

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

LEARNING FROM LEGACY: HEALING OUR COUNTRY



Reconciliation NSW

SCHOOLS
RECONCILIATION
CHALLENGE 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 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



Country is the keeper of stories,
of tradition and culture, and of reflection.

This year, we invited students to explore the deep and enduring legacy of First Nations knowledges and reflect on how colonisation—and its privileging of Western knowledge—has impacted that legacy. We ask students to consider the profound insights we stand to gain by learning from, embracing, prioritising, and protecting First Nations knowledge.

In 2024, the theme of the Reconciliation NSW Schools Reconciliation Challenge, **'Learning from Legacy: Healing Our Country'**, encouraged students to engage deeply with this reflection.

Now in its 15th year, and marking the 27th year of Reconciliation NSW, it has been truly inspiring to witness the strong commitment to reconciliation in education from schools across NSW and the ACT. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the participants of this year's challenge—both the long-standing contributors and the many new schools joining for the first time.

There is a growing recognition of the unique responsibilities First Nations peoples hold towards culture, family, and community, and an increasing understanding that these responsibilities differ from Western perspectives on family and community. These responsibilities are vital to the wellbeing of First Nations peoples and their communities.

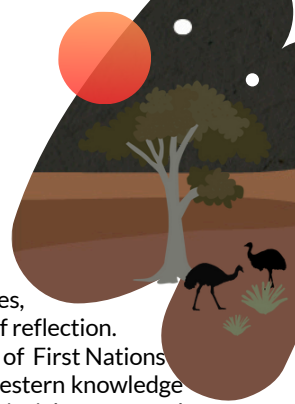
It is essential that we continue to listen to the voices of First Nations peoples. But listening alone is not enough. We must actively learn from and prioritise First Nations knowledge, which is intrinsically connected to the land now known as Australia. We must take deliberate action to protect culturally important places and stories, connections and relationships, and sustainable ways to rebalance and regenerate our country, ensuring the continued survival of culture and Country for another 65,000 years.

To heal our Country, we must learn from the wisdom of those that know it best. It is about spending time on country, learning from and respecting knowledge holders and nurturing mutual relationships with community and Country.

We thank every student, teacher, and school for participating in the 2024 Schools Reconciliation Challenge. Through your involvement, you have helped expand the understanding of First Nations cultures and contributed to building a more reconciled future. We look forward to your participation in next year's challenge!

Joshua Gilbert (Woromi)
Indigenous Co-Chair

Annie Tennant
Non-Indigenous Co-Chair





FOREWORD FROM MINISTER HARRIS

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, and as a former primary school teacher and principal, I think it is vital for school students to engage with and understand reconciliation, and to be exposed to Aboriginal culture and history.

Now in its 15th year, the Schools Reconciliation Challenge provides a unique opportunity for students to engage through art and writing.

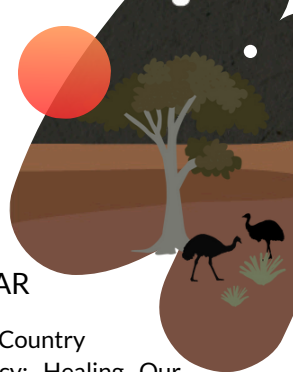
This year across NSW we saw 84 schools register for the Challenge, providing an opportunity for 6,500 students to take part. As a result 533 art and writing entries were received, and the final exhibition includes works from 31 schools.

This year's theme 'Learning from Legacy: Healing Our Country' is particularly relevant, as we all consider how reconciliation can be progressed at this moment in our country's history. It is important to consider the legacy of those who have come before us, and to learn from their experience. Only in doing so can we hope to move forward together. This is a key aspect of reconciliation.

Annually we celebrate Aboriginal Languages Week in NSW. Preserving Aboriginal languages is an important part of ensuring that Aboriginal knowledge, culture and living heritage continue to thrive.

I want to 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 importance of connecting with and caring for Country is central to the theme 'Learning from Legacy: Healing Our Country' for the 2024 Schools Reconciliation Challenge. Opportunities for our future leaders to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems in land management and sustainability can contribute to caring for Country, advancing reconciliation and building a better future for generations to come.

Now in its 15th year, I'm pleased this year's Reconciliation Challenge received so many entries from schools across NSW and the ACT.

Congratulations to every student who has taken part in this year's Challenge. Your profound sense of consideration and creativity is reflected in your beautiful artworks and words.

This year's theme highlights the value of connecting with and exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge in the areas of land management, sustainability, history, geology, and community.

The ongoing participation in the Challenge over the past fifteen years is great to see and represents the strong commitment from schools and students to engage in this important learning.

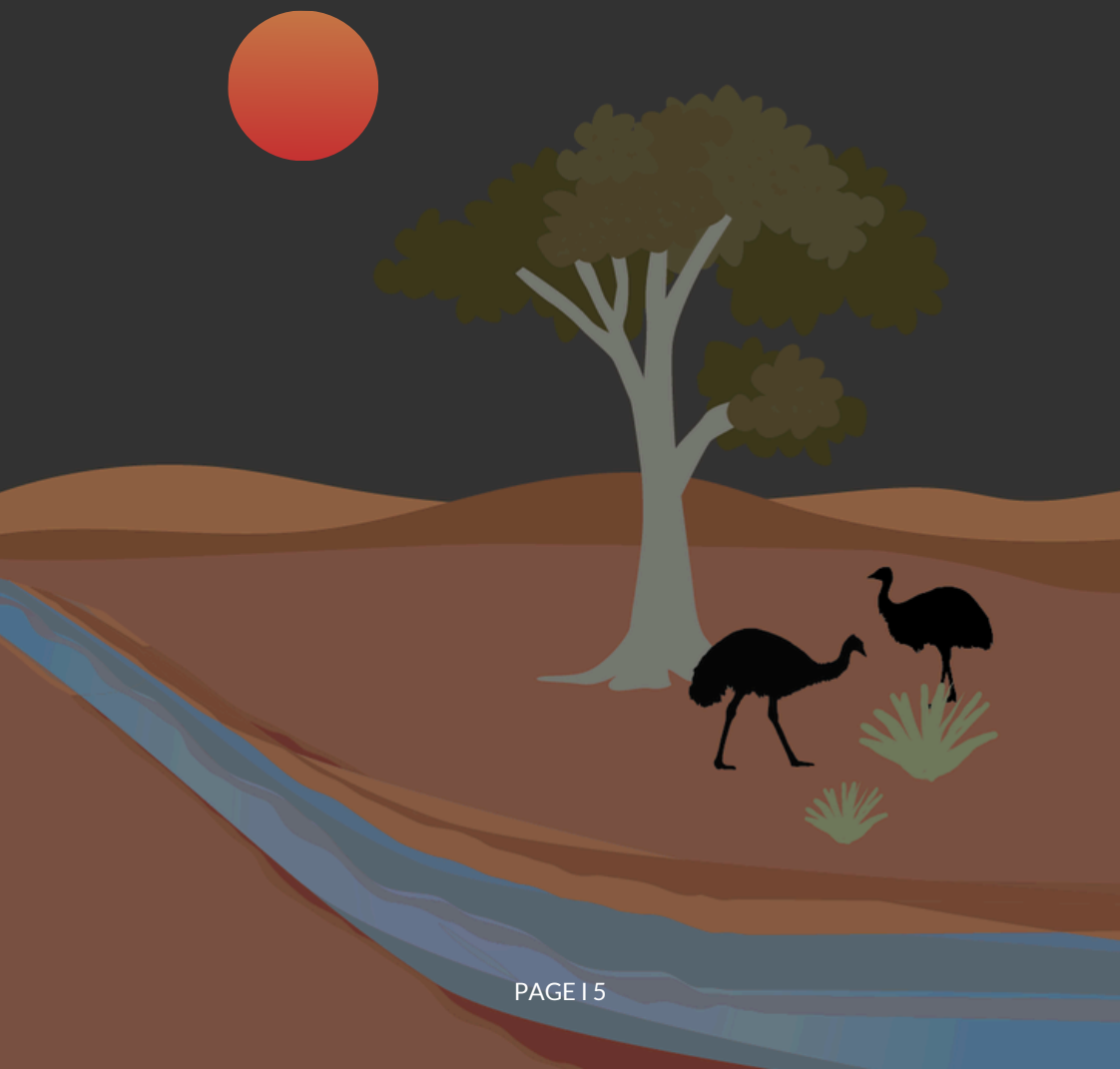
As the Minister for Education, reconciliation is deeply important to me. By working alongside First Nations people, we can provide better outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and school communities.

