Celebration is very much an integral part of Aboriginal Culture. At Worawa Aboriginal College after a year of hard work and amazing opportunities we like to celebrate.

Throughout the year, staff and students dedicate themselves to the development of the Worawa Way- Respect, Responsibility, Relationship and Rigour. On the last college day of 2014 we recognise and applaud the outstanding efforts of our students. All aspects of character, effort and achievement are commended. While academic excellence, sporting prowess and artistic talent are held in the highest regard likewise, cultural understanding of the whole person is equally valued and rewarded.

The proceedings began with a Smoking Ceremony led by Uncle Max. The Didgeridoo was played by Worawa Board Member, Mark Thomson to call the audience to ceremony.

After Cultural Protocols, led by our Senior Students we were treated to music and song by the Worawa Choir. The talented group sang in Yorta Yorta, Murrinh Patha and English. Our Traditional Dance group danced the ‘Morning Star Dance.’ We were very fortunate to have Tom Dhakaliny a traditional Songman.
We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing

Worawa Aboriginal College

PRESENTATION DAY 2014

from Elcho Island and student parent accompany the girls. Our Executive Principal, Ms. Lois Peeler spoke of the journey of Worawa and the importance of education. She also presented some poignant words and images from our most revered Elders who, through their own hard-won freedom have paved the way for the success and opportunities available to our students today. Parent, Ms Lorraine Williams, responded on behalf of the parent community. She encouraged the young women to be strong and keep going. Lorraine shared what she had learned from the other parents and students. She encouraged the students to press on towards their goals, to gain education and to become leaders in their own communities. It was a memorable and remarkable response. Ms. Andrea Farrow, Senior Graduating Student spoke of her time at Worawa, her struggles and aspirations with great depth and sincerity. It was a moving and beautifully spoken address. Proud Wiradjuri woman, Dr Anita Heiss gave an inspiring, humorous and educational address that challenged prejudicial thinking and narrow minded worldviews. After an award ceremony, where the girls received trophies from community leaders, our graduating year of 2014 was presented. Mr Tiriki Onus our wonderful MC was instrumental in the smooth running of this important day. The ceremony ended with a wonderful media presentation of our founder, Hyllus Maris. It was an inspirational end to a truly spectacular year.

We would like to express our absolute pride in each of our Worawa students. We congratulate those deserving young women who received trophies and awards in recognition of their efforts and excellence. Each girl was so very deserving and we look peacefully to the future knowing that with young leaders like these, our communities are in very capable hands.
SISTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM

This year a group of students from across the school have participated in Worawa’s first Sister Schools program. The students elected to be part of the program and have been corresponding with the Kamehameha School in Hawaii. Kamehameha has many similarities to Worawa including a strong link to traditional culture and language.

Initially the students wrote letters introducing themselves and asking questions about Hawaii and our new Hawaiian friends. We also sent over a map that displayed our students’ home communities. In response we have received a variety of letters from the Hawaiian students and an ongoing correspondence is forming.

Early in Term 4 the two schools came together over Skype. This was a chance to share songs, dances, language and stories from across the world, across cultures and across time zones. The students from both schools enjoyed the Skype session immensely and we will continue to strengthen the Sister Schools program in 2015.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AT WORAWA

At Worawa Aboriginal College, we acknowledge the richness and diversity of our students’ languages, and we also recognise the cultural pride and strength that comes from valuing these languages in the academic program. Our students are representative of approximately 25+ different language groups, with some students speaking up to 3 or 4 different languages or dialects, whilst others may only know a few words.

Each week, the girls work together in their language groups on language enrichment activities. They have the opportunity to produce resources, or to research and learn more about their languages. They also participate in Yorta Yorta and Wurundjeri lessons with Aunty Zeta Thomson, as part of their Aboriginal Culture classes.

A small group of students are fortunate enough to be part of a first language literacy program. They have the opportunity to develop reading and writing skills in their languages, which in turn, enhances their English language skills. The languages currently represented in this program are: Luritja/Pintupi, Warlpiri, Yankunytjatjara, Murrinh Patha, Kriol, Djambarrpuynu and Anmatjerre. These are just a few ways in which our students are assisted to keep their languages and culture strong.

