



Victorian College of the Arts

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VCA Wilin Week – Keep the Fire Burning Monday 21 –Thursday 24 April 2008

Mother Tongues: Honouring Indigenous Australian Languages *Lost Found Surviving: Sustaining Aboriginal cultural, creative & spiritual knowledge.*

Wilin Week is an annual Indigenous festival hosted by the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development at the Victorian College of the Arts. Featuring music, dance, food, film, language and debate, this festival honours Indigenous students and artists on campus.

‘Wilin’ means ‘fire’ in Woi Wurrung language of the Wurundjeri, one of the five tribes of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land the VCA occupies. Throughout Wilin Week a fire is lit and kept alight, symbolizing the centre’s commitment to Indigenous artists and their creative flames.

Drawing on the United Nations International Year of Languages 2008, this year’s Wilin Week Indigenous Celebration will honour all Indigenous Australian languages – lost, found and surviving. Our languages connect us to ancestors and keep Indigenous creative fires burning. It is believed that over 500 dialects and 250 distinct languages were spoken at the time of initial European settlement (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Our Indigenous Australian languages, whether lost, found or surviving, ultimately sustain Aboriginal cultural, creative and spiritual knowledge. Come and celebrate the strength of Aboriginal creativity in language with special guest artist-in-residence **Ray Kelly**, a performing artist and Indigenous languages researcher, acclaimed actor **Tom E Lewis**, singer/songwriter **Kutch Edwards**, didgeridoo player **Ron Murray**, hip-hop sensation the **Yung Warriors**, MC **Johnny Mac**, traditional dancer **Wayne Thorpe**, **Brown Roots Collective** and an array of other events and performances.

Ray Kelly has dedicated his working career to Indigenous community enhancement at regional, state and national levels. As an expert in Indigenous language he has been involved in a variety of community arts projects aimed at recording and documenting the stories and languages of Indigenous communities in New South Wales. He has written and performed in numerous plays and became the first Indigenous playwright to have work staged by the Sydney Theatre Company. Kelly was Director of the ATSI Unit of the Australia Council of the Arts (2003-2004) and was long serving CEO of Awabakal Newcastle Aboriginal Cooperative (1993-2003). As special guest artist-in-residence for Wilin Week 2008 Kelly will deliver public lectures and workshop with VCA and visiting Indigenous students.

Wilin Week 2008

Mother Tongues: Honouring Indigenous Australian Languages

When: Monday 21 to Thursday 24 April

Where: The Victorian College of the Arts, 234 St Kilda Road, Southbank

Tickets: All events are free

Program enquiries: Kate Munro p: 03 9685 9324 e: klmunro@unimelb.edu.au

Full Wilin Week 2008 program details can be viewed at: <http://www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/wilinweek/>

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