

Artstate Wagga Wagga – Thursday 05/11/2020 – Opening Ceremony – unedited captions Transcript

>> Good evening, everyone. I would like to say thank you to Uncle Peter for the lovely smoking ceremony.

My name is Elizabeth Rogers and I am the CEO of Regional Arts NSW and the executive producer and you will get sick of seeing me by the end of the weekend because I am the MC for the morning sessions.

It is really exciting for us to be able to have weathered the challenges of the last 12 months.

Quite recently, I was reflecting on the issues in Tamworth when most of that region of NSW, 91% of the state, was suffering from the most severe and debilitating drought and we can show you the photographs from Artstate Tamworth and there was so much smoke and now we are here in Wagga and everything is blooming and lush and green. It shows the country we live in and how extraordinary it is and the resilience of the people that live and work in NSW.

When we started conceiving Artstate, particularly on the eastern side of the river, they had just suffered the worst bushfires in living memory and so many communities on the eastern side of the Great Dividing Range were affected and we were hoping to bounce back and we have now got a pandemic.

It has been a winding road to this point. I would like to thank everybody and all the partners in particular and Wagga City Council for trusting as having the confidence that we can demonstrate how nimble we are in the arts sector and that we can deliver a COVIDSafe conference and an arts program that actually showcases the very best of the area. Don Harwin has attended everyone including this one but we also have our federal arts minister, the Hon. Paul Fletcher, the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, so I am delighted he has been able to be with us tonight. Sorry you could not celebrate with the other three and see the landscapes we work on in New South Wales but we are very grateful for the support from the Regional Arts Fund Boost that enabled us to go ahead with this event in the current pandemic and the Indigenous language arts program that has supported Eastern Riverina Arts to develop the lagoon project part of which features in this opening and at the end of this performance I suggest everybody takes a little time to go out to the lagoon and have a look at the first canoes on that the Goon in living memory. -- Lagoon. Please welcome the Hon. Paul Fletcher to the stage. (Applause)

>> Thank you very much, Elizabeth. Great to be here with you and with everyone here in Wagga Wagga and with my friends and colleagues, the New South Wales Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin. I occasionally meet with arts ministers from other countries but when they are not federations I say to them, "How unfortunate are you that you have only one arts minister? We have nine. We are very blessed." That is a good thing. In any event, it is a pleasure to be here with you this evening at Artstate, the fourth of us areas of successful events, previously in Lismore, Bathurst and Tamworth and I want to acknowledge Don Harwin's leadership in strongly backing this series of events. They have been important every year but this year more important than ever. As Elizabeth touched on, as we all know, this has been a very challenging year for all Australians but it has been particularly challenging for the arts. When COVID really started to bite in March of this year, almost overnight venues were closed, performances cancelled, artists losing their gigs and for everybody who loves the arts, that has been a very, very painful thing to see. For many months, theatres have been dark and the vibrancy of the arts that we are so used to in New South Wales in Australia has been denied us and that has been in deed a painful and troubling thing. But we are at a point now where we can see the way ahead and I think for Artstate 2020 to be happening now in Wagga Wagga is a symbol of hope for artists, performers, for arts administrators – let's not forget the administrators, ladies and gentlemen because nothing can happen without the administrators – and of course for audiences, everybody who loves to come and see galleries, performances, the fact we can see activities starting to recommence is enormously encouraging. Now, back in April, the Morrison government move to commit funding to seek to support and sustain particular parts of our arts community across the nation and in particular we committed an additional \$10 million to regional arts Australia and our thinking was 1st to acknowledge the extraordinary difficulties that artist in regional Australia had faced through a season of the most severe bushfires in many, many decades, and then for that be followed by COVID was extraordinary challenging and so we committed that Eminem dollars, regional arts Australia working with organisations like Regional Arts NSW. -- \$10 million. The money has been put to work quickly and I am pleased to announce grants under what has been called original art renewal grants for a range of activities that will occur around New South Wales. Let me quickly mentioned this funding – \$110,000 to the outback Theatre for Young people, \$119,000 to outside West, \$120,000 to the -- Flying Fruit Fly Circus, \$60,000 to the Aboriginal regional art alliance, \$68,000 to Byron writers Festival and \$70,000 to the Wyatt lab, so range of projects across different parts of New South Wales designed to, as arts minister, I acknowledge the continued enthusiasm of the arts community for additional funding. The irrepressible energy of the arts community seeking additional funding and I know you will continue to make those calls and I'm pleased to announce that funding tonight. Can I say it is wonderful to be here in Wagga Wagga? Cannot catch it -- can I congratulate Bayer, Key and the entire team? Can I also acknowledge Aboriginal Elders past present and emerging? -- Mayor Councillor Conkey. It was great to have a look at those canoes today and we are blessed to live in a land with the 65,000 year-old culture, culture where arts has been at the very centre, where we can see across our land wherever we look evidence of 65,000 years of inhabitation, 65,000 years of storytelling, 65,000 years of visual art, of performing art, of dance, and all our dance activities, such a big response of modern life today, we are informed and strength of that extraordinary tradition and I know