As Nancy Djambutj from Milingimbi said last year at the College’s Education Symposium:

“I believe that strong language means strong learning and that means strong culture. I want all Aboriginal children to have strong language, strong learning and strong culture and to feel proud and confident about who they are as Aboriginal people.”

LIBRARY

Students have been making increasing use of the library, both for borrowing and research. Students have been requesting new books by title – it is delightful to see this growth. Popular books have been the ‘Fallen’ series by Lauren Kate, ‘The Maze Runner’ which has a waiting list, ‘The Hunger Games’ trilogy by Suzanne Collins, along with graphic novels and the newspaper ‘The Indigenous Times’. It has been particularly exciting to have students who consider themselves ‘non-readers’ coming to the library to find a book for night time or weekend reading. Well done girls.

EQUINE THERAPY

Six students have been involved in a 10-week Equine Facilitated Art Therapy program. ‘Horses are responsive and tolerant of humans and are good at reflecting the emotions of those around them. The behaviour of the horse provides a platform to then teach life skills’ (Running Horses Equestrian Services, 2014).

The students are given the opportunity to learn about themselves, their emotions and their responses in different situations. The program enables students to develop skills for positive relationships, build trust and confidence, but also increase self-awareness and understanding boundaries.

Each week the girls involved cared for and built trust and relationships with the horses. One of these horses, Kali, gave birth to a foal towards the end of the program; this foal was named Versace, in honour of our Worawa girls by combining the first initial of the students’ names. The owner stated the students had a ‘wonderful input into Kali’s trauma recovery and rebuilding of her trust’. What an incredible privilege for our students!
**THE ARTS AT WORAWA**

Visual Art at Worawa has a vital place in our program. It has been a highly successful year for Worawa students with an exhibition of some of our most talented artists in the Netherlands. Many of the pieces were sold and now have a place in companies and homes in many countries across the world.

Our students paint and create in a variety of styles, using different techniques and mediums. Attention to Aboriginal traditions is the focus, while encouragement is given to the young artist to create and develop their own interpretations and styles. Girls express both traditional subject matter through traditional styles, but they also express modern challenges using fusions of traditional and non-traditional styles. Art and Culture are not static.

Our Art Room is a place where students find: their cultural identity supported, a peaceful place to paint and create, their unique interpretations are fostered and powerful art is created.

**DRAMA AND THEATRE**

Worawa students have attended a variety of wonderful performances this year. Every advantage of being in Melbourne is taken. Theatre is strong and the girls enjoyed a play about life and victory, ‘Into the Bigness.’ A group also attended the performance of Djuki Mala.

Our students enjoy taking part in lessons where they improve their communication skills and learn about the power of using gesture, stance and movement intentionally. We begin recognizing and researching the origins of story-telling and dramatic expression. The origins of theatre is investigated and the students are keen to embrace the fact that Aboriginal Culture is the living example of where all other theatrical expression begins.

From this understanding of narrative expression through ceremony, we study and explore mime, body language, gesture, stance, voice and improvisation. Girls who elect to go further with this study have the opportunity to develop a play and perform alongside other Melbourne schools in the city at the Malthouse Theatre. This year we had a group of 11 girls in this program. They presented a piece on climate change.

While interpreting the script through an Aboriginal lens they delivered a highly original work using Aboriginal languages and contexts. One student, Aliyanna Tipiloura, used her language, Murrinh Patha to emphasize a final scene of the play.

‘When I spoke my language, they looked amazed. I felt proud,’ she said.

Below: Worawa Elective Drama Class performing at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne.

**CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES**

This year as part of Worawa Aboriginal College’s ongoing commitment to build and maintain relationships with our communities, a full time Community/School Liaison was employed to visit communities and support the transition of students into the college.

Visits usually involved doing a short presentation to students and their families, answering questions and assisting families with paperwork. Thank you to all the families, schools and support people within each community for being so hospitable and helpful during visits. It is wonderful to be able to visit local schools, meet family members and share stories and photos of your children’s journey at Worawa. Similarly, students love hearing stories from home and seeing pictures of visits to their home communities.

