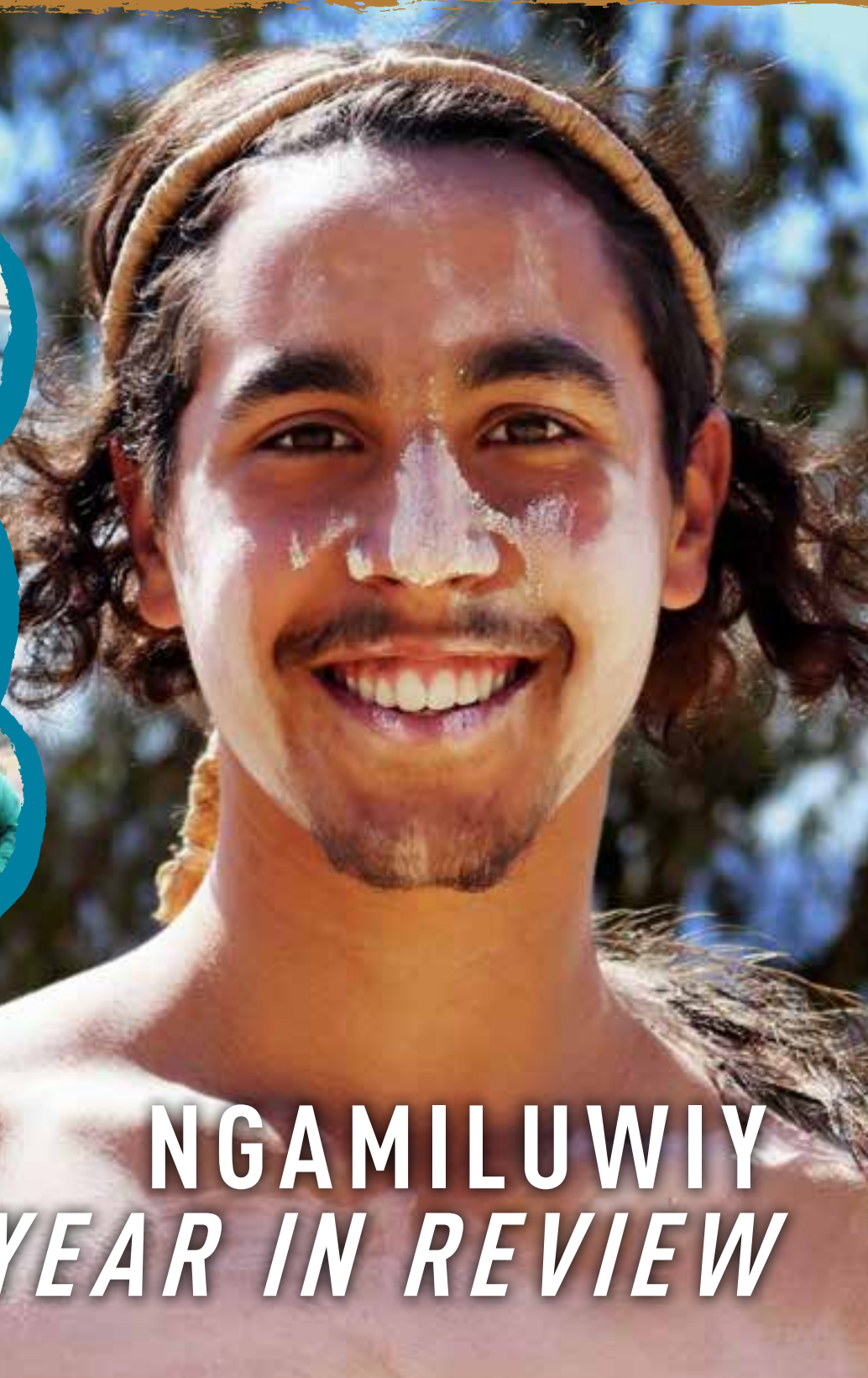


Giiir Maaru

A YEAR IN REVIEW FROM THE GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY 2019 REVIEW



NGAMILUWIY 2019: YEAR IN REVIEW



GOMEROI
CULTURE ACADEMY

Working to support and inspire a generation of culturally strong leaders within our community.

Yaama yaaminday
Gamilroi walaay-baa-ga ngiyani
winung-ulla-waa yillumbul murri
maaru mala ngalay dhawan

Dhiriya yambuli
garrivan-gun-dhuul marridhuul
gaayangal Gamilroi.
ngamil-la nginda, ngamil-la ngindaay
winanga-la nginda, winanga-la ngindaay
winangalawa, winangalawa

Acknowledgement of Country

The Gomeri Culture Academy would like to acknowledge the Gomeri people as the custodians and care takers for this land since time immemorial. We recognise the rich culture, history, diversity and deep connection to the land and waters held by Gomeri people.

We pay our respects to our Elders both past and present that have cared and always will care for Gomeri Country. We acknowledge that without their strength, wisdom and desire to continue cultural practice and create a world better for generations to come the Gomeri Culture Academy would not be possible.



The Bandaarr dance

A long time ago, when kangaroo walked on all four legs, there was a kangaroo named **'Bohrah'**. He was fascinated by people. One night he heard the loud noise of music coming from not too far away. He went closer to see what was happening and saw men and women having a lot of fun singing and dancing around the fire.

