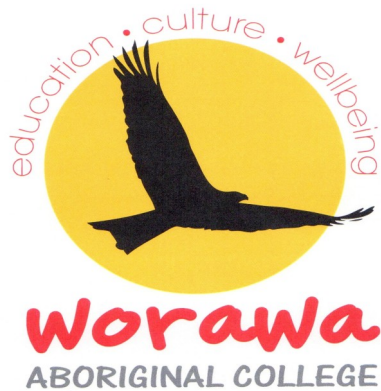


# Worawa Aboriginal College



**TERM 3 2011**

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# newsletter

### **Worawa Debutante Ball**

On 26 August, twelve Worawa students were partnered by boys from partner schools, Scotch College and Luther College to make their debut at the Worawa Debutante Ball. The ball was part of a broader suite of activities under the College's Pathways to Womanhood program which is aimed at supporting young women to understand the transition to womanhood, to build self-esteem and prepare them to take their place as leaders in their own communities as well as in the broader community. The students who made their debut come from remote and regional Aboriginal communities including Titjikala, Yuendumu, Ilpeye Ilpeye, Epenarra, Darwin and Wagga Wagga. Parents travelled from home communities to see their daughters make their debut.

We are grateful for the support of the students and families from both Scotch College and Luther College for partnering the girls. In the lead up to the event, the boys gave up their Sunday afternoons for dance rehearsals with Gail and Andrew Elliott. The rehearsals were conducted in a fun, social setting which enabled the boys and girls to get acquainted and to build respectful relationships.

Over 200 guests enjoyed the evening. We are grateful for the support of pianist Luca Stamatescu who provided a delightful musical interlude on the baby grand piano as guests took their places. We were delighted to have ex Bangarra dancer Rheannan Port perform and the very talented Rachel Maza as MC.

The Worawa Debutante Ball was planned to coincide with the 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the first Aboriginal Debutante Ball held 26 August, 1949 at a time before Aboriginal people were counted as Australian citizens. There are six surviving participants of the 26 debutantes from the 1949 event, two of the male partners and two flower girls. All attended the Worawa event and were honoured guests. We thank the organising committee, and in particular the committee Chair, Ronda Held. The Worawa Debutante Ball was supported by the Yarra Ranges Council, Anchor Inc, EACH, St Paul's Lutheran Church, Tiara Project, Healesville Living and Learning Centre, Scotch College, Luther College, photographer, Tim Suke, Fosters Group, Linfox and all who contributed to making it a very special and memorable evening.

A segment of the Deb Ball was shown on the 7.30 Report on Channel 2 and can be viewed on the internet at:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2011/s3317047.htm>



## Curriculum Happenings

### Literacy

This term in literacy students were encouraged to read and then, read some more. Some students read stories, some read magazines but most popular was the sports section of the newspaper. Some prefer word games and puzzles.

### Method and organization

The Literacy teacher, (Leigh Waters) organizes the lessons so that within a week the girls will have been immersed in all aspects of language development. Writing, reading, listening, questioning, vocabulary, spelling and speaking are all aspects of the current course. These components are covered through various means, so the girls are usually unaware of the machinations of the course.

### Content of the Literacy Course.

Along with many focussed worksheets, the literacy class has been involved in other activities. An orienteering course, which required reading of directions followed by an action was one way reading and comprehending was achieved. A response to photos from Wadey was another writing exercise where the girls wrote responses.

### Highlights and Future

Reading and responding to the prize winning book 'Shake a Leg' by Aboriginal writer, Boori Monty Pryor was a key lesson for the term. Boori Pryor won the Premier's Award for children's fiction. The girls were also introduced to 'Personal Dictionaries' where they recorded words that we frequently use and where they could record their own choice of words for future use.

Looking ahead in literacy we will be consolidating our new techniques and we will also attempt projects, looking at English needed for organizing events, filling in forms and celebrating.

### Numeracy

We have enjoyed thinking about owning a car this term. It was fun fantasising about what kind we would buy, where we could go and what we could do. Then we did the maths! What would it all cost? Registration, insurance, petrol, loan repayments, tyres etc. We compared the costs of buying different cars and different ways to finance the purchase. We worked out a year's costs and were quite surprised. We decided we might have to wait a while for that big 4 wheel drive or Mercedes. We decided that if we were going to learn to drive we needed to know more about alcohol and how it effects driving. The girls learnt about standard drinks. They measured the amount of alcohol in various drinks including light and regular beer, spirits and wine. The girls set up an interesting display about Drink Driving. Blue and Black groups are also to be congratulated on the excellent work they did on Algebra, Decimals and Co-Ordinate Geometry. Likewise Yellow and Red groups applied themselves conscientiously to improving their Measurement, Multiplication and Decimals skills.

