Wunya and Welcome to our Community Newsletter for Semester 1, 2014.

As you may be aware the Next Steps Initiative funding has now been finalised and fully acquitted as of the end of Term 1, 2014. Our College has been extremely fortunate to have been selected as one of over 100 schools nationwide to participate in this federal government initiative. This program has enabled our College to create and grow numerous programs and opportunities for our students, staff and wider community.

Over this time, our Indigenous Community Partnership Committee, local Community Elders, parents, families, staff and students have provided valuable time and input into establishing, growing and sustaining these programs. A heartfelt THANK YOU to each and every one of you for your efforts, contributions and support over this period. A special thanks to Mr. Greg Myers, our College Principal, for his ongoing support, drive and commitment to supporting this initiative and associated processes for continuing to deliver positive outcomes for Indigenous Education. A special thanks also goes to Mr. Shamus Leathart, our College Finance Manager, for his time and energy in ensuring all of our financial obligations relating to this funding program have been met during this process.

The outcomes of this funding initiative have added great value and depth to our College’s cultural landscape. It is now a key priority to both grow and sustain these initiatives in the years ahead for the benefit of all students and whole College Community.

Patron’s Day 2014

A special CONGRATULATIONS to each of our Dance students on their recent participation in the Patron’s Day liturgy. Performing a traditional Welcome Dance in front of such a large audience was a true testament to how far we, as a College, have come together to share and celebrate culture in such a proud way. Although preparations and rehearsals were short, our students showed such pride, enthusiasm and excitement for sharing their culture with peers and wider community on this special occasion.

We thank Uncle Eric Law for taking the time to share some words of wisdom with our students prior to the dance. Uncle Eric spoke to the dance group about being given the opportunity to dance. He spoke of the importance of such occasions and the responsibility for our students to really understand and know what it means to dance and represent our people; our culture. Uncle reminded the students of taking great pride in who they are, where they have come from and how they, through dance, make their Ancestors proud of the way they have grown and embraced their identity in today’s world.

Patron’s Day is certainly a significant day on our calendar for our whole college. For the students involved, traditional dancing and welcoming our community in such a proud and gracious way was a true testament to our young people who can look forward to a bright future where culture is acknowledged, respected and celebrated in school communities such as Southern Cross Catholic College.
The Homework Club continues to grow and thrive this year! Students arrive at the Homework Club each Monday from all campuses. An afternoon tea is provided and students work towards completing set homework and assessment tasks. This year has seen the program make positive connections with the Australian Catholic University Community Engagement Program where university students volunteer their time for our program. These hours then contribute to completing their Community Engagement Hours and is credited towards their field of study units.

Next Term we will be having a **DEADLY READING CHALLENGE** where students will be encouraged to read books, earn points and receive some great rewards along the way!

**Petero Civoniceva**, Rugby League Legend, will be our **Reading Challenge Ambassador** and will be joining us on **Monday 21st July** to officially launch this Challenge in Term 3.

We would like to take this opportunity to **THANK** our **dedicated volunteers** who support our students every week and to Petero for his generosity and enthusiasm to support our Homework Club.

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**2014 Homework Club Dates**

**TERM 1**

Commences Monday 17th February  
Finishes Monday 24th March

**TERM 2**

Commences Monday 28th April  
Finishes Monday 16th June

**TERM 3**

Commences Monday 21st July  
Finishes Monday 8th September

**TERM 4**

Commences Monday 13th October  
Finishes Monday 17th November (Break up Celebration)

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**Community Meeting Dates**

TERM 1 - Friday 14th March  
TERM 2 - Friday 13th June  
TERM 3 - Friday 6th September  
TERM 4 - Friday 7th November  
FAMILY DAY - Sunday 30th November (To be Confirmed)
At the commencement of the year the whole College Staff Professional Development Program included two sessions with Dr. Anita HEISS; Author, Social Commentator and Poet. Dr. Anita Heiss was invited to speak to all staff regarding a number of topics including her own personal journey as a Wiradjuri woman, Cultural Identity in contemporary contexts, language and identity, curriculum and accessing authentic Indigenous Resources for the Classroom.