As Bohrah sat and watched in excitement, the music started to get faster. Before he knew it, he had jumped up and joined in. Standing on his two back legs and using his tail for balance, Bohrah stood like a person and danced in his very special way. Soon the people started to copy his dance. But once the people had realised he was not a man

but a kangaroo, they had to decide what to do. For Bohrah had seen things that no animal was allowed to see but he had also shared a special new way of dancing. So from that day, all the kangaroo were made to move on two legs like Borah and people have continued to share the dance of the kangaroo.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



2019 has been an exceptionally busy and fruitful year for the GCA, with a total of 196 events delivered! This year we have seen massive achievements and growth in all participants, and are proud to have all 7 of our participants graduating. Students attendance of GCA and school programs have increased (compared to 2018) with all students being formally recognised for their achievements at their school presentations.

Throughout the year, students, parents, and schools have been highly dedicated to the program. This has been evident in participation rates for weekly mentoring, gatherings, and On Country learning experiences. Students have developed a strong sense of belonging and identity leading to a visible rise in self-confidence and self-awareness.

Our participants have developed a deepened understanding of specific cultural practices and their progress has been measured by successful execution of Cultural Learning Plans – evaluated by their Mentors. Students' final works presented at their Graduation Ceremony were of an exceptionally high standard, and all participants can be very proud of what they have achieved over the year.

We are pleased to have been able to maintain support of our 2018 Alumni who continue to achieve both academically and personally. The workshops held with Alumni throughout the year have demonstrated their ongoing growth and skill acquisition, and have provided insight and direction to the GCA program.

We are excited to see the GCA team grow and to maintain 100% Aboriginal employment across staff, mentors and external facilitators. With such a successful 2019 we are looking forward to 2020 and we have been receiving great feedback from local schools and community.

Nine one-day workshops targeting Stage 4 students were received very well by local schools and the local AECG. These workshops engaged 180 Aboriginal students from across the Tamworth region with workshops held at Peel, Tamworth, and Oxley High Schools as well as McCarthy Catholic College. Applications for 2020 have been strong with an overwhelming response of over 45 applications and a lengthy process has begun to finalise the 15 students who will be welcomed in early 2020.

In closing, I would like to extend very heartfelt thanks to all of the people across different communities who have taken us in and shared your Country and stories with us. We would also like to acknowledge our principal partners Yinarr Maramali and the Gomeroid Dance Company who have made this program possible.

Marc Sutherland
Director
Gomeroid Culture Academy

Giirr Maaru

A YEAR IN REVIEW FROM THE GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY 2019 REVIEW

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Working to support and inspire a generation of culturally strong leaders within our community.



GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY

WHAT WE DO

The Gomeroid Culture Academy (GCA) is a culturally focused leadership experience supporting young people living in Tamworth NSW. The GCA offers consistent mentorship and provides an opportunity for young people to learn more about Gomeroid culture, and build on and strengthen their personal identity.

The GCA provides a formal learning pathway that harnesses the strength and knowledge that exists within our community to support our young people to create positive change.

