



Walgett Community College High School

GABA GAAY

'GOOD STORY'

Issue 4 | September 2022

Across Term 3, Walgett Community College High School has continued to offer a range of learning experiences and activities which have been engaging our students. This edition of Gaba Gaay highlights some of these and demonstrates how we are Making School a Better Place for our students and staff.

After two years of COVID restrictions, it has been great to have Year 7 participate in a three-day camp at Lake Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre. Not only did this allow for a change from the usual school routine but also provided the opportunity for our students to mix with students from other participating schools.

The Goodooga Indigenous Games were held in early August and our students participated enthusiastically along with students from 40 other schools from across the state. This annual event (making a return after COVID restrictions lifted) is an opportunity for students to enjoy a day which focuses on adapted traditional Aboriginal games and sports.

Our hospitality students have had a unique opportunity to work closely with Michael Everett, a chef who conducted classes with our students and this culminated in a long lunch served in the school hall. It is great to see our hospitality students able to excel and apply their skills in a real-life catering and customer service situation.

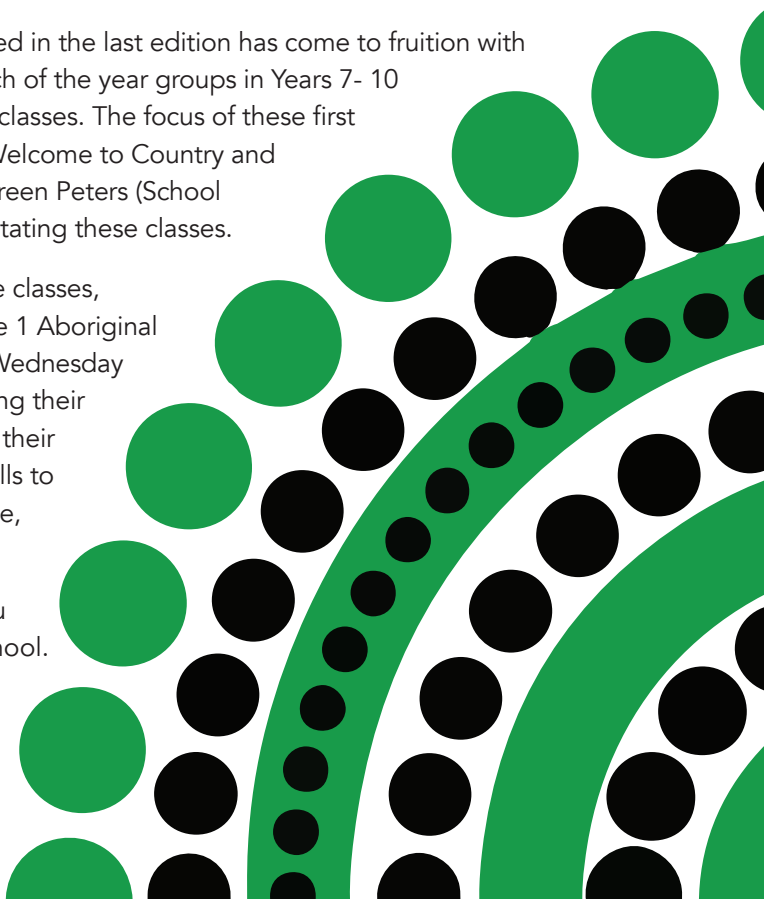
The planning for the Culture and Language Hub which I outlined in the last edition has come to fruition with student classes commencing at the beginning of this term. Each of the year groups in Years 7- 10 have commenced one hour per week of culture and language classes. The focus of these first series of classes has been on understanding and preparing a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. Thanks to Anne Dennis and Doreen Peters (School Reference Group members) who have been assisting with facilitating these classes.

In parallel with our students commencing culture and language classes, sixteen of our staff have commenced the TAFE NSW Certificate 1 Aboriginal Languages course delivered by Jacqui Frail after school each Wednesday until the end of 2022. This initiative will assist our staff in building their own cultural competency as well as supporting our students in their language development. It is my hope that staff will gain the skills to be able to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country in language, and this will then be practiced across the school.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Gaba Gaay and if you have any questions or feedback, please contact me at the school.