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

The Hon Prue Car MP

Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning,
Minister for Western Sydney

COLLABORATIVE ART





BINDARRAY JURRIYAY - THE RIVER IS FLOWING

YEAR 7 & 8 STUDENTS

TOORMINA HIGH SCHOOL

Materials: clay discs, paper raffia, paper cord.

This artwork acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Gumbaynggirr people - their long history on this land, the land they call mother, and the care they have given to her for thousands of years. The work reminds us that our school was once a beautiful forest and home to the Aboriginal people of this region - that under the concrete and tar, this land and her waters are, and always will be, traditional Aboriginal land. The Mid-North NSW coastal landscape and rivers are integral to the Gumbaynggirr people's culture, environment, and history, providing vital resources and spiritual significance. Students have incorporated the words into the woven piece from a song they have learned in class: Bindarray Jurriyay - The river is flowing, Jurriyay, barrwayay - Flowing and growing Bindarray jurriyay - The river is flowing Waarii gaagalgu - Down to the sea.

Reconciliation ...

is about coming together as a community to learn, heal, and grow. Through the theme 'Learning From Legacy: Healing Our Country', and guided by the wisdom of our Aboriginal Elders, our students are engaging deeply with the stories, language, song, and history of the local Gumbaynggirr Nation. As we embrace traditional weaving techniques, we not only connect with cultural heritage but also celebrate the importance of looking after our rivers and waterways. This shared journey fosters respect, understanding, and unity, allowing us to honour the past while working together for a brighter future.





SEA TOTEM KNOWLEDGE BOXES

ART ENRICHMENT (K-6)

CAMMERAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Materials: other

We created knowledge boxes for our 4 sport houses. Each sport house has a sea totem that connects us to Country. The sea totems are: Gudugulung (turtle) Daringyan (stingray) Burra (eel) and Baruwal (dolphin). Our school is learning about these sea totems and their importance to Cammeraygal land. We have included art symbols for saltwater, freshwater and land. Bibi Barba, our school's Aboriginal consulting artist, shared these symbols with us. The knowledge boxes are part of our school's legacy of connecting to Country. We are learning Aboriginal words that connect us to this amazing land where we learn, play and meet each day. These knowledge boxes are part of our school's journey that show the story of connection to Cammeraygal Land and the rich history of the Aboriginal people who lived here before us.

Reconciliation means ...

that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people come together to share stories, experiences and journeys so that we may learn from one another and heal together.





SANDBOARDS OF STRENGTH

STUDENTS K-12 NEXUS EDUCATION AND KOLANG KUMBA OUTREACH CLASS
JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL SCHOOL

Materials: other

Students from John Hunter Hospital School designed their own 'Sandboards of Strength'. Drawing inspiration from Zachary Bennett Brook's surfboard designs, the sandboards reflect the topography of Worimi Country, specifically the Stockton sand dunes. The Stockton sand dunes are a culturally significant site due to middens, which contain shell deposits and tool-making artefacts, campsites and burial sites. Tourists can 'Learn from Legacy' through sand dune tours run by the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, who educate the community about the cultural significance of this site.

Each sandboard was designed by a student from each of our school's diverse educational spaces to reflect the creation, merger and uniqueness of each context; the school room, ward, NEXUS Education and Kolang Kumba Outreach Class. This is metaphorically comparable to First Nations clan groups, living harmoniously within 'one nation', the John Hunter Hospital School. Students have been learning about symbolism and totems as spiritual emblems and symbols of First Nations strength.

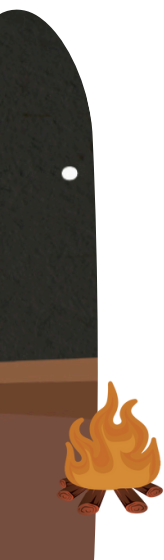
Totems define people's roles, responsibilities and relationships with each other and with creation. Students have learnt that totems symbolise strength, sustainability, protection, clan identification and cultural legacy. Our Aboriginal students used their totem animal as the basis for their design. Our non-Indigenous students used a spirit animal quiz to identify an animal that most embodied their

personality traits. Additionally, JHHS Outreach Class, Kolang Kumba (Awabakal language meaning 'Toward Tomorrow') is an educational service for students with regular attendance below 50% experiencing symptoms of anxiety and school refusal. The goal is to re-engage young people with an educational pathway and build their capacity to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

The NSW Schools Reconciliation Challenge provided a platform to deeply engage three young people who each completed an individual Sandboard of Strength. At John Hunter Hospital School, we nurture successful pathways for all through innovation, collaboration and excellence. Our school supports students to maintain educational continuity and engage in wellbeing practices to strengthen their social and emotional capabilities while undergoing medical treatment. This enables a smooth transition back to their census school.

Reconciliation means ...

that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people come together to share stories, experiences and journeys so that we may learn from one another and heal together.





DK

**JAKOBI ANDY, RYLEY BEADON, TYLER BROWN, LEVI COTTINGTON,
JAMIE EDWARDS, LACHLAN LEON, RYDER MCDONNELL, JAILYN RICKARDS,
CARLTON WHITE**

MORUYA HIGH SCHOOL

Materials: acrylic paint, pencil

DK as he is known to everyone at Moruya High School is a legend singer, song writer and storyteller. He is the Director of the Clontarf Academy at our school and works to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life-skills, and employment prospects of Moruya High School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. DK is a proud Ngiyampaa man of the Wangaaypuwan nation who is enthusiastic about people working together to make a better, more harmonious world.

Reconciliation means ...

acting to restore friendly relations and working to resolve negative differences between people who have been in conflict. It involves addressing the underlying issues, such as truth telling to help heal wounds, and fostering mutual understanding of people's differences in order to make our world a better place to live.



ANTHONY

MELIA BLACKMORE, ANNALISE CHAPMAN, BLAIR CLARK, TYRONE CONNOLLY, NATE HOCKEY, MADISON LLOYD, NATE NUGENT, SABIAN NUNES, JYE SLABBEKOORN, LACHLAN STOW, MADELYN TILBROOK AND PAIGE TILYARD
MORUYA HIGH SCHOOL

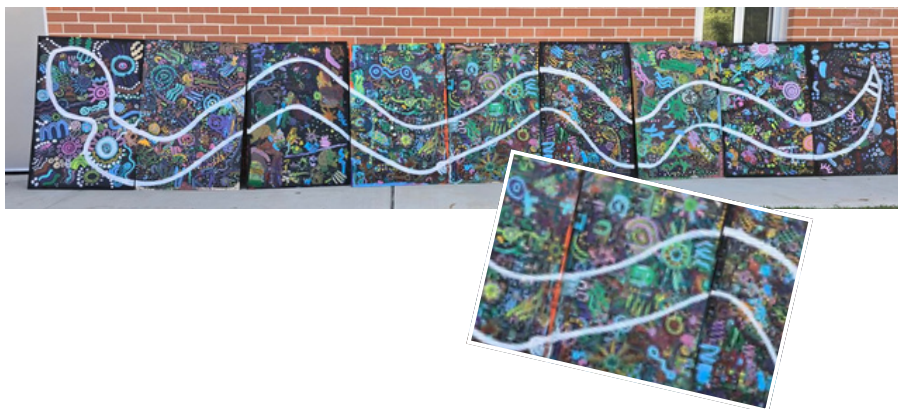
Materials: acrylic paint, pencil

Anthony is a proud Bundjalung man and operations officer with the Clontarf Foundation at Moruya High School. He is a positive and enthusiastic role model for all the students at our school. Anthony works tirelessly to improve the outcomes for Moruya High School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and helps to promote First Nations Culture throughout our school and wider community. We are all learning through his legacy to help heal our country.

