



Reconciliation
NSW

2023 SCHOOLS
RECONCILIATION
CHALLENGE

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Reconciliation NSW acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout NSW and the ACT and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and skies. We pay our respect to them and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS



This year is a pivotal period in our nation's story, providing a critical moment for us to think about our identity and who we are as Australians. While the result of the referendum settles, it's important to reflect on the stories of the past and dream of the yarns for the future.

In 2023, the theme of the Reconciliation NSW Schools Reconciliation Challenge encouraged students to consider *What Stories Will You Dream?*

Now in its 14th year, and our 26th year of Reconciliation NSW, it was uplifting to see a strong commitment to reconciliation in education from schools across NSW and the ACT. We thank all the participants of this year's challenge - the long standing participants and the many new schools who took part for the first time this year.

At such a significant time in our nation's history, this year's theme *What Stories Will You Dream?* allowed students to reflect upon the many stories that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories, to imagine new dreams for the future and to explore what stories we leave behind for generations to come.

Stories are how we understand the world around us. They inform what we know and shape how we act. The Australia we live in today is built upon the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, interwoven into the fabric of nature and the natural environment. These stories connect our people to Country and culture. They have been passed down over tens of thousands of years and remain as relevant today as they always have.

Throughout the long history of what is now known as Australia, the world's oldest living cultures have told and shared stories of culture and Dreaming; stories of hurt and devastation; stories of strength and resilience; stories of change; with so many stories still left unwritten.

We want to thank every student, teacher and school for taking part in the 2023 Schools Reconciliation Challenge. Through your participation you have provided opportunities for students and the community to expand their understanding of First Nations cultures to build a more reconciled future. We look forward to you joining us again for next year's challenge!

Joshua Gilbert (Worimi)
Indigenous Co-Chair

Annie Tennant
Non-Indigenous Co-Chair



FOREWORD FOR MINISTER DAVID HARRIS

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and a former primary school teacher and principal it is heartening to see more schools than ever wanting to be involved in the annual Reconciliation Challenge. 172 schools registered showing clearly that educators from right across NSW really want to engage with and understand reconciliation themes and Aboriginal culture, history, ways of knowing and truth telling.

It is my understanding the Dreamtime for Aboriginal people represents the time when the Ancestral Spirits progressed over the land, creating life and the physical formation of the land. The Dreamtime also connects the present to the past. Aboriginal people share their Dreaming stories, through dance and other customs, to pass on that knowledge, culture, traditions and lore to future generations. This year's theme '*What Stories Will You Dream?*' gave our 550 entrants, the next generation and future leaders, an opportunity to share their connection and understanding of Dreamtime, in their own unique and inspiring way.

Preserving Aboriginal languages is an important part of ensuring these stories, these traditions are passed on. I am proud to be part of a Government, the only jurisdiction in Australia, that has legislation in place to preserve and enhance Aboriginal Languages and directly funds programs to ensure these languages survive and thrive in our schools and communities. This month we will celebrate the first ever Aboriginal Languages Week in NSW and I look forward to students and communities across NSW taking part.

I congratulate and thank all the students and schools involved in this year's Reconciliation Challenge. Your contributions help us all on the important path to reconciliation in NSW.

The Hon David Harris MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty



FOREWORD FROM MINISTER PRUE CAR

The 2023 Schools Reconciliation Challenge presents a wonderful opportunity to bring together inspiring and thought-provoking art and writing works from students across NSW and ACT.

This Challenge provides opportunities for students to engage with reconciliation and build their understanding and awareness.

I was pleased so many new schools have registered for this year's Challenge, providing an opportunity for more than 16,000 students to take part in this important learning activity.

This year's theme '*What Stories Will You Dream?*' enabled students to reflect on how, throughout our country's long history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have told and shared stories of culture and dreaming.

The theme also captures how European settlement impacted the way these stories were shared and continue to be shared.

Importantly, these many stories provide an opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories and ask students to reflect on how they can contribute to creating future stories for our country.

As the Minister for Education, reconciliation is deeply important to me. I will continue to work with First Nations people for better outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and school communities.

Congratulations to this year's finalists, and all students who took the time to reflect, explore and creatively display what this year's theme meant to them.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Reconciliation NSW in continuing to host this Challenge, now in its 14th year, and encouraging students to learn about and explore reconciliation.

The Hon. Prue Car MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning

COLLABORATIVE ART



MEDIUM: PENCIL

ONCE UPON A DREAMTIME KAIYA AH-SEE AND TYRA TOWNEY LORETO NORMANHURST (YEAR 9)

Our artwork was designed to help the audience understand how First Nations culture was stripped away and how it is now seen today. This drawing reflects the idea of colonisation and the land before and after the fact. In the artwork, you can see the colour differences, with the left side you can notice how it is flourishing, and the right side is polluted and dark. This was something that we had decided to do on purpose to show the amount of pollution and toxicity our land is suffering from. The large tree is significant to First Nations peoples as it is known as the giver of life and is seen as a sacred site for Aboriginal people. As we are both from the Wiradjuri nation, we added our totem which is the sand goanna. To illustrate how the trees in our ecosystem are dying and being burned by droughts and bushfires, we added the road and made it resemble the large tree. Additionally, because their habitat was destroyed, we decided against including any animals to demonstrate how they were relocated. On either side of the large tree you can see two people, and on their chest is an Aboriginal symbol recognising their gender. On the left is a man sitting down and on the right is a woman who is picking some berries. We also have a fresh blue river on the left side where you can see it starts dying down as it makes its way to the right.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is important to us because it acknowledges the history of First Nations Peoples. It helps us with closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and to create a better future for all.

PEOPLE'S
CHOICE
AWARD



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

OUR WATERS, OUR HOME STUDENTS FROM YEARS 8-10

COFFS HARBOUR LEARNING CENTRE

This piece was a collaboration created by year 8-10 students at Coffs Harbour Learning Centre. CHLC is a School for Specific Purposes. The piece represents our opportunity to contribute to an important story that is being written now - our story! The story of how we can face and overcome any challenges by working together, and change the narrative for young people in our community. The artwork has inspired a new uniform for our school - one that the students have ownership in, and will be proud to wear.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and custodians of this amazing land. Reconciliation recognizes that these people were removed from country, oppressed and treated cruelly and unfairly as a result of colonisation. Reconciliation promotes the strengthening of relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

BUNAAN YANA TOMERONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Our school, Tomerong Public School, is situated on Yuin land. We acknowledge the importance of stories, as it informs history, passes on knowledge and traditions, and helps connect people to Country and culture. We have been working with many First Nation community members, including Theresa Ardler, Matty Simms and Johnathan Hill to learn some of the local Dhurga language, cultural traditions, Dreaming stories and significant landscapes and sites in our area. Each of our classrooms is named after a significant site, most have been based upon the local Dreaming story of 'Bundoola - The Great Rain Spirit'. Our school has created the collaborative artwork 'bunaan yana' which is a stone pathway that enters into our ceremonial yarning circle. Each class worked together to design and paint an artwork associated with either their class story, other local stories of significance, or their own stories of learning about Country. The students have painted the stones using an exterior paint, they have been sealed and will be installed permanently with concrete and landscaping. We have chosen to lay the pavers in the entry of the yarning circle as it visually reminds us daily (as it's situated in our playground) of the stories we have learnt together, as a school community. It also creates a beautiful, peaceful place for students to connect to Country and culture.

* Bundoola ? 'The Great Rain Spirit' - Father of the 13 Clans of the South Coast by Uncle George Brown retold by Theresa Ardler.

Reconciliation means...

At Tomerong Public School, our vision for Reconciliation is to strengthen the relationships between our First Nation peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. We aim to move forward together by recognising the past, understanding the history and looking to the future. Our school is committed to learning about Dhurga language, respecting the connection to Yuin land and embracing the culture and traditions of the Wadi Wadi and Wandean people. We appreciate and endeavour to continue to build these positive relationships, working together for a reconciled future.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, PHOTOGRAPHY

MIDHANG (ONE IN DHAWARAL)

SKYE GIETZELT-DAVIES, BELLA WATERFIELD,
NEVAEH WEST AND MAXINE ESCOBAR

LAKE ILLAWARRA SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Our artwork is made from different faces to represent our dream for reconciliation. Reconciliation is about coming together and making a new world where everyone belongs and can be heard.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means being connected. It is a journey and belief in truth telling.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

TOTEM TO OUR SCHOOL

EBONY KEMP, LOGAN DANIELS, HARDY
FLETCHER, MADI KEMP, DAYA JONES,
EADIE WHATSON AND LEVI KNIGHT

ST JOSEPHS PRIMARY SCHOOL
LAURIE TON (YEARS 3-6)

We are daydreaming of a story that looks like; all are welcome in our school and the whole wide world. We are daydreaming of another chapter in our story where we protect and care for our creatures that are our spiritual totem animals. Finally, we are dreaming that our artwork, totem pole will help represent our cultural and spiritual relationship to the land, paying respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their custodial, cultural and spiritual relationship with the land on which we live, breathe and walk alongside one another.

Reconciliation means...

All are welcome and included at our school and that no matter what we look like or where we come from we have respect for one another and can live in harmony and peace on Birpai country and all around the world.



MEDIUM: WATER COLOUR, OIL PASTEL

RECONCILIATION - A NEW DAWN

AVA ILIJESKI, ELLYRA ANGELESKI
AND RUBY HOEGEL

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Our class's artwork is an original inspired by 'The Uluru Statement of the Heart'. This is the reason Uluru is the centre of our piece. We have collaged the words from The Statement of the Heart either on Uluru or the Sun to show its significance. Like the Sun rises to begin a new day, our Sun represents a new beginning that we dream for the future, where everyone feels they belong, they are respected and valued in a reconciled nation. We have included words in the Sun's rays that stood out to us from The Uluru Statement of the Heart or what we believe reconciliation is. We used water colours and oil pastels to create our artwork titled 'Reconciliation – A New Dawn.'

Reconciliation means...

Acknowledged, accepted, united, respected.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT PLUNKETT ST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Our artwork represents two little girls who are friends and is depicted in a Picasso style abstract face showing the closeness of our school community and the friendships of our students no matter what culture they come from. The artwork also has words written on it which the students chose after yarning about what words represent reconciliation. The First Nations students added their totems to the artwork as they felt this represented them and their family. The concentric circles at the bottom was also contributed by the First Nations students and represents community. The use of the surfboard (entertainment which the students sometimes do together) for the artwork and the colours blue and yellow (the beach and ocean) is a representation of Gadigal Country where the students all reside. The round pictures attached to the artwork are the symbols of change for First Nations peoples which the students have recognised during our discussions around the idea of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation means...