Adam Batchelor
Executive Principal

.....
walgett-h.schools.nsw.gov.au



NAIDOC WEEK

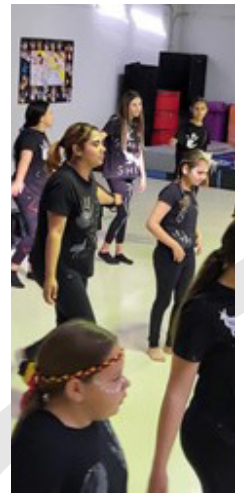
Students started NAIDOC week by baking and decorating cakes under the supervision of hospitality teacher, Ms Marks. Two frenetic days of baking, designing, icing and decorating culminated in some amazing cake decoration inspired by the NAIDOC theme.



Our school assembly started with a smoking ceremony arranged and taught by our Student Learning Support Officer Justin French with student Adrian Murray who expressed a desire to learn more about his culture.



Our girls' dance troupe performed at our assembly on Tuesday and joined the primary school students to perform a collaborative dance at their assembly on Wednesday.



Friday the whole school celebrated with a BBQ picnic down by the river – despite a lot of hand reels, there were only a few yabbies caught and cooked over an open fire.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY UPDATE

During the last few months, attending students have had a variety of learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy classes. Teachers and SLSOs have been supporting students to engage in critical thinking. Stage 4 and 5 students have seen an improvement in reading and writing. Overall, Stage 4 and 5 students have increased their understanding of reading texts, from understanding the material being read to being able to talk about the information in class.

Students have had a varying degree of success, with 94% of students attending class having seen improvement. Student writing has become more complex with the introduction of the Think Aloud Strategy and changing questioning techniques used with students. These approaches have given students a greater understanding of how to write with confidence.

Students have also seen an improvement in targeted numeracy. Multiplication and financial matters are two key concepts relating to real-world mathematics that are part of the targeted strategy. It is important to note that students with a higher attendance in class have had the most success, resulting in greater understanding.

NAIDOC SPEECH BY WCC HS SCHOOL CAPTAIN - AZARIA DENNIS

GET UP! STAND UP! SHOW UP!

For this year's NAIDOC theme, Get up, Stand Up, Show up - I want to talk about shame.

What is shame? Sometimes it's just being nervous. Other times, it might be a lack of confidence to get up and talk.

GET UP!

Sometimes I think people don't want to get up and talk, because they're afraid they might mess it up and say something that they're not meant to say and they think that's shame.

When people get up and pronounce a word wrong, someone in the crowd might laugh and make them feel worse – that's what people think is shame.

If someone laughed at me for mucking up a word, I would laugh at myself too because it is sort of funny but not shame. And I would say to those people, why are you laughing, when you can't even get up to say something.

Encourage your mates - don't sit there and put them down.

STAND UP!

You won't get anywhere in life if you don't stand up and talk up.

Don't be shame to stand up for your mates, no matter who they are and no matter what other people say. If you don't stand up for your mates then your mates are not going to stand up for you when you really need it.

There's no shame in standing up for what you believe in, there's only shame if you don't do it. When you stand up, you're actually standing up for a purpose, but when you sit down, you're not doing anything.

SHOW UP

If you walk in somewhere where you don't know anyone – don't think, I can't go in there because I don't know anybody and that's shame. That's what a lot of people in this school think, that's shame!

I know when someone walks into a new place, they think people are talking about them. If someone is shame, and doesn't want to go to class - I'll tell them what it's about first. If they don't like it, I'll explain it in a way that makes it sound fun and they might be encouraged.

I'd like to encourage you all to Get up, Stand Up, Show up! Not just for NAIDOC week but all year round.



WCC HS ATHLETICS CARNIVAL

On Friday 24th of June, WCC HS held its annual school athletics carnival.

