



NEWSLETTER

Term 4, 2018

We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing



Presentation Day

We are proud that Worawa is the only Aboriginal owned and governed school in Victoria, and, the only boarding school in the whole of Australia that caters specifically for Aboriginal girls.

And as such it has a unique place in Indigenous Education. Worawa is a place of learning – a place where we can not only learn, but also celebrate our culture and practice our Aboriginal Ways of Knowing, Doing and Being.

At Worawa we embrace the diversity of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We honour the rich cultural traditions, the languages, the art and the experiences of our Indigenous communities across the country.

On Presentation Day we celebrate the achievements of our students who come from communities across the country. We are delighted that a former student returned to share her story and we heard from a current student and a parent.

Presentation Day 2018

Presentation Day 2018 was an amazing day to celebrate the hard work of student's over, not only this year, but throughout their time at Worawa. Over the following pages are images from Presentation Day, along with the Keynote speech from a former student, the 2018 Student Speech and Parent Response.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - NARELLE URQUHART

Your Excellency, Mr Howard, Elders & Distinguished Guests, Aunty Lois, students, Friends. It is a pleasure to be here today.

Can I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians on whose land we are gathered and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

I am pleased to be here today to share my story with you. I am a proud Wiradjuri woman born 1971 Leeton NSW. I also have Scottish heritage of which I am also proud of. (The Urquhart clan is where the Loch Ness monster is supposed to be) Two amazing Clans from opposite sides of the world!

Although I was born on our traditional country I did not grow up there. My mother was a part of the Stolen Generation and at the age of 11 years, was sent to Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls Training Home operated by the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board to provide training for girls forcibly taken from their families under the Aborigines Protection Act. She was sent with her two baby sisters and her brothers were sent to Kinchella Aboriginal Boys Training Home, for boys between the ages of 5 and 15... until they were old enough to be sent out to work.

At Cootamundra my mother was trained as a domestic servant and at 14 years of age was sent out to 'service' to a white family in Canberra until she was 'released from service' at the age of eighteen. She returned to Leeton and married my father.

When I was 4 years old my parents

decided to separate and through this process me and my 5 siblings were placed in a Catholic Nunnery in Kincumber, Gosford. We were there for just over two years which was quite a traumatic time.

When I was around 6 years old my father took us and fled to Victoria, we lived in quite poor conditions and was given a home and welfare workers in Kerang. We later moved to Robinvale on the Murray River where there was a lot of seasonal work.

Throughout our childhood we always had a welfare worker, they would check if our house was clean, that we had food and that we attended school. Throughout my young years we were often in and out of foster care.

When I was 13 years old I left school without ever having completed a full year of high school. I believed I didn't need an education because I was only ever going to be a fruit picker.

I subsequently I left home at 14 years of age.

From this time on I was on and off the streets. In one of those times I was found by the authorities and sent down here to Worawa College, I had just turned 15.

I remember my time here, all be it short, because of the amazing principle. She was a beautiful Aboriginal lady who was proud of herself, knew who she was and had accomplished so much, she had an air of excellence, something that I had not seen before in what was my tragic circumstances. I will always remember her and not only for her



beauty but more importantly the strength in which she carried herself.

After my time here at Worawa, I went back to my home town and had a baby which tragically died before I gave birth. This was a devastating time. At the age of 16 and alone, I had to have a funeral and go through the grieving period as a young person that was still living ruff.

After this time I decided to move to Canberra to connect with my mother, although I had met her when I was 14 I felt it was time to really know her.

She was an amazing woman who had fought hard for us as a people, she was an artist, a poet and an activist.

I lived in Queanbeyan and Canberra for 12 years and had my three daughters there. Whilst living there I couldn't get a decent job, so I went to

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TAFE and completed Years 11 and 12, in which I received an award for 1st in a math's exam.

Fast forward to now. I am a mother of 4, my children are 27, 25, 22 and 16. I have lived on the Gold Coast and Northern Rivers for nearly 20 years.

I currently work at Bond University as the Indigenous Cultural Support Officer. A position that I have held for 6 years. Not only do I work full time but I also have two businesses and am about to recommence my study in Law. I have raised my children as a single mum, and they have been my greatest achievement.

Two of my daughters are graduates of Bond University.

Sinead studied a Bachelor of International Relations followed by her Masters, she went on to work at the Department of Defense in Canberra for three years and has just moved back Brisbane to work and start a family.

My second daughter Jessica studied a Bachelor of Social Science majoring in Counseling. She took a position with the Attorney General's Department in Canberra and has recently returned home to get married and take a position with the CSIRO.