The story we dream for reconciliation is based around mutual respect and friendship. Our school is based in the inter-city of Sydney on Gadigal Country which is part of the Eora Nation. We are a small school with one hundred students enrolled. There are thirty-five different nationalities within our school, of these nationalities we have twenty First Nations students (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) who are all living off their home Country. The children live in close proximity of each other so their lives are very much inter-twinned twenty-four seven. Therefore, cultural respect and friendships play a big part in their way of life. The school staff are committed to ensuring that the students in the school know that the land our school is built on is Gadigal Country and that the Gadigal people are the custodians. We have a school Acknowledgement of Country that is shared with the school and community on special occasions. Within our classrooms each class has written an Acknowledgement of Country which is personal to them and is read each morning before the daily lessons begin. We spoke about what reconciliation means to us and what we might be able to do to make our school a place where everyone is treated equally. Our idea of friendship, respect and fairness we thought would be a way we could strengthen our connections and relationship within our school and community.



MEDIUM: WATERCOLOUR, CRAYON, OIL PASTEL

PORTHOLES TO COUNTRY CLASS 5S

CAMMERAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

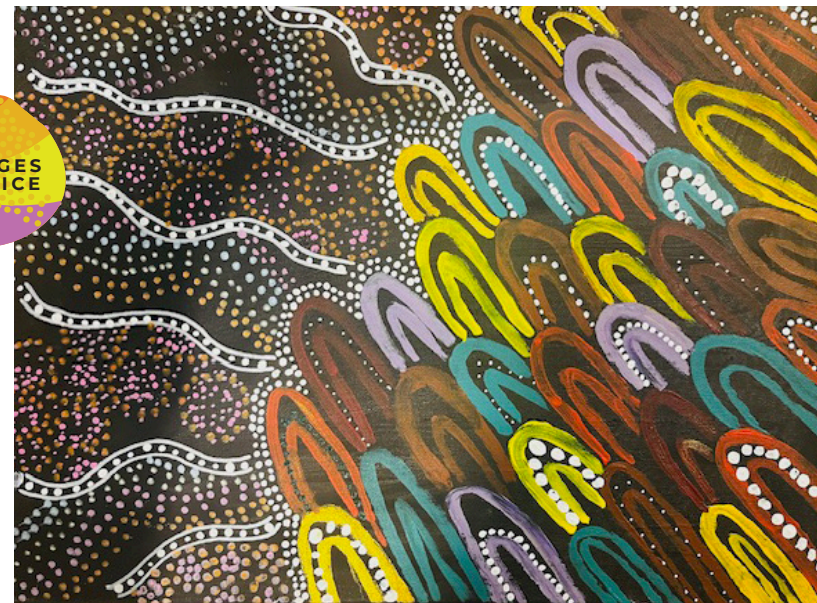
Individual Student Statements about their Portal artworks that visually connect them to Country while dreaming their stories. Saltwater, Freshwater and Land symbols have been included in each student portal. The art symbols used were provided by Bibi Barba, a local Aboriginal artist who authentically connected the students to Country. Damien - My portal artwork represents the ecosystem and how different animals live there. Mia - My portal artwork shows the love we could have shared with our endangered species. Harry - My portal artwork represents my connection to Country, by showing my love for the trees and the saltwater.

Isobel - My portal artwork shows the importance fire and water have to the plants and animals of Australia. Tom - My portal artwork educates people about the importance of not cutting down trees. Rachel - My portal artwork is based on the important connection between koalas, Aboriginal people, and Country. Elaine - My portal artwork is a representation of Yin and Yang. It means that land and water connect, and this connection represents good luck. Natasha - My portal artwork is meant to represent the importance of Australia, and how the land, sea and animals come together to make our Country. Selena - My 'Portal to Country' represents a typical sunset at a nature reserve next to a pond. The saltwater symbol represents the saltwater beach. Ayesha - My 'Portal to Country' relates to my father's hometown of Bathurst. The river in the middle represents Macquarie River and the flowers represent the sunflowers around my house. Nicholas - My 'Portal to Country' represents the different ecosystems and biomes in the Aboriginal land. Georgia B - My portal artwork is about my love of the ocean and how much it does for us. I also added a tree and a flower to represent a mother and a daughter. Joshua - My portal artwork represents the importance of water, as without it there wouldn't be life. Finn - My 'Portal to Country' shows a bird flying through the different seasons. Emma - My portal artwork represents the land and the saltwater that we now live on today. This land was originally owned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Santi - My portal artwork shows people and turtles. It reflects how we should appreciate nature and those we love, and never do anything to harm them. Georgia S - My portal artwork represents that there should be no purity and things should be mixed. Using the Yin and Yang symbols I wanted to show how two opposites can mix together to become balanced. Katherine - My 'Porthole to Country' represents nature and sustainability. Chloe - My portal artwork represents how lucky we are to always have access to sunshine, water, nature and wildlife. Araya - My portal artwork represents my home. I drew trees because my garden is filled with palm trees. The sun and the water represent memories of when I went to the beach to watch the sunset. Raffi - My 'Porthole to Country' represents that everyone is different in their own way and shape. Ryan - My portal artwork connects to the beach and fish, which is food for the saltwater people. Oscar - My portal artwork shows that nature has a heart and that it is alive, so we must treat it like a living person and take care of it. Mercutio - My portal artwork shows my connection to Country through the freshwater streams and creeks in which we play and swim. I chose the creek because water makes me feel relaxed.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is important to all of us in 5S. It is about two different lifestyles coming together and including everyone. It is about recognising that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the traditional owners of the land, and that their knowledge of the land must be acknowledged and respected. We must listen to each other, respect each other's opinions, and learn from each other. Together, we must look after Australia, this wonderful country we call home and share the stories of all Australians - Indigenous, descendants of the first settlers and the migrants from many countries, who now live here.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ART



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

YUWAYA WIINA-LI
FINLEY ANDREWS

JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Everybody has dreams, no matter where they come from. I painted all different people standing together with their dreams flying out. Everybody should be able to have their dreams come true to make their ancestors proud.

Reconciliation means...

When Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together to recognize the importance of learning culture, sharing culture and respecting culture.



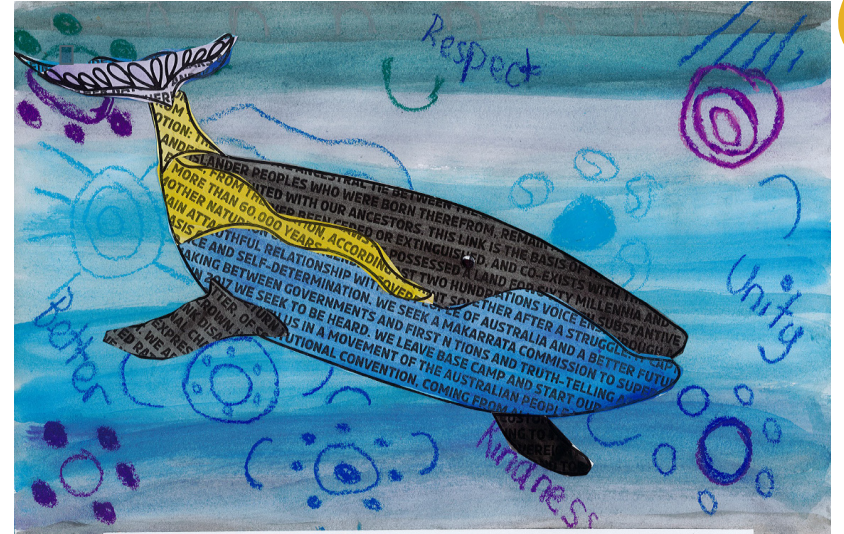
MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

THE GLOBAL STORY MIA SOUTHWELL (YEAR 6) LIVING SCHOOL

My painting for 'What Stories Will You Dream?', shows an Elder as part of the earth. He has told stories and looked after our country for thousands of years. The Elders words need to be heard and they have already been spoken loudly but we have not listened, we have not respected, and we have not learnt. It is time we listen and pay respects to the Elders past, present and emerging and to the planet that they have protected. This is what reconciliation means to me. I made my painting with different methods. I used a paint pouring method to do the sky and a pencil portrait to do the Elder. I then mixed them together and used paint and a sponge to create the earth and the Elders hair because he is one with the earth and we should learn from them. I painted turtle totems as a symbol of the stories the Elder is telling about the planet and how we must protect the planet and Aboriginal culture before it is too late. I also used an Aboriginal symbol for rivers on my globe to show that everything is connected.

Reconciliation means...

A time where we listen and pay respects to the Elders past, present and emerging and also to the planet that they have protected.



MEDIUM: WATER COLOUR, OIL PASTEL

SWIMMING TOGETHER IMOGEN BYRNES (YEAR 4) SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

My artwork was inspired by Danielle Mate Sullivan's beautiful 'Mother and Calf Whale' artwork. It shows the freedom that whales have in the vast, open ocean. Having an Aboriginal background myself, I loved becoming involved in the 2023 Schools Reconciliation Challenge. I used collage to layer bold words from the 'Uluru Statement of The Heart' to form the whale's body. This message is important because we want our future to embrace First Nations culture and traditions. Our dream is to swim together towards a united future which is why I included key words in the background using water colour paints and oil pastels.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means moving together towards a united future.



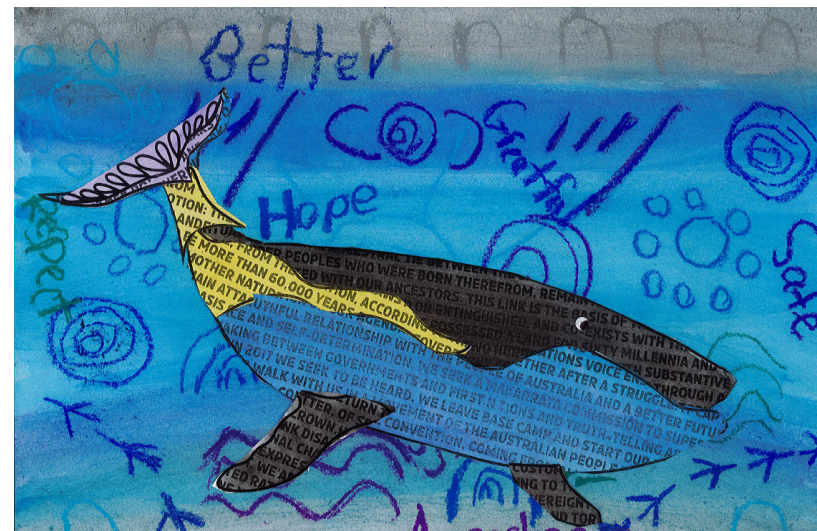
MEDIUM: WATER COLOUR

BIAMI
INDY FITZPATRICK (YEAR 6)
 SPRINGWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL

I drew a picture of Biami, the Rainbow Serpent, wrapping itself around a tree. I chose this because it is vibrant and is the most eye-catching creature. The Rainbow Serpent also represents the beginning of creation in Aboriginal culture.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is important to me because it reflects on who we are and the journeys we have gone through or are going through and what has happened to Country and wildlife. Also, Reconciliation is about everyone coming together and all being equals without worrying about their race.