that is an important theme of Artstate as well. All the best to all participating at Artstate and thank you for being a beacon of hope. Applause

>> Thank you Minister Fletcher and congratulations to all those recipients of the renewal fund, many of whom are here in the audience tonight. We are really looking forward to seeing your project come to fruition over the next 12 to 18 months. Congratulations. Well done. A fantastic outcome. Again my thanks to the federal government for the very quick is to the needs of artists in regional Australia. -- Responds. I would neither like to welcome the Honourable John Howard and -- Don Harwin, the Minister of Aboriginal most importantly the arts. The four-year funding for Artstate as a strategic project has been a foundation on which the event has been built and I get like to acknowledgement as to how one's commitment to attend all four Artstates. Please welcome Minister Don Harwin.

(Applause)

-- Don Harwin.

>> Good evening, everyone, practically as always those helping us out with the text that is going up on the screen. I'm delighted John Howard could be with us here tonight and it is almost an Artstate institution, isn't it, to just follow the text on the screen and see how it is going to excite and delight us, but somehow it manages to happen every time with the voice recognition. I should get back to what I really should be starting with. And that is the fact that we are here in this wonderful venue on the land and by the water of what was, is and always will be Wiradjuri land. I cannot yet thank someone for our acknowledgement... Welcome to Country although I do think Aunty Isabel Reid for her welcome earlier at the reception for us but what I can do is acknowledge the custodianship of the rancheria Elders past, present and future and thank them for the custodianship of country. -- Wiradjuri. I particularly would like to say to all in particular people of the Wiradjuri nation here tonight, thank you also for everything you do in keeping alive a culture which has been here for 60,000 years and may I as Aboriginal minister also welcome all other Aboriginal people who are here today, to Jonathan Jones, a Wiradjuri man who spoke to us as many of you will remember in Baathist in what was a particular powerful speech about country. -- Bathurst. And the extraordinary stories of country New South Wales. At the time I had the arts portfolio but what year to say, Jonathan, had such a profound effect on me that it was a matter of great joy to me when, about 18 minutes later, the Premier asked me to be Heritage Minister as well. -- 18 months. It has been my mission in those two portfolios to make sure Aboriginal cultural heritage is appropriately preserved and protected under New South Wales law. And I am absolutely determined to end the humiliating and shameful treatment of cultural heritage in New South Wales law, which is currently dealt with in legislation that is about flora and fauna. (Applause)

