

Rio Tinto



Australian Business Arts Foundation Awards
QantasLink Regional category

Together we are making
a difference



Michael Leslie
Foundation for the Performing Arts

A partnership between Michael Leslie Foundation for the
Performing Arts and Rio Tinto

Partnership background overview

Business partner - Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a global mining company with twenty-five percent of its assets in Western Australia, including iron ore, salt, talc and diamonds. Rio Tinto recognises the need to develop sustainable long term partnerships with its community neighbours within Western Australia and directly invested \$15 million in community projects in 2008.

Arts partner - The Michael Leslie Foundation for the Arts

In partnership with Rio Tinto, The Michael Leslie Foundation (MLFA) created the Pilbara Performing Arts Program (the Program) to help people in the Pilbara discover and express themselves in spirit, mind and body - through the Arts - and in the process develop invaluable life skills, self-acceptance and learning.

Through residencies, workshops and performing arts productions, the MLFA seeks out opportunities for young people and their communities in the Pilbara to reach their potential through creative expression, and in the process learn to rise above any barriers - real or perceived - as a community and as individuals.

1. Background

The partnership between Rio Tinto and the MLFA began in 2006 when Michael Leslie approached Rio Tinto with a proposal to become the founding partner for a performing arts program based in the Pilbara. Rio Tinto was impressed with Michael's passion and sheer raw energy, his determination to make a difference in the Pilbara and to inspire community members to grow in confidence, self-respect and ability.

Through the Program, the MLFA helps community members discover their personal and artistic potential while motivating students to stay at school and complete their studies. The Program has been developed in collaboration with schools and individual groups; producing quality dance and drama performances. The Program has a focus on all children and youth, but in particular Aboriginal students, to inspire them to overcome universal challenges such as low self-esteem, shame, shyness and embarrassment, poor body image, and a constant worry about what others think.

In the past three years the pace has not slowed. The Program now incorporates a schools initiative which reaches over 600 children per week across the Pilbara region with student numbers are expected to increase as new schools are added to the program. The sessions with Michael offer important life skills such as discipline. Additional benefits include empowering and encouraging participants to look beyond their immediate communities for external opportunities.

Response to selection criteria

2. Principles underpinning the partnership

At first glance, the employment of an Aboriginal dancer in the resource industry seems quite surprising and even perplexing. However at a closer look it is apparent that the three key principles underlying the success of the partnership between the MLFA and Rio Tinto are consistent with both partners' business strategies and goals.

An improvement in the lives of Pilbara people

Through the Program, the MLFA provides resources and creates opportunities to enrich the cultural life of the Pilbara and to promote the performing arts as a key component in the sustainable development for young people and their communities within the Pilbara.

Rio Tinto has made a similar commitment to the sustainable development of communities within the Pilbara. Since the company is operating in the region and on the land of the traditional owners, Rio Tinto has a responsibility to work with the local population in improving their socio-economic and cultural circumstances.

In providing these opportunities, the partnership has the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits for the region including increased community participation, development and collaboration.

An increase in the school attendance rates of Pilbara youth, especially Aboriginal students

A big barrier to the employment of Aboriginal people in the Pilbara is low literacy and numeracy skills. The program encourages students to stay in school, thereby improving their literacy and numeracy levels and contributing to positive employment outcomes post-school. Furthermore participation in the program hinges on students attending school. Both these factors are extremely important to Rio Tinto as they help to contribute to an increase in the number of work ready Aboriginal people in the Pilbara, which the company one day hopes to provide employment for.

Inspire Pilbara youth to “think big” about their future and aspire them to improve their socio-economic situation.

Rio Tinto and the MLFA share the same goals and beliefs that by providing performing arts resources and opportunities in the Pilbara region, young people and their communities can be empowered through the development of life skills, self-acceptance and the value of learning. These attributes are vital to the ability to work and contribute to the sustainable future of the community.

For both organisations these principals are extremely important to their social licence to operate. With support through Rio Tinto's Pilbara Partnership Program and MLFA's expertise these principals are being realised.

3. Objectives and Outcomes

To enrich the lives of young people and their communities in the Pilbara through the performing arts

The objective of the partnership is to expose Pilbara youth to diverse art forms and activities including: acting, singing, dance, and creative writing in an attempt to improve their self-esteem and school attendance. In addition, special pathways have been created to further interests and talents emerging from the program streams. The ultimate objective of the partnership is to motivate students to stay in school, which in turn will improve their socio-economic situation, self-esteem and self-worth.

An example of the opportunities that have been created by the partnership was the 2008 Pilbara Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival. As part of the Festival, the National Institute for Dramatic Arts (NIDA), the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), and the John Curtin College of the Arts presented information sessions to prospective students in Karratha.

As a result, four students won places at WAAPA and John Curtin College for the Arts, for which competition is fierce. This outcome is amazing given the remoteness of Pilbara towns. It illustrates that Pilbara youth do not lack the capacity to excel, just the opportunity. Both Rio Tinto and the MLFA want to provide this opportunity and the partnership has proven to do so.

To promote the performing arts as a key component in the sustainable development of communities in the Pilbara

Creating pathways for students and people in the Pilbara to pursue or further their interests and talents in the performing arts is a key component of the partnership. In providing these opportunities, the partnership's program has the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits for the region including increased community participation, development and collaboration.

Rio Tinto's support for Michael's program has also been leveraged to obtain additional support from government, corporate and philanthropic sectors.

Partnership outcomes

Over the past three years the partnership between Rio Tinto and the MLFA has brought to the Pilbara an extensive range of opportunities for local communities.

