeeper) **Richard**

a. Make sure times and signatures are correct.
b. Give sheets to person in charge of requisitions each week (bookkeeper).
c. Give or mail cheques to teachers and get signatures that they received the cheques.

Studio Rental and Scheduling (responsible to bookkeeper) **Malcolm**

a. Keep precise listing of times used in all studio's for classes, rehearsal and meetings.
b. Prepare an account out for the Bodenweser times and telephone each week and give to Les on a Monday.
c. Schedule studio use for student projects - make arrangements with Les Humphrey if Bodenweser is to be used or any other studio space that is to be used.
d. Teachers deciding space could co-ordinate through this person. Check with teachers if unscheduled rehearsal time is to be used.

Student Registrar (responsible to teacher in charge) **Rosemary**

a. Keeps attendance of all sessions.
b. Should get some to help in the secondary class.
c. Collects excuses from students, makes sure notates reason for absence or lateness if no doctors certificate.
d. Transfers daily record to master once a week.
e. As course grows is responsible for sending out letters to perspective students who request it.
students who request information. Keep list of persons interested.
Check with Prue from time to time.

B. HOSTEL MANAGEMENT: (responsible to course director) WAYNE

Bookkeeper

a. All bills relating to housing should go to manager who lists them and
then turns them over to Bookkeeper. Maintains separate set of Journals
for Hostels, this includes:
   - a listing of all bills that come in to both
     houses electric, gas, telephone, rent, etc..

b. Giving bills for payment to Bookkeeper at appropriate time - including
   rent for each house every four weeks.

c. Collecting rent and making sure receipt book for each house is up to date

d. Dealing with rental agent for all problems relating to the houses.

e. Keeping over all record of student payment of rent. Making arrangements
   for payment if they get to far behind.

Individual Hostel Managers (responsible to Hostel Supervisor) PHILLIP & MICHAEL

a. Takes responsibility of maintainence of house in charge; includes
   taking rent and writing receipts.

b. Making sure people obey rules and keep the houses in good repair
   handling personal problems.

C. STUDIO SUPERVISOR (student co-ordinator; teacher assistant to teach) WAYNE

a. Opens the building
b. Sets up classrooms (taped recorders and records)
c. Starts coffee urn.
d. Makes sure studios are left clean (not to do it himself)
e. Makes sure all equipment goes back to closet and is not left in studio's
f. Occassionally check on ammenities
g. Sees that all students are in the class ten minutes before class begins
   When teacher has'nt arrived on time the class is to begin with him/her.

D. BOOKING MANAGER: (for performances responsible to course director
   also co-ordinates with teacher in charge) CHERYL

a. Develops performance schedule based on requests for performances.
b. Investigates possibilities for performances.
c. Sends out information to potential customers and follows up through
   personal conversations.
d. Makes all arrangements for the performances

e. Once dates are set makes sure Lucy Jumawan knows. (check with her before
   final date is approved.)
f. Send out final contract letters - visit space if necessary.
g. Make sure organization requesting service of group understands its
   responsibilities to the group.

E. HISTORIAN: ANDREA.

a. Keeps all documentation of course and performances
b. Maintains a scrapbook
c. Knows where video tapes and Audio tapes that record programme's are.
d. In charge of collecting material from papers, magazines, and the media
   (especially when we have budget for such)
e. Makes sure we get copies of photographer for scrapbook and photographs.
F. COSTUME MAINTENANCE: Sharon - costume; Malcolm - equipment

a. Maintains inventory of costumes makes sure they are in good repair.
b. Prepares them for performances.
c. Makes sure that all costumes are collected after performances.
d. Must not do everything himself at the performances alternates each performance for two students to co-ordinate with him or her.
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

STAFF FOR COURSE INCLUDE:

1. Full Time Artistic Director - Administrator - Teacher

Duties:
- Overall direction of program
- Co-ordinates various funding sources.
- Liaison with Department of Education.
- Develop tours and programmes.
- Responsible for all staff.
- Hires staff
- Teaches limited schedule - on call as substitute for teachers
- Writes all reports, proposals and the like, handles budgets
- Responsible for continuity and development of course.
- Manages Student housing - counsels students
- Develops teaching materials with teachers from Mornington Island.

Teaching load: 5 sessions per week.

Requirements and qualifications for position: 1. University Degree

2. Ten years experience in the dance field that combines professional dance and administrative organising.

3. Able to teach at least 3 different courses.

4. Must be able to choreograph.

5. Experience Booking and Managing a Dance Company.

Teaching load: 5 sessions per week.
2. **Full-Time Teacher - Choreographer:**

- Responsible for day to day growth of students.
- On call as substitute for tutors if absent.
- Teacher full schedule.
- Choreographs new works for performing group.
- Able to go on tours with Performing group. (during breaks each term)
- Open and close building where applicable.
- Assists Artistic Director Administrator in Administrative and Company management

**Requirements for Full-Time Teacher:**

1. University Degree/or equivalent professional dance training.
2. Ten years in field as teacher, performer and choreographer.
3. Some company management and organizing experience.
4. Must be able to teach at least 2 dance techniques
5. Must be able to teach several Dance related subjects - Music, composition, notation, repertory, costume design, mime

**Teaching load:** 10-15 classes a week.

6. Must be able to Choreograph

3. **Tribal Teachers:**

Experts in their culture and able to pass it on to students. Preferably they will already have had some experience working with students.

4. **Tutors - Casual:**

Specialists in specific subject skills for a well rounded course, Speech, Stagemanagement, South Sea Island Dance, Ballet, Music, Sewing and Costume design, Sound, Lighting etc.

5. **Clerical Assistant:**

Is a non-Aboriginal student who takes the course but handles details of booking.
details of bookkeeping, typing and many of the office skills necessary to keep the course running smoothly. These duties she teaches and passes on to the Aboriginal Students.

6. Accompanists:

Dance is an activity that functions with music. Although we use recorded music; the students need to work as much as possible with live music. It's really as important for modern dance as for tribal dance. Aboriginal people especially in the country areas relate more to live music than to canned music. When we do performances of Aboriginal music we should as much as possible do them with live a musician. Preferably this musician would be someone who has worked with students in the class situation.

8. Dietian, Cooking teacher, House Mother:

**Duties:**

1. To teach students how to cook and make nutritious meals.
2. To help students shop for food.
3. To make sure students keep rooms clean and keep common parts clean.
4. To work with Hostel Manager for maintenance of properties.
5. To help students budget money.

**Qualifications:** Preferably an Aboriginal person who knows about home management and can help teach the students how to manage.

The course has found it necessary to provide housing for the students. The students live together and support each other as a family or small tribe. The high attendance rate (90%) and the group spirit attest to the continued need. As long as we had all urban and country people, they were able to manage relatively well by themselves. However, they did need help especially with the evening meal. Aboriginal food habits are not especially good as medical statics show. Dance is a strenuous activity and people must maintain their bodies eating good non-fattening food.

With the inclusion of students from Mornington Island, it is imperative that we have someone to work with them. There is so much they don't know about budgeting, cooking house management.
In addition they are fearful of going into the shops to ask for things other than cigarettes bread, milk, and butter. Currently the education officers Prue Lennon and Ken Thompson have volunteered to help them on Saturdays. However there is so much that they need and need to know that one day a week though helpful is not enough.

This inexperience of the Mornington Island young people of living in the city is putting a strain on the Urban young people who are coping quite well. However it must be remembered that most of the students are between 17 and 20 and still need help.
REPORT BY
Department of Education
Aboriginal Study Grants
N.S.W. Office

DANCE TRAINING COURSE

1 AIM (from Ms Johnson's Training Program proposal)

a To give participants basic training so that they can function inter-
nationally and individually if they wish.

b To give participants an opportunity to build group self-image in dance
through the creation of a performing company.

c To give participants basic training necessary to benefit from exposure
 to traditional styles of dance.

d To give participants basic training necessary to begin to be able to
recreate and develop dances based on tradition.

2 DURATION

Term I 20 October - 19 December 1975 (9 weeks)

Overall it is anticipated this course will run full time for 3 years.

3 COURSE CRITI:

Ms Carol Johnson was asked to organise the Dance section of the Aboriginal
Arts Board Urban Training Program.

4 ENROUEMENT OF GRANT HOLDERS

Wayne Nicoll*  (Geimsa)
Dorothy Randall*  (Darwin and Adelaide)
Michael Leslie*  (Kurrajong and Sydney)
Darryl Williams*  (Koori and Sydney)
Richard Velonga  (Hacket)
Vicki C ainlin  (Armidale)

There is one other student, not eligible for a Grant.

* Denotes student has previously held a part or full-time Study Grant over
short or extended periods to learn dance or other theatrical techniques.

Vicki C ainlin relinquished her Grant on 19 November for 2 reasons: she has
been offered a place in Armidale Hospital to train as a nurse, and she is
concerned over certain family problems at home.

5 TEACHERS

a Carol Johnson (16 hours weekly) - Modern technique, Lardil technique,
Balanta and Graham techniques, Composition and Repertoire.

b Terry Niddors (3 hours weekly) - History and current affairs discussion.

c Graham Jones (2 hours weekly) - Modern techniques and Music. After
training, started with Ronnie Arnold's Dance Company. Danced 2 years
with Alain Robbert in London. Has started his own Kinetic Energy
Dance Company.
d Jane Pike (3 hours weekly). Ballet and composition. Has run her own ballet school and danced with the Contemporary Dance Company of Australia. She has choreographed several works which have been performed by the Tasmanian Ballet Company, and the City of Sydney Ballet Company. Sponsored twice by the Australia Council to hold workshops.

e Penny Williams (3 hours weekly) – Soul dancing. Is a well known professional performer. Runs her own dance school.

f Jacob Jackson – Spent 2 full weeks with the class. A Lardil man, he taught language, song and dance.

6 SUBJECTS AND HOURLY ALLOCATION PER WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repertoire</td>
<td>7½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>4½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Technique</td>
<td>7½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lardil Technique</td>
<td>4½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and current affairs</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26½ hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing was cancelled because of unexpected difficulties in programming and finding a location.

7 COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CONTENTS

a Techniques. As Johnson feels it is most important that her students will attain what she calls an "international mix" of technique. To this end, and bearing in mind the age and comparatively brief formal learning experience of her students, several different techniques are studied. Besides Ballet, and general modern dance, the distinctive Marta Graham and Katherine Dunham modern dance techniques, and the ethnic dances of the Lardil people are taught to the group. By studying all these dance techniques, the students will fit themselves not only to work within Australia, but with other dance companies internationally.

"Soul" or modern popular dance developed by black Americans is also studied. Since dance is primarily intended to be performed in public, it was considered advisable to equip the students with dance technique appreciated in popular culture.

All the students, except Vicki Quinlan, had been learning or performing in modern or traditional modes of dance. Even after a short period of regular training, it is easy to see improvements in the technique and movement of each student. Their understanding of body placement has improved to the extent that an anatomy class is being contemplated for Terms 2 or 3.

A development which is providing a great deal of excitement for the group is the special relationship being established with the Lardil people of Morninhga Island. Jacob Jackson's teaching encompassed language, song and dance and the culture and family life of his people. Parts of the Rainbow Serpent and Wallaby Song/Dance Cycles as well as dances of Welcome, Farewell and Lightning were studied. This section of the course
may be considered as very significant: through it the students have
come to appreciate the cultural and social bases which underlie Lardil
creativity. This insight should provide a good comparative basis for
the studies of the dance and music of other Aboriginal communities
which have been projected.

The classes in Lardil technique are being continued with the assistance
of Darryl Williams.

b History: There has been some emphasis on the history of the people of
North Eastern and Northern Australian areas. This has been tied in with
the presence of Jacob Jackson.

c Composition: This subject concerns the creation of dances and the art
of improvisation. In Dr. Johnson's class an "Urban Aboriginal" Cycle is
being developed. The inspiration for these dances comes from songs and
poems by Bob McDow and Bob Randall. In this way, the group becomes an
outlet for other aspects of Aboriginal creativity.

Ms Pike's class is concerned only with improvisation.

d Repertoire: Two of the "Urban Aboriginal" dances, a "Soul" routine and
a Lardil dance comprise the group's repertoire. The group has already
performed together at a 13.1 Public School and intends performing in a
concert promoted by the Bodenweiser School in mid-December.

e Music: Primarily, this instructs students in relating the rhythm of
music to the timing of body movements.

8 NEED FOR PERFORMANCE: As stated, the primary purpose of dance is that it
should be performed before the public. Therefore, opportunities to perform in
public should be actively sought. Also there is a strong need for this group
to maintain as close a contact as possible with the Aboriginal people. In
this way, it will draw strength from and remain acceptable to the black
community. There is, then, a need to perform within Aboriginal communities,
some of which may not be necessarily metropolitan. It is conceived that not
all performances will be formally arranged but will vary according to location,
equipment and the preferences of the audience.

It is hoped that such performances will encourage interested and talented
people to join the course.

9 LOCATION: The course was supposed to be held at Black Theatre, Redfern.
There was, however, some conflict with Black Theatre administration and from
week 2 of the course, the group has been obliged to rent studios at both the
Bodenweiser School and the Seymour Centre. The cost varies from $70 - $90
weekly.

10 FEES. At present this Scheme has agreed to cover the cost of fees for each
Grantholder to a maximum of $200 per student for this term. In comparison with
the fees charged by similarly qualified teachers in other disciplines such as
singing or music, this cost must be seen as very reasonable indeed, considering
the hours of face-to-face teaching and the size of the class.
11 CONCLUSION: When the class has been seen in operation on a number of occasions, and after discussion with its members and teachers, it is clear that its establishment has been a positive development.

a The basics of dance are being properly taught.

b There is a good group rapport. Individual students are committed to each other and to the aims of the group. There is a good degree of motivation to continue.

c Teachers and pupils remain aware of the group's Aboriginal identity and are finding it a basis for creativity.

d This course is designed to teach dance to nature but relatively inexperienced students. There is presently no established institution in New South Wales where students may obtain similar training. Most dancers learn and train privately through childhood and adolescence with the support of their families. It is unlikely that the majority of Aboriginal children would be able to learn dance in that way.

It seems evident that this course meets a special need of Aboriginal people, in a way that is not duplicated elsewhere. Dance training is traditionally long and arduous; this course has been established a short while, yet advances have been made in technique and repertoire.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS: It is, then, recommended that:

a AHDIS support should continue and the full range of benefits be extended to weekends.

b Performance should be recognized as an integral part of the course and that AHDIS should consider assisting students with travel benefits (as under Section 12.9 of the handbook) for the purpose of performance.

It is envisaged that such benefits would be approved only when it can be clearly shown that the performance will be given by the students as members of the Dance Training Course and not as private individuals and that performance costs will not be covered by admission charges or remuneration from another source.

c AHDIS should be prepared to consider additional assistance in special instances as under Section 4.4.3 of the Handbook.

Frue Lennon
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAREERS IN DANCE"

TERM REPORT  February to April 30, 1976

CONTENTS:
A. COURSE COST
B. STUDENT PARTICIPATION
C. ACCOMPLISHMENTS
D. STAFF
E. SCHEDULE AND COURSE CONTENT
F. RELATIONSHIP WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND
G. PLACE OF STUDY
H. STUDENT HOUSING
I. FUNDING PROBLEMS
J. STEPS TO STABILIZE COURSE

The "Dance in Careers" program started in October 20th, to December 19th, this being its Introductory Term. Our 1st term began February 2nd, through to April 30th. This was the first time our term was a complete 13 week term. All terms will from now on comprise of 12 or 13 weeks.

A. COURSE COST

The total cost for the 13 week term is approximately $12,618. Although the amount spent is higher than the first term the actual cost per person is considerably less. We also serviced twice as many people. Each student had a total of 205 sessions he could actually attend.
The cost per session was $5.68 *
The cost per week for the full-time students was $102.
### COST COMPARISON CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
<th>Number full-time students</th>
<th>Session cost per student</th>
<th>Week cost per student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 1 Oct.-Dec. 9 weeks</td>
<td>$7,750</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$8.50</td>
<td>$172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 2 Feb-May 12 weeks</td>
<td>$12,618</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>$5.68*</td>
<td>$102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is on actual figure holidays are excluded and absences are excluded. People who tried the course out are included. Thus in 205 possible sessions we serviced a total of 2,221 people.
B. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

a. 11 Full-time students under Aboriginal Study Grant

Darryl Williams - Mornington Island
Wayne Nicol - Mossman, Queensland
Richard Talonga - Mackay, Queensland
Micheal Leslie - Moree, N.S.W.
Dorathea Randall - Darwin via Adelaide

6 new students joined the old students

Malcolm Cole - Ayr, Queensland
Steve Talonga - Mackay, Queensland
Leone Malamoo - Ayr, Queensland
Kerry Upkett - Mackay, Queensland
Ann Gundy - Newcastle
Sharon Coffey - Brewarrina, N.S.W.

b. 1 Student Assistant

Cheryl Stone

c. 4 Students who participated for approximately 1 week

Debbie Dennis - Walgett, N.S.W.
Laurence Dennis - Walgett, N.S.W.
Robert Kitchener - Sydney
Hue Foot - Sydney

Total 12 students completed the 13 weeks.

Six of the students from the Introductory term carried on through this term. These people started to create some of their own work and functioned on a very responsible level and in a disciplined manner. Their determination and interest in the skills of dance were very apparent. The 6 new students showed much interest and developed at a very fast rate. Certain periods were divided up so that advance students went on from last term's studies, and the beginners were able to function on their own level. Although this division came up at certain classes the group functioned on a whole very well together.

Attendance: Attendance by all students is still over 90%. The term consisted of a total of 63 days. The 11 full-time students spent a total of 654 days. This taken into account the student who started late and two who left early. There was a total of 37 full day absences. Students missed 207 sessions out of the 2181 sessions they all could possibly attend.

Steve Talonga stayed with us for a period of 8 weeks but, left partly due to the fact that he was lonely, not having anyone his own age, and weekends became very difficult to enjoy. Having a lack in the more Academic Skills he anticipated the difficulty of work to come in the more academic courses. The people who attended for less than a period of 2 weeks were not really aware of the discipline and determination needed in the skill of dance and were not sure if they wanted to become dancers or dance teachers. Also they were either living in Sydney or had relatives in Sydney that they stayed with.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30 am to</td>
<td>Ballet Studio 2</td>
<td>11.15-12.45 P.G. Music</td>
<td>Iardil Studio 2</td>
<td>Ballet Studio 2</td>
<td>Soul Studio 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 am</td>
<td>C. Johnson</td>
<td>Studio 3 E. Wesley</td>
<td>D. Williams</td>
<td>J. Pike</td>
<td>P. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30 am to</td>
<td>Soul Studio 2</td>
<td>1.00-1.45 Studio 2</td>
<td>Modern Technique</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 pm</td>
<td>P. Williams *</td>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>Studio 1</td>
<td>Studio 2</td>
<td>Studio 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Wesley</td>
<td>E. Wesley</td>
<td>J. Pike *</td>
<td>E. Wesley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 pm to</td>
<td>Composition and Rep.</td>
<td>Repertoire Men</td>
<td>Composition and Rep.</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Repertoire Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30 pm</td>
<td>Repertoire Studio 2</td>
<td>E. Wesley Studio 2</td>
<td>Dance History</td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
<td>E. Wesley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Wesley</td>
<td>Composition Girls</td>
<td>E. Wesley Studio 2</td>
<td>S. Costain *</td>
<td>C. Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 pm to</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Technique</td>
<td>Bodenweiser Clai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30 pm</td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Costain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Beg.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Academy of Ballet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D I N N E R</td>
<td></td>
<td>G. Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30 pm</td>
<td>Drumming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 pm</td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Laguarme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Absent sessions</th>
<th>Late sessions</th>
<th>Full days absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Talonga</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>17-08%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darryl Williams</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2 - 2%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorathea Randall</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>32-16%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Stone</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>20-10%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micheal Leslie</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>22-17%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4/33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Nicol</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>13- 6%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leone Malamoo</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>33-16%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm Cole</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3-01%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Upkett</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>22-11%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Coffey</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>34-17%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Talonga</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>3-02%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Gundy</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>6-03%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2/60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total             | 2181     | 207-9%          | 130           | 654-6%           |
THE STUDENTS OF THE
ABORIGINAL - ISLANDER
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
SCHEME

invite you to a

DANCE DEMONSTRATION

TIME: Friday, April 30, 1976
11:00 a.m.

PLACE: BODENWIESER DANCE CENTRE
18 City Road
Chippendale

CONTRIBUTION: $1.00 or Donation
ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

CAREERS IN DANCE

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

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ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

CAREERS IN DANCE

CLOSING PROGRAMME

TERM 1: FEBRUARY 2 TO APRIL 30, 1976 = 3 MONTHS

PLACE: Bodenwieser Dance Centre - 11.30am

1. Cut the Cake - Average White Band

   Choreography: Penny Williams, Ann Gundy, Dorthea Randall,

2. Excerpts from Missu Luba - Traditional

   Choreography: Adapted from Eleo Pomare by Carole Johnson
   Priest & Christ Figure - Richard Talonga
   Attendants - Sharon Coffey, Leone Malamoo, Patty Upkett
   Madonna - Cheryl Stone.

3. Aboriginal Country & Western Suite - Bob Randall & Bobby McLeod

   Choreography: Carole Johnson with assistance of students

   1. Just Hanging Around - Dorthea Randall, Cheryl Stone
      Michael Leslie, Wayne Nicols, Richard Talonga

   2. Childless - Dorthea Randall


   4. Shaky Ground - Temptations

      Choreography: Penny Williams

      Entire Group: Sharon Coffey, Ann Gundy, Leone Malamoo,
      Dorthea Randall, Cheryl Stone,
      Patty Upkett
      Malcolm Cole, Michael Leslie, Wayne Nicols,
      Richard Talonga

   5. Island Scene - The Blue Hawaiians
      Pepe & The Rarotongans
      Richard Talonga & Entire Group

   6. Parting - O.C. Smith

      Choreography: Carole Johnson
      Cheryl Stone and Wayne Nicols
7. **Modern Suite** - Crosby Stills & Nash

Choreography: Carol Johnson

* (a) **Opening**


* (b) **Night Thoughts** - Barry White

  Dorathea Randall

* (c) **Underwater Study** - Santana

  Wayne Nicols

* (d) **Group**

* Section (a) and (d) developed by students in choreography class of Jake Pike

8. **Lardil Section** - Traditional

Work developed by Teacher Jackson Jacobs from Mornington Island. In The Brolga Section and The Wallaby Song Cycle he has consciously taken traditional material and tried to develop it for the stage and for the students of this group. He received permission to develop The Wallaby Cycle from Dick Roughsey.

* (a) **Brolga**

* (b) **Shake-a-leg**

* (c) **Wallaby Cycle - Mangara - Wademby**

This dance is in five sections and is the process being developed for this group by Jackson Jacobs.

* (a) Women are beating the men back who do not have permission to be on sacred territory or to meet the women. Both men and women come forward and then retreat.

* (b) The elders have given permission for the men and women to get together.

* (c) The men place a necklace on the women. This signifies that they are engaged and will be married.

* (d) This is a celebration dance after the marriage.

* (e) Farewell - they all sing and leave the stage.
RECOMMENDATION:

We have to be able to anticipate the need of certain people like Steve Talonga who come into the course and are lacking in the Academic Skills and are embarrassed by the fact. We have to be able to meet their need without the individuals feeling that their lack of skills reflects on their intelligence, their human worth and dignity.

C. ACCOMPLISHMENTS (in form of performances)

Although the dance course is an educational project in relation to the development of the individuals, its accomplishments it is able to reach out artistically to the community.

1. Participation in the Canberra Country and Western Festival Narrabundah Oval Canberra February 29th, 1976.


a. The performance included songs composed by Aboriginal singers Robert McLeod and Bob Randall. Who were both present at the festival and who consequently played the music for two of our works.

b. A modern piece choreographed by Penny Williams.

2. Woolongong Teachers College - Orientation Week


All the students in the course went down, those who were not in the performance helped in other areas, which gave them a chance to see what the makings of a performance was.

The performance consisted:

a. A country and western suite
b. A soul dance
c. A modern solo
d. A duet of modern dance
e. Traditional dance

3. Bodenweiser Dance Centre End Term Programme April 30th, 1976

This was the first performance for the new students.

New works performed were:

a. Missa Luba
b. Shaky Ground
c. South Sea Island Segment
d. Modern piece worked out by students in Jane Pike's class.

Special Note:

Jackson Jacobs received permission to teach the group a special series of dances from the Wallaby Song cycle. These dances are not done anymore and are almost forgotten. He thought if the group does them when they go to Mornington Island it would make the old
people happy and perhaps awaken their memory.

D. STAFF

1. Carole Johnson - Artistic Director, Administrator, teacher.
2. Edmond Wesley - Guest teacher, full-time teacher.
3. Penny Williams - Soul Dance
4. Jane Pike - Modern Composition, Ballet
5. Stephan Costain - Speech
6. Graham Jones - Modern Dance
7. Albert Laguerra - Drumming
8. Jackson Jacobs - Traditional Lardil Culture and Dance
9. Enid Jacobs - Traditional Lardil Culture and Dance

RECOMMENDATION:

It is evident that the programme needs a staff of at least two full-time teachers. A regular contingent of part-time tutors will always be necessary. However, a second full-time teacher is needed for the programme to develop and fulfill its goals of:

1. relating to other sections of the Aboriginal Community
2. taking care of the day to day responsibility of teaching
3. the individual development of the participant.

Edmond Wesly who carried out the job of full-time teacher for a period of 3 weeks, made evident that the person who deals directly with student and daily programme continuity cannot maintain administrative continuity in the wider text.

E. COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Each student attended a required twenty sessions per week. Each session is an hour and a half long. In addition to this there are required performances and projects that the group attend in the evenings. The attached schedule will give the specific details of the class times, place, and the person teaching. Students were also on call for rehearsal when performances were being done.

Course Description: See report for Introductory Term.

Teachers from Mornington Island Jackson Jacobs spent 3 weeks his wife Enid Jacobs spent 2 weeks working the group. The schedule was adjusted during that period so that 50% of Ms. Johnson classes were with Mr. Jacobs. This gave the group a maximum amount of time with Mr. Jacobs.

The course was also arranged so that students take over administrative and other responsibilities relating to the running of the entire program. So that students have the experience in actually doing the things that keep an organization functioning. The duties rotate term to term from student to student so that each will have a total experience of running a group project.

The following duties were given to students:

a. Bookkeeping - making out requisitions, handling staff time sheets, keeping double entry cash flow, billing, handling petty cash, distributing cheques.
b. Registrar - keeping attendance of all sessions.
    Dorathea Randall

c. Hostel Managers - taking responsibility for the student housing,
    including taking rent and writing receipts,
    handling service people, making sure people
    obey rules and keep the houses in good repair,
    handling personal relationships.
    Malcolm Cole and Wayne Nicol

d. Costumer - maintaining inventory of costumes, making sure
    they are in good repair, preparing them for
    performances. Dorathea Randall

e. Adio Technician - learned how to operate tape machine and how to
    make tapes. Malcolm Cole

F. RELATIONSHIPS WITH MORNINGTON ISLAND

The relationship with elders from Mornington Island has consistently
grown. The Department of Education has approved the change of place
of study to Mornington Island, so that fares and living expenses of
students will be paid. The chairman of Mornington Island, Les
Marminor visited the course and has made arrangements to send 6
young people in the June term.

G. PLACE OF STUDY

Although the programme will need a home centre, in the future as we
find ourselves expanding each term, we are continuing to use
Bodenweiser Dance Centre and Seymour Centre.

H. STUDENT HOUSING

Since the beginning of the term new participants came into the course
accommodation for these participants was a necessity. We have thus
had to rent another house, so that students were not spread out all
over Sydney. Both houses are very close to the studios this
eliminates the problem of students not being able to get to classes
on time because they live to far. It is also a convience for
rehearsal times. There is a Hostal Manager in each house.

RECOMMENDATION

As the programme grows with more people, it will need additional
living quaters. The A.A.B. shoul contact Aboriginal Hostals to see
if they will be able to assist with the housing for people in the
programme.