>> Can I even say, Jonathan, I was motivated to go straight to (inaudible) and that was a powerful part of your speech. May also acknowledged and thanked Eastern Riverina Arts arts and city council and Regional Arts NSW on organising what is clearly a COVID Safe of space for all of us to enjoy at a time when we need to have an effusion of arts and culture. They say Wagga Wagga is a city of sport and many times I have been here and people have pointed to the great sportsmen from Wagga Wagga but this fourth state, this fourth Artstate, I should say, shifts the spotlight rightly to the region's many talented musicians, visual artists and storytellers. Over the next few days, we will celebrate the art and cultural excellence of regional New South Wales, especially the homegrown creativity of the Riverina. Artstate has also reignited cultural connections with the Aboriginal people who have been involved each year and I am particularly proud of the strong focus on First Nations arts and culture. I know it has been a tough year for regional communities and for the arts in regional New South Wales. All the initiatives you have announced tonight for those six companies, they are all extremely welcome and they are great, some great recipients there that you have announced, assistance to ensure that they restart. But I think it is very important that all of us in the arts remember what an absolutely crucial role Job Keeper has played in keeping the arts alive this year and I just want to say on behalf of the New South Wales government and I hope everyone in the New South Wales arts and culture sector, how grateful we are that the federal government has stepped up and provided JobKeeper and kept a lot of people in arts organisations in work this year?

We are grateful they have provided JobKeeper and kept a lot of people in work in arts organisations this year. I am really proud of the fact that, despite the year we have had, not a single NSW arts organisation has gone under. Not one. None of them are in voluntary administration.

The rescue programs have been carefully targeted, very carefully targeted. Some companies have faced enormous stress but all of them are still with us. It is time, as it has been said by Elizabeth and Paul, to start thinking about restart. And the future. And getting the arts and back to the place, back to the crucial place that they were prior to the difficulties of the bush fires, drought, COVID.

Not to take pole's thunder, but when I speak to you tomorrow morning, I will be outlining the restart plans for regional NSW. All of you know the government has a \$50 million program and \$25 million was put aside for rescue as needed. Fortunately, we have not needed all of that and we can put the balance of that into restart as well but we will have more on that tomorrow.

Why do we do this? We have to come out on the other side but why are we particularly keen to do this for regional arts in the measures announced tomorrow? We do it because we are, as a government, and always have been absolutely committed to supporting arts and in the regions to ensure every community gets its fair share and that is what the regional cultural fund over the last four years has been about. 136 fantastic projects

ranging from a major new exhibition and performance art space, the furnishing of libraries, resumes, theatres, through to small volunteer projects and digitalisation.

In this area, it has included three really great projects and even a little project like the Literally Institute in the snowy Valley Council is important and then needlessly museum in Lockhart, one of the best museums I have had the pleasure of visiting. And support for the mighty museum of the Riverina here and Wagga Wagga. Also, a further 17 projects across the Riverina and Murray region including the Griffith Regional Theatre that I had the pleasure of opening last month and also the Roxburgh. I visit a lot of cities, towns, villages in regional NSW and you get to know who are the good councils and I have got no doubt that they are the ones who invest in arts and and there are some really good councils and this to me at Wagga Wagga is one of them and to be are particularly pleased to be working with the team here at

BRIGETTE WALKER: Council on the exciting redevelopment of this including the project for the new exhibition hall and increased collection storage spaces and new opportunities for community engagement. The project is the catalyst for wide sweeping precinct renewal in this precinct around the lagoon and I am just so excited about the other aspects with the improved pathways and community spaces over the wider precinct and I am also excited about the expanded arts and presence that will be here as well.

All of you, I am sure, and regional arts will be interested to know that tonight I am announcing the Creative Infrastructure will be conducting a survey of regional councils, the regional arts network, an independent arts organisations based in the regions to update the understanding of the NSW government of the current and future infrastructure needs of regional communities. The RCS has done its work over the four years of operation that it has had, starting in 2017.

