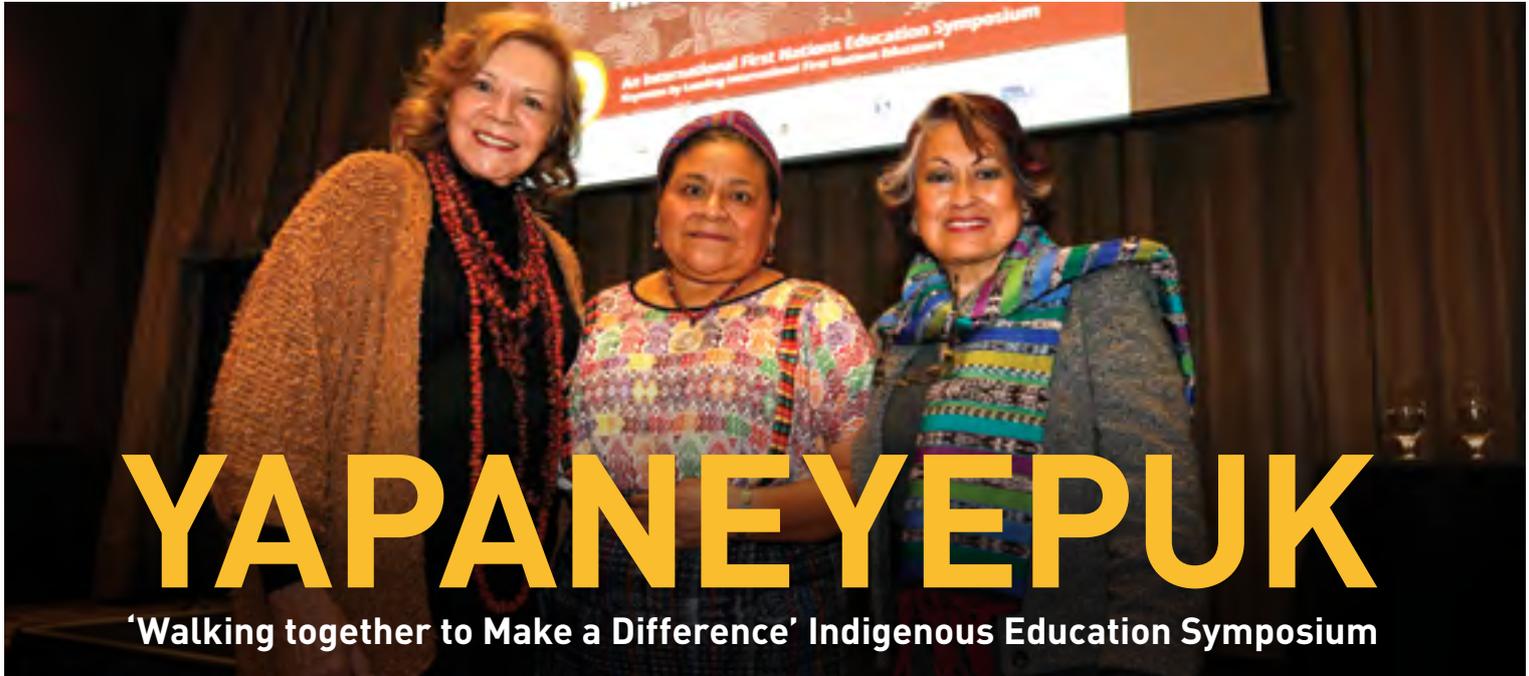




NEWSLETTER

Term 3, 2015

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YAPANNEYEPUK

'Walking together to Make a Difference' Indigenous Education Symposium

The Yapanneyepuk – 'Walking together to Make a Difference' Indigenous Education Symposium hosted by Worawa Aboriginal College, was an interactive program of keynote presentations and panel discussions held 27-29 July.

Yapanneyepuk recognised that First Nations Peoples have a belief in, and commitment to, holism in education which values total community involvement in and Indigenous leadership of education. This knowledge is foundational to providing students with a "learning journey" which will equip them to operate fully within their first culture, the western scientific community and as global citizens.

The organising committee's objectives for participants attending the Yapanneyepuk Symposium were to:

- Deepen knowledge and understanding of First Nation ways of knowing, being, doing and learning.
- Enhance knowledge and understanding required for teaching First Nation students and support building aspirations for higher education
- Understand of the importance of the integration of Culture, Wellbeing and Knowledge Systems within the learning environment
- Connect with local, national and international educators who are leaders in their field and willing to share their experiences
- Provide opportunities to discuss, share and network at a local, national and international level

Keynote presentations, from esteemed First Nation Educators from four cultures/countries, which feature the four themes of the Symposium—Culture, Wellbeing, Knowledge Systems and Partnerships.

