

The Wheeler Word



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Term 4 Week 7

Thursday 26 Nov 2020

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people of the Gai-maraigal and Garigal land as they are the true caretakers of this land. Underneath all the concrete and buildings this land is, and always will be theirs.

Erin W – Year 6

ABORIGINAL IMMERSION DAYS

What a fabulous two days we have just had with the Aboriginal Immersion experience. All students participated in Dance, Artefact making, Yarning & Story-telling and contributed to our new school mural located outside the Year 3/4 rooms. Special thanks to Uncle Dennis, Ben, Rheese and Sheridan who were such outstanding teachers and role models this week. A huge thank you to Mrs Wright for coordinating this amazing event and ensuring we were able to reschedule it so late in the year. One of the many highlights was Harrison A from 2S expertly playing the didgeridoo (or didjeridu) to the whole K-2 audience, and everyone being so proud of him!

Please have a good talk with your children to see what was their highlight of the day.



EX STUDENTS AT CROMER HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations to ex-students Emily Fokkens (CAPA Captain) & Alex Williams (Well Being Captain) who have been elected to leadership positions at Cromer HS for 2021.

PRESENTATION DAYS 2020

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 regulations and after discussion with other local primary schools, no parents will be permitted to attend our Presentation Days. The Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 Presentation assemblies will occur on Thursday 10 December and the Kindy, Year 1 and 2 assemblies will be on Friday 11 December.

All assemblies will be recorded and a link will be sent to all school families so that they can watch and share the events with family and friends.

YEAR 6 FAREWELL – Monday 14 December 5:50pm-8pm

Details are being finalised for the Year 6 Farewell and Graduation. It is very pleasing that the evening farewell for the students will be able to go ahead with suitable COVID-19 regulations and guidelines. Unfortunately, parents will only be able to drop off and collect their children from the event. More details will soon be available for Year 6 families.

YEAR 6 GRADUATION – Wednesday 16 December

Year 6 will have their Graduation assembly in the school hall. The event will be recorded and available to Year 6 families. Unfortunately no parents will be able to attend.

YEAR 6 CLAP OUT - Wednesday 16 December 2:45pm-3pm

We do still plan to have the Year 6 Clap out with the classes from Years K-6 safely spread around the school grounds. Year 6 will then proceed to the Rose Avenue gate and be met by their parents just before the bell. We do hope that parents will respect the guidelines and quickly disperse from the area.

YEAR 5 LEADERSHIP

Our Year 5 Leadership candidates presented their speeches today to Year 5 and by a recording to classes from Years 2-4. We have a very fine group of boys and girls who have been nominated. After the voting this week, the ten elected representatives for 2021 will be informed before the specific captains, vice captains and prefects are announced on Presentation Day. An induction assembly involving parents will take place early next year.

KINDERGARTEN 2021

Our four Transition mornings are now finished. Parents will soon receive an email with specific information regarding next year's Kindergarten Best Start assessment arrangements.

2020 DATES

Thurs 26 Nov Yr 5 Leadership speeches

Fri 27 Nov 9:30-10:30am Uniform Shop open for Kindy 2021 enrolments near the Admin office

Year 5 Surf Ed Day

Mon 30 Nov – Wed 2 Dec
Yr 4 Camp @ Milson Island

Tues 1 Dec Yr 6 High School Orientation Day

Thurs 10 Dec Yrs 3-6 Presentation Assemblies - no parents to attend

Fri 11 Dec K-2 Presentation Assembly - no parents to attend

Mon 14 Dec Yr 6 Farewell Dinner

Wed 16 Dec Yr 6 Graduation & Clap Out

Last school day of 2020

2021 DATES

Wed 27 & Thurs 28 Jan School Development Days - Staff only

Fri 29 Jan Years 1-6 start school & Kindy Best Start

Thurs 4 Feb Kindy start – TBC

Thurs 1 April Last Day of Term 1

Term 2 Tues 20 April - Fri 25 Jun

Term 3 Tues 13 July - Fri 17 Sept

Term 4 Tues 5 Oct - Thurs 16 Dec

Our wonderful team of volunteers will again be having a Pop-Up Uniform Shop near the school office tomorrow from 9:30am to 10:30am. New school families may be able to visit and purchase school uniforms. Due to COVID-19 regulations we hope that only new families come along and current siblings continue to purchase online using Flexischools. We do now have a new group set up for uniform purchases on Flexischools called Kindy 2021.

Special thanks to Uniform Shop Co Ordinator Holly and volunteers Melissa, Elisa and Kathy who assisted so well last week.

