

MAITLAND CULTURAL RESURGENCE

19th of March - 15th of May
Maitland Regional Art Gallery



*PRESENTED BY
SPEAKING IN COLOUR*





Maitland Cultural Resurgence is an exciting showcase of woven sculptural art pieces and Possum Skin Cloaks. Works in the exhibition have been created by local Aboriginal community group 'Hunter Aboriginal Weaver's Alliance' and Central Coast cancer services wellness group, 'Coast Can Care', as well as school groups that involved both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and teachers. Primary and secondary schools exhibiting are: Morisset Public School, Bolwarra Public School, Maitland Public School, Greta Public School, Abermain Public School, Kearsley Public School, Tenambit Public School, East Maitland Public School and Rutherford Technology High. We also have exhibiting Early Childhood services Hamilton Child Care Centre and Uniting Adamstown Heights Preschool. Cultural enrichment is paramount in all Speaking in Colour programs and while individual cultural knowledge and ability vary, we have found the hunger to learn and create is shared by all. Through the cultural journey of our programs, it is wonderful to see community coming together, with students becoming the teachers and sharing what they have learned with their friends and family. Generations have shared and worked collectively on projects, and for some participants, this may have been their first opportunity to do so. The 'end point' for these projects is not about the artworks, but rather the ceremony of connectivity, relationality and cultural strengthening. It is an honour for Speaking in Colour to facilitate cultural programs. Our hope is when the community visit Maitland Cultural Resurgence they will be able to recognise these ceremonies in action. Over the duration of the exhibition, some showcased items may come and go, witnessing cultural revitalisation in action as the objects now have a life and purpose of their own.

Cherie Johnson

Managing Director of Speaking in Colour

Possum Skin Cloaks

Simply put are utilitarian objects. Starting as a baby blanket, three (3) pelts are sewn together with kangaroo sinew to create a warm and soft blanket, much like a sheep skin rug today.

Over the years the blanket would be added to. Iconography would be burnt and scratched into the underside of the leather creating a historical narrative. Ochre mixed with a resin would be painted onto the leather recording the owners belonging and connection to country. Over time with additional pelts the blanket would transform into a cloak, used in wet weather (leather side out), as a warm cloak when cold and a blanket the mum would share with her children. Finally, people would be laid to rest wrapped in their Possum Skin Cloak.

Based on oral history and research it appears Possum Skin Cloaks were utilised in most areas where possums were found. However, in some communities the various species of possum were protected as part of the totem structure, allowing the species to thrive and help populate the neighbouring areas. Due to the introduction of the brush tailed possums to New Zealand they have become known as pests with the government instating measures to control possum population. In turn, this has now become the location to source many of our pelts.

It has been my absolute honour to teach whole communities this process of cloak making; however, it has only been made possible by learning under the guidance of my senior cloak makers Aunty Vicki Couzens and Lee Darroch who have been instrumental in this cultural revitalisation movement.

Weaving

Inspired by the traditional practice of coiling with rushes, lomandra and other grasses these contemporary artworks provide the opportunity for the youth and community to explore and learn about the traditional practices while being culturally appropriate, making a contemporary sculpture with contemporary materials.

The woven art forms selected for this exhibition are newly created works, they have never been exhibited before. These items have been created as part of the Resurgence program, by a select number of students at each of their schools. In our experience each program is run differently, some groups larger than others, some schools focus on a stage or year to be involved while other schools might have just the Aboriginal students and a friend participate. Either way we slowly build the expectations and level of difficulty in response to the student's ability so that by the end of the 10-week program each and every student has the ability to create a woven coil. These coils are then collated and stitched onto the welded frame to create the flora or fauna's form. Each sculpture varies due to the size, number and age of students involved and of course the artist's style.

I would like to honour and thank my weaving teachers Aunty from Gumbainggir country who taught me string bags with stringy bark, I never knew your name but you will forever be in my heart, and Aunty Ellen Trevorrow of the Ngarrindjeri people who taught me coiling with rushes. As a result of these ladies entrusting me with this knowledge, I have been able to share and teach others, including all of the teachers who have delivered the Resurgence program for Speaking in Colour.

I hope you enjoy this exhibition and can just see the positive impact these projects are making in the lives of our community.



MORISSET PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Tiddalick' The Greedy Bullfrog

Groups involved: Years 3 – 6 Aboriginal students and a friend.

Artists: Evie G, Evie S, Kingston B, Reef H, Ruby M, Sophia D, Sophie M, Bethany, Bentley, Ruby, Emma Rose, Alex O, Zachary H, Kale E, Summer H, Isabella G, Issabella B, Kyle P, Evelyn A, Teanu R, Liam W, Cassie P, Ruby, Sebastian, Annika, Marli, Bethanea, Enaya, Anastasia, Teliesha P, Charlotte, Grace H, Ava, Damon D, Chloe B, Eloise L, Trinity K, Tyson, Riley C, Maddie S, Charlee G, Dakoda F, Payton R, Oran H, Braiden P, Jaxson M, Zhayden, Angus, Amica, Lochie, Chloe.



