STUDENTS from five Wimmera schools will strut their stuff on stage at the Shine on 2010: Victorian State Schools Spectacular tomorrow and Sunday.

Ballarat Gap Primary School, Pomonal Primary School, Willaura Primary School, Rainbow Secondary College and St Arnprior Secondary College will participate in three shows at Melbourne’s Hisense Arena.

Primary classroom teacher Theresa Gemmola said three of the school’s eight students were involved in the performance.

“We have three grade five children involved and we’re going with Hall Gap which has about 13 students involved,” she said.

Mrs Gemmola said the event was a great opportunity.

“They learn a wide variety of music, from classical to Michael Jackson,” she said.

“The school has been involved in every production in the past 10 years and all our ex-students who have done it have said it was one of the most memorable things.”

Rainbow Secondary College principal Robyn Bellinger said year 11 student Marcel Macalinao would be one of the lead vocalists in the Schools Spectacular.

“Mariel does VCE music at the school and has been studying music since she moved to Australia from the Philippines in 2008,” Mrs Bellinger said.

“Mariel’s college music teacher Anne Perkins encouraged her to audition last year and she’s been travelling down to Melbourne every weekend since term two to rehearse.”

Mariel’s mother Conception Burns said she was proud of her daughter.

“I’m so thankful they’ve given her a chance,” Mrs Burns said.

“She’s got the talent, but she still needs to be developed.”

ORGANISERS have promised the 15th annual Barley Banquet will be the best yet, despite recently-flooded paddocks.

Tickets for the Rupanyup event went on sale earlier this month.

Organiser Ben Cordes said women might have to leave their high heels at home and opt for gumboots.

“There’s not doubt we have a fantastic crop this year, but people might need to bring the gumboots,” he said.

Mr Cordes said anyone wanting to attend should book early, because tickets were selling quickly.

He said tickets cost $120 a person, plus an additional $15 a person for a bus which would take guests from Horsham to the banquet and back again.

“This year the bus will leave from the Bull and Mouth Hotel in Wilson Street, Horsham, at 10.30am,” he said.

Mr Cordes said the event had gained a significant following and people who attended kept coming back year after year.

“The fact that a couple of members of the Rupanyup community came up with this 15 years ago and developed it to this stage is a credit to the community,” he said.

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