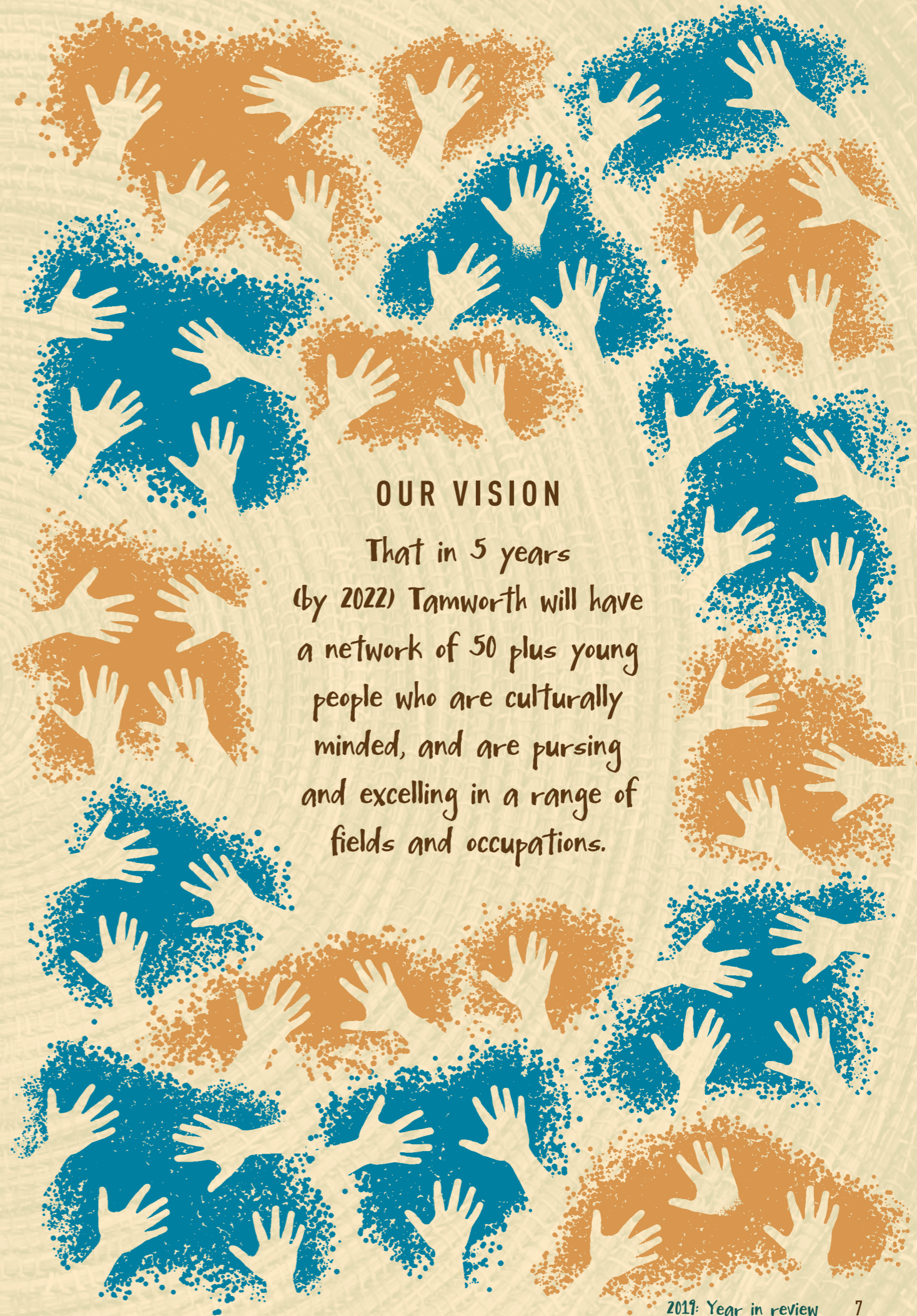
OUR PURPOSE

To support and inspire our next generation.

OUR OBJECTIVES

To support this purpose, the Gomeroid Culture Academy's aims to ensure that the Academy:

- ← Implements a culturally-driven Gomeroid self-development program that draws on the knowledge and strength of the community
- ← Gives young people the skills, confidence and self-awareness needed to make decisions that will have a positive impact on their lives and the lives of people around them.
- ← Builds participants' personal and cultural identity by providing them with a formal cultural learning experience to help them to better understand a variety of cultural skills, practices and techniques.
- ← Develops a network of like-minded young people within the community.



OUR VISION

That in 5 years (by 2022) Tamworth will have a network of 50 plus young people who are culturally minded, and are pursuing and excelling in a range of fields and occupations.

OUR 2019 GRADUATES



Tamia Haines

Tamia has been focused on gaining a better understanding of how art has been used to share stories and has visited many sacred sites throughout the year. Tamia has worked all

year to create an artwork that combines both painting and weaving to share a personal story that means a lot to her.

“Our art has always been used to share our stories and I am connecting to my culture through my painting and weaving because of the way I am telling my story. It feels as if it’s happened before.”



Joash Boney

Joash has worked hard to achieve his goals of understanding the different techniques needed to confidently play the Yidaki (Didgeridoo). Joash finished the

year knowing how to circular breathe and play a number of different rhythms. Joash grew in confidence as he performed at different events across the community. This extended to song and dance as he lead his school in dance performances, supporting other students to learn more about the culture. .

“My culture is important to me because it is a part of my identify and who I am as a person. Learning more about my culture was really healing and helped me process some of the feelings that I have had before.”



April Edser

April has spent the year better understanding the role that weaving plays in Gomeroid culture. April had learned the different techniques needed to make baskets and bags from

start to finish. This included identifying weaving plants, then cutting, splitting and weaving as told in our weaving stories. With this knowledge, April created a series of woven objects using grasses and recycled contemporary materials which were on display at the Graduation Ceremony.

“Learning about my culture was fascinating, when we were out On Country, I could feel the strength and all the calm vibes run through me.”



Lyle Thorne

Lyle has pursued his understanding of the Yidaki (Didgeridoo) and with the support of his mentor. Lyle is now confident playing the Yidaki, using a

range of techniques including circular breathing. He performed in front of family and friends at the Graduation Ceremony. Lyle also learned the process to make a Yidaki from start to finish which was also on display at the Graduation Ceremony.

“You need to know all the little things that make you who you are.”



Brianna McDonald

Brianna was focused on developing her understanding of bush medicines and the role they play in Gomeroid culture. After learning how to identify and collect the materials,

Brianna learned how these medicines can be incorporated into more modern uses. Brianna made many soaps and candles with different bush medicines that she has shared with her family and friends.

“Learning about bush medicines has made me admire the knowledge and skills of our ancestors, they knew these processes and shared the health benefits for generations.”



Alyce Jerrard

Alyce has spent her year developing a better understanding of the natural environment and has spent considerable time out in the bush learning how to identify

bush medicines and the different processes to make natural remedies and medicines. Alyce has continued the process of making Quinine and Gumbi Gumbi tonics and had both available for tasting at the Graduation Ceremony.

“Being On Country reminded me that our life doesn’t have to be so stressful and that you can always take a minute to breathe and how we can go to different places and still be connected.”



