

Shire of Broome
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MEDIA RELEASE



13 July 2018

For immediate release

***Song for the Mardoowarra* at Broome Civic Centre**

Song for the Mardoowarra is a puppet performance for all ages. It pays homage to the way that culture has shaped country and how country shapes culture, through the mediums of puppetry, music and animation at the Broome Civic Centre for two performances on Friday 27 July.

It is based on a Nyikina traditional story that tells how the Mardoowarra - Fitzroy River in the Kimberley Region of WA was created in the dreaming by Yoongoorookoo the rainbow snake and the first man Woonyoomboo.

This work compares shared stories and is a potent warning about the importance of caring for country and culture. It encourages people to begin listening to nature again.

Children have helped shape the work and it includes some of their stories that are told beside more ancient ones. The theme song "Song for the Mardoowarra" is sung by the children of Broome Primary School.

The impetus for *Song for the Mardoowarra* was a ceremony in 2014 in which river water was exchanged between senior members of Indigenous Nyikina people from the Fitzroy Valley and the elders of the French Ardennes.

Song for the Mardoowarra is written and directed by Broome's Big MAMA Productions director Gwen Knox and co-produced with Madjulla Inc. Managing Director, Dr Anne Poelina.

Big MAMA Productions uses a wide range of mediums to tell local stories through collaborative design and development of theatre that helps bring about positive change.

It is performed by Damon Lockwood, who recently moved to Broome after years of working with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre in Perth, Bao Nguansavanh from Tof Théâtre Belgium, Edwin Lee Mulligan who performs regularly with Marrugeku, newcomer Roechelle Rivers and a group of Broome children. Chris Hill is the designer and he and Ms Knox have made most of the puppets.

Ms Knox said she was absolutely delighted with how the work had developed with the input from Kimberley children during its development. "To hand it over to such a wonderful group of puppeteers and see it develop into a really beautiful performance is very thrilling," she said.

Broome Shire President, Harold Tracey, said the Shire was pleased to support local productions such as *Song for the Mardoowarra* and to help bring them to the wider community.

"Preserving and promoting our culture is a key part of the Shire of Broome's vision and one of the ways we can do that is by supporting the individuals and the organisations in our community who bring that to life," Cr Tracey said.

Song for the Mardoowarra is presented by the Shire of Broome and is at the Broome Civic Centre on Friday 27 July with shows at 11am and 6.30pm. Tickets are \$5 for children/concession and \$10 for adults from www.broomeciviccentre.com.au.

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