



NEWSLETTER

Term 4, 2016

We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing



Presentation Day

Lois Peeler, Executive Director Presentation Day Speech 2016

On behalf of the Worawa Community it is my pleasure to welcome you all here today. It is lovely to see so many family, friends and supporters here to join us in our day of celebration.

Worawa Aboriginal College is now in its 33 year of operation. Worawa is an Aboriginal initiative, owned and governed by Aboriginal people, for our Aboriginal young people. While the semantics may only subtly differ from other indigenous places of learning, it is important to note

that at Worawa we formulate our programs to support Aboriginal ways of knowing as well as mainstream understandings.

The Worawa Education Program is based on the concept of “two-way” learning. This involves the Learning and Teaching Program addressing the key Learning areas of mainstream curriculum whilst taking into account Aboriginal culture, values, spiritual beliefs and learning styles.

In terms of rigour and compliance, the ACARA Curriculum, (Assessment and Reporting Authority) document

is honoured in our benchmarking and in our competency and skill base development. Seeing through an Aboriginal lens in no way compromises curriculum integrity but rather provides a unique perspective. We do not merely add to standard models or adjust usual contexts, we ensure the content and examples, programs and courses have a clear focus on the support of Aboriginal knowledge and learning styles. At Worawa Aboriginal College we nurture the Aboriginal identity of each student and emphasise the importance of knowing and having

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pride in themselves, of valuing Aboriginal lifestyle and history in the context of being a contributing member of contemporary Australian society & being able to walk in both worlds. Worawa embraces the pillars of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy which include:

- Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- Culture and identity
- Partnerships
- Attendance
- Transition Points – including Pathways to Post School Options
- School & Child Readiness
- Literacy and Numeracy

In this regard we acknowledge the Victorian State Government for the introduction of the Murrung Aboriginal Education Plan. The vision for Murrung is for the rich and thriving culture, knowledge and experience of our First Nations peoples are celebrated by all Victorians; where our universal service systems are inclusive, responsive and respectful of Koorie people at every stage of their learning and development journey; and where every Koorie person achieves their potential, succeeds in life, and feels strong in their cultural identity.

Worawa Aboriginal College is aligned with both the national and state Aboriginal Education strategies.

A clear emphasis of Worawa is working with students to develop an understanding of pathways and opportunities for learning - and to facilitate transitions to continued education or employment.

In this regard the College proposes to broaden our curriculum offerings with a pathways approach, to further education or employment. In order to achieve its aims and objectives, Worawa enlists the support of a wide range of partners. In 2017 the College will offer the following streams:

- Sports Academy. Partnerships AFL Victoria, various sports associations, SEDA, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence and Bond University.
- Caring for Country – environment and ecology, Cadet Ranger Program. Partnerships with Healesville Sanctuary, Ranges Tec and La Trobe University.
- The arts – performing arts, dance, music, song, acting. Partnerships with Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts, Short Black Opera, Bangarra Dance Company, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance Academy, Malthouse Theatre, Footsteps & Wakakirri.
- Hospitality – food and tourism. Partnerships with Ranges Tec, William Angliss and National Indigenous Training Academy at Ayers Rock.



In terms of technology Worawa is a member of the Box Hill Lilydale Lake campus for Box Hill Lilydale Lakeside where there will be a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills. The College has partnerships with the CSIRO, University of Melbourne - GETEC, the RISE Camp, and is part of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mathematics Alliance. Worawa has established an Earth Science program that includes, aquaculture, hydroponics, weather station and a vegetable garden in a state of the art climate controlled hot house.

A key role of Worawa is in building relationships and communicating the vision of what the school is about, in communicating the value of education, and in developing and maintaining a productive partnership between the school and students' parents / families and communities. The value of such partnerships is recognised as integral to student commitment to school and engagement with learning.

Each year Worawa conducts an annual forum with families. The School - Community Forum is aimed at enabling input from parents into the education direction of the College in a meaningful way. Over the past two days we held the 2016 School Community Forum. We have shared with them the programs conducted by the College and the introduction of new and exciting developments in 2017 that are aimed to Inspire, Empower and Transform our young women.

