Finding Barrugin: The Echidna Tells A Story, Embracing Cultural Responsiveness And Identity
Acknowledgement Of Country
Where are we located

Where we are from...
“...we seek to bring healing and restore trust. We commit to the Uluru Statement of the Heart: to work “for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination...”

- Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen
The Totem Project

Origins

Increase in population

Sustainability

Garden project

Planning

Elder - Bluetongues

Experience

Increase in food source

Results
Totems
The importance

- Each person has 4 totems
- Creates balance
- Connection to land
- Lifetime responsibility
The Totem Project
Why?

For school communities to:

- gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples’ connection to country and identity
- connect to their local area and environment focusing on sustainability
- engage with and be challenged to dive deeper than one off events and embed Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture and perspective into everyday learning and the broader community.
The Totem Project
Why?

“To think about culturally responsive educational systems requires looking at the processes, decision and communication paths that are used to make and sustain changed practice.”

(Beyer, 1996)
The Totem Project
Barrugin

Behaviour and Wellbeing Team: Protection of self, tread lightly, do no harm, look around & share

“Learning ethics from an echidna is not something reserved just for me, or just for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Indigenous knowledges, like the Yarn about ethics and the echidna, are very present and available to our wider research community, they just need to be listened to, and valued, as a source of Indigenous knowledge.”

- Dickson, 2020
This is Barrugin
The echidna tells a story

**Unique & Adaptable**
Monotreme - egg laying mammal
Hard, rigid snout used as a snorkel or to break open logs & termite mounds.

**Actively Searching - Inquisitive**
Echidnas are solitary, wanderers: they have large territories that overlap but are not territorial towards others.

**Transformative**
They burrow into the soil, hide under vegetation, shelter in hollow logs, and rock crevices. They make changes to their environment for food & shelter.

**Looking Beyond Behaviour**
Echidnas have a sensitive snout and keen sense of smell. They also have electroreceptors, this allows echidnas to “see” beyond surface level.

**Resilient**
Echidnas have a unique defence mechanism, they can roll into a spiky ball or dig quickly into the ground so a predator can’t penetrate their sharp quills.

Just like the echidna, our students have flight & freeze survival responses
Finding Barrugin
The echidna tells a story

- Handprints
- Meeting circle
- Barrugin’s Tracks
- Backwards feet
- Water
- Moves objects
One path to creating culturally responsive systems is by working at systemic reform (Townsend, 2002; Utley & Obiakor, 2000). (Leverson, Smith, McIntosh, Rose, & Pinkelman, 2019)

**Identity**
- Totem project
- Murama - Youth Summit
- SEL programs

**Voice**
- Jarara
- Elders
- Student Panel

**Data for Equity**
- Oracy
- Attendance

**Supportive Environment**
- Lived experience
- Professional development
  - ATSI Conference
  - Crossing Cultures, Hidden History
  - Yellamundie Book Club
- STEM Project

**Situational Appropriateness**
- National Apology Day
- NAIDOC
- Acknowledgement of Country
Data for Equity & Outcomes

- Personalised Cultural Pathways (PCP)
- Enrolments
Data for Equity & Outcomes
Complex, Chronic, Emerging

Conducted in 2019 by Wollongong University.

Attendance Trendline
All Schools
CSPD Target: 90%

Overview (All Schools)
Absence Category  Attendance Category
41%  43%  15%  15.5%  68.7%
Students gathered across NSW to share their voice.

Builds confidence, creates connections to their identity.

Communicates their needs and feelings to teachers & stakeholders.
Practices for Equity and Outcomes
Practices for Equity & Outcomes
Basis for Learning & Teaching

“Coming together of all cultures, the most important thing about this is we walk the same land, we drink the same water and we breathe the same air”

Uncle Max Harrison.

We believe that all cultural differences are to be valued and are a rich resource to learn from.

An appreciation of these differences is fundamental to building relationships.
We also believe that high self esteem and sense of identity are vital for the effective learning and personal growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Value of culture
Seek advice and understanding
Sharing history
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal coming together

Building knowledge
Forming relationships
Embedding culture in Curriculum

Sense of identity
Practices for Equity & Outcomes
Smoking Ceremony & Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgment of Country

WE BEGIN THIS BOOK AND EVERY DAY IN OUR CLASSROOM, BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND THAT WE LEARN, WORK AND PLAY ON, THE DARUG PEOPLE.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING FOR THEY HOLD THE MEMORIES, TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS, CULTURES AND HOPE OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA. WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT UNDER OUR HOLY FAMILY GARDENS PATHS AND PLAYGROUNDS THIS LAND IS WAS AND ALWAYS WILL BE TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL LAND.
Practices for Equity & Outcomes
Embedding Cultural Norms

“It’s about sitting together in this circle, in our culture, there’s no hierarchy. This is a circle of friendship, circle of connection, circle of listening.”

Julie Waddell, CSPD Jarara Indigenous Education Unit
Practices for Equity & Outcomes
Learning & Understanding Culture
Practices for Equity & Outcomes
School Totems & Identity
Practices for Equity & Outcomes Through Actions

- Sustainability
- Purchasing and releasing eels to support the local numbers
- Clean up and protection of the 3 Sisters
- Adding native bees to the current garden
- Cleaning their Totem’s habitat

St Canice’s Primary Katoomba couldn’t be prouder to have the spectacular Three Sisters right in their backyard.😊❤️️😍.