Latrell Allan

Latrell used his Cultural Learning Plan to set a goal to build on his vocabulary of Gomeroid words, and begin to understand the role that song plays in Gomeroid culture.

Throughout the year, Latrell learned a few Gomeroid songs which he performed in front of large assemblies and community events. Latrell also challenged himself to create a new song that told a part of his story. After creating the song, he performed it in front of his family and friends at the Graduation Ceremony. n

“My culture is important because it helps me to understand myself and where I belong. It teaches me to be strong. Now I want to pass it on to my family and younger generations to keep our culture alive ... Knowing more about my culture makes me feel proud.”

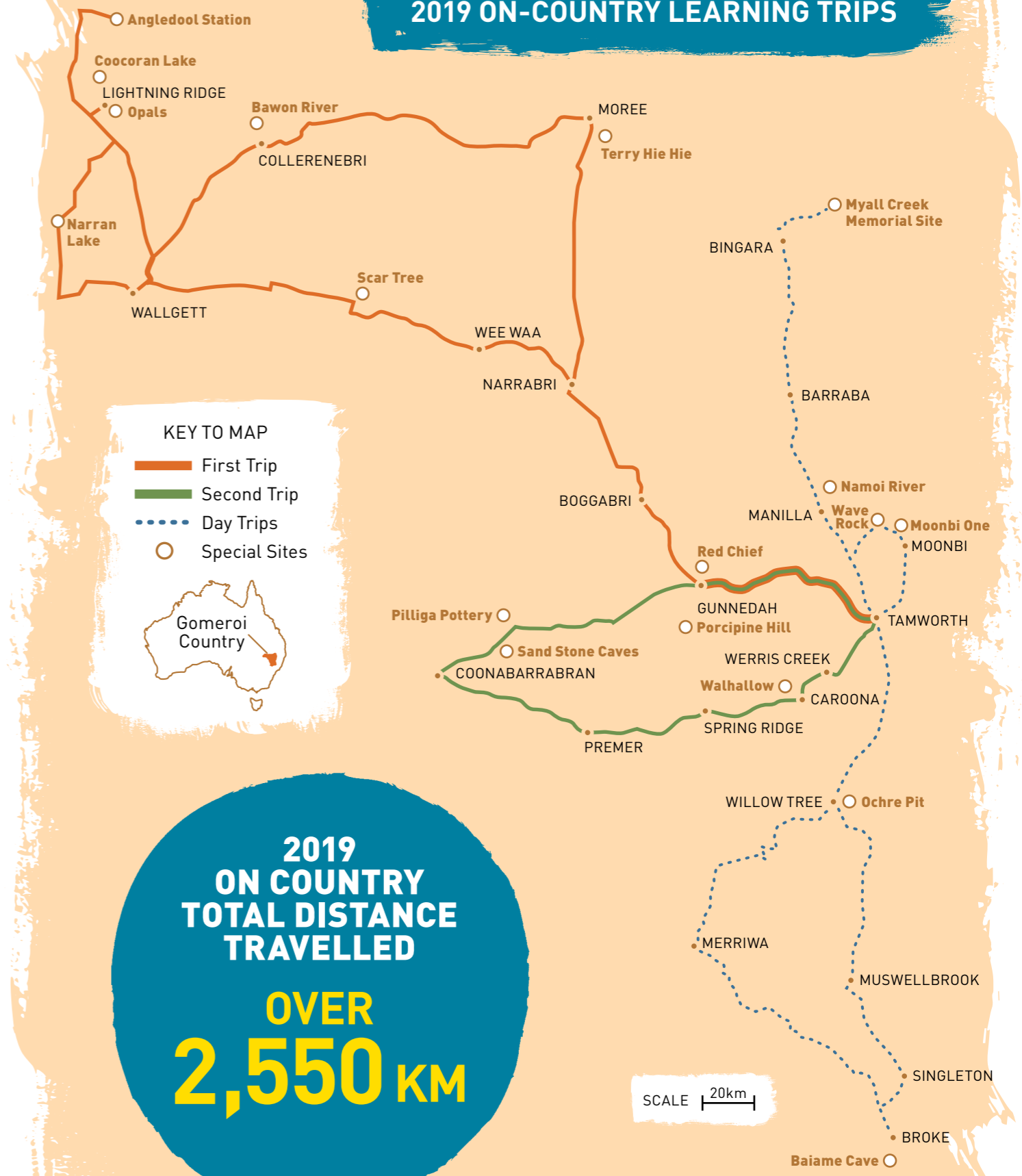


ON-COUNTRY LEARNING

Spending time out On Country is one of the most central learning experiences provided by the Gomeroi Culture Academy to our students each year. On Country learning reflects the didactic traditions, ways of knowing and passing on of knowledge that have been practiced in Australia for tens of thousands of years. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to continue to teach this way.