Year One (2007)

- National Institute of the Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) three-week residency programs, funded by Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund
- Collaborative theatre production 'I Have Something to Tell You' with youth from the Pilbara working with NIDA facilitators funded by Country Arts WA
- Barking Gecko two-week residency and commissioning of the play 'Sharpays Song', incorporating professionally-led drama classes for the Yirramugardu Majik Binbila Dance Group (Roebourne Primary School)
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre residency in the Pilbara and in-kind support for the Million Puppet Project

Year Two (2008)

- Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival – a week long major event in the Pilbara featuring a Barking Gecko theatre production of 'Run Kitty Run'
- John Curtin College of the Arts dance production 'One Step Forward Left Behind'
- Roebourne FX Girls Fashion Parade
- Workshops in Musical Theatre, Dance, Acting and Creative Writing
- Production of 'Sharpays Song' for Yirramugardu Majik Binbila with professional director Jilli Romanis
- Three Trees Performance Project by award-winning writer/dramaturge Dickon Oxenburgh to adapt local tales and stories into live performances utilising locations of community significance as the backdrop – research phase

- Audition tours to the Pilbara by NIDA and WAAPA, including funding for professional tutor to work with local youth to prepare their audition pieces. This offered an extremely rare opportunity for the participants, all Aboriginal, to be exposed to professional training and preparation for this highly selective auditioning process
- Two-week residency by Ausdance WA to conduct dance workshops at primary schools in Roebourne, Wickham, Tambrey, Millers Well, Pegs Creek and Karratha
- Choreographer Brooke Leader and selected youth from the Pilbara for the "One Step Forward, Left Behind" for the National Youth Dance Conference in Mandurah April 2009
- Primary Extension and Challenge Program (PEAC) in dance at Tambrey, Karratha, Millers Well, Pegs Creek and Dampier primary schools working with Year Five students
- Yirramugardu Majik Binbila week long Performances at the Rio Tinto Building in Perth November. Other performers included John Curtin College of the Arts, WAAPA

Year Three (2009)

Upcoming and potential projects for this year include:

- Yirramugardu Majik Binbila dance group invited to perform at the National Youth Dance Conference in Mandurah, April 2009
- Pilbara Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival, July 6 – 10
- Three Trees Project storytelling production involving visiting professional and local community performers in Roebourne (pending funding approval), September 2009
- Singing Workshops conducted by Annie Neale from WAAPA
- Drama Workshops conducted by NIDA
- Musical Theatre Workshops conducted by WAAPA
- Visiting fellow (Nitestar USA) – group devised workshops on youth health issues throughout regional and metro WA
- National and international cultural exchanges for the Yirramugardu Majik Binbila dance group to perform at Youth Arts Festivals around Australia
- Metal+Muscle – a Barking Gecko co-production dealing with Pilbara youth's issues of isolation, identity and maturity in a regional/remote area

4. The value of the relationship for each partner

Achieving financial and operational benefits

Since 2006, Rio Tinto has contributed approximately \$900,000 to the partnership. As a part of its commitment to the Pilbara community, Rio Tinto funds Michael Leslie's salary and contributes a large proportion of his operating costs. The MLFA use this funding to leverage additional support from the WA Department of Culture and The Arts, the Australia Council and Country Arts WA.

In return, the community leverage of the MLFA Program provides Rio Tinto a very cost-effective tool in the sustainable development of its relationship with its Pilbara neighbours.

Access

Through the partnership the Pilbara communities have had access to over 20 major arts initiatives including festivals, workshops, audition tours, theatre and dance residencies and production, providing vital access to the performing arts not possible prior to the partnership. Through these performing arts activities horizons are broadened, life skills learnt and rare opportunities to realize dreams have come about.

In turn, Rio Tinto has received access to Indigenous arts and community based organisations throughout the Pilbara and through its schools program the partnership has been able to promote Rio Tinto's activities in the community in a very positive light.

The partnership is helping to define the Pilbara cultural landscape, through which the families of Rio Tinto employees also directly benefit.

Supporting young people and their communities

The partnership provide new pathways for students and young people in the Pilbara to pursue or further their interests and talents in the performing arts, resulting in improved school attendance and ongoing opportunities.

As previously stated, a big barrier to employment of Aboriginal people in the Pilbara is low literacy and numeracy skills. The partnership encourages students to stay in school, thereby improving their literacy and numeracy levels and contributing to positive employment outcomes post-school.

5. Management of the partnership

Both Rio Tinto and the MLFA are subject to the procedure and strictures of corporate governance as they relate to their specific structures and circumstances. Through the appropriate corporate channels, Rio Tinto and the MLFA regularly brief each other of their activities and progress.

Rio Tinto is the founding partner of the Program and as stated previously, provides certain logistical and infrastructure support including Michael's salary through its Community Development arm. The MLFA is accountable to Rio Tinto in producing the Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program and must provide interim and annual reporting on its activities.

These processes and regular meetings help ensure the objectives of the partnership are achieved and the direction of the partnership remains focused and tailored to the Pilbara community.

6. Evaluation or measurement

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools are used to evaluate the program.

Quantitative data is collected by examining school attendance and retention of participants in the program. This figure is then compared to non-participants and whether their school attendance is increased through participating in the program. Data cannot be quoted as the research is longitudinal and the Foundation and educational authorities are in the process of compiling.

Qualitative outcomes are evaluated using a combination of community feedback, peer assessment and personal reflection. The participants engage in critical self-reflection on the successes and challenges created by the development process workshop and use this as a catalyst for further action. Anecdotal evidence is also collected as there are many examples of particular students excelling beyond expectation and these examples must be celebrated.

An example of a quantitative outcome of the Program relating to training facilitated by the MLFA is:

In 2008 15 students auditioned for places in elite training institutions. Four students were offered and accepted these positions:

- One place in the musical theatre course at WAAPA in 2009
- Two places in the drama course at WAAPA in 2009
- One place at the John Curtin College for the Arts in 2010

In addition, one student won a scholarship for a 3-month internship with Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company in New South Wales.

Michael Leslie also won the 2008 AusDance West Australian Dance Awards for outstanding achievement in regional and community dance which honours the outstanding achievements by an individual, company or organisation in the fields of regional or community dance.

