Outcome 1  
*Dance Ideas*

Students use creative processes and cultural understandings to explore and develop ideas.

Outcome 2  
*Dance Production*

Students use skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies to create art works appropriate to audience, purpose and context.

Outcome 3  
*Responses to Dance*

Students use their critical, social, cultural and aesthetic understandings to respond to, reflect on, and evaluate dance works

Outcome 4  
*Dance in Society*

Students understand the role of dance in society

**Background**

Traditional Australian Aboriginal dance relates closely to Creation stories and is often performed on sacred ground. Dance is a way of passing on cultural knowledge and defines a group’s identity, place and responsibilities. Body decoration and specific gestures relate to kin and other relationships. Certain performances are gender specific with men and women having separate ceremonies.

The term Corroboree is in common use today to refer to some Australian Aboriginal dances, although this term is thought to have come from New South Wales and Victoria.

**Ideas for teaching units in Dance from an Aboriginal perspective**
• Invite a Western Australian dance group to visit your school and perform for staff and students. Organise for dance students to have a workshop to learn from the dancers.
  o Check the list of Guest Presenters in the GECKOS file in your school for other WA dancers who you could invite.

• Traditional Aboriginal dance was generally carried out on sacred ground. It is an interesting point that before colonisation in Sydney, groups used to gather for corroborees at Bennelong Point. Aboriginal dance is still carried on today at this spot but inside the Sydney Opera House which itself stands on Bennelong Point.
  o Students could identify sites where traditional dance was carried out in their local area.
  o What was the significance of these sites?

• The Bangarra Dance Theatre is recognised as one of Australia’s best Aboriginal dance companies.
  o Students watch some of Bangarra’s performances on line or on DVD and discuss what aspects of their dance are Aboriginal and why their dance is so appealing. http://www.bangarra.com.au/
  o Students view and study performances which combine traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures with aspects of dance of other contemporary cultures.
  o Students investigate the use of ochres, design and ritual in body painting. They can find out about the painting of bodies for Aboriginal dance at: http://www.austmus.gov.au/bodyart/painting/paintup.htm
• Copyright laws exist in Australia and come into play when a group wishes to put on a performance written by another person. For Aboriginal cultural groups, copyright issues extend to protocols which must be adhered to.
  o Students study these protocols to gain an understanding of why they are so important to Aboriginal people. See http://www.bangarra.com.au/
  o Students collect stories from the local community and use to create dance pieces of their own.