



NEWSLETTER

Term 1, 2021

We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing



Boarding and Wellbeing Through Circle Time

At Worawa, boarding is learning through living. It is a vital part of each girl's educational growth and development. Every day the girls are discovering something new about their relationship to self, others and places of significance to them. This term the learning has come through some important relationship changes with not only the leadership of the program, through the new appointment of Viv Desmarchelier, but also through a more experiential approach to the program supported by the House Parent team.

Girls are learning through their lived experiences, and are expected to actively be engaged in their wellbeing. Wellbeing is not just an individual process but also a group process. Therefore, whether it is decisions affecting them as an individual, as a small house group, as a junior or senior group or as a whole, collaboration and community are key principles at play and their opinions matter. What are our responsibilities in taking care?

One strategy for this is achieved through group work. The experiential process involves participation through 'Circle' time. Each day students may meet as a house group under the guidance of a house parent or senior student and discuss their responsibilities or matters personal to the smooth running of the household. Decisions are made through listening and learning from each other and problem solving.

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Boarding and Wellbeing Through Circle Time (Continued from Page 1)

Our learning week is 'bookended' by two bigger group meetings. On a Sunday evening, a junior and senior Wellbeing Circle Time meeting is held to lead into the school week. On a Thursday evening a Respect Circle is held for the whole boarding cohort to lead into the weekend. These meetings have the specific task of engaging students in group processes whereby they can listen, learn and with increased confidence, lead. A feature of the process is two-way learning, equity and building respect. How does this all lead to taking care of our wellbeing?

Respect Circle time on a Thursday evening is all about gratitude. By focusing on the gifts around us we can see that we are blessed and can harness the good in our lives. What have we learnt this week at school or in boarding, what are we grateful for and how are we celebrating this in our key relationships? Respect is central to this process. Appreciating what we or others have achieved from our own efforts, can inspire us to keep going.

By reflecting on where we may like to make further changes and with a strength based perspective how can I support myself to be my best is relevant to us all as individuals and as a group. Through seeing staff model and encourage girls to take safe risks, such as stating their needs, achievements and worries helps build trusting expectations of each other to be caring and thoughtful. By having a good laugh at what went well, what they can change and what they will avoid next time brings everyone to an important space of self-acceptance and compassion. Through hearing shared experiences, empathy is built between the girls in appreciating that they are all on a collective journey of growth through learning together. No one is alone however only we can do the footwork, and isn't it good to have others with us on this journey!

Our Wellbeing Circle time is all about skill building and goal setting. Growth comes from overcoming challenge. How can I support myself through the coming week of opportunity for

learning – what do I need to work on, who can help me – how am I going to help myself? Linked with this is developing skills for understanding our emotional landscape and giving acceptable and unacceptable behaviours a name. This is so we can work together at protecting our culture of wellbeing and building an emotional language and currency that we all understand. Girls may participate in organizing a BBQ together out in the bush up the road or practice some deep relaxation or meditation skills to draw on when stressed. Wellbeing isn't something others do to them, it is something they take initiative for and engage in and increasingly make happen through positive choices. What would they like their weekends to be about and who and how shall this happen?

A fundamental aspect to Circle time is utilizing restorative practices to heal harm in our relationships when hurt has been caused. Girls are familiar with this process and will ask to meet for help or may be expected



to partake in the process as part of restoring balance in the community. Commitment to this process is central to functioning well as a collective and every time we come together we are strengthening our support of these processes. Reinforcing our vision girls come to know first-hand that experience becomes knowing which leads to action informed by healthy practices in wellbeing, culture and education that all the staff and students are learning alongside each other day by day.

KEEPING SPIRIT STRONG

The stories of our leaders past and present provide inspiration for keeping spirit strong. Following Aboriginal wisdom, knowing who you are and where you belong comes from connections to country, family and cultural traditions. Now research has validated what Elders have been pointing out for a long time – that strong and positive connections to country, family and culture are the foundations of wellbeing and resilience.

Affirming and supporting these connections in order to grow strong, confident young women is at the core of the Worawa educational approach.

This year's Senior Australian of the Year award honoured Ngangiwumirr Elder and esteemed educator Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM. Miriam-Rose is widely known and respected for her teaching about Dadirri, the "inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness" which is central to Aboriginal spirituality.