### Steve Parrish Photography Workshop

Worawa students participated in a photography workshop led by noted photographer Steve Parish who inspired the students with samples of his work. Steve is incredibly passionate about photography, but also about Indigenous education. One of the highlights of the day was the opportunity for the students to use Steve's cameras to take photographs. These were professional cameras with 10-inch lenses. The highlight was at the end of the day when we met back in the theaterette to look at photos we had taken. Steve announced that today he had come across someone with exceptional skills in photography. He described how difficult it is to capture professional photographs and how a good photo is an expression from your heart. He had been blown away by the ability of Worawa student Daleighla Brock to capture truly professional photographs. Steve talked about Daleighla's ability and displayed her photos for about 10 minutes while Daleighla stood by and flashed her big smile! (while slightly embarrassed).

### Sport/PE

The Dare To Dream Netball Program continued throughout term 3 with fortnightly visits from Bianca and Sarah which are definitely paying off. We have a lot of skilled netballers at Worawa and a lot of girls enthusiastic to keep playing. Our Wednesday basketball teams continued to have good seasons and we managed to get a few wins under our belt. Tuesday lunchtime basketball training has been introduced and is very popular. Girls now know that if they don't train, they don't get a game. Shai Peckham, has been training with the Victorian Softball Academy and will be attending a 5 day softball tournament in Adelaide during the school holidays. In PE we are going to learn to play European Handball and head back to soccer, which the girls love. We are entering a team in the Indigenous Soccer Tournament, to be held in November in Knox.

Next term we start our softball season again which the girls love.

### Science "In Miniature" and CSIRO Visit

The science program this term has involved lots of practicals to explore the "in miniature" theme. Our students have been learning about the differences between animal and plant cells as seen under microscope. They have also learned about the anatomy of flowers, the role of insects in pollination, the process of cell division, the structure and function of DNA and the curriculum was complemented by an end of term visit to the CSIRO education program "Forensic Frenzy".

This program explained how science can be used to solve crimes. Students acted as crime scene detectives looking at a case study examining the sort of evidence that police forensic scientists would. Students were presented with evidence such as fibres found on the body of a victim and on a fence, soil testing, evidence of blood on clothes, tyre tracks, fingerprints, chromatography, dental xrays, ballistics, and witness face identity using computer programs. The students once presented with the evidence had to work through the evidence to solve a crime. Students were encouraged to analyse the evidence they collected and make conclusions about the most likely suspects involved in the crime.

The girls had fun as they were able to experience real world science and its application in the police and legal systems



Shona Goldstraw analyses forensic evidence on the CSIRO 'Forensic Frenzy' education program.

### New Centres for Worawa

We are pleased to announce that the College's funding application to the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) has been approved. The College applied for funds to replace the existing arts learning centre which has outlived its usefulness. The ILC has approved an amount of \$250,000 on the basis of the College securing a funding partner. Long time supporters of the College have agreed to provide the balance of funds to enable the project to proceed. David Norman Architects has been engaged to draw up plans for a purpose built arts learning centre that will be designed to take into account the natural beauty of the Worawa landscape. The College has also submitted an application to the VIS Block Grant Authority for funds to extend the existing science block to include a language learning centre. The VIS BGA have recommended to DEEWR that a grant be made available to the College. A language centre will re-position Worawa as a centre for language and cultural learning and 'fan the flame' of previous language and culture work undertaken at Worawa. The College is also undertaking a project to develop the 'Worawa Heart' an outdoor space that will include a fire pit, a yarning circle and seating between the boarding houses.

### Worawa Heart



The Worawa Heart was designed by Salome Romero, Nicole Anderson and Ruth Redden from the Melbourne School of Design, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning Facilities of Social Sustainability.



Sonia Summerfield and Lana Wells like the swings

### Student Health and Wellbeing

As part of the orientation to the school, Worawa conducts an academic diagnostic assessment, health assessment and wellbeing assessment of incoming students. The health assessment includes hearing and dental tests. The health assessment assists in identifying students with eyesight and dental needs. Hearing and dental tests are conducted at Ranges Community Health. Hearing tests on students entering the College reveal that a high proportion of girls have a hearing impairment. Worawa has installed soundfield technology to enhance the teaching and learning environment. An arts therapy program is provided through the Eastern Ranges GP Association and the College has installed swings and sand boxes for sand play therapy. A weekly GP Clinic with a female doctor is conducted on site and provides for continuity of care of students. The College has placed increased emphasis on providing a higher level of care and coordination in mental health and wellbeing needs of students and staff. A professional development workshop based on Appreciative Inquiry was conducted by Education Psychologist Maria Ruberto and Cheryl Ritter from Eastern Health delivered a workshop on the effects of trauma on children and young people. The College has established a Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group comprised of practitioners in the field. The Reference Group is Chaired by Dr John Daniels a Worawa Director. The Reference Group will guide the continued development of an effective mental health and well-being model for



Tiffany Kuiper enjoys a day in the city

### School Holiday Program

Worawa has introduced a School Holiday Program which is being held during this term break. A fun filled holiday program has been designed to trial the program which is being tested by a small number of students who have elected to stay at the College during the term break. A wide range of activities are offered with some very clear favourites of the girls—perhaps the most favourite is the opportunity to attend the Grand Final Parade. The College has had the support of the team from the Yarra Ranges Council Youth Services Program. The School Holiday Program is supported by families and communities who see the benefit of the safe and supportive environment that Worawa offers. The Worawa holiday program will receive a boost with the launch of the Aspiration Initiative Residential Program which will be held at Worawa. The Aspirations Initiative will bring together thirty young people who have had notable success as part of the NAPLAN test process. Young people on both programs will have the opportunity to meet and share cultural and social activities. Both groups will come together in a 'getting to know you' disco before engaging in their various program activities.