I. FUNDING PROBLEMS

Need for Regular Yearly Funding (Refusal of D.A.A. to Support the
Course). Although the course is a three year course, it is still
only funded on a term by term basis. The major funding for this arts
education programme has temporarily come from the Aboriginal Arts
Board of the Australia Council. Additional assistance has come from
the Commonwealth Department of Education, Aboriginal Study Grants in
the form of a per student fee to the course. HOWEVER IT CANNOT BE
EMPHASIZED ENOUGH THAT THE ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD TO DATE HAS NOT
BEEN IN A POSITION TO TOTALLY FUND AN ON-GOING EDUCATIONAL PROJECT.
The Board is trying to maintain the course until it can establish itself as an educational programme and get continuing funds from the appropriate sources. The Aboriginal Arts Board took on this arts education programme as a temporary project because of the state and nature of the Aboriginal Community. That is, there are many Aboriginal/Islander people, especially the rural and urban people, who have a lot of ideas and a desire to do something. But, they have no skill or methodology for achieving a specific aim. People were applying for grants to do arts projects but there was no knowledge, or discipline behind the desire and thus the high failure rate was inevitable.

With the assistance of the Aboriginal Arts Board and the Commonwealth Department of Education, the course has looked to the D.A.A. including a meeting in which Bob Edwards, Director of the Aboriginal Arts Board and Mrs. Cladys Foster, Assistant Director of the Australian Department of Education participated. Not only has the application for funding been refused by the D.A.A., but the D.A.A. has told any subsidiary agency that might support us not to support the course.

J. STEPS TO STABILIZE THE COURSE

1. A Aboriginal/Islander Committee for the Course.

The Arts Council of Australia is in the process of setting up an Aboriginal/Islander Trust Committee for the course. The committee thus formalizes the position of the course so that it is clearly a part of the Aboriginal/Islander community and is run by them independent of the various government bodies that fund the course or that might fund it in the future. The committee can be viewed as a step towards incorporation if it feels that it need to do so at a later date. The committee will have broad purposes. Its specific project will be the stabilization and perpetuation of the Dance Course. Members of the committee will be Paul Murphy, Elsa Dixon, Wayne Nicol and Carole Johnson.

2. An Association with an established educational institution

The course needs to be recognized as an educational programme. As long as it is totally associated with the Arts Council of Australia as well as funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board, it appears to be an arts programme. This is rightfully an educational programme because its aim is the development of individuals to contribute to society at some time in the future. It is not trying to improve the state of the art of dance. The director of the course has had several meetings with the Guild Teachers College to try to become associated in some way with that institution. If the course can establish itself with this institution or some other accredited educational institution that should help establish the educational nature of the course.
School Acclaim

The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre Company trains young Aborigines in dance, theatre and drama management. The company's two pilot performances in Sydney Schools were a huge success.

Bob Edwards, the director of the Aboriginal Arts Board, has announced that, because of Fraser cuts, there will be no more money for the company—only nine months after the board made the first money available!

Special Education, which handles Aboriginal Education in the N.S.W. Department of Education, has suffered from last year's funds. They would be probably interested to assist the company, if they get the go-ahead.

But the Aboriginal Arts Board has said "no."

What possible reason can there be for this extraordinary insensitivity?

Do orthodox white capitalists still see Aborigines as artifacts to be put in glass cases and taken out for royal visits and TV ads?

A company like this impacts tens of thousands of people in a way that books, learning aids, culture kits and lectures can not.

Their educational value cannot be measured in terms of money.

Past and present

In order to create this first production, the students gig copies of all the back issues of identity magazine and the students chose the "moonlight" as their piece of work. They selected "Back to the Dreamtime," a poem with fifteen stanzas written by a fifteen year-old boy Alan Russell, as their piece to provide a basis to the work. They were then sent to the Mitchell Library to get old lithographs of the society. This was probably the first time the students had ever used a public library.

They then got together into "back to the dreamtime" the dance, by traditional Aboriginal Lurulji culture, from Mornington Island and modern, and build other poems and texts which seemed to emphasize the various aspects of the main poem. They thus developed a full minute production that, for the first time, combined traditional material with contemporary material. This blending of the two worlds produced an exciting, enthralling, yet inspiring work which gave insight into Aboriginal ideas and emotions of their traditional past and their present state in society.

Source of inspiration

As music and dance are a source of motivation to Aboriginal people and especially if traditional material is included, the theatre is thus an excellent tool for learning. It serves both the students watching and the students learning. In order to perform, which in our case means sharing knowledge that the students have filled for purposes of a program, our students must have command of themselves and their skill in dance, speech and music. Research, thought, and a lot of study and practice go into the final production. For instance, it took a year of study with the elders from Mornington Island before the young people from the cities to be comfortable with the traditional Lurulji song and dance that is included in the performance. For the students who make up the audience, seeing young black people perform is a source of inspiration and identity to the Aboriginal school child. In addition, the program certainly gives him or her as well as the others in the audience insight and knowledge in an interesting and exciting way of this culture which is unique to Australia.

Audience response

Judging by the response of the young people in the school audiences who saw "FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME, the aims, methods and results are an overwhelming success. Judging by the positive changes in attitude and function that have happened to the students within the course, the company is also an overwhelming success. That no department of the government can see fit to contribute $75,000 a year to continue this course which reaches out to so many people is sheer wasteful. It is wasteful of both people, power and money. It certainly serves in another example of government inconsistency, lack of interest and commitment to Aboriginal development and self-help. Just when a group of people are ready to do something good, they are just not quite yet prepared to go into the mainstream of Australia in their chosen career, the government cuts off support and thus Aboriginal hope. No wonder I have heard the old tribal elders often say that the old ways are better.

Stop Press

Good (and bad) news for the Dance Company. A spokesman for the Aboriginal Arts Board has told them they will receive $35,000 in the new year. Add this to student fees and the company will have $35,000. Fingers crossed. The spokesman says the company "will have to cut down" unless the Commonwealth Government releases more money.

The Company's History

by Carole Johnson, Director. The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre Company, the student performing group of the Center in Dance training program, put on its first school performance at Marrickville Girls High School on August 25. It was followed by a second at Marrickville High School on August 27. This marks the official close of the training course which aims at preparing for schools and the Aboriginal community, because there are no funds to continue.

It was planned as a three-year course, but funds for the first year came from the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council. The Board offered a special course through the Department of Education, Aboriginal Study Grants.

'Learn-by-doing' in Dance: The words "FORWARD TO THE DREAMTIME" were put together under the direction of Steve Costain, special teacher, with the assistance of course director, Carole Johnson, and major dance teacher Lucy Lumawun. The course is a "learn-by-doing" program for Aboriginal/Islander people interested in the dance as a career possibility. They have daily classes in dance, modern, ballet and traditional Aboriginal and Islander dance, as well as related subjects such as music theory, speech, stagecraft, and art management. The emphasis of the course is placed upon putting to use immediately what is learned in the classes. Thus the students have much of the administrative control of the course, taking over such duties as bookkeeping, student record keeping, hostel management, tour booking and clerical work.

Natural ability

All of these jobs are necessary to keep a school or company functioning smoothly. The performance of the dance is not possible without the method of sharing knowledge for the specific purpose that the students joined the course. Because of the intensity of the course, the natural ability of the students, and their need for a practical approach, the students perform at a high level at much earlier stage than in most schools.

When the students first arrive, most are extremely shy, lacking in self-confidence and pride in themselves and their culture. One can hardly hear them when they speak. Progress in the dance was always good; however, the surprise was the rapid development in speech. It was the enthusiasm of the students that inspired Steve Costain, who has developed a special method for teaching speech, to attempt a program of spoken word.
The myths and legends of the Dreamtime are unfolded in dance to a rapt audience of students at Marrickville Girls' High School.

But this premiere yesterday of Back to the Dreamtime may also be the swansong for the 15 dancers — eight men and seven women — who comprise the Aboriginal Dance Theatre. It was set up a year ago with $46,000 in Federal arts grants to train the Aboriginal dancers and stage Aboriginal productions. Now this money has stopped.

Carol Johnson, who is artistic director of the Bodenwieser Dance Centre and has been training them, said: "It's tragic that these dancers who are now able to stage highly-professional productions should now be forced to disband."

"It's a serious reflection on Australia that this small, but crucial attempt to communicate something of the priceless Aboriginal heritage should be so ruthlessly killed off."
6. REPORTS & APPLICATIONS

6.1 PERFORMING ARTS

6.1.2 ABORIGINAL & ISLANDER DANCE TRAINING PROGRAM $15,000

Additional expenses for program for period January to December 1977.

PROJECT:

At its November meeting, the Board considered an application for $35,000 as contribution towards a total budget of $63,088. A grant of $15,000 was approved.

Representation has been made to the Board that it reconsider its level of support for 1977 in the light of the following considerations:

. Additional support has been sought from other sources, but without success.

The level of support provided by the Board is not sufficient to allow the course to continue on a full-time basis. Under these circumstances the Department of Education has advised that it would probably have to withdraw its support.

. Discussions have been held recently between the co-ordinator of the course, the Board Director and the Principal of the Sydney College of the Arts, about the possible affiliation of the training program with the Sydney College of the Arts. Both the Principal of the College and a representative of the Higher Education Board are optimistic about the possibility of a future association between the two groups, with the budget for the Dance Program being incorporated into the College's budget. This, however, could not eventuate prior to 1979, and the program will need to continue seeking funds from the Board and the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme until that time.

In the light of these considerations, and given the Board's past support for this project and its desire to see it continue, it is submitted that the Board approve an additional $15,000 for the 1977 calendar year, making a total allocation of $30,000, which together with the $12,000 to $18,000 it will receive from the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme, should allow it to continue as a full-time course.

It is further submitted that the Board undertake to provide a similar level of support for the 1978 calendar year.

(File 77/816/009)
MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD, HELD AT WENTWORTH
HOUSE, CAPERTA, COMMENCING AT 9.45 A.M.
FRIDAY 6 APRIL, 9.30 A.M. ON SATURDAY
9 APRIL AND MONDAY 11 APRIL 1977

5.1.2. DANCE TRAINING PROGRAM (Aboriginal & Islander $15,000
Dance Theatre) (File 77/816/009)

Application for additional administrative and operational
expenses during 1977 of the full-time dance program for
Aboriginal and Islander students.

The Director reported that, since the last meeting,
representation had been made to the Board to reconsider the
level of funding for the dance program. Organizers of the
program had sought additional support from other sources
without success. Unless additional support was provided by
the Board, the other major funding organization, the
Department of Education, had advised that it would withdraw its support.
This would result in the collapse of the program.

It was reported that, following discussions with the Principal
of the Sydney College of the Arts, it seemed likely that the
dance program could be incorporated within the College's
teaching program. However, the College could not budget for
the program in the current triennium and therefore other
support would be required until 1979.

During discussion the Board noted that a grant of $15,000 had
been approved at the November meeting towards a total budget of $63,000. It was agreed that the Board's support to the
program be increased to $30,000 and an additional amount of
$15,000 be provided.

It was moved by Mr. Noble, seconded Mrs. Rankine, "that a grant
of $15,000, including administrative fees of $4,500, be approved
for additional administrative and operational expenses during
1977 of the dance program for Aboriginal and Islander students;
to be administered by Arts Council of Australia (Federal
Division)".

The motion was carried.
Nigeria

November 1975

- Are you an Aborigine or a Torres Strait Islander?
- Do you dance, sing, act, paint, weave, write, or play a traditional musical instrument?
- Would you like to travel to Nigeria next year to take part in a Festival of Arts and Culture?

More than 20,000 indigenous people from all over the world will be taking part in the Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos, Nigeria (West Africa) in November next year. Australia has been invited to send a group of up to 100 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Fares, accommodation and expenses are being paid by the Australian and Nigerian Governments.

Sections of interest to Australian Aboriginal performers and craftsmen include:

- Painting
- Leather work
- Jewellery making
- Photographic exhibition on
  ‘The Black Race’
- Traditional musical instruments
- Traditional and religious songs
  (soloists and ensembles)
- Drama
- Pottery
- Weaving
- Drawing and painting
- Carving
- Exhibition of books
  and writings
- Instrumental music
- Dance
- Films

If you or your performing group believe you have the talent and skill to represent your people at the Nigerian Festival, please write a letter, stating your proposals, and any financial assistance or support you may need in the preparation of your presentation or exhibits, to:

Mr. Vince Copley,
Secretary,
Nigeria Co-ordinating Committee
c/- Department of Aboriginal Affairs,
Box 17, P.O.
Woden, A.C.T. 2606
REPORT BY AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE CO-ORDINATING
AUSTRALIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND WORLD
BLACK AND AFRICAN FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE

The organisation of Australia's participation in the Festival
is being handled by a Special Committee set up by the Australian
Government and includes representatives from the Aboriginal Arts Board,
the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs
and the Australian Council for the Arts Committee that is responsible for
Australia's International Arts Program. The major responsibility for
Australia's involvement in the Festival lies with the Aboriginal Arts
Board, an all Black body set up by the Prime Minister to foster and
develop all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture both
traditional and modern. The Australian Prime Minister has officially
sanctioned Australia's participation in the Festival and has approved the
allocation of substantial funds to cover the costs of preparing and
transporting the Australian contribution to the Festival.

2. The Co-ordinating Committee circulated the attached information
sheet to Black Australia's inviting them to submit ideas on likely
entries. In addition discussions have been held with the different Black
organisations that are involved in cultural activities. It is intended
that the Australian participation in the Festival will consist of the
following:
   
   - A group of traditional Aboriginal dancers.
   - A group of traditional Torres Strait Island dancers.
   - An Urban Black Theatre production.
   - An exhibition of Aboriginal Arts and Crafts.
   - Several Aboriginal artists and craftsmen and women.
   - Films and video-tapes.

Australia would also like to contribute photographic material to the
Exhibition on the Origins of Man. There is quite extensive evidence
that Black people have been living in Australia for at least 40,000
years. The Australian Co-ordinating Committee has also had several
enquiries from Aboriginals who wish to participate in the Colloquium.
It is expected that the Aboriginal and Islander delegation to the
Festival will consist of about 100 people plus 50-60 visitors.

3. The Australian Committee feels that the Exhibition material
from the Australian Black Community should be presented as a whole and
not divided up into the various categories listed in the Festival program.
We feel that the educational impact will be greater if the Australian
contribution is kept as an integral unit.
4. The Australian Co-ordinating Committee held a joint meeting with the Papua-New Guinea Co-ordinating Committee in September and further such joint meetings are planned. The closest co-operation is being maintained on all aspects of the preparations.

5. It was agreed at the joint meeting that the Australasian Zone should be broadened to include Black nations in the South Pacific area. The Australian Committee would like to suggest that the International Festival Committee consider sending invitations to the following countries. In order of priority they are:

1. Fiji
2. Tonga
3. Nauru
4. Western Samoa

The Committee might also consider the communities of Melanesia such as the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, New Caledonia and the Gilbert and Ellis Islands.

6. The Black community of Australia regards its participation in the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture as an extremely important step in forging an Aboriginal identity. This will be the first occasion on which Australia has been represented at an International event by an all Black delegation.
ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD

JANE THYNNE

77/816/009

RE: "CAREERS IN DANCE" PROGRAM

Would you please prepare an agenda item for submission to the Board at its next meeting.

In view of the agreement on the part of the Sydney College for the Arts to incorporate the program into its curriculum, it is necessary to present to the Board a case for the continued support of the program until such time as it can become the responsibility of the College.

I understand Carole Johnson is preparing a detailed submission. In view of the limited funds available to the program at the present time, it is essential that a decision be reached in this matter at the next meeting.

Robert Edwards
Director

18 February, 1977
Memo: Director

Re: Administration of Grant for Careers in Dance Programme

Carole has advised that she is presently finalising arrangements for the Sydney College of the Arts to administer all funds for the course as of mid-1977. This would mean that the Board's grant of $15,000 for the period July-December 1977 should be made payable to this body.

Carole will advise on the outcome of subsequent meetings.

Jane Thynne
Project Officer

9 March 1977
FILE NOTE

Carole Johnson rang to advise that the Dance Training Programme had found premises for next year in a church hall in Glebe. The hall which had rooms for two studios and a lecture hall, as well as lounge and kitchen facilities, had been used previously as a dance studio, but would need additional barres and mirrors installed.

Rent for the premises would be the same as the course had been paying for hire of studio space at Bodenweiser and the Seymour Centre.

Jane Thynne

21 December, 1977
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAREERS IN DANCE"

Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre
P.O. Box 4, '53 Pyrmont Bridge Road
GLEBE          N.S.W.     2037
Phone: Office/Studio 660-2851

Director: Carole Y. Johnson

1977 ANNUAL REPORT
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I am proud to present the achievements of the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme. The community involvement, indeed world experience, which this Report presents is impressive. The Course started only two years ago as a training course with a goal of a performing group some 3 years away. The fulfillment of building a school and a performing group have nearly coincided because of the Australian, the world and the Aboriginal community's need for quality performance by an Aboriginal group. In addition to performing for over 30,000 people, the students have also been able to teach over 60,000 children - most of whom are Aboriginal. Perhaps one of the least expensive programmes funded by the government - about $43,000 for the Course and about $8,000 for projects - its value, with the influence of the nine performing students as a dedicated, hardworking, successful image of Aboriginal people, cannot be estimated.

We must especially thank all the teachers whose dedication and consistent effort, in spite of many frustrations and problems, enables the students and therefore the Course to realize its aims.

[Signature]
CAROLE Y. JOHNSON
Course Director
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

INCOME SOURCES AND EXPENDITURE FOR: YEAR 1977

INCOME SOURCES

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Aboriginal Arts Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Education fees</td>
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<td>Performance &amp; other fees</td>
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<td>Rent</td>
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<td>Contingencies</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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COURSE EXPENDITURE

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<td>Programme Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>Total Programme</strong></td>
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<td>Projects (includes performance expenses)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,418.02</strong></td>
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NOTE: This is not our audited calendar year statement. It refers to expenditure and money for projects of 1977 whether or not all money was collected or paid within 1977.
### Average Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
<th>Average Cost Per Student</th>
<th>No. of Sessions</th>
<th>Cost Per Session</th>
<th>Cost Per Student Per Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Term I</td>
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<td>$53.79</td>
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<td>Term II</td>
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<td>$33.32</td>
<td>$4.93 $92.47</td>
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<td>Term III</td>
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<td>$1,083.29</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>$31.60</td>
<td>$4.96 $92.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Based on our attendance records the course serviced a total of 8,205 students.
STATEMENT OF 1977 ACTIVITIES

Students of Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course related to community in 27 major teaching or performing activities.

They did a total of 49 performances before approximately 29,915 people.

They spent approximately 40 days of the Course teaching young people of Australia. In that time they taught a total of 5,646 students.

Of the 27 major activities, nine were done because of a direct invitation from Aboriginal organizations or people. These include numbers 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 19, 22 and 24 on the following chart. Number 22 was an invitation by an Aboriginal High School student to perform in the school's International Day Celebrations. There are only two to four Aboriginal people in the school.

The chart on the following pages is a detailed list of the above activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>NO. OF PERFORMANCES</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE PERFORMANCE/TEACHING</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Sydney—Stanley Palmer Centre &quot;Battle Rites&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>150 F</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 9,10</td>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,000 E</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 13-23</td>
<td>Tahiti &amp; Noumea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,000 A</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Stanmore Public School, N.S.W.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Film &amp; T.V. School Sydney Filming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Stanley Palmer Centre &quot;Vanishing Species&quot;</td>
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<td>200 F</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2 *</td>
<td>Nowra N.S.W.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350 P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3 *</td>
<td>Woy Woy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100 P</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4 – Aug 13</td>
<td>QUEENSLAND WORKSHOP</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4 – August 13</td>
<td>Normanton</td>
<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18 – 20</td>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 22 – 28</td>
<td>Weipa</td>
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<td>July 29 – August 4</td>
<td>Lockhardt River</td>
<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
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### Summary of Activities (cont)

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<td></td>
<td>Hopevale</td>
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<td>250 children x 4 days</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16 *</td>
<td>Taree</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>July 30 *</td>
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<td>September 13 - 21</td>
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<td>September 16-22</td>
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<td>Friday 16</td>
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<td>Saturday 17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 children x 2 sessions</td>
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<td>Sunday 18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30 children</td>
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<td>Monday 19</td>
<td>Cabbage Tree Island</td>
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<td>Tuesday 20</td>
<td>St. Mary's College</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lismore Town Hall x 1</td>
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<td>Wednesday 21</td>
<td>Community School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lismore 5th Primary School</td>
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<td>October 2,3,4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coffs Harbour N.S.W.</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>Rooty Hill</td>
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<td>October 5 - 10 *</td>
<td>Darlington School</td>
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<td>October 10,17,28</td>
<td>Bodenwieser, Sydney</td>
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Summary of Activities (cont)

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<td>&quot;Legend of Purukapali&quot;</td>
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<td>Bodenwieser Dance Centre</td>
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<td>December 14-17</td>
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* Involvement with N.S.W. Aboriginal children
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<td>2. Tahiti Dance Festival</td>
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<td>3. Queensland/Yirrkala (Special Tribal Teachers to Sydney)</td>
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<td>$2,092</td>
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<td>4. Lismore Teaching</td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,041</td>
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<td>5. Papua/New Guinea Tour</td>
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<td>6. Coffs Harbour</td>
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<td>7. Cowra</td>
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<td>$740</td>
<td>6 from B Group</td>
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See Term Reports in Appendix for short descriptions of the above projects.

*NOTE Funds were not necessarily completely paid or spent within 1977 calendar year.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Wayne Nicoll           | QLD  | X     | X     | X          |                 |
2. Cheryle Stone          | W.A. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
3. Dorathea Randall       | N.T. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
4. Michael Leslie         | N.S.W.| X     | X     | X          |                 |
5. Richard Talonga        | QLD  | X     | X     | X          |                 |
7. Kim Walker             | N.S.W.| X     | X     | X          |                 |
8. Lillian Cromptie       | S.A. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
9. Wendy Roberts          | N.T. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
10. Kerry Upkett          | QLD  | X     | X     | X          |                 |
11. Chandra Baban         | N.T. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
12. Mervyn Fitzgerald     | N.S.W.| X     | X     | X          |                 |
13. Sylvia Blanco         | QLD  | X     |       |            |                 |
14. Shane Williams        | QLD  | X     |       |            |                 |
15. Leone Malamoo         | QLD  | X     |       | X          |                 |
16. Elizabeth Ingrim      | N.S.W.| X     |       | X          |                 |

**Others Who Tried**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>1976</th>
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<td>II</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>October</td>
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17. Daryl Williams        | M.I. | X     | X     | X          |                 |
18. Steve Talonga         | QLD  | X     |       | X          |                 |
19. Sharon Coffey         | N.S.W.| X     |       | X          |                 |
20. Ann Gundy             | N.S.W.| X     |       | X          |                 |
21. Rosemary Evans        | M.I. | X     |       | X          |                 |
22. Philip Laing          | M.I. | X     |       | X          |                 |
23. Lance Gavenor         | M.I. | X     |       | X          |                 |
24. John Williams         | M.I. | X     |       | X          |                 |
25. Andrea Leigh          | N.S.W.| X     |       | X          |                 |

**TOTAL**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>EXPERIMENT</th>
<th>SIX WEEK COURSE</th>
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<th>14</th>
<th>13</th>
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* Dropped out of Course before end of term - not counted in total
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<tr>
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<th>Q'LD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne Nicol</td>
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<td>Dorathea Randall</td>
<td>Lillian Crombie</td>
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<td>Malcolm Cole</td>
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<td>Kerry Upkett</td>
<td>Mervyn Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Wendy Roberts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leone Malamoo</td>
<td></td>
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| TOTAL       | 7               | 3             | 3               | 1             | 1             |
The 1977 year started with the first term beginning on February 7 and continuing until Friday, May 6. We added an extra week to make up the week of classes that were missed when the group went to Tahiti.

This was the first term that we functioned with the certainty of a full year's funding for salaries. However, because of the funding uncertainties until the beginning of January, 1977, we had only one new student starting in February. We discouraged all people who made enquiries prior to that time. The nine students who have been with us since the inception of the Course or who have come to us with prior dance training have continued. These are the students that make up the student performing ensemble and represent the Aboriginal community in performances both at home and abroad.

PERFORMANCES & PROJECTS

The performing highlights of the term were the participation in the ABORIGINAL COUNTRY AND WESTERN FESTIVAL on Sunday, April 11 and Saturday, April 10 and the trip to TAHITI from April 14 to April 27. Both were highly successful and the performing ensemble that has been able to grow from the Course is now seen as a resource for the ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD and AUSTRALIA. In addition to the above, the students did a school performance at STANMORE PUBLIC SCHOOL on April 28.

SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS & NSW HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD

The director of the Course, Carole Johnson, has been in continuous contact with the New South Wales Higher Education Board and with the Sydney College of the Arts. The College has been helpful to us whenever possible. They provided video taping services for us when the traditional teachers, Eric Mariko and Arthur Kebisu, from the Torres Strait Islands were with us.

The proposal for permanent funding by the Higher Education Board will be completed by the end of June. This is a lengthy document which describes in detail the Course; its educational validity, its objectives and methods of operation and its staffing and facility needs.

GUEST TEACHERS FROM TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS

The teachers from the Torres Strait Islands spent two weeks with the students and put together a fifteen minute programme made up of nine traditional dances. They have given us permission to perform them. We consider the time spent with these teachers only a beginning because it takes a great deal of time to perfect the style. The performing abilities of the students are thus improving in:

a. Modern dance  
b. Traditional Lardil dance of Mornington Island  
c. Traditional Torres Strait Island dance

Attached to this report is the financial report that shows how we have spent our funds in relation to the budget that has been approved.
NEW CLASS

As a result of the stability of funding, the Course was able to start a second class with five new students. Along with Wendy Roberts who joined in February 1977, two students, Leone Malamoo and Kerry Upkett, who had tried the Course in 1976, returned and three new students began.

Six is a marginal number for a starting class. Ideally there should be ten to fifteen students beginning a class. In that way, the Course could more easily weed out those students who do not have the strength and discipline to meet the rigors of the Course and would not suffer either financially or from a morale point of view with classes that become too small.

NEW TEACHERS

Four new teachers joined the faculty:

RONNE ARNOLD, American dancer and choreographer.

DON SECOMB, a music teacher who also dances.

FRANK KNOWLES, a speech teacher just recently returned from London.

JENNY ISAACS, currently writer for the brochures of Aboriginal Arts & Crafts Pty. Ltd.

THE PERFORMANCE EXAM

The Course introduced the technique-performance exam this term. A panel of seven people - four dance teachers, the speech teacher and two outside people, Jane Thyne from the Aboriginal Arts Board and Sue Rutter from the Department of Education, watched and judged the students as they performed in small groups movement sequences and dances they learned during the term.

The students were graded on five points of technique and five of performance. The results were interesting because they reflected the performance and class experience of the students. The highest results went to those with experience since childhood and the lowest to those just starting the Course. More than a final performance workshop, the exam made the students realize how much they need to do to prepare themselves. The teachers, on the other hand, were able to see what the students have achieved and what needs to be done to raise the technical and performance level.

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The proposal for the N.S.W. BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION was completed and produced. A copy has been given to the Aboriginal Arts Board.

QUEENSLAND - YIRRKALA PROJECT

Two teachers from Yirrkala spent three weeks, July 11 to August 1 with the Course. They were Peter Yikiki Maymuru and David Wuyal Warrpanda. The Aboriginal Arts Board made two weeks possible and the Department of Labour asked that they remain and teach in the hostels.
Report Term II (cont)

QUEENSLAND — YIRRKALA PROJECT

Four of the Course students and the two teachers did a special performance in Newcastle for the Department.

Wayne Nicol and Dorathea Randall as the other part of the project went to Queensland to teach in Aboriginal communities for six weeks.

PERFORMANCES

The Course is slowly being recognized by Aboriginal people as a resource for performances. All performances of the term were as a result of requests by Aboriginal people and their organizations.

The performances were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday,</td>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>NEWCASTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday,</td>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>NOWRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday,</td>
<td>July 16</td>
<td>TAREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday,</td>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>NEWCASTLE — YIRRKALA Traditional dance only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REPORT TERM III - September 26 to December 19, 1977

This last term of the second year of the Course went relatively smoothly with no major crises. Now that the funding has been stabilised it is obvious that much time needs to be spent strengthening the internal processes for the Course. The students need a great deal of counselling. The Course needs to be structured over the nine terms that make up the three years, so that everyone knows what the basic requirements are for completing it successfully. A great deal of time needs to be spent with the faculty as they develop their courses. All of the regular procedures of a school must be formalized so that the students feel a strength emanating from it and thus use it to develop their own internal strengths.