According to Miriam-Rose three elements of wellbeing particularly affect young people in First Nations communities. She believes that the challenges and fast pace of today's living make it vitally important to slow down and listen deeply, to know who you are, and to have a sense of belonging. She describes Dadirri as a way of connecting with "the deep spring that is inside us." By helping to connect people with their deeper selves the practice of Dadirri can have profound benefits for health and wellbeing.

Yarning together has long been an important way for Aboriginal people to connect and care for one another. To supplement this emphasis on affirming cultural identity and connectedness we also draw useful elements from mainstream psychology and education. Social and emotional learning involves teaching communication skills, skills for regulating emotions and problem solving, as well as skills for positive relationships and friendships. This term we placed emphasis on skill development by exploring with the girls what it means to be respected and safe. Here Dadirri has led us to reflect on the value of really listening to ourselves and to others.

Although we have only very recently started with this strengths-based approach we have already seen some very promising signs. Using the approach of Dadirri we have begun to explore how we can grow strong spirits. The girls have been encouraged to continue this exploration over the holidays by asking people around them what keeps their spirit strong.

Senior Students Commence Pathways to Womanhood Program

Pathways to Womanhood is a course unique to Worawa Aboriginal College. It was developed by senior specialised Educators, experienced in creating education while focusing through an Aboriginal lens under the direction of the Executive Director and Worawa Council of Elders. The culmination of this course is Debutante Dreaming where the debutantes are formally presented to Elders. Mothers of the debutantes travel from their home communities to be with their daughters for this once in a lifetime event which celebrates the rite of passage to womanhood through a combination of Western and Aboriginal culture.

The ultimate goal of the Pathways to Womanhood course is to create a set of experiences and reflections that assist the students to make healthy choices and enable them to walk with confidence in any context they choose. The course focuses on those skills and experiences that will diversify and increase the future opportunities of those students who elect to take part in the course.

Among the many opportunities the Pathways to Womanhood course offers, in 2021 the students will enjoy a couture experience.

A group of Pathways to Womanhood students were invited to attend exclusive fashion fabric retailer

'Stitches to Style' to select a fabric of their choice. Fashion designer Svetlana Khmelevskaya was on hand to assist with the selection and will then work with the girls to create their own dress. This is a rare opportunity. Students examined the colours and textures of the available fabrics. The choice was stunning and made selection very challenging. The resultant choices were very colourful and unique.

Students were asked to express why they had chosen certain colours and designs. The answers were as diverse as the students themselves. One answer to this question encouraged all present to be true to their own unique values and preferences.

Senior student, Mary-Cruz Fernandez was looking at the many bolts of fabrics and then, confidently made her choice. The fabric is a wavy design of many different blues with some sparkle added through sequins and beading. When asked why she chose that fabric Mary-Cruz smiled and said it was for her country, Salt Water Country. When asked by designer Svetlana what she liked about her body and how she felt she wanted to express herself physically through design, she did not have to think long. "I like that my body is strong." How confirming it is to hear a student make selections based on strong culture and a healthy understanding of her own worth!



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Mary's short answer demonstrated her understanding of worth based on deep values and cultural strength.

Pathways to Womanhood and Debutante Dreaming are all about those values. Strength, culture and confidence to express individuality no matter where the student may be. Whether she is in a Melbourne fashion house with an accomplished designer or on her home country with her family, a Pathways student is experienced and prepared to be herself. She can express herself clearly and with confidence.

As the course progresses, the Pathways student honours her culture, family and community, she will study her own history and uniqueness, attend formal dinners, enjoy self-development training, work with partner schools, participate in self-care and responsibility, learn and practice public speaking. The course will be rigorous and challenging.

Pathways to Womanhood and Debutante Dreaming are special experiences for students who are ready to take responsibility for their learning and progress.

We are excited to see a new group of students participate in this very special course and event.

Debutante Dreaming will take place on Saturday, 7th August 2021 at Pullman Melbourne on the Park, 192 Wellington Parade East Melbourne. For bookings enquiries please telephone Worawa on 0498 967 292 or registrar@worawa.vic.edu.au.