During Term 2 a number of staff accessed a professional development opportunity working with Mr. Graeme Mundine, a Bundjalung man, Aboriginal Catholic leader and Elder. Mr. Mundine shared his in depth knowledge of Christ through Culture; Beneath the Surface - including in depth discussion on topics such as the fundamental understandings of Aboriginal Spirituality, prayer and worship, biblical scriptures, creation stories and accessing quality teaching resources.
Search over 300 scholarships available to Australian Indigenous Students for undergraduate study at Australian universities as well as more than 100 postgraduate scholarships for study in Australia and overseas.

Learn more about how to search for scholarships, how to apply, and where to get more information on getting a scholarship and other support options available at non-university educational institutions. In addition to the scholarships specifically the site has other equity and merit-based scholarships which Indigenous students are encouraged to apply for.
Patron’s Day 2014

“I really enjoyed performing the welcome dance on Patrons Day and it was very good that we all got together and celebrated and welcomed all the campuses. I liked how we learned how to do the dance so we can pass it on to our children, and they onto their children.”

Jemmya Keys Year 6

“It made me feel proud to do this dance because it is an Aboriginal dance.”

Hunter Kirwan Year 2

“I loved it because I knew I was showing everyone how special and important my culture is.”

Tylah David Year 5

“I liked the dance because it was welcoming our 4 campuses together. It was what Aboriginal people did when they welcome all people together.”

Eva Kirwan Year 4

PAINTING MY STORY THROUGH ART....Tyreece Relph Year 7

Every Thursday I work with Ms. McMurtric for Cultural Lessons. This term we designed and painted Skateboard Decks.

We talked about where my mob was from, my culture, my identity and what it means to me. I have both Aboriginal and South Sea Islander heritage which is why I chose to paint the background blue, this is the ocean. The black lines are the waves on the ocean. The brown and red earth colours; my Aboriginal culture. In the middle there is a campfire with people sitting around it. The Elders here are telling me stories from long ago.

I love painting during these lessons because I learn more about my culture each time. I am also very excited to start learning how to play the didgeridoo. I designed my skateboard deck and experimented with colours and paint to tell my very own story.

I can’t wait for the next project!
Please mark the following dates on your Calendars:

**Monday 7th July** - Traditional Dance Performance Lasallian Youth Gathering

**Friday 25th July** - BushTucker Garden Opening Breakfast, De La Salle Campus
   (Traditional Dance Performance)

**Friday 25th July** - Beatty Clan Crew Torres Strait Islander Dance Performance
   (After School, De La Salle Campus, Homework Club)

**Sunday 27th July** - COLLEGE OPEN DAY 10am-2pm

**Monday 28th July** - Murri Medical and Dental Check Ups (On-Site)

**Wednesday 30th July** - Murri Medical and Dental Check Ups (On-Site)

**Monday 11th August** - Redcliffe Show Day (NO HOMEWORK CLUB)

**Friday 15th August** - Bangarra Dance Theatre Performance “Patyegarang”

**Friday 5th September** - ICPC Community Meeting

**Friday 8th September** - Last Homework Club Session Term 3

**Friday 8th September** - End of Deadly Reading Challenge, Homework Club

**Monday 13th October** - Homework Club Recommences - Term 4

**Friday 17th October** - Brisbane Catholic Education Indigenous Graduation Mass

**Monday 17th November** - Homework Club Finishes

**Sunday 30th November** - Family Day (To Be Confirmed)

A new piece of artwork, produced by Artist Debbie Taylor in consultation with Ms. McMurtrie is now proudly displayed next to the De La Salle Bush Tucker Garden Space. The special plaque has been created to display a statement regarding our College’s Acknowledgement and Recognition of our Nation’s First People and the Land where our College stands. As the plaque proudly states:

"May the stories, knowledge, wisdom and culture shared on this land unite us as one people in the true spirit of Reconciliation for today, tomorrow and for our future generations."
Walking on Wakka Wakka Country – Year 10 Cultural Immersion REFLECTIONS Term 1 2014

In the last week of Term 1, 30 Year 10 students were selected to participate on a Cultural Immersion experience where they travelled to Wakka Wakka Country for 3 days and 2 nights. Students visited the community of Cherbourg, The Bunya Mountains and camped at the Barambah Environmental Education Centre. Wakka Wakka Country is the Aboriginal name given to this region. The students chose to share their personal reflections with the rest of the De La Salle Campus during the Campus Assembly. The following is an extract of what was shared and presented by the Year 10 Students.

Reader: To commence our presentation I am going to read a quotation to you that Ms. McMurtrie shared with us on our Immersion during our Yarning Circle Reflections.