My third daughter Katrina is married and works at Pacific Hope Christian school with her husband assisting with autistic children and hopes to become a missionary.

My son Malachi who is 16 is currently being home schooled and wants to study Film and Television at Bond University.

In saying all this, although I have had a tough background, and I have had to overcome so much, having key people and moments in my life have helped to shape who I am.

It has given me courage, hope and empathy to walk out an amazing life as an Indigenous woman who hopefully can inspire young people just as Aunty and

Worawa have and continues to inspire me. It is my hope that Australia will grow into a unified nation with the knowledge and blessings of First Nations People.

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to 'find myself' at Worawa Aboriginal College and, as with many past students, it has been a significant time in the lives of many.

A place that nurtured the identity of each student and empowered them to rise above the challenges in their lives.

To feel the positivity of being a person of Aboriginal heritage and taking deep pride in knowing that you belong to the oldest continuing culture on the planet.

To have the knowledge, pride and confidence to hand that knowledge down to your children and being able to Walk in Both Worlds.





STUDENT PRESENTATION DAY SPEECH: KATELYN WOODHOUSE

Your Excellency, Mr. Howard, Dr Lois Peeler, guests, teachers and students.

I want to start by acknowledging the Wurundjeri people, the original custodians of the land which we meet on. I want to pay my respects to their elders past, present and future.

My name is Katelyn Woodhouse I'm a year 11 student here at Worawa, this is my first year at the school and of VCAL. I come from a small town called Halls Creek that's located in the North of Western Australia. I have five older brothers and a six year old foster sister. My family is the most important part of my life. I'm a part of the Kimberley and the Deserts. My language groups are Jaru from my dad's side and Kija from my mum's side.

I chose to leave home hoping to improve my education, find out more about myself and test what independent living was like. I thought being away from home for a long period of time would get easier the longer I was away, but over time it seemed to just get harder and harder. I felt as if I was missing out on everything, like I was drifting away from my family and I even started to believe it. Trying to avoid the way I felt I shut everything out. I tried to deal with things by talking less, not calling home, and kept my feelings bottled up hoping they would just disappear. But that wasn't until I realised that maybe I was doing it all wrong and taking things for granted. Expressing how I felt and getting involved made me realise that this is the place I want

to learn and finish my education. Now Worawa has become my second home.

I could literally make a list of things that I've had the opportunity to do here at Worawa but it'd just be too long, so I will tell you the ones that really stand out to me. I and other students got to be a part of a Aboriginal flag raising event at the Government House where we sang Ngarra Burra Ferra, toured some of the grand rooms and ate delicious food. I was a part of the Pathways to Womanhood Program where I learnt how to take care of myself, table manners, boosted my self-esteem and so much more. I and others then celebrated our achievements at the debutant dreaming ball. I even had the opportunity to umpire on an AusKick game at half time on the

MCG during the Sir Doug Nicholls Round 'Dreamtime at the G'. There were so many smiles, that experience is going to be for a long time and one I won't forget.

This year was the first year that Worawa has had VCAL and being a part of it has been great. I have really enjoyed VCAL as it has given so many opportunities and has taught me so much. It has really expanded my view of what I can achieve. The program has allowed me to grow so much and find myself along the way. I have done barista training, participated in university excursions, attended a case in the Koori Court, did driving lessons at METEC, worked with Ranges Tech and completed my Cert II in Business. I have also done work experience in the gym at the Healesville RACV Country Club where I learnt how they ran the gym, joined in with sessions and how to make a program that fits the customer's needs. I was also a sports teacher's aide at the Badger Creek Primary school.

My overall experience of Worawa has been great. I've learnt so much - most importantly I've allowed myself to grow. I am so grateful for how much support the school offers and all of the opportunities. The girls are amazing people, when I first attended the school I felt so welcomed and I made instant friends that are going to last a life time. It's amazing how we all come from different parts of Australia and unite together as one in a community where we're exposed to many opportunities, share culture, focusing on our education and making pathways for our future.

The sports Worawa offers is not only a great way to be involved and stay active but is sort of a distraction from home that helps the days go by quicker as it keeps you busy. The staff being teachers, house parents and others are great support, they have helped many of us get through the year.

I plan to attend the University of Western Australia located in Perth after I graduate and study anything

to do with sports. I want to become a personal trainer or a sports teacher, but law has caught my eye as I want to be involved with Indigenous affairs. I want to be able to help my people but who knows what the future holds for me. As long as I have some sort of idea everything should work out fine. For those girls who feel as if they're finding it rough or that they don't want to be here, remember the sacrifices you're making being away from home. You're getting a better education, making something of yourself and making your family proud - they make the stay so worth it. It shows you that anything is possible when you put your mind to it. The best way to predict your future is to create it. Be the creator of your own future, follow your dreams and focus on your education. As Nelson Mandela said education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. Be the one to make that Change.