Please see attached letters of support for further information.

7. Partnership impact

The following testimonials provide a snapshot of the success of the Program. They illustrate that the partnership has been extremely successful in achieving its objectives by bringing a quality performing arts program to the Pilbara.

Testimonials

“Michael’s program is fast becoming a success story in our community. As a role model, his performance workshops inspire and instill self confidence in kids.”

Jill Churnside,
Chairperson Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation

“I was 17 when I met Michael. With his guidance and mentorship I began a new path in life I thought I could only ever dream of. It feels like I was given a second chance. Michael Leslie changed my life.”

Amy Hammond, Michael Leslie student and WAAPA graduate

“When the students heard Michael would be running an optional dance group, they clearly remembered him ...”the cool dance dude - he’s really good”... they were keen to nominate for the session even though it runs through their lunch time!”

Lyn Mascauley
Principal, Tom Price Primary School

“No-one can question Michael’s talent and experience, but what makes him very special is his ability to ‘connect’ with students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Michael’s impact on the students, the school community and town itself cannot be quantified... he has been about far more than just the dance itself.”

Debbie Douglass
Project Coordinator, Garnjurri Mirnumurri Ngurr-Unga Tom Price Enrichment Centre

See attached letters of support for further evidence of partnership impact.

See appendices for supporting partnership communication materials, including:

- Media coverage
- Letters of Support

Appendices

Media coverage





Pilbara News
01/08/2007
Page: 13
General News
Region: Pilbara WA Circulation: 6450
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Size: 239.92 sq.cms
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Lucky to have Leslie

By Benn Marks

MICHAEL Leslie is an extremely talented and experienced performer, who should list an ability to inspire and motivate young students as another one of his key achievements.

Tambrey Primary School has scored a major coup this year by securing the services of Leslie to teach its students contemporary movement.

Leslie's impressive career in the performing arts has spanned three decades in which time he has successfully accrued experience and left professional marks in the dancing, theatre choreography and live theatre performance spheres.

And with past achievements ranging from winning a Sir Winston Churchill scholarship, spending seven years at New York's prestigious Ailey Dance Theatre, becoming a founding member of the Black Swan Theatre Company in Perth, and serving as an advisor to both State and Federal Government Arts advisory committees for culture, arts and policy, it's no wonder that Rio Tinto has employed him to work with students of the Pilbara.

And as a part of the Rio Tinto-sponsored program, Leslie visits Tambrey Primary School once a week to offer contemporary movement classes to students of all levels for half a day.

"By teaching them contemporary movement, it engages all the kids and allows them to enjoy and participate, but the main thing is that they all get up and have a go," he said.

Dancing to the latest 'hip-hop' and contemporary dance tracks, students learn dynamic dance manoeuvres and routines that have the added benefits of increasing fitness and confidence levels in all the students too.

"I teach them to appreciate movement and encourage them to express themselves through movement, and dance is a great vehicle in addressing self-esteem too," he said.

Donna Moore, who teaches at the school and coordinates the program, said Leslie was well suited and an excellent teacher for the students.

"As an indigenous role-model, someone whom the students look up to, he brings so much experience to the school and he works well with everyone and has the ability to get everyone involved," she said.

Moore said that besides motivating and instilling a sense of confidence in the students - in addition to learning new 'moves' that would no doubt turn many impressed heads in a nightclub, the students enjoyed the classes.

"All the students participate, they enjoy the classes enormously and there's also the added

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General News
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Page 2 of 2

bonuses of increasing their levels of motivation and confidence, which they can also transfer to another learning areas."

** The students will be performing at the main stage at 10:30am on August 5 as part of this year's FeNaCING festival.



Michael Leslie with pupils from Tambrey Primary School.

Tambrey students sing out in season's spirit

By Jessica Smith

On Tuesday 2nd December Tambrey Primary School celebrated the closure of the 2008 school year with a fantastic display of dance music and drama at their end of year graduation.

The whole school performance was held at the Walkington theatre starting at 7pm and continuing on through the night.

The classroom teachers aided their prospective classes to entertain parents and friends with a choreographed item ranging from a song, an act or a dance.

Tambrey Primary also has a program run from the school which caters for dance students, known as the 'Talented and Gifted Dance Student Program.

These students showcased a fantastic display of talent, colour and pizzazz adding to the evenings charm.



The nights agenda was not only about performing, but also recognized the students who were to be commended for their achievements over the year.

From kindergarten certificates to the year 7 graduation awards - the night saw all ages being awarded for academic and humanitarian achievements over the year.

Deputy Principal Luke Breman said "the night was a perfect way to celebrate a wonderful year."



Mitchell shortlisted for Bell Shakespeare theatre scholarship

By Jessica Smith

For some of us, the term 'Bell Shakespeare' may conjure images of a man in tights pining for his Juliet.

For Karratha student Ryan Mitchell, such a term simply means opportunity; and rightly so.

Mitchell has been shortlisted for The Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company scholarship from some 130 auditionees.

The shortlist is made up of thirteen students from across regional areas of Australia with only one other student being from WA.

Two exceptional individuals will be chosen from this group for a scholarship which allows them to travel to Sydney, the home of the Bell Shakespeare company.

The two selected students will be able to work with Bell Shakespeare during rehearsals for their performance, *Pericles*, which will be performed on the 18 to 22 May 2009.

Being awarded the experience of working with the company in Sydney is an opportunity of a lifetime and one that doesn't come around too often!

During the audition process, students presented a two to four minute Shakespearean soliloquy of their choice.

According to Matthew Edgerton, Bell Shakespeare's Resident Artist in Education the selection criteria for the audition weighed up factors like characterisation and ability to take direction, voice and movement.

"The actor's vocational suitability was also taken into account, meaning how much they want to be a performer and how much this scholarship would be a step towards helping them to achieve that," he said.