And we've been looking at the assessment of applications around the establishment from the advisory boards. The boards have 40% of membership derived from regional NSW and Western Sydney and this is critically important to have those represented when making funding recommendations and offering strategic advice and it has worked. I am thrilled at our refocus and that it has ensured that the allocations from the 2019-20 competitive open runs resulted in 35% of project funding and 39% of annual organisation funding and 65% of creative Koori funding going directly to regional NSW. That is a fantastic outcome and is unprecedented. No, as the focus turns to the days ahead, I wish you all a great Arts Day and I look forward to many conversations, performances and experiences that we will share together. I'm excited about what the event means for regional NSW and I look forward to hearing from all of you over the days ahead as we delve into Wagga Wagga and Riverina and Artstate 2020. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, Minister. I think you all have got a big hint to be here in time to hear the next announcement from the NSW government. Now it is my great pleasure to welcome Cr Greg Conkey who is the Mayor and we are old friends after dancing in the rain in Tamworth last year and I would like to congratulate Greg on his election as the Mayor of this beautiful city and we would not be in Wagga Wagga tonight that it was not for the support of the council and is not just financial support that is critical to enable us to run this event but also the support, especially from Janet and her amazing team. Local government and regional NSW provides nearly all... (Applause)

.. Provides nearly all the infrastructure and provides for regional arts workers and you look around this precinct you can see that Wagga is a shining example.

(Applause)

>> Thank you, Elizabeth. It is good to see the auditorium full. It has been many months since that has happened and I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Wiradjuri land and I pay my respects to Elders past, present, emerging, and acknowledge all First Nations people here tonight.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Uncle Stan Grant AM who is here tonight.

(Applause)

The work of Uncle Stan and other Elders, through them, we have found out the true meaning of the words 'Wagga Wagga'. It is a place of dance and celebration. It has taken as more than 150 years to correct the record and I thank you, Uncle Stan Grant AM and others.

(Applause)

I thank you for your patience. I note that in more recent times we have developed the wetlands which is an important place for Wiradjuri people and we have unveiled the rock that is predominantly displayed outside the

building next year the training centre will have a joint name in recognition of its Wiradjuri heritage and I have noted that the aircraft base is also looking for a joint name next year.

I would like to acknowledge Paul Fletcher and the Special Minister for State and the Arts, Don Harwin. Also, Parliamentary Sec Ben Franklin census apologies and we also have the member for Wagga Wagga here and we have Julie Briggs the Chair of Regional Arts for NSW and the CEO who is here and is the MC to rent, Elizabeth Rogers. Also, Murray -- my wife Jenny and fellow councillors Dan Hayes and Vanessa Keenan and I would like to acknowledge the council staff who have assisted in organising this event tonight.

Also, Belinda King, a highly talented event organiser and I am proud to say my daughter-in-law. We have apologies tonight from the Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack. Our cultural precinct, which includes the theatre, is clustered around the Wollundry Lagoon which is an ancient ceremonial site at the river and a place for First Nations people have gathered and made art and told stories and sang and danced and shared culture for more than 65,000 years.

It is indeed a very significant place. It is fitting that as we embrace the correct name of Wagga Wagga as a place of dance in celebration, we are hosting this major conference and Festival of arts and cultural exchange around this precinct.

Wagga Wagga is partnering with Regional Arts NSW and working alongside colleagues at Eastern Riverina Arts and a very creative community to host this event. I cannot begin to tell you how excited my wife and I are about this festival. We have been waiting 12 patient months for this to happen after being in Tamworth last year.

We are big supporters of the arts and this festival covers music, performing arts, visual arts, film, theatre, words, multi-arts. Having said that, I personally have only had a limited experience of performing on the stage.

There is a reason for that. In fact, my very first public performance took place on this very stage. As a member of the local primary school choir, which was some years ago, I competed in a competition shortly after the theatre opened and the highlight of my limited stage career was a short speaking role in a rewritten George Bernard Shaw play, again in high school, so a few years ago.

I played the role of a policeman and then somebody onstage yelled out, "Up, police. Help, please." I made allowed entrance from the back of the auditorium and ran through onto the stage and I tripped up. On recovering, I climbed onto the stage and said the seven words that still ring in my ears today. And those seven words were, "Hello, hello, hello. What's going on here?"