Students, families and staff recently celebrated their deep connection with the Three Sisters, highlighting the importance of community, Aboriginal culture❤️️❤️️ and caring😊 for the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area😊❤️️😍.

Find out more about this great Blue Mountains school here: https://www.stcaniceskatoomba.catholic.edu.au/About

Read the story here: https://www.parra.catholic.edu.au/2022-StCanice-Immersion
Systems for Equity and Outcomes
Systems for Equity & Outcomes
Jarara Cultural Centre Leadership

- Spirituality days
- NSW Catholic Schools Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Conference
- Professional Development
- Cultural immersion for students and staff
- Liaising with community Elders
- Advise on Aboriginal Personalised Learning Pathways.
"The Jarara Totem Project aims to ensure that as Australian citizens, we acknowledge and make a visible effort to protect, respect and advocate for the beautiful relationship Indigenous people have with their land as stewards but also with their spirituality" added Ashyra.
"The changes in awareness and attitudes amongst teachers regarding student needs and drivers of student behavior concerns is significant in the development of inclusive practices."

Schimke, Krishnamoorthy, Ayre, Berger & Rees, 2022
"Incorporation of culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices into such multi-tiered systems requires **capacity building** for all school staff to achieve effective, school-wide implementation. This includes training, coaching and leadership support."

Schimke, Krishnamoorthy, Ayre, Berger & Rees, 2022
“Identified the interconnected domains of connectedness to body, connectedness to mind and emotions, connectedness to family and kinship, and connectedness to community, culture, spirituality, and country as critically underpinning the Aboriginal conceptualization of social and emotional wellbeing.”

Gee et al 2014
# Systems for Equity & Outcomes

## Embedding Culture through Curriculum

### Social Emotional Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Skills Program:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Stage: ES1 &amp; 1</th>
<th>Year: Kindy / Year 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Information:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Intention:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Learn skills to cooperate and improve relationships.</td>
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<td>- Recognise and develop healthy friendships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Practise and develop social skills including self-awareness, honesty, cooperation and empathy.</td>
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<td>Learning Outcomes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies people and demonstrates protective strategies that help keep themselves healthy, resilient and safe</td>
<td>Communicates ways to be caring, inclusive and respectful of others</td>
<td>Practises self-management skills in familiar and unfamiliar scenarios</td>
<td>Uses interpersonal skills to effectively interact with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognises and describes strategies people can use to feel comfortable, resilient and safe in situations</td>
<td>Recognises and describes the qualities that enhance inclusive and respectful relationships</td>
<td>Demonstrates self-management skills in taking responsibility for their own actions</td>
<td>Describes and practises interpersonal skills to promote inclusion to make themselves and others feel they belong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Domains of Social and Emotional Wellbeing:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection to mind and emotion</td>
<td>Connection to physical wellbeing</td>
<td>Connection to community</td>
<td>Connection to family and kinship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual’s experience of wellbeing and the whole spectrum of basic cognitive, emotional and psychological human experience including the ability to manage thoughts and feeling.</td>
<td>Connection to body aspects of health and wellbeing that are rooted in the body. Using stress management and self-calming techniques.</td>
<td>Building a sense of identity where personal connections and sociocultural norms are maintained.</td>
<td>Building a sense of identity and participating in family and kinship and where personal connections and norms are maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to country</td>
<td>Connection to culture</td>
<td>Connection to spirit, spirituality and ancestor</td>
<td>Connection to help in tough times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to country helps underpin identity and a sense of belonging.</td>
<td>A connection to a culture provides a sense of continuity with the past and helps underpin a strong identity.</td>
<td>Spirituality provides a sense of purpose and meaning.</td>
<td>Identifying support people and help-seeking conversations for self and others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Social Emotional Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 1</th>
<th>Resources / Cultural texts</th>
<th>Evaluation: Location &amp; students</th>
</tr>
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*Teach weekly Skill (15 min)*

- **Tell:**
  We all belong to many different communities. People in our communities support us, care for us and are role models. All communities are different and they are important to us for different reasons.

- **Show:**
  Read the picture book 'Ceremony' by Adam Goodes
  Ceremonies are an important part of a community. The welcome ceremony welcomes all people to the community and makes us all feel welcomed.
  What is important for us to do to be a part of our school group, friendship group, church groups etc.

- **Practise:**
  Create a community circle for each session
  Why are these people important?
  Create a welcome to be conducted by class every morning. Define the importance of inclusiveness and fresh start.

**Making Connections:**
Connection to community - who is your mob? How do they support you?

**Yarning Circle:**
This is our class community and today we are going to yarn about how important we each one of us are.

**Journaling / Mindfulness**
*Dadirri*
Systems for Equity & Outcomes
Embedding Culture and Making Connections
Dadirri
Connection to SEL, Contemplation & Mindfulness

“[Dadirri] is in everyone. It is not just an Aboriginal thing.”

— Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Aboriginal writer

Source: Deep listening (dadirri) - Creative Spirits, retrieved from https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri
Where to now...

- Matrix - including community
- Schools sharing experiences
- Working more closely with Community Elders
- Professional Learning in understanding the 8 ways of learning framework
The Path Ahead with Barrugin
The echidna tells a story
Credit to our communities

Jarara Cultural Centre
Dalmari
Catherine McAuley, Westmead
Emmaus, Kemps Creek
Holy Family, Emerton
Holy Family, Granville
Holy Family, Luddenham
St Anthony’s, Girraween
St Agnes, Rooty Hill
St Canice’s, Katoomba
St Joseph’s, Kingswood