2021 START OF SCHOOL DATES

The Department of Education has released the official school dates for 2021. Please be advised that from next year there will be two Staff Development Days at the start of Term 1 and only one at the end of Term 4. Please see the amended dates on the calendar on this front page.

CLASS ORGANISATION 2021

We are currently beginning to form draft classes for 2021 now that our Kindy enrolments have been confirmed.

If you will not be returning to Wheeler Hts PS next year could you please inform your class teacher or the office so that we can plan accordingly. At this stage we hope to have 19 classes for 2021.

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS

The State Government and the Department of Education have updated COVID-19 arrangements for Term 4. The table below outlines the latest changes and updates to events for Term 4.

David Scotter
Principal

COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS

Currently these are the arrangements as at 26/11/2020

Canteen will continue with online orders for recess & lunch. There will be no over the counter sales at this stage.

Uniform Shop - orders online at this stage. No over the counter sales. Kindergarten 2021 have another opportunity to purchase uniforms tomorrow, November 27 from 9:30am-10:30am.

Presentation Day Assemblies - on a grade basis with no parents to attend. Assemblies will be recorded and made available to school families.

Kindergarten 2021 Tours/Case Conferences - only when specifically required.

Extra cleaning and hygiene practices will continue in Term 4

All providers of special programs (Band tutors, Ballroom Dance, Gymnastics etc.) will provide an updated Department form regarding safe working practices.

All rooms will have hand sanitiser and tissues available at all times.

Non-essential parents and visitors are still NOT to enter the school premises.

Mrs Wright's Wrap Up

Warami

(Hello – greeting)

Murra murrong byali

(It's a matter of honour to speak)

Murra murrong ti anaga-anaga

(It's a matter of honour to walk)

Gai-maraigal goori pemul

(on Gai-maraigal peoples' land)

(Greeting in Gai-maraigal language kindly shared by Uncle Dennis Foley)

Wheeler Heights Public School proudly sits on Gai-maraigal country and this week we were so fortunate to be immersed in Aboriginal culture and Gai-maraigal creation stories.

Uncle Dennis Foley (Gai-maraigal Elder, Professor – University of Canberra),

Sheridan Bird (Wiradjuri woman, local Aboriginal artist),

Rheese McMinn (Darug and Gubbi Gubbi man, Gurrawin Group Aboriginal educator and performer), and

Ben Kitchener (Dharawal and Wiradjuri man, Gurrawin Group Aboriginal educator)

kindly shared their knowledge and culture with our students and teachers over the two days and what an experience this was! Children in Years 3 to 6 completed workshops on Tuesday and Kindergarten to Year 2 students participated on Wednesday.

We started each day with our students presenting their *Acknowledgement of Country* (Isaac P, Maya R and Harry A). This was written at the beginning of Term 1, when our Year 6 student leaders and Aboriginal students participated in a workshop to understand the significance of Country to Aboriginal people. Uncle Dennis Foley responded to this with a *Welcome to Gai-maraigal Country* in language and Ben and Rheese performed the smoking ceremony including leaves from trees within our school. Uncle Dennis explained the significance of the *Welcome to Country* and that the smoke from the leaves was connecting us all to the Gai-maraigal Country and culture. Next, students rotated in grade groups to a number of differing activities. *The children were placed in groups with names of four Gai-maraigal totems: Woyan Group (Ravens), Gar-ra-way Group (Sulphur crested cockatoo), Wulaba Group (Red-rumped wallaby), and Bunburra Group (Small lizard).*

Gai-maraigal creation story telling by Uncle Dennis Foley

Being able to listen to creation stories of the Gai-maraigal people was such a great honour for us all. Uncle Dennis explained that he had been told these stories by his grandparents and they had heard from theirs. He told the children that as he is sharing the stories with them, they can now pass them on and are connected and are part of the sharing of culture with future generations.

With our older students Uncle Dennis shared his experiences as a child of the Stolen Generation. His deeply moving recollections were responded to with many questions from our respectful students. We thank Uncle Dennis for sharing these deeply personal and sad stories with our students which provide them with an understanding of history in our country from a personal perspective.



With our new sport houses being a large focus this year, Uncle Dennis kindly shared the creation stories of these birds and discussed their significance to the Gai-maraigal people.