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PARENT RESPONSE PRESENTATION DAY – MS MELISSA BIN BUSU

Your Excellency, Mr Howard, Elders & Distinguished Guests, Aunty Lois, students, Friends – Good morning.

First I would like to acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri People and Elders, past present & future.

My name is Melissa Bin Busu a proud Kija woman from Halls Creek in Western Australia, which is on the edge on the Tanami & Great Sandy Deserts, it has a population of about 1600 people. The majority of the people living there are mostly of Aboriginal descent. It is a lovely little town, rich in history of gold, beautiful landscapes, old timers, cattlemen, horsemen and fresh water springs which never run dry, but like many other small community towns in the Kimberly, it has its problems dealing with social issue

like domestic violence, alcohol/ drug abuse, crime, homelessness where some people still today live in third world conditions, living conditions are appalling, no running water or electricity those who are lucky enough to live in houses have sewerage problems, homes are overcrowded and falling apart, and people have to wait months for repairs, no access to trained health professionals to deal with youth issues, councillors, dentist, renal specialist for example live in the bigger towns and can only visit once every three months, health issues where children and families have no access to fresh food.

On a lighter note, I am honoured and feel very privileged to speak to you all today on this special occasion as a proud parent of a student. My

daughter, Katelyn Woodhouse, whom I'm very proud of as I've seen her grow and mature into a beautiful young woman, she has shown me she can adapt to her surroundings and take on different and new challenges, in order to be here, she has overcome some very difficult challenges & changes in her life - dealing with bullying, verbal abuse and peer pressure in her previous schools.

Changes of traveling a long distance to be here, dealing with homesickness, missing her family, missing sorry business times, birthdays and milestones. School rules, boarding house rules, the weather, her diet, sleep patterns, due to Melbourne's time difference to ours in Western Australia. I'm very proud to say Katelyn wants to be a leader & role model for her family, friends and countrymen.



The main reasons I chose to send Katelyn to Worawa for her last years of education is because I liked the idea of the two way of learning Worawa offers which gives Katelyn the best of both worlds, doing the Australian curriculum and how it takes into account Aboriginal culture, values, spiritual beliefs and learning styles which I strongly believe should be taught in all schools to benefit our Indigenous children. I basically wanted Katelyn to see there is life beyond Halls Creek and I felt Worawa would provide more opportunities, not just in normal everyday education, but in a way that would expose Katelyn to new challenges that could help her to grow, experience and further her education. I would like to thank Worawa and the staff for giving Katelyn the opportunity to do so. I would like to say to you, Katelyn that

I love you and want you to know how proud I am of you and the sacrifices you made to be here. I'll be with you every step of the way in any decisions or choices you make regarding your higher education and life.

I am pleased to know that Worawa provides accommodation in a safe, caring, nurturing environment, where opportunities for art, sport, recreation, & self-development are supported. Also I like that Worawa has guest speakers, role models, Aboriginal Elders from different organisations, sporting groups and communities who come to the school to talk about their personal journey and achievements, to motivate the students that their dreams are special no matter how big or small, teach them about the country, and all it has to offer and to teach them to be strong independent woman and leaders in

their communities and homes, inspire them to believe anything is possible and encourage all the students to follow their dreams.

Lastly I would like to say to all the students of Worawa, education is the way to gain knowledge and understanding for our people, to empower yourself and them. To talk up and be strong role models for your towns and communities I know some of you may not think so now, but it's the only way for all of us to move forward for generations to come. Believe in yourself, dream big, and strive for the best you can be. Always remember to be proud of who you are and be proud of where you come from, and just be thankful, as you all have been given a massive opportunity others wish they had. Thank you



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ENGLISH / LITERACY

This term has seen students achieve some spectacular improvements in Literacy. Supported by the teachers across all Curriculum areas and our wonderful Aides, Vicky and Grace, we have seen individual students leap 10 or more levels in the PM Reading Benchmarks.

The girls have been continuing to read many different texts and experimenting successfully with a variety of writing styles in their own pieces. We are sharing just two examples of student work, the result of careful planning and perfecting to produce very thoughtful and moving final pieces.

