

# Chatham dancers to attend renowned Aboriginal festival

A GROUP of Chatham High School students are set to attend the Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival this June.

The six local indigenous dancers, Logan Simms, Michael Slater, Ben Williams, Shane Morcome and Blade Thorpe will attend the festival to learn from diverse Aboriginal communities on their language, song, dance and stories.

They will also have the opportunity to showcase local Biripi dances in the various workshops they will take place in.

The program is initiated by Taree Indigenous Development and Employment (TIDE) and support from Chatham High School and Australia Communities Foundation (ACF).

The group will be accompanied by the CEO of TIDE Uncle John Clark, Auntie Valerie Clark, Uncle Wayne Paulson, Uncle Jeremy Sauders and the co-ordinator of the TIDE program, Parents and Community Engagement Program (PACE), Sean Ploder.

Wayne Paulson, the dancers' teacher, believes it will be a valuable experience where students will learn cultural knowledge that they can pass on to other students.

Sean Ploder identifies the students attending the festival as leaders in their dance group and school.

"These students have excellent attendance," said Sean.

"Through attending the festival they will be able to reinvigorate culture among other young Aboriginal dancers, promoting others to take more interest in coming to school and learning about their culture."

The Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival is held on June 19-21, on a sacred ground on the Cape York Peninsula. The festival is part of a nationwide reconciliation ceremony.



Principal of Chatham High School Willem Holvast, coordinator of Parents and Community Program (PACE) Sean Ploder, CEO of Taree Indigenous Development Employment (TIDE) Uncle John Clark stand behind the six talented dancers attending the Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival. Their names are Ben Williams, Shane Morcome, Logan Simms, Michael Slater and Blade Thorpe (not pictured). Next to the students is Wayne Paulson, their supportive dance teacher.