Ryan is ecstatic about his potential future prospects. He said "just being able to do something you always wanted to and being told that you are good at it is awesome!"

Edgerton made special comment about the enthusiasm and talent Ryan Mitchell displayed in the audition.

He said "Ryan took direction really well, had a clear voice with great diction and clearly showed a passion for acting judging by his participation in NIDA workshops and the

fact that he has been making short films!"

Bell Shakespeare's Regional Performance Scholarship is specifically designed for secondary school students living in locations with limited access to live theatre.

In previous years, the company has taken shows to Karratha, Carnarvon and Port Hedland, generating recognition across Australia.

In the last couple of months they have also been running workshops in Broome for Primary School students.

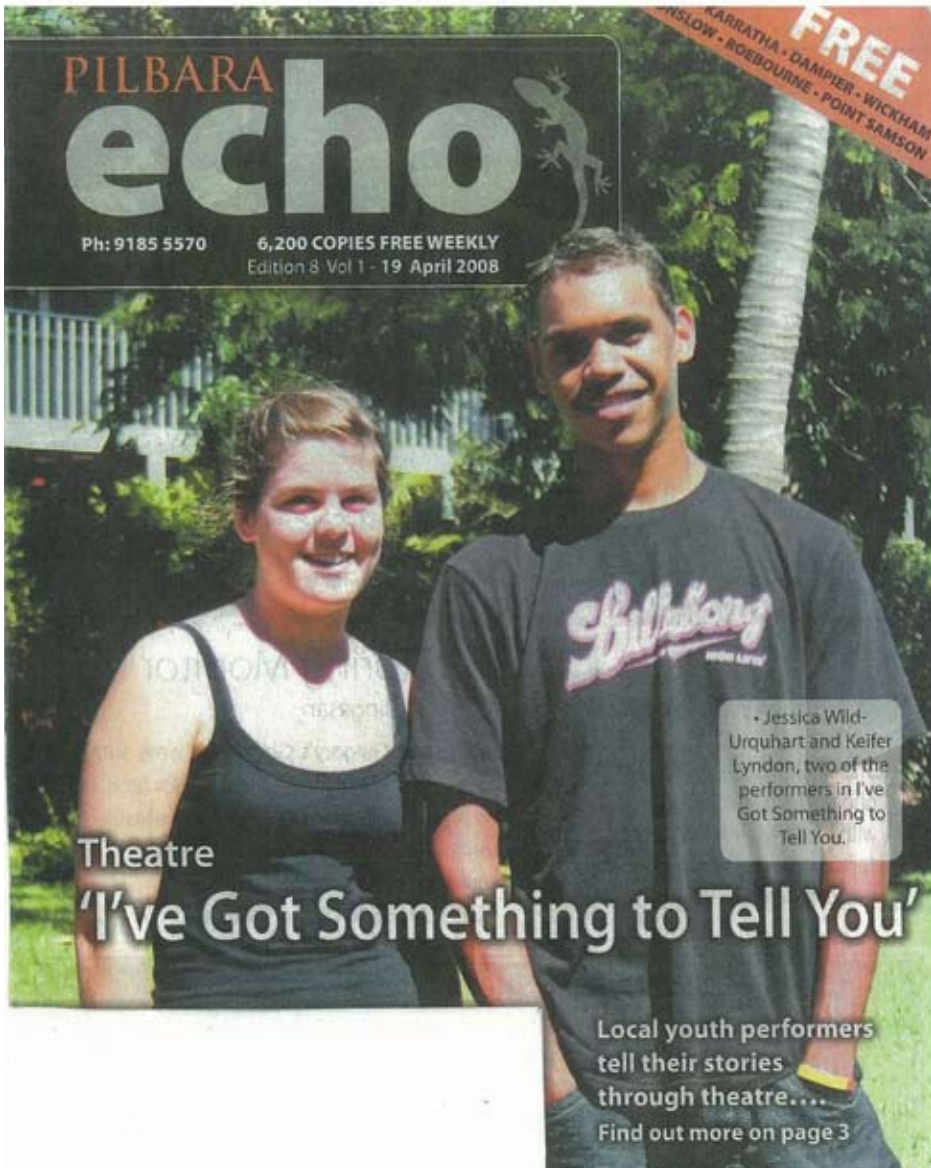
The achievement of being shortlisted for such a prestigious scholarship comes as a shock to both Ryan and his teachers who were not expecting this exciting news.

Christine Hill Ryan's drama teacher at Karratha Senior High school who originally told Ryan about the audition said "we are all so proud of Ryan."

It is a massive accomplishment for Ryan to have been selected and we wish you all the best for thy future!



• Karratha's Ryan Mitchell has been shortlisted for the Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company Scholarship from over 130 applicants.



19 April 2009, Pilbara Echo



news@pilbaraecho.com.au

Aimee Smith (left) with contemporary and choreographic workshop students from Perth, Karratha and Dampier.

John Curtin Project Company bounds into the Pilbara

by Deanna Cream

It was a busy but fulfilling week for students from John Curtin College of the Arts as they participated in the exciting new Pilbara Arts Festival organised by the Michael Leslie Foundation and sponsored by Rio Tinto.

Designed with a view to encouraging young people in the Pilbara to discover their personal and artistic potential, the festival included a range of workshops and performances given by Pilbara and Perth students, highly-respected teachers and well-known artists.

The students from John Curtin travelled from Perth in the second week of the school holidays to join students from Karratha and Dampier in this fantastic opportunity.

Students were involved in contemporary and choreographic workshops with Perth choreographers Brooke Leeder and Aimee Smith and drama workshops with Barking Gecko Theatre Company.

The students all enjoyed working with the specialist tutors as well as one another, "The workshops were great! The best bit was that, because of our common goal (dance) we were able to be unified and work together", said Thalia Livingstone, a year 10 student from John Curtin.