Bringing Them Home and the Stolen Generations

by Paris Carpio

Bringing Them Home was the name given to the final report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Between 1910 and 1970 many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and country as a result of various government policies. This became known as the Stolen Generations. The children were taken away because the government believed that they didn't have a future and would be better off

learning the white ways. Often they were forced to stop speaking language and reject their Indigenous heritage.

In my opinion this was not fair at all, my father and his siblings were removed from their family and sent to the Moore River Native Settlement, my aunty was abused whilst in their care. Children were supposedly taken away because they would have a better life but the only thing that came out of it was grief for the families and children and a loss of knowledge for their culture. Many children were psychologically, physically, and sexually abused while living in state care or with adoptive families. Medical experts have noted a high incidence of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and suicide among the Stolen Generations.

Studies have shown that the number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care has doubled in the decade since the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations, I believe the government is still failing Indigenous families. The children of the Stolen Generations deserve to be recognized everywhere; people need to know about the past and the pain that was caused to our people. No one should ever have to go through that, no matter what race or skin color. I believe some people may not realize it wasn't that long ago. No child should be taken away from their family.

Teenage Days

by Jessica Byford

We aren't prepared some days,
We get scared some days,
We get stuck some days,
We get lost some days,
We seek help some days,
We want to yell some days,
We are queens some days,
We can be mean some days,
These are just our teenage days,
We all have faults,
We all have goals,
We all have stories that are untold,
We are all young, sometimes play dumb,
We are very different but very same,
When we hit our teenage days,
Our attitude may change,
Our looks may change,
But remember live it up,
Whilst it's your teenage days!





CHRISTMAS PARTY

Students, their families and staff gathered to enjoy our annual Christmas tree event. A beautiful Christmas dinner with all the trimmings was lovingly prepared by Chef Sharon.

The event was held in the evening overlooking our beautiful Dreaming Trail. It is a great opportunity for students to introduce their families to their teachers, house parents and friends.

The atmosphere was full of joy and laughter as stories were shared and people from many different places came together to celebrate. We were even lucky enough to have a visit from Santa and three helpers who 'flew in' to spread Christmas cheer.

The Elves helped Santa distribute gifts for each student, thanking them for a wonderful year and wishing them happy holidays as they head home to be with their families over the holiday period.

VCAL YEAR 11 OUTCOMES

This year has been the first year for Year 11 VCAL at Worawa. Next year is the very first group of Year 12 VCAL students. There have been many highlights as well as many character building challenges. Each year level of VCAL at Worawa is designed to prepare students for future employment, study and community leadership and commitment. Students this year have participated in projects about Aboriginal rights and contact history, they have been involved in work placements and traineeships and they have kicked goals when it comes to vocational skills in the areas of business and hospitality. Skills in both of these fields are invaluable as students make their

way towards a career they choose whether it be for part-time work or so that they have the computer and people skills for any type of employment and career. As students embark on their last year of secondary school in 2019, students will be planning in detail and on a very practical level, the next steps in their journey. This includes confirming university and further study or employment opportunities as well as accommodation, networking and support services as they make this exciting but challenging transition in their lives. Congratulations to the girls, families and communities for supporting the commitment to education and opportunities in the future.

EXPERIENCES IN STEAM AT WORAWA

This term in STEAM students have been studying the first form of Science, Astronomy, and learning about the stories of the first astronomers in the World, Aboriginal Astronomers. To support their in class learning, students visited the Planetarium to experience 'Stories in the Stars', a visual retelling of stories from the Boorong people of North-West Victoria.

The night sky was brought to life on the unique dome shaped screen of the Planetarium allowing the students to pinpoint the exact location of the star constellations highlighted in 'Stories in the Stars' and bring the stories to life.

Students were also inspired to follow careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through participation in the inaugural Air 4 Life event. The whole school woke up early for a 7:30am bus to Luna Park where they were joined by 700 other young women from around Melbourne. The event was sponsored by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), the Air Force and the Defence Science Institute and focused on celebrating women in STEM. During the day students had the opportunity to meet and talk with some of Australia's most accomplished women within the STEM fields who shared

their life stories, struggles and achievements. The main focus of the day was showcasing how STEM knowledge and concepts are vital to the functioning of objects we take for granted in everyday life, including the mechanisms of theme park rides that we all enjoy so much. Naturally, the students had to test that the theories and concepts were accurate by trying out the rides!

While the rest of the student body were climbing onto the bus for Luna Park, three Year 8 students Indiana, Kyanna and Miranda were in a taxi heading to Melbourne Tullamarine Airport for the annual Pymble National Exchange. The girls enjoyed four jam packed days where they experienced living and learning at a school with 2000 students, participated in a surfing lesson at Manly beach and saw the iconic sites of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and

the Opera House. The girls had a wonderful experience catching city trains and sharing stories with fellow students from all around Australia and forming life-long friendships.