MEDIUM: WATERCOLOUR

A WHALE HEART
ABBY WALSH (YEAR 4)
 SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

My artwork was inspired by Aboriginal artist Danielle Mate Sullivan. Like me, she is from South-Western Sydney and has a love for animals. Aboriginal people hold a connection to the land through waterways and living things. I chose the whale because animals and plants surround us and continually grow. We looked at Reconciliation and how Australia will work together to grow. Using the Uluru Statement of The Heart, I arranged the body of the whale. I included the words 'Better,' 'Hope' and 'Grateful' because when I grow older, I HOPE Australia will be better by including all First Nations people equally. I am hopeful and grateful this is happening, and First Nations people are being heard.

Reconciliation means...

Hearing First Nations people and respecting their strong connection to Country.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, CHARCOAL

VISION

XAVIER MATIC (YEAR 6)

HOLY CROSS GLENWOOD

My artwork is titled 'Vision' and this is me in the artwork, I imagined myself as an Indigenous year 6 student and my dreams for the future. I hope that the land of Australia is always cared for and the spiritual connection that the Indigenous community has towards Country is always respected. I hope that everyone has access to medical treatment and their well-being is supported. I love going to school and I hope this is the same for all youth across Australia.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation to me is about respect, looking at life through the eyes of another person and living together in harmony.



MEDIUM: WATERCOLOUR, PENCIL, CHARCOAL

AS WE COME TOGETHER, WE HEAL THE LAND

OLIVIA SUTHERLAND (YEAR 6)

MINMI PUBLIC SCHOOL

My artwork is about Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous making Australia a better place, and ending racism. I chose bright and dark colours to make my artwork pop out. I used a pencil for detail and outlined it, so it looked better. I dream of Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous peoples getting together and stopping racism and making Australia a better place.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation to me is Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous coming together after a big disagreement and learning to overcome it to make a better place.



MEDIUM: WATER COLOUR

FIND YOUR VOICE

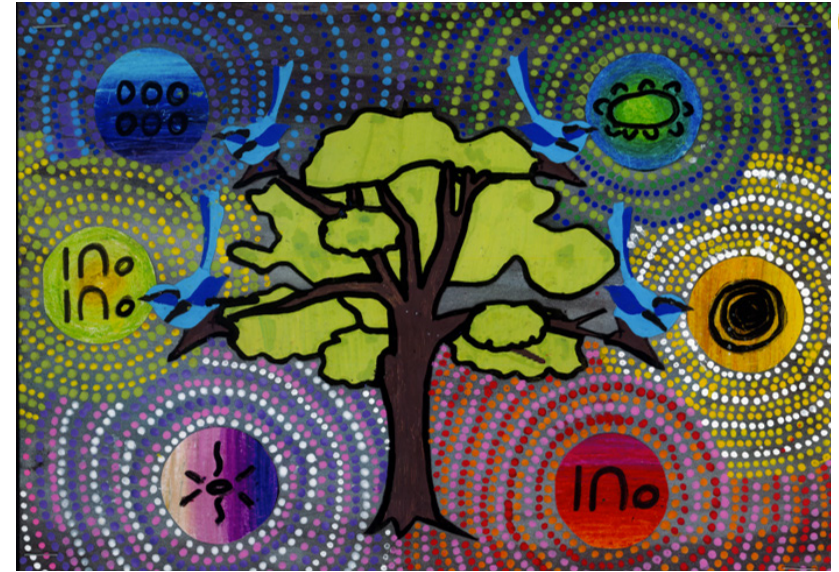
ASHMEET KANDA (YEAR 5)

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

My painting is Magpie singing after he has learned from the Elders how to stop being angry. This is because we read Mad Magpie by Greg Dreise and learned that we need to find our own voice. When we listen to our Elders, we get good ideas about how to live a good life.

Reconciliation means...

Getting on with other people and working together. Australia will get better if we all work together. Being angry doesn't work. Find your voice.



MEDIUM: OTHER

FAMILY TREE

ABIGAIL STEVENS (YEAR 5)

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

This artwork represents society being like a family tree where we all need to work together to ensure our future generations live harmoniously and experience a world that is free from discrimination, hate, warfare, poverty and starvation. The Blue Wren represents peace, harmony, and togetherness. The Aboriginal symbols for community, love, family, tribe, sitting together all represent kinship, family, and connection to land. These are significant elements as they help us realize the important role we play in ensuring we live in a reconciled world.

Reconciliation means...

A reconciled future to me is a world where everyone gets along and judgement of one another is extinct. People from all walks of life have the same chances and everyone is given the opportunity to experience equal rights. It is a society where everyone works towards achieving the same common goal – a society where everyone can thrive and succeed.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

STAY ALIVE

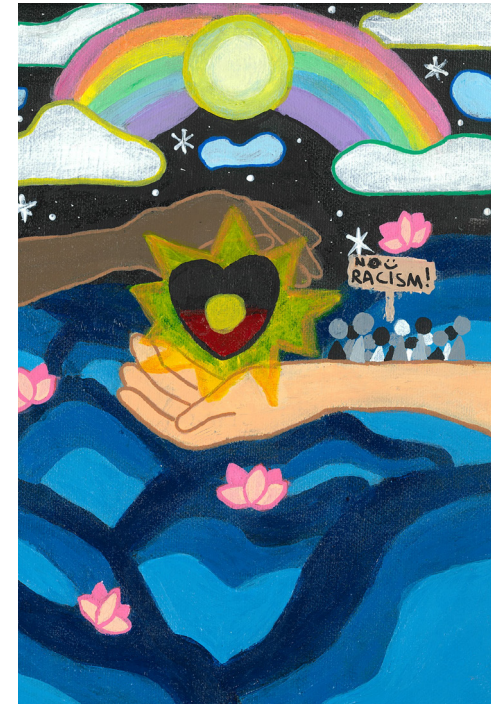
ALEXIS KELLEY (YEAR 5)

FARMBOROUGH ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

My dream is for Aboriginal language not to be lost and stay alive.

Reconciliation means...

Restoring what was lost.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

A TRANQUIL EDEN

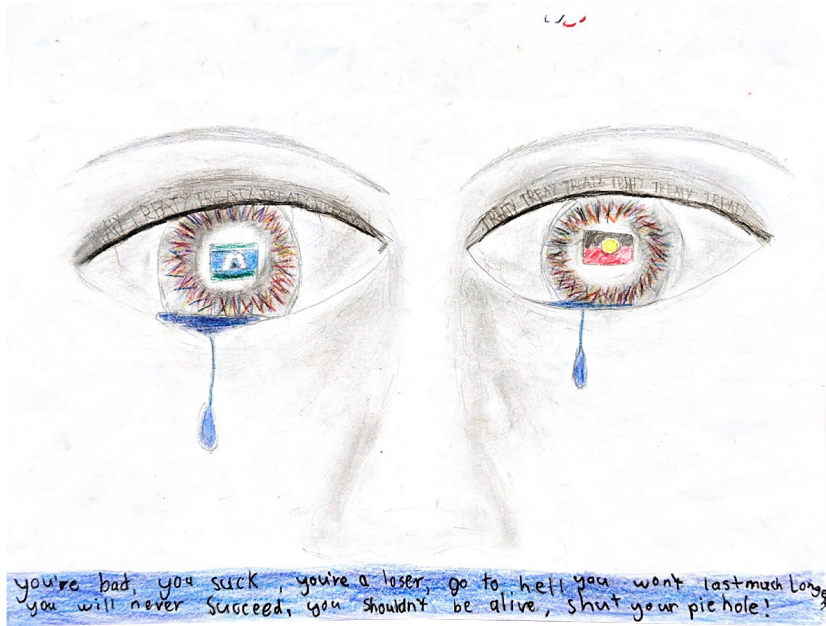
MARIA CASAS (YEAR 5)

WAITARA PUBLIC SCHOOL

A Tranquil Eden is an artwork I created that has symbols hidden within it. In the centre of the painting, are two hands, light and dark, with a shining Aboriginal Flag heart in the middle of them. It is supposed to mean peace and serenity between two races. On the light arm, is a group of people holding up a sign saying, 'no racism'. Behind the arms, there is an ocean with lotuses floating on the superficial surface. A lotus is a sign of strength and renaissance. At the top of the painting there is a colourful rainbow that represents joy and happiness. These symbols are positive for the world and in the future, I hope that this is what the world will become. Filled with joy, peace, and strength.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means forgiveness. To forget feuds, arguments, and negativity, but instead to work together and create more harmony in our society.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

RELEASE
 LUCA MATRICARDI (YEAR 6)
 LIVING SCHOOL

This artwork shows a character crying. This signifies that the character is letting go of their negative feelings towards the unjust past of First Nations people and revealing a reconciled future that lays in front. This relates to the theme of *What Stories Will You Dream?* because it signifies releasing the negative to reveals the joyful dreams for the future. I also used the word 'TREATY' as eyelashes to signify the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which is a very important part of moving towards our future.

Reconciliation means...

To ignore our differences and to rejoin as one group of people as we once were in the past.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

GUNAGALA
 WILLOW ANDREWS (YEAR 3)
 JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL

I dream about space. I love listening to the stories about the stars and my ancestors. I want to be the first Aboriginal girl in space.

Reconciliation means...

Learning Aboriginal culture and respecting each other.