The festival was also an opportunity for the John Curtin Project Company to perform their new work "Put in Front, Left Behind" choreographed by talented independent artist Brooke Leeder. Project Company is an extension and acceleration program run by John Curtin for students already enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Dance/Ballet Program at the school.

Diedre Atkinson, Head of Dance and Drama at the College, said that John Curtin's affiliation with the festival was to assist in the launch of an ongoing program aimed at developing links and cultural exchange between young people in the Pilbara region and the John Curtin Project Company.

"Michael Leslie has amazing vision and his determination to establish the Pilbara region as a centre of excellence for the Arts is extremely exciting. We are honoured to have been invited to participate in the festival and look forward to our continued partnership."

19 April 2009, Pilbara Echo



Youth have something to say

Contributed by Yure Covich

Last January award winning playwright Tommy Murphy and National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) tutor Yure Covich worked with the youth of Karratha and Tom Price to produce a workshop presentation of the self devised project, 'I Have Something To Tell You.'

The project, funded by Rio Tinto and NIDA, encouraged the young actors to develop their own stories and put them on the stage.

Now the same young actors have returned and sacrificed school holidays to further workshop their project and 'flesh out' ideas while developing performance skills.

The rehearsal process is intensive and tiring. The day starts with a quick warm-up and then the rehearsal of the performance begins. The actors have been challenged at a professional level and every day have shown a discipline and maturity that has equalled and exceeded professional actors of the same age on the east coast.

The story follows the lives of fictional characters who work through the battles and joys of everyday life, all revolving around the one big battle, a boxing match between two local boys at the Karratha recreation club.

But amongst all the laughter and tears is an original piece of music written by one of the actors about the joy of being alone on the dunny, a truly magical moment.

The play is a celebration of youth through performance in that they are presenting their original ideas that are vibrant, intelligent and at times confronting, looking at life in the Pilbara through the eyes of our teens.

'I Have Something To Tell You' is part of the 'Say It Loud' Festival that was produced by the Michael Leslie Foundation.

Michael is working hard to develop the Pilbara as a regional centre of excellence for the arts and provide opportunities for young artists in the area.

On Wednesday the 23rd of April at 7pm on the stage of the Walkington Theatre the young actors of the region will perform an entertaining and thought provoking piece of theatre guaranteed to make you think and smile.



echo arts

- Above: Ryan Mitchell, Jessica Wild-Urquhart, Joel Jackson and Ebony Swetman.
- Top: I Have Something To Tell You will be performed at the Walkington Theatre on Wednesday the 23rd of April at 7pm

19 April 2009, Pilbara Echo

Letters of Support

14th May 2008

PO Box 713
Karratha WA 6714

Rio Tinto Iron Ore
Level 22 Central Park
152-158 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Attention: Mr Sam Walsh – CEO

Dear Sir

RE: Pilbara Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival/Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program

On behalf of many appreciative parents in the Pilbara, we would like to express our gratitude to Rio for its initiative in launching and funding the subject arts festival through the Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program during the recent April school holidays this year. We would especially like to express our thanks to the person who was the driver behind this initiative, Michael Leslie. Michael spent countless hours and an enormous amount of energy organising the entire event, from convincing professional drama and dance groups to hold workshops here, through the tedious arranging of students and venues, to making sure buses were available and on schedule.

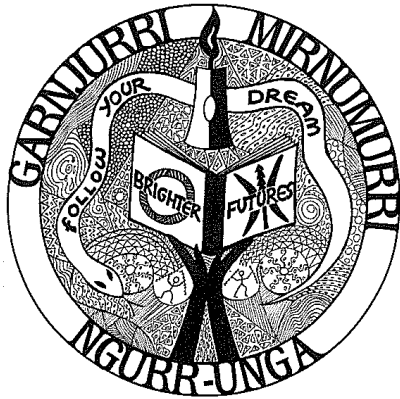
My husband and I have lived in Karratha for the past 24 years and raised our children here. Never in all that time has there been such an amazing opportunity for involvement at such a high level in such a variety of art forms as Rio and Michael have made possible. My daughter, and every one of her friends I have spoken to, reiterate how much they learned from the Festival experience, not just in terms of drama and dance, but also through personal development.

Rio's involvement in promoting interest, participation and excellence in the arts in a remote town like Karratha is an investment very well spent. Not only does it contribute to the enrichment of the participants personally, but ultimately the town is enriched as these children continue to grow in artistic capability and contribute to the culture of the town in a positive way.

On behalf of the parents of Karratha we again thank Rio, yourself and Michael and would encourage you to continue to invest in this positive way in the Pilbara.

Yours sincerely

Vicki Long



Tom Price Enrichment Centre

579 North Road
Tom Price WA 6751

Phone/fax: 91893490
Mobile: 0408093569

Mr Sam Walsh
CEO Rio Tinto Iron Ore
Perth

13 May 2008

Dear Mr Walsh,

During the last school holidays, two of our Aboriginal students starred in the drama performance 'I have Something to Tell You' as part of the Pilbara Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival. The opportunity for these students to participate arose from the on-going partnership the Enrichment Centre has with the Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program.

Michael has worked with our students for nearly two years and the Dance Group has performed at the High School and Primary Schools as well as at town and community events. The positive impact Michael has had and continues to have on our students is profound and the confidence and skills he has developed in them flows into the classroom and all aspects of their lives.

Rio Tinto's initiative in employing Michael Leslie and Rio Tinto's continued investment in Youth Arts has truly made a difference in individual lives, which we have witnessed first hand. The two students who attended the Pilbara Rolling Spinifex Youth Arts Festival were Kiefer Lyndon from Tom Price and Shaka Cook from Wakathuni Community. Their participation has made their family, friends and acquaintances so proud and has inspired other Aboriginal students to want to be part of such events.