VCAL WORK INFORMATION TOUR

VCAL students had the privileged opportunity to undertake a work information tour of the RACV Healesville Country Club and Resort. This is a huge property which includes diverse employment opportunities in various operations of the property including accommodation, conference facilities, dining and entertainment areas, a large kitchen, gym and aquatic centre, sauna, beauty salon, theaterette, tennis courts, lawn bowls, golf course and administration,

The tour included both front of house and behind the scenes allowing the girls to see just what it takes to support such a large facility. The logistics and management of the resort and the resources that are necessary were really a focal point for the students.

While the facilities were stunning there was a definite wow factor about everything that happened at the resort all the way down to recycling and compost.

A wide variety of staff from different roles and levels were able to talk to the girls about career pathways that they had taken. A highlight being that many had been able to work overseas, and some had even met celebrities at different locations around the world.

The girls were able to ask questions about the challenges of working in the hospitality industry. A key message that came across was that regardless of how you feel about customers or your own emotions for the day, working with a smile and kindness will get you through even the hardest of days and that even if you start in the industry washing dishes or glasses, you can become the general manager of a large resort.

HUMANITIES IN TERM 1

The Humanities program at Worawa incorporates the History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship curriculums. This term, years 7 and 8 students have taken on two units 'Water in the World' and 'Understanding the Ancient World'. In Geography, Water in the World examines the many uses of water, the ways it is valued, its different forms as a resource and the ways it connects places as it moves through the environment.

Students have developed their understanding of the concept of environment, including the ideas that the environment is the product of a variety of processes, that it supports and enriches human and other life, that people value the environment in different ways and that the environment has its specific hazards. Students have focused on the environmental water hazard of Tsunamis. Investigating the causes as well as the range of social, environmental and economic effects of Tsunamis. In their History Unit, Understanding the Ancient World, students investigated how people lived in the ancient world through studying evidence of the social, political and economic structures. Students enjoyed exploring the legends and myths of Ancient societies such as Greece and Egypt.

Years 9 & 10 students also explored two units 'Environmental Change and Management' and 'Understanding the Modern World'. In the Geography Unit, Environmental Change and Management, students investigated an in-depth study of specific environments. This unit began with an overview of the environmental functions that support life and the challenges to their sustainability. Students discovered how these threats to sustainability also impact society. Students focused on the challenges that people of Mongolia face with dangerous levels of air pollution caused by burning coal to stay warm. They applied human-environment systems thinking to understand the causes and consequences and apply methods to evaluate strategies to manage the change.

Within the History Unit, Understanding the Modern World, students examined social developments in the modern era, including the ideas that inspired them and their far-reaching consequences. Students explored crucial movements and happenings such as the Black Lives Matter movement, Change the Date and Women's Rights. Students wrote persuasive letters to Government in order to demand for political and social change. They grew their knowledge and skills in how to verbalise their opinions with evidence and purpose.

STORYTELLING AND STORY WRITING

The Term One English focus was on narrative, storytelling and story writing. Under this theme the Baggup class began with a text study of the novel, 'Black Cockatoo' by Carl Merrison and Hakea Hustler (Magabala Books, 2018). As they read this novel, students were guided to observe the storytelling process. They began by creating a glossary of words to see how the author's choice of words add meaning and visibility for our imagination. This assisted students to explore the concept of 'show, don't tell', and noted times when the author used descriptions of character responses and conversation to reveal attitudes and ideas that were not explicitly stated in the text. This novel also helped students to see that a potential purpose for story writing is to inform and educate about Culture and Country.

Having read Black Cockatoo, students then observed a text in the form of a movie from a different culture and again noted the manner of storytelling. They also explored which character's perspective was being shown throughout the story.

To finish out the term, students experimented with their own story writing. They experimented with inventing characters, using story prompts and trying different genres. For most, it was a discovery that this was not as easy as first thought; especially editing. The stories that students found to be the easiest to write were those that related to their own experiences.