H I G H S C H O O L A R T



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT, FEATHERS

ALTYERRE AREME

AVA MUIR (YEAR 10)

LORETO NORMANHURST

My artwork "altyerre areme" meaning to dream about in my language Arrernte shows the loss of culture First Nations peoples have had to experience due to colonisation and the Stolen Generations but also the bright future that we are dreaming of and bringing it back to life. It shows how strong the culture was pre-colonisation. As well as the loss of everything that we have had to experience since this time. This artwork shows hope in bringing the culture back. It is my dream to not be discriminated against and to bring life back to my culture, so it flourishes again. This would allow future generations can experience the longest-surviving culture in the world. It shows the strength and determination that First Nations peoples possess in bringing back what has been lost and never giving up. The track marks at the bottom symbolise the small gaps in culture that will always be there and the broken pieces in the story that may never be revived. The emu feathers coming out of the weaving in the centre are the culture being shared for everyone to know and share. This is my dream to bring back what we once had without being discriminated against and being a connected society.

Reconciliation means...

As written in the Uluru Statement from the heart "Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle". Reconciliation to me is the coming together of First Nations Australians and non-Indigenous Australians to accept the past and the mistakes that have been made to be able to close the gap of inequality and come together with no segregation or discrimination.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, CHARCOAL

GROWTH
LILLIANA GOSLING (YEAR 9)
BLAXLAND HIGH SCHOOL

My artwork, titled 'Growth', represents the beautiful, forgotten, and undervalued relationship Indigenous people hold with the earth. My admiration for the deep connection and respect Aboriginal people have for Australia's land has inspired my choices for 'Growth'. When I think about 'What Stories Will You Dream?' I think about the future I'd like to see for Australia. I would like to see a world where everybody has a spiritual and respectful connection to the land, whether they are Indigenous or not. The baby and the seed in the artwork are meant to represent the baby in the mum, because people owe just as much to Earth as they do to their own mother. The mother and the Earth are similar in their capacity to provide shelter, love, and support to people.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means acknowledging that you can't take back what happened in the past, but you can make the effort to change and improve healing between hurt people. My artwork relates to reconciliation because it shows an innocent baby undefined by race with a deep connection to the land like Indigenous people which is the future I dream.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

WATER WAYS DREAMING
ZACHARY KNIBBS-PECKHAM (YEAR 10)
NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING
ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

As a voice for the generations to come, I connected with the rainbow serpent through my artwork. In its natural surroundings, the rainbow serpent is considered sacred as a source of life and a protector of water. I was inspired by this dreamtime for my artwork since the rainbow serpent is the creator of our valleys, streams, land, and mother nature. In this piece, the rainbow serpent serves as a spiritual protector of the places nearby the water in which we gather to tell our stories. Everywhere we go, every seat we take. It won't matter if we don't know who the rainbow serpent is because it'll be with us. The Rainbow Serpent is a symbol of life.

Reconciliation means...

As an indigenous man, reconciliation means starting over with the concept of respect and extending it to others in order to build a stronger link between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. To me, reconciliation is forging a new storyline, a new relationship while still respecting the storyline of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT, PENCIL, CHARCOAL

GALAH DREAMING KALARA PENRITH (YEAR 8)

CAMPBELLTOWN PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

Galah dreaming represents my totem from my mob in Gulargambone which means 'watering place of many birds'. The Galah has strong connection with my ancestors, allowing them to pass on messages of love, knowledge, and respect between generations. They represent freedom and resilience which we can all learn from nature and develop an ability to grow strong in even the harshest climate. In today's world of reconciliation even the warble of the Galah's call is believed to be a reminder of non-physical love, connection, and happiness which we all seek in life's journey. This is what I dream through my artwork about reconciliation - a unified Australia with connection to country.

Reconciliation means...

Learning from our mistakes in the past and moving forward as one.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT, PENCIL, CHARCOAL

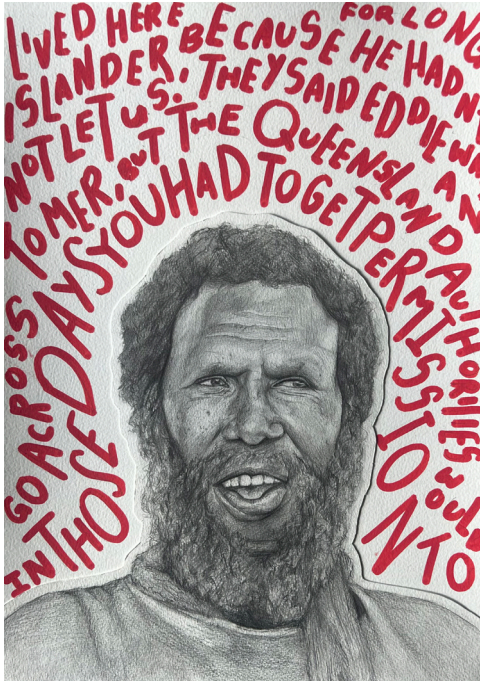
BURRUGUU 'TIME OF DREAMING' DESTINY BAKER (YEAR 10)

CAMPBELLTOWN PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

In the dreaming, it is a vital role that our Elders play within our culture and society to ensure the wellbeing of the community. I have drawn Uncle Ivan, our community Elder who guides the pathways to our future and has passed on his knowledge and perspectives, and these will continue to be passed down through the generations. In my dream, I hope to be able to pass down the knowledge that I have learnt and received and to become a significant part of a reconciled Australia moving forward.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means although our culture has suffered many hardships we can still move forward together in unity and as one.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, CHARCOAL

IN THOSE DAYS

EVIE MCKECHNIE (YEAR 10)

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING
ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

My artwork is a pencil portrait of Eddie Mabo, an indigenous man widely known for his activism concerning Aboriginal Land Rights. This portrait, including a quote from Mabo's mother, explores the theme of 'What Stories Will You Dream?' by detailing Eddie Mabo as the transformative figure he was in the Aboriginal community, bringing rights and freedoms to fruition, which, in the past, were nothing but a dream.

Reconciliation means...

To me, reconciliation is an important word. In its 14 letters, reconciliation represents bridging the gap and creating harmony between communities, creating love where there was hate and attempting to rewrite the wrongs of our past. Reconciliation is about the original owners of this land and amplifying the voices of the people too long silenced.



MEDIUM: OTHER

SUNSET DREAMING

ELLA HOWLETT (YEAR 10)

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING
ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

I dream of the sunsets of a time long ago where stories by Elders, Aunties and Uncles were once told, they sat around the fire as the sun goes down, settling in, settling down. I hear children laughing, mothers helping them along, to get them to sleep with a beautiful song. The stories they told are now passed down. Of Country and Culture, Language and Songs. I dream of that time and now dream of my own. It's been there all along, weaved and imbedded into something that can never be stolen. My Dreaming of Sunsets will always live on.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation to me means coming together no matter our differences, with respect and understanding, acknowledging that everyone has a story to dream.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, CHARCOAL

FAITH'S FUTURE TELEAH RHODES (YEAR 9)

BLAXLAND HIGH SCHOOL

My artwork 'Faith's future' is about Faith Bandler who was an Aboriginal activist and campaigner for the rights of Indigenous Peoples & South Sea Islanders. Throughout this artwork there are some small key messages such as a local historic landmark- The 3 sisters, the Aboriginal flag, and Indigenous designs to symbolize how Australia should be more inclusive to the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

My artwork relates to 'reconciliation' by trying to make other people view how Australia should be more culturally aware by showing symbolic designs and well-known activists/campaigners. Australia should be inclusive of Indigenous cultures as we are a 'diverse and accepting country'. 'Faith's Future' relates to theme 'What Stories Will You Dream?' because it's the Australia that Faith would have dreamed of before she died. Faith was an activist who hoped for an equal and diverse future.

Reconciliation means...

To me reconciliation means 'being more aware of other cultures' and being diverse and caring for Indigenous people, native Australian plants, and languages. That's why I made 'Faith's Future'.



MEDIUM: DIGITAL ART/GRAPHIC DESIGN

YOUR PROMISE UNDER THE WANING SKY AISLINN WHEELER (YEAR 9)

BLAXLAND HIGH SCHOOL

'Your Promise Under the Waning Sky', is an artwork that represents the promise and subsequent apologies, to mend what damage has been done in the past. The reconciliation of both halves of Australia, represented by the girls as the new generation, setting aside their differences and working to make a better future for themselves and whoever comes after them. My piece is set under a sunset, modelled after our own Australian sunsets. It represents a metaphorical end or 'sunset' to prejudice and hurt, while the star that ignites behind their intertwined hands represents the rebirth of a new future. A bright and colourful future, where the past's mistakes are not ignored, but set aside in favour of forgiveness and peace. A world where reconciliation has changed it for the better. This piece is rather close to my heart. I interpreted the prompt as something akin to 'My ideal Australia', so I envisioned a world free from racism and prejudice. A world where the mistakes made in the past have had a chance to be rectified, and Australia as a whole, has come together and lives in bliss. That is the future I hope to someday see.

Reconciliation means...

Well, if you mean the literary, textbook definition, probably something like; 'Restoration of relations', the meaning in the lens of morality and this challenge are no different. To me, it represents a continued effort to amend past wrong doings, by acknowledging, apologising, and fixing, (where possible) the errors previously incurred. Bridging the gap between the two halves of Australia that us, non-Indigenous carved, both just as deserving to live here as the other. Connecting with each other and building a world of respect and care for one another.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

SEA LIFE

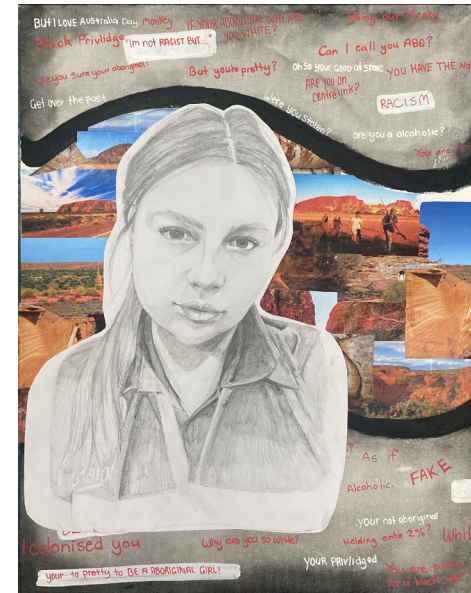
SASKIA RYLANDS (YEAR 9)

BRISBANE WATER SECONDARY
COLLEGE UMINA CAMPUS

I worked on this artwork in Aboriginal Art at school. I started with painting the canvas black and then I traced the cutouts of the fish and the starfish. Then I started dotting the animals. Then I did the background and finished with outlining it all. It relates to the theme 'What Stories Will You Dream?' because I dream of being underwater with the ocean and sea life.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is about people coming together to unite and celebrate everyone's culture.