Reconciliation ...

is acting to restore friendly relations and working to resolve negative differences between people who have been in conflict. It involves addressing the underlying issues, such as truth telling to help heal wounds, and fostering mutual understanding of people's differences in order to make our world a better place to live.





RAINBOW SERPENT

K-6 STUDENTS

JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Materials: acrylic paint

Our whole school contributed to our Rainbow Serpent, after listening to the dreaming story on Darug land. We painted the rivers, mountains and shapes of Country that the Rainbow Serpent's body made as it moved over the land. The Rainbow serpent is a part of everything in Country. All the colours of Country remind us of creation and how everything is connected and important. The snake reminds us of all the knowledge passed on for generations through the dreaming stories and that if we keep telling these stories we will always be connected to ancestors and have the knowledge to carry on caring for Country.

Reconciliation means ...

At John Palmer Public School we are committed to reconciliation. We are committed to learning traditional culture from the Darug people and embedding it in all aspects of our school. Being a reconciliation advocate means we respect and embrace Indigenous culture, we create a safe space for Indigenous people in our school and we learn the truth about history and ongoing fight for First Nations human rights.



LEARNING THROUGH LEGACY

MARLI ODGERS, MADELEINE OKORN, DANIEL FAJARDO
SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Materials: acrylic paint, watercolour, digital art, graphic design

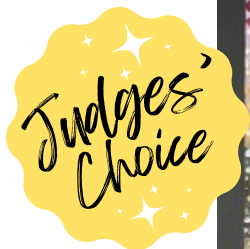
'Learning Through Legacy' embodies the fusion of past and present in the pursuit of collective healing and growth. Our creative process began with brainstorming key concepts like connection and wisdom, which we wove into the fabric of this work. Central to the piece is an open book, symbolising the ongoing journey of learning and knowledge. Above it, a hand emerges from the night stars, representing our ancestors extending their guidance and support across generations. This artwork invites viewers to reflect on the shared wisdom of those before us and emphasises the power of learning together to heal and unite our country.

Reconciliation means ...

respect, acknowledgement, belonging and working together for a better future.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ART





LEARNING FROM LEGACY

AMELIAH VO

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Materials: acrylic paint

I have painted this artwork, showing learning from legacy. The top hand shows our beloved ancestors telling us many stories up in the sky, where all the stars and constellations are. The bottom hand reaches towards our ancestors so we can connect with the custodians of this land and heal our country. If you look more closely at the art, I have included a small detail of the words describing reconciliation.

Reconciliation means ...

improving our relationship with Indigenous Australians - to connect with one another, understanding the importance of equality.





JIGSAW OF HEALING

SUMMER GALEA

SURVEYORS CREEKS PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: acrylic paint



This artwork shows how Australia is coming together, just like a jigsaw puzzle. Each bright shape is a special piece, representing different people, cultures, and stories that are all important. When we connect these pieces, we make a picture of healing and collaboration. Inspired by the strength and history of Australia's First Nations people, this artwork reminds us that everyone has a part in helping our country heal by understanding and respecting one another. Just like in a puzzle, every piece matters!

Reconciliation means ...

building relationships between all Australians, especially First Nations people, to heal past wrongs and work together for a better future.



A DEEP CONNECTION

EVA THORNTON

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

Materials: acrylic paint

I used the hands as a symbol of people coming together. Usually, when people hold hands it is like a deep connection, like what the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have with the land. I chose to make blue dots because they represent sadness because it hasn't always been equal. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people didn't have the same rights and were made to work in communities without much pay and didn't get treated well. Their children were stolen from their families, so they couldn't learn their language or culture. I painted white hands with a brown outline because blank usually means loneliness, and now we are coming together so First Nations people don't have to be invisible.

Reconciliation means ...

forgiving someone who wants to be forgiven. The people who took the children away, and their lives and culture, we can see now what they did was wrong. I respect that the First Nations peoples were here before us and we took that from them. I will try to listen and learn more about their traditions and culture and learn some Ngunnawal language to share with other people.





GROWING TOGETHER

TALEI ENSOR

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: watercolour

'Growing Together' is about how Australia is like a big, strong tree. The branches show all the different people and cultures that live here. The roots remind us of our history, especially the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By learning from the past and working together, we help the tree (our country) grow healthy and strong for the future.

Reconciliation means ...

bringing people together to make things right after there have been wrongs in the past. In Australia, it's about helping Indigenous and non-Indigenous people understand each other, respect each other's cultures, and work together for a better future.



MARAN-DHI [BECAUSE OF ANCESTORS]

FINLEY ANDREWS

JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Materials: acrylic paint

Maran-dhi means 'because of ancestors' in my people's language from Yuwalaaraay land. The theme 'Learning from Legacy' means to me that our ancestors passed down all their knowledge and traditions to help us be strong Aboriginal people and care for Country. My artwork shows that my people have worked hard to keep culture alive and to give us young Aboriginal people many opportunities to succeed. My artwork shows that when you find the doors they left for us you will find culture, and finding culture will give our lives magical colours and joy.

Reconciliation ...

is about acknowledging the mistakes that have been made in this country for Aboriginal people and promising to stand up and fix those mistakes.





MY LAND

OCEANE KOZLINSKI

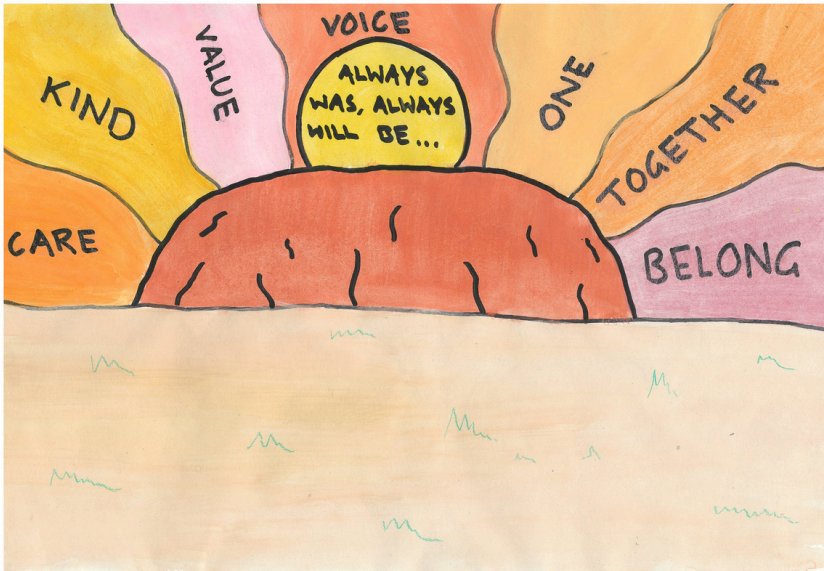
MANLY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 3)

Materials: pencil, charcoal, crayon, oil pastel

This is the place I grew up on. The lands I love, the land that is millions of years old. It is where my ancestors grew up and it is the place the future generations will grow. The people on the beach are exchanging ways of learning and traditions.

Reconciliation means ...

everyone comes together and puts aside their differences. In that time span of one week every year the bridge grows stronger, and it is the connection between different tribes, skin colours and countries of origin.



ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE

NINA GOWER

MANLY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

Materials: crayon, oil pastel

My artwork represents us as a country through a sacred space, Uluru. Uluru is a significant place for Indigenous people as it is much more than just a rock, it's a living landscape that treasures many stories and sites. My artwork represents how a place such as Uluru is sacred to the Indigenous people of Australia and is a way to connect with them through Country. My artwork also displays words that represent reconciliation such as peace, equality and fairness. Australia is, was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

Reconciliation means ...

lots of different things. Reconciliation is equality, peace and fairness. Though recently these things that make up reconciliation have not been represented throughout Australia! And that's why I have chosen to make an artwork to bring us all together, as one, one equal country.





HEALING OUR COUNTRY, ONE BOTTLE LID AT A TIME

ISLA SEIVERS

ST JUDE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

Materials: watercolour, pencil, charcoal, other

My artwork is about healing our country, I made my artwork with bottle lids and plastic. There are scuba divers collecting plastic bags taking them out of the way of a turtle made with bottle lids and bread tags that I have recycled helping heal our land. This turtle is representing that we all should all help our country it has done so much for us and all we do is litter not caring about all the beautiful features around us.

Reconciliation means ...

recognising Aboriginal people, culture and history and acknowledging their resilience after everything they have gone through. It's about saying sorry and treating them equally. It's about bringing Australia closer and continuing to help the Indigenous people move forward.



THE STORYTELLER

MILA REID

FARMBOROUGH ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

Materials: acrylic paint

My painting is about two children from the Stolen Generation looking up at the moon and the dot art is representing Elders and Ancestors teaching their children their lost but not forgotten past.

Reconciliation means ...

to me finding forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples for the treatment they received in the past and moving forward together.





BALANCE

CHLOE BENITEZ ATTARD

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: watercolour, pencil, charcoal

My artwork 'Balance' shows a tree with day on one side and night on the other. The day and night remind us that just like the tree needs both to grow, we need to learn from our past and use that knowledge to heal our country. By understanding and learning about all parts of our history, we acknowledge the hardships First Nations people have faced and are able to come together.

Reconciliation means ...

Reconciliation is like a healing tree after damage. Acknowledging past wrongs and working together, we help our country grow stronger.



RAINBOW SERPENT

SIENNA VENDRAMIN

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Materials: acrylic paint

In my painting, I mainly symbolise the rainbow serpent. In the background, I created a rainbow gradient symbolising all the parts of nature. The symbol in the middle of my painting is a meeting place where everyone comes together to celebrate culture and new beginnings. The three dots on each person around the meeting place symbolise women having the same power as any other person.

Reconciliation means ...

connecting with the past between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people. True reconciliation is when everyone is treated equally and counted as one, no matter what they look like or what they believe in. Reconciliation is when people aren't judged by anything; it's about aligning with people to fight for what's right—a new, fair world.





THE SNAKE

LOTTE FLOOD

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Materials: acrylic paint, other

This drawing was inspired by the rainbow serpent. The gradient represents the land, earth, sea, sky, forest and dirt. The middle is a meeting place and represents reconciliation. The patterns on the snake represent the culture.

Reconciliation means ...

that we can come together no matter who we are and what we look like.



CULTURE WITHIN

WILLOW ANDREWS

JOHN PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: acrylic paint

My picture shows that all the knowledge we ever learned always stays within the trees and ground. Trees are everything. The symbols under the ground show old men and women, animals, meeting places and dried up water holes. 'Learning from Legacy' means to me that my ancestors have left all their knowledge for us to find so it is important that we care for Country and connect to Country where all that knowledge is being kept.

Reconciliation means ...

that all Australian people learn about Aboriginal culture and history. That we work hard at keeping it alive and respecting it to right the wrongs of the past.





JUST KEEP SWIMMING

EDIE BAYES

AVALON PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: watercolour, other

The chevron background in our artwork represents the Avalon ocean and shows how we are all moving forward together toward a united nation. Whales are very important to the Garigal people, who are the original people of our area. When the whales passed our shores twice a year, it told the Garigal people that the wattle flowers were blooming. The traveling whale in our artwork stands for National Reconciliation Week's theme 'Now More Than Ever', reminding us that we need to keep moving forward as one nation.

Reconciliation means ...

we need to be mindful of our First Nations people and continue recognising their amazing culture and traditions. We are grateful that we get to learn about what they did for our land and how they are always leading the way for others in how to respect it.



COME TOGETHER

MAXENCE STUCKEY

MANLY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 4)

Materials: acrylic paint, watercolour, pencil, charcoal

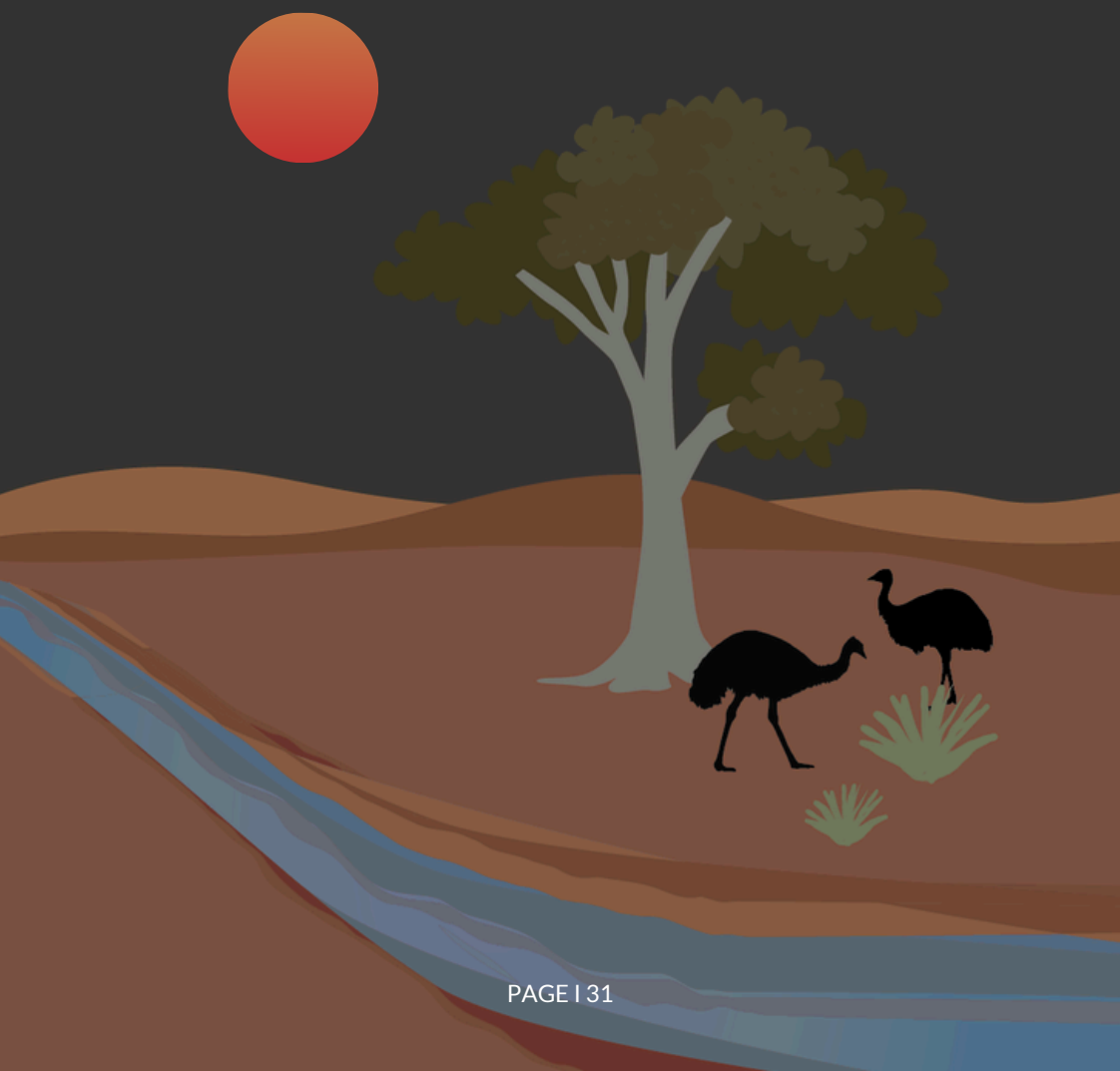
My art represents that we should look bringing everyone together and making peace. The Australia with the Aboriginal flag in the middle represents we should look after the land like they did and heal our country. We need to learn from legacy and heal our country.