Guma kuma – Musk Lorikeet

Guma kuma was once a pigeon, a very drab, grey pigeon. It used to eat grass seeds on the ground and over time its body was stained by the green grass. When the grass seeds ran out, it needed to learn to fly and when it did it flew up into the trees and was amongst the green leaves in the trees. Again, this green colour stained its feathers. Whilst it was high up in the trees, the yellow of the sun was transferred onto some of its feathers also. As the grass seeds had run out Guma kuma needed to find new food. It started to eat native blue berries from the spikey shrub. When it would try to eat the berries a blue tongue lizard at the base of the shrub would hiss at Guma kuma and scare it. When scared and trying to get away Guma kuma pulled its head quickly and some of the spikes struck around its face causing it to bleed. That is how the red appeared on its face. The blue of the berries stained the top of Guma kuma's head creating the vibrant blue flash they now have on their heads. Uncle Dennis explained Guma kuma is a placid kind and pretty bird that is important to Gai-maraigal people as it links to the women spirit in the trees. Sadly Guma kuma have been eaten out of the area and it is very rare for them to be seen.

Dyaramak (pronounced Dere-a-mak) – Sacred Kingfisher



Before people were here kookaburras inhabited the land. With climate change it became harder for kookaburras to find food. Due to this, kookaburra babies didn't grow as well and some kookaburras became very small. This lack of food meant the small kookaburra had to find new food sources. It started to eat blue berries and got quite a sweet tooth. It used its long beak to peck up into the shrub to get the berries and the squished berries falling down stained its feathers the beautiful blue colour we see today and the sacred kingfisher – Dyaramak was created. This is a story of diversity. In times of change one eats whatever is available. The message of this story is to understand what is edible and what you should not eat. Dyaramak are very common to our area. They hunt for their food in the creeks and sides of the lagoons. Male and female Dyaramak mate for life and are special to Gai-maraigal people because they are amazing parents. They have taught people how to be good parents and how to build a strong bond with their children. Dyaramak fight off danger and protect their young at all costs.

Leo P loved hearing Uncle Dennis explain creation stories. He found the stories entertaining but really loved the messages within them and how they explained how things began.

Mural artwork with Sheriden Bird



Every student in the school participated in creating an incredible mural on the wall outside 3Y and 4RO classrooms. Sheriden spent many hours creating the design, based on our new sport house mascots - Dyaramak and Guma kuma - as shared by Uncle Dennis. She worked closely with Uncle Dennis to ensure the mural was authentic, appropriate and respectful. I'm sure you will agree the final product is not only amazing but extremely important and integral to connecting the culture to our school and it is a wonderful educational experience for our students.

Sheriden provided an explanation of her interpretation of her artwork, please see her words below.

The story of the kingfisher and the lorikeet as told by me.

The lorikeet and kingfisher are competitors, they both strive to be the best, the fastest. They fly high into the sky, skimming along waterways, zipping through bush. Kingfisher is faster around water. Lorikeet is faster in the bush. Soaring into the sky they rise to the same height. They acknowledge each other's abilities and realise that together they are equal and a firm friendship is made. This doesn't stop them trying to be faster, trying to outdo the other, it's the fun of competition. The centre symbol of the mural, starts in the small circle with a child and an adult. There are three more circles and a group of people meeting. This symbolises community. Kingfisher and lorikeet respect community and healthy competition.

This story is mine, it is not taken from a book or person, it is my interpretation of the art. Sheriden Bird November 2020



We were lucky this week to have Millie L visiting us for work experience from Northern Beaches Secondary College – Mackellar Girls Campus. Millie along with Isaac, Kyah and Mackenzie assisted Sheriden throughout the second day. Sheriden wanted me to thank these students as she greatly appreciated their assistance.

Artefact-making demonstration with Ben Kitchener

Just wow! Throughout the two days Ben conducted interactive workshops and made six coolamons from trees within our school. He did this with the assistance of some of our students. Ben explained some of the many and varied uses for a coolamon and how Aboriginal people have been using the land effectively for thousands of years. Prior to taking the coolamon from the tree he conducted a blessing and thanked the tree for providing for us. At the end of the day Uncle Dennis visited the trees and covered their wounds in ochre. He again blessed the trees and thanked them for educating our students and providing resources for us to use. This process wasn't only educational it was also greatly moving. With some of our younger students, Ben displayed traditional tools and explained their uses. Aboriginal people think creatively about using resources wisely and sustainably and learning about these resources was truly inspirational.

When asked what his favourite part of the day was Harry A said it was so hard to choose because he loved them all so much! He then said his favourite part had to be making the coolamon. He explained that It looks so different on the tree to when it's done.

Aurora H really liked watching Ben make coolamons from trees in our playground. She liked the creativity, smart thinking and how useful they are. She really liked how respectful it is.