2019 ON-COUNTRY LEARNING TRIPS





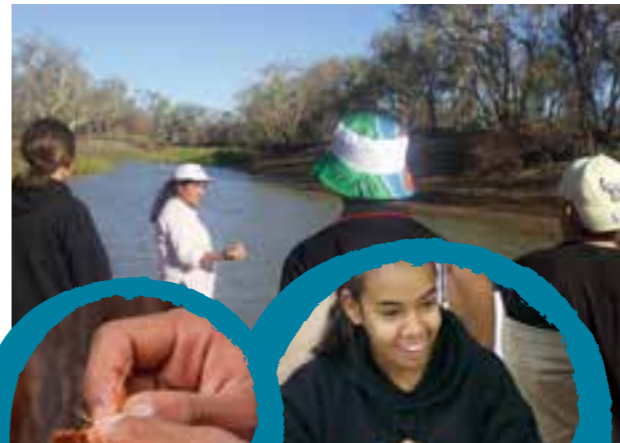
GCA students were shown the importance of connection to Country through visits to a range of places of significance around the region. By being On Country, students began to understand the diversity within sites. Throughout the year we visited rock paintings, water holes, former reserves, 'Dreaming sites' and unique ecosystems created from Ancestral stories.

Visiting these sites gave students the opportunity to better understand these stories, their importance, and the knowledge that is held within Country and the landscape.

Among the places visited by students were Moore Creek Caves, Lightning Ridge, Narran Lakes, Moree, Willow Tree, Gunnedah, and the Baiame Cave in Wanaruah Country. At each place, students learned stories that linked to the landscape, explored how to 'read Country', and were able to see first-hand the importance of storylines and Songlines.



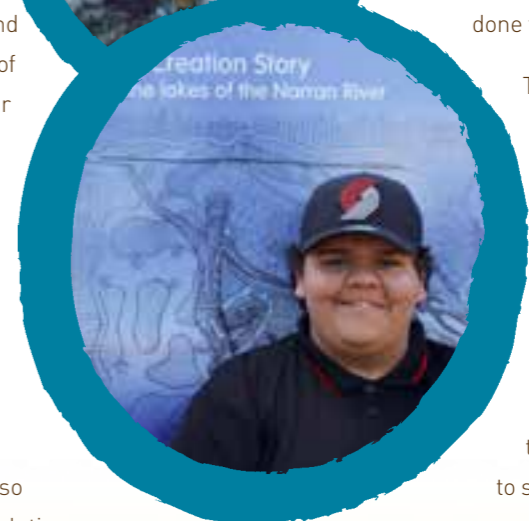
Visits on Country also provided opportunities to discuss the importance of bush foods and medicines. Students were surprised about the strength that is held in our native plants and were shown how the parts of some of our special plants are collected and used. The students commented on how they could feel something special – the connection made over many generations unfolding before them through shared knowledge and stories.



At an ochre quarry, the students had a chance to see and feel the ochre in its natural state and collected some to use later in the year. Some of the students used ochre to create artworks for the end of year exhibition, and some used it as body paint for performances throughout the year.

Exploring Country also allowed us to talk about the impact of external factors, such as farming and mining on Country, storylines, and access to traditional sites. Students' knowledge regarding these topics was very limited but grew over the year. We also talked about the government policies and legislation

that governs access to Country and our ability to collect traditional resources. This allowed a discussion on the current and past efforts that have been made to have our cultural rights recognised, and work that has been done to protect our sites locally.



The GCA students' many hours connecting to Country have helped them to develop a better understanding of what is happening around them. Many of them have said that the experience has given them a new set of eyes to see things that they could never see before.



GATHERINGS

The GCA's gatherings have included a range of activities and experiences that are designed to support students to gain a stronger understanding of who they are. During the gatherings students have been encouraged to identify some of their own personal values and look at how these values impact their decision making, day-to-day behaviours, and relationships with others.

The types of values that have been explored throughout the year include respect, trust, responsibility, sharing, listening and honesty. Gatherings have provided opportunities for students to share their feelings and ideas in a safe space and this has led to great conversations that have explored a range of different topics and issues important to students within the group.



At all times, through some difficult and revealing conversations, the level of respect that students have shown to each other was inspiring. Despite attending different schools, students are building strong friendships and are starting to network and connect with each other in their social lives.

One focus of the gatherings was on family and collecting family stories which students shared. Students were then helped to understand these family connections and stories within the context of the Gomeroi kinship structure and its role in ensuring that everything and everyone is looked after. The students learned about different blood and skin groups, including the names for each position within the system (eg. your mother and mother's sister share a name because they share the same position), and have been able to take this new layer of knowledge back to their families and share it more broadly.

Gatherings have also been an opportunity to teach students about the importance of ceremony. Students were taught some Gamilaraay phrases to help acknowledge



Country, and a number of students extended this practice into their school assemblies and community gatherings throughout the year. The students also learned about the role that smoking ceremonies play within our cultural protocols.

By holding gatherings at local sites, students were able to familiarise themselves with local rock paintings and learn the lessons and stories that they describe. We were able to have authentic conversations around self-determination, support and unity, and learned the importance of having responsibility and consequences. The story of Yarraandu (the Southern Cross and Pointers) helped to guide a conversation about dealing with grief and loss.

This time spent on Country together has been vital to the students learning the importance of being comfortable with themselves, and being calm and still when things around them are moving fast. These lessons will assist them to manage difficult situations and decisions, and how to apply their values in a mindful way when faced with challenges into the future.