Reconciliation means ...

peace and bringing everyone in harmony.



HIGH SCHOOL ART





GOANNA HEALING

APRIL BURNS

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: acrylic paint

My artwork 'Goanna Healing' is about moving around the land as part of a healing cycle, allowing nature to regrow. This representation allows us to learn from the legacy of Aboriginal people as they move throughout the land to take care of it and heal it. The land at the centre of the artwork represents Wiradjuri land (the land that I come from). The Goanna (our Totem) watches over us, protecting the land as the people come together to heal the land that was once hurt. The green in the artwork shows the regrowth of the life that has been healed, where the brown represents the earth in the way it has been currently left. Through engaging in and sharing First Nations culture and legacy, we can learn how to take care of our land as one community.

Reconciliation means ...

to connect, to come together as one and join focus to work together. This doesn't just mean First Nations people it means everyone, First Nations, Mobs and all non-Indigenous People, so that we can join together and connect as one. Reconciliation is not just about listening, it is an important part of healing as we acknowledge each other.



BURRUL GI-GI

TOBIAS ANDREWS

MELONBA HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 7)

Materials: acrylic paint

Burrul gi-gi means 'grow' in my people's language (Yuwalaaraay). I painted the wind blowing in all different directions - through the plants and land, through the water and through the sky. The wind holds our ancestors who help blow us in the right directions. When we listen to ancestors they give us the knowledge we need to care for Country.

Reconciliation ...

is about healing from the damage done. Working on keeping culture alive in the present. Making the future for Aboriginal people bright.





FOOTPRINTS OF OUR ANCESTORS

ZACHARY SHAW-DARCY

CAMPBELLTOWN PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: digital art, graphic design

"Footprints of Our Ancestors" honours the enduring legacy of Aboriginal peoples and their profound connection to Country. This piece reflects the wisdom passed down through generations, guiding us towards healing our lands and spirits through storytelling, culture, and art. The red, yellow, and black evoke the strength and resilience of Aboriginal culture, symbolising the unbroken connection to Country and the vital importance of learning from the legacy of our Elders. By embracing this legacy, we continue the journey of healing, growth, and unity for future generations.

Reconciliation ...

is about recognising the truths of our shared past to build a stronger, culturally rich future. It's a journey of learning from our ancestors and Elders, whose wisdom and knowledge guide us. By embracing this legacy, we can educate future generations, fostering respect, understanding, and unity, ensuring the strength of Aboriginal culture endures.



SPIRITUAL DANCING

BRIDGET HIDDEN

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 9)

Materials: acrylic paint

My artwork explores the traditional dances learned and performed in ceremonies, connecting us with Country and community. By learning these dances from our Elders and performing them as part of ceremonies, we are able to reconnect with and maintain our connection to Country and community. This allows us to heal our spiritual health and mental health through dancing as we acknowledge the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people that have come before us and connection to the land.

Reconciliation ...

is what keeps our culture alive. It involves acknowledging our past, present and our future with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.





BIRDS AS TOTEMS

HONEY BOYD

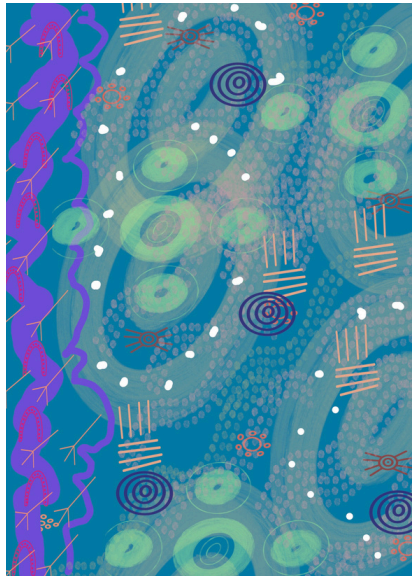
NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 7)

Materials: acrylic paint

My artwork is about my totem which is the 'wedge-tailed eagle', which is the prettiest birds you will see. In the wings of the eagles, you can see symbols of people which is representative of my family and our bloodlines. They are also representative of spirits. The coloured dots are water, fresh green leaves guide mother nature.

Reconciliation means ...

having a voice and being heard. It also means being connected to Earth.



LEARNING FROM MUM AT THE RIVER

JORJAH ANDREWS

THE PONDS SCHOOL (YEAR 10)

Materials: digital art, graphic design

Learning from Country from mum and walking at the river with mum. We see an emu, it is my totem. I listen to the water and I feel the sun on me. Mum tells me about bush tucker. Mum tells me the Dreaming Story about the river. I feel happy, I feel strong when I'm with my mum at the river.

Reconciliation means ...

learning about Aboriginal people and being proud of yourself, so everyone is listening to each other to be happy





SHARING CULTURE

EVELYN BOWDEN

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: pencil, charcoal, other

My artwork 'Sharing Culture' represents the sharing of knowledge through different generations and people. The hands in my artwork show these different generations of Aboriginal people passing down cultural knowledge and experiences in order to continue legacy and culture. It is through this sharing of knowledge between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people that we can create a better Australia that is full of life. This message is also shown with the use of Dharug language, sharing Aboriginal people's language and culture to teach the generations moving forward. I hope that through the passing and sharing of this knowledge that my local area can begin to heal and celebrate the long history of our Aboriginal people as we share the Blue Mountains, the Nepean River and native wildlife as depicted in my artwork.

Reconciliation means ...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people coming together as one to strengthen the unity between cultures and help Australia grow and become a better nation for everyone.



SPIRITS OF THE SOIL

KALARA PENRITH

CAMPBELLTOWN PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 9)

Materials: acrylic paint

'Spirits of the Soil' draws on the 2024 theme 'Learning From Legacy: Healing Our Country'. In this work, I've depicted a solitary tree with leaves formed by traditional dot painting, symbolising the enduring connection between culture and land. The black trunk represents strength and resilience, rooted deep in the soil of our shared heritage. The emu, kangaroo, and three figures, painted in silhouette against the desert landscape, embody the presence of ancestral spirits walking with us, guiding our journey towards healing and reconciliation. Through this piece, I aim to honour the legacy of our ancestors and inspire a collective healing of our country.

Reconciliation means ...

to me, acknowledging the truths of our shared history and committing to a future built on respect, understanding, and unity. It's a journey of healing that honours the deep connections between people, culture, and the land. Through reconciliation, we create a space where all voices are heard and valued, paving the way for a stronger, more inclusive nation.





DREAMTIME LEARNING

JOHANNA LE

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: pencil, charcoal

My artworks depicts the message of sharing knowledge to different groups of people. The focal point of my artwork is a book with Dreamtime stories emerging from the pages; the Rainbow Serpent and Birds. 'Dreamtime Learning' shows people learning from the legacy left by Aboriginal Elders through the Dreamtime stories passed down through different generations. It is through this interaction that we can come together as a community and heal through a celebration of culture.

Reconciliation ...

is learning about and sharing Aboriginal culture and knowledge. This involves connecting with and understanding culture while learning to be respectful and appreciative.



FISH TRAPS

MISCHA THORNE

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 9)

Materials: acrylic paint

My artwork is based on the adoption of Aboriginal cultural practices and using them in our modern world to build sustainable and clean practices that take care of our environment and wildlife. In my artwork, we can see the use of fish traps with Sydney Harbour set in the far distance. It is my hope that we can begin to heal our environment and Country through the sharing and adoption of cultural practices.