Because the Director had a lighter teaching load, she was able to spend more time with the students and their problems. The Aboriginal Arts Board should understand that even more time needs to be spent in this area and eventually a person put on the staff who does nothing but counselling. The establishment of the PERFORMANCE EXAM has helped formalize the Course. The result is that the students do pull their knowledge together and the teachers can see exactly their strengths and weaknesses.

HOUSING

A major requirement by the Department of Education is that the Course be able to provide housing, at least for the incoming students. It is a major need. Although the Course rents a house, there is need for adequate supervision. House problems carry over into the Course. Also, most of the students need discipline with their sleeping and eating habits. The rents that the students pay do not cover the expense of running the house. A source must be found to assist with this if the Aboriginal Arts Board is not going to support this area that is essential to the Course.

NEW FACULTY AND RESIGNATIONS

ANDIE REESE joined the faculty as a writing teacher. As a result, the Course has been able to get reports of various projects written by the students.

FRANK KNOWLES resigned until such time as the Course is more organized and the student body more in tune to speech.

RONNE ARNOLD has taken leave of absence. He will be in Melbourne with the show, "A Chorus Line" for the next two terms.

NEW STUDENTS

Two new students, Sylvia Blanco and Shane Williams, joined the beginning class in September. They both come from Queensland.

In 1977, the Course has had to accept new students each term. Ideally, the Course should only take in new students at the beginning of the year. For 1978, the Course will accept new students in February and June terms. By 1979, the Course should have so organized its in-take procedures that it can have a selective group coming in the February term only.
REPORT TERM III (cont)

GUEST SPEAKERS

WILL BIER, from New Guinea spoke on the Modern Art movement in New Guinea and Street Art in America. The Course hopes to have him do a special course next year. Since there are not enough qualified Aboriginal/Islander people to join the staff of the course, the course will attempt to get a greater input by inviting guests to speak on various topics. Whenever possible, the course will ask a person to develop a series of talks that he/she could give.

This term the Aboriginal speakers were:

PAT O'SHANE Aboriginal lawyer who spoke on her experiences in getting an education.

LORRAINE RANDALL Who spoke on her experiences living in Mornington Island and the work she did in South Australia as a lecturer taking a bit of Aboriginal culture to non-Aboriginal audiences.

ROSLYN WATSON who spoke on her experiences as she developed into the only Aboriginal professional ballet dancer.

The above three people would be qualified to join the staff - however only Pat O'Shane is available to us. Next term she will do a course on Aboriginals and the law.

STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHIC WORK

For the first time the course has been able to have dances created by the students. Seven of the eight OLD students produced solos for the performance exam. Several of the students have considerable talent. Choreography is where the real voice and growth of the Aboriginal Modern Dance Company lies. It is only when the choreography for the future company is developed primarily by Aboriginal dancers that Australia will have its true Australian Modern Dance Company.

PERFORMANCES AND TEACHING PROJECTS

1. Lismore - Performance Teaching Project - September 15 - 21

This involved Lucy Gumawen and Carole Johnson (for two days only) taking Cheryl Stone, Michael Leslie and Malcolm Cole to Lismore for one week to teach in Aboriginal communities and present a major concert to the general public at the Town Hall.

2. Papua New Guinea Tour - September 13 - 20

The balance of the students from the performing ensemble, Wayne Nicol, Richard Talouga and Kim Walker, Lillian Crombie and Dorathea Randall spent a week in Papua New Guinea performing at the Museum.

Special reports concerning the trip have been prepared by Ronne Arnold and Lillian Crombie. The trip was successful but very hectic for the dancers. They certainly did not learn enough about Papua New Guinea because they were isolated from the people. They were also overworked according to the union rules.
C. COFFS HARBOUR, RAINBOW RIDGE - October 2, 3, 4

The University of New England Special Programmes invited Lucy Jumawan and a student, Michael Leslie, to teach dances to Aboriginal children at a Dance/Drama Weekend Workshop. Michael Leslie was able to go because of the support of the Department of Education.

D. COWRA PROJECT - November 26

The beginning students went to Cowra for a weekend to perform for the Aboriginal community's first Arts Programme. Five of the six beginning students were accompanied by Michael Leslie and Dorethea Randall, two of the older students who acted as stage-manager and dance director. This is the first time that older students have gone out on their own and been responsible for a programme. This project was supported by the Commonwealth Department of Education.

OTHER PERFORMANCES IN THE SYDNEY AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>October 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooty Hill</td>
<td>October 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabramatta High School</td>
<td>November 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippendale University Settlement</td>
<td>December 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour Centre - One Extra Dance Co.</td>
<td>December 14 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodenwieser Christmas Workshop</td>
<td>December 13 - 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Reports are available for the following Teaching/Performing Projects.

Queensland Teaching Trip - July/August
Lismore Workshop Trip - September
Papua/New Guinea Trip - September
Papua/New Guinea Trip - September
Rainbow Ridge, Coffs Harbour, Teaching October
Cowrie Performance - November

Dorathea Randall
Cheryle Stone
Lillian Crombie
Kim Walker
Michael Leslie
Sylvia Blanco
Shane Williams
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

STUDENT REPORT ON: ONE WEEK WORKSHOP IN LISMORE N.S.W.
DATES: September 15 - 22, 1977
Funded BY: Australia Arts Council
Written BY: Cheryle Stone

WRITTEN EXPRESSION

The workshop took place from the 15 to 22 September inclusive. Our main
activity in the Festival was teaching young Aboriginal children on missions
and in schools.

There were three dancers. Michael Leslie, Malcolm Cole and myself along with
our teacher, Lucy Jumawan who attended the Festival. Our director, Carole
Johnson joined us towards the end.

It was also largely a student project of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Train-
ing Course, since we taught the children the dances under teacher supervision.
Lucy Jumawan assisted us, the student teachers. She would watch us and some-
times started the class off with a few simple steps/movements just to warm up
and encourage a feeling of security and relaxation. Each of us had been
taught certain dances to teach. While one person was teaching his or her
dance it would mean the other two would help and correct the children.

Our main workshop was with the Box Ridge Mission about 30 kilometres out of
Lismore itself. We taught here for three consecutive days. Approximately
twenty children between the ages of 6 to 12 attended. They were all so eager
to learn and work together. Their ability to pick up so quickly fascinated me.
We taught them various folk dances and song and dance from Torres Strait
Islands. We had a film showing of "Sunrise Awakening", a film that was the
beginning of our Dance Company, so they were able to see us.

On our last day there we gave them a small performance. They then gladly got
up and performed for us the dances we had taught. Our work here was truly a
success and an achievement for the children.

Cabbage Tree Island, another mission, was the next community we worked in.
This island is about 45 kilometres out of Lismore. We taught at the primary
school here for a day. Here it was mainly the children from the school we
were involved with since the rest of the community was not as accessible. The
children were between the ages of 5 and 9. Our teaching therefore was very
basic and not so much set dances but imaginary dance, also imitating animals
and objects in the form of dance. The children were intrigued and stimulated
by the creativity that had come into their world. Time did not permit us to
be there for a longer period which was a great disappointment for the children
and for us.
To me the most important work we did in this festival was at the missions. Doing the workshop right in the mission was the best thing that could have happened. There the community could be part of it and also experience the reality of their children being constructive and creative. These are the places that are crying out for the kind of creative communication we had shared with them.

Our last couple of days were spent teaching in the schools of Lismore. Some of these schools had a percentage of Aboriginal children. But here was where we saw the difference between city and country. Many of the students had already experienced dance in the city through the school dance workshops. The schools were South Lismore Primary, St. Mary's High School College and the Pre-School Community Centre. Most of the children were much older than in the previous workshops, ranging from about 10 to 15 years of age. At St. Mary's College, we gave a dance demonstration and performance. At that school a dance group was already established. At the South Lismore Primary School we mainly taught the repertoire of dances we had been teaching since there was a mixture of ages. At both of these schools, there was a dance teacher.

We also spent time at the Advanced Technical College of Education, where we had once again the opportunity of showing the film "Sunrise Awakening". We gave a brief lecture about the film and performed for them.

Besides the teaching projects, we had to slot into our scheduled rehearsals for our main performance concert. This concert took place at the Lismore City Hall on the 20th September. The performers were the Yirrkala Traditional Dance Group, solo and dust musicians and the three of us who represented the Aboriginal Dance Group. Our group itself had a 3/4 hour slot and Carole Johnson gave a brief history of the Dance Group.

Since this was the first time that the Lismore September Festival had incorporated Aboriginal representation, I feel it is very important to participate there every year during the Festival. It brings to mind that around this area the Aboriginal culture and life was very strong and alive many years ago.

This indeed was a very unique and rare occasion for black performers in Australia. Even with the audience there was a strong link since most of them were black themselves. It meant that they could identify with all that was happening and at the same time feel a sense of pride and dignity. Almost the whole of the Box Ridge Community had come with their children. The children could relate what we had taught them. Who knows, there may be just one or two of those children who would one day follow the footprints we had made for them.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
"CAREERS IN DANCE"

STUDENT REPORT ON:

WORKSHOP PERFORMANCE IN WAUCHOPE

DATES:
October 2, 3, 4, 1977

FUNDED BY:
Commonwealth Dept of Education

WRITTEN BY:
Michael Leslie

WRITTEN EXPRESSION

On the 23rd of September, Lucy Jumawan, our teacher from the Company and myself, a member of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre, went to Wauchope. There we held a Dance Workshop for 15 Aboriginal children from Kempsey.

During our stay the dance instructor Lucy, myself and the children stayed at "Rainbow Ridge". This was a farm outside Wauchope which was being used at that time as a holiday resort.

The Workshop was conducted from the 23rd to the 26th of September in Wauchope, Port Macquarie. The children we taught were aged between 14 to 17 years. Our workshop was held within an old picture theatre.

I taught the children various disco dances. I used the "Shaky Ground" dance for a video that was made of the class. This is a dance from our repertoire that we teach the beginners of the Course. I was very nervous at first, however I eased down soon knowing that the children were all very talented in their own way. They picked up the dances very quickly during the two days we were teaching them. They realized that we were not there to play around although they found the work very enjoyable. Lucy did an improvisation dance with the students from an Aboriginal myth called "Lalai". The myth was about how the Aboriginal people were formed from part of the ground; people started growing from the surface of the earth, with some developing into animals, crabs, birds and trees etc. A video tape was made of all the workshop activities. Now the children have taken it with them to Kempsey.

The day we were to perform, the Mayor and the priest of Wauchope presented the Aboriginal community with a Rock Memorial Service. We found the community of Wauchope very small. A majority of Aboriginals attended the performance, coming from as far as Kempsey, Taree and Port Macquarie.

The service and performance were held at a timber town. This was a reproduction of a lumber town of the olden days. Here they hold a bullock demonstration during the day.

I performed for about 50 to 70 people in a large oval. The dances I performed were "Hallelujah", "Cut the Cake" and "Nullabor Prayer". It went well, except for the ground being rough and dusty from bullock hoofs. In some cases, I found difficulty in keeping my balance because of the hoof prints in the ground. All went well, especially for the "Nullabor Prayer" dance. In some parts I had to slap the ground with the dust flying everywhere as if I were in the desert dying of thirst. But this is what the dance is about.
The children performed "Bus Stop", a disco dance I had taught them. They coped very well for their first performance in front of an audience. The community enjoyed them. They were very proud of their children dancing. We found their co-operation most enjoyable.

The television studios, Nine and Eight from Tamworth, filmed us doing the performance. One interested person video taped me doing "Nullabor Prayer" with the intention of sending it to the Dance Theatre eventually.

I was very proud to go and teach the children from Kempsey and to dance before the black community of Wauchope. It was a privilege to perform and I would love to do more Workshops with young Aboriginals in the near future.
A. DETAILS OF APPLICANT

1. Name of Organisation/Individual making application:

Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme

2. Address:

26 Arts Council of Australia
77 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, NSW 2060
(Accounting Manager)

26 Bodenweiser Dance Centre
18 City Road, CHIPPENDALE 2008 (Studio)

Telephone Contact: 660-0483

3. If Organisation, name of office bearers & titles:

Wayne Nicol
Pat O'Shaugh
Bob Mazza
Bobbi Sykes

Elise Dixon
Terry Vidders

4. Please provide an outline of the objectives of the organisation or person making this application:

(See previous applications) Nov 1978

or copies of Trust Deed already filed
APPLICATION TO ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD
FROM: ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
Careers in Dance Training Project

B.1. Further details

To date I have been acting as administrator and secretary doing all the day to day detail work including typing some letters and reports. The duties have become so detailed and extensive that they have encroached totally on my teaching time and I cannot even begin to think of doing any creative work with the students. For the next six months I would like approval of a part-time secretary typist that can grow into the position of administrative assistant the duties would be as follows:

1. Act as office practices teacher to students involved in helping the course with day to day administration. See attached.
2. Take care of booking arrangement for performances
3. Type letters, reports, schedules and etc.
4. Answer phone - Keep appointments record for me
5. Be responsible for student records - such as attendance sheets and assessment forms that go to the Commonwealth Department of Education-Aboriginal Study Grants.
6. Make copies of material for teachers for students
7. Follow through on keeping up bookkeeping file in conjunction with the Arts Council of Australia. This includes mailing out cheques.
8. Pick up salary cheques of the teachers on pay day from the Arts Council of Australia after they are signed.
9. Keep all our files in order
10. Follow through on details of publicity
11. Collect rent from students
12. Deal with the rental agents making sure house is in good repair.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

"CAREERS IN DANCE"

COURSE ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

A. BOOKKEEPING
B. HOSTEL MANAGEMENT
C. STUDIO SUPERVISOR
D. BOOKING MANAGER
E. HISTORIAN
F. COSTUME MAINTENANCE

A. BOOKKEEPER: - (responsible to course director)
   a. Responsible for total financial record keeping of course
   b. Managers of studio hire, teacher time sheets, and
      hostels all co-ordinate through Bookkeeper.
   c. Collect all bills and time sheets each week.
   d. Make out all requisitions and see that they get to the
      Arts Council on time
   e. Distribute cheques and post out ones required.
   f. Keep double entry cash flow.
   g. Prepares final financial report in conjunction with
      accountants of the Arts Council.
   h. Hands petty cash and keeps records.
   i. Types correspondance necessary for course when needed.

Teacher Time Sheets (responsible to Bookkeeper)
   a. Make sure times and signatures are correct.
   b. Give sheets to person in charge of requisitions each week (bookkeeper)
   c. Give or mail cheques to teachers and get signatures that they
      received the cheques

Studio Rental and Scheduling (responsible to bookkeeper)
   a. Keep precise listing of times used in all studio's for classes,
      rehearsal and meetings.
   b. Prepare an account out for the Bodenwieser times and telephone each
      week and give to Les on a Monday.
   c. Schedule studio use for student projects - make arrangements with Les
      Humphrey if Bodenwieser is to be used or any other studio space that is
      to be used.
   d. Teachers deceiding space could co-ordinate through this person. Check
      with teachers if unscheduled rehearsal time is to be used.

Student Registrar (responsible to teacher in charge)
   a. Keeps attendance of all sessions
   b. Should get some to help in the secondary class.
   c. Collects excuses from students, makes sure notates reason for absence
      or lateness if no doctors certificate.
   d. Transfers daily record to master once a week.
   e. As course grows is responsible for sending out letters to perspective
      students who request i:.
students who request information. Keep list of persons interested.
Check with Prue from time to time.

B. HOSTEL MANAGEMENT:- (responsible to course director)

Bookkeeper
a. All bills relating to housing should go to manager who lists them and
then turns them over to Bookkeeper. Maintains separate set of Journals
for Hostels, this includes:
   a listing of all bills that come in to both
   houses electric, gas, telephone, rent, etc.
b. Giving bills for payment to Bookkeeper at appropriate time - including
   rent for each house every four weeks.
c. Collecting rent and making sure receipt book for each house is up to date
d. Dealing with rental agent for all problems relating to the houses.
e. Keeping over all record of student payment of rent. Making arrangements
   for payment if they get to far behind.

Individual Hostel Managers (responsible to Hostel Supervisor)

a. Takes responsibility of maintainence of house incharge; includes
   taking rent and writing receipts.
b. Making sure people obey rules and keep the houses in good repair
   handling personal problems.

C. STUDIO SUPERVISOR (student co-ordinator; teacher assistant to teach)

a. Opens the building
b. Sets up classrooms (taperecorders and records)
c. Starts coffee urn.
d. Makes sure studios are left clean (not to do it himself)
e. Makes sure all equipment goes back to closet and is not left in studio's
f. Occassionally check on ammenities
g. Sees that all students are in the class ten minutes before class begins
   When teacher hasn't arrived on time the class is to begin with him/her.

D. BOOKING MANAGER:- (for performances responsible to course director
also co-ordinates with teacher in charge)

a. Develops performance schedule based on requests for performances.
b. Investigates possibilities for performances.
c. Sends out information to potential customers and follows up through
   personal conversations.
d. Makes all arrangements for the performances
f. Make sure organization requesting service of group understands its
   responsibilities to the group.

E. HISTORIAN:-

a. Keeps all documentation of course and performances
b. Maintains a scrapbook
c. Knows where video tapes and Audio tapes that record programme's are.
d. In charge of collecting material from papers, magazines, and the media
   (especially when we have budget for such)
e. Makes sure we get copies of photographer for scrapbook and photographs.
F. COSTUME MAINTENANCE:

a. Maintains inventory of costumes makes sure they are in good repair.
b. Prepares them for performances.
c. Makes sure that all costumes are collected after performances
d. Must not do everything himself at the performances alternates each performance for two students to co-ordinate with him or her.
INTERVIEW WITH DR. MARTIN OF THE H.E.B.

The Higher Education Board (H.E.B.) is a statutory body established under the Higher Education Act of 1975 of the N.S.W. Parliament.

The Board has a full-time Chairman with the status of permanent departmental head in the N.S.W. PUBLIC SERVICE and two full-time members with the status of deputy undersecretaries. Dr Peter Martin is the Deputy Secretary in charge of academic development and Mr Parrer is the Chairman.

The Board is not an advisory committee but a major government operation charged to do work. The responsibility of the HEB is to plan and administer provisions of Higher Education of N.S.W. It has in its care the following:

1. the six universities of N.S.W.
2. Twenty three Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE)
3. Fifteen other institutions offering advanced education courses (NIDA is one of these)

As the coordinating authority for higher education in N.S.W. it has different degrees of control over the various categories of institutions.

1. For category 1 the universities
   the coordination is very general and limited. For the CAE's the coordination is very detailed. They must run their courses in accordance with procedures developed by the HEB. All funds to the Colleges come through the HEB. The HEB has the role of going to Canberra to fight for any increases in budget that the colleges need and request. The HEB plans in cooperation with colleges and universities the schedules of major building developments.

3. For category 3 the other institutions
   the Board has only control in relation to academic matters.
   The HEB can withdraw accreditation if the institution is not living up to standard. There is no financial coordination. Some of these institutions are totally private; some government funded and some partially government funded.

   The institutions are responsible for getting their own funds which come from a variety of private and possibly public sources.

The current federal government policy in relation to higher education
is that all in category 3 must eventually be brought under the
jurisdiction of the CAE category. The HEB has had in mind since
it has encouraged the AISDS to get accredited that it would have to
get on the fully funded schedule. It has therefore encouraged the
affiliation with the SCA in order to get full funding. This could
take a few years to organize. 1982 is the earliest possible date
because the HEB functions in a triennium. It could be 1983 if the
wheels of government procedures take too long.

The HEB is given authority under the Higher Education Act Section
11(3)(d) to provide accreditation to private Institutions. The
reason that the HEB envisages unfolding for AISDS in the next
few years is:

1. HEB is now in the middle of accrediting the AISDS by Dec. 1980
   Assuming the Course is credited, the Board is interested
   in the possibility of bringing about a closer association of
   the Scheme and the SCA.

2. Federal Government policy is to shift long term educational
   commitments out of the special funding into the regular
   Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funding.

3. The HEB could seek to have the Scheme recognized as a school
   or department within the SCA and thereby become eligible for
   regular TEC funds.

4. To make no. 4 possible HEB would have to ensure that the total
   student numbers and financial limits for the state of N.S.W.
   would not be exceeded. (The AISDS funds would come from the
   area where the need for funds is diminishing such as teacher
   education.)

Problem for the Course is that it will offer Certificates and Diplomas
as an associate. Under the Act the HEB can only fund that part of the
Course which is officially at the tertiary level. The normal source
of money for certifical level from TAFE system. To avoid having to be
connected with another authority which would be difficult, the HEB
would arrange to have cross over funding and give it to the SCA. There
is precedent for cross over funding so it seems that it could happen.
The HEB is thoroughly aware of Canberra's need for the shift of Special Education projects, such as AISDS's Dance Course, into regular funding. The reason the HEB hasn't done much up to now is because its rules are: "until a Course is accredited it can't make special application for funding. Now that accreditation is imminent it will soon start to make application to Canberra for funds under the regular procedures for tertiary education courses. Although the Board in N.S.W. will act as quickly as possible, they can give no guarantee as to the exact date of the transfer of the funding from special to regular. This is primarily because they do not have control over the timing of the processes in Canberra that may affect the Course. The funding help of other sponsors would be needed until the Course is incorporated into the regular funding system. Once the Course is accredited, any government body that is providing special funds can of course help speed up the process which will put the Course into the regular funding schedule. It is important to note that the accreditation process can be speeded through the Course's present ability to provide the educational programme as described in the proposal. Because the present funding has not increased since 1976 and has never been at a level that would enable the Scheme to provide a three tiered Course as proposed, the accreditation process could be further slowed and thus the HEB's plan for us delayed. The HEB's committee, which will be visiting the Course again this year, will be looking at its operation. It will certainly be necessary for the Course to assure them that the Course can provide an educational programme of a tertiary standard and quality. These matters will be carefully considered and discussed at this next investigation.

It is for these reasons that the Scheme, which has already proved that it operates a viable and effective educational programme for Aboriginal/Islander people, is applying for funds that will enable it to establish itself as an accredited tertiary Course. With accreditation, the Aboriginal/Islander students who successfully complete it will receive an Associate Diploma that will be recognized throughout Australia and the world.
The HEB is helping this Course in giving expression to current governmental policy to move worthwhile educational activities into the mainstream of Australian education. The current sponsors of the AISDS have already given expression to governmental policy of providing Aboriginal people with training necessary to integrate into Australian society and ensure that the concept of Aboriginal self-development can be followed through by Aboriginal people at the level they expect of themselves.
TRANSLATION OF REVIEW FROM NOUMEA

The contemporary dance group, which draws its inspiration from the folk culture, its great choreographic quality demonstrates the evolution of their tradition to modern life. [Demiere, 1977]

Le groupe de danse contemporain, qui puisse son inspiration dans le folklore, sa grande qualité chorégraphique montre l'évolution de leur costume à la vie moderne. [Noumea D emiere, 1977:April 27]

TRANSLATION OF REVIEW FROM TAHITI

The troupe, we say, is intelligent and sensitive. It never falls in the trap of being outrageous and for necessary reasons. It is truthful and credible, while the ballets remain beautiful and continue to move people. [Journal de Tahiti, 1977]

Mais la troupe, nous l'avons dit, est intelligente et sensible, jamais elle ne tombe dans l'outrance et le gratuit, elle est sincère, crédible. Et les ballets, eux, restent beaux, continuent à émouvoir. [Journal de Tahiti, 1977:April 23]
# 1978 Annual Report

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- Glebe Community Leisure & Learning Project
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme has survived three hectic but exciting years and graduated its first students. This year is highlighted by many firsts. Some of these achievements are firsts not just for the Course but for Aboriginal people of Australia. Most notably a first for Aboriginal people was the appearance of Kim Walker and Wayne Nicol, a 1978 graduate, as dancers in the Annual David Jones Fashion Awards.

Students of the Course attended the Queensland Ballet’s seminar in Rockhampton and the performing team participated in the Festival, presenting three programmes of modern, jazz and traditional Aboriginal dance.

Doratha Randall, another 1978 graduate, choreographed during her last year, a modern solo based on the traditional "Devil Dance" form of the Northern Territory. This is the first piece choreographed by a student that became part of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre's standard repertoire for schools and community groups.

With the study trip to Mornington Island in September, the Course finally realized the principle of "Changing the Centre of Learning" to a place where expertise is readily available and the study of traditional culture and dance can be learned by living among the people whose culture the students have studied in the classroom. It took the twelve days of living and seven nights of performing with the Lardil people for the students to attain a greater stylistic ease with traditional Lardil dance.

The performing tour to Darwin showed people for the first time that a group of Aboriginal and Islander people can present a quality show that combines traditional Aboriginal dance, Island style dance and jazz and modern dance.

And finally, the season at the Opera House was the first time the Course itself presented its students in a recognized performing venue. Lucy Jumawan, the Course's principal teacher and choreographer, created two new exciting ballets for this season.

The above highlights of what occurred during the year have been possible through the efforts of a few dedicated teachers and the continuity of funding. The performing group that has developed from the Course brings pride to all Aboriginal people. This goes beyond the dollar cost of the Course, which is quite inexpensive in comparison to many other projects.

Thanks to all who have helped this year.

CAROLE Y. JOHNSON
Course Director
You stand united
Fierce and happy, pain of being.
Teach yourselves, refrain yourselves.
Make the future your future
with your dance.

Richard Talonga
STAFF LIST

ADMINISTRATION

Carole Y. Johnson       Director
Caz Villiers           Administrative Assistant
Cheryle Stone         Student Bookkeeper
Lucy Jumawan         Principal Teacher/Choreographer

TUTORS

Kai Tai Chan             Creative Dance, Choreography
Carole Johnson             Modern Dance, Ballet
Lucy Jumawan             Modern & Creative Dance, Ballet
Mira Mansell             Choreography
Gerard Sebritt             Modern & Creative Dance
Peggy Watson              Ballet

Don Secomb                     Music
Howard Spicer                     Singing
Faye Nelson                     Aboriginal Arts & Culture
Steve Costain                     Speech & Drama
Bobbi Sykes                     Personal Development

GUEST TEACHERS

Peter Yikaki Maymuru       Yirrkala Traditional Dance
Gary Wanirnya Marika       Yirrkala Traditional Dance
Aku Kadogo                     Modern Dance - Guest from U.S.A.
### 1978 INCOME SOURCES

**ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD**

<table>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**N.S.W. CULTURAL COUNCIL**

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**OTHER INCOME**

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<td>Department of Education Fees</td>
<td>19,316</td>
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<td>Gifts and Grants</td>
<td>5,789</td>
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<td>Rent</td>
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<td>Performance Fees</td>
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<td>Box Office Receipts</td>
<td>689</td>
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<td>Class Fees</td>
<td>346</td>
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<td>Sundry ($1199 + $1010*)</td>
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**TOTAL INCOME**

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### 1978 PAYMENTS

**A. SALARIES**

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**B. PROGRAMME EXPENSES**

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**C. STUDIO HIRE**

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**D. OFFICE COSTS**

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**E. ACCOMMODATION**

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**F. SUNDRY ($1253 + 1062)**

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**G. SPECIAL PROJECTS**

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<td>Darwin Dance Workshop</td>
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<td>Queensland Workshop</td>
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<td>Opera House</td>
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<td>Guest Teacher</td>
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<td>1977 Performance Projects</td>
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**H. 1977 DEFICIT**

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**TOTAL PAYMENTS**

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<td>Term</td>
<td>Average Attendance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>3.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.66</td>
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Includes guest artist teacher.*

Based on actual per term payments, the number of sessions held and the students that attended.
STATEMENT OF 1978 ACTIVITIES

Students of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course related to the community in 30 major teaching or performing activities.

They did a total of 68 performances before approximately 17,000 people.

They spent approximately 35 days of the Course teaching about 5,000 young people in Australia, mostly Aboriginal children.

Of the 30 major activities, eleven were a direct invitation from Aboriginal organizations or people. These include numbers 5, 6, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 25, 29, 30, 31.