Day 1 commenced with the keynote by Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Nobel Peace Prize winner. Her keynote grounded the Symposium and the 'learning journey' with the integral central position of culture, language and spirituality for identity and education. This then fed through to the Wellbeing Theme and Professor Kerry Arabena's keynote which reflected on the reciprocal relationship between culture and wellbeing: that 'understanding identity (culture) is critical to wellbeing.' But also that for students to learn, their wellbeing must be addressed first.

Day 2 addressed the Learning/ Knowledge Systems Theme and the Partnerships Theme. During the 'Towards an Indigenous Curriculum' keynote Jana Harcharek discussed the working curriculum model that integrates both the Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and the non-indigenous western curriculum.



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Distinguished Prof Graham Hingangaroa Smith's keynote for the Partnerships Theme further extended discussions in the previous keynotes and acted as a call to action for participants.

Yapaneyepuk was more than a symposium for speaking and learning about educational practice and issues. It was also a platform to share cultural practices, arts and communication styles. Honouring the represented traditions and cultural practices was a highlight of the conference program. As each Key Note took the stage, an appropriate traditional welcome was offered.

To call and welcome the delegates initially, Mr. Mark Thomson, Worawa Board of Directors, played the didgeridoo. Delegates took their place and this distinctively Aboriginal sound set the tone for the opening of Yapaneyepuk.

It was exciting to see both a traditional dance from the Worawa girls (North Wind), followed by a modern dance that expressed the movement of our youth into confident adulthood. The Worawa Choir sang a traditional Yorta Yorta song to continue to honour and engender the right spirit for this important symposium.

Guatemalan dance was offered as a welcome to Keynote Speaker, Nobel Peace Prize Winner- Rigoberta Menchu Tum. Along with a sung Torres Strait Islander welcome for Professor Kerry Arabena, Inupiaq Educator Jana Harcharek from Alaska performed a traditional ritual of 'Lighting the Oil' and a rousing Haka was performed to honour Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith; the many cultures came together in a spirit of unity to share their understandings and time - honed knowledge systems.

The Gala Dinner continued to showcase indigenous talent Nathaniel Andrew, guitar virtuoso and Ms Rheannan Port, Dancer (ex Bangarra and Graduate of NAISDA). The Governor's Reception provided an opportunity for Worawa students to present a student art work to Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AM.

Guests were treated to a performance by Yorta Yorta Soprano Deborah Cheetham AO.

YOUTH FORUM

The Yapaneyepuk Youth Forum was designed to provide senior school students with the opportunity to make connections with ideas, challenges and with each other as they explored the theme of recognition through the Aboriginal values of respect, relationship, responsibility and rigour.

Young people from twelve schools across all systems and sectors, came together on Wednesday, 29th July 2015. To both affirm and stimulate the students an address was given by the Yapaneyepuk Symposium Knowledge Systems Theme keynote speaker - Jana Harcharek, Director of the North Slope Borough School Districts Inupiaq Education Department, Alaska. Jana spoke of the work of the Inupiaq people to develop an education system, which presents a combined First Nation and Western Scientific Learning and Teaching Program for students.

Students then participated in three RECOGNITION workshops, which had been designed for students to challenge their knowledge and understanding and to share their thinking. The questions that the students designed during the workshops reflected the understanding and knowledge that they gained working together. The interest and involvement of the students in the Forum workshop activities was reflected in the insightfulness, interest, concern, issues raised in the questions prepared by the students.

The Yapaneyepuk Youth Forum was presented through generous sponsorship from Holmesglen Institute, The University of Melbourne, The Victorian Department of Education and Training and with special thanks to ACCOR IBIS.



STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC)

The Student Representative Council (SRC) students have performed their duties most admirably this term. Every week they meet, take meeting minutes and discuss College events, fund-raising activities and student issues. A highlight for the term was the successful fund-raising total of \$800 raised for victims of the Nepal earthquake. This was achieved through selling biscuits and collecting coins in donation jars placed in all of the boarding houses. Other responsibilities this term have included; College representation at public events, welcoming visitors to the College, performing the Acknowledgement of Country and preparing an SRC report for the assembly each week. The SRC students were very fortunate to represent the College at a Reception at Government House in July, and they were also guides to international visitors who visited the College following the Yapaneyepuk Symposium.