Worawa Aboriginal College exists to enable students to 'walk confidently in both worlds.' Students maintain strength and pride in their own unique culture and in that culture's importance to Global Knowledge, while also learning more about the dominant, mainstream Australian culture. This is with a view to being able to take an influential place in their own community or on national or international stages.

In regard to the international stage - I would like to announce that Worawa has been invited to give a keynote presentation on 'Telling our Stories Our Way' at the 2017 Worlds Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Toronto Canada. I am pleased to announce that two students have been identified for scholarships to attend WIPCE - the students are Bianca Roseblade and Stephanie Williams. scholarship sponsored by LaTrobe University.

We are absolutely delighted to have a number of parents and family members here today to join with us in celebrating the achievements of our students.

Opposite page, top left: Stephanie Williams was awarded the Hyllus Maris Award by Auntie Lillian Tamiru and Board Chair Mark Thomson. Top right: Keynote speaker Yorta Yorta soprano Deborah Cheetham AO. Bottom right: Farewell to transitioning students. Bottom left: Inspector Clive Williams presented Melanie Cook with the Victoria Police Citizenship Award.

Below: 2017 Student Leadership Team.



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WELLBEING

Our Wellbeing Team works alongside teaching and boarding staff to provide a trauma informed approach to support our students. Many students present with complex issues that has impacted their ability to focus on education. The College provides sensitive support from all staff to enhance student general wellbeing and attachment to the school to ensure students are acknowledged, contained and nurtured unconditionally. It is this repetition of positive regard (together with routine, clear boundaries and structure) that gradually helps the students to feel secure and to develop positive identity and self-esteem to help them to focus on their academic learning. We work actively to help students to identify their issues and emotions and use effective ways to reduce their dysregulated states. We also work alongside parents and Elders to address student issues.

We are delighted to announce this initiative of a Student Leader Team who have been selected as role models for their altruistic qualities and engagement in both their learning and the many extra-curricular activities Worawa has to offer. They will meet with Wellbeing for weekly leadership training, actively support new students and promote empathic and inclusive peer relationships.

Providing Tools to Help Our Students Develop Self Confidence and Social Skills:

- Connecting to culture through our Aboriginal Protocols and Cultural Program is at the heart of the Students' Wellbeing through enhancing their identity, spirituality, self -esteem and pride as young Aboriginal women
- Mindfulness is used to promote calmness and help reduce stress
- Restorative Practice is used to help students to learn about the impact of their behaviour on others, promote empathy and resolve conflict
- Worawa Way Awards are announced weekly to recognise and promote kind supportive behaviour and resilience

The Art Therapy program supports students at Worawa by providing a space for students to express themselves verbally and / or through the process of working with art media. The combined therapy relationship and art process is directed to address student concerns and aspects of emotional wellbeing.

Students also benefit from having the space and opportunity in Art Therapy to engage in artistic self-expression, which is often used at

Worawa to reconnect with their family, culture and home land.

A number of students at Worawa attend weekly individual Art Therapy sessions. Lately students have working with printmaking to produce woodcuts and linocut relief prints in which they practiced skills in carving and printing. The relief printmaking process involves different concepts of drawing an image, relating to raised and carved surfaces, which simplify forms and details to blocks of single colour.

Within my role also assist in designing and facilitating art activities with Carolyn Aston, Wellbeing Coordinator, relating to broader aspects of the Wellbeing program. Most recently, we ran a number of sessions in which students drew or painted a place that was special to them. This related to the Mindfulness program at Worawa and produced a wonderful series of calming and uplifting landscapes and places.

While the emphasis in Art Therapy is on process and experience rather than the product, many beautiful works have also been produced within the program and students often feel a sense of achievement and are pleased with their finished works.