Walking with the two boys through the Karratha shopping centre during the week of the performance Shaka stated 'Miss, we're famous' and it was obvious that wherever we went people knew what they were involved in and wanted to talk and congratulate them. Both Shaka and Kiefer thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of the two weeks and want to continue down this path.

In the past the primary focus of youth activities, visiting groups and holiday activities has been focussed on sport so it has been wonderful to have Rio Tinto help provide students with the opportunity to experience the world of the arts.

Regards

Debbie Douglass
Project Manager

Proudly sponsored by



Mr Sam Walsh

CEO

Rio Tinto Iron Ore

Perth

13th May, 2008

Dear Sam,

I would like to acknowledge Rio Tinto's support of the April 2008 Pilbara Youth Arts Festival and commend Michael Leslie on such an outstanding festival for young people.

John Curtin College of the Arts' Project Company (dance and ballet troupe) had the good fortune to participate in this festival through dance workshops and performances, which provided our students with invaluable leadership and team building opportunities.

The festival was a result of Michael Leslie's inspiring vision to see the Pilbara region become a centre for excellence in the Arts for young people. The program catered for all ages. Young people aged 14 plus participated in a range of different activities each day and younger participants were provided with 'taster' sessions.

High calibre tutors, choreographers and directors delivered an appropriate mix of arts workshops, which resulted in an interesting and diverse program of activities for festival participants. The combination of these workshops with performances each night was well received by the community. Participant organisations also had the opportunity to present an information session to young people in the region about the future opportunities to study in the Arts.

John Curtin College of the Arts students were peer teachers in the dance workshops under the guidance of an experienced tutor/choreographer, which provided them with a unique leadership experience.

On behalf of John Curtin College of the Arts and the Project Company I would like to acknowledge the role of the tour and its success as the first step in creating links between the college and young people in the wider West Australian community.

The college and the Project Company were well looked after and supported throughout the week and the accommodation and facilities at Dampier Camp school were exceptional. The camp manager was extremely accommodating to our needs at all times and the food was outstanding as the cook, Margarida, made every effort to ensure that we had what we needed throughout the day and to suit our busy schedule.

Rio Tinto provided a bus and drivers for transfer to and from the festival each day, who were both friendly, informative and, as a bonus, became our wonderful tour guides. The success of the trip can also be attributed to the financial support of Rio Tinto for accommodation, food, bus transfers and artist fees.

The organisation of an event such as this is a huge undertaking for any organisation and is a tribute to Michael Leslie's vision, knowledge of the arts and his perseverance to make it happen.

For future events, I have a few suggestions to help better assist Michael with the festival.

1. Placement on the calendar of events at a time when the Arts Festival is the sole focus.
2. Minor adjustments to the timetable to allow for transport to and from suitable venues. Otherwise, the best option would be for all activities to take place in one venue.
3. The festival to run for an entire week.
4. Opportunities for festival participants to present short demonstrations from the day's workshops each evening prior to the performance.
5. Promotion and publicity for performances and workshops in the wider community.
6. The final performance of the festival to be a collaborative work created throughout the festival and involving all participants, Pilbara youth and visitors.
7. Form an organising committee/group for day to day organisation during the festival to assist with its management and thereby offering additional support for Michael. For example someone to assist timetable bus transfers (to ensure all participants have adequate time between sessions), an information person at each workshop (for roll taking and any other small problems that may occur) and a liaison officer to ensure guest artists are picked up and dropped off as appropriate and to see to all their performance requirements.

I hope you will consider these recommendations.

Participating in the festival was an amazing experience and was highly valued by both the participants and the Arts College. We would like to continue this link in the future and the next stage for this partnership is to see visitors from the Pilbara at John Curtin for a short exchange to experience first hand the Gifted and Talented Arts programs at Western Australia's only Selective Arts School.

We are looking forward to future collaboration.

Yours sincerely

DIEDRE ATKINSON

HEAD OF LEARNING AREA, ARTS DANCE AND DRAMA



Department of Education and Training
Government of Western Australia

ROEBOURNE SCHOOL



To whom it may concern,

The Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Program has been working with the Yirramugardu Majic Binbils of Roebourne School in movement, acting and other areas of the performing arts.

Michael's dedication to the students has been unwavering and his program has demonstrated its commitment to the development of the performing arts in the Pilbara. His work in schools and centres throughout the region has led to a marked improvement in the self-esteem and confidence of the students concerned.

The opportunity to attend an event like the National Youth Dance Festival is a rare thing in the lives of youth in remote areas, such as the Pilbara, and must be promoted to provide students a perspective on the wider world of the performing arts and their place in it.

Any contribution that the Foundation for Young Australians could give the project would be greatly appreciated

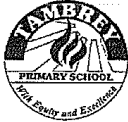
Yours Sincerely


Jacqueline Barry
Principal
Roebourne School

Ph: 08 9182 1244
Fax: 08 9182 1255

13 October 2008

Cnr Sholl & Fraser Streets, P O Box 186, ROEBOURNE WA 6718
Phone: 08 9182 1244 - Fax: 08 9182 1255 - Secondary Fax: 08 9182 1499



Tambrey Primary School

Tambrey Drive, Karratha WA 6714
Telephone : (08) 91442020
Facsimile: (08) 91442644

6 July 2007

To whom it may concern,

Michael Leslie has been working with the students in our school for over a term now.

We were originally introduced when Michael addressed a Principal's meeting. I had also heard Michael speak of his background and experience on the local radio.

Michael has been extremely flexible and is always willing to adapt to the needs of staff and students. Each Tuesday he works with children of all ages and backgrounds with the goal of establishing a dance routine for school performances. Included is a specialist dance group we have selected to make community performances, such as at the upcoming FeNaclNg Festival.

Michael has impressed students and teachers alike with his high expectations, commitment and passion for what he does. He is extremely patient, and has even been able to engage the most unwilling students in some capacity.