Reconciliation means ...

recognising and apologising for past actions.





BUSH FLORA

BAILEY SPACKMAN

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 7)

Materials: acrylic paint

My artwork is about how plants and the lush green of the landscape carry the traditions and customs of the Aboriginal people. I have depicted native plants slowly flowing down the sandstone rock in order to symbolise the growth of new generations. Through the recognition of the ways Aboriginal people interacted with their environment and used native plants, we are able to begin healing as we recognise the bounty that surrounds us.

Reconciliation means ...

mending the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people.



THE HEALING FLAME

LILY CHAN

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: pencil, charcoal

My artwork is about the different uses of fire, particularly as a place to gather and share knowledge. My artwork depicts people gathering over multiple generations to eat, dance and share a meeting place as they pass and share different cultural knowledges and histories. My artwork addresses the healing and cleansing properties of fire and smoke, highlighting that through the simple notion of coming together and sharing our stories we can begin to heal as a nation.

Reconciliation ...

is about finding a way to bring together different cultures to reach an understanding.





SYMBIOSIS

VIOLET WILSON

NEPEAN CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 8)

Materials: acrylic paint, pencil, charcoal

My artwork represents the idea of 'symbiosis', a cooperative relationship in which two groups of people can live together for the benefit of both. At the centre of my artwork sits the Rainbow Serpent, symbolising the powerful legacy the many Dreamtime stories have in shaping our view of Country and culture. The Rainbow Serpent (and the Dreamtime) connect my two figures and represent the sharing of ideas, culture and the passing of knowledge between cultures as we live side by side. Through living together symbiotically and sharing culture we are able to begin the process of healing our country as we connect to the land, people and animals that have been here for thousands of years and learn from the Dreamtime.

Reconciliation means ...

the process of creating and rebuilding respectful relationships between all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It means to value the culture and traditions of Aboriginal Australians, equally to the various other cultures and values of other Australians. This year's theme means to embrace and share First Nations culture and knowledges as a way to heal our nation and move forward. Reconciliation is an important step towards forming Australians' future national identity.



RECONCILIATION

ALINA FITZGERALD

BLAXLAND HIGH SCHOOL (YEAR 9)

Materials: watercolour

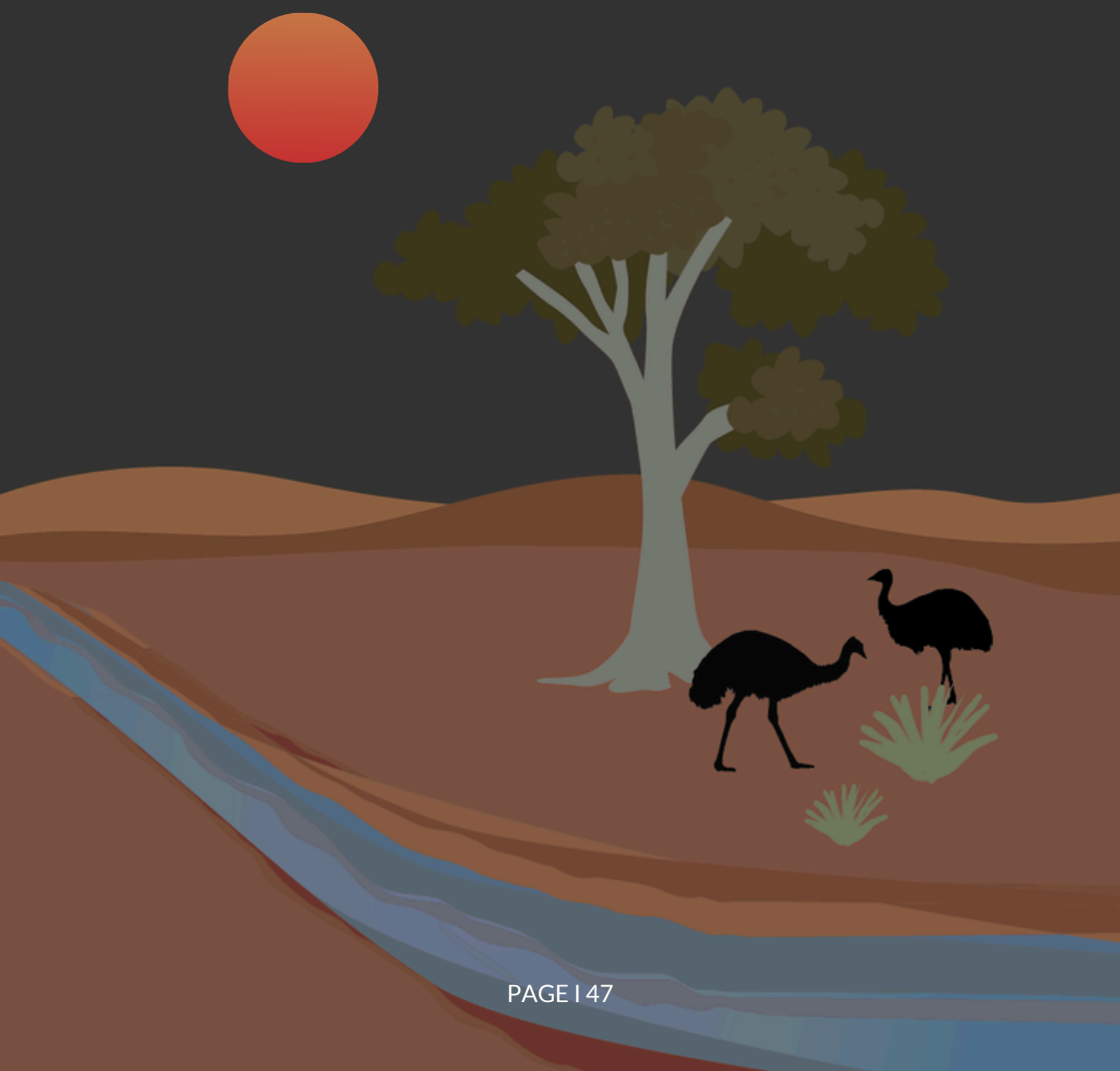
The scenery in my artwork is a combination of multiple locations throughout Australia. The day represents Australia now and the starry night in the river represents the everlasting culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Despite the attempt of being taken away all those years ago, the culture still managed to find its way of survival to this day, that's how I find my artwork relates to reconciliation and the theme 'Learning From Legacy: Healing Our Country'.

Reconciliation means ...

learning from past mistakes and moving forth together as equal human beings.



WRITING



AWARENESS OF RECONCILIATION

NIVY GHIMIRE

RIVERBANK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 6)



In the heart of Australia, where the red earth meets the endless sky, lies a story as old as time itself. This land, rich with the whispers of ancient ancestors, holds the legacy of the First Nations people. Their stories, etched into the rocks and sung by the winds, speak of a deep connection to the land, a bond that has endured for millennia.

Reconciliation is not just a word; it is a journey - a path we walk together, hand in hand, towards understanding and healing. It is about acknowledging the past, with all its pain and triumphs, and learning from it to build a better future. The legacy of the First Nations people is a tapestry woven with threads of resilience, wisdom and culture. By embracing this legacy, we honour their contributions and recognise the importance of their place in our shared history.

As we reflect on reconciliation, we must listen to the stories of the Elders, the custodians of knowledge and tradition. Their voices carry the weight of history and the promise of a brighter tomorrow. Through their teachings, we learn the value of respect, community, and the sacredness of the land. These lessons are not just for the First Nations people but for all Australians. They remind us that healing our country begins with understanding and respect for one another.

Reconciliation is a call to action. It urges us to confront the injustices of the past and work towards a future where equality and justice prevail. It is about creating spaces where the voices of the First Nations people are heard and valued, where their rights are upheld, and their cultures celebrated. This journey requires courage, empathy, and a commitment to change.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we must also recognise the healing power of the land. The earth, with its ancient wisdom, offers solace and renewal. By caring for the land, we honour the traditions of the First Nations people and ensure that future generations can enjoy its beauty and bounty. Healing our country means healing our relationship with the land and each other.