COMMUNITY SKYPE

This term we have started a Community Links Skype program. The aim of this program is to strengthen our connection to home communities and also to support students and families during the term by facilitating contact with friends and family back home.

Our first Skype was with Elliott Community. Many family members were there to say hello as well as the schools "Stronger Sister" program. There were lots of stories shared by both sides and lots of laughs. The Worawa girls loved being able to see school friends, parents and especially seeing their younger siblings. They also listened carefully to the messages of support and love from home. Thank you to the Elliott community for making our Skype such a successful experience.

If you would like to be a part of our Skype sessions, please contact the school and we will endeavour to set up a Skype session during term 4.



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SCIENCE

This term, students learnt about the seasons through a combination of utilising traditional seasonal knowledge, exploring the environment around them and studying the movements of the Earth in relation to the sun. The unit began with students sharing their knowledge of their home seasons and the traditional bush foods and medicines available at different times of the year. They remembered constellations recognised in their cultures, and the stories they contained. They then examined the environment around them, learning about the Wurundjeri seasons and bush foods, and going on walks to find signs of change in the environment. The students identified the blooming of the Silver Wattle trees on the banks of the Yarra (which flows through the Worawa grounds) as a sign that Berrentak Darr-Karr, or the Wurundjeri winter, was coming to an end. Students made connections with their own seasonal knowledge, and were

then taken to Scienceworks, where they learnt about the reason for the seasons – the Earth's tilt. The unit culminated in students creating models of the Earth in space, which demonstrated why different parts of the Earth receive differing amounts of sun during a year and why the constellations change seasonally.

ICT

This term Worawa's ICT and Science classes were focussed on the theme of weather. The teaching of this theme was greatly aided by the use of local weather data collected from our very own weather station. Students utilised temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind and pressure data in Microsoft Excel to interpret and analyse information for the purpose of predicting the weather. Students were challenged by the mathematical and scientific concepts embedded within this task, but successfully developed their ICT skills while deepening their knowledge of Traditional and Western systems of understanding weather.

MINISTER VISITS ENGLISH CLASS

The Hon. James Merlino, Minister for Education visited Worawa and spoke with teachers and students. Students have been studying the text "The Fault In Our Stars" by John Green in English. Many tears and giggles have been shared during the reading of the novel. We used an audio book to assist with the reading, and the class has completed a digital scrapbook for their work throughout the term. This has involved creating fake 'Facebook' pages, writing music soundtracks, building an annotated photo scrapbook about Amsterdam, where part of the book is set, and writing an essay, along with the usual work an English class does about a novel. The difference was that all work had to be completed in a digital format. Students have worked well to achieve the outcomes of the task, and managed the frustrations that occasionally come with working in a wholly digital environment.



ART PROJECT

During Term 2 and 3, a group of Worawa students have been visiting Scotch College. With the help of Taungurung Elder, Uncle Mick Harding students embarked on a journey of planning, researching and creating traditional Victorian shields. Uncle Mick led the students through his own work, explaining the linear artwork of Victorian Aboriginal people. Malgaar (Shields) were used traditionally with Liyangayil (Fighting Clubs) for hand to hand combat against enemies. Students visited the NGV exhibition for inspiration, where they were treated to a private walk through of the shields on display and viewed other Indigenous artworks. With the help of the Scotch woodwork department, shields were cut out of wood and students used wood burners to burn design into them. The last task was using paint to add colour, the last step will be for the shields to be lacquered to seal the designs. They will then form part of a display at both Scotch and Worawa.



SPORTS AT WORAWA

NETBALL

With the addition of 7 new students to the squad this term, we continued into the second half of the season with our three teams; The Wallabies, The Echidnas, and The Kangaroos.

The Wallabies, which consisted of mostly new students who had never played netball before, had a somewhat challenging start in the new term. They found themselves playing against teams who had played together for at least a term if not longer. However, this served as a swift and thorough introduction to the game and within a few weeks the Wallabies were moving about the court with the game-knowledge and confidence of a far more experienced team.

