

Boon wurrung Ngargee Workshops Point Gellibrand, Williamstown October 2011

Carolyn Briggs (senior elder of the Boon wurrung) and Jacob Boehme (artistic director of IDJA Dance Theatre) have developed a program that delivers workshops on Indigenous culture into primary and secondary schools.

Boon wurrung Ngargee is a collaboration of traditional transferral of knowledge and memory, contemporary indigenous performance and the writings of early European settlers who witnessed the last known documented Ngargees held in Melbourne, 1843 – 45.

The Boon Wurrung Ngargee is a great way to impart knowledge of culture and country to young and old, as well as provide interesting and creative participation in understanding Boon Wurrung culture and actively becoming part of the stories of these ancient landscapes.

The first pilot program held in Hobsons Bay involved the grade 5 and 6 children from Laverton P-12 College as part of the Mayoral program.



“I really liked it because it is so different to what we usually do. On the day, we got to learn about local aboriginal history, traditions, weaving and dance.

My favourite part was the weaving – it wasn't as hard as it looked after you got the hang of it!”

Courtney, Grade 6

About Jacob Boehme

Artistic Director of the IDJA Dance Theatre.

Jacob is a Melbourne born and raised Indigenous artist of Narangga / Kurna heritage, with a Diploma in Dance (NAISDA) and Masters in Puppetry (VCA) who has been working with traditional / contemporary story and dance with Elders and Youth of metro / regional and remote communities for the past 15 years.

About Carolyn Briggs

Aunty Carolyn Briggs is a Senior Boon wurrung Elder, who is held in very high regard throughout Melbourne and Victoria, often called upon to undertake significant Welcome to Country. Carolyn has reviewed and endorsed the Hobsons Bay City Council publication The Yalukit Willam – The First People of Hobsons Bay and is able to speak on behalf of Aboriginal people in this region. Carolyn has been working artistically with Jacob for the past 3 years and recently they have been delivering culture / arts camps to aboriginal children in foster care. They have found these tours very effective and rewarding for all concerned.

About Aunty Vic Morphy

Aunty Vic Morphy, artist and teacher, has a long history of working in community arts. She originally began weaving so she could have a traditional skill to pass on to her Taungurrung children. Her passion for the traditional practice has seen Aunty Vic continue to learn and share her knowledge of weaving techniques, from around Australia and the Pacific, with all cultures and communities. Aunty Vic is the Co-Director of Land as Canvas, a cross-cultural natural fibre project currently in residence at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

The Boon Wurrung Ngargee offers a new element to the arts and culture program of Hobsons Bay, consistent with the Reconciliation Statement of Commitment and Policy, and in support of the Council Objectives Civic Leadership, Community Wellbeing, and Arts, Recreation and Culture.



“I found the songs and dances really interesting because they are about animals and their links to the indigenous culture. The weaving amazed me because I was surprised that you could make such strong, unique pieces with grass!”

Trent, Grade 5

Boon wurrung Ngargee in Hobsons Bay

"This unit is very fun because we are learning Boon wurrung words and about how the indigenous people used to live. We are learning about the Dreaming and about why it is so important to aboriginal culture."
Josh, Grade 5



"The experience was fun because we learnt about a different culture. I really liked the singing and dancing – especially the 'Waa' song which is about the crow."
Kaw Ploh, Grade 6



photography by Arlene Sachon

Boon wurrung Ngargee at Point Gellibrand October 2011 was presented by Hobsons Bay City Council in partnership with The Boon wurrung foundation and Idja Dance Theatre

Special thanks to:

Aunty Carolyn Briggs, Aunty Victoria Morphy, Jacob Boehme, Carly Bannon and teachers at Laverton P-12 College, Students from class 5-6 Laverton P-12 College and Parks Victoria. For more information contact Tania Blackwell on 9932 2001 or email tblackwell@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

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