SPORTS ACADEMY

It was wonderful to see students returning to their Sports Academy program after it was put on hold in 2020 due to COVID-19. Students began the program by participating in activities that are considered lifelong. They enjoyed attending archery at the Yarra Valley Archery Club where they learned to use the bow and arrows at close and

long range. They were taught lawn bowling at the Healesville Lawn Bowling club. Members of the club demonstrated the game to the students and they played a series of games against each other. The final activity that students participated in was water aerobics at the RACV Country Club in Healesville. Students were taken through a

water safety class with Lifesaving Victoria. They learned the basics of water safety and how to deal with an emergency. This will be followed up next term with a CPR class. The students also had the opportunity to participate in fitness sessions every day to improve their health and wellbeing and develop a base fitness level.

STOP! TIMELINE TIME!

Every Friday, in the Mathematics room, the Year 7 & 8 students could be heard excitedly yelling "Stop! Timeline Time!" when it was time to start work on their project. Throughout the term, they worked hard to create their own version of the Timeline card game as part of learning about Place Value and negative and positive numbers. The Timeline game cards have a historical fact and linked picture on both sides and the related date only on one side. The aim of the game is to be able

to place the historical facts in the correct spot on a timeline without looking at the date.

As a class, they discussed what type of events and dates were important for them to remember or were interesting to learn. The students then split into groups and used books and the internet to research dates in their chosen topic. The topics included world history, Aboriginal history, inventions, movies and well known people. Some exciting facts the students discovered were that

the first iPhone is about the same age as them and that Uluru started to form 550 million years ago. Once they selected which facts to include, the students summarised the information into a dot point and found a related picture. The final lesson of the term was a hubbub of activity as the students cut, folded, laminated and sorted the cards to complete their game. The students look forward to teaching the whole school how to play their game next term.



VISUAL ART IN TERM ONE 2021

Throughout the term students explored a variety of visual art skills, techniques and concepts. Murnong and Cumbungi students learnt about story telling through symbols and images, including a range of traditional Aboriginal art styles. They experimented and then applied printmaking materials, techniques, and processes to transform their visual ideas onto fabric.

Baggup and Kombadik classes created a self-portrait reflecting their personal and cultural identity. Students learnt about the use of images to tell their story and how to layout these images to create strong design. They then explored 3D form by experimenting with the medium of clay. They developed pottery techniques and processes such as slab building and pinch pot forms.

VCAL students are being introduced to the concept of creating design work for a client and target audience. They participated in activities from brainstorming visual ideas, to presenting finished artwork. VCAL student Ooen-s'tae, was successful in producing the logo design chosen by the Zart Art suppliers for their national conference in September and Sarah, Shontay, Miranda and Kylinda were the designers of the new Worawa Economy bank notes.

A great start for all students in the Visual art classes. Next term we should be launching our new media space and begin a series of exciting media based activities.

HEALTH

This term, students identified how valuing diversity positively influences the wellbeing of the community. They explored the values and beliefs of different cultures and groups in community and around the world. Students completed a research assignment where they selected an Indigenous culture from another part of the world where they could learn about other traditions and customs. They reflected on the different stereotypes in society and the damaging effect that comes from them. Students also learned about gender and identity, and the impact that gender norms can have on health and social outcomes. In Physical Education, students completed fitness testing to assess their levels. To enhance their fitness, they participated in circuit training as well as modified games to improve their fundamental motor skills.

RETURN TO THE STEAM LAB

The Worawa Girls celebrated their return to the STEAM Lab by donning white lab coats and safety glasses and participating in a range of Physical Sciences experiments to explore transference and transformation of Heat, Light and Sound Energy.

Students began by re-familiarizing themselves with the lab, by developing or refreshing their lab safety skills and discussing the structure and purpose of lab reports. The girls worked in teams to identify and manage risks during practical experiments. Throughout the term they worked as a class and independently to complete reports with increasing technicality and incorporating key vocabulary and scientific drawings.

One of the hardest aspects of studying Physics is that although we can see the end result of the work done, we cannot see the forces at work. To combat this challenge, students worked hard to develop links between their known vocabulary and new Science vocabulary, conducted research and completed multiple experiments which allowed them to approach and discuss Energy from multiple angles.

A highlight of the Term was comparing Newton Colour Wheels – Reverse Rainbows with Newton's Prism Experiments. It was fascinating to see a beam of light split into a rainbow and then a rainbow 'turned back' into white light. The girls are to be congratulated for their independent explorations which resulted in some students discovering and discussing how the pupils in our eyes enlarge and contract depending on how much light is shone at them.