The chart on the following pages is a detailed list of the above activities.
**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

**KEY:**  
- **P** = Free  
- **E** = Expenses only  
- **A** = Salaries & Expenses to Dancers through Special Grant  
- **I** = Income Received (Stipend to Dancers)  
- **P** = Dept. of Education Project  
- **C** = N.S.W. Cultural Council Grant  
- **D** = Payment direct to Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>AUDIENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PERFORMANCES/TEACHING</td>
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<td>1. Feb. 20</td>
<td>Marrickville Girls High</td>
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<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. May 5-13</td>
<td>Queensland Ballet Festival &amp; Seminar, Rockhampton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. June 12 to July 14</td>
<td><strong>QUEENSLAND WORKSHOP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>Burketown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>160 children x 5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Normanton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>Mornington Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>165 children x 5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>165 children x 5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Weipa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>200 children x 4 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. June 21-24</td>
<td>Miranda Fair Shopping Centre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. July 6,7</td>
<td>Martin Place Plaza</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>950</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. July 7</td>
<td>Sydney Opera House Aboriginal Day Performance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>7. July 13</td>
<td>Crown Central Shopping Centre Wollongong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>750</td>
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<td>8. July 14</td>
<td>Awabukul Aboriginal Co-op. Newcastle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. July 29</td>
<td>Foley Park, Glebe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. August 1</td>
<td>David Jones Fashion Awards Wentworth Hotel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500 (National T.V.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. August 5</td>
<td>Trade &amp; Labour Hall Wollongong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. August 7,8, &amp; 11</td>
<td>David Jones Fashion Shows</td>
<td>12 **</td>
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<td>13. August 12</td>
<td>Auburn International Festival</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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* Includes children who were also participants
** Not included in total
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>NO. OF PERFORMANCES</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Sept. 2-11</td>
<td>Aurukun/Weipa Project</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>15. Sept. 4-11</td>
<td><strong>MORNINGTON ISLAND PERFORMANCES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 6 (video showing)</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td></td>
<td>September 8 (Special request)</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>16. Sept. 14-22</td>
<td><strong>DARWIN PERFORMANCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 14 Rapid Creek Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 15 Dolphin Hotel Cabaret</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept. 18 Stewart Park School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept. 18 Jingili School</td>
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<td>87</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 19 Nightcliff Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept. 20 Oenpelli State School &amp; Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 20 Mudginberri Station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 21 Kormilda College</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 21 Casuarina High School Workshop</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Sept. 22 Batchelor College</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>Sept. 22 Dolphin Hotel Cabaret</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. October 14</td>
<td>Parramatta Gaol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>18. October 18</td>
<td>Ferncourt Primary School Marrickville</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
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<td>19. October 19</td>
<td>St. James Hall Workshop for</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. James Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>20. October 24</td>
<td>Tempe High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. October 27</td>
<td>Ensemble Theatre</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. October 28</td>
<td>Dulwich Hill Community Festival</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. November 4 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Sth. Sydney Community Festival</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. November 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
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<td>25. November 10</td>
<td>Aboriginal Medical Service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>No. of Performances</td>
<td>Audience Performance/Teaching</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. November 16</td>
<td>Martin Place Plaza</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<td>27. November 24 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Sydney Opera House</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>28. December 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Sydney Opera House</td>
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<td>29. December 6</td>
<td>N.S.W. Uni. – Health Comm. Aboriginal Section</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>30. December 9</td>
<td>University Settlement</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>31. December 10</td>
<td>Aboriginal Country Music Festival, Dubbo</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>17,281</td>
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**PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN**

**ACCORDING TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

1. Free          F    13
2. Expenses only E    7
3. Aboriginal Arts Board Grant A  1
4. Income from Organizations I  8
5. N.S.W. Cultural Council Grant C  6
6. Department of Education Project P  15
7. Combined Resources of A & P A/P  5
8. Combined Resources of A, P & I API  8
9. Income Direct to Student D  3

**TOTAL**  68
### QUEENSLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Category</th>
<th>No. Of Performance/Workshops</th>
<th>Total Audience</th>
<th>Workshop Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Q'ld. Ballet Festival &amp; Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remote Area Tour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>4,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mornington Island Study Trip</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aurukun/Weipa Study Trip</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,710</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,681</strong></td>
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### NORTHERN TERRITORY

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>750</td>
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<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
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### NEW SOUTH WALES

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<th>Workshop Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sydney Area Community Festivals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,610</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Organizations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Produced</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country town</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
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<td>月份</td>
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<tr>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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| 1. 教学 | 1000 | 2 | 六月/七月 | 学生
| 2. 国庆假期 | 1800 | 2 | 五月 | 教学
| 3. 教学 | 15 ** | 1 | 四月 | 直接基金
| 4. 艺术教育 | 1 ** | 1 | 四月 | 直接基金
| 5. 艺术教育 | 1 | 1 | 九月 | 直接基金
| 6. 悉尼歌剧院季 | 1174 | 2 | 十一月 | 直接基金
| 7. 艺术教育 | 3814 | 2 | 九月 | 直接基金
| 项目 | 4361 | 2 | 七月 | 直接基金

注：上述项目包括与项目相关的直接和间接费用。
COURSES OFFERED

For the first time the Course operated on three distinct levels.

Group A represents students in their third year.

Group B represents students in their second year.

Group C represents beginning students.

In the third term students of Group B and C combined into one group.
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21  20  20

NOTE: Private Singing Classes were introduced for selected students.
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** TOTAL ** 20 21 20

* Private singing classes were introduced for selected students.

Group C combined with Group B in third term.
### GROUP C - COURSE OFFERED

<table>
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| Total                         | 20     | 20     | 20     |

### GROUP D - TERM 1 ONLY

Two boys from Elcho Island were given separate Technique classes based on Dunham Technique.

For the balance of the day they followed Group C schedule.

15
# Continuity of Students

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<td>N.T.</td>
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<td>N.S.W.</td>
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<td>N.T.</td>
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<td>N.T.</td>
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<td>N.S.W.</td>
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<td>Shane Williams</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Leo Munyarryun</td>
<td>N.T.</td>
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* Dropped out before end of term

Not counted in total

* | 16 | 17 | 21 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 3
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1976 STAFF REPRESENTATION
Inner self breathing
Breathe with uncertainty
Breathe release
Breath.
Refreshing thoughts become ........
Become
Unspoken words.
Movement, movement, movement
Oh movement.
Soo long within.
Let you touch you, touch you deep.

Wayne Nicol.
The first term of 1978 was spent trying to further tighten the Course structure.

Fund raising to meet budget requirements still takes too much of the director’s time and energy. The Aboriginal Arts Board held its grant to the 1977 level. However, since the programme has established itself as on-going and effective, other sources will now help supplement the yearly allotments provided by the Aboriginal Arts Board and the Commonwealth Department of Education. These limited funds given for very specific purposes, add scope and content that would not otherwise be possible.

C With the employment of a full-time secretary typist, the Course now has an office that is beginning to operate more efficiently. This regularity makes the students, who desire a more formalized atmosphere, feel they are attending a school that can meet their requirements. The students want a great deal of personal time and need to have people around that can help them reflect and build habits that will enable them to cope successfully in the world outside of the Course and Aboriginal society. In addition to the staff, the Course Director has had time to seek help from several outside organizations. This includes the Department of Education, the Health Commission and Glebe Community Care.

C • ASSESSMENT BY COMMITTEE OF BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

On Thursday, April 27, the committee spent an entire day with the Course. The members included Dr. F. Sharpe; Mr. K. Bain; Mr. R. Edwards; Mrs. S. McKeechnie; Mr. G. Murphy and Mrs. M. Walker. Exceedingly impressed, the committee is going to recommend that the Course be accepted as a tertiary course subject to the conditions that it increase its content of traditional Aboriginal dance and that it become affiliated to an established college of Advanced Education.

C • STUDIO AT ST. JAMES HALL

The move of the Course to the premises of St. James Hall where it can operate on a full-time basis, has helped to consolidate the Course for the students. Far from causing an isolationism, and that had been feared, the effect of having a home that is primarily for them enables the students to be more expansive.

Now that the Course has both the hostel and full-time school in Glebe, and the possible use of a Glebe theatre, it will try to consolidate itself as part of the Glebe community. The support of the community to the school will also help students who, coming from smaller tight communities, feel lost in the anonymity of Sydney.

The building will also enable the Course to establish programmes that can bring the community in as well as create an identity that will help generate funds to the Course.

HOUSING

The Department of Education has finally agreed to deduct rent from students' allowances. This then frees the director from the worry of making the accommodation pay for itself and the need to chase students for their money when they invariably fall behind. Most of the old students found accommodation elsewhere and all new students, except one, occupy the premises.
NEW FACULTY

1. Mira Mansell, dance teacher.
2. Faye Nelson, teacher of Aboriginal Arts and Culture.

NEW STUDENTS

The Course began a new class this year with the enrollment of five new students. Although some classes are taken with the group that began throughout 1977, it is necessary to separate the technique classes. Again, after eight weeks in the Course, it was impossible to mix the two new students from Elcho Island with the beginning group. Thus, by the end of first term, the Course had students operating on four distinct levels.

The two students from Elcho Island, who came into the Course late, bring to the Course something very special with their knowledge of traditional dance. It is important for these students that their knowledge be supported by the Course and that they feel that what they already possess is as important and fundamental as the new forms that they will be learning. The director took over most of their technique classes, introducing them to concepts of exercise and movement continuity through use of Dunham technique, a modern dance form based on African dance. The modern dance as introduced to the other students would have been totally alien, irrelevant and boring to these students because the element of dance is not inherent to the movement exercises.

ORIENTATION WEEK

Introducing the new students to Sydney, as well as to the Course, was seen as a major need. Lucy Jumawan organized the first week by taking the students to facilities of Sydney — to the Aboriginal community at Redfern and by having speakers and discussions of the Course rules.

EIGHT DAY ART AND MUSIC WORKSHOP - February 10 - 17

The schedule was altered slightly for consecutive days in order to introduce students to other pursuits. Jonathon Ladd, a composer, held a two and a half day workshop in music. Georgina Bier, an artist visiting Sydney, spent five days introducing students to technique in art. It was highly practical, giving students the opportunity to experience the use of visual arts materials. The week before, her husband, Uli Bier, gave a lecture and slide show on arts of Papua/New Guinea.

WORKSHOP DEMONSTRATION - April 27

The students of the Course presented their first performance of the year. This is important because it makes all of the students work together, create a goal, and enables the new students to have their first experience with performing.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Course was visited by the cast of "For Coloured Girls", a show from the U.S.A. that was part of the Adelaide Festival of Arts. Subsequently there was:


b. A series of master classes by Aku Kadogo.

The Course hopes that Aku will return and spend six months.
1978 - SECOND TERM REPORT

In spite of all the distractions - the cold weather, lack of heating in the studio building and the painting of the upstairs floor - the spirits and co-operation of the students remained at a high level.

NEW FACULTY

Bobbi Sykes joined the faculty this term and has started a course in Personal Development. This was organized as part of the need for students to become more aware of themselves and their relationships with other students and people. She plans to add another course that will give them an historical perspective and statistical facts on Aboriginal people in Australia.

Wiyendji Nunngula (Jacob Roberts), a tribal elder from the Alawa tribe in the Northern Territory, has come to us and given us a scenario for a ballet he would like to see developed. He also gives lecture classes in Aboriginal Culture from his tribe.

HOUSING

The need still exists for a real hostel with staff management. It is obvious that all the problems in the Course stem from inadequate housing and supervision of young people who are living in a large city and away from home, often for the first time.

SPECIAL EVENTS (see page 29 for details)

'A. QUEENSLAND BALLET FESTIVAL & SEMINAR IN ROCKHAMPTON - May 5 - 13

The Queensland Ballet invited the Course to participate in its annual festival and seminar. All students attended the two week seminar as the Department of Education paid transport and additional living expenses. This was the first time that students of the Course participated in classes with students coming from all over Australia. The performing group performed in two joint concerts and also had one solo performance.

The Course met with Aboriginal people in Rockhampton who were so enthused by the performances of the group that they decided to try to start classes for the young people of Rockhampton.

'B. QUEENSLAND TEACHING PROJECT June 4 - July 14 (See page 32 for details)

Lucy Jumawan, teacher, was accompanied by Malcolm Cole and Lillian Crombie, student trainee teachers, for the joint teaching project with the Queensland Ballet Company. The team, which also included Roslyn Watson from the Queensland Ballet Company, visited

1. Burketown       June 12 - 19
2. Normanton       June 19 - 26
3. Mornington Island       June 26 - 30
4. Kowanyama       July 3 - 10
5. Weipa           July 10 - 14

The week of June 5 - 12 was spent in Sydney where they prepared material for the tour which, as usual, proved highly successful.
We came to learn our dances
Stretching, swaying, bouncing, swinging,
Eight hours a day the beat goes on.
The pain, the agony, the blood and sweat and tears.
We continue to reach for something
They said we couldn't grasp.
We've come a long way brothers and sisters
Yeah we've come a long way.

Richard Talonga
C. PERFORMANCES

In 13 performances the group performed before a total audience of approximately 5,000 people as follows:

- Miranda Fair Shopping Centre: July 21-24
- Martin Place Plaza: July 6, 7
- Sydney Opera House: July 7
- Crown Central Shopping Centre: July 13
- Wollongong: 
- Awabukul Aboriginal Co-op., Newcastle: July 14
- Foley Park, Glebe: July 29
- Trades & Labour Hall, Wollongong: August 4
- Auburn International Festival: August 12

D. DAVID JONES FASHION AWARDS

Wayne Nicol and Kim Walker participated as dancers in the fashion parade at the Wentworth Hotel which also was broadcast as a T.V. special. This is the first time that Aboriginal people have functioned in this way.

Kim Walker was also asked to perform for an additional period in the David Jones stores as part of their promotion.

SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE COURSE

1. Heat for the 1979 winter. This can be done relatively inexpensively by the purchase of gas heaters and bottled gas that can be put outside with copper piping running through the windows. Permission would have to be obtained to place the bottles in private property on the Glebe Point Road side of the Hall.

2. A video recorder.

(Refer to Special Needs for Term I – they remain the same for Term II)

SPECIAL GRANTS TO THE COURSE

1. The Catts Trust – a grant for audio equipment.

2. The Gwenda & John Lloyd Memorial Trust – a grant for placement of mirrors in the studio.

3. Aboriginal Arts Board –
   a. Grant for purchase of library books.
   b. Grant to visit capital cities of Northern Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia to assist with recruitment and nationwide Aboriginal community involvement.
   c. Grant for tribal tutors and for two student teachers from the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Training Course to go to Aboriginal communities in Queensland and teach.

4. Ministry of Education – a special grant to assist with tutors’ salaries.
Planning and rehearsing for the Course's first Concert series to be held in the Recording Hall of the Sydney Opera House was the major goal for this term. The regular schedule was altered to meet this need.

NEW FACULTY

Aku Kadogo from America, who taught the students when she was here as a member of the cast of "For Coloured Girls", returned to work with the Course for six months. This was made possible by a grant from the N.S.W. Cultural Council.

TRIBAL TUTORS

Originally it was planned to have tribal tutors teaching the students while Lucy Jumawan was leading the Cape York Peninsula Teaching Tour. The Course decided to wait to use the money for tribal tutors because:

1. The Elcho Island boys decided not to stay in the Course;
2. The weather was exceptionally cold and the studios of our new premises were unheated; and, more importantly
3. The Course learned that Peter Yikaki Maymuru from Yirrkala, who had worked with the group in 1977, would be returning to work for three months with Margaret Walker.

By waiting, the Course used part of the grant to pay Peter Yikaki and Gary Marika on a casual tutor basis for five weeks. They held three to four classes per week (depending on schedule). The students thus had the advantage of consistent daily work over a long period and also were able to do five performances with Mr. Maymuru and Mr. Marika. In addition, Mrs. Jumawan was able to incorporate them in her ballet, "Aboriginal Awakening" which was premiered at the Opera House.

MORNINGTON ISLAND/DARWIN TRIP – August 30 to September 24

"A" group students finally made their study trip to Mornington Island. They arrived on August 31 and departed September 12.

In those thirteen days the group camped with the people, visited sacred sites and were told the stories by Uncle Henry Peters.

During the second week, the group performed almost every night. They travelled to different people's homes. After the modern dance performance, people went home to dinner and then returned after dusk for the corroboree. Dancing and singing usually lasted up to 11 p.m. or 12 midnight. It appeared that the group brought a good feeling to the community. We also held workshops at the State School on three mornings, teaching the older students "Cut the Cake" (boys) and the group dance from "Charlie Pride" (girls). Malcolm Cole, Philip Lanley, Kim Walker, Lillian Crombie and Bronwyn Thompson did most of the teaching. The trip was possible as part of Aboriginal Study Grants principle of "change of centre of learning".

The group arrived in Darwin on September 13 and spent twelve days doing performances and holding workshops. This was made possible by an Aboriginal Arts Board special grant and money raised by the Darwin community through cabaret performances. The students performed before a total of 1,715 people. (See report on Mornington Island/Darwin Study Trip for details.)
STUDENT STUDY & EXCHANGE PROJECT

Sylvia Blanco and Shane Williams were selected to go to Weipa and Aurukun to teach dance and to try to begin to research tribal dance in the area. They were assisted by relatives in their need to meet the local people. They were not able to obtain much information on tribal dances in either area. However, they did teach the young people and built up support in the communities which could lead to study of the tribal dances in the future. (See Sylvia Blanco's report for further details, page 51.)

SYDNEY PERFORMANCES

In addition to rehearsing and preparing for the Opera House performance, the group managed to meet community performing requests. Peter Yikaki and Gary Marika from Yirrkala accompanied the students and performed with them in the ones marked with an asterisk below. They performed before a total of 4,120 people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>* Parramatta Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Ferncourt Primary School</td>
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<td>October 19</td>
<td>St. James Primary School</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td>Tempe High School</td>
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<td>October 27</td>
<td>Ensemble Theatre</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
<td>Dulwich Hill Community Festival</td>
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<td>November 4</td>
<td>* South Sydney Community Festival</td>
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<td>November 9, 10</td>
<td>Seymour Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>* Aboriginal Medical Centre</td>
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<td>November 16</td>
<td>Martin Plaza</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>N.S.W. University - Health Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>University Settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>* Aboriginal Country &amp; Western Festival Dubbo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

OPERA HOUSE

This special project was the first major concert for the group. The students performed for two weekends - November 24 and 25 and December 1 and 2, with one performance on Friday night and two performances on Saturdays.

Lucy Jumawan created two new ballets, one called "Infusion" for the B group, which adopted Aboriginal bird movements and rhythm patterns into modern dance and "Aboriginal Awakening" for A group, which culminated in tribal dancing led by Peter Yikaki and Gary Marika.

This performance series was made possible by a special grant from N.S.W. Cultural Council, who is assisting the professional development of the group.

THREE YEARS COMPLETED

The end of this term marks the end of the first three years of the Course. Four members will have completed nine terms and will try to remain to establish the professional company so that quality and consistency of performance level increases.
Guest teacher travels widely

The principal teacher and choreographer for the Aboriginal-Islander Dance Theatre, Lucy Jurnawan, is one of the guest teachers at the ballet seminar currently underway in Rockhampton.

Lucy, a petite Filipino, has been teaching dance all over the world for the past 24 years and during her short two-week stay she is trying to impart some of her knowledge and skill to local students. She started dancing at eight, studying classical ballet in the Philippines. Circumstances dictated that she started teaching quite young and she has never looked back since.

Studies

Lucy went to America shortly after she started her teaching career and furthered her studies into every aspect of dancing. She then returned to the Philippines, where for 17 years she was head of the Dance Department of the Silliman University.

In 1972 Lucy came to Australia for what was intended to be a short teaching visit. She ended up staying two years and became involved in teaching dance to Aboriginals and Islanders. It was back to the Philippines in 1974 but again an invitation to teach brought her back to Australia.

Lucy is very enthusiastic about her current permanent teaching project - the Aboriginal-Islander Dance Theatre. The company runs a full-time three-year diploma course for students of ethnic dance. The course focuses on Aboriginal and Islander cultural dances but also includes traditional dances from Africa and the Philippines.

Lucy says she would eventually like to extend the repertoire to Hindu, Chinese, Japanese and South America dances.

At present the dance theatre has eight main performers and the 20 students make up the chorus. The works performed by the company include traditional ethnic dances and modern ballets choreographed to incorporate an ethnic impression.

The theatre gains its knowledge of traditional Aboriginal dances in an interesting way according to Lucy: "We fly the elders from various tribes from all parts of Australia to Sydney. They teach us the steps, the songs, and the appropriate costume and decoration for the dances. In this way we are preserving the culture of Aborigines and Islanders and keeping it intact for future generations," she said.

Ethnic boom

Lucy adds that ethnic dance is currently enjoying a boom in Australia: "I'm always being invited to teach at seminars, schools, conventions and tutorials all over the country. There is a tremendous interest in the work we are doing."

Interest in the theatre is not only confined to Australia. The Aboriginal-Islander Dance Theatre has performed in Nigeria, Tahiti and New Guinea, and an invitation to perform in New Zealand is in the pipeline.

Some of the company's best works can be seen on stage at the Municipal Theatre during the festival.
The Queensland Ballet Company went to Rockhampton to present the Ballet Festival – a two week extravaganza of dance incorporating theatre productions and a teaching seminar.

Approximately 170 ballet students, ranging in age from 10 to 27 and in all stages of advancement, came from all over Queensland and from the east coast of Australia, as far south as Sydney and Canberra to attend the Festival and Seminar.

Teachers belonging to the Queensland Ballet tutored classical students and guest teachers, Jennifer Barry and Lucy Jumawan taught modern, American dance, jazz and Philippine dance.

The dance seminar was held daily at the Municipal Theatre and at various studios in nearby areas which were utilised to cater for the numerous classes in different and varied dance forms, starting each day at 9 a.m. and finishing at 5.30 p.m.

Nightly performances were presented by the Queensland Ballet Company, The Dance Company of N.S.W., The North Queensland Ballet Company and the first Queensland appearance of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre.

The following is a list of students from the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course who participated in the dance seminar:

Cheryle Stone            Desmond Coleman
Lillian Crombie          Theresa Creed
Wayne Nicol              Philip Lanley
Richard Talonga          Patricia Scott
Malcolm Cole             Elizabeth Ingram
Sylvia Blanco            Kerry Upkett
Mervyn Fitzgerald        Shane Williams
Wendy Roberts

DANCE CLASSES

Students were divided according to the level of their qualifications. Cheryle Stone, Wayne Nicol, Lillian Crombie, Malcolm Cole and Richard Talonga were in the "B" stream. All the rest of the students were in the "C" stream. The above students attended classes and managed well within standard. I personally commend our students doing the "B" stream work. Teachers were impressed with their good technique and strong dance background. Two of our students, Cheryle Stone and Wayne Nicol, were selected to participate in the workshop presented at the end of the seminar.
PERFORMANCES

The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre performed on the following dates:

May 5
Cinque - choreography by Mira Mansell
Vanishing Species - choreography by Kai Tai Chan

May 8
Full-length Concert
1. Torres Strait Traditional Dance
   The dances are drawn from material taught to members of the
   A.I.D.T. by traditional dance teachers of the Torres Strait Islands.
2. Underwater Study - choreography by Carole Johnson
   A mood piece done in modern style.
3. Marcia Hines Suite - choreography by Lucy Jumawan
   Marcia Hines is a Black American singer who grew up in Boston and
   has migrated to Australia to become the top soul singer in the
   country. This work is in three sections -
   Trilogy
   The Last Song
   Hallelujah
4. Mornington Island Traditional Dances
5. Harold Blair Suite - choreography by Lucy Jumawan
   Harold Blair, who died in June 1976, was the first Aboriginal
   operatically trained singer. The songs have Aboriginal words and
   melody. The contemporary music written for a chamber concert group
   was arranged especially for Mr. Blair by modern composer, Brian Brown.
6. Vanishing Species - choreography by Kai Tai Chan
   For the many primitive and native people of their own land who had
   to struggle to survive when they encountered the 20th century.
   Aboriginal people have written their contemporary songs of love,
   of protest, of nature, of joy through the Country and Western
   musical sound. Almost every country town has an Aboriginal Country
   and Western band.
   In February, 1972, Aboriginal people placed a tent embassy on the
   lawns of Parliament House. In August, 1972, after two attempts, the
   Commonwealth Police tore it down. The spear is a traditional symbol
   that the challenge to the opposition will remain forever.
   In May 1976, a permanent Aboriginal Embassy was founded in Canberra.

May 13
Underwater Study - choreography by Carole Johnson
Marcia Hines Suite - choreography by Lucy Jumawan

PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE

May 5    approximately 350 - 400 people
May 8    approximately 300
May 13   approximately 250 - 300
MEETING

As a result of our performances, a meeting was organized by the Aboriginal and Islander people residing in Rockhampton. They openly and publicly expressed their strong appreciation of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre's performances. Parents and children who attended the meeting numbered around thirty five.

The main reason of the meeting was the community's desire to establish and organize a dance school in Rockhampton and they asked our advice and assistance. I suggested they form a committee and a sub-committee and plan the scheme. I also suggested they write to our Director, Carole Johnson, so we could discuss the possibilities.

This great interest from the community is a wonderful result of our participation.

PUBLICITY

The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre received overwhelming publicity in all media - newspapers, radio and two live television programmes.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE SEMINAR

The Queensland Ballet Company afforded an excellent dance seminar as well as extending, both to the dance students and the community, high quality nightly performances. The visiting companies had overwhelming response. It was an enriching dance experience for every person involved.

COMMENTS

The students of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course were given a special privilege to attend the seminar through the earnest efforts of the Director of our Course, Carole Johnson, the funding bodies and, of course, the Queensland Ballet Company. I will personally endeavour and support any future possibilities of involving ourselves and our students in any seminars of the same nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I strongly recommend that the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course select, on the basis of sound behaviour and outstanding class record, the students who will participate in any future workshop or dance seminar.

APPRECIATION

My deep appreciation to the performers of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre and to all the students who attended regular classes and rendered good behaviour and extended total co-operation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO:

Department of Education - Funding Body
Carole Johnson - Director, Aboriginal/Islander Dance Course
Mr. Harry Haythorne - Director, Queensland Ballet Company
BURKETOWN

Burketown State School is a small school with an approximate total enrolment of 157 children. The headmaster is Mr. Paul Tasker and there are two permanent teachers and two teachers' aides.

The school is newly constructed and some of the sections will be completed either later this year or early next year. We had a lovely adequate space for dancing, ideally situated so as not to distract the attention of the other children in their classrooms or disturb the children in the dancing class.

This was the first dance workshop conducted in Burketown State School. The children, in general, were shy but were anxious and interested to learn. Movement co-ordination is something they have to work hard at, especially with the younger groups. The discipline was excellent and concentration very good. I could always see and feel that every child enjoyed their first experience of a dance class. They related themselves very well, especially in the Clown dance.

We presented the children in a dance workshop towards the end of the teaching period. All the dance teachers guided the children as most of them could not memorize the complete movements of each particular dance. The experience of performing in little costumes really added colour and created a lot of enthusiasm among the performing children.

The community participation was tremendous. Even the builders and other related workers in the community were given time off to enable them to see the dance workshop. Of course, all the mums, dads and relations came with great interest.
The kindergarten children participated too. I was overwhelmed with their natural ability to move and above all the outstanding discipline of every child present.

From the headmaster down to the teachers' aides, we received total support and enormous co-operation. The voluntary participation of the teachers in the dance classes showed a sincere contribution, necessary to morally and culturally uplift the children in the school. Mr. Paul Tasker's warm reception was inspiring to the teaching group. The Dance Education Workshop in Burkettown was successful and was a deeply enriching experience for the school children, school faculty, the community and teaching team.

NORMANTON

Normanton State School has a large enrolment of approximately 250 students. The headmaster is Mr. John Hookens and the faculty numbers over twenty. This year our dance workshop was conducted within the school compound and, as during previous years, we were holding the classes in the town's Cultural Hall.

