

Bangarra calling?

Chatham student's opportunity to dance with an iconic dance company

By Ainslee Dennis

DANCE technique, choreography and music dominated the thoughts and life of Ryan Pearson.

The Chatham High School student immersed himself in the world of professional dancers as he worked for three days in an intensive workshop under the guidance of the iconic Bangarra Dance Theatre.

Ryan is part of a dance troupe called the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Company and it features 23 talented dancers from across the State.

Ryan is the only member from the Manning Valley and Great Lakes areas. Members of the company were chosen at a series of workshops for Aboriginal public school students conducted at Sydney, Dubbo, Griffith, Grafton and Tamworth.

Ryan travelled to Sydney to complete the three-day intensive workshop which began on June 5 and ended on June 7.

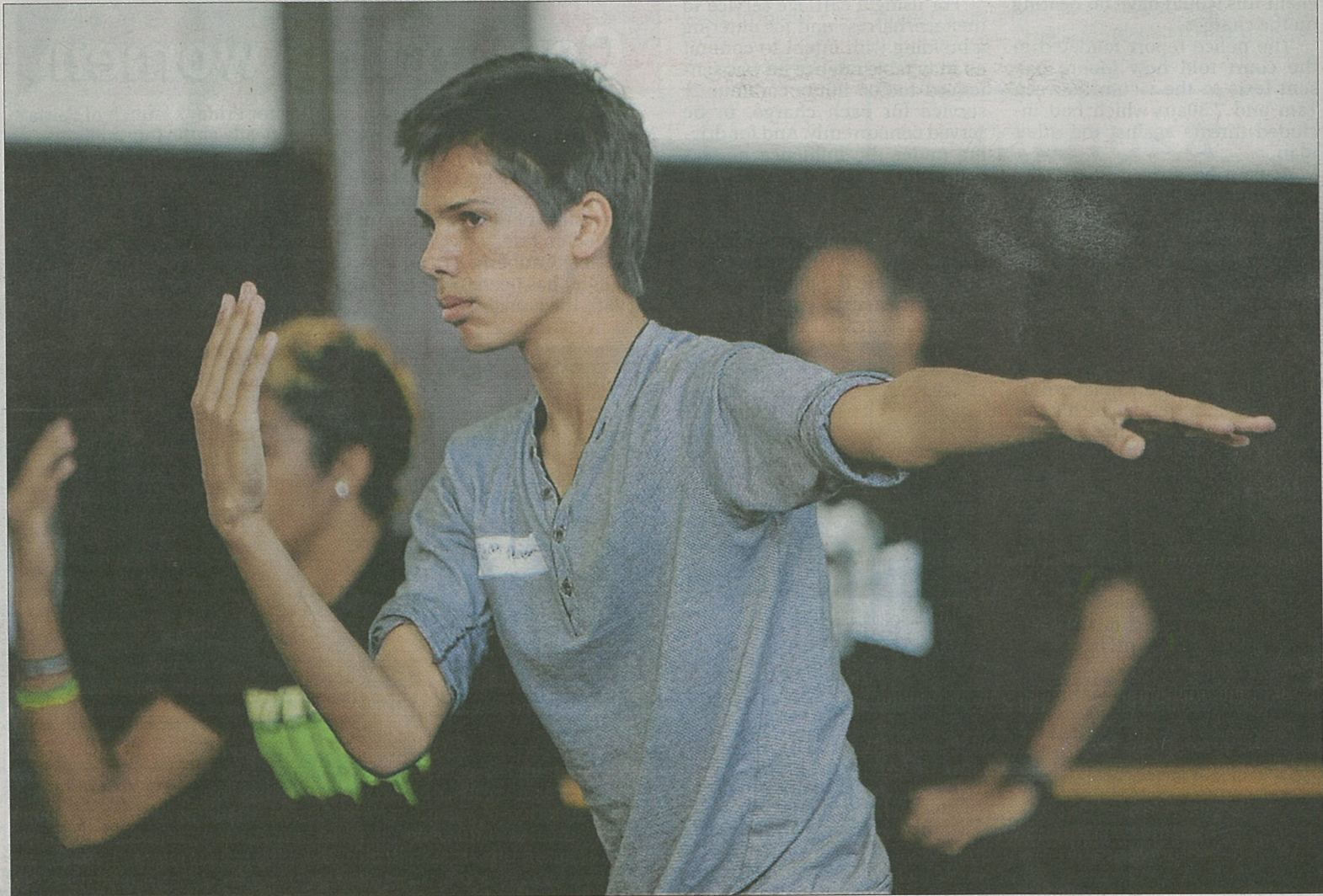
In coming months he will return to Sydney for a series of workshops to assist the students to learn and rehearse as a company and to absorb the techniques and disciplines of this higher level of dance.

This is the second year that the company has benefited from the intensive guidance of the Bangarra Dance Theatre.

Last year, the program which is a joint initiative with the arts unit of the Department of Education and Communities, saw the chosen dancers potential blossom under the nurturing they received.

The company performed at the Vibe Alive Festival in Moree and the State Dance Festival as well as the Schools Spectacular in Sydney.

The lead tutor providing in-



Intense focus and talent provided Ryan Pearson of Chatham High School with the opportunity to attend a workshop in Sydney with the Bangarra Dance Theatre.

struction to Ryan is Sidney Saltner.

From the Wulli Wulli people of central Queensland, Sidney has been with Bangarra Dance Theatre since 1997. He has exten-

sive performance and teaching experience throughout Australia and internationally in Asia, North and South America, Europe, South Africa and the Pacific Islands.

He has performed major roles in all of Bangarra's productions from then to now.

Last year, Sidney performed with Bangarra on its highly successful 2011 European tour of

Spirit, followed by an Australian national tour of *Belong* and the Mathinna tour through regional Queensland and the Northern Territory.