ENGLISH

Writing Project: Telling Our Stories Our Way

All of the students were privileged to be involved in two sessions of workshops with Tony, being inspired by his humour, creativity and passion for owning and telling your own stories. He delivered a very strong message about the power of story-telling, in any form, for keeping your own identity and your culture strong. Inspirations for stories can come from a special photo, a memory, an important person or place in your life, or perhaps the story of how

your naughty behaviour resulted in a permanent scar somewhere on you. A number of students were brave enough to tell their stories in front of the whole group, and many more spent time creating and writing their own stories over the next few weeks. We are very proud to announce that a collection of our students' writing, along with artwork, has been published into a full-colour Anthology which will be launched on Presentation Day and we look forward to sharing this with families and friends, home communities and the wider community.

Picture right: Shantelle McCormack's artwork was selected for the anthology project.



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Kids Teaching Kids

Five of our students were selected to contribute to a film and travel to Sydney to present it at Kirrawee High School, as part of the large Kids Teaching Kids organisation. A range of schools were gathered, with students devising and presenting workshops to groups of students from several different schools. The topics were as varied as Homelessness, Religious Diversity, Cyber Bullying and Environmental Awareness. The day before the event, the girls met up with the students of Henry Lawson High School, from rural NSW, and spent an enjoyable afternoon escaping the heat at Cronulla Beach. At the event, the Henry Lawson students presented a detailed and thought-provoking role-play on the impact of droughts on cotton production, a key farming activity in their region. To add to the farmers' challenges, this year their region has experienced serious flooding. Our students gave the Acknowledgement to the Eora nation on behalf of all the participants, and our film opened the day's proceedings. All the audience members were very moved and impressed by our footage which included the school poem, the singing and dancing to Gathu Mawala from Culture Day, and the reading of two pieces of writing that are being included in our first Anthology of student writing.

Peer Teaching in Action – A Visit to Badger Creek Primary School

The girls in Blue group took on a big challenge this term. In class, they used both internet research and first-hand accounts to prepare detailed Powerpoints on the Stolen Generations. The students practised their presentations in front of the class before going to Badger Creek Primary



School to teach the Year 5 and 6 students. The Badger Creek students were divided into groups and two or three of our students were in charge of each group. The girls were nervous beforehand, but on the day, everyone did an excellent job. The Badger Creek students were very engaged by everything they heard and asked some very thoughtful questions. They then worked together to produce posters for their classrooms. The Worawa students shared stories of their own families' experiences during the time of the Stolen Generations, really helping the younger students to understand the importance and impact. The Badger Creek students were also fascinated to see some of the home communities on Google Earth and hear about the girls' experiences, and were keen to learn some words in language. The very successful and enjoyable visit ended up with a quick game of basketball. All of the girls were outstanding representatives of the College.

CULTURE

Aunty Zeta continues to teach Aboriginal history, language and culture and throughout Term 4 focused on songs in language. In addition students were very lucky to spend time with a number of Aboriginal artists and leaders. Earlier in the year, girls spent time with the talented Gamilaraay artist Akeria Rose Armstrong in painting a very beautiful artwork that told the story of the College and the communities of each of the artists involved. The painting sold from our Sandra Bardas Art Gallery and will remain in the Yarra Valley. The girls also spent time with Aunty Lorraine Williams learning the beautiful song Gathu Mawala as performed by Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu and Blue King Brown. Students from Elcho Island created

a brand new dance to accompany the song and all students took part in a carefully rehearsed performance. The girls were very proud to surprise Aunty Lois with a beautiful performance on the Dreaming Trail that was so beautiful that it brought Aunty Lois to tears.

Building Confidence in Reading, Understanding and Applying

In English classes this term, the girls have been encouraged to develop more confidence in reading and understanding, and apply what they have read to real-life activities. Students in Green and Red groups followed directions to assemble and decorate fantastic Gingerbread houses. Green group have also very successfully cooked (and eaten!) Honeyjoys, pancakes and some birthday cakes, accurately

following the recipes. Black group have worked on a range of writing activities, looking at both fictional and real-world stories. Blue group has spent time each week reading with the girls in Green and Red, hearing them read aloud and reading with them. Everyone read the wonderful story *The Burnt Stick*, which is a fictional, but moving account of a young boy taken during the era of the Stolen Generations. The older students discussed the key ideas with their 'students', acting as very effective teachers in these lessons. Next year will see the Library shelves stocked with even more new books, which the students will be able to borrow and read at any time, and the new books will include some by our recent inspirational visiting author, Tony Birch.