Dance workshops with Rheese McMinn

Not only is Rheese a very talented and knowledgeable Aboriginal dancer and educator he is also highly engaging. Every grade was taught a welcome dance, a farewell dance and a creation dance. Rheese also spent time sharing knowledge of his culture and answering many thoughtful questions from our students. Rheese was impressed by the behaviour of our students but mostly by their interest and thirst for knowledge. Isaac P enjoyed everything about the day but he especially enjoyed the dancing workshop because he felt connected to what they were doing and to country and enjoyed the meaning behind the dances and how he felt spiritually connected to the land. If your children haven't already performed for you, make sure you ask them to! You won't be disappointed!



Uncle Dennis, Ben, Rheese and Sheriden all commented on our students and how engaged and respectful they were throughout the two days. They also complimented our wonderful teachers for their interest and commitment to their student's learning. We make a great team at Wheeler Heights Public School and this feedback is not surprising but lovely to hear.

We finished off the day with a farewell concert performed by Ben and Rheese and a farewell message from Uncle Dennis. Sheriden presented the school with a dillybag she had woven. This will be displayed in the office and is greatly appreciated. On the second day, a highlight and extremely moving moment was when Harry A played his own digeridoo with Ben, Rheese and Uncle Dennis singing with him. Emmerson P was so excited to see Harry A playing the digeridoo. She said it was really nice seeing someone from her school being so clever and playing so well. Our Aboriginal students from Kindy to Year 2 presented our student written *Acknowledgement of Country* books to all visiting presenters. This was a small token of our thanks for the immense experience of knowledge, insight and understanding of Aboriginal culture they provided to us. We thank Uncle Dennis, Ben, Rheese and Sheriden so very much and are greatly looking forward to inviting them all back next year for another important and significant experience.



Yanu
(see you later)

(Gai-maraigal language kindly shared by Uncle Dennis Foley)

Mrs Priscilla Wright
Assistant Principal
Instructional Leader

EAGLE TAG GALA DAY

Last Thursday the Junior and Senior Eagle Tag teams made their way to North Narrabeen Reserve to compete in the highly anticipated NRL Eagle Tag Gala Day. As we arrived and began to set up the gazebo, Mrs Miller mentioned that it was a “dangerous day to be a tube of sunscreen”. She was right. The weather gods had turned up the temperature and it was going to be hot! “More sunscreen” was definitely the most spoken play throughout the day.



As both teams started to arrive a genuine buzz was sweeping around the Wheeler Heights gazebo. After a few warm up stretches lead by Mrs Miller, it was game time. Both Mrs Miller and I spoke to our teams before kick-off. It was a short, but powerful conversation about competing as a team and in the Wheeler spirit. As the bell for kick off rang across the field I left the teams with this last bit of advice, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”. Each team represented Wheeler Heights to the best of their abilities. They showed fantastic levels of sportsmanship and should be extremely proud of their efforts throughout the day.



Mr Jeffery & Mrs Miller
Eagle Tag Coordinators



JOIN OUR BAND IN 2021

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST NOW OPEN!

Are you interested in joining the school's fun & successful band program next year? We welcome any child in Years 3-6 in 2021 to join our band program STARTING TERM 1 2021.

More Info [CLICK HERE](#)

Register your interest [HERE](#)



FUNDRAISING NEWS



Fundraising Team Coordinators Wanted

Do you like to arrange functions, events or social occasions?

Wheeler Heights P&C needs you!

Whether an individual or a team, the P&C needs help to coordinate the fundraising for the school. You don't need to reinvent the wheel as there is a program of events in place, similarly there is always room for new ideas to bloom.

Contact the P&C President Paul Hardy or if you wish to have a chat to the outgoing team, they would be more than happy to have a chat with you and provide support along the way 🐱

whps.fundraising@gmail.com

2020 Tea Towels

4 Weeks Till Christmas

A keepsake of your Child's year, the perfect gift to send overseas to family or environmentally friendly wrapping paper!

Thank you to all the families who have purchased additional or a first time order of our personalised 2020 Tea Towels.

We have reduced the price and in these unprecedented times, this year is not about raising lots of money for our school but is about continuing to offer these events and feel good opportunities for our school community. Again, we hope that you will help us to ensure that these remaining tea towels get put to good use as they are a really lovely and quality keepsake.

Tea Towels can still be purchased for \$10 via the TryBooking link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/BJKMP>

Or please email WHPS.fundraising.com if you would like to pay cash.