MENTORING

Gomeroi Culture Academy students were supported to create their Cultural Learning Plans which identified their own cultural areas of interest, and set goals for learning across the year. Students were then paired up with specific Cultural Mentors to assist them on the learning journey within their areas of focus.

Students' Cultural Learning Plans (CLP) highlighted a variety of passions they wanted to pursue, encompassing song and dance, weaving, native plant use, didgeridoo, art and storytelling, and Gomeroi language fluency.



All of our Gomeroi Culture Academy students have shown commitment to their Cultural Learning Plans, deepening their understanding in their area of focus with the support of their Cultural Mentors. Elements of what students accomplished within their CLPs were displayed at the end of year presentation, so students could share their journey with their family and friends.

Didgeridoo / Yidaki: Joash and Lyle worked with Bareki and Barega Knox to understand the story of the yidaki, and to practice skills and techniques including mastering circular breathing and making their own instrument. Joash performed yidaki at his school's NAIDOC Assembly and Lyle created his first yidaki from scratch learning how to source, shape, sand and wax his instrument. Once it was finished Lyle could not stop looking at it – he was so proud in achieving something he had always wanted to do.

Art and Storytelling: Tamia worked with mentor Bronwyn Spearim to understand the role that art plays in sharing stories, and how art, and its shared symbols, supported the sharing of knowledge between generations and between clan and nation groups.

Native Plant Use: Brianna and Alyce worked with mentor Lorrelle Munro to build skills in identifying and



understanding different plants. Under Lorrelle's guidance, the girls have learned to collect grass tree resin and giyawaan (kurrajong tree fibres), and used these in oil and rope-making respectively.

Weaving: April has also worked with Lorrelle Munro to understand the role that weaving plays in Gomeroi culture. April has learned different processes and techniques to make her own baskets, and is now comfortable creating a basket/bag from start to finish.

Gomeroi language: Latrell worked with Marc Sutherland to build up his Gomeroi vocabulary and understanding of the role of song in sharing stories. Significantly, Latrell performed an Acknowledgment of Country and two Gomeroi language songs in front of a 900-strong assembly. He has also created his own song and dance, telling the story of him fishing for Dhagaay (Yellowbelly) with his Dad.

STUDENT'S JOURNEY

Graduate - Latrell Allen

Latrell spent the year developing his knowledge of Gomeroid language - the language that his family has always been connected to. Throughout the year, Latrell has shown passion, commitment and growth, progressing from very limited knowledge to performing Acknowledgments in language at events of up to 1500 people, and sharing Gomeroid songs and language at a gathering of over 900 regional HSC students.

Latrell has gained confidence and strength in his identity and a clear view of his personal responsibilities. He has continued to excel at school where he will move into

Year 11 in 2020, taking on leadership roles to support younger students.

On a personal level, Latrell obtained his Ls and is hoping to get his Ps in early 2020. He has maintained employment, moving from KFC to a new job at Woolworths. Latrell was also selected to represent his community in the Australian Indigenous Oztag Team playing in Auckland, New Zealand.



Cultural Learning Plan goals

Over 2019, Latrell met all of his Cultural Learning Plan goals:

1. Become more confident in Gomeroid language.

This involved:

- ← Learning at least 100 Gomeroid words.
- ← Forming short sentences.
- ← Performing an Acknowledgement at a school and community function.

2. Understand the role of song in Gomeroid culture.

This involved:

- ← Spending time with knowledge holders of Gomeroid song.
- ← Learning at least 3 songs including their language and story.
- ← Creating a pair of clapsticks for performances.

3. Participate in the continuation of traditional story telling.

This involved:

- ← Creating a new song in language and performing this new song in front of family and friends at the GCA Graduation Ceremony.

Latrell's Journey

A record of personal reflections were kept throughout the year to evaluate Latrell's personal growth and development.

"When I am singing songs, I feel relaxed and connected. It is a great feeling to know that I am passing on my stories through songs to the next generation. It is like I am another link in the chain."



STUDENT'S JOURNEY

Graduate - Tamia Haines

Tamia focused on the intersection of storytelling, weaving and art in Gomeroid culture. Tamia's goals saw her spend time on Country collecting traditional materials, and learning the techniques and processes involved in preparing and using these.

Tamia graduated Year 10 at Tamworth High in 2019 and demonstrated tremendous growth in her self-awareness, confidence and communication skills throughout the year. Tamia maintained an almost perfect attendance record and showed dedication to her goals, putting in a lot of work between mentoring sessions. While Tamia prefers to achieve her goals away from the spotlight, through

the GCA program Tamia regularly pushed herself and stepped outside her comfort zone and as a result her voice has grown louder.

The artwork that Tamia presented at graduation shared a story of her family. She painted women sitting down and weaving, showing them connecting and dealing with stresses and anxieties through the process of weaving.



Cultural Learning Plan goals

Over 2019, Tamia met all of her Cultural Learning Plan goals:

1. Understanding the role of weaving in Gomeroid culture.

This has involved:

- ← Learning to identify, collect and prepare grasses.
- ← Create woven baskets.

2. Learning about the importance of storytelling through art.

This has involved:

- ← Learning Gomeroid stories.
- ← Visiting sites.
- ← Learning from knowledge holders.
- ← Collecting ochres.