Schools teachers/helpers: Mr R. Groves

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter and Lynelle Elliott

Welders: Lynelle and Larry Elliott

Artist Statement: During discussions, the students talked about the story of Tiddalick and rock formation that can be found locally at Wollombi. You can see into the frame that Tiddalick's belly is full of water (blue cellophane).

The year 6 students who participated in the program took the opportunity to share their learning during the school NAIDOC celebrations they hosted weaving workshops for their peers giving more students the opportunity to be involved.



HAMILTON CHILD CARE CENTRE

'Wallaby'

Groups involved: Children enrolled in Term One 2021, aged 3 to 5 years of age.

Service Educators: Ms T. Greening, Mrs H. Smith, Mrs K. Kirrage, Mrs B. Bunning, Mr A. Sutherland, Ms E. Pearson, Ms D. Smith

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter, Cherie Johnson, Kristin Sheldon

Welders: Lynelle and Larry Elliott



Artist Statement: Hamilton CCC has had a long-standing relationship with Speaking in Colour and was extremely proud to be asked to part of this amazing project. The centre staff team and families have been developing our Reconciliation Action Plan over the last twelve months and looking at ways to authentically engage with our local Aboriginal community, providing our children with important learning specifically in relation to love of land and connection to country. The development of our 'Children's Aboriginal Knowledge and Water Saving garden' was the perfect backdrop to support and foster this knowledge in a relaxed and meaningful manner in the yarnning circle. Our three- to five-year-old children worked together to create our 'wallaby' as we had learned that our centre built on Awabakal land was at one point in time named 'awata Balbangba' which specifically talks about wallabies on this flat place.

As the children sat with Jaimie and learned to weave, they shared stories of connection and friendship, learning not just this skill, but a deeper understanding of the importance of caring for country. Without a doubt, this was a wonderful opportunity to empower our young children with knowledge, skills and understanding through relationship and the ancient art of weaving. We look forward to further opportunities for learning and collaboration with the talented artists and educators from Speaking in Colour, and we are sure everyone would agree, our wallaby is quite striking!"





BOLWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Izzy' The Koala

Groups involved: Aboriginal students Years Kindergarten – 6.

Artists: Loki S, Aleah G, Zander H, Arthur T, Ava W, London M, Maykala B, Paige D, Isla R.W, Faith-Rose D.S, Sia M, Tiarna W, Ayble M, Ashton M, Tariq N, Austin C, Isla W.M, Callum M, Amelia H, Scarlett W, Molly S, Sunny C, Alexis M, Brock W, Rueben D, Claire T, Tristan Z, Koby B, Kade S, Beau M, Naomi S, Hayden D, Stella P, Trae F.T, Zahri M, Peter R, Hunter L, Sophie S, Cobey M, Emrick K, Josie S, Gabriel S, Sarah S, Willow N, Archer M, Tobyn T, Cooper W, Charlie P, Gabrielle R, Ruby D, Kiata G, John M, Charlotte M, Saba S, Clementine S, Tahlia N, Xanthie W.M, Phoebe S, Dexter K, Oli B, Eleanor B, Bella M, Adrian B, Serena T, Oliver W, Cruz W, Cleopatra D.W, Lucy.



Schools teachers/helpers: Tahnee Skuthorpe

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter, Elizabeth Howard, and Rosemary Howard

Welder: Rainnie Carter

Artist Statement: We chose to make a Koala to represent the many whose lives were lost during the devastating bushfires of 2019/20. The Koala has booties specially made by some students to show how their feet are covered and treated after being burned.

At this school students from kinder through to year 6 participated, the kinder- year 2 students came up with a wonderful idea of making pom poms to create fluffy ears and a tail and weaving across the bracelets so that Lizzy would have a grey furry texture. Izzy was named after Izzy Bee a young girl who featured in the documentary Izzy's Koala World with her veterinarian mother and saves Koalas on Magnetic Island.

MATLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL



‘Parky’ the PBL Owl & ‘Tawny Frogmouth’

Groups involved: Children enrolled in Term One 2021, aged 3 to 5 years of age.

Artists: Oscar G, Gracie-Lea I, Blake M, Ari M, Aleisha W, Jarrod F, Cooper F, Kyana G, Taya L, Taj M, Zaik A, Catherine C, Cordelia M, Cade M, Kayla R, Teagan W, Abby G, Isabelle H, Nate M, Tyler P, Koby R, Sophia R, Shaylee W, Bella W, Jasmine F, Dalton B, Annabelle B, Skylah G, Shakirra H, Isabella-Rose T, Alex T, Wil P, Calleigh de C, Shon’taen P, Dante C, Zander D, Jarrod N, Halle R, Serena R, Koby W, Charlotte A, Connor D, Jack D, Rylan E, Piper F, Sophia G, Mamie G, Xanthe G, Jerzey G-S, Chloe I, Beau J, Ellis J, Kruz K, Theodore K, Keevah K, Evelyn L, Mikayla L, Jazmin M, William M, Laura M, Archie M, Dylan P, Kaylee R, Jahmal R, Maggie T, Jye T, Charli W, Liam Y, Isabell A, Andrew C, Phoebe C, Lavani C, Jasmyn D-A, Ruby D, Emily D, Wesley E, Norah F, Charli F, Eli G, Mia G, Chace G, Christopher H, Annabella H, Ryan M, Tyler M, Callan M, Jordan P, Bryce P, Isabelle R, Harlem S, Lillian S, Arianna W, Hailey-Grace W, Lily W, Dakota A, Rachael B, Breanna B, Jacob C H, Mackinley D, Charles D, Lilah-Rose E, Jarrah E, Trinity G, Jasmine H, Ethan H, Lilian K, Ethan M, Gypsy M, Levi M, Damelia P, Arlo R, Faith R, Jake R, Charlie S, Addison S, Indi T, Elena W, Ava W, Blaze W, Nate W, Edge W, Layla W, Khloe A, Parker B-S, Kayden B, Max B, Eamon B, Hunter B, Zachariah C, Seth D, Emily E, Xavier E, Alaina F, Masyn G, Summer G, Travis H, Sophie H, Jayden K, Indira M, Kenadie M, Abigale M, Amelia P, Sophia R, Isabella S, Isabella S, Lucy S, Archie T, Cooper V, Ryver W, Makaylah A, Emogen A, Tyson B, Malakai B, Shiloh C, Ella D, Elijah E, Ruby F, Marshall F, Marlie F, Mia G, Jaxon G, Laura H, Chevy H, Ryan H, Tallikye H, Olivia J, Adam L, Olivia M, Hamish M, Koa P M, Krystal P, Mataya R, Eve S, Ivy T, Rylee W, Riley W, Paul de L.

Service Educators: Ms L Wighton, Mrs L Hieke, Mrs M Evans, Mrs B Turner, Miss E Bourke, Mr A Britt, Miss A Coombs, Miss J Perkins

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter, Elizabeth Howard, Kristin Sheldon, Lynelle Elliott and Cherie Johnson

Welders: Rainnie Carter



Artist Statement for 'Tawny Frogmouth': The students from Maitland Public School wanted to represent the Tawny Frogmouth breeding pair that reside a large tree on the grounds of the school. It's an adventure to pick out the birds as they camouflage into their surroundings, or appear on a window sill high up on the second storey of the classroom building. It was decided that they would represent the Tawny in full flight, showing off the long flight feathers that allow the birds their stealthy, silent flight.

Artist Statement for 'Parky': During discussions majority of students noted the Tawny Frogmouth family that lives within the school playground, after much discussion we also noted that there was another owl who is special that being Parky who is the PBL mascot. The students decided it would be great to create a Parky. One of the teachers who attended the program was able to continue the learning in the classroom having the students weave earrings for Mother's Day gifts. One student who was struggling at the beginning was given extra time and support with the cultural teachers, he was then able to find a way of weaving that worked for him, the next week he ran in excitedly and exclaimed he remember the trick he'd been shown and was now teaching others.





'Giant Emu'

Groups involved: Year 5 and 6 students.

Artists: Ely A, Thomas A, Rhys B, Lucian B, Kaden A, Auron B, Isaac B, Jessica B, Logan B, Darcy C, Roxy C, Sienna B Mc, Jack B, Rachael C, Inura D, Flynn E, Eamon B, Janny C, Ruby-Lou C, Bailey D, Emily F, Jeremy C, Amelia C, Ayden E, Madison F, Charles G, Jahan D, Alana D, Wyatt FT, Harrison F, Udan I, Anton D, Sienna E, Holly F, Zach H, Klara M, Hunter D, Thomas F, Madison G, Archie J, Isabelle M, Ruby F, Claudia F, Aidan G, Katelyn K, Nixon P, Isabella G, Azariah F, Oakley G, Myles KS, Heidi P, Billy G, Lily G, Zac H, Emilee LP, Matilda B, Isabella G, Amelie H, Blake I, Jacob L, Gracie B, Lilly J, Lucy J, Graham J, Johann L, Serena C, Azariah J, Fyn J, Marcus J, Keira L, Jayce F, Princess M, Nathan M, Chase K, Thomas L, TJ G, Lincoln M, Evan M, Nash M, Isaac M, Abby G, Olive M, Alexander M, Layla M, Milicent MC, Jett L, Liam P, Jackson P, Anaia M, Isabella O, Phoenix L, Ailly S, Ashton S, Tyler O, Alycia R, Mitchell M, Aria H, Levi S, Noah P, Joshua R, Vincent P, William SC, Jamie SC, Jackson P, Sienna S, Ed S, Chloe W, Mason S, Zahli R, Jackson S, Ella S, Sienna WS, Aaliyah T, Benjamin SP, Heidi S, Leah W, Harrison W, Thomas W, Blair V, Kisharna T, Georgia W, Adelia W, Carter W, Harry T, Tobias W, Ella W, Xavier W

School teachers/helpers: Mrs T Mather, Miss R Robinson, Mrs J Ford, Mr B Swab, Miss R Riley, Mr C Fenn, Mr P Howel

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter, Elizabeth Howard, and Cherie Johnson.

EAST MAITLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL

Artist Statement: “Experiences and Knowledge are Invaluable”

For Stage 3 students at East Maitland Public School the design and completion of our Emu sculpture has been an amazing experience that transported us into learning invaluable lessons in Aboriginal culture and history.

The Resurgence program involved both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and their families as they were taught to weave whilst learning about Aboriginal culture and practices. The conversations and knowledge shared built pride, respect, and connections to our shared history.

The weaving incorporated a strong link to nature with the use of natural materials and had a calming quality through the repetitive nature of the activity. The students found it a great mindfulness activity and a stimulus for many conversations around Aboriginal history and culture both at school and at home.

Our students chose the Emu as it doesn't take a backward step. This reinforces our Aboriginal Education purpose at East Maitland PS that we need to look behind and acknowledge where we have come from whilst always moving forward together.



COASTCANCARE

'Eadie' The Echidna

Groups involved: Community support group.

Artists: Rose C, Jeanette H, Wendy M, Sue Smith, Carol Rippon, Val Joliffe, Stacy Parry, Amy Parry, Tanya Olip, Lyndel Ives, Sharnee T, Tracey Cutmore, Diane Misiak, Molly M, Marg Smee, Pauline D, Jeff Delaney, Anne Holland, Gayle Errington, Liesel Paris, Mary Wood, Mary Wood, Jane, Tia.

Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliott and Jaimie Carpenter

Welders: Lynelle and Larry Elliott

Artist Statement: CoastCanCare is a wellness program offering local adults with cancer, their family members and carers free wellness activities in accessible venues across the Central Coast. Meeting weekly on Darkenjung Country over 10 weeks with proud Wiradjuri artist and weaver, Lynelle Elliott we came together to create and heal.

The weeks were filled with yarning, weaving, learning, sharing and laughter. Our project was to create a sculptural piece that represented their personal journeys and the Country we came together on; we chose the echidna.

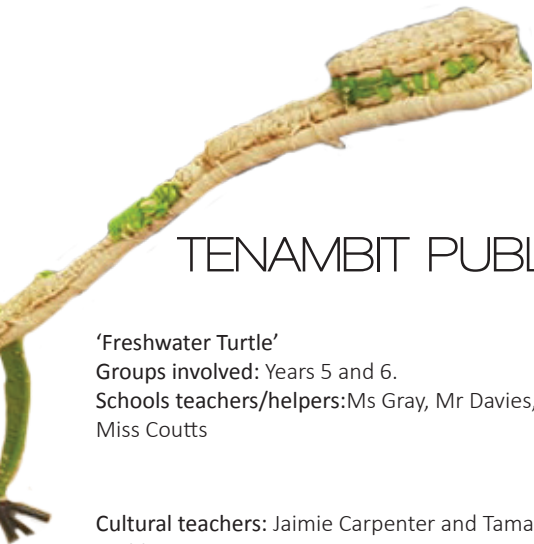


Health
Central Coast
Local Health District

Echidna are unique, secretive, quilled monotreme, and best exemplified the groups experiences of feeling “prickly”, wanting to “bury” feelings or hide away. Eadie came to life with enthusiasm and positive creativity as we attached the raffia coils to the steel frame designed and fabricated by Lynelle and her husband Larry. Once the woven coils were attached to the frame, white ochre covered gum sticks were gathered from the surrounding Country and added the defining quills, connecting all the elements of the work to place. This combined journey was completed with a wonderful gathering at Gosford Hospital where Eadie now resides as a mascot for this special programme.







TENAMBIT PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Freshwater Turtle'

Groups involved: Years 5 and 6.

Schools teachers/helpers: Ms Gray, Mr Davies, Mrs Feund and Miss Coutts

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter and Tamara Jackson

Welder: Rainnie Carter



Artist Statement: Although this program was interrupted by the lockdown that did not stop these determined participants from creating a beautiful artwork.

All participants continued their weaving alongside their learning from home. When face to face learning returned these students worked tirelessly to make sure the project was completed. One student in particular who excelled at weaving was able to create a small woven turtle from their coil starter, the baby turtle is featured on the neck of the sculpture.

ABERMAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Grevillea Flowers'

Groups involved: Stage 2 and 3.

Artists: Caleda M, Tristan R, Ciara H, Anisley M, Toby H, Aidan W, Shelbi S, Daytona S, Heyleigh S, Alice L, Mia H, Nevaya W, Kaylee P, Grace B, Tylor Q, Rhys W, Nate W, Lilly B, Lilly-Anne R, Sebastian G, Logan A, Slater B, Emily C, Charlotte F, Rohan F, Ellie G, Jye H, Charlie J, Chelsea L, Missy S, Chevy T, Ezekial T, Liam T, Trinity W, Lachlan W, Tayla B, Brock C, Jorja F, Cooper H, Cooper M, Brock M, Jorja P, Isabelle R, Angus S, Mason W, Zahlia W, Mason D, Abi E, Lynken F, Olivia J, Alexis O, Lucas P, Kelleah R, Max S, Tyrone T, Will W, Kallum W, Chloe C, Tynan C, Talisha C, Ayden F, Tyrone F, Koby F, Braiden F, Ruby J, Levii L, Kieran M, Jessica N, Taylor W, Aimee E, Brock F, Blade H, Jett J, Ashleigh K, Mikaylah L, Jaimee L, Christopher M, Letticia R, Ana S, Tyler S, Tyra-Lea V, Ella B, Oscar B, Liam C, Jaxson C, Rhys C, Ebony D, Cameron E, Esther H, Lachlan H, Ruby J, Nicholas S, Abbie S.

School teachers/helpers: Mrs D. Bower, Mrs J. Roberson, Mrs E. Britton, Mr B. Bridge, Mrs M. Samson, Miss J. Crossley, Mrs C. McGee, Miss S. Morgan, Miss B. Prior

Cultural teachers: Kristin Sheldon and Suzanne Oliver

Welders: Rainie Carter





Artist Statement: The students from Abermain Public School wanted a challenge and when they heard that no one had represented native flora they were ready. Students knew that the grevillea trees that dotted the school grounds were a native species, so a branch full of blooms was agreed upon. The initial idea was to create a bouquet in a vessel, but as the welded sculpture came together, it became obvious that this piece was destined to be a hanging branch. As some were keen to use pink in the sculpture, a little artistic licence was used to create a bloom of ombre red, orange, and pink grevillea flowers. Problem solving turned bracelets into flowers and leaves, resulting in a spectacular collaboration.



GRETA PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Junior' The Brushtail Possum

Groups involved: Years 3 – 6.

Artists: Amanda, Mason, Ivy, Katie, Isabella, Amelia, Jaydn, Jesse, Ben, Haylee, Cruz, Isabelle, Blaze, Cailin, Jarell, Aden, Meyah, Zoie, Layla, Taya, Mikaylah, Lilly, Kaley, Simon, Amelia, Jade, Hannah, Haleigha, Angel, Daina, Emilee, Beau, Tyler, Eli, Charlie, Kasady, Aiden, Nadar, Alyssia, Deagen, Mayson, Joshua, Salwa, Len, Makenzie, Harvey, Maddy, Olivia, Avah, Archy, Keely, Caleb, Khloe, Lily, Charli, Evie, Chayse, Marley, Alana, Grace, Luke, Jacob, Maliyah, Grace, Chase, Maci-Rae, Max, Olivia, Jaxon, Ben, Logan, Eli, Addison, Darcy, Alexa, Boyd, Brock, Lochlan, Maddie, Isabel, Sahraya, Morgan, Riley, Charly, Ace, Hunter, William, Piper, Freya, Kayden, Layla, Jasper, Tahlia, Aria, Bayden, Liam, Emery, Isabella, Meredith, Indi, Maddison, Finn, Erin, Bodhi, Bella, Noah, Ahli-James, Jaxon, Emily, Sophie

Schools teachers/helpers: Mrs L. Jarlett, Mr J. Cronin, Miss C. Slater, Ms C. Rummery

Cultural teachers: Kristin Sheldon, Jaimie Carpenter, Tamara Jackson and Elizabeth Howard

Welder: Rainnie Carter



Artist Statement: Greta Public School had been involved in making a possum skin cloak earlier this year and decided to continue this theme by making a brushtail possum interwoven sculpture as there is always evidence of possums in and around the school grounds. After learning that a male possum is a jack, a female is a jill and a baby is a joey, the students decided on Junior so their possum could be a female, or a male and it keeps with the 'J' theme. The students would have loved to have dressed Junior in school uniform, but with limited time, one of the students designed a school hat, complete with the school initials! And as a sign of the times, another student thought it was important that Junior have its own Covid 19 mask. A wonderful representation of life in 2021!

KEARSLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Sunny' The Bearded Dragon

Groups involved: Years 1 – 6.

Artists: Hudson B, Jakell D, Kirsty F, Jett G, Leon H, Antonio H, Brock H, Ryleigh H, Seth K, Murray M, Sophia M, Cooper M, Hannes, M, Evie M, Maddalin M, Koa P, Nate P, Evie S, Cooper W, Isla A, Gracie B, Imogen F, Nevaeh MC, Syd P, Vaughn W, Zac B, Ella B, Charlotte B, Michael H, Levi H, Selene H, Dylan K, Connor M, Emily P, Haydan W, Ella B, Lucas B, Hannah C, Savannah D, Zach K, Leah M, Tim M, Zoe M, Kai O, Kaiden P, Armani P, Beau P, Broddie P, Kiahna R, Abbey S, Maclyn W, Jony C, Aloura C, Jack D, Micah F, Sienna K, Maeve A, Joshua B, Heath B, Arrabella C, Madison D, Tillie D, Sage H, Danielle H, Anthony L, Dakotah M, Iszac P, Kyrach R, Charlie S, Ellie S, Kiarntae W, Joshua W, Amelia W, Karleigh W, Kyle A, Skylah B, Elsie B, Savannah D, Joel F, Lachlan G, Theo H, Lilly J, Sophia L, Calais P, Hayley W, Jeziah W, Ava W, Isabella Y, Connor H, Max K, Tate M, Temperance S, Beth W, Will B, Britney B, Harrison D, Ash F, Mia G, Ruby G, Phinn H, Lola J, Islay L, Letty M, Ebonee P, Tyrah P, Levi S, Johnnie S, Link W.

School teachers/helpers: Mrs R. Richards, Miss B. Forbes, Mrs M. Power, Mr J. Warby, Miss L. Corrigan, Miss A. Willard, Ms K. Johnson, Mr D. Carter, Mrs S. Wendt, Mrs T. Graham, Ms N. Pitt, Mrs A. Archibald, Mrs J. Dodd, Mrs M. Bargwanna, Mrs S. Fisher

Cultural teachers: Jaimie Carpenter, Kristin Sheldon, Suzanne Oliver and Tamara Jackson

Welders: Rainnie Carter





Artist Statement: We chose the bearded dragon because we have a family of them on school grounds. The students are very protective of them when they are out and will even place cones around their space to alert others. The name Sunny was chosen because of the proud way bearded dragons stand and absorb the heat. We all became more connected and aware of Aboriginal culture through this program and have grown in both knowledge and skill. We've experienced the process of weaving in a variety of ways, from making coils and bracelets, shaping and stitching of the structure to learning the process and reasons for the harvesting of lomandra. We all connected with each other and the project as a community where we would sit and share stories. We can't wait to make Sunny a permanent fixture on the wall of our hall, for now we hope you enjoy our bearded dragon.



HUNTER ABORIGINAL WEAVERS ALLIANCE

‘Cultural Cup’

Groups involved: The women of the Hunter Water Weaving Alliance.

Artists: Liz Ross, Kath Russell, Sophie Sheldon, Jessica Hopcroft, Danielle Carroll, Annissa Hardwood, Emma McDonald, Kiah Larrigo, Ebany Larrigo, Shannon Whyte, Sharleen Masters, Tamara Jackson, Kelly Hallam, Sue Darby, Josie Newton.

Cultural teachers: Cherie Johnson and Nina Ross.



Artist Statement: Hunter Aboriginal Weaver’s Alliance is a group of women who come together to weave, connect, and yarn over cups of tea. The group can be large or intimate depending on the session, but they always come together to ‘fill their cultural cup’. The Hunter Aboriginal Weaver’s Alliance began on Worimi Country, facilitated by Speaking in Colour and Hunter Water. Kath Russell, Nina Ross, and Cherie Johnson harvested the Australian native climbing fig, the ficus pantoniana while it was malleable in the Raymond Terrace wetlands. The native fig can be a pest as it smothers other native species, so harvesting the fig to use for weaving was considered part of traditional cultural practices of caring for Country. Once harvested, Kath, Nina and Cherie wove the fig as the base of the “Cultural Cup”. On the sides of the vessel, raffia coils wove by members of the Hunter Aboriginal Weaver’s Alliance represent the revitalisation of weaving practices for the Aboriginal community using more contemporary mediums. The “Cultural Cup” has been left open to show the ongoing journey of connecting back to culture for the Hunter Aboriginal Weaver’s Alliance with their future projects; that they are open to connecting, weaving, and yarning over a cup of tea until their cultural cup is spilling over.

RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

'Teenage Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Year 8, young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women

Artists: Savanna. B, Mia. D, Sophie. E, Ella. H, Leteisha. J, Kayla. M, Kiarna. M, Katelin. P, Maddison. P, Sham. R, Charlie-Maree. S, Bridget. W

School teachers/helpers: Mrs M. Keyes, Mrs R. Chapman, Mrs B. Meister, Ms K. Turner, Ms S. O'Sullivan

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke, Cherie Johnson and Jaimie Carpenter



Artist Statement: The possum paw print in the centre of the circle signifies community coming together to create Possum Skin Cloak. The girls focused on connections, friendships and creating something that represented their cultural identity, family, and connectedness to nature. Their attention to detail and the ease in which they picked up the skills required to make cloaks was outstanding. They were respectful to each other and respectful to their cultural teachers.





RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

'Teenage Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Year 9, young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women

Artists: Kiesha. B, Stella. C, Shatikka. E, Destiny. H, Aleigha. J, Brooke. M, Amarina. P, Lahtia. P, Sophie. R, Samara. S, Demani. S, Makayla. T, Sarah. T

School teachers/helpers: Mrs M. Keyes, Mrs R. Chapman, Mrs B. Meister, Ms K. Turner, Ms S. O'Sullivan

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke, Cherie Johnson and Jaimie Carpenter



Artist Statement: When choosing the central theme, the girls chose the koala as they felt it was something unique, and something that has been greatly impacted by the bush fires. Which guided them to choose animals that represented their family, identity and their cultural connections as individuals. This group of girls were really connected and bold. They were able to translate an initial idea and develop it into a design, evidencing their ability to work well together, combine their thinking to create harmony. All the animals selected by the young women were chosen by the way the animals were impacted by the fires.

RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

'Teenage Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Year 10, young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women

Artists: Skye. A, Jacinta. C, Bethani. F, Hollie. F, Caitlyn. G, Lakeysha. G, Olivia. J, Phoebe. O, Ellie. P, Suzie. T

School teachers/helpers: Mrs M. Keyes, Mrs R. Chapman, Mrs B. Meister, Ms K. Turner, Ms S. O'Sullivan

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke, Cherie Johnson and Jaimie Carpenter



Artist Statement: This group was environmentally conscious. The design depicted a goanna walking through the centre. The girls have imprinted the cloak with their handprints, demonstrating their connection to the natural world, their community and their culture via cloak making. The pelts show individual iconography representing the beauty of nature. This group was truly a collective of individuals. They were able to quickly articulate themselves, collaborate easily, agreeable, they got along, and the flow of the sessions was natural and easy. They connected beautifully with one another just as their pelts connect on the cloak.





RUTHERFORD TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

'Adult Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Year 8 – 10 young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander men

Artists: Jack B, Zeke R, Rohan B, Blake B, Thomas K, Alex B, Sam R, Jack S, Caleb V, Destiny C, Patrick B, Noah D, Kavin W, Jensen B, Alex C, Vili P, Matthew H, Moses W, Liam D, Connan H, Judd P, Aaron L, Jaimon S, Rylie M, Adam M, Jarrod W, Jet T, Rusty K, Roman L, Blaydon, Tyrohn M.

School teachers/helpers: Mr G. Stickland, Mr. J Knight, Mrs M. Keyes, Mrs R. Chapman, Mrs B. Meister, Mr M. Heitmeyer, Ms K. Turner, Mrs E. Robinson

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke, Cherie Johnson and Jaimie Carpenter



Artist Statement: This group was environmentally conscious. The design depicted a goanna walking through the centre. The girls have imprinted the cloak with their handprints, demonstrating their connection to the natural world, their community and their culture via cloak making. The pelts show individual iconography representing the beauty of nature. This groups were truly a collective of individuals. They were able to quickly articulate themselves, collaborate easily, agreeable, they got along, and the flow of the sessions was natural and easy. They connected beautifully with one another just as their pelts connect on the cloak.

GRETA PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Adolescent Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Stage 2 and 3 students. Aboriginal student from K – 2

Artists: Chayse, Alyssia, Amanda, Deegan, Mason, Charli, Joshua, Salwa, Marley, Makenzie, Harvey, Alana, Maddy, Olivia, Avah, Ivy, Archy, Katie, Grace, Isabella R, Amelia, Keely, Caleb, Khloe, Jaydn, Annabella, Jesse, Lily, Evie, Benjamin, Haylee, Cruz, Isabella H, Blaze, Cailin, Jarell, Aden, Meyah, Zoie, Layla, Taylah, Mikayla, Lily, Kaley, Simon, Amelia, Jade, Hannah, Haleigha

School teachers/helpers: Mrs L Jarlett, Mr J Cronin, Miss C Slater.

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke and Cherie Johnson



Artist Statement: Stringlike processions of hairy caterpillars predict the arrival of the mullet in our waterways. The design of the cloak depicts a seasonal event in nature that transcends the three local communities of the Wannaruah, Worimi and Awabakal peoples. It is the story of the mullet and the caterpillar. The story is commonly known to be when the hairy caterpillars are seen moving, the mullet are on their migration run. This teaches children to be aware of their surroundings and to be observant of nature, and all signs on how to live in harmony with one another. Our work is not in isolation, we are all interdependent on one another and therefore must learn to work well in a collective and not just see an individual point of view.

Each student designed their own mullet representing themselves and their families. The mullet has been arranged in a circular format depicting the circulating waters. The caterpillars were created using the fingerprints of the Aboriginal primary school infants as the foundation with other students' fingerprints being added. The caterpillars are crawling across the cloak making themselves known.





EAST MATTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL

'Adolescent Sized Cloak'

Groups involved: Year 4 students

Artists: Zoe A, Ally-Mae A, Zavier A, Pippa B, Jaya B, Macy A, Rosie B, Hannah B, Chloe A, Noah C, Olivia B, William B, Faith C, Lewis B, Maggie CP, Eden D, Xander C, Makai C, Evie F, Benjamin C, Drake C, Beau G, Ryan C, Lockie C, Gus H, Xander C, Lukas C, Sophie H, Chandra D, Charlotte E, Abbigail H, Natalie H, Ethan E, Andrew K, Saxon H, Lara E, Natalie L, Liam H, Angus H, Noah M, Arhlee H, Grace-Faye J, William M, Laila K, Mia J, Rebecca R, Tully M, Rose M, Joh'Leikah R, Matthew M, Sebastian Mch, Kody W, Addison P, James M, Toby W, Lulan P, Connie O, Lachlan R, Willow P, Maddison R, Amelia S, Kieran S, Miranda S, Jack S, Nixon S, William S, Oliver S, Ashton S, Adina S, Hope T, Bently T, Meika T, Max T, Dylan W, Grace TG, Mackinley W, Haylee T, Carter V, Grace W.

School teachers/helpers: Mrs L Jarlett, Mr J Cronin, Miss C Slater.

Cultural teachers: Kerri Clarke and Cherie Johnson

Artist Statement: Our Possum skin cloak is designed around The Emu in the Sky constellation. The Emu is the centre of our cloak story. We chose this as the emu can only move forward. It can look behind and learn from what it sees and what it has experienced but then moves forward using this knowledge. We used the Emu Constellation as the centre of our cloak as we can see it in the Milky Way in the skies above our school. In each corner of the cloak the students have chosen four animals of significance to our community. The Eagle is our school mascot as well as the Totem for the Wonnarua people whose land on which our students are taught, as children have been for tens of thousands of years. The Bluetongue lizard. Our school has many 'Blueys' living within our school grounds and gardens. Our Bluetongues don't mind sharing their gardens with us and have been here for a long time. The Magpie represent a sporting team within our wider community to which our students and families belong. The magpie, just like many of our students, is a supreme communicator bringing forth courage with wisdom and sociability. The Redback spider is also a sporting team supported by our students and families and was also chosen as many of our students thought our school and wider community was like a spider's web that connects us all together.



UNITING ADAMSTOWN PRESCHOOL

'The Kindness Cloak'

Groups involved: Children aged 3-5 years across the week.

Artists: Azalea B, Lacey B, Ava B, Charlie B, Harry BD, Ellie B, Isabella B, Jesse B, Ira B, Rosie C, Zoe C, Caleb D. Edward D, Elsie D, Thomas E, Angus F, Sebastian F, Archie G, Louis H, Leo H, Harriet H, Tilly J, Tilly K, Lauren K, Cooper K, Hudson K, Grace L, Arlo L, Willow L, Jai Mc, Isabelle Mc, Aleksander M, Ella M, Isabel M, Indie M, Liam M, Josie M, Laila N, Harry O, Luka P, Quinn P, Skye P, Ziggy R, Sash R, Charlie R, Bella R, Sonny R, Scarlett S, Prea S, Olivia S, Elliot T, Juliet T, Atticus T, Eli T, Oscar T, Milla W, Louie W, Ahliya W, Norah W, Madeleine W, Adeline W.

Service educators: Mrs V. Geach, Mrs B. Cox, Mrs C. Marsden, Miss K. Boon, Miss N. Calo, Miss M. Stuart, Mrs T. Jedreznjak, Mrs H. Bruton, Mrs J. Stockwell.

Cultural teachers: Kristin Sheldon

Uniting



Artist Statement: Uniting Adamstown Heights Preschool were truly grateful to be a part of the Possum Skin Learning Project. Our commitment to gaining a deeper understanding, connectedness and respect for our Aboriginal Community is a journey we strive towards throughout all aspects of our Belonging, Being and Becoming Program. We chose the Possum Skin Project as we believed our preschool children ranging from 3 – 5 years of age could connect with and understand the preciousness of a Possum Skin Cloak to the Aboriginal peoples, as they too may have had or still have their own special baby blanket or comforter. Our Cloak consists of three possum skins sown together, head to toe with waxy thread, and inscribed with the children's drawings of what makes our Preschool a beautiful place to 'BE'. Our inspiration emanated from the children's ideas and drawings on what makes our preschool special to us, our Acknowledgment to Country and our strong values of being kind and caring to one another, whilst walking gently upon our land. Hence, it is suitably named 'Our Kindness Cloak'. The opportunity to be a part of this program was such a significant journey that touched all of our preschool community's hearts and allowed us to feel more deeply the traditional cultures of the Aboriginal peoples. We invite you to engage with and explore our 'Our Kindness Cloak' for a while and allow our values and our story to touch your heart as well as other students' fingerprints being added. The caterpillars are crawling across the cloak making themselves known.



PRESENTED BY
SPEAKING IN COLOUR

a special thank you to

**MAITLAND
REGIONAL
ART GALLERY**