

Wednesday 14 August 2019

Statement on behalf of Ningali Lawford-Wolf's family and Sydney Theatre Company

Sydney Theatre Company is absolutely devastated to confirm the passing away of Ningali Lawford-Wolf in Edinburgh, Scotland on Sunday 11th August, while she was touring with STC and performing in *The Secret River*. Ningali was an incredibly talented performer as well as a wonderfully caring and thoughtful person. We've lost one of Australian theatre's greatest treasures.

Ningali was a Wangkatjungka woman born under a tree at Christmas Creek Station in the far north Kimberley region of Western Australia. Ningali trained as a dancer at the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, then continued to perform professionally with Bangarra Dance Theatre in Sydney to build an impressive stage and screen career. She is well known for her films *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002), *Bran Nue Dae* (2009) and *Last Cab to Darwin* (2015) and television shows *The Circuit* (2007 – 2010), *3 Acts of Murder* (2009), *Little J & Big Cuz* (2017) and *Mystery Road* (2018).

Ningali's theatre roles included her one-woman show *Ningali* (1994-1996), which toured nationally and internationally and earned her a Green Room Award for Best Actress and a Fringe First Award for Best New Production, *Aliwa* for Company B Belvoir (2001), *Uncle Vanya* (2005) and *Jandamarra* (2008) both for Black Swan Theatre Company.

Ningali was involved in the development of *The Secret River* at STC, narrating its return Sydney season and national tour in 2016, Adelaide Festival performances in 2018 and Edinburgh Festival performances in 2019. Ningali gave a solo performance in the reading of *Windmill Baby* in 2014, the winner of the 2003 Patrick White Playwright's Award, which she co-wrote with David Milroy, and performed in *The Long Forgotten Dream* at Sydney Opera House last year.

Ningali was a wonderful mother to Jaden, Rosie, Alexander, William, and Florence, and loving grandmother to Zavia and Mia.

Ningali's family as well as the cast and crew of *The Secret River* are understandably very distressed by this news. All of us at STC offer our condolences to Ningali's family and friends, and ask that the media respect their privacy at this time.

Ningali Lawford-Wolf's family have requested that only the attached image of Ningali from The Secret River at the Edinburgh International Festival be used to accompany all news stories of this announcement. Thank you.