Our school is proud to have someone of Michael's calibre be involved with our school and working with our students. We feel he is a wonderful role model for students, teachers and our parent community.

We look forward to his continued involvement in our school.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Moore
Specialist Teacher
Tambrey Primary School



Department of
Education and Training



Tom Price Enrichment Centre

579 North Road
Tom Price WA 6751

Phone/fax: 91893490
Mobile: 0408093569

5 July 2007

Michael Leslie continues to inspire our students; to challenge them; and to help provide special opportunities for them to grow and develop. He has had a big impact on our students, developing their confidence and nurturing a positive self-belief within them. The students have made the realisation that, in all things in life, you need to work hard to achieve a good result. Michael has reinforced to them that success is based on discipline, teamwork, commitment and resilience.

In Semester 2 2006, our Enrichment Centre dancers performed at 2 Senior High School assemblies. The male dancers in this group were in Year 10 and 11 and their performances stunned and surprised the audience – students and teachers alike. Overnight our students had gone from shy, quiet students to high profile dancers admired by all for their talent. A week after one of the performances one of the student dancers said to me 'It's like Michael Leslie has sort of made me famous at school' as wherever he moved around the school students would greet him or congratulate him. All now walk tall around the school.

This year, for the first time, all the Indigenous students in Year 11 and 12 attended the Tom Price Senior High School Ball. The students in Michael's dance group were confident and led all the other students on the dance floor. In fact, in the group dance competition, all the other students wanted to join our students and in the end all the students were dancing as one giant group – Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Michael Leslie has also introduced our students to a drama specialist and 3 students have been selected for the Black Swan Drama Camp to be held in Dampier October this year – a first for Indigenous students for this camp. One of the selected students made the comment recently, 'This year is the best year I have had and it is getting better with my art, the dance performance and now I have been chosen for the Drama Camp'.

Michael continues to work with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at both the Tom Price Senior High School and North Tom Price Primary School. All students admire and respect him and he remains a powerful role model.

Debbie Douglass
Project Coordinator
Tom Price Enrichment Centre



Tanunda Street
TOM PRICE WA 6751
Ph 9189 1299 Fax 9189 1342
Email Principal: Lynnette.Macauley@det.wa.edu.au

Together We Strive



In 2006 Michael Leslie worked briefly with a range of classes at North Tom Price Primary School.

This year we are fortunate to have him booked weekly to conduct dance lessons with a group of our Year 6 and 7 students. When the students heard that Michael would be running an optional dance group, they clearly remembered him from the year before, " the cool dance dude - he's really good!".

They were keen to nominate for the session, even though it runs through their lunch time.

Michael has been working with the group for four weeks. I am constantly amazed how he motivates and involves the students during the hour session. Our students have had little dance experience, yet he encourages them to devise their own moves and choreographs them into a dance performance. In the short time he has worked with our students they are confidently performing professional moves.....and volunteering to practise after school by themselves. Michael's rapport with students and ability to develop self esteem and confidence are outstanding skills. We value his contribution to our school.

Lyn Macauley
Principal
5/07/07



MILLARS WELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gawthorne Drive
KARRATHA WA 6714
Phone: (08) 9185 2400
Facsimile: (08) 9185 1319
millarswellps@det.wa.edu.au



To whom it may concern; Michael Leslie

I first met Michael Leslie in 2005 in my role at the time as Manager of Aboriginal Education in the Pilbara Education District WA. At that time Michael was enthusiastically planning how he could develop an arts program in the Pilbara in partnership with other groups. This was no easy task and what lay ahead of him were many challenges.

We are some years on from that first meeting now (2009) and I am the Principal at Millars Well Primary School in Karratha. Michael works in our school regularly and has done so for the last 2 years. He works with all students in class groups and teaches dance.

Michael main work is with the wider community including the inland Pilbara region promoting and guiding young artists in the area of the performing arts. I have personally seen the productions during the year at the Walkington Theatre and the high standards of performance have been amazing.

These programs have given a broad range of young people opportunities they would not normally encounter. They have become role models for others. There have been indigenous and non indigenous participants. The success of these events and programs can be measured by the success of these festivals and the good response from those attending in the audience. There are many positive community messages by valuing the arts and diversity. The programs would not run unless there was funding to support it. This is a great opportunity for an organization to share its view of social citizenship and corporate responsibility in a very public way.

I believe that Michael is a very professional and dedicated person enthusiastic about the Arts. He is a positive role model to all people and in particular Indigenous Australians. His work is commendable and has positive influences upon the wider community.

I support his continued work in this area.

Kind regards

Weston Jackson

Principal

Millars Well Primary School

11/3/09



Karratha Primary School

ABN 62 01 5 742 571

Turner Way, Karratha, 6714

Telephone: (08) 9185 1026 Facsimile: (08) 9185 3622

Email: principal.karratha.ps@det.wa.edu.au

06.03.09

Letter of Support for The Michael Leslie Foundation for the Arts.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Our School first had the opportunity to work with Michael Leslie during 2007. Through his sponsored position, he contacted the School and discussed the vision he had for dance and drama and offered an invitation to the school to be part of it.

The programme he outlined dovetailed well with the School's plans to promote performing arts across the year levels. We, as a school, had found the constraints of staffing such a position a very difficult obstacle to overcome. His offer helped, in a very significant way, to meet our immediate and longer terms needs.

The dance programme he brought to the school was an unqualified success! He readily engaged with the children and they responded by performing at high levels and at levels well above what we had originally envisaged. To achieve such high order outcomes required the teacher to be highly skilled not only in the relevant arts area but also in being able to be connected and relevant to the students. As I said, it was a highly successful dance programme and something we have built on since.

During 2008 Michael conducted a series of dance lessons for students who were identified as being exceptional dancers in each school. This culminated in a series of performances at school presentation nights. Again, it was an example of what can be achieved by our students if they are given the opportunity to be tutored by skilled practitioners. Michael will again be working with another cohort of students in the school this year.