This was the fourth dance workshop to be held in Normanton and the second time I'd conducted the workshop. The progress in the children's dancing was really interesting to see. From the first grade to the fourth, the following dances were taught - Puppets, Welcome Dance, Soldiers, Clown and the higher grades were taught Subli and Jota, Tinikling and the Coconut Shell dance. It was amazing to see how the children learnt the dances without difficulty. There was, however, a slight difficulty this time with the behaviour of the children, especially in the higher grades but eventually they settled down. The dance area directly faced most of the classrooms and was an open area which resulted in a little disturbance and affected the children's behaviour. But, as I said, they settled down and got used to the conditions, absorbed the teaching and behaved better. This group of children has a natural feeling for rhythm. As I observed, we could easily select around twenty students from the school who are gifted and talented and would be interested to further their studies in dance, if and when there is an opportunity open for them.

The workshop programme was held in the town's Cultural Hall. The parents and community were invited and the turnover was approximately 250. The children's programme was good and well presented. Many lovely and inspiring comments were made and marked the success. The teaching group, Roelyn Watson, Lillian Crombie and Malcolm Cole again performed in the second half of the programme. The kindergarten children were invited, however they did not participate as we could only give them three sessions. I'm sure it was an enjoyable programme for them too.

Mr. and Mrs. John Hookens and the faculty gave us excellent co-operation in every way, a cordial reception and receptive attention. The Dance Education Workshop, especially in Normanton, is now like a part of the school's yearly activity. I firmly hope the project will be given a yearly financial assistance as it is establishing a unique and important cultural experience for the school and the community.

MORNINGTON ISLAND

The school here has a total enrolment of 157 children, aged from 4 years to 16. The school's headmaster is Mr. Allen Knox and there are 10 staff members. A number of permanent tribal elders regularly teach Aboriginal lardil dances to the students.
During the period we were there, the school complex was still in the process of completion. Our dance classes were held in the regular classroom and it was really inadequate space-wise but somehow we managed. All the dance classes were attended by the tribal elders and they conducted and taught Aboriginal dancing too.

The Mornington Island children generally have a special talent for dance. I attribute this to the regular weekly dance classes given and conducted by the elders themselves. They showed a great deal of interest throughout the period. Attitude and behaviour were really good. We taught the same dances taught in the previous schools. However, the most popular one was the Clown dance. The children enjoyed learning the Shaft and the Bus Stop. The high school made a special request for dance classes. We were more than willing to extend our services to them with the co-operation of the primary school. The high school students were shy but were interested in attending classes. They liked Shaft and Bus Stop and preferred this style of dancing to other forms. Overall, the teaching group found Mornington Island children really exceptional in movement co-ordination, with good rhythm and rare quality of style.

The workshop was a big surprise to us all. The children presented themselves very well and this programme was the most highly attended. Over 300 parents, friends and community people came to watch the programme. One of the teachers specially joined and performed with the children. This is something that deeply touched me and I considered her participation as an endearing cultural fulfillment. The community's attendance was by far the biggest, as far as school activity was concerned.

The great and especially warm reception coming from the headmaster, faculty, the elders of the community and the people is evidence that the project is gaining tremendous support. For Mornington Island, the Dance Education Workshop was a cultural revelation and a stepping stone towards continuing and furthering their experience to fulfil their own cultural identity.

KOWANYAMA

Kowanyama State School has an approximate enrolment of 165 students from 4 to 15 years with a faculty of twelve.

Dance classes were held in a big open area within the school compound. This was the fourth experience of a dance workshop for Kowanyama. The children are always enthusiastic and this makes the teaching very exciting for the children and the teachers. This year's dances were in preparation for next year's creative level of dances. Our dances were mainly ethnic and folk, character and disco type. This year the children exerted more effort, as the dances taught, like Subli and Jota, were technically difficult. The comprehension and retention had improved compared to last year. The boys and girls in grade 7 and upwards are shy and, if teachers are not experienced in handling situations like this, it can easily get out of hand. The condition can become a real problem but our previous experience with them has actually produced a good solution to the related problems. All the grades learnt their dances and were ready for the dance workshop.

The community was invited, parents, visitors and friends came and we had an attendance this year of about 200. The workshop programme was well presented and well received. The children are gaining more and more performing experience and the improvement is great. In the second half, we presented three numbers danced by Roslyn Watson, Lilian Cronbie and Malcolm Cole. The performances of the teaching group are always important, especially for the children, as it is through this that a genuine desire and interest is created in them that will continually build a greater cultural awareness.
Kowanyama dance workshop is more than a success for us, the school and the community. Last year the council especially invited back the teaching group – Roslyn Watson, Dorothea and Wayne Nicoll – to perform at the opening of the new Cultural Centre. This year the head council official, Mr. Jemmy, requested the group to go back and present a dance concert sometime in August. Our relations with the community have strengthened and this is of great value to us and to them.

WEIPA

Jessica Point State School has an approximate enrolment of 160 children and there are about forty in the kindergarten. Ages ranged from 3 to 14 years. We noticed a great improvement in the dancing, from the first grades to the highest. I was most impressed with the general strength in their feet. The future of the developing artistic interest in dance is enormous in this school. We taught the same dances learnt by the previous children. The higher grades preferred the disco type dancing to either ethnic or folk. In the afternoons, Roslyn gave special dance sessions to the high school students who had requested this.

The headmaster, teaching staff and teachers' aides supported the workshop with much co-operation. We have always been well received and assistance was extended in every way possible.

The workshop this year was attended by about three hundred people from the community. The kindergarten performed a short dance class demonstration, guided by me. The grades that followed performed exceptionally well, considering the short period we had with them. The numbers that Roslyn and Lillian presented were enthusiastically received and many people in the audience made beautiful remarks, took photos and talked to us after the workshop.

Last year we presented a mini concert in the House on the Hill and, in spite of short notice, we performed another successful concert and raised some money for our return trip to Kowanyama. The community was especially looking forward to another concert this year – we received a lot of enquiries and they were really anxious to see the dancers again. We hope we can get financial assistance from Comalco, so we can go back and perform at the inauguration of the Cultural Centre in Weipa.
DANCERS from the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre have come to Darwin to present performances, give dancing workshops and recruit potential students for the 1979 school year.

They performed at the Jigali Primary school yesterday and will have shows at Stuart Park and Rapid Creek primary schools on Monday.

Tonight they will put on a cabaret at the Dolphin Hotel and again next Friday night.

The Dance Theatre developed from a three-year dance training course that operates in Sydney. The course is supported by the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council and all students participating receive Aboriginal study grants.

CAREER

The course is designed to give Aboriginal and Islander students the necessary training for careers as dance teachers, performers or choreographers.

They receive training in modern dance forms and traditional Aboriginal and Islander dance and culture. The group performing here have just completed a study trip to Mornington Island.

Traditional teachers from the island have worked with the group since its inception in 1975.

It has already performed in Nigeria, Tahiti and New Guinea.

Workshops will be arranged for young men and women 17 and over who are interested in joining the course.

They should contact Carol Johnson at the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service or Mr McKay at the Department of Education.
The original proposal for one teacher and two students to go to Darwin for a week, turned into an exciting three-phased trip as follows:

1. Two students to Darwin for the Darwin Eisteddfod August 2 - 5
2. One teacher and seven students to Mornington Island for 13 days August 31 to September 12
3. One teacher and six students to Darwin for 11 days September 13 - 24

The Course was able to do the above because of additional money that came through the Department of Education, a private contributor and income from performances while in Darwin. The grant, which was given by the Aboriginal Arts Board, gave the Course a base which enabled it to do far more than originally planned.

DARWIN EISTEDDFOD

Dorathea Randall and Wayne Nicol, two of the Course's gifted student choreographers, accompanied Lucy Jumawan to the Darwin Eisteddfod in order to see the tribal Aboriginal dance section. While there, Dorathea made arrangements for the A group to return to Darwin to perform and give workshops in the Aboriginal communities.

MORNINGTON ISLAND

Teacher, Carole Johnson and students, Malcolm Cole, Wayne Nicol, Kim Walker, Richard Talonga, Lillian Crombie, Dorathea Randall and Bronwyn Thompson finally made the long-awaited trip to Mornington Island. Living and dancing with the people of Mornington Island reconfirms my belief that we must spend as much time as possible in the communities whose culture we study. It is only in this way that what is taught really becomes part of the students.

Whilst there the group did the following:

a. Camped out in the bush home of Mr. and Mrs. Lanley. Uncle Henry Peters took the students to various places of the Dreamtime and told them the stories.

b. Taught for three mornings in the State School. This was a reinforcement of the teaching done early in July by Lucy Jumawan, Lillian Crombie and Malcolm Cole.

c. Went on several wallaby hunts - Wayne was the best hunter.

d. We took our video tape of the 1976 Opera House programme, "Forward to the Dreamtime" and played it for the community because there were five or six young people from Mornington Island in that programme. It was unfortunate that the video equipment broke down because, after that showing, most people in the community were prepared to dance so that they could see themselves on television.
e. Performed almost every night for the community. Each night the group performed in front of a different person's home in order to make sure everyone in the community felt involved.

On the last night they performed at 8:00 p.m. behind the canteen. Flood lights were rigged up and the entire performance was done in costume, including a few dances that no-one had seen before.

The performances were so popular that the one night the group decided to rest, the community came and demanded that the students perform for them.

The performances organized by the community were arranged as follows:

1. Before dark - modern dance by Aboriginal/Islander dance students.
2. Everyone goes home to dinner.
3. About 8.00 - 8.30 p.m. everyone returns to the performing site for corroboree and Island style dancing. These evenings usually lasted until midnight. Sometimes there was singing after.

The performances seemed to draw the community together and certainly enabled people to release the tensions that might ordinarily have broken out into fights. The total audience for the 6 nights was about 1,450.

By the time the group left Mornington Island all had been adopted into various families and really felt part of the community. The students can now do the dances of Mornington with an authority and style that was impossible before the trip. Two young people from the island requested to join the Course.

**DARWIN**

This returned the group to the city but with the potential of a two day trip to Arnhem Land.

Wendy Roberts and her mother organized school performances and two cabarets which were financially successful.

The Darwin trip took the following shape:

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<td>Thursday September 14</td>
<td>School performance</td>
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<td>Friday September 15</td>
<td>Dolphin Hotel, cabaret</td>
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<td>Wednesday September 20</td>
<td>Oenpelli State School</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday September 20</td>
<td>Mudginberri Station</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While at Ja Ja the students were taken to a special swimming place in the East Alligator River and to a sacred cave painting site that belonged to Doratha's father's father.
Thursday September 21
Kormilda College 150
Workshop at Casuarina High 14
School given by Malcolm Cole and Lillian Crombie

Friday September 22
Batchelor College 75
Main performance at Dolphin 400 Hotel

Total audience 1,701

We rehearsed at Brownsart and at Kormilda College where some of the group spent three nights and got to know the students, teaching them informally and allowing them to watch rehearsals.

The success of the Darwin trip was that people saw, for the first time, the mixture of Aboriginal, Island style and modern dance. They were especially proud of the quality of the production.

It has been suggested by many people that the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre tour all of the Aboriginal communities next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is essential for future trips of this nature that the Course have a group booking with the airlines to cover excess luggage.

The Course must also take all the sound equipment which might be necessary, as follows -
a. Extension leads (75 - 100 ft.)
b. Double adaptors - preferably a 4 place junction box.
c. Amplification system.
d. Tape recorder.
e. Small cassette (battery operated).
f. All jacks and connections.
g. Lights - 4 to 6 flood lights to start. It will eventually be necessary to develop coloured floods attached to a dimmer.

We never know what is going to happen performance-wise so we should take copies of all dances possible for several different performances. Music for teaching must be prepared for all ages as well.

Publicity:
a. Have photos and stories prepared for newspaper coverage.
b. Find out in advance the cost of announcements on radio for performances.
c. Must have posters and leaflets that can be distributed in each place.
d. Must have information on the Dance Course for distribution.

Extra Staff:
1. Stage and Equipment Manager/Operator to take care of all company luggage and costumes.
2. Film-maker/Photographer - if we want a story of the trip, we need a person whose job it is to do only that.
ABORIGINAL AWAKENING

ABORIGINAL / ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE

A Programme of modern dance

RECORDING HALL  SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

FRIDAY NOV.24, DEC.1 - 8 P.M.
SATURDAY NOV.25, DEC.2 - 6 P.M. & 8 P.M.

TICKETS - Opera House Agencies
Aboriginal / Islander Dance Theatre - 660 2851
Bodenweiser Dance Centre - 212 3000

ABORIGINAL / ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE ACKNOWLEDGES SUPPORT OF N.S.W. GOVERNMENT THRU DIVISION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND ABORIGINAL ARTS BOARD
OPERA HOUSE REPORT

DATES:  November 25 & 26; December 1 & 2

Audience

Friday, November 25          1 Performance          200
Saturday, November 26        2 Performances          100
Friday, December 1            1 Performance          150
Saturday, December 2          2 Performances          300

Total of 6 Performances      750

PLACE:  Recording Hall, Sydney Opera House

PROGRAMME:  Included two new works by Lucy Jumawan: "Infusion" and "Aboriginal Awakening"

GUEST ARTISTS:  Peter Yikaki Maymure & Gary Waninya Marika from Yirrkala, N.T.

SPECIAL GUEST:  Wandjuk Marika, tribal Elder from Yirrkala played the didgeridoo in sections of "Aboriginal Awakening" for two performances.

PERFORMERS:  All students of Aboriginal/Islander Dance Training Course, with the advanced students carrying the major portion of the programme. "Infusion" was the modern work created especially for the new students.

Advanced Students:  Years of Study with Course:

Malcolm Cole                  3
Wayne Nicol                   3
Dorathes Randall              3
Cheryle Stone                 3
Richard Talonga               3
Bronwyn Thompson              1
Kim Walker                    2

Intermediate & Beginning Students:

Sylvia Blanco                 1
Mervyn Fitzgerald             1
Elizabeth Ingram              1
Philip Lanley                 1
Wendy Roberts                 2
Kerry Upkett                  1
Shane Williams                1
Azhar Nik                     1
The performances were well received. Saturday November 26 was the worst night as far as audience, with only 100 people attending.

Publicity was a weak area, partly because of lack of money and partly because there weren't enough workers and a person totally in charge. In spite of problems, a small team of workers was created to produce publicity and assist in general. The need is to start all work much earlier.

The term's schedule became a weekly schedule all geared around the rehearsing and producing of the work.

"Infusion" was presented at the Seymour Centre before the Opera House concert on November 9 and 10. This gave the new students an opportunity to present the work before the opening night and enabled them to become more comfortable performing.

**IMPORTANCE OF CONCERT**

This was the first time the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme presented its students to the viewing public as a performing group in a major performing venue. The students, who are all aspiring to professional careers, need to have the opportunity to perform a season in an established theatre. The students get a great deal of experience performing for the community in schools, festivals, shopping centres and at such events as requested by various groups. A season at a place such as the Opera House provides added professional training for the would-be performers.

It is also important that the public sees the high quality of work that the students produce. Performances of this nature help continue the growing awareness of Aboriginal people and prevent stereotyping into one particular category. Such performances are a source of pride for Aboriginal audiences and performers alike when they take place in a recognized theatre.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That such a concert be an annual project of the Course and the Course book the theatre at least a year in advance.

2. That the Course get interested professional assistance for publicity and money from commercial companies.

3. That the Course develop a system of projects that are produced in workshops during the year and the best of these plus old works be presented in the annual concert.
After getting a week's notice to teach in Queensland, I packed my bags and got my things ready. We left for Mt. Isa on Sunday, June 11 at 7.00 a.m. We stayed overnight at Waltons Motor Inn in Mt. Isa and left early the next morning, 6.00 a.m. to catch a very small plane to Burketown.

We finally touched down at Burketown and Mr. Paul Tasker, the headmaster of Burketown State School, was there to greet us. It was very different scenery compared to Mt. Isa. I felt as though I was back home on that bumpy dirt track, which here, I supposed, was the main road. Already I was feeling the comforts of home. Except for that ride in the plane, for I usually get air sick. I think I must be allergic to planes. No, not really. We arrived on Monday, June 12 which meant we had time to sort out our things before starting the "hard grind" the next day.

When the next day came, it wasn't really a "hard grind", it was just nervousness I felt at teaching kids who had never danced before. It was an experience for me to make those kids listen to me and no-one else. It was like the power which Lucy has over us and we have to listen to her. It was the same thing, except I was the "boss" and it was my responsibility to teach those kids the dances. I was quite amazed with the Burketown State School when I started teaching them. Their timing and rhythm was astounding. I couldn't believe my eyes. Between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. there was deep concentration for the students and dancing teachers.

The week went by very quickly. The performance in which all the students and dancing teachers took part was quite successful. Many of the students' parents came, including their fathers who were working with the council. The fathers were allowed one hour off from work to see their kids dance. Most of them really didn't think their own kids could dance like that and when they were dancing, I think there were a few hidden tears behind their smiling faces. For me, there were also hidden tears.

The school was divided into three groups. There were grades 1 and 2, 3, 4 and 5 and 6 and 7. Many of them tackled each step with ease.

Mr. Paul Tasker was kind enough to use his working time to take us to many sites around Burketown. Driving along the dirt track was an excitement for me. On to a new adventure and goal.

While we went sight-seeing, Malcolm went fishing with Mr. Paul Tasker and a group of other people and caught us a big barrumundi which Lucy cooked Filippino-style. I wasn't feeling well that day so I only had a little bit of the food. It tasted really good. We made lots of friends there. Some were working and would leave when their task was done.

The time was nearly up for us to leave Burketown and head for Normanton.
When we boarded the little plane I was a bit sad to leave Burketown. Once again, without fail, I was feeling airsick. From the air I could see in the distance the Gulf of Carpentaria. What a beautiful sight it was! The pattern of the earth was so incredible, with rivers branching out like veins and seeing landmarks which looked like heads, feet and many things depended on how good your imagination was.

Normanton was the same as Burketown as far as school dancing went. The performing was also a success, despite the power which was off for a long time. The performance was not held at the school but at the Community Hall. Roslyn, Malcolm and I also danced for the audience. There were lots of Aboriginal kids at the school. Lucy picked some girls in the secondary section to go to Sydney to join the Aboriginal/Islander Dance School.

The teachers took us sightseeing during the weekend. They took us to this place where crocodiles dwell. Shane, one of the teachers, was good enough to take us in his Kombi van. After parking the van on a dirt track, we walked through bushes and shrubs. The ground was covered with long, dried reeds and bushes but we were unaware that under all this were big potholes. So you can imagine all the screams and shouts when we landed in one of them! It was a beautiful day too. The warm sun beat down on the dewy bushes and trees which were still wet from the misty morning. We finally reached our destination. Very quietly we crept through the bushes, knowing that the crocodiles would certainly hear us if we cracked a bush or a piece of twig. We sat high upon a dry bank and watched carefully as a boar on the other side of the river drank peacefully, not knowing of our presence. Just up the bank we could see the crocodiles lying lazily on a sand bar in the middle of the river. Finally the boar heard us and shot off into the bushes, leaving behind him a cloud of dust. Roslyn took some pictures of the crocodiles and some nearby kangaroos, who also shot off into the bushes. We arrived home exhausted.

The rest of the day brought more excitement and adventure. The teachers entertained us by taking us on fishing trips down one of the big rivers in a home-made boat. They also took us to a house-warming party. We played tennis with the teachers and went to one of the local dances which was held half a mile from Normanton. The male teachers were in the band and were quite good.

After a successful tour in Normanton, we then flew to Mornington Island where we were greeted by Philip Lanley's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Lanley and many of the local Aboriginals. One of them was Rosie, who was with the Aboriginal/Islander Dance School before, with her baby girl, Trisha.

I think I enjoyed Mornington Island more than any other town that I have toured. I also enjoyed Kowanyama because I learnt how to ride a motor bike and I was free to roam around the bush by myself, trying to escape from the frustrations of work. This was done after work and on the weekends. Marco, one of the teachers, taught me how to ride the motor bike. When I learnt how to ride one, I felt like going on forever because the road was inviting and the bushes and trees were kind to me. My spirits were really running wild but if the loneliness brought happiness and freedom, it also brought danger. I was thinking what would happen if I ran out of petrol and got stuck in the middle of nowhere. My freedom was stopped by this, so I turned back because danger might be lurking behind the bushes. I just rode very fast, taking it easy on bumps and corners.
We spent the weekend in Cairns and attended the anniversary of the missionaries' first landing in Torres Strait Islands. We flew to Kowanyama then to Weipa, our last stop.

We went to Weipa South. Weipa North is for the mining people. The two suburbs are totally different from each other. We did our main shopping in Weipa North. The schoolkids' parents, after seeing our performance, were sad to see us dancing because they had never seen that kind of entertainment. It was also good for them to see what Aboriginals can do if they really want to.

Sometimes I think back to all the schoolkids that we have visited during our tour. What are those kids going to do when they finish school? Because I tell you, all those kids have brains and are very intelligent. They have a sense of timing and rhythm. It saddens me if ten years time comes and sees those kids grown up and being put in jail because of alcohol and young girls having kids at very young ages. There are some young talented kids. If only they had the chance, like I did, to explore the world and to find out who they really are, instead of always depending on alcohol. To me, that is the number one crime and danger to my black Australian friends.

The idea I have is there should be a dancing school in every town or anything to do with the arts so the kids could find which talent suits them. It doesn't necessarily have to be dancing—something like painting, singing, music and many more things.

On this tour, I have learnt how to be responsible towards my students. Also the loneliness of being out in the sticks. There is very little communication between the city and the country towns. What also saddens me is that some kids have not even a nice, warm jumper to put on on a cold day. When I saw a small child standing there really cold and shivering during our dancing classes I took off my jumper and put it on the little student. I'd rather her wear it than me. Most of their parents don't have time for their kids, they don't even take time to buy them something warm to wear. All they think of is themselves and spend their money on grog. Sometimes I think the white people only think of money. Like them, the Aboriginals get their cheques from the government. The white people know when they get their cheques and get ready to stroll into the pub. So they buy their grog and spend most of their time there. Even young girls and young boys get drunk as well. This is what really makes me mad. That's when they don't think of their kids. I don't like it when white people put Aboriginals down, saying, "Oh, they're all the same these black fellas, they've got nothing. They think of beer all the time." Well, people, all these "black fellas" are not like that, there are some people that are doing good for their people. We still have our culture and our heritage behind us and in front of us.

When there is no grog, there is no violence and that's when they have time for their kids, and to give love to one another. The place which saddened me the most was Normanton, especially the pubs. Blacks were in one and whites in another. There were too many discriminations there. I didn't like it at all. I kept my feelings for this report. Aboriginals are not animals and don't like to be treated like them. We have feelings like any other people on earth. I only put this down as I was really angry about the situation in Normanton. It doesn't apply to any other town in Australia, only the ones which we visited on the Queensland tour. These are my feelings and no-one else's. This tour was an experience I'll never forget. The only way to really find out is not to read it in the papers or hear it on the wireless but to be there and live amongst them. I found out in those few weeks. I hope one day those kids will find what they've been looking for, the way that Roslyn, Malcolm and I did.
On Friday, September 2, Shane Williams and myself from the Aboriginal/I Islander Dance School set out on a project, teaching students dance at Weipa South then Aurukun Mission. We arrived in Weipa on September 2 but could not conduct classes until it was approved by the councillors. At 10.30 a.m. on Monday September 4, the chairman plus the councillors discussed the matter, then informed us that we could hold a class as soon as possible. Shane and I then introduced ourselves to the principal of Jessica Point State School who was very helpful to us. We then conducted a class at 1.00 p.m. at the school, in the lunch shed. The area was very roomy with a concrete floor. There were 30 students from grades 5 and 6. The majority were girls as the boys were very timid. To start the classes we did the jazz exercise of head roll and stretching. Then we taught the jazz progression to Disco Inferno off the "Saturday Night Fever" album. To end the class, the girls did ten jumps then the boys. My impressions were that the children were half-hearted in their approach for the simple reason that the other students were distracting them by laughing. Shane took the class and I helped by demonstrating the first exercise. Then we did vice versa for the second exercise. As this was our first class we decided to share the teaching as there were too many students for us to cope with alone. Some students were making a joke out of it while others were very serious.

On September 6 my mother and grandmother accompanied Shane and me to Aurukun on Bush Pilot Airways. There to meet us was my uncle who then organized for Shane and I to meet the principal to get acquainted. At 1.30 p.m. until 2.30 p.m. we conducted a class with grades 5 and 6, with a total of 30 students and two teachers. On September 7 from 9.00 a.m. until 10.30 a.m. grades 9 and 10 attended class. Then from 10.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. we conducted two classes for grades 4 to 7 with approximately 35 students.

The teachers of Aurukun Mission requested Shane and me to hold a performance, to give them a brief idea of what our Course holds for students who might wish to join. The performance started at 8.30 p.m., beginning with Torres Strait Island, "Cut the Cake" and then we decided to improvise to "Should be Dancing". Later in the night, the elders did Shake-a-Leg to the Woom-lee-Ra, which is the traditional song used for this dance.

Pup-a-Retta-Retta is the song used for quick Shake-a-Leg. Shane managed to tape Shake-a-Leg but unfortunately we could not find time to spend with the elders as our stay was rather short. We also got permission from Uncle Donald Peinkinna, the Chairman of the Aurukun Council plus another councillor to learn traditional dances to perform in Sydney. Both Shane and I were amazed at the people from the Mission. After our performance they would not move and wanted us to continue dancing for them. Terry, one of the teachers from Aurukun, decided to hold a disco after the performance. To our amazement, the children lost their shyness and continued to join Shane and me in disco dancing. Everybody finally left at 11.30 p.m.
Early Friday morning we got organized to proceed with classes at 8.30 a.m. Shane conducted a class with fifteen grade 8 students, while I had the grade 1 and 2 class of approximately eighteen students. To me, the children were very shy. The Clown Dance had to be re-arranged as they would not attempt the first movements which were given. It was one big experience for me plus a memorable one. We said goodbye to the students and teachers at 10.00 a.m. then departed on Bush Pilot Airways for Weipa.

NOTE: The Chairman of Aurukun Mission apologized for not having the dance classes approved on our arrival. Shane and I gratefully appreciated their hospitality during our stay at Aurukun Mission. Before conducting our classes, the allocation of the classroom and sound equipment was fully organized, with various grades arriving after each class we taught. Our appreciation is given to the staff, students and families of Aurukun Mission for their great co-operation towards making our project very successful. Special thanks to my Uncle Charles Hudson, who made all this possible. Also special thanks to Auntie Rose and Auntie Mavis for accommodating us during our stay at Aurukun.

On arrival in Weipa, we had to get in contact with the principal of Jessica Point State School, Mr. Peter Starr. He then arranged for us to take a class of any students from the Mission on Saturday morning. I brought along five of my younger sisters and my youngest brother to inspire the kids at the Mission not to be shy and join in the class. The class was quite simple and we used straight little movements which were not too difficult. We taught Tico Tico. There were approximately 15 students present and the class went for one and a half hours. We thanked the principal, Mr. Starr, for co-operating with us on our first project.

On Monday night, Mum and Dad put tea on for us as we were leaving the following day. On Tuesday September 12 Shane and I departed for Cairns where we spent a few days of our vacation before resuming work.

This being my first project with the Course, I found it was successful, considering the amount of time Shane and I had trained for.
Here we are, heads and souls together
No matter what colour or creed we are
Still as one they will see us
Showing our fellow country men and others
What we are about.
And holding together in our bodies
Our culture and tradition.
Putting together the many pieces lost.

Kerry Upkett
GLEBE COMMUNITY LEISURE & LEARNING PROJECT

The Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme has been located in St. James Hall Glebe since March, 1978. The Scheme has always been eager to participate in community activities and, following a successful experimental six week dance course at the Glebe Community Care Centre, it was decided to establish evening classes in visual arts and dance to fulfil an apparent need in the Glebe area.

The Project received a grant from the Board of Adult Education to establish the programme and classes began in November, 1978.

Georgina Bier, a noted artist who has worked extensively with the peoples of New Guinea and Africa, taught the art classes and Aku Kadogo, together with Peter Yikaki Maymuru from the Northern Territory and Eddie Captain from the Torres Strait Islands, taught the dance classes.
The dance classes were conducted at St. James Hall on Tuesday evenings from 6.00 p.m. - 8.30 p.m. and on Thursday evenings from 6.00 - 7.30 p.m.

The Tuesday evening class was specified as being a class primarily for people of Aboriginal or Islander heritage while the Thursday evening class was open to all.