MEDIUM: PENCIL, PHOTOGRAPHY

AKUTUNE 'NOT KNOWING'

INDIANA THOM (YEAR 10)

LORETO NORMANHURST

My artwork 'Akutune' shows the face of my best friend, Ava, who is an Aboriginal girl from Arrente. My portrayal of her through my mixed media artwork reflects the adversities she has overcome continuously because of her culture and skin. I hope that one day Australia will be more encouraging for young Indigenous Australians to connect with their culture, and that the new generation of Indigenous Australians can rebuild on the wealth of knowledge and culture they have lost through colonisation. Akutune means not knowing in Arrente, Ava's native language. It reflects the loss of culture that is experienced all over Australia, and by extension the hundreds of Indigenous languages that have been lost. The background of my artwork portrays Ava's home country that she longs to travel to, surrounded by words that have held her back from finding herself and her family's story. Some of the words are misspelled, as a way to represent that racism comes from a place of being uneducated.

Reconciliation means...

For me, the term reconciliation in Australia refers to the continuous process of fostering positive relationships among Australians of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous descent, recognising the past injustices and disadvantages experienced by Indigenous peoples, and promoting social, economic, and political equality. By addressing the effects of colonisation, fostering understanding, and upholding Indigenous cultures, languages, and customs, it seeks to build a cohesive and inclusive country. '



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

FOR OUR ELDERS KARLEE SIMON (YEAR 8)

GREAT LAKES COLLEGE, FORSTER CAMPUS

This painting is about my Elders. Being Worimi, our totem is the Dolphin which is 'Guparr' in our language. The pipis and the fish represent some of our food sources. Our people are very connected to the ocean, and I hope my painting shows this.

Reconciliation means...

To apologise for what happened in the past.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

JOURNEY THROUGH OUR STORIES CLAIRE WILLIAMS (YEAR 8)

THOMAS REDDALL HIGH SCHOOL

The concept behind my piece is exploring the idea that we share our words through a common origin. The meeting place is the start of the journey, and the journey lines take us through the messages we share.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means telling our stories so that we can understand each other and build unity and equity so that our stories become one.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

GRANNY'S ROCK

ALLEGRA CALDWELL (YEAR 10)

GREAT LAKES COLLEGE, FORSTER CAMPUS

I have painted my interpretation of the local Worimi story 'Granny's Rock'. It includes The Tanks and I have also put the Emu in the sky which shows our connection to the land which shows different times of the year. I chose to paint Granny's Rock because the warrior women show how strong and independent, they were.

Reconciliation means...

Coming together.



MEDIUM: ACRYLIC PAINT

OUR ELDERS

BYRAN NIXON (YEAR 10)

GREAT LAKES COLLEGE - FORSTER CAMPUS

I have painted about the hairy man that elders talk about to scare me. The top part of my painting shows spirits which represent past elders. The snake is about the creation of land and the Worimi Country. The bottom section is about the land and our people traveling through it.

Reconciliation means...

Acknowledging the mistakes of the past.

W R I T I N G

MY DREAM IS THAT AUSTRALIANS STOP CELEBRATING THE 26TH OF JANUARY EVERY YEAR

EDEN LOWRIE-JONES (YEAR 6)

NARRABEEN LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL



This is my dream...

The date is the 26th of January 1788, but I don't know that at the time because my mob don't record time by numbers and dates.

I am sitting with my family living a life my people have been living for over 65,000 years. I did not know it at the time but today life as I knew it was about to change forever.

My people lived off the land, we saw the land as our Mother and if we looked after her, she looked after us. We were free people who swam in crystal clear water holes, we ate wherever the food was, and everyone was part of my family.

We were a proud people we had laws, culture, and traditions, we had ceremonies and believed in the Dreamtime.

We didn't all talk the same language and have the same customs there was actually over 250 different language groups on this land we now call Australia.

Life as we knew it was good but all that changed on the 26th of January 1788 when 11 big boats arrived. Those boats planted their British flag in our land and declared it Terra Nullius which means land belonging to no one but what about me what about my ancestors don't we exist?

The people on those boats took our land, chopped down trees and put up fences so we could no longer access our food, they spread diseases that we had never seen before, they stole babies out of their mother's arms, those poor Mothers often never saw their babies again.

Once the invaders had settled in, they then removed us from our traditional lands and threw us into missions, they labelled us as fauna we were not even seen as humans to them.

We tried to work with them we fought in both WW1 and WW2 as Australians and then when we returned, they wouldn't even let us wear our uniform in public or March in the ANZAC Day March because it was an embarrassment for Australia.

Now the year is 2023 and the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is changing this was seen in the 1967 Referendum when over 90% of non-Aboriginal Australians voted yes for the protection of Aboriginal people's rights.

Then again in 2000 when over 250,000 people walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australians. Nelson Mandela, who was the South African Prime Minister, watched that march and said, 'the bridge walk was evidence of a country wanting to heal itself and deal with the hurt of the past'. Also, in 2008 a National Apology was given by the Prime Minister at the time Kevin Rudd for the forceable removal of Aboriginal Children from their mothers and families by the Australian Government and then in 2022 the Australian Government after 234 years has agreed to fly the Aboriginal Flag on top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

However, there is one thing that hasn't changed and that is the date that Australians celebrate Australia Day!

Every year on the 26th of January the same date that those 11 boats arrived on Australian shores people all over Australia celebrate Australia Day, a day to celebrate all things we love about being Australian.

People fly Australian Flags, hang out with family and friends, there are BBQs, lamingtons and people head to the beach.

However, Australia Day for Aboriginal people is a day of mourning, a reminder of all the pain and suffering that started on that very day when the people aboard those 11 boats stepped ashore at Botany Bay, that pain and healing is still continuing 235 years later.

The 26th of January is a reminder of everything that was taken from us as Aboriginal people. We still need a day to celebrate Australia Day because we do live in a beautiful country with an amazing variety of different cultures, but it needs to be a date where all Australians can be part of it.

Australia Day needs to acknowledge that not all Australians come from those 11 boats, but we come from many different cultures some who have been here for over 65,000 years and others that have only recently started to call Australia home.

Aboriginal people are the world's oldest surviving people, through all the hardship, hurt and pain we are still here, we survived!

We are now stronger and prouder then ever and that needs to be celebrated. Australia Day should celebrate all the people and cultures that live in Australia from Aboriginal cultural practices like smoking ceremonies and tradition dances to even just having a yarn about the old times. It should also include the other things that as Australians we love like wearing thongs, blue singlets with zinc on our nose, Chinese food, a yummy Curry or even a meat pie with tomato sauce.

Australia Day should be a day that we celebrate living in one of the luckiest countries in the world, a day where everyone can embrace and reflect on what it means to be Australian to them, this will never happen if Australia Day continues to be celebrated on the 26th of January... that date should be reserved for reflection, healing, nurturing, and understanding.

In my dream this would all be a reality.

Author's statement:

The 26th of January is not a day of celebration it is a day of mourning and reflection. Australia Day should be celebrated on a day that all Australians can celebrate what it means to them to live in such a beautiful country.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means acknowledging the mistakes of the past and respecting the views and beliefs of everyone in order to move forward and build a better Australia for everyone.

FINDING HARMONY AT THE RIVER

EMILY SMITH COLGAN (YEAR 6)

WALHALLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL

Long, long ago, two tribes made their homes not far from a river. But the riverbed was almost completely dry. The dusty earth had cracks in it that were so deep. The tribe from the East and the tribe from the South fought over the land near the river. They would meet at the river every day at sunset when the sky would fill with an array of colour. Every day at sunset, the tribes would fight and argue. Fight and argue.

'Yilli, Yilli ngaya ginyi' Angry, I got angry, the tribes would shout. Words like spears were flung out at each other.

The fighting continued day after day, week after week. The fury between the tribes was rapidly growing stronger and stronger. The Eastern tribe made a plan to stop this once and for all. They were going to spear the other tribe with the sharpest spears. But the Southern tribe also had a plan. They were going to hide in the bushes and target their enemies with the biggest boomerangs. All the men were prepared.

The Eastern tribe waited, their hearts pounding. The sun had almost disappeared. The Southern tribe remained hidden from sight. When the time was right, they sprung out and charged towards the Eastern tribe. The Southern tribe used their spears and blood drenched the ground. There was silence. Only a tiny sound was heard. 'Squeak'. They had hit a baby dhinawan, emu. 'Gamil, gagil, gagil!' No, no good, shouted the men. Regret filled the air and tears flooded the men's eyes.

The tribes ran back to their camps to tell the women. 'Gamil maaru' badly, carelessly, screamed the women. Clouds covered the moonlight, and the wind began to stir. Thunder rumbled in the distance. The earth was furious. 'Baawaa, Gunii, Baagii' Sister, Mother, Grandmother. 'Come here,' the women cried, as the storm was building.

There was only one thing to do. Both tribes went back to the river at dawn. They gathered at the meeting place and paid their respects to the dhinawan. The men gathered and the women held hands. They wanted to stick together, they wanted to help. The two tribes stood with eyes closed. BOOM! The earth shook beneath their feet. The men and women opened their eyes. The dried up river was now filled with crystal clear waters and the grass was green and lush. The smell of wildflowers filled the air.

The storm had cleared. But the baby dhinawan had disappeared. The two tribes were in shock. A woman huddled with everyone and spoke, with a wise, firm voice, 'We must share this land near the river, our tribes must unite. Look what we have done, we have killed a dhinawan, a future generation. We must never make this mistake again.'

'We must look past our differences and rejoice for we only have each other.'
Everyone agreed and the two tribes then lived together in harmony.

Author's statement:

My story is about the importance of coming together to unite. When we do not work together, mayhem starts to grow. The two tribes in my story, represent our differences and the tribes learnt that we must appreciate and show understanding of our differences. The only way to true reconciliation is through healing, to help each other and work together by bringing brilliant ideas together. In my story I incorporated my home river, the Mooki, and the traditional language of the land I live on, Gamilaraay language. I used the words I learnt at school. My story aims to teach how we should all work together and have peace and reconciliation.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is about all people coming together, no matter what we look like. I think reconciliation can be achieved if we all work together and learn about culture.

DREAMING TOGETHER
MILLY MCKENDRY (YEAR 6)

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

My pillow slowly shapes into a cloud as I drift off into the world of dreams, my thoughts droopily disappearing from my mind. The dark of closed eyelids morph into a deep blue sky, casting the world beneath it in a soothing shade of cyan. But the sky beckons me, telling me to explore further. Its pull is strange – a powerful force that can't be resisted. My legs start to move, rapidly picking up pace. Soon hills, mountains and deserts fly behind me, gone as quickly as they come.