Making connections between Worawa and communities is an important factor in the success of the students that attend our school. The school community forum held in the last week of Term 4, reiterates the value Worawa places on the input of various Aboriginal groups from around the country that make up the Worawa family. We look forward to continuing to build relationships with our communities into the future!

Above: Photo in Wadeye Community; Brother Vince, Joanne and Rose Tipiloura.
We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing

SAILING
A bright and sunny Monday brought the Worawa girls to the Sandringham Yacht Club. While the drive up was rain splattered, the sun appeared and it became clear that the wind was on our side.

After a lesson on water safety and beginner tips on how to control the jib and main sail, students and staff alike were out on the water. Some got a chance to drive the speedboat, while others relished the chance of cruising at a slower pace around the safety flags. It wasn’t long before squeals of delight echoed across the water and the girls were confidently controlling their boats like seasoned professionals. When it came time to return to the marina, some opted for a tow while others boldly decided to sail back on their own. Once lunch was devoured, most girls couldn’t wait to return to the water, and others chose a tour of the marina looking at the submarine and the many yachts visiting for the ISAF Sailing World Cup.

With only one voluntary dip in the ocean and some very burnt House Parents, the activity was a success and certainly something the students were keen to repeat. A big thank-you to the staff at the Sandringham Yacht Club whose professionalism, care and sailing experience made for a highly enjoyable day.

PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER MEETINGS AND ACADEMIC AWARDS ASSEMBLY
At the conclusion of a highly successful academic year, students and teachers proudly met on Tuesday December 9th with parents, relatives and guardians to talk about their year’s academic growth and achievements. They used their digital portfolios to demonstrate and show examples of their learning in all subject areas.

This followed an Academic Awards Assembly where particular students from each class group were recognised with awards certificates for the outstanding academic achievements or for their outstanding academic improvement over the year. It was a fitting end to a very productive and satisfying academic year for students and teachers.

Regina Inkamala-Lankin and teacher Dean Thomson, at a meeting with Regina’s mother Beth Inkamala.

Students in Blue group, showing their parents and grandparents their year’s work. Branesha Farrow and her grandmother, Margaret Clayton are in the foreground.
CAREERS

This has been an exciting year in Careers. The course work has involved the girls in researching choices and designing pathways. Determining the roles we already fulfil as daughters, sisters, cousins, students, team members, athletes, artists and many more is our starting point. Discussing what sort of people we want to be is the next step. Finally, after determining their unique strengths and preferences the students examine what career might suit them best.

The girls are encouraged to dream and then plan how to make those dreams a reality. Work skills and communication skills are practiced and improved. The culmination of the course is a session of Work Experience. This year students expressed their desire to be involved in a variety of industries and with some planning each girl was able to be placed in a company or industry that matched her interests. From a student Artist at Arts Project Australia to young administrators at World Vision Australia, from budding Rangers at Healesville Sanctuary to beginner nurses at Eastern Health, our students experienced a range of exciting placements.

The students could observe the industry they were interested in and just as importantly, become a part of the workforce and all that entails. Worawa girls are set to make their mark in the world of work!

Top right: Regina Lankin Inkamala and Rhianna Nambiard – Eastern Health. Learning all about Medical Careers.

Bottom right: Jamira Hunter and Jaden Croker – Media Students at Network 10 on the set of ‘Neighbours.’

LILYDALE SHOW

One of the weekend activities that the girls enjoyed this term was going to the Lilydale Show. This is an annual event in the local area and a number of the girls were looking forward to being able to attend this year. The day started out quite dreary, with rain scheduled, but we were not deterred. We set off with umbrellas and rain coats in tow and the girls were buzzing with a sense of excitement at what the day would bring. The rain for the most part held off and the girls enjoyed the numerous rides, games, stalls, show bags and animal stalls.

One of the most popular rides was one that included going upside down. Many girls went on this numerous times, often reporting feeling ill before happily rushing back to the ticket booth for another go. On this ride Andrea Farrow faced her fear of heights and while she began the ride by closing her eyes tight and screaming, by the end of the ride she was laughing and relishing the experience.

The girls also enjoyed playing the prize games that were at the show - many of them winning stuffed toys from the various games. With arms loaded with prizes and show bags we made our way back to Worawa. The girls were exhausted, but excitedly showing others their prizes and purchases on the bus ride home.