There were actually two classes held on Tuesdays. The first class was Afro-jazz and went from 6.00 - 7.30 p.m. This was followed, in the first term, by tuition in the dances of Yirrkala in the Northern Territory by a visiting Aboriginal dancer, Peter Yikaki Maymuru accompanied by Gary Marika, also from Yirrkala. During second term, dances from the Torres Strait Islands were taught by Eddie Captain.

I believe it is most important to have a class geared to and for both Aboriginal and Islander people. Besides the obvious reason of enriching themselves with knowledge of dance from their own culture, they were obviously more comfortable in a predominantly black class than in a predominantly white one.

The Thursday evening class, which consisted of an hour and a half of Afro-jazz, seemed to grow by word of mouth and both classes increased in size as summer approached and decreased with the coming of winter and cold weather.

My major emphasis in the classes was on dancing as opposed to technique and musical and rhythmical appreciation. I concentrated first on teaching movement then gradually moved on to combinations of movements and ultimately to complete short dances.

Most students came because they wanted to exert themselves physically and yet wanted to do something they enjoyed as well. I believe this was accomplished, as the bodies were hot and the faces were smiling at the end of each class.
It was originally intended that this course was to be given at St. James Hall in Glebe but because other groups were using the premises at the time, it became necessary at the last minute to look for alternative premises. We were fortunate that Annandale Primary School made a room available to us.

Ten students joined the course and attended three 3 hour sessions a week. The course ran for three full weeks, with only one session during the fourth week because the school was then breaking up for the holidays.

The students included migrants, some unemployed, some were parents of Annandale School pupils and three were teachers. Although the course was not intended for school teachers, it was not possible to exclude teachers from the school whose premises we were actually using. One mother brought her child regularly to attend the class and one child drifted in occasionally.

Students were given the opportunity to work in four different media; painting, drawing, batik and applique.

All students were started off by being given large sheets of paper and intense primary colours. From the way they handled these I decided which other media to introduce to specific students.

None of the students showed any confidence whatsoever. Some had such preconceived ideas that they could not relax and could not develop. One student thought she was already an artist, although she displayed no talent. She was both inhibited and argumentative and her presence disturbed the others. Fortunately she left after three classes of her own accord.

Five of the students showed real talent and each of those achieved a genuine breakthrough. All were extremely hesitant to start with and felt that they had no real hope of expressing themselves. None of them was quite sure why they had applied for the course.

A brief description of some of these students' progress may be helpful.

1. This student was a migrant truck driver. He was unemployed and in a bad state of nerves. His first pictures were tracings of children's books. His first original picture was of a sword. Although this was not interesting in itself, it afforded him an opportunity of using his imagination on the elaborately decorated guard. As he began to feel "at home" and relaxed in the class, he displayed a powerful imagination. He painted an abstract picture in brilliant primary colours, which he called "The World Explodes". From there he moved on to very powerful abstract masks, like compositions. There was no holding back any more, his pictures had a powerful emotional content and at the same time displayed a disciplined sense of design. The difference between the nervous, anxious student whom I met in the first class and the relaxed even happy man I saw towards the end was remarkable and rewarding.
2. This student was a migrant housewife. Initially she presented herself as a very timid person. She started by painting a tiny flower on a large piece of paper. Her line was trembling with nervousness and she found herself incapable of filling the page, as if that large, empty space frightened her.

I realized that she had associations with the concepts of "art" and "painting" that would be very hard to overcome in a short course. I introduced her to batik. I got her cloth, wax and dyes. Now that she had decided to make a cushion cover for herself, she lost her "hangups". It no longer mattered whether this was going to be "good" or "bad", "successful" or "unsuccessful". It was something she was going to use herself and which she could feel free to throw away if she didn't like it. She produced a bold, abstract design - within two lessons this timid lady produced designs in thick, exuberant brush strokes.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

While the school was very helpful, the premises had several drawbacks:

a. There was no space to store materials and I was obliged to carry everything home every night.

b. There was no space to have a permanent display of students' work.

c. Sometimes school events forced us to change class times at short notice.

d. There was constant pressure from some teachers to use my time to teach their children rather than the adults.

The biggest difficulty however, was the lack of continuity which this kind of course provides.

On an average, I would think that I would find at least two and up to four students who should and would continue working as artists and who might well end up as professional artists. The possibility of continuity is not provided under the existing system. Consequently, the students - who reached a state of elation half way through the course - began to get sad (even depressed) towards the end of the course. It should be possible to build up a strong group of artists, ten to twenty really worthwhile people, over a period of five to six experimental courses. One's time should thereafter be devoted solidly to these people over a period of several years.

This course revealed the potential that exists but the aims of the adult education classes are visualized without the conception of continuity.
DANCE

Basically black

BLACK, proud, and Australian, the tall, handsome, lithe dancer performed with mastery the athletic leaps, lifts and solos of contemporary ballet.

To a background of Alfred Hill's music, Wayne Nicol shimmered his chest muscles, and stamped to rhythmic, hisses, yells, music sticks and thrumming didgeridoo in a tribal dance led by Peter Yaki of the Yirkala, Arnhem Land.

In his performance in Aboriginal Awakening at the Sydney Opera House last week, Wayne Nicol exemplified what the Aboriginal—Islander Dance Theatre is about.

Born of a Torres Straits Islander mother and Aborigine father in Mossman, north of Cairns, where cane-cutting was the only future job, he had become involved in the dance workshops in Redfern, Sydney, at the time of the Aboriginal Embassy to Canberra in 1972.

He was aiming, he says, to offer an alternative to the pub to Aborigines.

From that period emerged a comprehensive three-year full-time dance course, funded since 1975 by the Aboriginal Arts Board, from whose best students black American Carole Johnson has formed a most impressive company of 16 dancers.

Their main teacher and choreographer, Filipino Lucy Jumawan, has used her 25 years of dance experience to create for them dramatically intense modern dance works drawing on the rich inspirational base of tribal dancing.

The graduating three-year-trained group included, apart from Nicol, three other fine dancers of islander descent from Queensland, Richard Talonga, Kim Walker, and Malcolm Cole, three women of Aborigine descent, Dorothy Randall, Jillian Crambie, and Bronwyn Thompson, and Cheryl Stone, from Capetown, South Africa, all of them at ease in a range of styles ballet, Martha Graham, jazz, tribal dance, and not least, mime.

The Challenge-Embassy Dance reflected Carole Johnson's New York modern dance background in its variation of styles and sound, from Mornington Island songs through aboriginal country and western to poetry by Kahl Walker, with accompanying slides of the confrontation with police.

It had so much to say that it lacked the more smoothly unified flow of the other five pieces, but as with them all, the high standard of dancing and production, fidelity to Aborgin-
16th July, 1979

Ms. Carole Johnson,
Director,
A.I.S.D.S.,
P.O. Box 4,
GLEBE N.S.W. 2037

Dear Carole,

At its meeting on 6-8 June 1979 the Aboriginal Arts Board considered your various submissions for funds.

Due to the severe limitations on funds available the Board members felt they had to reject the following:-

- Field officer program: 4,200
- Production of publicity material: 2,725

It is to be hoped that you might be able to obtain funds from other sources for those projects.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Edwards
Director
Aboriginal Arts Board.
25 July 1979

Ms Jenny Bott
Administrator
Arts Council of Australia (Federal Division)
32-34 Bridge Street
SYDNEY N.S.W. 2000

Dear Jenny,

The Aboriginal Arts Board has approved the following grants for the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme.

A. A basic grant of $35,000 was approved as a contribution to the general course costs during the period 3rd December 1979-31st December 1980.

B. A grant of $9,000 was approved to meet the costs of the tribal tutor program.

C. A grant of $500 was approved to meet costs of upgrading the library facilities.

Note: A 3% administrative fee has been added to these amounts to cover the Arts Council's costs.

The first grant is to be used in support of the general course budget as enclosed. The Arts Council's administrative fee will be $1,050.

The second grant is to be used according to the following budget:

Salaries of tribal tutors (6 tutors for 3 weeks at $175) $3,150
Living away from home allowance ($90 per week for 6 persons for 3 weeks) 1,620
Airfares - 6 trips return 3,020
Ground transport 50
Recording and documentation 1,160
Arts Council administrative fee 270
The third grant is to be used according to the following budget:

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Collection of books</td>
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<td>Periodical subscriptions</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records, tapes, films and other reference material</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Board is able to make grants payable only to incorporated bodies, it would be appreciated if your organisation would consider administering these grants.

If you are willing to assist, would you please sign the attached forms and return them to me as soon as possible, so that the cheques may be drawn in favour of your organisation.

The method of payment used can be for the mutual convenience of your organisation and the applicant but should enable you to observe the conditions relating to auditing financial accounting specified in the attached forms.

The applicant's name and address is:

A.I.S.D.S.
P.O. Box 4
GLEBE N.S.W. 2037

Your experience in arts administration would be of direct benefit to this project.

Sincerely,

Robert Edwards
**Director**

Encl.
Introducing

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE

Founder and Artistic Director • CAROLE JOHNSON
Principal Choreographer & Teacher • LUCY JUMAWAN
Administrator • CAROLE VILLIERS
Booking Co-ordinator • KAY SMITH
Tribal Elders & Teachers, Traditional Dance & Folklore
WANDJUK MARIKA • HENRY PETER • DELL SEBASIO • MAREKO KEBISU

CONTACT
Carole Villiers
PO Box 4, Glebe NSW 2037
Telephone: 660 2851 / 660 2312
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE

BACKGROUND

The ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE, originally made up of young people participating in the Careers in Dance Course, has developed to include teachers, graduate students, advanced students and guest artists. This special fulltime dance course, which trains the majority of the performers, is run by the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme. It is funded by the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council. The students, who come from all over Australia, receive Aboriginal Study Grants from the Commonwealth Department of Education. In 1979, the Course initiated a one year job training program for its graduates. The NEAT SCHEME of the Commonwealth Department of Labour assists these dancers.

The three year course, started in October 1975, is uniquely the only fulltime course in Australia which offers people of Aboriginal/Islander descent the chance to train for careers in teaching dance or performing jobs on stage, television or films, as well as technical jobs in the theatre.

ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE developed to fill the demands for performances of Aboriginal dance, both traditional and modern. Since its inception in 1976, the group has performed both locally and internationally, participating in the Second African and Black World Festival of Arts and Culture in Nigeria and in the First Bi-Annual Dance Festival of Tahiti and in Papua/New Guinea to coincide with the Independence Day Celebrations.

Within Australia there has been recognition of the work of the group in the form of critical acclaim and increasing requests for performances by community organisations. It was originally planned to have a limited number of performances and workshops to provide experience to the trainees. Without soliciting, the group, which works primarily in Queensland and New South Wales, receives many more requests from community organisations than it can fulfill. In 1977 there were twenty-seven Australian performances and approximately thirty workshops. By 1978 there were sixty-eight performances and approximately thirty-three workshops.

The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre brings together Aboriginal, European, Asian, African and South Pacific cultures — the collective birthright of all its members — to promote the modern Aboriginal/Islander identity. The Theatre incorporates ideas, values, aesthetics and rhythms of the traditional past in light of contemporary life. It pursues the eternal truths that underlie the Aboriginal/Islander world view. It is a theatre of exploration — of creation — exciting, challenging and probing the senses. Its members share their perceptions of the past, present and future by embodying the traditional, folkloric and the modern forms. Their dreams — sometimes comic, dramatic, ugly, beautiful, sad, happy — are always vital, exciting and immediate, never remote or obscure. The Theatre is their vision — the dream — the instrument for cultural revitalisation. Though the form no longer maintains the traditional shape, the integrity remains constant.

The Aboriginal/Islander heritage of this group provides its members with their spiritual strength. They, who have been involuntarily freed from the limitations of both European and Aboriginal traditions, are equipped to find the new artistic forms that express the substance and excitement of modern day Australia. They have already blended several cultures into their daily lives. The school and its Theatre is a reflection of this fusion.

While the Course is involved in the preservation of Aboriginal/Islander dance traditions, it emphasises creative and modern forms. It leaves theatre forms that are primarily concerned with preserving traditions in the hands of those who teach their traditions. It believes that by developing people who are skilled, secure and free to experience life fully, the creative leaders capable of transmitting their feelings through dance must emerge. The primary aim is thus to bring about a new creative force and artistic identity for Australian modern dance through the input of Aboriginal/Islander dancers.
FACT SHEET
Highlights of the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Training Course Including Its Early Origins

**Month**

**May**
Start of first Modern Dance Workshop in Redfern by Carole Johnson. *Wayne Nicol* one of first students.

**July-August**
Participation in street demonstrations associated with saving of Aboriginal Tent Embassy — Sydney and Canberra.

**September**
First performance workshop — held at Friends Meeting House. Performance included first development of 'The Challenge — Embassy Dance'.

Lucy Jumawan comes to Australia and helps Redfern group to continue its dance classes.

**November-January**
Return of Carole Johnson to Australia to work with people establishing Black Theatre and Dance Workshop — established Black Theatre as independent group at building in Botany Street (no work in dance).

**November**
Return of Carole Johnson to Australia — re-established dance workshop at Black Theatre Building — *Wayne Nicol* and *Cherylle Stone* two participants.

**February-April-June**
Performances of Dance Workshop at Black Theatre

First use of contemporary Aboriginal songs, Bobby McLeod's 'Mangy Ol' Dog'.

**Six week Theatre Workshop at Black Theatre** — a project organised by Carole Johnson, Bryon Syron and Terry Widders. *Wayne Nicol, Cherylle Stone, Dorothea Randall* and *Lillian Crombie* participants.

Film: 'Sunrise Awakening'.

**Start of 'Careers in Dance' by Carole Johnson, the first fulltime dance training course for Aboriginal/Islander people.**


**January**
First tour of New South Wales country areas — established the Aboriginal/Islander student performing ensemble.

Participated in first National Aboriginal Country Music Festival in Canberra.

**April**
Return of Lucy Jumawan to Australia who then continued her work with the group.

**June**
Adoption of group's concept and name, Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme which has two separate components:

'Careers in Dance' — the fulltime training course,

Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre — the student performing ensemble.

**September**
First production: 'Forward to the Dreamtime' held at Black Theatre for two weekends and one out of doors performance at Opera House — black and white video of production available.


July-August  **First participation in Gulf of Carpentaria — Remote Area Teaching Tour,** organised by Queensland Ballet for Roslyn Watson with Lucy Jumawan as guiding teacher and Wayne Nicol and Doratha Randall, two trainee teachers.

August  **Premier of 'Vanishing Species'** — choreography by Kai Tai Chan. Also a video film project.


**Lismore September Festival:** Cheryle Stone, Malcolm Cole, Michael Leslie.

1978 May  Participation in Queensland Ballet Seminar and Festival — Rockhampton.


July  **First National Aborigines Day Concert** at the Opera House. 'Vanishing Species' mounted.

September  **First study trip to Mornington Island to observe and participate in the life of the people. Darwin Tour.**

November  'Dance Umbrella' at Seymour Centre.

First performance of 'Infusion' — Lucy Jumawan;

'Devil Dance' — Doratha Randall.

**Second production — 'Aboriginal Awakening' at Recording Hall of Opera House.** Included a ballet created by Lucy Jumawan under the same name.

1979 January  Participation in Aboriginal/Islander Catholic Council Conference at Toowoomba.

March  **Participation in first Aboriginal organised Concert Tour of NSW prisons.**

'Dance Umbrella' — Premier 'Unseen Images' by Lucy Jumawan.

May  By invitation of community, participation in *Mornington Island Dance Festival.* Purpose: to show Mornington Island community work what Lardil Elders had done in Sydney with group. Creation of first Aboriginal Traditional Ballet — 'The Rainbow Serpent' by Henry Peters. Significance: to my knowledge, first time a ballet is created with beginning, middle and end in a contemporary theatre style using totally traditional movements and music.

July  **Second National Aboriginal Concert at Opera House. 'The Challenge — Embassy Dance' presented.**

August  **First intensive school holiday workshop** organised for Cairns.

September-October  Queensland Remote Area Teaching Tour now totally under Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme management. Third tour headed by Carole Johnson assisted by Lillian Crombie with student trainee teachers Michael Leslie and Philip Lanley.

October  'Dance Umbrella Series". Further development of 'Harold Blair Suite' by Lucy Jumawan.

November  **Third production — 'Right Now' at Union Theatre, Sydney — performing group gains recognition as creative dance group.**
WHERE WE’VE BEEN

1976
SYDNEY
Black Theatre and Opera House
‘Forward to the Dreamtime’
‘The myths and legends of the Dreamtime are unfolded in
dance to a rapt audience of students.’
Sydney Morning Herald, August 25, 1976

CANBERRA
First National Country Music Festival.

1977
LAGOS, NIGERIA
Second Festival of African and Black World Arts and Culture.

CANBERRA
Second National Country Music Festival

TAHITI
First South Pacific Festival of Dance
‘Mais la troupe, nous l’avons dit, est intelligente et sensible,
jamais elle ne tombe dans l’outrance et le gratuit, elle est
sincère, crédible. Et les ballets, eux, restent beaux, continuent
à emouvoir.’
Journal de Tahiti, April 23, 1977

NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA
‘Le groupe de danse contemporaire, qui puise son inspiration
dans le folklore, sa grande qualité chorégraphique montre
l’évolution de leur costume à la vie moderne.’
Noumea Derniere, April 27, 1977

LISMORE
September Festival.

PORT MORESBY, NEW GUINEA
Independence Day Celebrations.

SYDNEY
Stanley Palmer Centre,
One Extra Dance Co, ‘Vanishing Species’.

1978
ROCKHAMPTON
Queensland Ballet Seminar and Festival
‘Vanishing Species’
‘If the company’s performance is any indication, their
complete program on Monday night will really be something
out of the box.’

SYDNEY
Opera House — First National Aborigines Day Concert
Seymour Centre – Dance Umbrella, ‘Infusion’,
Opera House — ‘Aboriginal Awakening’
‘...the high standard of dancing and production, fidelity
to Aboriginal sources, idealism and integrity of this new
company made me hope they get the audiences they deserve.’
National Times, December 9, 1978

DARWIN
MORNINGTON ISLAND

1979
TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND
Downlands College,
Aboriginal/Islander Catholic Council Conference.

SYDNEY
Opera House — Second National Aborigines Day Concert
Martin Place — National Education Week
Seymour Centre — Dance Umbrella
‘The three works they presented were thoughtful, well
prepared, and in one case, an inspired example of using dance
to make a strong social point.’ And of ‘Harold Blair Song
Cycle’ ‘a strong, cleanly honed work that expressed a great
deal in relatively simple dance terms.’
Sydney Morning Herald, October 25, 1979.
Born in Jersey City, New Jersey, CAROLE JOHNSON received her Bachelor of Science degree from the Juilliard School of Music where she majored in Ballet and Graham style MODERN dance. She became well known to her audiences both in the United States and abroad as a versatile, dynamic dancer. Ms Johnson has received critical acclaim for her performances in the ELEO POMARE DANCE COMPANY, with which she was soloist for six years. When she was appointed as the Standard Oil Co of New Jersey and Humble Oil and Refining Company's AFFILIATE ARTIST with the Department of Cultural Affairs of New York City’s Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Administration, she developed a solo dance lecture/demonstration which she toured throughout the city. Subsequently she took this concert program on a tour of South East Asia, set up by the US State Department.

A performing artist of great energy and warmth, Ms Johnson has been instrumental in organising innumerable projects to promote cultural development in America and Australia. In the US she was organiser and director of the city’s first DANCEMOBILE unit, producer of the dance evening for 'BLACK EXPO', administrator of the Study on Black Dance Development, consultant on dance for the New York State Council on the Arts, editor of FEET, the first Black Dance News publication and president of Modern Organisation for Dance Evolution (MODE) which organised the nation’s FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BLACKS IN DANCE, held at Indiana University in Bloomington. Ms Johnson went to Iran as the US International Theatre Institute delegate to the Third World Theatre Committee's Conference/Festival where she also reported on efforts at theatre by urban Aboriginal people in Australia.

Ms Johnson came to Australia in 1972 with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company to perform at the Adelaide Arts Festival. She was invited to stay in Australia by the Australia Council for the Arts to work among Aboriginal people who were becoming increasingly interested in developing theatre. Combining both her administrative and dance abilities, Ms Johnson was instrumental in doing the behind the scenes work between 1972 and 1974 that brought Sydney's Black Theatre, Arts and Culture Centre alive.

At the end of 1975, she established the first fulltime Dance Training Program for Aboriginal people. Ms Johnson is responsible for the establishment of the ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, which serves as the umbrella organisation for the fulltime 'Careers in Dance' training course and the ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER DANCE THEATRE that has evolved as a result of the Course and the need of Australia to have a contemporary dance theatre that has strong roots in its indigenous Aboriginal heritage.

LUCY JUMAWAN

PRINCIPAL TEACHER / CHOREOGRAPHER

Mrs Jumawan has been teaching and studying dance all over the world for the past 24 years. She commenced her career in the Philippines where she also established her own school and dance company in Seligman University. She furthered her studies at the Jacob's Pillow Dance University in Lee, Massachusetts, USA. She has had extensive training in classical as well as her own traditional Filipino dances.

Mrs Jumawan first visited Australia in 1972 where she worked with the Black Dance Workshop. She returned in 1976 under the auspices of Margaret Walker's Dance Concert and began working as the fulltime principal teacher/choreographer with the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme. An exciting teacher and choreographer, Lucy Jumawan has a sensitivity that enables her to translate feelings of many people into dance works.
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

‘CAREERS IN DANCE’

OTHERS HAVE SAID...

'The course is doing a real important job when it projects the image of Aboriginal people to people.'

Joe McGuinness, Regional Director
Aboriginal Hostels, 1978

'It’s good to know that there’s an organisation carrying on cultural work that can be demonstrated nationally and internationally. We want to see its continuation so we can take our dance to the pinnacle.'

Terry O'Shane
Federal Council Advancement of Aboriginals & Torres Strait Islanders

'The whole of Sydney must see this. It’s something of great value.'

Keith Bain, Dance Lecturer
National Institute of Dramatic Art

'At first I wasn’t sure but now I’m convinced that what you’re doing is really important.'

Steve Albert, Chairman
National Aboriginal Education Council

'Please write a strong letter to my younger brother and ask him to come to this course. I came for a while and now have gone on to do very serious work on Mornington Island.'

John Williams, former student AISDS
Leader of Woomera Dance Company

'The rapt attention of the pupils and the enthusiasm shown by them during and after the performance was clear evidence of a wonderful occasion.'

V S Stephens, Principal
Marrickville Girls High School

'I’m very happy to have worked with your students. I feel that this work must be continued and I will be back to work here again. I’m proud to be involved.'

David Gulpilil, Traditional Dancer

'The input of dances performed by visiting Aboriginal teams on the larger community is of course considerable...you are welcome anytime.'

T P Birchley, Principal
Kowanyama State School

'Such performances would seem to me to be an excellent means of bringing children to an appreciation of the Aboriginal heritage and awareness of the development of modern dance forms.'

Helen Vale, Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Studies
Newcastle College of Advanced Education

'I can see the interest you have brought to the Aboriginal community in Rockhampton by your participation in the Ballet Festival. There is great potential in your students and its important that the work you are doing be continued.'

Harry Haythorne, Artistic Director
Queensland Ballet Company, 1978
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
'CAREERS IN DANCE'

CAROLE Y JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

LUCY JUMAWAN
PRINCIPAL TEACHER/CHOREOGRAPHER

TUTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS

Modern and Ballet
Kai Tai Chan .................. Choreographer
Robina Beard .................. Choreographer
Chris Jannides ............... Guest from New Zealand
Anita de Regt .................. Choreographer
Cor de Regt .................. Jazz
Gerard Sebritt .................. Ballet
Aku Kadogo .................. Guest from United States
Cheryle Stone .................. Modern

Traditional Tutors
David Gulpilil .................. Northern Territory
Dick Bandali .................. Northern Territory
Henry Peters .................. Mornington Island
Wandjuk Marika ............... Yirrkala
Peter Yikaki Maymuru ........ Yirrkala
Gary Wanyina Marika .......... Yirrkala
Bruce Mawalan Djioumu ....... Yirrkala
Stuart Djarranggu Marika ..... Yirrkala
Eric Mariko .................. Torres Strait Islands
Arthur Kebisu .................. Torres Strait Islands
Dell Sebasio .................. Torres Strait Islands
Mareko Kebisu .................. Torres Strait Islands

RELATED SUBJECTS
Howard Spicer ................. Singing/Music
Athol Compton ................. Drama
Bobbi Sykes .................. Aboriginal Development

PRODUCTION STAFF AND ASSOCIATES
Bobby Lloyd .................. Technical Director
Chris Sammers ................ Stage Manager
Gary Moore .................. Lighting Design
Wayne Nicol .................. Rehearsal Assistant
Lee Chittick .................. Photography
Cheryle Stone .................. Costumes

HOSTEL STAFF
Graham Mooney ................ Manager
Noeline Choppy ................ Housekeeper/Cook

ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
ADMINISTRATION
Jenny Bott .................. Administrator
Brigitte Tang ................ Bookkeeper

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
Sue Rutter .................. Liaison Officer

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
Aboriginal Arts Board
Commonwealth Department of Education
NSW Board of Adult Education
NSW Cultural Council
Theatre Board

FOUNDING COMMITTEE
Elsa Dixon
Robert Maza
Pat O'Shane
Wayne Nicol
Terry Widders
Bobbi Sykes
BOOK NOW       BOOK NOW       BOOK NOW

UNION THEATRE — SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Nov. 28, 29, 30 and Dec. 2, 8 p.m.
For the premiere of the stunning new Aboriginal Production

RIGHT NOW!

Presented by the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre

Richard Talonga in The Devil Dance — Choreography by Dorothea Randall
An Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre Production

RIGHT NOW! takes a raw look at the urban Aboriginal situation through the eyes of a young Mornington Island Aborigine who comes to a great Australian city and after much suffering joins a dance group and finds identity with city Aborigines and Islanders.

Tickets available at Mitchell Bass Agencies throughout Sydney—Wynyard, Regent, Opera House, Parade Theatre, Sydney Square and all Grace Bros, Sydney stores.

Ticket Prices: $5 Adults — $3.50 Group Booking $3 Concessions

Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre acknowledge the support of the NSW Government, the Division of Cultural Activities and the Aboriginal Arts Board

Any Enquiries — A.I.D.T. — 660-2851 660-2312
5. Have you applied previously to the Australian Council for its Marcel for funds?

(If 'yes' please give details):

YES. Please see attachment "B"

B. DETAILS OF PROJECT: (If there is insufficient space available please attach further pages)

1. Description of Project: A field officer will travel to Queensland, stopping in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns to meet with people who have been working with us and asking for both workshops and performances. The work will include but not be limited to organizing workshops and performing venues, setting dates and finding co-operating agencies and people.

The field officer will also travel to Yirrkala to discuss with Council and elders what's being done in Sydney and arrange future study tours, and to Darwin, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth for organization of workshops. There will probably be three separate trips originating from Sydney to cover all these places.

See Attachment "A"

2. Date or period to which the present application applies:

(You should allow at least eight weeks for Board consideration and payment procedures to be effected):

September 1973

3. Budget Estimates: (In detail) $4,200

Field officer - 8 weeks @ $175

Living away from home allowance - $120 per week

Airfares - Qld. & N.T. return - $550

Melbourne return - 214

Sth. Australia, Western Australia - 476

Local Transportation - 300

Long distance telephone calls - 300

1,400

960

-260

1,240

300

300

$4,200

283
ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

PLANNING GRANT FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT LEADING TO INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS IN EACH OF
THE STATES

ATTACHMENT 2.

In 1978 we applied for a grant for Intensive Workshops in each capital city for purposes
of recruitment and nationwide involvement with the programme at the local level. The
grant was approved and we did one quarter of the planned programme.

Reason: We found we could get a more successful and intensive input if we worked in
co-operation with aboriginal Study Grants.

In mid-December 1978, the central office of the Commonwealth Department of Education,
Aboriginal Study Grants, agreed in principle to the workshops and said they could pay:

1. transportation and room and board for 25 students from each
state requested

2. minimal fees for tutors

They stipulated that we, as the organizing body, must work with the local authorities
and take responsibility for all organizing. This included finding a suitable venue in
each state and co-ordination with Aboriginal organizations. In some cases we might also
need to find additional assistance for rental of necessary equipment, airfares and
living allowance for tutors. This proposal is now requesting funds for proper planning
of workshops which we again think we would schedule for January, 1980.