Did you note my Cockney accent? And the pause before the last word. There is one huge difference between me and the many people who will be performing on various stages and celebrating in various venues around the city as parts of Artstate and that can be summed up in one word, talent. We have extremely talented people who will be performing. It is unfortunate due to COVID-19 limited numbers of people will get the chance to see these extremely talented people. I thank you, Minister, and Artstate and I congratulate Regional Arts NSW for delivery of Artstate 2020. We are delighted that we are the fourth and the last century New South Wales to be chosen to stage this event. We have big shoes to fill. But we are up to the challenge. Over the next four days my wife Jenny and I are looking at attending a number of events. The next one. It 9:30 PM tonight and tomorrow morning at around 8:29 AM, 59 seconds, you may find us enjoying a all around the lagoon to check out the pathway in front of the lagoon and theatre. -- A walk. There will be a COVID-19 safe link from the theatre balcony at that time and what would be the odds? Congratulations on bringing Artstate to this wonderful theatre. We are in for a truly inspirational for days.

(Applause)

>> Thank you so much, and I think we are all really excited to be able to get the socially responsible in a theatre that is not full but we don't want to share our germs but we are so delighted to actually be seeing real faces and of the Brady Bunch scream as I call the inevitable, ubiquitous Zoom. It is now my pleasure to introduce Julie Briggs of Regional Arts NSW. We could not deliver Artstate without our partner, riverine arts, supported by the chair and the board have worked tirelessly to ensure that arts... Artisan speakers from across the Riverina are represented in the Artstate program -- artists and speakers. I would like to applaud the work of Scott in putting together the arts programme.

(Applause)

>> And taking it on the chin when his initial vision have to be completely reimagined at the end of August. So please welcome the chair of Regional Arts NSW Julie Briggs. Julie has served on the board since 2016 and was appointed chair in April last year. She is based in Wagga Wagga where she runs a consultancy working closely with business and government and she has been an amazing support for me over the last 12 months of this challenging year that we have faced. Thanks, Julie.

(Applause)

>> Good evening, everybody. I, too, would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and as councillor, key, thank you for that fabulous Welcome to Country. -- Cr Greg Conkey. I would like to acknowledge Don Harwin, Paul Fletcher, Cr Greg Conkey. It is unfortunate take Franklin could not be with us. -- Ben. He took a trip last night and fell down

the stairs so he could not come today. We are all looking forward to a trip after COVID but not that kind of one. I would like to also thank the board members of Regional Arts NSW that are here and the councillors from Wagga City Council as well. It is with enormous pride that our welcome you to the fourth and final Artstate in my hometown of Wagga Wagga. We got here. As you know, Artstate is really unique. It is a conference and a festival combined and it allows Regional Arts NSW to showcase some truly amazing talent that we are blessed with in regional New South Wales and it is joy every year that I come to Artstate to see the wonderful, fabulous things that people do, the way they reimagine things and in a COVID year, the way they have addressed what has been as we have all acknowledged tonight a most challenging of times. This year with COVID we have had the challenge of a COVID Safe event, and to be totally honest, and the board will tell me the same thing, I was not real sure we would get this one off the ground, but the termination by name is Elizabeth. -- Determination. She was very determined along with her production team. She said we could do this, run a COVID Safe event, register a COVID Safe event. What if nobly comes? She was so determined it was very hard not to believe in her belief and that has got us here. Here we are, Regional Arts NSW, once again leading the way in how things can be done if you truly believe and you really want to make it happen and I really want to congratulate Elizabeth Rogers, the whole production team, the people at the Civic Theatre...