“Aboriginal people are familiar with the power of story. Our culture is shaped around stories, our history transmitted through them. Stories spoken from the heart hold transformational power, they are a way for one heart to speak to another. They are a means of sharing knowledge, experience and emotion. A story spoken from the heart can pierce you, become a part of you and change the way you see yourself and the world. Listening to a heart story is a way of showing respect, a silent acknowledgement of what the speaker has lived through and where they have come from. Stories can also transform the speaker. Sharing the past can ease old pains, soothe deep hurts and remind you of old joys, hopes and dreams”.

Reader: On our immersion experience we heard many stories that have had a great impact upon each and every one of us. We firstly travelled to the Bunya Mountains and listened to Uncle Eric speak of the significance and sacredness of this area to his people, the Wakka Wakka people, the traditional custodians of this land. He spoke passionately about this land and explained that this place is likened to what the Vatican means to the Roman Catholics. It is the heart of his people and that is why it is so important and sacred. Uncle further explained it to be a place of deep meaning and inspiration to his people. He also told us stories about his totem, the Carpet Snake and about nature. These and the many other stories we heard during the immersion are the stories that have pierced our hearts.

Reader: We explored a place known as The Ration Shed. This was a moving experience where we visited the small community known as Cherbourg. We had the opportunity to speak with local community people such as Aunty Ada. This is where we learned that all that is written in textbooks is nothing in comparison to going into Aboriginal communities and hearing the personal stories face to face. Aunty Ada shared her story of living in such harsh conditions and having every aspect of her life, and the lives of her family, completely controlled. One thing that really amazed us was that Aunty Ada did not focus upon the mistreatment, but instead, spoke of her determination, resilience and pride in her culture and her hopes for her children’s future. Her message that resounded with all of us was that “the key to life is Education and that Education equals Freedom”. She is such an inspiring and strong woman. I will never forget these stories.

Reader: We then travelled to a camp facility known as Barambah or A-Flat. This is where we bunked down for 2 nights. At Barambah, we had a very full schedule of many cultural activities including Boomerang and spear throwing, traditional fire making, shelter making, bushwalking, bush Tucker, camp fires, yarning circles, learning Aboriginal stories through the stars, Aboriginal art, learning about native plants, revegetation and what it really means to give back to Country. These experiences gave us a glimpse into how Aboriginal people not only survived for thousands of years, but lived a nourishing and plentiful life on and with the land. We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Ms. McMurtrie, Ms. Freeman, Ms. Smith and Phil for taking us on this amazing and memorable experience. One that we will never forget.

Reader: To conclude our presentation, we would like to mention the importance of personal reflection and our Yarning Circles during our immersion experience. We focussed upon how to carry forward what we have learned and how we can do this through our Head our Hearts and our Hands. Today we have shared only a small amount of knowledge with you that has touched our hearts. Ms. McMurtrie taught us of the cultural significance of Message Sticks and how they were used to convey messages between tribes and communities. And so today we would like to present Mr. Myers with our own Message Sticks which bring back stories of our journey on Wakka Wakka to share with our Southern Cross community. Each piece of artwork has been created by the students and staff of the year 10 immersion as a reminder of the great lessons we have learned, the experiences we have enjoyed and the many stories that have touched our hearts.

Reader: We would like to thank our teachers for this great opportunity to participate in such a valuable learning experience that will have a lasting impact upon each and every one of us. As one student said “the stories that were shared and the experiences gained have changed my way of thinking and will influence my future actions. I have a deeper understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture, people and communities”.
During the Year 10 Cultural Immersion to Wakka Wakka Country each student and staff member created a piece of artwork in the form of a Message Stick. Ms. McMurtrie taught us of the cultural significance of Message Sticks and how they were used to convey messages between tribes and communities. When we returned to school, we shared our immersion experiences at Campus Assembly and presented Mr. Myers and Mr. O’Connor with this framed artwork. This art is a way to for us to bring back stories of our journey and to share stories with our peers. When we look at the Message Sticks we are reminded of the great lessons we learned, the experiences we enjoyed, the friendships we made and the many stories that have touched our hearts. This artwork is now proudly displayed in our De La Salle Library for all to see and enjoy. We thank Ms. McMurtrie for creating this design with our Message Sticks.

Year 10 Cultural Immersion Students 2014