The purposes of the workshops remain the same as they were for the 1978 approved grant.

1. To insure that people who do not live in Sydney can have direct benefits of
the training course through a week of workshop participation in their own area.

2. To further insure that advanced dance students in the Course share the benefits
of their training and knowledge with the Aboriginal community by giving
performances.

* 3. To make sure that talented people in each of the capital cities have the
opportunity to join the Course and are not left out because of lack of information
and knowledge.

* This recruitment aspect which underlies the purpose of the entire tour is extremely
important because the on-going success of the Course rests on the quality of the
students we take in. Although practically all Aboriginal people have talent in dance
often the personality, motivation and inability to persevere makes them unsuited for
a long intensive professional course. It is important to the Course and the future
development of Aboriginal people that we select for the intensive training those
people most suited and still give a bit of experience and uplift to those with more
limited motivations.
The teaching aspects of this tour would be run in conjunction with the Career camps, conferences and courses that are regularly organized by both the Department of Labour and the Department of Education.

The performing aspects would be run in conjunction with Aboriginal organizations and people who have expressed interest in having the group appear in their area but have lacked the finance to bring the group or individuals to their area.
5. Have you applied previously to the Australia Council for this type of support? YES

(If 'yes' please give details):

SEE ATTACHED FOR DETAILS OF FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THIS PROGRAM.

Last year for Calendar year 1979 we received $35,000 towards the salaries and running costs.

B. DETAILS OF PROJECT: (If there is insufficient space available, please attach further pages)

1. Description of Project: On Dec. 14, 1979, the Course received a letter from the NSW HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD which stated that the Course be recommended for accreditation when certain conditions were fulfilled. These included affiliating with an established institution and clarifying specific aims of the Course. In April, 1979 the Sydney College of the Arts accepted our request for affiliation. It is now projecting into its 1981 calendar year budget to the NSW HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD funds for our Course. In a meeting with Dr. Peter Martin, executive officer of the Board in February 1979, he noted that they would "be able" to fit us into their funding no earlier than 1981 and after NIDA (the 25 year old dramatic institution once funded by the Australia Council) had been absorbed.

SEE COURSE PROPOSAL PROVIDED IN 1977 FOR A PRECISE STATEMENT OF OUR PROJECT. (See Attached B)

2. Date or period to which this present application applies:
(You should allow at least eight weeks for Board consideration and present procedures to be effected):

December 3, 1979-December 31, 1980

3. Budget Estimates: (In detail) SEE ATTACHED FOR DETAILS

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286
The Course is requesting that the Board provide $60,000 towards salaries and the airfares and living allowances of tribal tutors. This covers specifically lines 1,2,5,6,7,8,10,12,13 in the detailed section of our budget.

This budget though considerably more than previous budgets is endeavoring to meet the Higher Education Board's request that we show in realistic educational terms what is required to run the Course as well as their recommendation that there be greater depth of tribal dance and culture in the Course and that we establish a Library.

The increase also reflects our need to:

- Have a full-time teacher for graduates on the NEAT SCHEME who are able to function as performers and part-time teachers in the community, but do not have enough real work experiences to function totally as workers. The development of these teaching and performing projects should lend to if not part-time, if not full time, positions throughout Australia.

- Control our own space and take out a full lease on a building.

We have omitted the need for a vehicle or preferable two vehicles and the costs attached to the running and maintenance of this.
Series given real meaning

**DANCE**

by JILL SYKES

Dance Umbrella: Aboriginal and Islanders Dance Theatre, Bushdances, Modern Dance Ensemble, Margaret Barra Dance Drama Group, Seymour Centre Downstairs.

JUST as I was despairing of this Dance Umbrella series, the Aboriginal and Islanders Dance Theatre gave it a reason for existence.

The three works they presented were thoughtful, well prepared and, in one case, an inspired example of using dance to make a strong social point.

This was The Challenge — Embassy Dance, which begins with a traditional lardil dance from Mornington Island and reaches its climax with the battle of the Aboriginal "Embassy" on the lawn of Parliament House, Canberra.

The dawn of civilization is represented by the arrival of missionaries, policemen, cotton dresses and jeans. The style of dance changes from traditional to an amalgam of European influences.

A mixture of the spoken word (not always audible, unfortunately), Aboriginal music and country music provides the background to a high level of dance performances, with several really talented dancers among them.

Its only drawback was its closing few minutes. Surely a greater finale, and one more in keeping with the rest of the work, could be achieved by symbolizing rather than shouting.

Carole Johnson, who choreographed The Challenge, is director of the group, which is financed by the Australia Council. Its members are students of a three-year course which attracts people from black cultural groups around the country.

Lucy Junaway, the principal teacher, choreographed the Aboriginal Male Song Cycle which began the program — a strong, clearly contrasted work that expressed a great deal in relatively simple dance terms.

I liked her blend of European styles with the traditional hops, crouches and literal imitations of feeding birds which come from Australia's indigenous dance style.
Urgent, funny dances

BY JILL SYKES

The Aboriginal-Islander Dance Theatre, the performing group of a dance course started four years ago under the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme, is developing a strong identity of its own.

This program is an ideal way to pinpoint the ideas and styles that are going into the training of these dancers. The material is raw, but this does not detract from the performance. On the contrary, it adds an urgency to the message that permeates all this group's work: Freedom of choice for the Aboriginal.

Right now! is a hoot-potch of dance numbers loosely linked by the presence of an Aboriginal who leaves his traditional life to make his way in the city.

This thematic device enables the group to mingle their traditional dances with those influenced by just about every available style, classical to modern.

It found it fascinating to compare the Mornington Island dances, probably familiar in style to most regular dancegoers in Sydney by now, with the South Pacific influence in both the dance and sung harmonies of the Torres Strait Island dances.

But most of the program was more concerned with presenting the Aboriginal in an urban setting—arriving in the city, discovering discrimination; in Kings Cross, facing the social welfare inspector, fighting loneliness and eventually finding brotherly friendship through a group of Islander dancers giving a lunchtime performance in Martin-Plaza.

Outside, choreographers were brought in to supplement the work of the group's director, Carole Johnson; and principal choreographer, Lucy Jumawan.

Robina Board showed what could be done with the kind of routine that scores on television—and which is entirely valid in this program in that these dancers are learning commercial skills.

Working with the cast's ideas, Kai Tai Chan created Paytime at Mornington Island, evoking some strong atmospheric sections, which were cleverly portrayed in traditional and contemporary movements, and providing the marvellously funny sight of a Swan Queen—pink satin point shoes, white tulle and all—who was not only shot by the hunters, but plucked as well.

It was pathetically funny and gave Lillian Crombie one of her several well used opportunities to display her comedic abilities as a comedienne. On the dance side, Richard Talouga and Philip Lanley were outstanding, with several other boys and girls showing real talent.

A great deal of preparation has gone into this program. Despite some longeurs—most evident in the two items which depend on the spoken word—it has much to recommend it. Right Now can be seen again tonight and on Sunday night.
Carole Johnson is in a paradoxical position; she is a Negro ballet and modern dancer who has high hopes of forming a full-time Aboriginal and Islander dance company. Johnson, who trained at New York's Juilliard School of Music, performed in Australia in 1972 and found herself working with Aborigines in Redfern, Sydney. After a couple of trips back to the US she settled here in 1976. With Australia Council backing she set up an Aboriginal-Islander dance training course and part-time company. The course has taught modern dance and — through links with tribal Aborigines — traditional dances. She says there are now enough trained dancers to form a full-time company, although "from a money point of view it's a long way off." She sees nothing odd about her directing the Aboriginal group. "Why not?" she says.
Much of the reason that there are so many London Australians in the Aboriginal Advancement Movement stems from the fact that, as expatriates, they are no longer restricted by the Brazza MacKenzie society at home.

But much of their generosity to Aborigines stems also from the fact that we're not likely to go and live next door to them.

However, opposition to Bobbi Sykes from black people in Australia is mostly the usual jealousy shown to anyone who has upstaged too many people. What her colleagues should, perhaps, have realized was that, initially, she was bound to get a lot of attention from the press.

She has been described as "remarkable," "fiery" and "the I of Arc of Redfern". But much of her appeal has been in the fact that she has been an easy story because she is so new and some of her "brothers" and "sisters" might take comfort from the fact that her interest to the press may yet prove very transitory.

Furthermore, one of the reasons that Bobbi Sykes has always looked and sounded like good copy is because she, herself, writes on a fairly regular basis for the 'Nation Review'. A sensational weekly, it usually demonstrates a partiality for the frequent use of the fashionable for better word, and what Bobbi Sykes has to say about Aborigines seems very much in keeping with the paper's style.

It has been unfortunate for Bobbi Sykes that the black American cult in the Aboriginal Advancement Movement has not been strong enough to give her a password to automatic Aboriginal leadership. For if her first-hand experience of Black America might be almost as non-existent as her first-hand experience of Australian Aborigines, her reading of Black American literature seems to be quite extensive.

She is full of the latest things that black writers are saying. Her favourite label is "uptown nigger", would seem more than anything else to be an almost pathetic rejection of herself. Another favourite sneer is "black bourgeoisie". Although this is less vitriolic than most of her stock phrases, she has been rather misinformed in applying it to some Aboriginal leaders whose struggles have made being black so easy for the nouveaux noires.

There have been a lot of big names from the black entertainment world pass through Sydney and Melbourne in the last few years but many of them didn't even know there were black people in Australia.

Some did and some have wanted to do a handshake or two.

Earl Grant, Harry Belafonte and a few others have stopped by at the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs to say "Hello". Shirley Bassey has party-talked about benefit nights and Winifred Atwell has actually done them.

But nobody has gone down to Redfern and mixed it with the blacks the way Carol Johnson has.

Formerly with New York's Negro Ensemble, she came to Australia this year to perform with the Eele Pomare Dance Company.

She is the official Dance Ambassador for New York City and as such has toured most parts of the world, particularly the African nations.

Says Carol Johnson of Aboriginal culture, "I think that, just as the only really American music and the only American dance is black, so, too, is the only Australian music and dance black."

While in Australia, Carol Johnson worked with the National Black Theatre in Sydney and visited tribal areas in the Northern Territory.

She also attended the last North Australian Eisteddfod.

"I think the corroboree is one of the finest art forms in the world," she says.

Some years ago, Dame Margot Fonteyn and Sonia Arova said things very similar. But nobody was ready to listen.

"I think it's going to take a long time for white people here to realise that the corroboree is something more than a gimmick or a tourist attraction.

"But this was the same back home. It took a long time for them to accept the idea of jazz at Carnegie Hall.

"There is also a fabulous transitional art form developing in and around the National Black Theatre and probably in other urban areas.

The Aboriginal people have made Carol Johnson as much an Aborigine as one of their own.

"I think the people here are great. I haven't tried to tell anyone what to do and they respect me for it as I respect them.

"I think there's a lot more unity here than might at first appear obvious."

And, does she believe in black power?

"Of course I believe in black power—it's black people."
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

From the time of my first official involvement with the Aboriginal and Island Dance Course, (as a guest for the Nigerian performance in 1977, and then again with the Remote Areas Tours) I've had the opportunity to witness the tremendously positive effect wherever there have been performances or workshops held by the group. It has an absolutely vital role to play, not only within the Aboriginal Community, but in the wider sphere of the Australian Community. I was even more impressed by the Courses' achievements during, and leading up to the end of year performance at the Footbridge Theatre from December 1st to the 5th. Unfortunately the funding situation has been unnecessarily inconsistent and as such, has impeded the progress and planning of future programmes. I sincerely hope, that, given the phenomenal record of past achievements as well as the exciting role the Course has to play in the future, a system of continuous funding will be implemented in the very near future.

[Signature]
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
CURRICULUM VITAE

CAROLE Y. JOHNSON

131 Underwood Street
Paddington, NSW 2021
Tel: 02-335-9559

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RESUME

CAROLE Y JOHNSON
119 LEINSTER Street
PADDINGTON NSW 2021
TEL 02 360 6187

PERSONAL INFORMATION

BIRTH PLACE
RESIDENTIAL STATUS
Jersey City New Jersey USA
Australia 19 years

LANGUAGES
English, basic French

MAJOR POSITIONS
DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATOR TEACHER

PRESENT POSITION
Self-employed as Consultant/Technical Documentation Business

CAREER OBJECTIVE

A highly experienced, innovative arts administrator with experience in word processing and office management is seeking new opportunities and challenges with a dynamic and progressive organisation, where existing qualifications and experience can be fully utilised.

PROFESSIONAL ASSETS

• Building functioning boards and committees, developing agendas;
• Suggesting goals, setting priorities and developing strategies;
• Fundraising in government and private sector;
• Preparing many types of proposals to meet requirements of funding bodies and educational authorities as well as preparing strategic business plans and other styles of proposals;
• Preparing and writing all types of reports including Annual Reports;
• Preparing and monitoring budgets - Negotiating loans;
• Liaison with consultants, sponsors and staff;
• Organising media and press from writing of releases to contacting and following through to a press functions;
• Assisting community people to develop programs, clubs and organisations designing and possible projects as they identified areas of interest and need;
• Assisting clients with writing proposals and preparing reports;
• Planning and running workshops;

CLERICAL SKILLS

Word Processing and Clerical including
Typing 50 wpm
Computer IBM Compatible Programs
Word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing
Writing, filing, simple layout and design, office organising and supervising, faxing photocopying, telephone and reception, simple bookkeeping
EXPERIENCE AS DANCE ADMINISTRATOR AND CONSULTANT

1966-67
Assistant Manager in charge of Booking and Co-ordinating Production
Coordinator/Producer: HCC's first Dance Project: DANCENOBILE
Organized, administers and fund raiser for the DANCENOBILE A project that took dance to NY City communities on a flatbed truck.

Consultant to NYSCA
Study on Black Dance Development Reports on artistic merit of various dance programs

Coordinator and fund raiser for Master Workshop-Talley Beatty

1965
Producer performance series for pre-school youngsters participating in Cinemobile Project - Rod Rogers
Director: DANCENOBILE
Project Assistant: SUMMER ON WHEELS and took DANCENOBILE to NYC communities as well as to communities in cities of Up-state NY Albany, Rochester, Buffalo, Westchester County

Writer: PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF DANCENOBILE (copyright 1969)

1969
Founder/Coordinator
Organized Modern Organization for Dance Evolvement (M.O.D.E.)

Production Coordinator for "BLACK EXPO", a week-long series of performances at City Center Theater.

Producer of Dance Evening for Dance Caravan M.O.D.E. "Black Expo" - works of Eleo Pomare and Rod Rogers

Field Representative for SUMMER ON WHEELS INC

Producer: Alvin Ailey in Rochester SUMMER ON WHEELS
Consultant for NYSA - examined
possible co-ordination of video tape
and labanotation

Founder and Editor of FEET, the
first monthly periodical about
the black experience in dance.

Affiliate Artist to NYC Department
of Cultural Affairs. Gave lecture
demonstrations, taught dance and
assisted artistic planning to variety
of groups in New York City.

Conceived and then collaborated with
LIKE IT IS, ABC-TV for its first dance
program. It brought together four key
figures for discussion: Katherine Dunham,
Alvin Ailey, Eleo Pomare, Carole Johnson
and included dance performances.

Research trip to Africa to analyze
the dance and related arts: Senegal,
Sierra Leone and Ghana.

Consultant to the Australian Council for
Arts for work in the Aboriginal
community. With special funding
began organizing a dance program
among Aboriginal people in Sydney
visited: Darwin, Indulkna, country
towns of NSW and Perth.
Formed Sydney Dance Group which took
part in Embassy Demonstrations and had
first concert at Friends Meeting House,
Surry Hills.

Organized the initial development of the
First National Congress of Blacks in Dance
(Began work in 1971; completed as part of
team and in conjunction with Conference
Coordinator)

U.S. Delegate to UN’s ITI Third World
Theatre Committee’s Conference/Festival
held in Iran.

Returned to Australia and continued
work in Sydney. Primarily responsible
making sure National Black Theatre Council
establish under direction Betty Fisher.
1974
Under a grant from the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council continued developing Dance Program, which has resulted in a three year dance training program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1975-88
Founder Director of Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme (incorporated and renamed: NALSSDA in 1986)
A full-time accredited training program for Aboriginal and Torres Islander People planning a professional career in dance.

1989
Founder and consultant for development of BANGARRA Dance Theatre Australia, full-time professional company

1990
WORKED IN US AS
Panelist - Black Dance Conference - Denver
Dance USA Conference - Philadelphia
Lecturer - Australia/Backgrounds for Aboriginal Contemporary Dance
Franklin Middle School - Columbus
Cathedral Village Philadelphia
Phila. High Sch. for Girls - Friends School
Berean Church
Organizer - Planning for US TOUR of BANGARRA with Bess Pruitt Associates
Visit Cities of: Columbus, Detroit, Milwaukee, New York Philadelphia
1971 to 1974 spent working in variety of countries

Outline of countries and activities

1. Africa
   October, 1971 to February, 1972
   Senegal
   Sierra Leone
   Ghana – worked and studied informally at University of Ghana, Legon
   Purpose: Study and Observation Tour

2. U.S.A.
   February 14 to March 14, 1972
   Rehearsal and two week U.S.A. Tour with ELEO POMARE DANCE COMPANY

3. Australia
   March 14 to September 13, 1972
   Part I. March 14 to April tour with ELEO POMARE DANCE COMPANY – Adelaide Festival of Arts
   Part II. April to September
   Grant provided by Australian Council for the Arts to work among Aboriginal People.
   In June appeared as soloist and guest teacher with Australian Dance Theatre, Adelaide S.A.
   Taught dance at University of NSW

4. South East Asian Tour
   Solo tour arranged by U.S. Department of State – Cultural Affairs Section in Sydney Australia
   Malaysia ----- September 13 to 18, 1972
   Hong Kong ----- September 17 to 21, 1972
   Philippines ----- September 21 to October 21, 1972

5. West Coast U.S.A.
   Guest Lecturer at University of California, Irvine
   January, 1973
   Guest Artist for City of Seattle (Pacific Northwest Dance) March, 1973
8. NEW YORK and East Coast USA

Return to East Coast to complete organization of FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BLACKS IN DANCE. June 1973 at Indiana University, Bloomington, Illinois.

7. IRAN


U.S. - ITI delegate to Third World Theatre Conference and Festival. Made attempts to get Australian Aboriginal delegates to attend. Provided report on Australian Aboriginal Theatre Activities.

8. AUSTRALIA


Return to Australia to work with dance club that had originally started as. Lucy Jumawan was leaving. Ended up working to put Black Theatre, Redfern together.

9. U.S.

June 1974.

Return to U.S. - Worked at Karamu House, Cleveland, Ohic.

10. AUSTRALIA

1975.

Major work was to organize Six Week Training Course at Black Theatre in Redfern out of which AIDS, (ABORIGINAL ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - now NAISDA) grew as full-time dance training course for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.
Organized Dance Club in Redfern
- Met 2 times per week at Uniting Church
- Worked with Bob Maza who brought to Australia the concept of a National Black Theatre.
- By 1973 there was a Black Theatre group in each capital city.

**Visited and conducted workshops in**
- Home
- Weipa - conducted workshops
- Darwin -- Met Bob Randall and daughter Dorathes Attended Estedifer and saw many different traditional dance groups and developed
- Perth -- Workshops with Ken Colbung's Organization
- Indulkna --- First experience in Traditional Community

Helped Organize Aboriginal Community to see performance of Traditional Dancers representing Australia at the 1st South Pacific Festival
- First time such a performance made available to urban Aboriginal community.

**Participated in 3 Embassy Marches**
- Dance group performed as part of demonstrations performance
- Began creative development of choreographic work called: Embassy- The Challenge

**Performed for FACAATSI Conferences**
- to help raise money for fares
  - First Dance Club performance - Sept. 1972
  - Friends Meeting Hall in Surry Hills

*After I left Sydney Bob Maza's Black Theatre put on its first production, "Basically Black" at the Nimrod Theatre. They then toured the show and a 1/2 hour television program was produced.*

Pattern of performing arts in Redfern was that Black Theatre drama productions usually followed a dance performance. Therefore it appears that the activity of the dance group served as a catalyst for drama events.
1973

(May - Approximately 6 months)

Consultant: Australia Council
The following are activities in which I was involved.

DANCE CLASSES

Took over dance workshop that Lucy Jumawan had been holding together since my previous departure — Meeting at Medical Centre on Maughur St. Chippendale

Difficult to hold together; did not have many ongoing dance classes during this period.

Found I was working more generally and for establishment of Black Theatre as on-going group: First with Lester Bostock who took over after Bob Haza left and then resigned.

ESTABLISHMENT OF BLACK THEATRE ARTS AND CULTURE CENTRE

Helped to secure building to house Black Theatre activities which had finally been found and obtained. Worked very much in background to help establish National Black Theatre as on-going organization and find Aboriginal director after resignation of Lester Bostock.

Chicka Dixon suggested I contact Betty Fisher a singer who might like to become involved; she finally agreed to take on position as the 3rd director of National Black Theatre.

Also worked closely with Chris McGuigan during this period of establishment.

Perth - Workshops with Ken Colbung's Organization in Perth for 2nd time.

Choreographer - Play for Sydney Drama Co.
Worked with David Gulpilil & urban young people on dance sequence Minuet for the English Settlers
1974 November - Return to Australia 3rd time. continued to function as Consultant to the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council.

(Part of 3rd & last trip)

ASSISTED IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN 2ND WORLD BLACK AND AFRICAN FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE: NIGERIA

I was possibly the only one in country and at Council that knew about conference and all the planning being done in Africa, West Indies and the U.S. Initially I did what I could to make sure that the Arts Council considered it as an event for Australian participation.

Made sure Aboriginal people were included in first meeting at Arts Council with African Coordinators.

The next step enabled African coordinators to meet socially with Aboriginal people.

Australia Council Aboriginal Arts Officer then made sure the African committee met Aboriginal people working in Canberra.

Final result of official meetings and social involvement with the African coordinators was that a committee of Aboriginal leadership and involvement was established.

Aboriginal people involved in planning committee which met in Sydney and Canberra from 1975 to 1977 with one or two trips to Africa.

The participation in this Festival was first time Aboriginal people worked in conjunction with Foreign Affairs and other government organizations to participate on an organizational level in an international event.

DANCE CLASSES AT BLACK THEATRE

Black Theatre is now under leadership of Betty Fisher and functioning efficiently.

Start Dance Classes. Develop upstairs studio with mirrors and barre. Classes twice week in evenings and on Saturday Childrens classes start developing

Film: SHARING THE DREAM - documentary of these workshops
PARTICIPATE WITH BRYON SYRON IN BRINGING FIRST PRODUCTION OF "THE CAKEMEN" by Robert Merrill:

Help initial organization for the production
with Bryon Syron who finds Eric Haza to Direct the play.

PRODUCE SEVERAL DANCE AND DRAMA WORKSHOPS IN BRISBANE AND MELBOURNE

Bryon and Carole travel to Melbourne and Brisbane
to give drama and dance workshops.

COORDINATOR OF SIX WEEK DANCE AND DRAMA WORKSHOP AT BLACK THEATRE

As consultant for Ab Arts Board develop with
Bryon Syron, Terry Widders the Six week training

Write Proposal and take major responsibility for
organising for Six week Workshop:
Coordinate funding with Ab. Arts Board and Department
of Education Aboriginal Study Grants for airfares
and living allowances for 28 participants from
all over Australia.

Many people who attended this workshop are now
functioning successfully in arts in a way that had not
thought of:
Jack Davis --- Wrote First Play
Maureen Watson - First Acting experience
Christine Donnelly --
Briggs -- ? Laurel & Hillary?
Andrew Jackomos -- Used film making skills in
production of film
Maroochi K -- First Dance Experience
went on to College in Vic.
Dancers started NAISDA -- Wayne Nicol, Dorathea
Randall, Cheryl Stone, Daryl
Williams, ?Lillian Crombie
Fred -- Actor

FILM DOCUMENTATION: "Sunrise / Awakening",
Ande Reese, director/producer
Film wins 1976 Sydney Film
Festival Award

BEGINNINGS OF AISDS - Outgrowth of above Six Week Training Workshop
Organize and teach 3 month workshop for
1976

FIRST DANCE TOUR OF NSW COUNTRY AREAS
established the Aboriginal/Islander student performing ensemble
organized tour of NSW communities to show work that dance group had done - Jan. 1976
Temora, Walgett and Moree
Tour served as recruitment for new students for following year.

ESTABLISHED ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (Created name and concept as on-going)

Managed to get more funds Ab. Arts Board to continue classes for another six months and on-going support from Dept. Ed. for students to participate.

Moved classes from Black Theatre to Bodenweiser Dance Center..... in order to maintain regularity of classes.

The concept was accepted that training would continue and there would be two components to the Scheme:

'Carers in Dance' - the fulltime training course Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre - the student performing ensemble.

Began to look for way to establish the course as on-going. Put in touch with Sydney College of the Arts which developed a relationship with the Course that led to writing of Stage III document which would lead to accreditation of the course by the NSW Higher Education Board.

First Production: Forward to the Dreamtime, held at Black Theatre for two weekends and one out-of-doors performance at the Opera House; Shortly after this production the 2nd play at Black Theatre was produced.

Through the ABORIGINAL/ISLANDER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT under initiation of its founder director, Carole Johnson urban Aboriginal/Islander Dance students created a series of firsts:

1977

- FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOUR:
  Participation in Nigeria's African and Black World Festival of Arts and Culture.

- FIRST REMOTE AREA TEACHING TOUR:
  Became on-going training project for advanced students to work in Aboriginal communities.
1978

- COMPLETED FIRST STAGE OF WRITING PROPOSAL TO NEW HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD FOR DANCE COURSE TO BE ACCEPTED AT ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA LEVEL

- FIRST STUDY TRIP TO TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY - Mornington Island and then to Darwin where visited Gumpelli and performed in schools.

Took many years to develop concept of change of center of learning and the annual study trip to traditional areas to become accepted part of training course.

- SECOND PRODUCTION 'Aboriginal Awakening' held at Opera House

Beginning of concept to provide annual opportunity for Aboriginal/Islander students to perform under theatre conditions as part of training; to perform with traditional people as part of training; for the development of their professional experience and traditional dance training.

1979

- FIRST INTENSIVE HOLIDAY WORKSHOP ORGANIZED FOR CAIRNS

Advanced students work with young people in Cairns and present performance program that involves community and dance students.

- COURSE GAINS ACCREDITATION AS DANCE MAJOR (ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA AWARD)

1980

First involvement of dance students in tourist presentation, TRADESHOW at Sydney Town Hall; Others held at zoo.

Participant along with members of School to First Indigenous Peoples Celebration in Toronto, Canada.

(Need to look up accomplishments for 81, 82, 83)

1984

Panelist Institute of Aboriginal Studies National Conference on Aboriginal Arts Canberra

Managed to achieve Department of Aboriginal Affairs funding for Course
1985-1987  Member NSW Department of Education
Years 7-10 Dance Syllabus Committee
Curriculum development for years 7-10.

1986-87  Member Sydney College of the Arts - Dance Major
Curriculum Development Committee

1987  Delegate ARTS DIALOGUE-AUSTRALIA
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing
Arts, Education Program/Alliance for Arts Education
Visited U.S. with a team of Australian Arts Educators
to view developments of American Arts in the Education
system.
Washington, New York, Alberquerque/Santa Fe,
Los Angeles and San Francisco

Panelist Colloquium - by Institute of Aboriginal Studies
on Aboriginal culture and music held in Townsville
Alice Moyle (contact)

1988  European Tour of Graduates of AIDT leads to
founding of BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA

Completed Stage IV draft for Higher Education
Board for re-accreditation of school.