3. Participating in the continuation of sharing story through art.

This has involved:

- ← Combining knowledge of weaving and art to share story.
- ← Completing an artwork for the GCA Graduation Ceremony.

Tamia's Journey

A record of personal reflections were kept throughout the year to evaluate Tamia's personal growth and development.

"Weaving teaches us about importance of following the process and paying attention to how things are done. Weaving has taught me patience and has helped me overcome the feeling of being overwhelmed and anxious."



GRADUATION CEREMONY



In December, all seven of the GCA's 2019 students were recognised for their hard work and graduated at a special ceremony. Together they celebrated with over 150 close family, friends, school staff and the GCA team.

Throughout the year, each participant spent time with their Cultural Mentor to deepen their understanding in specific

cultural areas of their own choosing. The graduation celebrated the growth and success of participants in 2019 and allowed them a chance to display or perform what they had learned.



Latrell had focused on learning Gomeri language and song. At the graduation he performed two songs that he had learned during the year as well as a song that he wrote himself, sharing the story of him going fishing for yellowbelly with his dad. This was the first time in generations that anyone from his family had sung songs in Gomeri. Latrell performed in front of his family and friends who were all ecstatic with his efforts.

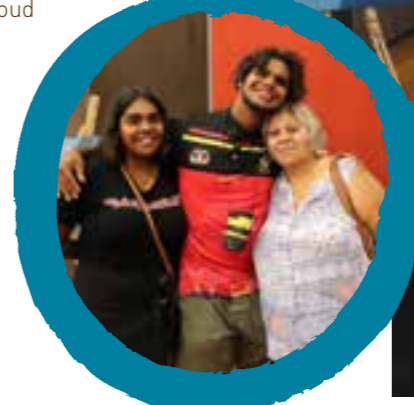
Another participant had focused on learning bush medicine and spent the year walking in the bush with their cultural mentor identifying different plants. After learning about the plants and collecting them, she was taught how to extract the medicines and make them safe for consumption. The plants she can now use include quinine, sandalwood, eurah, gumbi gumbi and eucalyptus from which she has created tonics, soaps, candles and ointments. These were on display at the graduation with parents and community proud to see these traditions and knowledge being passed on.

On the graduation night, students received individual woven dilly bags created by Yinarr Maramali. Each

bag was woven using the colours of different Australian birds, chosen because they shared a special connection with the student. Graduates also received a hard-cover photo book with photos and individual quotes from throughout the year. This book will remind them of their journey and the special connections that they have made.

The graduation was also supported by the GCA's Alumni of 2018 who were invited to dance to the newly learned songs, as other participants accompanied on the didgeridoo. All graduates are recognised and supported as young leaders within the community and their journeys and graduation have received an overwhelmingly positive response via local media outlets and on social media.

They now join the proud members of the GCA Alumni where they will continue to be supported to grow and will provide direction and input to the GCA moving forward.



ALUMNI

“Every time
I paint up and
share my culture
I know that
I am making
my old people
happy.”

MaKalyn Brown
2018 CGA Alumni

Last year's graduates have continued to be a part of the GCA Program, with a number of Alumni gatherings run throughout the year, and GCA continuing to support Alumni-led projects. Furthermore, over 2019 GCA put in place formal opportunities for Alumni to identifying priorities for their ongoing involvement with the Academy. This input will ensure that the program has been shaped by the wants and needs of young people, and that current participants are well supported into the future.

Alumni gatherings held on Country were a chance to share cultural stories and knowledge as well as personal stories and experiences, and it was great to see the Alumni reconnect. They commented how relaxing it was to be back out in the bush and that it felt like their batteries were recharged.

Alumni have also been active within the community, demonstrating leadership and having a positive impact on others. They were involved in running a number of Gomeroy dance workshops in the lead up to 2019's NAIDOC Week which saw over 100 young people participate in a NAIDOC Corroboree led by the Gomeroy Dance Company.

On a personal level, our Alumni have been taking steps in the right direction with three more students obtaining their learners permits, two starting school-based apprentices and one starting a career in cultural education.

Two key Alumni projects stand out from across the year. During 2018, our Alumni wanted to find a way to make language and stories more accessible to community, and this has motivated them to work together to create their own language resource during 2019. Besides sharing it with their schools, students felt it would be great to see the resource made available to younger children and this year, they have donated a full copy to the Birrelee MACS Preschool and Long Day Care service in Tamworth. Birrelee's Director Rachael Phillips said that Birrelee

will use the Gomeroy Language Resource to help share language and stories with their children and families, to help build up their cultural identity.

Secondly, it was with great pleasure that the GCA was able to support two Alumni to join Director Marc Sutherland at the 18th National Symposium on Indigenous Music and Dance, held at Monash University in early December. For Maene and Makalyn, the trip represented their first time on a plane and first visit to Melbourne. The Symposium boasted an impressive program of guest speakers and knowledge holders, a highlight was the opportunity to sit with, and learn from cultural leaders including senior Anangu woman Inawinytji Williamson and their Bupa Brian Djangirrawuy Garawirrtja, and his wife Renelle from North East Arnhem Land.

