



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**15 August 2016**

### **STUDENTS NATIONWIDE TACKLE TOUGH TOPICS AT THE ANNUAL WAKAKIRRI PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL**

Primary and secondary students across Australia have expressed the issues important to them, in performances for the 2016 Wakakirri performing arts festival. The festival runs from August through September 2016 at various venues around the country.

Each year hundreds of schools across Australia create Story Dances for Wakakirri that reflect their students' thoughts, ideas and aspirations. A Wakakirri Story Dance is a 3-7 minute performance using any combination of dance, creative movement, acting, music, props, costumes, sets, and in some cases, film, projections and singing.

Dances this year deal with topics including refugees, mental health, diversity, bullying and the cost of social media in modern life.

Festival Director Adam Loxley has seen a constant shift in topics covered by schools in his 24 years running the festival: "when you give young people a creative voice through something like a Wakakirri Story Dance, it's remarkable the insight you get into the issues facing youth at a point in time," said Loxley.

"It's quite touching to see it played out on stage; often audiences are astounded at how deeply and delicately they explore a topic that means something to them," said Loxley.

Wakakirri is the largest performing arts event for schools in Australia; where students perform in professional theatres in front of an official panel of industry professionals. It involves over 20,000 primary and secondary students across every State and Territory annually. This year's national panel members are Justine Clarke, Alex Papps, Rachael Beck and James Elmer, who will be at various events around the country. State panel representatives include Mark Wilson, Michael Cormick, Petra Glieson and more.

Semi-finals have begun across the country commencing in August, and various state Story Award winners have already begun to be announced. Story Award titles include Environmental Story, Mental Health Story, Choreography, Solo Dance, Teamwork, Set Design, Lighting and Staging and more.

Finalists will next travel to state venues, competing to become Story Of The Year nominees and go in the running to be the overall national winner.

## **LINKS**

Website: <http://www.wakakirri.com/> Dates: <http://www.wakakirri.com/venuesanddates/>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCetz8dVb7sXLwPim-ypSgXg>

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