Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture celebrated this weekend

22 May 2015

Territorians are encouraged to join in a three-day celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders arts and culture that kicks off tonight at 6pm (Friday 22 May) at the Darwin Entertainment Centre.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Garrmalang Festival showcased music, dance and culture from Top End Indigenous artists and the Northern Territory Government was proud to support the event.

“The festival is a great way to celebrate Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander talent and also provides a platform for local performers to develop their art,” Mr Giles said.

“More than 4000 people attended the inaugural festival last year and we’re hoping numbers will be even higher this year with the chance to see performances by some of the most exciting Indigenous talent in the country, including Djuku Mala (The Chooky Dancers).”

Djuku Mala’s dances also include video highlighting some of the challenges facing the Indigenous community such as the high rates of youth suicide and displacement from family and country.

“The Garrmalang Festival is the inspiration of local man Ben Graetz,” Arts Minister Gary Higgins said.

“A NIDA trained actor and director, Ben has done a wonderful job with the Festival and I congratulate him and all the organisers for pulling together yet another fantastic occasion for Territorians and visitors.”

“The Northern Territory is pleased to be able to provide $50,000 funding to support the Garrmalang Festival as part of our FestivalsNT and calendar of cultural and sporting events,” Mr Giles said.

The festival runs from Friday 22 May until Sunday 24 May with featured events including:

- a panel discussion about life in the public eye with Australian Olympian Patrick Johnson, ABC broadcaster Charlie King, actors/playwrights Jado Cubillo and Steven Oliver and singer/songwriter Shellie Morris.
- On Saturday evening patrons can enjoy an evening hosted by Shellie Morris discussing music and stories titled *Four Little Birds*. Local artists Leah Flanagan, Ursula Yovich and desert diva Catherine Satour will also join Shellie onstage.

- On Sunday afternoon Darwin-based The Gary Lang NT Dance Company will perform a free showcase of their work-in-progress *Inspired* - an evolving experimentation ballet to the musical score of Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake.

Tickets to attend the Garrmalang Festival are available from http://www.garrmalang.yourcentre.com.au

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