As my legs come to a halt, I notice a familiar meadow up ahead. It ropes me in, begging for me to come. My body propels itself forward, forcing my legs to continue running, until finally collapsing onto the bed of grass, smothering the ecosystem for as far as the eye can see. Sighing, I glance up at the sky; it's an orange hue now, with swirling clouds spotting its surface.

I turn my attention to the grass – it feels smooth beneath my palms and as I snake my hands through the spuds, I feel a soft lump hidden between the crevices. I instantly recoiled my hand, fearing that I had just touched some sort of unknown animal. A wild cat maybe? But instead of a tail and whiskers, I see two round eyes looking back at me. Eyes of a girl, who I presume to be about my age. Her hair is long and dark, and her skin is a dark chestnut. She smiles, and I smile back.

'Hi!' I say cheerfully, attempting an introduction. She simply continues to smile, her eyes twinkling in the afternoon sunlight. 'Budyeri kamaru!' She replies after what feels like a millennium. I don't know what that means, so I just smile and nod up to the sky, still mesmerised by its impenetrable glare. She turns her gaze upward too, watching the clouds turn a slight silver, forming odd shapes in the flamingo-pink sky. We lie side-by-side, letting the beauty of the clouds and sky wash over our beings.

After a while, I can feel a tap on my shoulder. I turn my head to see the girl with a stick in hand. She giggles and slowly draws out a picture of a man and a woman in the dirt, with Toonku and Ngyardi over their heads. Noticing that I still don't get it, she points up at the sky, then at the drawing. I smile and say, 'so they came from there?' Noticing that she doesn't understand, I just nod my head to communicate my understanding. She grins and continues sharing her stories for hours, not limited to her voice, but liberated by her drawings. I share my stories too – ones of the sky and its limitless bounds. But soon, we both get tired and instead simply stare up at the sky, its trance connecting us. The quiet is peaceful, flowing through the grass, floating up the tree trunks and finally drifting off into the sky.

For a while we simply lie under the comforting glow of the sky and clouds, basking in the cool relief of sunset, until soon the clouds part for the moon, turning the sky a murky blue. But in a flash the sky warps from blue to a deep black, swiftly coating the whole meadow and my friend. Then my eyes opened, and I was greeted with the morning sunlight. As I pulled off my sheets, my expression turned sour. Who was that girl? This thought nagged at the back of my mind all the way to the kitchen, where I noticed that Mum wasn't home. Shrugging, I opened the fridge and got out some yoghurt, but just as I was about to put it in a bowl, I caught sight of a girl holding moving boxes outside my window...

Author's statement:

For me, reconciliation is all about mutual respect and camaraderie. My story demonstrates that even two people from different backgrounds, who have never met before and don't even speak the same language, can still reach reconciliation through working around barriers such as communication. This, I believe, is when you know you have successfully reached reconciliation: when you are able to find ways around problems together and with each party's best interest in mind.

Reconciliation means...

'Reconciliation' means not looking past differences but rather exploring differences, and learning from other cultures that are different from yours. We will never reach true reconciliation if we have a closed mindset and believe that our way is the only way or the best way to do things, as that is not accepting and appreciating other people for who they are and is disregarding their experiences and beliefs. If we learn from each other, we will all grow together, and move beyond what has happened in the past and create a better future in which everyone is respected and treated equally. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were the first people in this country and when the foreigners came here lots of bad things happened to them. For example, people couldn't live how they normally lived and children were stolen from their families. All Australians should still help the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and respect their culture and identity.

THE WONDERS OF NATURE

DARA HADDADI (YEAR 6)

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Giran

It's a warm, yet miserable summer. At least, for Poppy it is. Nothing outside satisfies her. 'Winter is better,' she says. 'I can curl up and read all the time in winter, and it doesn't feel right to do it in summer.'

Summer is the best time. The wattles bloom. This signals that the whales are migrating, and their songs bring everybody joy. Summer really is the best time in nature. Over in Poppy's world, everything is reversed. The wattles bring hay fever, and the migration ruins the time at the beach. My name is Wind, by the way. In the Wiradjuri language, my name is Giran, and I am a part of Country. Poppy is also part of Country, even if she doesn't realise it yet.

Poppy

Ugh, field trip day. I hate field trip days more than literally ANYTHING. They make us take our shoes off. Yuck. The bus smells like dirty socks and week-old vomit. The metal creaks as the bus twists and turns. The bus makes its final creak as it comes to a halt, sending everyone flying into the seat in front. Once I take one step out of the bus, I want to go back in. I trudge down to the river, dragging my feet in the dirt. In the clump of the group, I break away, disappearing into a gap in the bushes. No one seems to notice. I wander through the twigs and leaves, trying to find a way back to where I can be safe.

As I walk, I stumble and fall into a wattle tree. Oh no. The hay fever is coming back. I feel a sneeze coming, but before it comes out, it goes back in, and I see the pollen drifting out of my nose and reconnecting with the plant. I watch in shock as the flowers reach out and talk to me.

'Hello, Poppy!' The wattle touches my head and I immediately feel woozy. 'Don't worry, Poppy, you're safe.' I stutter. 'H-how are you doing that?' 'You are imagining this. But I am talking to you, in a way.' This feels so strange. 'I, you, and everything else here is part of Country, whether you realise it or not. You can see my flowers, right?'

'Yes.'

'That means the whales are migrating. Watch, you can see them breaching.' I look towards the sea. 'Wow, it's beautiful!' 'That is just one of the wonders of Australia. There are so many more things if you just look for them. So, remember this Poppy, there is so much in the world. Find it.' 'Thank you so much.' 'I'm trusting you with the knowledge of the Indigenous people. Use it well.'

Giran

And so, Poppy left the wattle bush and emerged into the world, a new girl. And every day after that, Poppy returned to the bushes and gazed at the wonders of the world. Beautiful.

Author's statement:

I wrote this story after being inspired by the SRC workshop. I chose two words to connect to reconciliation: trust and mending. I used third person personification at the beginning to tell from the point of view of the wind and then switched to first person to guide the reader through a story of mending and trust. The storyteller in the story is a Golden Wattle Tree who gives wisdom to a girl and teaches her about Indigenous Culture and how we can bring back stories and culture, as well as connect back to Country.

Reconciliation means...

To me, reconciliation means working together, celebrating each other's cultural differences, our beliefs and coming together to celebrate people. Reconciliation means to accept everyone for who they are and their differences. Reconciliation is very important because we have not seen it a lot in Australia's history, but it is never too late to fix the gap that has separated us. By sharing stories, dances, songs and culture, we can continue to grow the knowledge of Country. That, for me, is reconciliation.

HEARTSONG

LILY DWYER (YEAR 6)

KAMBORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

The dreamer dreams of hope.
As odd as it is;
A hand to hold,
Is now not so far away.
So the flame of the hearth,
Once embers,
May blaze again someday,
Sharing songs with a stranger.
So they breathe with the heart,
With those all around,
Oh such a gorgeous song.

Joined hands breathe in sync.
They always have,
Tucked away behind the tree,
Walking at sunset along the beach.
Thousands more breathe with them,
But in their bed it's just them three.

Coffee toned hands,
Marred with the cards Life has dealt.
Unforgivable to a cruel 'ruler'.
So chocolate fingers clasp them tight,
Pulling them into the spell.

Small fingers grip calloused ones,
The wreck lays far behind.
The path is long,
But they will trek it.
Who knows? There may be a sweeter tale ahead.

No matter if they keep doubling back,
They can sing to pass the time.
A screeching song,
Like nails scraped on the rusty roof.
The walls crumble,
Breaths uneven,
The rattle of old wheels.
The gates swing shut.

The golden glow of sun,
Breathing slowly in sync.
Nurse each other's wounds,
And they begin again.
The last few years of sunrise,
The youth who hopes for more.

Author's statement:

My poem is about the idea of everyone breathing to the same song.

They know medicine does not cause miracle,
Yet they still breathe,
Their heart still beats to the song.
They have lived Here,
They have loved Here,
To them,
That is enough.

Why shouldn't we dance to the song of Life?
Why shouldn't we strive to make it okay? The
lyrebirds are singing.
The sun rises over Country.
The wombats waddle home,
The kangaroos follow suit.
These scars should be slowly fading,
This hurt is ours to mend.
So let's dance to the heartsong.
Let's breathe with the home,
So wonderfully alive.
So wonderfully here.
Find the past,
Find it full of sorrow.
Find it full of joy.
Find it full of a home ripped away.
Seek it out.
Reconnect,
However you may.
Stories kept to the chest,
Aren't they better told?
So come on,
Breathe with me.
The heart beats.
The dead rest.
Time moves,
Become familiar with the eternal.
Mourn the past.
Know the now.
Allow the hope.
Allow the sorrow.
This is the sunrise.
This is their dawn.
This is our new vow.
So come now,
Why not dance to the harmony of home?

THE MULGA TREE

TAYLOR ASHLEY (YEAR 6)

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

This story is about a time a thousand years ago when there was a Mulga Tree (Wattle Tree) near a calm pond. This tranquil scene had long been a place of reflection and contemplation for the Muruwari tribe that lived nearby. Each year in the springtime, the Mulga Tree began to burst forth with vibrant blossoms. As the Mulga Tree continued to flourish, its branches became heavy with shiny golden flowers and tiny seeds. The Muruwari tribe saw this as a sign of abundance and blessing from their ancestors.

In the beginning, the Muruwari people were possessive over the Mulga Tree because they didn't want other tribes taking their Mulga seeds. The other clans that lived close by complained that they too needed the rich Mulga seeds to feed their families and loved ones. But the Muruwari people refused to listen, and they didn't have sympathy for the other tribes.

There was a Rainbow Serpent watching the Muruwari people. The Rainbow Serpent noticed that the Muruwari people fought over the Mulga seeds and didn't share them with any other tribe. So, the Rainbow Serpent made the blossoms fall off the Mulga Tree and blocked the Sun, Moon, and Stars. The Muruwari people's hopes were lost when darkness took over. The Mulga Tree gave the Muruwari people food to grow. They felt a sense of desolation and hardship.

In desperation, the Muruwari people cried out to the Rainbow Serpent 'I beg you; can you please unblock the Sun, Moon, and Stars and give us back our Mulga Tree?' The Rainbow Serpent agreed only if the Muruwari Tribe promised to share the Mulga seeds with the other tribes. So, the next day, the Sun came out, and the Moon and Stars glistened in the night sky. The Mulga Tree started to flower with lots of blossoms.