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WEATHER STATION AT WORAWA

Worawa's weather station contributes weather observations to the Weather Observations Website. This initiative is hosted by the United Kingdom's Meteorological Office, and is supported by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Weather information from Worawa's weather station is fed to the servers in the UK every hour. You can browse to:

<http://wow.metoffice.gov.uk/>

and search for "Worawa" to access the weather information that Worawa contributes to worldwide weather observations.

In conjunction with this, students applied their knowledge of probability and statistics in a Mathematics project. Using actual rainfall data, students used Microsoft Excel to analyse the data using formulae, and create graphical representations of the data. Through this, students learnt about transforming data into useful information and how graphical representations of data can facilitate comprehension of information.

SPORT

The last couple of months have been very busy with Australian Rules football, Touch Football, netball, basketball and softball. We have four Worawa students chosen for Eastern Ranges girl's football squad and two girls chosen for Woomeras 2017.

The Melbourne Marathon had good representation, and above all the girls have enjoyed their sport.

Meaghan Donald who is the school personal trainer, has had a major impact with her early morning gym sessions and dance aerobic sessions. We have some regulars at 07.00 hours week days, and combined with the healthy eating plan the girls have enjoyed optimum fitness and a reduction in sport related injuries.

Generally everyone has enjoyed good health and the long winter did not interfere with the school regime and no one was burdened with flu.

All immunisation is up to date, and the dental van spent 3 months over two sessions providing dental care for all students. The optometrist, physiotherapist podiatrist and hearing health were all present this term.

We are also looking forward to another umpiring squad development group to ensure that all aspects of team sport is covered and provide another avenue for leadership and skill building.

MATHEMATICS

In Mathematics this term, students covered measurement of angles and probability. Students also experienced online learning by using a learning management system.

Paper-based worksheets were supplemented by interactive online assignments. Students were taught as a class, and also engaged in workgroups and independent learning. Learning about different types of angles and using protractors to measure angles was fun, but the most fun was working out angles to shoot at aliens!

Before learning about probability, students revised fractions, decimals and percentages. Online quizzes, challenges and puzzles made revision and reinforcement of learning a lot more enjoyable and memorable. In probability, students learnt how to construct probability trees, likelihood of outcomes and how to calculate probability in different experiments.

This knowledge was put to practical use in analysing actual rainfall data and finding answers to commonly asked questions about rainfall.

SCIENCE: STEM

In science this term the students explored the concepts of Physics. Some of these topics included Simple machines, such as levers, pulleys, gears etc., Forces, Gravity and Air resistance. These topics were explored in both theoretical and practical activities. For the practical activities there was a cross curricular collaboration between Sports and Science where we were able to take the girls to some exciting excursions such as Bike riding and Archery. These activities explored the health aspects as well as the science aspects of how our body works and how forces are changed.

The Ranger program also explored some new STEM principles such as aquaponics and horticulture.

Aquaponics is essentially the combination of Aquaculture and Hydroponics, both aquaculture and hydroponics are very efficient methods of producing fish and vegetables respectively. Aquaponics combines these two and turns the negative aspects of each system into a positive. In Aquaponics the waste produced by the fish is converted by bacteria into nutrients the plants can use.

The system initially started small but has slowly been added to over the term to incorporate more plant beds and most recently a bathtub to keep and breed yabbies. We currently have 15 Silver Perch and 10 yabbies in the system and are growing a number of different plants including, tomatoes, parsley, strawberries, watermelon, cucumber, lettuce, pumpkin, capsicum and celery.

The aim of this system is to give the students some practical skills such as basic plumbing, plant production, fish production and laboratory skills as well as the ability to setup and run their own aquaponics system so that they could produce their own fresh food for use at home or possibly to sell to a market for a profit.