



For immediate release

## 'Deadly Arts' - engaging Western Sydney children in Indigenous culture

12.15pm Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

Over one hundred and twenty Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from disadvantaged schools from the Mt. Druitt region of Western Sydney will perform together for the first time at the 'Deadly Arts' performance event at the Blacktown Arts Centre on Wednesday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014, in collaboration with Aboriginal Elder Uncle Wes.

Students from Bidwell, Shalvey, Noumea, Willmot and Whalan Public Schools in Sydney's West have spent 12 months writing and learning music, song, dance and dramatic expression as part of an innovative, inclusive Indigenous music and arts program. This 'Deadly Arts' program, developed by Australian non-profit organisation The Song Room, aims to engage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with Indigenous culture and heritage in order to connect them with their peers and help their parents engage in their school life.

The children, their schools and communities have worked in partnership with The Song Room and local Aboriginal Elders in Western Sydney to develop the storyline and cultural activities that have been included in the delivery and creation of this work.

The performance tells the story of 'Creation', as told by local Aboriginal Elder and community leader Uncle Wes Marne in two of his poems; 'Caged' and 'Indigenous One'. These poems draw on historical periods of Aboriginal people as seen through the eyes of Uncle Wes. Themes included in his poetry are the arrival of the white settlers, the stolen generation, loss of cultural identity, incarceration, displacement, the missions, Aboriginal Lore, family and a deep longing for life on the land.

The story of 'Creation' and the poems have been interpreted by the primary school students through multi-disciplinary music and arts performance, which showcases their developing knowledge of community, culture and diversity. These students will perform for an audience of over one thousand of their peers, families and community members across two special shows on the day.

"Let the old one tell the stories  
Let the young ones hear and learn  
Tell them of our days of glory  
So that for more they will yearn

And they will tell, tell their young ones  
and teach them what, what we were told  
And we will be here, be here forever  
And our culture, will never grow old"

- From 'Indigenous Ones', by Uncle Wes Marne

Media are invited to attend this special event for photography and filming opportunities, as well as interviews with students, school Principals and The Song Room.

The Song Room is a national not for profit organisation that provides tailored, long-term music and arts-based programs for children in disadvantaged and high need communities. The Song Room programs are based on research and have been demonstrated to improve educational and social outcomes and to help schools create and sustain their own music and arts programs.

**When:** Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

**Where:** Bowman Hall, Blacktown Arts Centre, Campbell Street, Blacktown

**Time:** 12:15pm – 1:30pm

Please contact Tammy Schlitz on **0420 278 265** or [tammy@songroom.org.au](mailto:tammy@songroom.org.au) for further information

Engaging Young People Through Creativity

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