As we walk this path of reconciliation, let us carry with us the lessons of the past and the hope for a united future. Let us learn from the legacy of the First Nations people and work together to heal our country. In doing so, we create a nation where all cultures are respected, all voices are heard, and all people can thrive.



Reconciliation is not a destination but a journey - a journey that we must undertake together, with open hearts and minds. By learning from the legacy of the past, we can heal our country and build a future where everyone belongs.

Writer's Reflection

Before I knew about the competition, I was going through my history work. We were learning about Aboriginal Rights in Term 1. As I was going through my work, my teacher announced the art and creative writing competition about reconciliation. I decided to apply to it, since I'm extremely bad at art, I decided to write about it. So, I grabbed my laptop and opened a document on Microsoft Word. I started typing but deleted my work immediately thinking, "how on Earth do I start?". After some thinking, I began writing about where this story took place and how old it was. I then wrote about a specific word 'reconciliation'.

The only thing on my mind at the time was, 'You've got to win Nivy'. So I typed and typed and typed, but stopped suddenly. 'If I'm not sincere in this, then why write about it?'. I hovered my mouse above the 'X' on the top right corner of my screen but stopped when about to press it. I realised that before this, before Year 6, I was trying to figure out how to spread the word about Australia's First Nations people with my friends. This was the way I could tell people about reconciliation. I continued typing and the only thing on my mind was, 'Spread awareness with this'.

I finished in two hours and stayed in my chair. My fingers all numb. The next day, I had asked my teacher to print my work, and she did. This piece of work, led to this. This is why I authored this story. To spread awareness and make sure people understood we are not the first people in Australia.

POEM

AKSHAY SRINIVASAN

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Learning from legacy,
healing our Country,
it's really quite simple
actually.

Blak, loud and proud
that's the way,
To close the gap,
And save the day.

Gum nuts, bush berries
And many more,
Will give us
Solutions galore.

Listen to Elders
Carefully,
For they know the
Secrets of Country.

For they take only
What they need
And don't approach
The world with greed.

Stand against
Discrimination,
And never again
Assimilation.

To heal Country
We must become one,
And that's when
we'll know we have won.



Writer's Reflection

My poem is inspired by the theme 'Learning from Legacy: Healing our Country' and the sayings 'blak loud and proud' and 'close the gap'. I incorporated these quotes throughout my poem because I think these ideas are the keys to healing our broken world. These quotes are key because they tell us to turn to the Indigenous people of these lands, learn from them and help them, help us, help them heal our broken world.

Reconciliation means ...

not only acknowledging that the Aboriginal people are, were and always will be the Traditional Custodians of the land but also taking action, raising awareness and encouraging people to learn and experience more about Aboriginal cultures and traditions. For example, 40% of children experience racism in Australian schools. Another big problem is that the Aboriginal people are not once mentioned in the constitution, it doesn't even have an Acknowledgement of Country.

WISDOM OF THE ROCKS

HANNAH FRANZKE

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

Warami Diary,

I had the most AMAZING dream last night.

My thoughts drifted away slowly as my pillow turned into a cloud. My dark eyelids started to form a picture, a picture of a perfect place.

I was in a yarnning circle, talking to rocks. Rocks with all the colours from a rainbow. The seats were a black background with white, red and yellow dots. They were as katjeri as a sunrise that has only just started. As I continued to soak in my surroundings, a large black rock started to say, "The Djardak were monsters back then! Taking Gulyangarri away from us. Such a cruel thing. I couldn't imagine it happening in the perfect world I yearn for."

I start to picture monsters like bunyips taking away kids like me. Innocent. I imagine kids screaming and crying, trying to break free but they can't because the bunyips were too strong.

"The perfect world I dream of is a world where all colours are accepted for what they are. There is no perfect colour, they are all perfect in their own way," speaks one mirda rock.

"Back when I was young, " started a Dyinguranang, "There were some nasty people who couldn't accept difference. Difference to me is what makes the world interesting. Without it, life would be boring. Looking around at twins who act the same as you."

I imagine looking around and everyone looking, speaking and moving the exact same as me. It is annoying and I want them to stop and go on their own way with their own looks. I guess difference is important.

"I believe a perfect world is where we all stand together, where we put our heads together. But we won't be dreaming of a perfect world, it WILL be a perfect world," says another wise rock.

I sit up in bed thinking about what my dream meant. Where was I? Who were those talking rocks? I think about it over and over until I discover a meaning. The rocks were teaching me the importance of difference, acceptance and kindness. I learnt that kindness needs to be everywhere and everyone needs to spread it.

Writer's Statement

I wrote this text as a silhouette of people in a yarnning circle but instead of it being people/humans I have rocks representing them instead. The rocks are Elders and that is where in this text we are learning from legacy and healing our world.

Reconciliation means ...

that everyone puts their heads together and we make the world a better place.

It is time we celebrated the changes for the better that have already been made.



LEARNING AT ULURU

HUNTER WEIR

SURVEYORS CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (YEAR 5)

I close my eyes and slowly drift off into the world of Aboriginal story time. I awake in the Aboriginal land of the Northern Territory, I can see urdulas (kangaroos), and wildus (eagles), and mawpaka (owls). I turn my head and I can now see some Adnyamathanha (Rock People). They are speaking in the local Aboriginal language of the Anangu people. I walk over to a land I hope sometime can be the land we live in. They are welcoming me with their local language.

Welcome! I am one of the land's local Aboriginal Elders. We are here today to talk about the land we live on.

We walk around while looking at all the socialising happening between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We keep walking, while watching all the animals and how they move and do things!

The Rock People are now sitting me down and they start telling me how much all the non-Aboriginal people still have to learn. They tell me about all the languages that have slowly faded away when Australia got invaded. There were over 250 languages and now there are only 120 languages spoken today.

All of the land that Aboriginal people stand on has been in Australia for over 65,000 years. All the land has some special meanings and story time to still be shared around. And non-Aboriginal people still need to learn it.

They started telling me about this greedy blue tongue lizard. His name was Lungkata, he was greedy, he stole precious food from some of the hunters. When the hunters asked him about the food, he told them he had no idea where it was. Lungkata discovered Uluru in a burn-off, he then choked to death when falling off a mountain and lost some of his limbs. They remind me how being greedy is nothing special and no one should be greedy.

I walk around by myself in the night's darkness looking at all of the attractions that Aboriginal people have. I look up and see stars made into a pattern of Uluru. I look for 5 more minutes until the stars drift into a kangaroo. The local Aboriginal people tell me about all the different stars they have seen while living near Uluru.

The rocks around Uluru were formed from the waters around Uluru. The water started drifting out of Australia as mud and sand began forming at the bottom of the

water. The water was drifting away as the rocks in the Northern Territory started forming. This story was told to me by the Anangu people.

They give me an Aboriginal language book and send me on my way as my eyes slowly drift open. I remember how much we still need to learn. I sit down with my parents and tell them about my imaginary dream. I tell them about all of the Aboriginal words I learned while I was in the Northern Territory Land.

Writer's Statement

I wrote this text to keep people learning about the missing languages. I believe that if we had more access to Aboriginal Elders, their languages and their wisdom, that Australia would be a much better place. This country needs healing and healing starts with respect.

Reconciliation means ...

working hard to keep our relationships better with Aboriginal and Indigenous people. Reconciliation means working together to have better friendships and involvement with Indigenous people.



HOSPITAL CREEK POEM

EADIE EINSTEIN

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

ONCE THERE WERE THREE
ON HORSEBACK
IN THEIR STIFF SCRATCHY UNIFORMS
PATROLLING THE FIELDS
WITH NARROWED EYES

AS THE SUN DIPPED
AND THE SHADOWS GREW.
INSTEAD OF THREE
THERE WERE ONLY TWO.

