



2022 Schools Reconciliation Challenge

## FROM RIVER TO SEA: OUR ISLAND HOME



*Indigenous at Heart, Casey Hayden, Winmalee H.S*

### ART AND STORY TELLING AS A PATHWAY TO RECONCILIATION.

For over 13 years students have been creating art and writing that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures, histories, languages, stories and the call for all Australians to participate in reconciliation. [The Schools Reconciliation Challenge](#) is a free annual art and writing program open to all NSW and ACT primary and secondary students in stages 2-5. Teachers and students are encouraged to use the curriculum-based resources online to inspire, learn and create a culturally inclusive classroom. Each year we explore a different theme, in 2022 the theme is [From River to Sea: Our Island Home](#)

Artworks and writing are showcased in a variety of locations including International Towers at Barangaroo in Sydney and Questacon in the ACT. The exhibition also travels to regional locations throughout NSW and the ACT supported by the National Trust.

### FREE RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Both the Schools Reconciliation Challenge and the Reconciliation NSW website offer online resources to support teachers and educators learn about a range of subjects. Students are encouraged to express themselves and to engage in practical exercises such as participating in talking/yarning circles, reading and evaluating stories and articles, understanding truth telling and race-relations, as well as practicing their art and writing skills.

### FROM RIVER TO SEA: OUR ISLAND HOME

Water has been the lifeblood for First Nations people who, for over 60,000 years, have lived on this vast and arid continent. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their relationship with water goes far beyond that of just physical survival; it is deeply embedded in identity, connections, spirituality and ways of life as First Nations people.

Through the sharing of Dreaming stories, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have developed a deep spiritual connection to water and Country. Teaching lessons by sharing stories has established lore on how water and Country is to be used, managed and cared for. Knowledge about how to locate water, and which water sources were suitable for bathing, fishing, leisure and ceremony safeguarded access to quality drinking water.

In 2022, water extremes experienced by communities across NSW highlight the need for everyone to better understand and learn from First People's land and water management practices, which have allowed their survival on the driest inhabited continent on Earth for millennia.

Find out more with our From River to Sea: Our Island Home [lesson plans](#).



Lansvale East PS holds a yarning circle each morning



The Schools Reconciliation Challenge is coordinated by Reconciliation NSW, the peak body for advancing reconciliation in NSW. We promote a respectful, just and equitable community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in NSW. We engage people in open and honest conversations to understand our diverse histories and experiences. Our work is guided by Aboriginal voices, with the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination at the forefront.

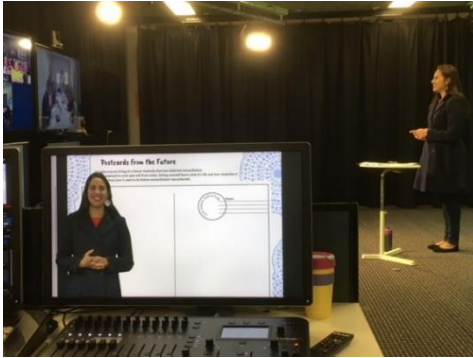


We partner with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to support all schools and early learning services in Australia to foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

[Narragunnawali's online platform](#) is free to access and provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school and with the community. Through the Narragunnawali platform, schools and early learning services can develop a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#), and teachers and educators can access professional learning and curriculum resources to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

## FREE ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Each year the Schools Reconciliation Challenge coordinates free online workshops. We have worked with the Department of Education's Arts Unit, the Powerhouse Museum, Red Room Poetry and Sydney Story Factory to present a range of contemporary and traditional understandings of First Nations cultures, Languages, Art and Technology and inspire students to create art and writing.



Kirli Saunders presents an online workshop

## HELP FOR TEACHERS

The Schools Reconciliation Challenge recognises that some teachers need support when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, themes and issues. We offer guidance for culturally competent teaching, access to professional development webinars and subject guides that covers the range of primary and secondary curriculum. Feedback from teachers demonstrates the value and benefits of participation, 75% of teachers surveyed had greatly improved *understanding* of reconciliation; 69% had greatly improved *confidence* to explore reconciliation themes in the classroom; 81% significantly more *inspired* to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in the classroom.



## REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL

Teachers can register their school now to receive email updates with useful resources, information, tips and news about reconciliation and new developments in reconciliation in education. [Sign up](#) for our Reconciliation in Education newsletter.

Create a more inclusive classroom and explore our lesson plans. Primary schools that enter have the opportunity to win a year's Wingaru subscription for the whole school to access online Aboriginal Education.

The closing date for all entries is Friday 2 September 2022 in Term 3. Judging will then take place and the finalists will be included in an exhibition and launch in November.

Visit the [Schools Reconciliation Challenge website](#) for more information and to access resources, activities and lesson plans as well as view the gallery of previous finalists.

## TOOLS TO BUILD RECONCILIATION IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- [Narragunnawali subject guides](#) to support your classroom teaching with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, understandings and achievements.
- Activities and classroom resources around a huge range of topics at the [Narragunnawali website](#).
- Get started on creating a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) in your school.