Across the day students participated in a wide range of competitive activities with outstanding results in several events – U 14 boys shot put, U 13 girls shot put, U 13 girls 200m, U 15, 16 and 17 boys high jump.



GOODOOGA INDIGENOUS GAMES

On Thursday, August 4, 40 WCC HS students and staff attended the much-anticipated Goodooga Indigenous Games on Yuwaalayaay country at Goodooga Central School. The day focused on students participating in an assortment of Indigenous games. Keentan, a game similar to netball, with a soccer ball and with poles as the goal, was an obvious highlight and brought much adrenaline and laughter to many of our students.

Students were allocated into teams like the Guba, the Yuwayaa and the Dhinawan that mixed our students with schools from across NSW. It was great to see how well our students teamed up and supported younger

students from other schools throughout the day. The Goodooga Games is all about promoting health, community, and preserving Indigenous customs, while having fun, building local camaraderie and being a good role model when looking out for younger students.

Wuljini was another sport enjoyed immensely by many of the WCC HS students and others attending the Goodooga Indigenous Games. Wuljini is a game like volleyball that allows a team to utilise all body parts to keep the ball off the ground and attempt to ground it over the net on the other team's side of the court.

Goodooga Central School organised and catered for the day which was enjoyed by our students and staff. Lamb, beef, chicken, sausages, and a variety of bread and salads were a very welcome provider of nutrition after a long, enjoyable day of sportsmanship, competition, and camaraderie.



YEAR 7 CAMP

In early Term 3, Year 7 students attended a three-day camp at Lake Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre. The students and staff participated in three days of activities and socialised with students from other schools.

Our Year 7 students enjoyed new experiences such as pedal kart racing, archery, grass skiing, traditional Indigenous games and survival skills, but without doubt, their favourite activity was archery tag played in the Combat Arena.



It was particularly pleasing to watch our students make new friends from other visiting schools and participate in the camp routines that encouraged student responsibility such as assisting with the dinner service clean up in the camp dining hall.



PERSONAL REFLECTION ABOUT THE ON COUNTRY EXPERIENCE

I wasn't sure what to expect from the On Country experience other than getting to spend an enjoyable day with good company and like-minded people. The day turned out to be quite spiritual as well and this aspect began at our first stop – the First Shaft Lookout at Lightning Ridge. We were asked to stand in a circle and introduce ourselves as we scratched a symbol in the dirt with the stick being passed around. It felt like more than that. We were declaring our identity to each other as well as the beautiful landscape that we looked over. The scratching of our own symbol into the dirt added to the power of the words 'I am...' It gave us a feeling of connection to each other as well as place and it was a great way to start our On Country experience. This feeling of connection continued at our next stop – Warrambool State Conservation Area. This was a former working station where the relocation of hard-hoofed animals has assisted the return of the old gilgais (waterholes.) A clearing was identified where hunters would camp amongst the trees which gave them shade and an opportunity to ambush kangaroos. Local grasses such as Kangaroo Grass were also identified whereby the seeds could be used to make damper. This relaxing and insightful day concluded with a bush meal under the stars with the beautiful voice of 'Kelsey' allowing us all to gently reflect on the day.

Doug Grave
Teacher

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS



LIZ O'REILLY

What is your role at WCC HS?

My role at Walgett Community College High School is to make connections between students, teachers, community, and culture. I create and facilitate learning projects to help embed effective

teaching practices that are culturally inclusive, individually focused and engaging.

What do you like best about your role?

The variety of tasks that I have that can vary from Yarn-ups to cooking with students, cultural excursions, and creative arts. I enjoy working with the whole school community - students, teachers, school learning support officers, AEOs and SASS Staff.

What is one positive activity you have been involved in this year?

Working with the Girls' Dance Troupe has been just one of many positive activities I have had the privilege of being involved in throughout this year. Working with student learning support officers Tanya Tighe and Kaisan Walford, and AEO Deidre Kennedy, a group of our students came together to learn, rehearse, and perform a Welcome to Walgett dance. Seeing how our students rose to the occasion when asked was a very special moment. To see how proud our students are of their culture is inspiring.