This taught the Muruwari Tribe one big lesson about nature. The lesson was how to appreciate what the Mulga Tree does for them and the importance of sharing with the other tribes. As they spent more time observing its graceful branches and vibrant blossoms, they began to understand the deeper symbolism embedded in its existence. The Mulga Tree served as a symbol of interconnectedness, a gentle reminder that in the grand tapestry of life, they were not isolated beings but rather integral threads in a larger, more intricate web.

For generations, the Muruwari Tribe told stories about the Mulga Tree and the pond, stories that spoke of reconciliation and healing.

Author's statement:

My story is inspired by the SRC workshop. I used tension to build up my story. It encourages the reader to follow on with the story because it has a big problem and then a plan to solve it. It is an exciting story that includes a Mulga Tree (Wattle Tree), so powerful that it gives the Muruwari tribes food. It is set near a beautiful pond which was near where the Muruwari tribe lived. The way that my story relates to reconciliation is by tribes sharing the Mulga seeds and especially the Mulga Tree itself.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means working together, building relationships, and respecting each other as a nation. It can also mean showing each other what's possible to achieve in life. It is also showing other people confidence to do things that they've never done before. It is also showing kindness to others. Reconciliation can also mean two people that can connect together in a certain way, and taking care of it, for teaching us its beauty and its dangers. In learning together, we hope to work together for a better future coming together as one nation.

KNOWLEDGE HOLDER

FLINT FOOTE (YEAR 6)

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

As I stepped out of the city and into the rainforest, I felt a sense of peace wash over me. The air was fresher, the trees were greener, and the sounds of nature surrounded me. I have always felt intrinsically entwined to the earth, and this hike was exactly what I needed to reconnect with my roots. I walked along the path, taking in all the sights and sounds around me. I could feel the earth beneath my feet, grounding me and connecting me to something deeper.

The rainforest is an exotic tapestry woven with the threads of nature; every living thing plays its part in a harmonious rhythm. The leaves of the towering trees are the dancers, swaying and descending in the gentle breeze. The rivers are the veins, coursing through this living, breathing organism. The animals are the actors, each with their role in this complicated drama.

An intriguing feeling came over me like a gentle push, making me advance deeper into the undergrowth. An eerie veil of silence blanketed the trees. Fear and curiosity clouded my vision. The rainforest looked as if the trees were reaching the sky like outstretched hands, casting long shadows in the silver moonlight. The leaves rustled beneath my feet like a gentle whisper, beckoning me to walk deeper into the forest. And then I heard a voice calling out to me, like a beacon in the night.

'Finally, a visitor,' someone said in a rough lonely voice like gravel. My heart skipped a beat. I started glancing around looking for whoever spoke. My heart felt like a cage with a wild animal trapped inside. 'Hello Andrew,' the voice said. A tsunami of fear crashed over me. How do they know my name? 'It is good that you are here and at peace with us.' I was as lost as a stray dog in the city. Suddenly out of the corner of my eye, I saw movement. I slowly turned around in trepidation.

The large decrepit gum tree stood there. 'Maybe just a figure of my imagination,' I thought to myself.

Gradually I stopped panting and just stood there trying to accept the voice was just my imagination playing tricks on me. The large gum tree shifted. 'You need to learn a lesson,' the voice said. I was drawn towards the tree.

The large trunk and branches towered over me. It emanated presence watching over the rainforest. The bark was etched with the wisdom of the ages, and it was as if the tree was alive with an energy that I couldn't quite explain. On the engraved bark, it showed our values and beliefs, our understanding of the world and its creation.

'You are now a knowledge holder Andrew,' the tree said.

A million emotions formed into a whirlpool in which my mind was drowning in. I was so shocked that I couldn't speak.

'Mr Andrew,' a student said. 'Did this happen? Is the tree real?'

Author's statement:

The First Nation People's tradition of passing information from generation to generation orally inspired me. These people who are given the right to pass down this knowledge are called knowledge holders, and this is what I wanted to incorporate in my story. This story represents the power of nature and how it teaches the main character a valuable lesson.

Reconciliation means...

It is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people. It involves acknowledging past wrongs, seeking forgiveness, and working towards healing and rebuilding trust. True reconciliation requires humility, courage, and a willingness to listen and understand the perspectives of others. It is a process that takes time, patience, and effort, but the rewards of restored relationships and peace are immeasurable.

A SECLUDED PLACE

THOMAS LOVATT

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

I walked through the forest, absorbing the various sounds of the wildlife. The loud cackle of birds in the canopy. The gentle sound of the leaves swishing side-to-side to the whims of the wind. The soft gurgle of rushing water, flowing from the peaks of the mountains to the distant sea. Though it was obscured by the trees, I could still see the sun, high in the sky, its heat somewhat stifled by the plentiful shade surrounding me. In the corner of my eye, I spotted a bright twinkle. Curious, I began running towards it, to see what it was. The dry sticks and leaves on the floor crunched under my feet as I ran, a reminder of the early Autumn. Eventually, I reached the source of the light. A tall waterfall led into a modestly sized lake roughly a metre deep. The sun shone on the waterfall, creating myriads of diverse colours, like a painter with the rushing water as their canvas. I slowly waded into the water, towards the waterfall, each step submerging myself deeper into the water. By the time I reached it, I was submerged up to my waist, though the water didn't bother me. I slowly reached a hand to the waterfall. The stone behind it was smooth and unyielding, contrasting starkly with the rough tumble of water. Though both seemed opposites, in a strange way they felt intensely connected, the stone given its shape by the water, the water its path by the stone. The sun now shone upon my back, warming me, a perfect counterbalance to the coolness of the water. I smelled the strong scent of eucalyptus leaves from the trees on the shoreline and heard the birds chirping in the sky. All of them were connected, an intricate web of life supporting life. There was something here, in this secluded place. A lesson to be learned. I closed my eyes...

Something changed. I could feel the nature around me, the plants and the animals. My sense slowly expanded and with each passing second my understanding of the world around me grew. Suddenly, an overwhelming sense hit me, one that felt both familiar and entirely alien. Humanity. I could feel its spirit, the turmoil, the order, the happiness, and the pain. Pain. I could feel it, the scars of past atrocities, staining the very soul of it. Yet many still went about their business, turning a blind eye to the injustice around them. I felt people, lives defined by hardship and oppression, for whom the wrongs of the past had never stopped. I knew in my bones that this had to stop. The truth had to be told. The wounds had to be cared for. The mistakes must be acknowledged and accounted for to stop the pain. The land around me should be cared for and preserved, lest its natural beauty and generous gifts be lost forever to greed. My eyes opened and the sense receded. I knew what I had to do.

Author's statement:

A secluded place - I have tried to incorporate many themes related to reconciliation into this story, whilst also keeping it a bit anonymous, though I feel all of its morals are very important to the theme of reconciliation. A lot of the first part of this piece is about how trust and cooperation benefit everybody, as shown by how the various parts of nature support each other. The second paragraph briefly reflects some of the themes in the first part, though is largely about closing the gap and truth-telling. The disadvantaged people in that paragraph are meant to represent First Nations peoples yet can be applied to many other disadvantaged minorities. Though they aren't greatly personified, the sun, the waterfall and the stone all have a bit of a personality and do drive the story, with the sun shining on the waterfall to show the main character to it and the waterfall (and the stone) helping to teach the main character their lesson. I also tried to incorporate the message of caring for the Country and giving back in the second paragraph though less strongly than the other themes.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation means acknowledging and healing the wounds of the past and closing the gap so that First Nations people are on an equal playing ground with the rest of the country and rejecting all forms of discrimination and oppression. It also means respecting, preserving, and sharing First Nations culture and recognising their status as the first custodians of this land by respecting Country and acknowledging it.

VOICES OF THE WIRADJURI PEOPLE

BELLA SEARLE (YEAR 9)

LORETO NORMANHURST

My Culture is dying.
I'm being told I'm a Half caste.
That I'm not a real Aboriginal.
What percentage are you they ask?
Surprised and shaken I answer with
'Excuse me. Who are you
to ask such a thing?'
Are you questioning my
identity of Aboriginality?
Or are you questioning my
ancestral history?
My morals, my culture, my
people, my stories
Or maybe you're questioning
my very own mob.

Even better my very own family
The people I identify myself as
The proud Wiradjuri nation
Let's look at this:
Windradyne a proud Wiradjuri man
Who fought for our country,
our rights, our people?
And he's just one of many.
And well there you go and
if I'm honest with you I'm 100%
So, I'm sorry to disappoint but
I am a proud Aboriginal.
Mandaang Guwu

Author's statement:

My poem 'Voices of the Wiradjuri People' talks about some of the experiences I have had as a young Aboriginal girl. This poem represents my connection to culture, Country and family. In a world that often seeks to question our backgrounds, this poem stands as a testament to the strength of my Aboriginal identity. In the poem, the difficulties faced by People with Aboriginal backgrounds are explored, mirroring the sensitive nature of the question 'What percentage are you?' This question makes me understand and consider the depth of my relationship with my people, my history, and my culture. Throughout the poem, I also talk about one of the Ancestors, Windradyne. I embrace the story of Windradyne, a brave Wiradjuri warrior who stood up for the rights of his people, as a way to trace myself to a proud and resilient ancestry. The story of Windradyne serves as a reminder that my identity is still defined and strong and should be fought for. The poem's concluding lines read, 'So, I'm sorry to disappoint but I am a proud Aboriginal, Mandaang Guwu'. The Wiradjuri word 'Mandaang Guwu' (which translates to 'thank you') emphasizes our connection to our culture, Country, and family. So, in total 'Voices of the Wiradjuri People' emphasises the power of identity, resilience, and the connection that Aboriginal people have to culture, land and family.

Reconciliation means...

The Uluru Statement from the Heart reinforces the importance of truth-telling. Truth Telling allows us to acknowledge the History of First Nations peoples culture and to recognise the mistakes that have happened in the past so that we can learn from them and so we can help stop history from repeating, as well as helping to create a better future for all. By creating a better future for generations to come it will have a positive effect on not only First Nations Peoples but on everyone.

UNWRITTEN ARE THE STORIES THEY DREAM

MORGAN FUGLE (YEAR 9)

LORETO NORMANHURST

For the stolen children scream,
Ripped from their mother's hands,
Unwritten are the stories they dream.

Subjected to racially discriminatory
schemes.

Taken from their own land,
For the stolen children scream.

The gap can be blatantly seen,
Trauma continues to expand.
Unwritten are the stories they dream.

The media tells stories that are not what
they seem,

But the truth can be found firsthand.
For the stolen children scream.