Many visitors enjoyed the Aboriginal community art exhibition at the Sandra Bardas Art Gallery at Worawa during July

### Rotary Support for Worawa Art Exhibition

Worawa was pleased to have the valuable support of Rotarians to enable the Yapa Aboriginal Community Art Exhibition held in July. Under the leadership of President Kerry Kornhauser, Rotarians provided voluntary support to man the gallery on weekends throughout July enabling visitors to view the exhibition in College's Sandra Bardas Art Gallery. The exhibition was planned to coincide with the Tarawarra Museum of Art's exhibition of the Archibald's held throughout July which brought many visitors to the Yarra Valley.

The Worawa Yapa Aboriginal Community Exhibition was a great success and visitors to the gallery responded positively to the ambience of the gallery and learning about the art on display.

Rotarians will again provide voluntary support to the next exhibition which will be held in December. The exhibition will showcase the work of Aboriginal women artists and will include student art work and fibre craft.

### Mungo Youth Conference

Term 3 saw a group of students and staff set off to the Mungo Youth Conference. This conference was founded on the educational premise that it could create an authentic student centred approach to learning about prehistory and it would create powerful references to contemporary challenges including climate change and reconciliation. An essential aspect of the program was to stress the ongoing Aboriginal connection with the landscape. Supported by local Aboriginal Community Elders, students are given the opportunity to prepare and present on a topic nominated earlier in the year. 2011 is the first year Worawa has provided an entry. Our students worked on a presentation "Pathways to Womanhood" about traditional rites of passage. Our presentation was beamed live to an Alaskan School where their students could ask questions and a video prepared by Worawa student Shai Peckham will be sent to Alaska.

Our activity morning took us to the archeology of Lake Mungo and the amazing 42,000 year old finds of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man. The site retains original cooking hearths with the actual remains of extinct megafauna, scattered around, (imagine eggs from an emu like bird over 3 meters high). Otoliths, (bones able to be dated for age), from extinct fish which once swam in the Willandra Lakes, (20,000 year ago), are left where they were scattered after eating. We were walking on land dated 146,000 years old, while the upper layers of hills were only 14,500 years old. Our group then explored the visitors centre where large models of Diprotions (imagine 3 ton wombat like animals) who freely roamed the area, can be seen. Here they have display casts for 22,000 year old footprints found at Lake Mungo. Worawa students enjoyed meeting other students and watching their presentations. The "talent" show on the Thursday night provided quite a laugh and we have proved that not showering over two days can be survived.

*... students came together in a special place to celebrate and to learn, to grow together and to enjoy themselves. The students knew that the Willandra Lakes World Heritage area (which includes Lake Mungo) is an area which tells a major story of humanity and of Australia – They were advised by educators and elders that "...the land whispers to us about the past and writes a story of change – of people, of climate and of plants and animals." Archaeologists revealed that "for over 50,000 years Indigenous Australians have been of this land and that important sign posts of that story are captured within the landscape... it is story like no other". Elders asked that the students and teachers "...listen to that story - through the wisdom of the Elders, through the mindfulness of scientists, through the pastoralists and through each other". Students were invited to be open to the spirit of place and to build their own knowledge and power. Choose to thrive was the invitation and in doing so chose to make a difference by helping to make their world more caring, intelligent and sustainable for all...*

Courtesy of Michael Westaway, Robert Biggs and Helen Healy

### Enrolment Enquiries For 2012

We invite enrolment enquiries for girls in years 7 to 10 for commencement in 2012. Enquires may be directed to the Registrar, Ms Lynne Murray on 03 59 624344, mobile: 0408 393 035 or fax : 03 59622419 email: registrar@worawa.vic.edu.au.

21 Sept – 10 Oct.	School Holiday Program
10 Oct.	Commencement of Term 4
21-23 Nov.	Excursion to Phillip Island
12 Dec.	School Community Forum
14 Dec.	Presentation Day and Art Exhibition
22 Dec.	End of Term 4

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Worawa welcomes financial contributions to support implementation of its integrated Education, Culture and Wellbeing Model, student needs, cultural programming and for future development.

Worawa Aboriginal College is a non-profit organization recognised by the ATO as a Public Benevolent Institution and endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.