ALEXANDER PENNELL

What is your role at WCC HS?

I'm part of the Creative and Performing Arts Team at WCC HS, teaching Music and Visual Arts to our Stage 4 and 5 students.

What do you like best about your role?

I love being able to connect with students to tap into their creative potential! One of the best aspects of working in a smaller school is that I'm able to know all my students really well, which makes it all the more satisfying to see their growth, both in CAPA and in their interests in other areas of life.

What is one positive activity you have been involved in this year?

During Term 1, I coordinated a series of interviews with Teach.NSW and our staff and students. The interviewers, Carl and Nadine, were very impressed with our large proportion of students who volunteered to be interviewed and it was an amazing experience to hear our students share their views on school and life in Walgett!



TRACY WALFORD:

What is your role at WCC HS?

My role at WCCHS is SAO - meaning Administration Support Officer. The Administration Support Officer focuses on customer service - internal/external, phone, email, personal data entry and much more.

What do you like best about your role?

The best thing I like about my role is assisting and supporting staff, students, parents, and our community in an administration capacity. I really enjoy meeting and greeting students and encouraging them to have a great day and students reply, 'you too'.

What is one positive activity you have been involved in this year?

I have been involved in many activities as an Administration Support Officer. A positive activity for me is attendance support - working with RSAS, staff, parents and students who need support for a positive and smooth transition back to school.

PROGRESS ON THE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE HUB

The Culture and Language Hub has started daily sessions with students creating connections to culture. The School Reference Group and community staff are involved in each session and the focus this term has been on where are we, who are we and who are our neighbours? We have also started to focus on the natural world around us, particularly birds and plants. A community morning tea Yarn Up was held on September 7th 2022 and students created handmade invitations for their families.



LONG LUNCH EVENT

On Wednesday 27th July, hospitality students and their teacher were involved in the preparation and service of a long lunch to community members. This event enabled students to gain work placement hours necessary to complete the Higher School Certificate in hospitality.

A visiting chef, Michael Everett, travelled from Sydney to lead the event which was run in conjunction with the hospitality teacher, students from Lightning Ridge and staff from Western Student Connections, Dubbo.

The lunch involved the preparation and plating-up of a 3-course meal which included 6 different menu items.

The school hall was decorated with student works and a long table to seat the 34 guests was set up by the hospitality students. All food and then service were provided by the students. The close-down at the end of the event was also part of the process which weary students and staff completed.



CONSTRUCTION TAFE TASTER

Students in Years 7 and 8 participated in a Construction TAFE Taster over two days during Term 3. The workshops were conducted in our own Trade Training Centre and delivered by TAFE teacher Iain Rutherford.



During the sessions, students learned about the safety requirements of a workshop and then measured, drilled and sanded using manual and small hand-held tools. They worked across the school day to produce their own Kentucky chairs which were surprisingly comfortable. At the end of the day, students took their chairs home to use as outdoor furniture.



CERTIFICATE 1 IN FUNDAMENTAL ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES FOR PERSONAL USE

In July 2022, 16 Walgett Community College staff enrolled and commenced the Certificate 1 in Fundamental Aboriginal Languages for Personal Use. In this course, participants learn up to 100 words in Gamilaraay language and basic sentences. They also learn about culturally appropriate protocols and ways they could engage and interact in their community to deepen their connection to culture.

The course outcomes require the participants to engage in fundamental spoken exchanges and written text in the local Gamilaraay language. They also develop learning resources to use in the classroom to assist students with their language learning. On completion of the course, participants can bring about change to protect and promote the Gamilaraay language, both in the school environment and in the community.

TAFE teacher Jacqui Frail said "This group has been fantastic; they are keen to learn about culture and talk Gamilaraay. I have put it out there in the very early stages of the course about how I would like them all to do an Acknowledgement to Country. I am very happy to say that it has happened and is still happening, and I have had some very courageous participants who have done the Acknowledgement to Country beautifully".



TAFE Teacher Jacqui Frail with some of the participants in Certificate 1 in Fundamental Aboriginal Languages for Personal Use