Our year in STEAM was rounded out with participation in 'We Have An Opportunity' a Digital Fabrication Challenge at Lauriston Girls School. Valerie, Mary-Cruz, Eucharía and Elizabeth represented the school with pride and displayed the Worawa Ways during the 3-day challenge. The girls experienced inner-city living, catching public transport to Lauriston each day and worked as a team to develop, design and prototype a Phone App to educate about the diversity of contemporary Aboriginal culture. The challenge ended with a presentation where the girls demonstrated strength and pride talking about their heritage and presenting their application design.

CADET RANGER PROGRAM

This term three students from the Worawa Cadet Ranger Program, Lornie, Deborah and Jessica, travelled to Sydney to present at the annual 'Kids Teaching Kids' showcase event held at Qantas headquarters.

Students were given a full tour of the Qantas building which highlighted sustainability improvements. Our students presented an activity that identifies the Wurundjeri Seasonal Calendar highlighting the indicators such as animal behaviours, plant cycles and the cultural events that happen throughout the year.

The calendar comes from the region that the College is located on and we have been able to collate images and weather charts to assist the students in identifying visual clues as to when the seasonal changes occur.

The Girls enjoyed the opportunity to share the local knowledge they have gathered this year for the seasonal calendar. We look forward to the Keeper Program

next year at Healesville Sanctuary and developing more resources to work with sharing important sustainability and conservation information in creative ways.



For more information visit worawa.vic.edu.au



SPORT AT WORAWA

Sport is a huge part of life at Worawa and the entire Worawa community loves to be involved and watch girls grow and develop their sporting skills.

Throughout the term the girls worked together to develop as a team which shone through in how they communicated and encouraged one another whether on the basketball, or netball court, footy field or softball pitch.

The girls played their final basketball match for the year on our last day of term, with friends and family cheering them on and echoing throughout the stadium to bring an incredible energy and joy to all the girls playing, it was a special night to end a great year of basketball.

This year we held our very own Sports Presentation Awards event held at the Yarra Valley Lodge, to acknowledge the contribution and support of coaches, organisations and supporters to celebrate the effort and achievement of all of our students in sport.

The award for Sports Woman of the Year went to Milena Mosquito.



WORAWA WALK

Throughout Term 4 students participated in the Melbourne to Darwin walk by doing laps of the oval at lunch and recess. Each lap counted for 24 kilometres towards their trek to Darwin, with students earning prizes at designated towns along the way. It was good to see most of the students doing laps at some point over the term, with over 33 students participating.

While walking the students were able to have some great conversations as well as feeling good after exercising. The first students to complete the 160 laps (an actual total of 64 kilometres) and reach Darwin was Katelyn Woodhouse, followed by Mary-Cruz Fernandez and Valerie Warramurra. All received prizes, including a t-shirt designed by Katelyn, for their achievement in rigour, persistence and reaching goals.

TRADITIONAL DANCERS SHINE

Our talented group of traditional dancers capped off a stellar year of culture and performances with a wonderful performance of Lungurrma (North Wind) in front of the Governor of Victoria and many other distinguished guests and family members on Presentation Day.

During this term, the dancers have practiced and shared dances from several different regions. Earlier in the term, the girls danced for a large group of visitors from Deloitte, many of whom had not had the opportunity to see traditional dance previously.

It is exciting to see the girls sharing dances from different areas, as diverse as Croker Island, Elcho Island and Central Desert, and taking on the responsibilities of being custodians and teachers, honouring and sharing their stories and knowledge with confidence and pride. Students from partner school Pymble Ladies College in Sydney, were entranced on our Culture Day to be able to share many new experiences and very much enjoyed watching the dancers and learning a little about the meanings of the dances.

SPORTS ACADEMY

Students in the Sports Academy received their IAAF Coaching Kids in Athletics Certificates from Athletics Australia and quickly put their coaching and leadership skills to work by organising the school House Athletics Day. They organised all of the students into house teams, named after successful female athletes Nova Peris, Cathy Freeman, Evonne Goolagong and Shantelle Thompson. They organised the event and equipment and conducted house meetings, allocating students into events.

The Athletics Day was held at Yarra Ranges Athletic Track and the girls dressed in their house colours to represent their teams. The students participated in many events including 100 sprint, long jump and shot put. The highlights of the day would have to be the team tug-of-war and the team relay. The students had a great day participating in all the events and cheering on each other. The winner of the day was blue house – Team Peris.