(Applause)

>> Scott Howie. As Elizabeth said, this has been a rolling evolving, constantly changing, responding exercise, and exercise in fluidity, flexibility and patience and everybody has worked together constantly to bring you the best possible event that we can possibly bring you, to wrap up four years of Artstate. Over the last four years we have had the opportunity to bring some of the best and brightest together to share, discuss and analyse what is happening in the arts sector, not just within New South Wales or Australia but overseas. Unfortunately this year we will not get the overseas speakers that we normally would but again we have worked very hard to identify the high-calibre people that work in the arts in the regions and bring those to you so that you can have a great experience in the conference. We have been challenged through Artstate, questioned and asked to consider new ways of approaching the delivery of the art, new ways of engaging and new ways of collaborating over the last four years and over that period we have had through Artstate, I'm proud to say a strong focus on our First Nations people and it has been a joy to hear artists and speakers use their language and images to convey strong messages about inclusion and recognition and I think that has been a really important element of Artstate for us. This year's conference teams are particularly relevant in these very challenging times we find ourselves. In walking together tomorrow on day one and shaping tomorrow on day two. Walking together is inspired by the concept of (unknown term) and this broad theme reflects lessons to be learnt by listening and engaging with the first Australians, to develop a better understanding of arts, culture, language and additional practices. The theme for date two is shaping tomorrow and build on day one and looking at ways we can walk together to achieve better outcomes for all. -- A. If this year has taught us nothing it has taught us the strength of working together. What an amazing nation we have been the way we have risen to the challenge of COVID, the way we have worked together to meet this challenge and overcome it. Another day in Victoria with no deaths and no COVID. The low numbers of COVID in New South Wales is testimony to the sacrifices people are prepared to make to work together to get over this pandemic. Our festival component as Elizabeth said has somewhat change this year. Scott Howie and his team have put together something that embraces a wired range of things. -- Wide. I carried you to cram in as much as you can and as Cr Greg Conkey said, rock up at 8:29 AM and listen to the singing that will be coming from the balcony. Amazingly enough for us, next year, Regional Arts NSW will celebrate 75 years of activity, our 75th anniversary.

(Applause)

>> So, while we won't have Artstate, we will still have a celebration next year. 75 is a big number and over the last 75 years we have facilitated, promoted and worked with an incredible array of artists and arts organisations who called remote, rural and regional New South Wales home and we have been proud and honoured to do so. Over those 75 years, there have been loads of challenges, of course there have and at every turn Regional Arts NSW has risen to meet those challenges, changing, pivoting, the COVID word, looking at ways we can better help the people that are trying to make the communities that they live in better. We look forward to rising to the challenges before us as we have with this event and as well as working, continuing to work with our network and artists and organisations to ensure we can continue to represent them as best we possibly can. The arts are such an important component of regional New South Wales. We are committed, the board and staff, to continuing to provide the kinds of support and services that you need to make life easier for you to stay in regional areas. Artstate is important in that because it has allowed us to showcase the artists and arts organisations we represent and it has been an absolute privilege to do that. However, Artstate does not happen without support and I would like to acknowledge the amazing support we have received from the New South Wales government to create New South Wales and as Elizabeth said, the minister, Don Harwin, has been to every Artstate and that is an incredible commitment. Usually the minister stays for the entire event and we are really appreciative of the commitment he has made to join us and participate in everything and look forward to the announcements tomorrow and also regional New South Wales health story is sponsoring a program called ash, dust, air, launched on Saturday and that as a writing program for young people talks about how they have coped with the bushfires, drought and pandemic, so I carried you all to come to the launch of ash, dust, and at 1:30 PM on Saturday here in the Civic Theatre. I would like to really thank Wagga City Council. Their support has been outstanding. Somebody said to me today, "I think the lawn is mowed to cement level." I know Janice has looked at every element that has gone into it to make sure everything runs smoothly and as Elizabeth said, I would really like to think Janice Summerhayes, all of the staff, the outdoor staff that are put together to put this on for us and TAFE New South Wales has been instrumental in getting out state off the ground. Without that support we could

not be here at all. I also would like to acknowledge Elizabeth and the staff of Regional Arts NSW, the production team, again the Civic Theatre staff to ensure that we not just have a COVID Safe event but we have an event that is fun, informative and engaging, and on that point, finally, can I just remind you it is up to each one of you to ensure that we remain COVID Safe? Make sure you socially distance, wash your hands. If you want to, wear a mask. And use a sanitiser. We have located them everywhere. Do everything you can to stay safe. Welcome to Artstate, have fun, stay safe. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, Julie.