The Echidnas also experienced a shakeup of players with many from the previous terms team moving up to fill spaces in the Under 17s Kangaroos team. The new formation didn't hamper the Echidnas for long, though, and the team quickly bonded and regained their level of competitiveness. The Echidnas showed a significant degree of improvement in skills becoming much more controlled and tactical as the season progressed. The Kangaroos burned through the second half of the season to finish third on the ladder, making it all the way to the semi-finals. The girls worked hard in training to refine their already well-developed skills and natural speed and their efforts were evident in the smooth flow and perfect timing of their game. A big thank you to Loretta, who was out of the game for most of the season with a knee injury but who still came to score every week.

BASKETBALL

The basketball teams ended on a successful note. The U16 team won three out of the last four games just missing out on the finals by three points. The U18 team made the finals coming third on the ladder in the regular season in A Reserve,

just missing out on the grand final. The girls played hard every game while demonstrating respect and sportsmanship for their competition and should be very proud. Next term there will be focus on improving the skills of ball handling and shooting technique as well as learning new offensive and defensive strategies.

SOCCER

Worawa has two soccer teams Winyas and Tiddas. This year both teams played a great season, with a mixture of losses, draws and wins. It was a great sight to see how much the girls grew with each game, not only on an individual level but also as a team. The dedication each player had every game was inspiring to see and hear as they communicated and cheered each other on.

Rain, hail or shine they were always pumped and ready to give 100% to play a great game.

No matter whether the team was losing or winning without fail you could always hear laughter from the girls which just reiterated how much they enjoyed playing. There were times however, when they wished they didn't have to play, for example in the driving rain and hail that we

experience in the Yarra Valley, but even on those gloomy days, the girls managed to turn their frowns upside down and get on with the game. The girls should be really proud of the season they played. The position on the ladder by all means doesn't reflect the hard work, commitment and sportsmanship they showed throughout the season, because if it did, they would be first place. Thanks for a great season Winyas and Tiddas!



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KOALA EXPERIENCE DAY

A number of Worawa students had the special privilege of joining Sanctuary staff for a Koala experience day. Students learned about the journey of the 16000 eucalyptus trees planted on Worawa property just two and a half years ago to develop a Koala Browse.

An early start to the day enabled students to work alongside Animal Keepers to service the Koala exhibits, they looked for what had been eaten overnight, the condition of animals and cleanliness of the exhibit for the day ahead. Students then travelled back to the plantation and harvested a day's worth of eucalypt branches with the Sanctuary arborist, for feeding out at the afternoon Koala presentation.

Animal Keepers involved the students with the browse change in front of visitors whilst the Koala presentation took place. Students gathered up the old browse branches and took them to the Kangaroo exhibit where they are placed in the animal's favourite resting areas for feeding and enrichment. Old branches are then gathered and transported to the depot area for mulching which produces the soil for the next generation of plants to use for growth. The girls had a fantastic day and look forward to further activities working alongside the Animal Keepers at Healesville Sanctuary.



RANGER PROGRAM

The Ranger Program provides the opportunity for students to gain experience working with Animal Keepers at the Healesville Sanctuary.

The girls work one on one with the Keepers across all the animals in the Sanctuary and assist with feeding, cleaning exhibits, looking after animal welfare matters and learning about working with native animals in a captive environment.

Each of the girls has been enthusiastic and worked with rigour taking on different responsibilities and developing great working relationships Sanctuary staff. They are taking on different responsibilities and developing great working relationships with the teams of Animal Keepers at the Sanctuary. The program runs with fortnightly half day sessions and each session is in a different area of the park.

Students have gained a new respect and understanding for wildlife conservation and the animals the Sanctuary protects from extinction.

HEHO HELPERS!

In Term 3 a small number of girls were involved with working with the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeaters (affectionately abbreviated to HeHo).

The Helmeted Honeyeater is an endangered bird which is the bird emblem for the State of Victoria and native to the region around Healesville, only 130 birds exist in the wild today. The Healesville Sanctuary has embarked on a breeding programme for this threatened species and the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater group run a nursery that seeks to revegetate the local landscape to provide food and habitat for this bird and other native birdlife and wildlife (including the Leadbeater's Possum – also endangered and native to the Healesville region).

Worawa students and some HeHo volunteers collected plant cuttings and seeds from a number of shrubs and trees on the Worawa property. As the students and volunteers were wandering the property collecting the cuttings, there were lots of discussions about similarities and differences of the plants and their traditional uses to plants back in the students' home communities.

The girls then learnt how to propagate and care for these cuttings in the college greenhouse. The students will plant the healthy, established plants out next term and water them as needed over the warmer months.