1989  Responsible organizing and founding of
BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA

1990  Panelist  3rd ANUAL BLACK DANCE CONFERENCE
Denver, Colorado USA

Panelist  DANCE USA CONFERENCE
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Lectures  in the U.S. on my work in the school
with background information on the
indigenous experience and cultures
of Australia. Lectures created to
stimulate interest in possible future
CHOREOGRAPHY

UNDERWATER STUDY - Santas
PARTING - G. C. Smith

EMBASSY - THE CHALLENGE

Major Solos:
  Brown Skin Baby - Bct Randall
  Nullabor Prayar - Harry Williams
  Mangey Ol' Dog - Bobby Moled

WOMAN'S LAMENT - Sylvia Sings song written by
                   Ronnie Ansell of Us Mob

TRIO
(Fusion piece with Yirrkala Elder playing Fingerpicking)

MILKYWAY - Ted Egan
  Dreamtime Story Song Dance

BROLGA DANCING GIRL -
  Dreamtime Story Song Dance

KUYAM - Concept with transitions and
  5 sections with variety of music including
  Sun Ra, Santanas and traditional

  included traditional dance and section
  choreographed by Dennis Newie

DANCES OF THE DREAMING -- Concept with transitions

  Modern dances by a variety of choreographers
  based mostly on Devil Dance forms
  interspersed between traditional dances of
  Yirrkala

  Mostly I found myself re-staging and creating transitions for most
  programs Also adapting other people's Choreography for Specific
  changed situations.
MAJOR CONCERTS

(As a 1970s mostly responsible for structuring and content; also rehearsed dancers in others work)

1976 - Forward to the Dreamtime
        Out of Doors at Opera House
        Season at National Black Theatre, Redfern

1978 - Aboriginal Awakening (with Lucy Jumawan)
        Season at Recording Hall, Opera House

1979 - Right Now with Lucy Jumawan and Cheryl Stone
        Season at Union Theatre (Footbridge)

1980 - Heritage with Lucy Jumawan
        Season at Recording Hall, Opera House

1984 - Modern Section of FIRST AUSTRALIAN'S PROGRAM
        Season at Opera House

1987 - Survival (with Raymond Sawyer, Directing)
        Season at Belvoir Street Theatre

1988 - Worked on Concept of Mimi
        Germany Tour and Spoleto Melbourne Festival
        Raymond Sawyer, Artistic Director
TRADITIONAL TRIPS TOOK DANCERS ON
(usually led to concerts elsewhere):

1978 - Mornington Island
      Performances in Darwin

1979 - Queensland Remote Area Tour

MAJOR TOURS TOOK DANCERS ON:

Catholic Conferences:
   Toowoomba 1978
   Rockhampton 1980
   Townsville 1981

1982   Melbourne
1984   Canberra - ANU
1985   Cairns

OVERSEAS TOURS

1980   Canada - Indigenous People's Conference
1985   Memphis in May, Memphis US
1988   Germany Tour
       Spoleto Melbourne

HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD ACCREDITATION PANELS:
   Wooloongong
   Darwin Theatre Course (2 year assessment)
   Dance Course at Physical ED. School - Sydney
ARTICLES, PUBLISHED AND MAJOR UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS.

1969 - Report - The Progress and Development of Dancemobile 1967-68

1970? - Section in a Business and Arts Book by Alvin M. Reiss

1973 - Report - The International Theatre Institute Third World Theatre Conference/Festival Shiraz, Iran September 6-9, 1973

1974 - Article - Now is the Time to Dance Catalyst, February 1974


1975 - Proposal - to Aboriginal Arts Board for Major Performing Arts Project: Six Week Workshop - June, 1975

1977 - Proposal Stage III - to NSW Higher Education Board for Accreditation of Dance Course

1978 - Proposal Addendum - to Stage III Proposal Result: Accreditation of Careers in Dance as an Associate Diploma Course

1987? - Articles - Series of 4 for NSW Department of Education Years 7-10 Dance Syllabus

- Traditional Dance p.37
- Classical Dance p.40
- (3 paragraphs by someone else)
- African Derived Modern Dance Styles p.45
- Aboriginal Dance p.47

1988 - Proposal - Completed Stage IV Document for NSW HEB Accreditation of NAISDA Course (5 years in the writing-some areas possibly changed as result of my resignation as Director of the Course)

AISDS ANNUAL REPORTS 1978 TO 1985

VIDEO EDIT

1983? - 8 minute Promotional of AIDT Student Ensemble
PERFORMING EXPERIENCE

Ballet Companies:
Ballet Concepts
Ballet Players
Capital Ballet Guild
Philadelphia Ballet Guild

New York, N.Y.
New York, N.Y.
Washington, D.C.

Modern Dance Companies:
Jack Moore
Helen McGeehee
Cleo Quitman’s Danse Generale
Stanze Peterson
Eleo Pomare (Soloist 1967-72)

New York, N.Y.
New York, N.Y.
U.S. Tours
U.S. Tours
N.Y. -
Tours: U.S. & Abroad
N.Y. & U.S. Tours

Rod Rogers
Raymond Sawyer

Television:
ABC-TV Dimension 66
NET-TV Educational Programs
ABC-TV Like It Is

New York, N.Y.
New York, N.Y.
New York, N.Y.

Special Projects:
Affiliate Artist to New York City Department of Cultural Affairs ... 1970-71
Solo Lecture Demonstrations and Master Classes in U.S., Africa, South East Asia
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1963

JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Lincoln Centre Plaza
New York, New York
Hill, Director
Substitute Assistant
for Lulu Swellgard
Dance Anatomy Martha
Teacher

1963 -1965

HARLEM BRANCH YMCA
135th and 7th Avenues
New York, N.Y.
Director now deceased
Dance Teacher
Modern Dance for
Adults

1963 -1967

WALTANN SCHOOL OF CREATIVE
ARTS
1078 Park Place
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Ann Pinkston, Director
Dance Teacher
Ballet for children

1962 - 1967

COMMUNITY CENTERS OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION, NY
Jacob Weiss, District
Supervisor for Fall &
Spring Semesters
Dance Teacher
Recreational and
Modern Dance

1970-1975

MASTER CLASSES

U.S.,
Ghana: Institute of
African Studies at
University of Ghana
Philippines
Malaysia, Hong Kong

1975-Present

Teaching in Australia
professionals throughout city;
and Aboriginal students esp.
at full-time AISDS full-time

* Responsibilities for the Summer Board of Education Dance Program
were to formulate the dance program for an entire school district
(Lower Eastside) which included 12 individual schools. Included
in the program was a huge out of doors dance festival which used
both folk and creative modern dance. More than 1000 children
participated.
ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Philadelphia High School for Girls
Academic

Adelphi College
Garden City, N.Y.
Dance
None

Juilliard School of Music
New York, N.Y.
Dance
B.S.

Amplification of Juilliard Training

1. BALLET
   4 years with Antony Tudor, Margaret Craske, Margaret Black, Alfredo Corvino.

2. MODERN DANCE, GRAHAM TECHNIQUE
   4 years with Helen McGehee, Mary Hinkson, Ethel Winter, Bertram Ross and Donald McKayle.

3. LITERATURE AND MATERIALS OF MUSIC
   4 years with Caryl Friend and Norman Lloyd.

4. COMPOSITION
   3 years with Louis Horst.

5. LABANOTATION
   2½ years with Muriel Topaz and Lucy Venable.

6. STAGECRAFT
   1 year with Thomas Degastani

7. ANATOMY
   1 year with Lulu Sweigard

8. DANCE HISTORY AND CRITICISM
   1 year with Martha Hill

9. ACADEMICS
   Juilliard
   Adelphi College
   NY City College
   Temple University
   33 credits,
   20
   6
   2

Total of 61 credits (hours) spent as follows:
Humanities 30 credit hours
French 12 credit hours
Social Sciences 8 credit hours
Miscellaneous 11 credit hours
PROFESSIONAL DANCE TRAINING CONTINUED AFTER JUILLIARD

Ballet     Margaret Black and Antony Tudor
Jazz       Luggi and Matt Mattox Schools
African    Katherine Dunham School
Modern     Eleo Pomare

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING CONTINUED AFTER JUILLIARD

Seminars Attended:

General Management Course for Senior Arts Executives
  NLP Workshop - John Grinder
  Dynamic Speaking - NLP Workshop
  Metaphors - NLP Workshop

Effective Leadership Courses - ICA
  Communications - WEA

Business Organization - Conflict Resolution Group (CRG)
  Negotiating Workshop - CRG
Statement Delivered on Sat, Jan 28 at the Black Dance Conference in Kariamuu's session on the Middle Passage- Some modifications as spoke.

First, as I see it though there is some continuum with Africa, we are the newest Culture in the world, the first to evolve a culture from roughly speaking the beginning of the Industrial Age 1700's to present. When we as Black Americans, the newest culture in the world go to Australia, we meet with indigenous Australians who have a 40,000 year old continuum that was undisturbed until approximately the time that we started evolving the world's New Age Culture. When we meet with Urban Aboriginal people, we meet with a people who have been dispersed within their own lands and though many know their tribal origins many (not all) have little functional knowledge of their continuum with the traditional past.

As far as I know, I am the first Black American to function in the indigenous community. I don't think it was an accident that it was through dance that it had to be done. It is the dance that kits our respective beings within the two communities. Dance (its totality music story and movement) is the method the indigenous Australians who retain their continuum continue to retain their continuum. (I’m avoiding using the term tribal people because I think it’s wrong) Dance and music is the way Black Americans today maintain their unity, identity and spiritual connections and through the US's distribution monopoly its money making aspects of our culture are spread worldwide.

I truly felt a kinship with these urban Aboriginal people and as I think about it now believe that it was on a spiritual level and a level of our mutual understanding of that broken continuum with our respective ancient roots. Upon analysis, I believe I was called to remain there to assist my new friends to be able to re-establish in a tangible and functional 20th century way their connections with parts of their ancient heritage that was being denied to them by the Australian power structure.

When I saw that university students and faculty (there were only 6 indigenous university graduates when I went to Australia in 1972), had access to the traditional indigenous people and urban Aboriginal people were denied access, I was reminded of my personal experiences of the American structure denying urban African Americans access to African dance groups coming to this country. When I heard people who you would look at as white, saying we are human beings too, not part of the flora and fauna or rubbish people which was their category, I thought of us being legally regarded as 3/5's of a human being.

So establishing the school was one primary way I saw would give urban Aboriginal people, the "credentials" that would force the structure to provide them with funds to visit the elders to study and allow the elders to come to the city to teach their urban relations who had lost the continuum with the language group of their immediate origins. As a revolutionary idea to the structure, this key essential to our dance course was one of the obstacles now taken for granted, that I and the founding students had to fight for.

My life in the U.S. and work with the N.Y. State Arts Council had prepared me to share with Aboriginal people the organisational knowledge that the Australian structure was going to eventually require of its white dancer and dance companies.
African Americans Influencing Australian Dance

Our popular and social dance forms that travel to Australia via soldiers/sailors on R&R and television and movies.

Artistically
Katherine Dunham

Antonio Rodgrizuex
Albert Legare

Alvin Ailey

James Truit
Judy Jamison
Others

Ronne Arnold

Eleo Pomare

Carole Johnson
Tommy Pinnock

Others

Katherine Brown - Black Canadian
Sabene Walker
Theresa Jackson

Christine Lawson - Victorian School
Ted

From Yellow Sheet

N'Kitia Bertie O'Poku - Patterned Dance course - Met at Dance Conference

ADAPT PROGRAM

About understanding controlling mechanisms and methods in the hiring of dancers and making sure Ab dancers could be part of general pool of professionals.

Disturbed when other people look at Jazz dance, point at me and say America influence

Disturbed
That is already part of Aboriginal culture and I personally had nothing to do with putting jazz
dance there.

Mostly whites used.

Had to respond to Youth Culture and could not ignore that.

Synergy -- helping to make contact with roots. See value in heritage and help make sure
that is explored.

Subtles in what say. Same program different thinking emerged when whites took over.

Changed to mean Aboriginals needed to work with whites in order to learn and not to be able
to work with Black company to gain experience

Not putting down and making white superior by virtue of being white.

Aboriginal impact on Australia is similar to Black American as appeared to me
Provides both countries with special identity

A connection between Black Australia and Black America is so often dismissed by
Australian. Oh "our Aboriginal situation is nothing like the Black American. It's like the
native American".

There's too much similarity between the situation of urban Aboriginal people and Black
American for people to dismiss - underlying commonalities by saying "Your situation is
totally different from the Aboriginal situation". 0

Obvious distinctions yes from stand point of land ownership origins on land

Forget about Black American identity to African heritage which has similar

Alien in land not our own - Alien in own land

Indian viewed as noble savage;

Race in American especially with blacks is always on the consciousness; similar to religion in
that colours the thought and the decisions

racial way of life - decisions coloured by race similar to way religion colors decisions and
way of thinking -- almost all issues media-politics-employment-education, economic issues

Whites do have opportunities to forget

Glad to escape constant confrontation by living in Australia.
Yet I stayed because I felt very major commonalities in our experiences which does not negate commonalities similar commonalities with Native Americans.

Commonalities

Jail -

Poor learning curves

Distruption of housing when get -- blight and ugly neighborhoods

Sense of despair and

Drug and alcohol problems

Children

Sense of powerlessness - White control and alienation
Non-talking in school situation, Teachers talking about us negatively as part of learning

Need to build our own institutions as white did not service adequately

Difference
Celebration and understanding of uniqueness
Black American pushing for integration

Human

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility with language - no real understanding what it takes to make something happen</th>
<th>More clear understanding of the system and ability to make things happen</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Not used in white society - invisible</td>
<td>used - thus learned system - important in labour force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though lie to say were not used in labour force - trained or as servants, good with animals, different pay scales</td>
<td>Different pay scale, no pay and a commodity as slaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No value as humans</td>
<td>value as commodity only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value to certain degree - culture - create identity for Australia</td>
<td>Today problem with down sizing- problem that not commodity and labour not needed so no value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have feeling both cultures AUS and Am like Ab and like Black Jazz but would like better is could dispense with the people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia country where lots of immigrants from all over the world come lucky country</td>
<td>sam US -- Free country, opportunity for all</td>
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DREAMING TRACKS

HISTORY OF THE
ABORIGINAL ISLANDER
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME,
1972 – 1979:

Its Place in the Continuum of Australian Indigenous Dance and the
Contribution of its African American Founder Carole Y. Johnson

Raymond S. Robinson
(Wanaga)

Master of Arts – Honours (Performance)
School of Applied Social and Human Sciences
University of Western Sydney
2000
**PLEASE NOTE**

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.

WAYNE NICOL AT ST JOHN'S HALL, GLEBE STUDIO

Raymond S. Robinson (Wanaga)
MA Honours Thesis
An extra special acknowledgement is due the University of Western Sydney, the School of Applied Social and Human Sciences, and the School of Social, Community and Organisational studies for funding the production and distribution of the thesis, ‘Dreaming Tracks’ and for the support of staff over the many years.
SYNOPSIS

Dreaming Tracks was chosen for the title of this history because of its reference to the journeys and routes taken by the ancestral founders of each of the extended family clans. As they travelled they recorded the events and situations they encountered along the way, which they left in story, painting, song lines and dances for the future survival of their people.

Dreaming stories (tjukurrpa) invariably pertain to journeys. The routes taken by the ancestral spirits follow specific lines – called “dreaming tracks” – that cross the country like highways but are invisible to all but the initiated. (Marshall-Stoneking, Nov. 1985:18)

The history of the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme also pertains to a journey. This journey records the events that brought about the establishment of the longest surviving urban Indigenous dance organization. It’s a voyage that identifies the obstacles and accomplishments of its Founding Members, who dedicated themselves to the hard work to ensure the continuum of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance. It was their dream, to have an Australian Black Dance Company that would create a link between past and present, traditional and urban. The pathways they created equipped urban Indigenous Australians with a unique dance identity of their own, and established the path to continued contact with the traditional owners.

Dreaming Tracks is contemporary Dreaming lore that begins with the contention for land rights in the early 1970’s and follows the progress of the Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Scheme to the end of the decade. It records the desires, dreams and conflicts that brought this organization into being. For the Founder the journey begins with her observations of what was lacking in the Black community and of her efforts to provide tools that would ensure success for their aspirations.

I have been basically concerned with the overall development of an Urban Performing and Communication Arts concept, that takes into consideration what I understand to be the aims and goals of the Aboriginal community. I have been most concerned with establishing a real base, that allows for successful individual and thus group development. I have been concerned that so much of the discussion of arts and culture, in the Aboriginal community is on a dream level and that, so much of the time, no real way to bring these exciting dreams to reality was being proposed or acted upon. Or if it was, the process of doing was usually in a way that failure was almost inevitable. I was
thus concerned that individuals begin to experience a greater degree of success in their endeavours and that their actual achievement matched their own high vision of quality. I think this will only happen as people gain more knowledge, of how things are accomplished in the rest of the world. This can only happen through the actual experience of doing. As more and more people with the group vision, experience the application and the eventual success of doing or producing something on a good qualitative level, the community base will be built for a real cultural recreation. (Johnson, 1975c:1). (Appendix item 33)

Her concerns set the path for this journey, which by the end of the twentieth century witnessed the establishment of an accredited dance course, two Dance Companies (The Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre and Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia) and students who are key participants in the artistic design of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. What better mark of their success?
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement and thanks are due the following individuals and organizations that have helped to locate and gather documents from the early 1970’s pertaining to the history of the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme. These sources of information were not only difficult to find but some were at the beginning stages of dissipation from age.

However, the primary sources of data that supports the reconstruction of this period in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance history was compiled from the thorough annual reports, memos, rough drafts and notes donated by the Founder of the organization, Carole Y. Johnson. Her material was augmented by the collection of minutes of the Aboriginal Arts Board archived at the Library of the National Museum of Canberra. These documents were impeccably kept and donated to the library by Dr. Robert Edwards, the first Director of the Board. Other documents, archived at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council, were released with the permission of the then Director, Faye Nelson.

Acknowledgement is also due Melissa Jackson of the Aboriginal Section of the Mitchell Library at the State Library of New South Wales. Roanna Overden, the Librarian at Tranby College, plus Black Books at the same organization. Fisher Library at the University of Sydney was also a constant source of help.

The reproduction of this unique period in Indigenous Australian dance was greatly enhanced by the interviews of people who actually lived through this period of time and the students of AISDS who shared their personal experiences: Sol Bellear, Percy Jackonia, Lucy Jumawan, Gary Lang, Michael Leslie, Bob Maza, Marilyn Miller, Cheryl Stone, Dr. Roberta Sykes and Caz Villiers. Special gratitude for supporting friends who kept me going with the project: Sienna Brown, Jole Bosschart, Keith Graham and Jamilah Halvorson.

And lastly, my supervisor of seven years, Anne Marshall, from the University of Western Sydney, School of Applied Social and Human Sciences.
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Opening Picture: Wayne Nicol at the Glebe studio, St John’s Hall.


Page 44: Ronne Arnold working with one of the students of the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme, Gail Mabo. Pictured copied from the 22 Oct. 1986 (p. 7) issue of The Australian. Staff photographer.


Page 68: Composite of the instructors and a participant of the “Six Week Aboriginal-Islander Cultural and Performing Arts Training Program”. (Top) Brian Syron (Acting Instructor), Shireen Malamoo (participant), (Bottom) Henry Peters (Torres Strait Island Tutor) and Andee Reese (Writing Instructor). Picture copied from Identity, July 1975:17. Staff Photographer.

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Page 129: Daryl Williams in the foreground, performing the Pelican Dance from the Lardil culture of Mornington Island, outside of the Sydney Opera House. This was part of the 1976 end of year show, “Forward to the Dreamtime”. Photographer unknown.

Page 130: Arthur Keibus from Thursday Island is teaching a Torres Strait Island dance to Richard Talonga at Bodenweiser Dance Studio. Photographer unknown.

Page 131: Arthur Keibus and Eric Mariko performing a series of Torres Strait Island dances at Martin Place. Photographer unknown.


Page 160: Cheryl Stone being lifted by two male dancers, at Glebe studio. Photographer unknown.

Pp. 161-62: Traditional students from Yirrkala performing with AIDT at the Aboriginal Country Western Music Festival at Dubbo, NSW. Photographer unknown.

Page 180: David Gulpilil conducting a class at the Glebe studio for AISDS students. Photographer unknown.

Page 182: Lucy Jumawan doing make-up with two Aboriginal children. Photographer unknown.


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<td>Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAB</td>
<td>Aboriginal Arts Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAF</td>
<td>Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACPA</td>
<td>Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADTR</td>
<td>Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDT</td>
<td>Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIATSIS</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AISDS</td>
<td>Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APB</td>
<td>Aboriginal Protection Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>Black Theatre or Black Theatre Arts and Cultural Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE</td>
<td>Commonwealth Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAA</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCAATSI</td>
<td>Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEB</td>
<td>Higher Education Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITI</td>
<td>International Theatre Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAISDA</td>
<td>National Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBT</td>
<td>National Black Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIIPA</td>
<td>National Indigenous Institute of Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUTP</td>
<td>National Urban Theatre Program (a proposed idea of the UTC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTC</td>
<td>New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCA</td>
<td>Sydney College of the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>UTC</td>
<td>Urban Theatre Committee (a sub-committee of the Aboriginal Arts Board).</td>
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Raymond S. Robinson (Wanaga)
MA Honours Thesis
INTRODUCTION

The History of the Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS), chronicles a period in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance history that is fast disappearing. This educational organization has survived through one of the most exiting periods of contemporary arts development in Australia, the 1970’s. In terms of government support the early 1970’s was a period of abundance that by the end of the decade had changed to yet another fight for basic survival. However, in spite of the changing climate AISDS has managed to be the longest surviving Indigenous performing arts agency in Australia. Its dedication to the continuum of Australian Indigenous dance has created an environment for Indigenous people who have been distanced from a personal, experiential knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance cultures. Its existence has established a bridge between the owners and keepers of the tradition and those separated from their dance cultures.

The History tracks four issues involved in its evolution: the diversity of connection to the dance continuum after British colonialism; the events and people that inspired the creation of the organization (including the influence of the African American political/cultural struggle of the 1960’s); the role of the organization in the continuum of Australia’s Indigenous dance and the contribution of its Founder, Carole Y. Johnson, and of the Founding Members (Sylvia Blanco, Malcolm Cole, Lucy Jumawan, Michael Leslie, Wayne Nicol, Dorathea Randall, Richard Talonga, Cheryl Stone, Kim Walker and Darryl Williams).

As a portion of the history involves British colonialism and its effect on the cultural continuum, other sub-texts need to be introduced as well. For example: the importance of dance in oral societies, the similarity in the use of dance in both oral and contemporary societies; the evolvement of urban Indigenous dance cultures and the value of social comment as subject matter for urban Indigenous dance. These are topics for future dance research work, however some of it has been touched upon in DREAMING TRACKS.

DREAMING TRACKS is divided into 9 Chapters. Chapter 1, describes the diversity of live styles that evolved under colonialism, and reveals the level of contact each had with the traditional dance culture; Chapter 2, details the coincidental events that established a training
research centre for Australian Indigenous dance; Chapter 3, is the period of transition towards the national development of Indigenous arts, which culminates with the Six Week Aboriginal-Islander Cultural Performing Arts Training Program. This program was committed to performing arts exposure and development in the urban centres and is the topic of Chapter 4.

Chapters 5 introduce the scheme and objectives of the ‘Careers in Dance’ course, out of which evolved, The Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Scheme (AISDS). The focus of Chapter 6 is on the growing hunger for the services of the student-performing ensemble, the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT). Chapter 7 is the final year for the original the Founding Students, of the three-year Associate Diploma Course. Chapter 8 sees the first graduating class moving towards employment with the addition of a further two years of study under the National Education and Training System (NEAT). And, Chapter 9 provides a summary of student accomplishments.

**SOURCES OF DATA**

In comparison to the abundance of documentation on traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island societies, cultures, customs and people, the writings on dance are minimal; considering that dance as performance, is the way the two cultures were maintained from generation to generation and “was the place where community knowledge was stored” (Marshall). There are even less, in-depth writings on ‘contemporary’ Indigenous dance, as if contemporary Indigenous people don’t exist. Outside of reviews, news items, articles, promotional material, proposals, documents and videos, there are no in-depth comprehensive writings, pertaining to Australian urban Indigenous dance for the period (1970-1979).

Most of the data came from interviews with people who were intimately involved with the history of the organization and the struggle for Land Rights in the early 1970’s. Besides the interviews of the Founding Director, the second most important source of material came from the minutes of the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee (AAAC) that later became the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB or the Board).

*From 1970 to 1972, the Australian Council for the Arts administered federal government assistance to Aboriginal arts through the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee. In 1973, at the time of a National Seminar of Aboriginal Arts, the Aboriginal Arts Board was established by the Council to foster the development of all art forms*
in which Aboriginals were involved and to promote Aboriginal art and culture both in Australia and overseas. Since its inception, the Board has been made up entirely of Aboriginal people. (NMOA, 1991:2)

These documents were donated to the library of the National Museum of Art (NMOA), in Canberra by Dr. Robert Edwards, the first official Director of the AAB. The following provides a brief on Dr. Edwards and the libraries holdings.

The first part of the Edwards Collection was given to the National Museum by Robert Edwards in 1991. The archive documents consist of 33 boxes of material concerning the work of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council. They cover the decade 1970-1980, with the bulk of material spanning 1973-1980, when Robert Edwards was Director of the Board. The archives represent not only the corporate activities of the Board but, to a large extent, the personal involvement of Edwards in the development and promotion of Aboriginal arts within the Aboriginal communities, in Australia at large and internationally. (NMOA, 1991:1)

Data from the Edwards Collection put to text has been referenced in a way that includes the libraries system. For example the library has the material in boxes and folders that are labelled by series number in the following way: Series #, box #, item or folder #. It appears in the text as follows (AAAC or AAB:2.3.8, 1978:4). This identifies the (corporate author;series, box, folder, year:page(s)) of the references.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The term ‘traditional’ is used to identify the original dance cultures of mainland Aboriginal people, of the Torres Strait Islands and when referring to both collectively. Their dance served as oral literature and as such belongs to the body of information about their traditions.

In today’s world the word Aboriginal seems to refer specifically to Australian Aboriginal people. The word has more of an ethnic or racial meaning as it combines the different extended families or clans into one, just as the term American Indian makes no distinction between the different Indian cultures of North and South America. In ‘Dreaming Tracks’, when referring collectively to the original inhabitants of mainland Australia and of their descendants, the term Aboriginal is used. This includes non-initiated rural and urban Aboriginal people who were officially acknowledged by the elders during the National Seminar for Aboriginal Arts, in 1973. To paraphrase their decision, it was confirmed that anyone identifying as Aboriginal and is known to be Aboriginal, is. Indigenous is used quite a
lot in the text and always refers collectively to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Throughout the text AISDS is the name used to identify this organization but as of the 24 May 1988, the name changed to the National Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), however the curriculum and objectives remained the same. Other than the name, the major change was the length of time the students need to complete, in order to qualify for the different awards offered by the Course. For the most part the history covers the period that only concerns AISDS, however when addressing later periods that specifically involve NAISDA, it is also included. When an issue directly affects both the past and present organizations, AISDS/NAISDA is used.

METHODOLOGY
The methodology for this thesis included three main approaches.

1. Archival and historical records research, and the filling out of the timeline between, 1973 – 1979. These include official government records and public media.

2. Interviews focused on people’s personal recollections and experiences of the evolution of AISDS, including the students.

3. Interpretive ethnography to analyse the data gathered, acknowledging two cultural viewpoints (mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) acknowledging both the traditional past and contemporary timelines.

In order to remain true to the records and memories of the participants, I have chosen not to ‘problematisate’ the data too much, but to let records speak for themselves in most cases. Where comment is required, I have chosen to take a positive rather than a negative view, especially in light of the successful outcomes twenty years on.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT
There is a huge need to document the dance of colonized people and its transition from oral literature to urban usage. There is especially a need to recognize that contemporary Indigenous dance practitioners exist, and are a valuable link in the continuum of the dance culture. In the past dance was not easy to document. Words could not fully portray movement, the technology to capture dance being a recent one, was not available to aid the process. In today’s technological world, the possibility of visual documentation via video, film, computer

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programs or notation (which is not readily used by ethnographers, anthropologists or general dance practitioner) are an encouraging sign. However, no comprehensive account of AISDS/NAISDA has been compiled to date.

This research attempts to capture a period in the continuum of Australian Indigenous dance that has been ignored. It is here to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance continuums, part of which is fast disappearing. It is also important to acknowledge the African American contribution that made AISDS a reality. The urgency for this document is even great now that so many of the people who created the possibility for its existence (those who were part of the political and cultural renaissance of the 1970's) are also fast disappearing.