Racial disparities are still extreme.
How much longer can we withstand?
Unwritten are the stories they dream.

Is reconciliation enough to redeem?
Is education all we need to understand?
For the stolen children scream,
Unwritten are the stories they dream.

Author's statement:

'Unwritten are the Stories They Dream' is a poem about the forgotten, lost or unheard voices and stories of First Nations peoples, especially those impacted by the Stolen Generations. Throughout the composition, I aimed to address historical and current issues relating to the Stolen Generations. Such events include dispossession from Country, removal from families and culture, Intergenerational Trauma, Closing the Gap, bias within the media, cultural education and fundamentally, reconciliation. This poem was written in Villanelle form, to emphasise through the means of repetition the core of the poem; 'For the stolen children scream, unwritten are the stories they dream'. Through the repetition of these lines, I intended to communicate the importance of truth-telling, especially about past and ongoing injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in order to progress towards and achieve true reconciliation.

Reconciliation means...

To me, reconciliation means addressing injustices of the past faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating equality within Australia, and strengthening relationships between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous people for a better shared future. I believe that Constitutional action to recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of this land and enshrinement of an Indigenous Voice is important to enable a shift in attitudes and perspectives that Australian people have towards First Nations peoples and culture. Education and cultural understanding across the wider Australian society is also key to achieving this. Ultimately, I think this will deliver true reconciliation in Australian society.

TAKE IT IN, THE WILD HEART FROM THE FIRES

KENZH MUNDA CRUZ (YEAR 9)

ST PATRICK'S MARIST COLLEGE

Those who go to Terra Australis
Take in the beauty, rich and rare we hold
Where we are, its history has malice
Of strife, of hurt, and the need for some gold
Alas, our elders have taken their home
But yet to end our century-long need
To get back the fields where which can we roam
Away from those who know nothing but greed
Smoke and triumph win our hearts, satisfied
As the road to true peace is in our grasp
Unite with our hearts, our souls and our mind
For the future, for our kids, a world to enclasp
We sit around the fire of life, of dreams
A dream of a trail trekked to close the seams

I dream a dream of a land down under
Whereas far as I can see, where we roam
Dreams dreamt without hurt, made out of
wonder
Red soils soiling our hearts, rusting our chrome
On river's edge, others said to what end?
Places sowed to grow, to help cultivate
And build bridges, gifting flowers to mend

Author's statement:

My piece, 'Take it in, the Wild Heart from the Fires', is made out of three connected sonnets, reinstating and reusing language from the other to reinvigorate the idea of a dream where we all are together for our future and all hate be eradicated from our society. I used sonnets to convey my own wants and opinions with love triumphing over hate in my own dream, as Shakespeare used Sonnets to convey his own feelings and opinions. I convey my message with our future as that sun rises, as we are able to obtain it, whilst those who hate, remain in shadow. I allude to certain phrases such as 'beauty, rich and rare' from the national anthem and 'the land down under' as terms for Australia as it's meant to signify our unity as people, all from one land. The first sonnet sets our scene, telling the reader of Australia's past with terrible things happening for many reasons, but winning back our luck throughout the years. The second sonnet thinks and lingers on the future generations, who wouldn't have their culture stolen but given back. The last sonnet is the dream dreamt where those who go against love won't survive the tests of time and we all grow together with love in our hearts.

Reconciliation means...

Reconciliation is the admittance of past actions which one regrets and toils over. The process of reconciliation is talking about mistakes, allowing for healing and building ourselves up in order to progress in life, the need for understanding and learning from one another in order for true love and harmony.

Our broken tome, as it's never too late
Rain pours softly on the soil, the dry sands
May the world be at peace for our children
We do not know, but with our hearts in hands
Violence must end, we do not know when
Ahead of us lays a path, uncertain
But it's a while until closing the curtain

Yet, simple as it is all to forgive
Improbable to convince certain ones
But, their hatred would all be outlived
For love will persist and grow through their sons
Brazen and burn and love and hurt only
Makes up all our need to improve our lives
As the dream we dream, none do it lonely
Because we are not like Tassy Devils
Like kookaburras, we laugh together
Hopping around the bush like wallabies
We be jellyfish, who live forever
Living past the past, taking apologies
To Australia, the land down under
To our future hope, we never sunder.

A DREAM OF 'MAKARRATA': WALKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

ELLIE WENTWORTH BROWN (YEAR 10)

LORETO NORMANHURST

'I have a dream'. When Martin Luther King Jr. wrote this speech Australia had a long way to come. Now we have travelled further than a lot of people thought we would have, although we still have a long way to go. As a non-Indigenous person, I want to be a part of that change, I want to make this Australia better for those to come. 'I have a dream', I also have a dream, a dream for a reconciled future, where everyone, First Nations people or not, understands our shared past, an understanding of our First Nations people and an understanding of how to make progress. This is a dream I hope multiple people throughout our country have. Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin...' and I share this dream with him, I have a dream that the children of this country will no longer make assumptions about someone because of the colour of another person's skin. That my Aboriginal brother will not be growing up in Australia where he'll be judged, criticized, and attacked because his skin is a few shades darker than mine. 'I have a dream', a dream that one day he will be able to learn about his culture, his language, and his history from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's perspective. The culture he shares with many will be taught in schools all around Australia. 'I have a dream' a dream that there is no us and them, that we are equal, equal opportunities, equal respect, equal incarceration rates and equal hope. 'I have a dream', my dream is that the gap is closed, Australia's past is uncovered and we, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, can embody the concept of 'Makarrata' and walk together after a struggle for a more reconciled and just future.

Author's statement:

In 'A Dream of 'Makarrata': Walking Together for a Better Future' I express my shared dream with Martin Luther King Jr. a dream for a reconciled future in Australia where everyone, regardless of their background, understands our shared past and how to make progress. I dream of an Australia where there is no 'us and them,' and where we are all equal in terms of opportunities, respect, incarceration rates, and hope. I dream of an Australia where the gap is closed, and the country's past is uncovered. I hope that Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can embody the Yolngu word, mentioned in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, 'Makarrata' which means coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs, and living again in peace. Like Martin Luther King Jr., I have a dream that the children of this country will no longer make assumptions about someone because of the colour of another person's skin. I hope that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture will be taught in schools all around Australia.

Reconciliation means...

To me, reconciliation means acknowledging the past injustices and ongoing inequalities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since colonisation. It means recognising and respecting the First Peoples of this land and committing to working towards a more equal and respectful future. Reconciliation is about improving the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, through addressing inequity of opportunity, enhancing recognition of cultural identity, and building respect. It is a journey towards a just, equitable, and reconciled Australia, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will have the same life chances and choices as non-Indigenous children, and the length and quality of a person's life will not be determined by their racial background. Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility, and it requires active support from the nation's political, business, and community leaders.

UPON THIS LAND

COOPER MYERSCOUGH (YEAR 10)

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

We stand united upon this Land,
And acknowledge those who have come before us.
We see Dharug Country in our Elder's hands;
Passing on all that important stories encompass.

The old lie of the empty nation;
They claimed that this was Terra Nullius.
Australia was born on a false foundation,
A rich cultural history was here belonging to our First Nations.

Prosperous in a culture, that is highly complex;
With stories of Dreaming and Creation.
With Country, there comes a manner to connect,
For years of Tradition was conveyed with great elation.
By the power of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament;

Wishes of the Elders are continuously preserved.
The future is rising at a sharp ascent,
Along with the stories we are yet to conserve.

Reconciliation is the ingredient of a unified community;
Where future needs are yet to meet.
In determination for outright security,
When Australia is at its complete.

Author's statement:

My work is a writing piece in the form of a poem that embodies the daily importance of recognising both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians to both the land and sea, and with it preserving each of their unique and complex cultures and stories. Throughout this poem I have explored the theme of 'What Stories Will You Dream' by developing empathetic, compassionate and a sensitive understanding of the consequences that one group's actions place on another group. Furthermore, this understanding not only generates what must be done in the future, but it also symbolises how everyone's life matters and what we should do in order to show that we care.

Reconciliation means...

To me, Reconciliation is about strengthening ties between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the wider Australian community for the benefit of our country. Additionally, I also see a much more deeper meaning behind this term. From the moment we arrive into the world all our lives are based upon relationships between other people and their communities. Without people caring for one another, our society will not survive. We can't change history. But we can learn from it and make Australia a better place.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Barham High School	Barapa Barapa
Birchgrove Public School	Wangal
Blackheath Public School	Dharug
Blaxland High School	Darug and Gundungurra
Brisbane Water Secondary College, Umina	Darkinjung
Bolwarra Public School	Wonnarua
Budgewoi Public School	Darkinjung
Cammeray Public School	Cammeraygal
Campbelltown Performing Arts High School	Dharawal
Chertsey Public School	Darkinjung
Coffs Harbour Learning Centre	Gumbaynggirr
Danebank Anglican School for Girls	Bidjigal
Farmborough Rd Public School	Dharawal
Great Lakes College, Forster	Worimi
Greenwich Public School	Cammeraygal
Gwandalan Public School	Darkinjung
Holy Cross Glenwood	Dharug
Hornsby Girls High School	Dharug
International Grammar School	Gadigal
John Hunter Hospital School	Awabakal
John Palmer Public School	Dharug
Kambora Public School	Garigal
Lake Illawarra South Public School	Dharawal and Wadi Wadi
Living School	Bundjalung
Loreto Normanhurst	Guringai and Darug Country
Manly West Public School	Kayamai
Middle Harbour Public School	Cammeraygal
Mimosa Public School	Garigal
Minmi Public School	Awabakal
Moruya High School	Yuin
Narrabeen Lakes Public School	Garigal
Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School	Dharug
Oatley Public School	Bidjigal
Peterborough SSP	Dharawal
Plunkett St Public School	Gadigal
Riverbank Public School	Dharug
Singleton High School	Wonnarua
Springwood Public School	Dharug and Gundungarra
St Charles Catholic Primary School, Waverley	Gadigal
St John the Baptist Primary School, Freshwater	Garigal and Gayamaygal
St Joseph's Primary School, Laurieton	Birpai
St Patrick's Marist College	Burramattagal and Wallumategal
Surveyors Creek Public School	Dharug
Thomas Reddall High School	Dharawal
Tomerong Public School	Yuin
Toormina High School	Gumbaynggirr
Tullimbar Public School	Dharawal
Waitara Public School	Guringai and Dharug
Walhallow Public School	Gamilaroi
Winmalee High School	Dharug
YWCA Canberra Clubhouse	Ngunnawal, Ngunawal, and Ngambri

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In support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart
and a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice