Welcome (Wunya) to the final edition of our Community Newsletter for 2013. This year has seen our students grow and learn in so many different ways throughout the year.

We have been privileged, through the Next Steps Initiative funding, to create and grow numerous programs and opportunities for our students, staff and wider community. Many of these initiatives have been driven and supported by the establishment of our Community Group (ICPC) where families meet once per term. We value the ongoing support of our families and community in providing important feedback on developing the best support programs and opportunities across our college.

Some of these successful initiatives have included the establishment and continuation of our Homework Club and Indigenous Community Partnership Committee, employment of an additional teacher and school officer, purchase of teaching and classroom cultural resources, creation of our Dance Group and various cultural immersion opportunities just to name a few. Our hope now is to grow and sustain these initiatives in the years ahead for the benefit of all students.

This year we say CONGRATULATIONS and Farewell to our five Year 12 Graduates; Brooke-Louise KEEVERS, Benjamin KEEBLE, Nicholas IRELAND, Sophie ROGERS and Monique TINETTI. We wish you every success on your journey beyond the gates of Southern Cross Catholic College and hope you travel safely wherever the road leads you. You are each blessed to have had a solid start in life through education and now it is up to each of you to dream, believe and achieve.

Southern Cross Catholic College is a proud recipient of QATSIF (Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation) Scholarships for our Year 11 and 12 Indigenous Students.

For 2012 and 2013 our College has applied for and received financial scholarships for 7 of our students. Recently Jasmine Maynard and Ally Gardiner represented the College at the QATSIF celebratory breakfast at Kuril Dhargan, State Library of Queensland. Pictured below is Jasmine and Ally meeting with Aunty Ruth Hegarty, Patron of the QATSIF Scholarship Foundation. QATSIF’s main aim is to help turn around inter-generational legacies of past policies and practices, and help close the gap in educational and employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

May the knowledge learned, give you the strength to be a strong carrier of much great wisdom for you and the many generations to come.

It’s time to take the next step and carry close to your heart the Sacredness of that wisdom that has been shared. Hold the Spirit of this Sacred Land always in your heart and may the Spirits of your Ancestors always watch over you and keep you safe.

Vicki Clark (Muthi Muthi)
**Homework Club NEWS Update...**

The Homework Club has been established to further support our students with their homework and assessment plus engage in various cultural activities such as Traditional Indigenous Games. Numbers attending have grown over the past three terms and now we are happy to advise that the Homework Club will continue into 2014.

The college bus collects students from both Mackillop and Delany campuses on Monday afternoons. The Homework Club operates from 3:15 – 4:45pm in the De La Salle’s Learning Enrichment Centre. A light afternoon tea is provided for all students attending. Senior students and volunteer staff often visit the centre to provide additional academic support and mentoring for the younger students.

We would like to encourage more students from all year levels (prep to year 12) to use this valuable service. If your child wishes to attend please email or phone Ms. McMurtrie or Mr. Brown to organise a permission slip to travel on the school bus. If your child attends either Frawley or De La Salle campus a permission slip is still required for attendance and catering purposes.

*Meetings will be held on each Campus during Week 3 of Term 1, 2014 to sign up and fill out the required permission forms. Dates will be confirmed by email shortly.*

---

### 2014 Homework Club Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Commences Monday 17th February</th>
<th>Finishes Monday 24th March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Commences Monday 28th April</td>
<td>Finishes Monday 16th June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Commences Monday 21st July</td>
<td>Finishes Monday 8th September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Commences Monday 13th October</td>
<td>Finishes Monday 17th November (Break up Celebration)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Community Meeting Dates

- **Term 1** - Friday 14th March
- **Term 2** - Friday 13th June
- **Term 3** - Friday 5th September
- **Term 4** - Friday 7th November
- **Family Day** - Sunday 30th November (To be confirmed)
During Term 3, our Indigenous students in Year 4-6 had the opportunity to travel to North Stradbroke Island on the Big Cat Ferries accompanied by Ms. McMurtrie, Mr. Brown, Ms. Smith. We were privileged to be joined by Uncle Gene Blow (Stradbroke Island Elder) who took us to many culturally significant sites including Brown Lake, Amity Point, the Birthing Tree and a special visit with Aunty Margaret Iselin (Stradbroke Island Elder).

Uncle Gene and Aunty Margaret shared many many stories of the history of the Island community including stories about bunyips at Brown Lake, turtle mating seasons, full moons, finding oysters, making ochre, drinking water from the natural springs, native plants, using Dugong ribs for clapsticks and the story of how the Koala lost its tail at Amity Point.

Everybody enjoyed the delicious bush tucker provided by Uncle Gene... especially the dugong! Thank you Uncle Gene and Aunty Margaret for sharing your Country and Stories...

“My favourite part of the day was when we were looking over the cliff and Point Lookout and saw dolphins and turtles. I learnt how to say some aboriginal words like barramundi. We also saw the Lord’s Prayer written in local Aboriginal language. Uncle told us stories wherever we went which were interesting. I find it very calming learning about my culture.”

TYREECE RELPH - YEAR 6

“When I went to Stradbroke, we went to Aunty’s home. It was good because she told us about the stuff we didn’t know like what the dugong is used for and a lot of other stuff. We also went for a bushwalk. We saw whales, dolphins and turtles. I learnt what trees were good for fires and that paperbark trees were good for camps. We also saw koalas and a stingray. I really liked the water.”

PRESTON BROWN - YEAR 4

“At Stradbroke we had cultural eating that was so much fun and delicious! We also saw Aunty who showed us all the different things that Aboriginals used. Aunty said that people were not allowed to call grass tress ‘black boys’ anymore because people thought it sounded racist. I loved the bush walk and all the stories that Uncle told us, especially the pirate story and the bunyip story at Brown Lake. I liked when we got on the boat as there was a lot to see. I liked how the Aboriginals used different things to make their food. The birthing tree was pretty cool because Uncle told us the men had to go away because it was ‘women’s business’. The women then carried the baby in a bowl to the sea water to wash it. I also like the story about how his father was on a ship and a lot of people sank but him and his 10 friends saved a lot of people and his father had to go back out twice. We also saw koalas in the tree and the stingray on the bottom of the clear water. We also drank fresh water from a natural spring. It was the freshest water I ever tasted. It is naturally filtered by sand. Uncle told us about a story when his sister took something from the island and her family got sick so she had to drive a long way back to the island to put it back where it was. When she returned, her family were all better. So we all believe that you should never take something from another island. We went back onto the ferry and came back to Cleveland. We then ate dugong meat and dugong ribs are also used as clapping sticks.”

JEMMYA KEYS - YEAR 5
Walking on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Country

In Term 3 I was privileged to participate in a professional learning experience visiting the Central Desert region of Australia; Anangu Country. This experience was an opportunity afforded to me to develop my professional skills but as I was accompanied by my blood kin Aunty Julie Foster-Smith, this experience was also deeply personal in many respects. My Aunty is a respected community Elder of the Kalkadoon Language Group (Far North West Queensland) Country and so to be afforded the time to be with family whilst visiting community learning and walking with Elders is a privilege I do not take for granted.

As a Kalkadoon woman, visiting Anangu Country was a deeply spiritual and moving experience where “going back to Country” encourages both an opportunity for personal reflection and re-igniting the inner spirit. The experience unexpectedly commenced immediately upon our arrival at Sydney airport where we literally ran into Uncle Bob Randall; a Traditional Owner of Anangu Country and renowned musician and songwriter. Uncle Bob was on his journey returning home and we were on our journey to his land…his Country.

Upon arriving at Mutitjulu, a small remote community in Kata Tjuta National Park, Uncle Bob warmly welcomed us to Country and generously opened his home. All prearranged itineraries were set aside instantly when invited to sit by the campfire, drink tea and yarn for hours on our first night’s stay. We helped Uncle Bob cook kangaroo tail, traditional way, over an open fire in the ground and listened to the many stories of his land, his family and the footsteps of his Ancestors that will remain forever embedded in my heart. That evening we were privileged to witness the darkening silhouette of Uluru, seen from Uncle Bob’s backyard, adding another dimension to this experience that can only be described as magical, mystical and very spiritual all at once.

Throughout the evening Uncle Bob’s spoke of his enduring commitment to his land; the origins and relationship with the rich red dirt beneath his feet and between our toes. He spoke of his community and how the land has graciously sustained the lives of his Ancestors for thousands of years, his own life, the lives of his children and grandchildren. He continues to teach far and wide of the deep spiritual connection to this Country through his gentle words and songs. Umbiari is the name of his family run and owned cultural program where learning takes place on the land and the landscape is his classroom. His love and faithfulness to his family, whole community and connection to land was at the forefront of his many stories. He proudly shared stories of his Ancestor’s songlines, of Tjukurpa (Anangu Traditional Law) and humbly told stories of his parents and the extraordinary pain and struggle of being forcibly removed from Country and his journey to return to his home where he now remains.

Over the coming days, I was blessed to be welcomed by Community and walk on Anangu Country learning of the land, the strong community and spiritual connectedness to Country, yarnning with Elders, listening to stories, and learning of community protocols. On this journey, I learned of the Songlines of my own Ancestors from my Aunty Julie and of their spiritual connection to this vast desert country. I was quickly reminded of what it means to “just be” and “to sit quietly” and gently encouraged to release the very westernised ways of set agendas and strict deadlines “as you are on country now; you are home”. I did not find this too difficult as I quickly realised the true privilege of being in community as opposed to the rushed and structured decision making “ticking and flicking” processes that can often monopolise the city urban lifestyle. Taking the time to sit, listen (I mean really listen) and learn from one another seems such a simple concept, though for some, it can be difficult to do. When in community it becomes very apparent that this sense of sitting and listening to one another is key to developing strong relationships and must be done in a respectful and meaningful way.

Continued...2
I was reminded by Elders of the ways of our people and why I felt comfortable on this land. The best way to describe this feeling is likened to having a sense of comfort beneath your skin, in your stomach and in your heart; a characteristic of our Aboriginal culture that is often lost in the daily grind of work and schedules. Sitting with Elders and reconnecting with these values and ways of being is a way to refocus and find clarity in thought processes by listening to your inner spirit, Aboriginal way.

Visiting the sacred site of Uluru was a priority to both acknowledge and show our respect for the Spiritual Ancestors of this desert land. It is protocol for visitors from other Countries to let the Anangu Ancestors know of their presence whilst walking on Country.

Maruku Community Arts, located in the Mutitjulu community, is where I witnessed a large array of amazing, authentic artwork all produced by community people. A place where royalties are paid directly to the artists and given back to the community. It is here where I found row upon row, and table after table of artwork, including punu traditional wood carvings, stacked and ready for sale across all corners of Australia and beyond our coastlines. I purchased several punu wood carved paintings created by local artists as well as a punu hand carved lizard that now takes pride of place in my own home as a reminder of my desert experience.

During my visit to Central Desert I was essentially an “observer” whilst in the company of an Elder blood connection. From a professional teaching perspective, the experience showed how a school can effectively engage with community in meaningful and productive ways to both develop and grow long term respectful and reciprocal relationships. At the core of this experience lay the key foundation of being able to digest information intellectually and how to move this knowledge to the heart by immersing yourself and living the experience of community and by walking together with community.

I am deeply appreciative of this experience, one that will remain embedded in my heart forever. I look forward to sharing this knowledge with our students, staff and whole college community and building our College’s Cultural landscape through sharing knowledge and deepening understanding of our Nation’s First People.

“Napatiaji Napatiaji”...meaning “I share with you and you share with me”...

Mary McMurrtrie
Late in Term 4 our Prep—Year 3 students visited GOMA (Gallery of Modern Art) to explore 2 exhibitions. The first exhibition, called **Gordon Hockey’s KANGAROO CREW** is an Interactive Indigenous childrens’ book that has been turned into artwork and interactive workstations. Gordon Hockey is an Indigenous Artist who has created this exhibition specifically for children and families. The exhibition is based on his narrative “The Sacred Hill”; a book about four kangaroos finding their way home. The second exhibition **FALLEN BACK TO EARTH** created by Cai Guo-Qiang looks at Earth through animal existence without humans. It also uses taxidermy animals to portray harmony of all animals from all continents. The displays were so life-like!

The students really enjoyed the day and asked many questions about each of the exhibitions. The first exhibition was the main reason for the trip and the second was an extra bonus, but both exhibitions were FANTASTIC!

The exhibitions are well worth the trip into the city. Both exhibitions will continue up until 11th May 2014. To check them out online go to [qagoma.qld.gov.au/kids](http://qagoma.qld.gov.au/kids).

---

**Dallas Brown & Theresa Smith**

---

**Our Dreaming: animating country** – connecting people to place through animation and storytelling.

Through exhibitions, workshops and events **Our Dreaming** showcases Queensland’s vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, as they are retold through animation. Explore how new mediums have contemporised traditional storytelling, preserving a rich legacy for future generations.

Our stories create enduring connections from past to present, people to place and to each other, giving us a sense of belonging. Experience how these stories are being shared and bring your own stories to life.

The Dreaming is eternal, alive and ever-evolving. This is **Our Dreaming**.

**SESSIONS:** 10am-5pm from Friday 24th January - 9th June

**VENUE:** Kuril Dhagun, Level 1 State Library of Qld

**COST:** Free
**Fact Sheet 11**

**Proof of Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander Heritage**

Knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present.

Your Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage is something that is personal and you do not need a "letter of confirmation" to identify as an Indigenous person. However, you may be asked to provide a confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage in some circumstances such as:

- Government (such as Indigenous housing loans, research and policy grants)
- University courses (such as Indigenous studies)
- Commonwealth and State welfare agencies (Indigenous-specific)
- Employment (Indigenous-specific)

The following information is provided to guide you. Guidelines and procedures may vary from region to region and between organisations. University, welfare and government departments will only supply you with a form for the purpose of verification.

**Why is it so important?**

These services and programs are intended to address the social, health and educational needs that Indigenous people have as a result of past removal policies and inadequate educational, employment and health services. Requesting proof of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage from applicants helps to make sure that this intention is honoured.

**How do I obtain proof of my Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage?**

**Step 1 - Gather as much information as possible.**

When applying for a letter of proof of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage through an Indigenous organisation, you are likely to be asked to provide your heritage to these committees. For this reason, it is often useful to gather as much information as possible. Wherever you can before you consult them. This is particularly important if you or your ancestors have been disconnected from your heritage.

Examples of useful information include birth, death and marriage certificates that show your family is a particular Indigenous community, your parents’ and their ancestors’ names and stories, and even photographs. The AATSI Family Register Unit is able to assist you with the family history research that you may need to undertake to determine your Indigenous heritage and/or the information that your family knows.

**Step 2 - Contact an Indigenous organisation.**

A letter of confirmation is usually obtained from an Indigenous organisation and must be stamped with their common seal. It is useful to contact an organisation when your family is from, if possible, as someone in the community might know of or remember your family.

As Indigenous organisations in the area where you live may also be able to provide you with this confirmation. For instance, if you live in Cairns and your family is from the Cairns region, you would seek advice from the Yarrabah Land Council or the Mapoon Land Council. If you live in Carpentaria and your family is from there, you would seek advice from the Land Council in the area your family came from or where known.

To find the contact details of a Land Council or other Indigenous community organisation, you can search the Yellow Pages online at www.yellowpages.com.au or Ask the Indigenous family located at www.indigenous.com.au. Type "Aboriginal" as the YPL key and the place name as "WHERE". In the past versions of the Yellow Pages, look under "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Associations & Organisations".