I would just like to sincerely apologise because we have actually broken cultural protocol and it is something we have been absolutely permitted to in the work that we do but in particular in engagement with the local Aboriginal community.

Due to a technical fault, we could not do the welcome to country before the speeches and I really apologise to everyone in the room. As you know, this particular event is stretching the technical capacity of theatre and the crew with live streaming and new ways of working that we are trying to develop in this difficult year.

We did not do the welcome to country first because of the technical issue. My apologies. We have now fixed it and so with the programs you were given, we are now going to segue through to Wagga Wagga to dance and celebrate.

(Applause)

(Birds chirping)

(Birds chirping)

>> I am Aunty Isabel Reid, a Wiradjuri Elder and I'm here to present the welcome to country which is important and necessary as it welcomes visitors to ancestral lands and it has been conducted over thousands of years to officially welcome people and identify who we are and who you are.

I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the custodians of this land, the Wiradjuri people, whose land we are gathered on today and acknowledge our Elders past, present, future, for the memories, tradition, and the culture of all Aboriginal Australians.

In recognition and respect for all Aboriginal people, our culture and heritage, it gives me so much pleasure to welcome you all here to the land of the Wiradjuri people.

(Sounds of nature)

(Birds chirping)

>> My name is Stan Grant and I am Wiradjuri and I have been asked many times about the meaning of the words Wagga Wagga and I can go back to the 1940s and I was in Griffith speaking to the headmaster and he was doing a talk and he said that the meaning of the words Wagga Wagga meant a place of many crows and I had to put my hand up and I had to tell him that the word Wagga Wagga did not mean place of many crows. He asked me what I thought it meant and I said I know what it means, but it means 'Place of Dance and Celebration' and Wagga Wagga means to dance. He thought it meant the place of many crows. I had to tell him what the word for 'crawl' was and it was different and he said that the book told him it meant place of many crows so that was what it meant and I did not see any more after that because I knew he would not listen to me and I spoke to my mum and dad and told them that I had a few words with the headmaster. I told them it was about the words Wagga Wagga and they told me I had to learn to shut my mouth. It will be my grandfather would get into trouble for teaching the language and I could be sent home for speaking it so I was told to shut my mouth and let it be what they wanted to be. I asked them what they meant and they said they fight fellows would not listen to us. It has been bugging me for a long time, about 70 years, and I don't like the fact that language is being discarded and the wrong meaning is being put down and I'm sick to death of being called wrong when I know I am right in calling Wagga Wagga the place of dance and celebration.

(Sounds of nature)

(Singing in Wiradjuri)

(Singing in Wiradjuri)

(Singing in Wiradjuri)

(Singing in Wiradjuri)

(Singing in Wiradjuri)

>> That was a beautiful welcome to country. How wonderful to hear Uncle Stan Grant AM. We are very fortunate when we kicked off the journey and we took over and handed over to the National conference and double mac and then we were in calculi -- elderly in 2014 and to do the handover from Dubbo to NSW and Uncle Stan Grant AM with those two speak and we took some things back made by the women and the Dubbo men created a replica of the message stick. It is a really nice circle to come all the way back and have Uncle Stan Grant telling is about the real name and we will not think of crows again and dance is a much better thing to have for the name of the city. This is the intermission and normally would have the four speakers who have just spoken and now we're going to welcome the next part which is our wonderful dancer, Joel Bray, performing 'Man.Dancing'.

(Didgeridoo soundscape)

(Music plays)

(Music plays)

(Ambient music)

(Applause) (Music plays)

('Dear Madam Barnum' plays)

('Dear Madam Barnum' plays)

('Dear Madam Barnum' plays)

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