SCANNING THE LANDSCAPE
SEARCHING FOR DAYS.
WHERE WAS THE THIRD,
WELL, NO ONE KNEW.

SOON VOICES GREW LOUDER AND
FINGERS STARTED POINTING.
"IT MUST'VE BEEN THEM."
"THE ONES IN THE BUSH".
"THOSE FERAL ANIMALS",
"THEY MUST BE PUNISHED."

THE TRIBE IN THE BUSH
HAD DONE NOTHING WRONG.
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE,
THE AMBUSH HAD STARTED.

WITH NO CHANCE TO SPEAK,
GUNSHOTS WERE FIRED
AND THE GROUND SHOOK
WITH HOOVES AND BOOTS.
THEN THERE WAS SILENCE,
FEW BODIES LEFT BREATHING.

FEW DAYS AFTER
THAT "JUSTICE" WAS SERVED
THE THIRD APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE.
"I FORGOT TO TELL YOU I WAS GONE",
HE SAID.
THEY ALL JUST LAUGHED IT OFF
AND NODDED THEIR HEADS.

NOT ONCE DID THEY STOP
AND REALISE THE CRIME
THEY HAD COMMITTED.

SACRIFICING HUNDREDS OF LIVES
FOR ONE 'MISSING PERSON'.

TO THIS DAY ALL THAT STANDS
IS A FEW GRAVESTONES AND
A BARBED WIRE FENCE.

IT IS WORTH NOTHING COMPARED
TO ALL OF THE LIVES LOST.

THIS HAS LEFT SCARS
ON THE HEARTS OF MANY

BUT IF WE CAN COME TOGETHER
WE CAN MOVE FORWARD.
WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR PAST
AND NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES
IN THE FUTURE.

Writer's Statement

This Narrative poem is based on the true story of the Hospital Creek Massacre. When I heard this story, I thought that it was so important and that it showed just how judgemental and broken the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is. Without even a second of questioning, the English people just assumed that the local Indigenous tribe had taken the man, and they decided to kill the whole tribe. In this story is important to recognise and acknowledge that what happened was wrong, and we need to ensure that this horrific event never happens again. We must put this in the past and make sure that we move forward together.

Reconciliation means ...

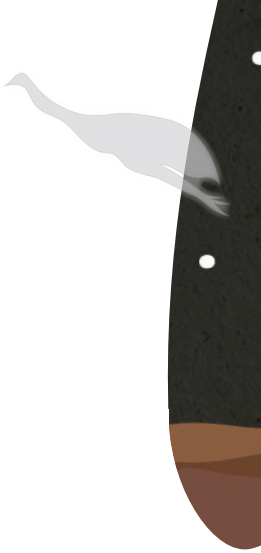
mending the friendship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Some horrible things happened between us in the past, and we need to put all those things behind us and move forward as one. Together, we can help shape the future, learn from our past mistakes, and heal our country.



HEALING COUNTRY

AVA REGAN

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL (YEAR 5)



To me, Healing Country doesn't mean putting
a band-aid on a tree.
To me it means healing
our past,
our ancestors,
and listening to First Nations people and their ways,
of dealing with fires and floods,
because before the English settled on the land
the Aboriginal people dealt with it using smoking
ceremonies and other traditions.

Writer's Statement

When I first heard healing Country, I thought it is watering the grass and helping the trees grow, but I realised quickly that it meant healing Aboriginal people and their past and making us all welcome in the community, all different tribes and Countries. I feel that making everyone feel welcome will heal our past.

Reconciliation means ...

being sorry and not just saying it because you are forced to, but because you have a deep understanding of what happened to First Nations people in the past. Understanding that our words are not perfect, but we can make it better.

POEM

ABBHEY WONG

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL (YEAR 6)

Meeting Elders

keep the fire burning

Catching boogalies and yabbys

keep the fire burning

Cooking them on the fire

keep the fire burning

Visiting sacred sites

keep the fire burning

Learning language

keep the fire burning

Doing traditional dances

keep the fire burning

Smelling the gidgee

keep the fire burning

Eating bush tucker

keep the fire burning

Sleeping out in the open

keep the fire burning

Stars lighting up the sky

keep the fire burning

Yarning around the

fire keep the fire burning

This is Country



Writer's Reflection

My poem is inspired by my trip to a place in the Country called Goodooga. At Goodooga, we participated in many traditional practices, learnt about Country, and had loads of fun. The phrase "keep the fire burning" is stated throughout the poem, meaning that every activity that we did kept the Indigenous spirit alive inside each and every one of us.

Reconciliation means ...

working together, building bonds, relationships, and friendships, and respecting people for who they are. We do this to close a gap that we have destroyed in the past. It also shows that we as a nation are capable of celebrating everyone's differences and making sure that everyone feels like they belong.

GLOW OF UNITY

JASMINE TAYLOR

ROSEBANK COLLEGE (YEAR 7)

My version of a reconciled Australia

When understanding shadows minds,
When acknowledgment grasps people's throats
Country, the true owners,
When words don't injure, they bestow,
When his story's now their story,
Country, they fought,
When flags sway hand in hand,
When dignity is a birthright,
Country, their hearts,

Abolished is the restricted service,
Abolished is the skin making others nervous,
Abolished is the laws defeating purpose,
Abolished is the he said she said versus,
Abolished is the bad war crimes and saw crimes that stirs us,
Abolished is the no to land fuss and cries of you misunderstand us,
Abolished is the taking kids and saying it's a joy you can grant us,
Abolished is the shield on violence you use to enchant us,

First on the continent, first with the smarts,
First to be denied, first pain in hearts,
First to be given support, getting rid of damaged parts,
First to be seen as a whole, without restarts,
First to be loved and welcomed, by remarks,
First to be apologised, a ceremony with harps,
First to be reasoned with, given fireworks with sparks,
First to be united as a whole, in this country down below



Writer's Statement

My work is a writing piece that demonstrates and opposes the harsh realities that many First Nations peoples face daily, it also embodies my dream of how a reconciled Australia would look like. In relation to the theme, 'Learning From Legacy: Healing Our Country', I've tried to illustrate my words in a way that expresses a dream many of us hold dear, a reconciled and free from discrimination country. Healing our wounds is something I mention throughout my text because I believe we can't move forward without doing something to heal the pain and suffering First Nations peoples have been through.

Reconciliation means ...

to acknowledge that we as a nation have done some dark and horrible things and that we have let some dark and horrible things happen but we need to learn and grow from those mistakes so we can inspire future peace and equality in other generations, and discourage hurtful mistakes made by previous generations.

OUR PARTNERS



Narragunnawali
Reconciliation in Education



OUR JUDGES

- Multi-disciplinary Artist, Nicole Smede
- Executive Director of Story Factory, Dr Catherine Keenan
- Art Curator, Barbara Dowse
- National Trust Gallery Director, Jane Watters
- Reconciliation NSW Executive Directors, Geoffrey Winters and Carly Bush



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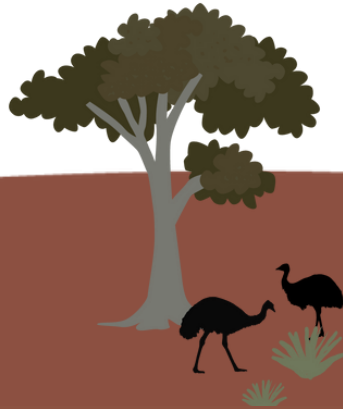
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CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING

Magabala Books 

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Cammeray Public School	Cammeray, NSW	Cammeraygal
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Holy Family PS	Gowrie, ACT	Ngunnawal
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St Jude's PS	Holder, ACT	Ngunnawal
Surveyors Creek PS	Glenmore Park, NSW	Dharug
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Toormina HS	Toormina, NSW	Gumbaynggirr
Wahroonga Prep	Wahroonga	Dharugl





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