

Media Release

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2016 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominees unveiled Even representation of men and women marks historic first for the Award

Thursday 18 August 2016 – Six talented dancers from The Australian Ballet have been announced as nominees for the most prestigious prize in Australian ballet, the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award. Now in its 14th year, the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award helps young ballet dancers reach their full potential.

For the first time in the award's history, there is an equal representation of genders among the nominees. The 2016 Telstra Ballet Award Nominees are **Brodie James** (Perth, WA), **Callum Linnane** (Townsville, QLD/ Ballarat, VIC), **Jarryd Madden** (Sydney/ Wauchope, NSW), **Jill Ogai** (Sydney, NSW/ Adelaide, SA), **Nicola Curry** (born in Baltimore, USA, resides between Brisbane and Melbourne) and **Jade Wood** (Cairns, QLD).

The 2016 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award winner will take home a \$20,000 cash prize, while the winner of the People's Choice Award, decided by public vote, will receive \$5,000.

To help the public decide who should win the People's Choice Award in 2016, Telstra, together with The Australian Ballet has created a [video series](#) that allows all Australians to connect with the dancers on a new level. The videos take a look behind the scenes of The Australian Ballet showcasing where each of the dancers have come from and what drove them to where they are today.

Telstra's Chief Financial Officer, Warwick Bray said the 32 year partnership with The Australian Ballet was about connecting audiences of all ages and backgrounds with the Ballet through experiences that are enabled by technology.

"Each year we strive to use our partnership to enhance the way people can connect with the ballet. This year, we've created videos telling the stories of each dancer who has been nominated for the Award, giving audiences an opportunity to connect with the dancers off-stage. Audiences can access the content from a connected device, at a time that suits them, including on the way to the ballet performance," said Mr Bray.

The Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister commented on the calibre of this year's dancers.

"It's wonderful to see an equal female to male split in this year's nominees showing the great depth of ability across the company. Each nominee share both passion and talent, but have interestingly diverse backgrounds coming from across Australia and overseas," said Mr. McAllister.

The award has helped catapult the careers of some of The Australian Ballet's brightest stars, with seven former winners being promoted to principal artist in the company following their award, including Matthew Lawrence (2003 winner), Amber Scott (2004), Lana Jones (2005), Daniel Gaudiello (2007), Kevin Jackson (2008), Ty King-Wall (2010) and Chengwu Guo (2011).

The 2016 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award winners will be announced on Friday, 2nd December 2016 at the opening night ceremony of *Coppélia*. Australians are encouraged to watch the video series and vote for their favourite dancer in the People's Choice Award at telstra.com.au/TBDA

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