On another level, schools in the Karratha Hub have held meetings with Michael where he has outlined his desire to widen the scope of the work he does through the establishment of a Foundation for the Arts. This is something Karratha children, historically, simply have not be able to experience nor be part of. It is part of all school's core business to ensure every child has their needs met. Those who have talent in the Arts often leave the area due to lack of opportunities for them to explore their area of expertise. This, I believe, has a negative effect on the community. I also believe the establishment of the foundation would assist greatly in meeting this need and helping families to stay together and grow in the Pilbara.

In summary, the school and town have been very fortunate to have such a highly credentialed, talented, enthusiastic and committed person willing to work and support our youth. He has a vast array of plans for the immediate and long term future through his foundation and I fully support him in his quest for its establishment and future success.

Yours sincerely

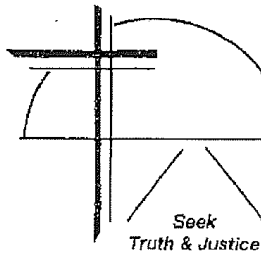
Mark Smyth
Principal

27 Feb 2009 10:37

St Luke's College

08 9185 2124

p.2



ST LUKE'S COLLEGE

Karratha

27 February 2009

Reference for the Michael Leslie Foundation for the Arts

To Whom It May Concern

I have had the pleasure of working with Michael Leslie during the past three years in my capacity as Principal of St Luke's College.

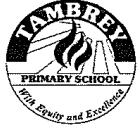
It has been an absolute joy to observe Michael's work with the young people of St Luke's and indeed of the region of Karratha generally. He has initiated and developed a wonderfully enriching culture of performance in drama and dance in our remote region. His worth to the young people of Karratha and the surrounding region is significant. We are very fortunate to have a man of Michael's talent, enthusiasm and ability to inspire young people in our community.

St Luke's College is currently building a new Gym/Performing Arts Venue and we would be honoured if Michael chose our venue to rehearse and stage various productions that he is coordinating. We will ensure that our Performing Arts Centre is available to the wider community for the benefit of all performing arts.

We are always keen to host visiting performers in music, dance and drama in our centre. I hope that our expanded facility will enhance the growth of the Arts in our region and inspire to young people to be a part of the many wonderful productions that Michael has planned.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Bothe
B. Psych., Dip. Ed., B.A., M.Ed. Admin., Grad. Dip. Arts.(Theol.) MACE, MACEL
Principal
St Luke's College



Tambrey Primary School

Tambrey Drive, Karratha WA 6714
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Donna Moore
Specialist Teacher
Tambrey Primary School



Department of
Education and Training

27 February 2009

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Peter Bothe
B. Psych., Dip. Ed., B.A., M.Ed. Admin., Grad. Dip. Arts.(Theol.) MACE, MACEL
Principal
St Luke's College



Your ref:
Our ref: DT/1/11: 078170
Enquiries: Don Webster

9th March 2009

The Projects and Residencies Assessment Panel
Country Arts WA,
PO Box 7012
Cloisters Square
Perth WA 6850

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Proposed Three Trees Story - Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program

The Shire of Roebourne would be pleased to examine ways in which it can partner with other stakeholders in the above project. Having read the above performance project I have no hesitation in supporting the funding application to Country Arts WA by Dickon Oxenburgh for the dramaturge, and for the director to develop the workshop draft of the Three Trees project.

Stage two of this project is an important step towards the final production where the stories gathered in stage one will be adapted as series of monologues, to be performed in promenade style, using various locations of community significance around the old town site of Roebourne.

This project will assist in the gathering and preservation of historically and culturally important stories and it has the potential to consolidate Roebourne's position as a centre for the performing arts in the Pilbara. In addition, the building of local performance and production skills through skills development will enable young people to participate in future productions that build on pride and knowledge of the past.

It has been said that to make sense of the present we need to understand our past; this is vital to our sense of identity.

Yours sincerely

Don Webster
Manager Community Development

PO Box 219 Karratha Western Australia 6714 Facsimile: (08) 9185 1626 Telephone: (08) 9186 8555
E-mail: soa@roebourne.wa.gov.au Web: www.roebourne.wa.gov.au



Event/Project Report

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Event/Project: National Youth Dance Conference Mandurah | Date: 12 April – 19 April 2009 | Contact: Shannara Smith 9366 5526 |
| Background: | Rio Tinto is a founding partner of the Michael Leslie Pilbara Performing Arts Program. As part of this sponsorship, Michael Leslie arranged for 10 students to travel to Perth to participate in the National Youth Dance Conference in Mandurah. | |
| Venue: | Fishtrap Theatre Mandurah and other Venues | |
| Attendance: | 10 students from the Pilbara 6 boys from Tom Price 4 girls from Roebourne 200 students attended the Conference nationally and internationally | |
| Notes/Comments: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Cost: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rio Tinto Contribution: \$8,543.70 ○ Grant Australian Foundation for Young People: \$4,235.00 <p>The conference consisted of 5 days of classes, two nights of performances on Wednesday and Friday night and a final performance day on the Saturday. The week day classes involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.00-10.00 yoga class • 10.30-12.00 techniques class • 13.00-17.00 3 choreographers with 60 students in each group each choreographed a dance piece which was performed on the Saturday of the Conference on the Mandurah foreshore. In one of the three groups Roddy Hughes from Tom Price was the main performer, an honour that only three students of the 200 that participated were given <p>The Tom Price students opened the performance night on the Friday, followed by the students from Roebourne.</p> <p>Overall the event was a great success and the students from the Pilbara were well received, doing their community proud. Many noticed the students grew immensely over the week in Perth, never complaining with two students in particular showing leadership potential.</p> <p>Attendance at the Conference also helped to improve the students' self-esteem, as was illustrated by the intensity of their performances during the week, there was no shame.</p> | |

Photos:

