

# RECOUNTING OUR YEAR OF CULTURE



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Class  
Lavington Public School



## CREATIVE CATCHMENT KIDS

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

**[www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/](http://www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## WIRRAMINNA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

**[www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)**

## ENVIRO-STORIES

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

**[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

# RECOUNTING OUR YEAR OF CULTURE

**Authors:** Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Class

**Teacher:** Frank Calabria

**School:** Lavington Public School

In 2017, students from Lavington Public School's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander class were involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program. Each week they participated in a cultural lesson to learn more about their culture. This book recounts many of the experiences that the students had throughout the year. The program was generously funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Creative Catchment Kids is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and thank them for sharing their knowledge and culture with us.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images and/or names of people who have since passed away.



© 2017 Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre, [www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)

Design by PeeKdesigns, [www.peakdesigns.com.au](http://www.peakdesigns.com.au)

Additional photos provided by Kelly Coleman (2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15),

Cassie Leatham (5, 12, 16) and Velta Fellowes (14).

# OUR TRIP TO WIRRAMINNA

We took a bus to Wirraminna to learn about Aboriginal culture and about nature. When we arrived we were greeted by the teacher out there. His name is Owen and he taught us so much.

The first thing we did was a ghost hunt about animals that used to live there. They were hiding everywhere. We had little maps to help us find the animals.

The second thing we did was look at water bugs. We sucked them into a special tool and then put them into a magnifying glass. The water bugs we looked at were Yabbies, baby yabbies, blood worms, dragonfly nymphs that looked like aliens, backswimmers and water scorpions.

In the afternoon we looked at corroboree frogs. Corroboree frog's skin are poisonous to other animals but if we touch it we might kill it.

The other activity was looking at plants. One plant was kangaroo grass. The seeds were harvested, separated and ground into flour using grinding stones. Then it was made to make damper!

We loved our trip to Wirraminna and we learnt much more about nature and Aboriginal culture.

*By Lezley and Matilda*





## NAIDOC DAY

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Australia and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in the range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself. Find out more about the origins and history of NAIDOC Week.

Each year, a different city hosts the National NAIDOC Awards Ceremony. Local community celebrations during NAIDOC Week are encouraged and often organised by communities, government agencies, local councils, schools and workplaces.

*By Savannah, Picture by Latoya*

# NATIVE PLANTS

Did you know some bush tucker is very sour and some is quite sweet? Plants were also used by Aboriginal people as medicine.

We are creating a bush tucker garden at Lavington Public School. We are growing plants like silver wattle, banksia, Eucalyptus and finger limes. I have really enjoyed creating this garden.



## **BANKSIAS**

Banksias (Hairpin) are a really interesting plants. The flowers are used for making cordial. When you soak the flowers in water you get a sweet drink. Delicious!



## **MELALEUCA**

The young leaves of Melaleuca trees (Paperbarks) were chewed to deal with pain from headaches often caused by the hot sun.



## **BRACKEN FERN**

By crushing the soft ends of the stem of the Bracken Fern and rubbing it on the skin, you can relieve pain from animals. The part found underground can be eaten but the leaves are quite poisonous.

*By Nikita, Karla and Klaire*

# BUSH TUCKER PLANTS

We have created an indigenous plant garden which has plants that were used as medicines, foods and other resources by the Aboriginal people. Here are three of the plants that are now in our garden.

## LILY PILLY

The Lilly Pilly is a popular native bush tucker plant. It has reddish purple fruits. You can eat berries raw or you can make jams and syrups with the fruits.



## ANISEED MYRTLE

In our garden, we also planted Aniseed Myrtle. When eaten, it helps you go to the toilet if you are blocked up.



## BANKSIA

The banksia has large flowers sometimes called 'candles'. The nectar from the flowers were mixed with water and made into a drink which is a bit like cordial. The candles were also used as a hair brush for Aboriginal women.





This term we learnt more about our culture. It was really fun when Cassie came to teach us some more things from our culture. Each Thursday we have our ATSI lessons. My favourite thing about my culture is I don't need a fishing licence to go fishing.

Over the past month we've been building an indigenous bush tucker garden at the back of our school. The bush tucker garden includes foods such as lilly pilli, banksia and myrtle. Lilly pillies have pink fruits that you make jam with. You make cordial with the nectar from banksias, also called birthday candles. Aniseed myrtle is used for people when they are constipated.

*By Kiesha*







This year we have been learning about our culture.

We have been learning about different tribes, throwing boomerangs, learning about native plants, learning about native animal, painting and traditional ways of living.

My favourite activity this past year was when we went boomerang throwing and also when we did painting with David Dunn.

We've also been learning in our garden. We have been planting many different bush food plants including Banksia and Silver wattle and the Lilly Pilly which can be made into sweet jams.

We also had NAIDOC day on in Term 3. On NAIDOC Day we participated in many cultural activities including boomerang throwing, bush shelter making, an Aboriginal tools session and traditional painting. We also got to make Johnny Cakes with flour and water and we had to cook them. After that we got to eat them with butter and golden syrup. That was fun.

I hope we can continue to learn more about our Aboriginal culture.

*By Karla*



This is year we learnt about our Aboriginal culture.

On Thursday mornings, we meet up as group to find information on bush foods, tools, painting, Dreaming stories and boomerangs.

I have learnt about the environment by making a native garden.

We have had visitors in our school to show us how to paint traditional pictures, about the environment, animal clothing and how to catch an eel.

We have been on an excursion to Wirraminna. We went for walks around the lagoon to find the ghost animals.

I love coming to this group as it helps me learn more about Aboriginal culture and each other.

*By Kaiden*



# HOW TO THROW A BOOMERANG

This year we learnt how to throw a 'returning' boomerang. A returning boomerang is much smaller and lighter than a hunting boomerang and was not used to hunt for animals.

This year I have had the opportunity to teach the school how to throw a boomerang. Then I got the opportunity to teach them about some of the tools Aboriginal people used. I taught others what they were used for and how the Aboriginals used them.

*By David*

## STEPS TO THROWING A RETURNING BOOMERANG

1. Hold the boomerang so that the curved face is facing you.
2. Your hand should be at the end of the boomerang curve.
3. Put both hands up above your head pointing to 12 o'clock.
4. Keep the boomerang up high and aim to throw on an angle between 1 and 2 o'clock (the angle of an analog clock).
5. Use your arm mainly from the elbow to throw. Flick your wrist when letting go. Hopefully the boomerang will return!

*By Anthony*

# HOW TO USE OCHRE ROCKS FOR PAINTING

## YOU NEED:

- Water
- 2 Ochre Rocks

## STEPS:

- Pour a little amount of water on one ochre rock
- Rub the 2 together hard so the ochre comes off
- Dip your finger in the ochre that is now paint
- Use extra water if needed
- Paint your skin using Aboriginal pattern

You can also paint on paper or paper-bark or other natural materials.

*By David*





## DAVID DUNN

Last term we had an indigenous painter come to our school. He showed us a technique called silhouette painting. We got lots of photos taken and we all had so much fun.

To do silhouette painting you need three main types of colours - black, yellow and red.

We first created a sunset with red and yellow paint blended together and let it dry. To do the black silhouette figures on your canvas you have to use a thin paint brush to create the shapes.

So if you ever want to do this type of painting you're welcome to ask any of the ATSI children at Lavington Public School and we'd love to help.

*By Bonnie*



## BUSH HUTS

Bush huts were, and still are, getting used by Aboriginals to this very day. Bush huts get used in camps, near rivers and even lakes. Bush huts are usually made of wood, sticks, bark and rope. These bush huts are very important to Aboriginal people and are very special to their culture. Aboriginal people use bush huts for many purposes such as shelter for living and storing food.

Here at school, the whole school got a chance to make a mini bush hut. The bush hut had to go through 2 stages. First, our teacher poured water on the bush huts to see if it stopped rain getting through. If it passed, you go to the next test. The next test was to see if it stood up to wind. One of our teachers tried to blow it down. If it passed, your bush hut was a success.

*By Shinaye*



Today I was burning wood with Mr C. I was burning the wood with a magnifying glass. First I drew a coral snake on the wood. As I burnt, I traced the pattern of the snake. Next I will put more detail on it.

I get to do planting in Aboriginal lessons. Some of the plants tell me about my Aboriginal culture as many were used for different things like food, medicine and tools.

*By John*





## CASSIE LEATHAM CAME TO OUR SCHOOL

In Term 2, Cassie came to our school to teach us her culture and to show us her aboriginal tools and bush foods.

Cassie taught us what the tools do and how to use them. She also taught us what bush tucker is and how to use it.

Cassie had many stories about her life as an Aboriginal person. Her dad taught her many things about aboriginal culture. One thing that stood out was when she was initiated and she had to be cut during a ceremony. She still has a scar from this.

Cassie let us feel her possum skin blanket and pillow and showed us her hunting boomerang and her toy boomerang.

*By Harry and Josh*





## SONG FOR CASSIE

Sassy Cassie, blood is pouring, from your heart, cut with a blade,  
Sassy Cassie you save the creatures and bring them back.

Sassy Cassie you're the one.

Sassy Cassie, blood is pouring, from your heart, cut with a blade,  
Sassy Cassie you save the creatures and bring them back.

Sassy Cassie you turn the coffee into some toffee.  
Sassy Cassie you're the one.

Sassy Cassie you're the one.  
Sassy Cassie you're the one.

Blood is pouring from your heart, Sassy Cassie you mould my heart; you  
turn the dead into creature comfort.

Sassy Cassie you're the one, you dive on in to the cultural world, the  
cultural world, you turn the dangers into the fun.

Sassy Cassie you're the one, you're the ONE.

*By Shinaye*





## WATTLE SEED DAMPER

Wattle seed was a staple food (important food) for the Aboriginal people. It contains many nutrients such as protein and carbohydrates that provide energy to our bodies. We can make a type of damper using wattle seed. Here is how to do it.

1. Crush the wattle seed into a fine dust
2. Mix until you get a gooey mixture
3. Place in the oven at about 180 degrees
4. Take out of the oven and let cool down for 20 minutes
5. Spread maple syrup on the damper
6. Eat! And enjoy

*By Dom*

## Operation: Engagement

In 2017, Lavington Public School began a project called Operation: Engagement. This project aimed to ensure that supports are provided to complement schooling, and may include mentoring programs, project based learning, services from the community into the school, individual case management support and tutoring to build skills in areas such as literacy or numeracy.

We then developed a partnership with Petaurus Education Group who assisted us to connect with Indigenous groups within the Albury network. I am delighted this support will continue in 2018 and allow our students to benefit from more cultural experiences. The student flourished throughout these experiences creating memories and sharing in experiences they will never forget.

I am incredibly proud of my staff and students involved in this project. To witness the quality of the final product is a fitting reflection of the student and staff contributions to make it happen.

**Brett Davies**  
**PRINCIPAL**



# Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and  
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the  
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