At the end the Symposium, our Alumni danced with other NSW delegates, sharing dance and ceremony with Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon. Ken Wyatt MP, who personally spoke to Maene and Makalyn, congratulating them on their passion and dedication.



OUTCOMES AND IMPACT



The GCA is focused on supporting our students to develop a strong personal foundation on which to build and grow. Our conversations around leadership, life by design, and putting personal values into action are seeing students do some amazing things both inside and outside of the school grounds.

A large element of the GCA is about giving back to community and our Alumni are reaching a level where they are confident and capable to share some of the cultural practices they have learned. These students are now running workshops within their schools and across

communities. Some of the students lead school dance groups, performing at assemblies, presentations and special events. We are proud that over 2019, our students have shared their knowledge and strength of culture face-to-face with over 1200 people across the region.

A number of other key events over 2019 have highlighted the broader impact that the GCA, its teachings, and our students can have across the region.



“As an Early Childhood Teacher and a Gomerioi Yinarr, I can confidently say that the Gomerioi Cultural Academy has a significant and positive impact on our community... their ongoing, strong connection to education and culture is inspiring.”

Rachel Phillips
Director of Birrelee MACS

Our current GCA students and Alumni played an active role in recognising and celebrating the 2019 NAIDOC theme – “Voice, Treaty, Truth” – across Tamworth and the region. Both groups of students were recognised for their actions, and individually they received many awards celebrating their achievements academically, athletically, and across the community. Alumni Maene Trindall took centre stage in the role of MC for Tamworth’s NAIDOC Family Fun Day and excelled in it, capturing the attention of many people, including the Local MP Kevin Anderson. He is now receiving invitations to MC other events.

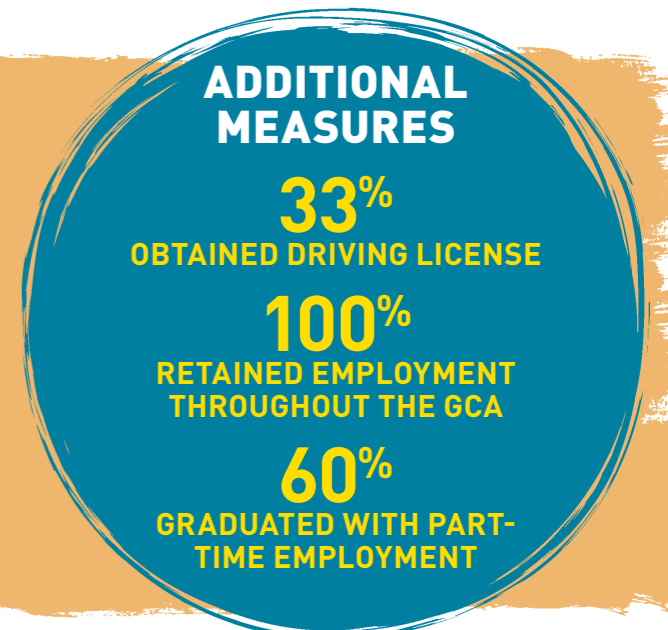
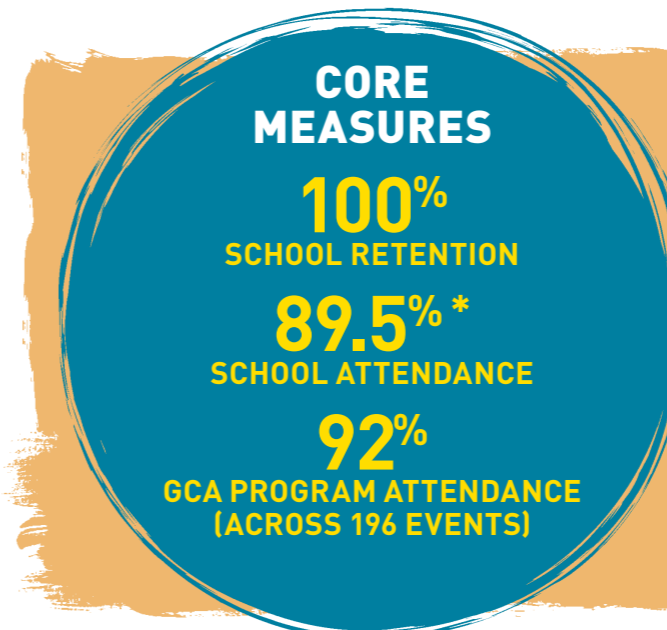
In June, GCA students and our 2018 Alumni attended the Memorial of the Myall Creek Massacre that took place on



Gamilaroi Country between Bingara and Delungra in 1838. The memorial event allowed students to better understand some of the horrific events that occurred across our region and see first-hand the efforts being made to recognise their impact. GCA students were invited to share song and dance at the Official Ceremony where they talked about the strength and resilience that lives within our community.

On 1 December, Tamworth answered a national call to a “Nation Dance” where people across Australia danced simultaneously to give love and strength back to Gunima (Mother Earth). Nation Dance built on conversations throughout the year about responsibility to look after Country and connections between different language groups. In Tamworth, GCA Alumni and Gomerioi Dance Company led dance workshops immediately before the event, teaching over 100 dancers aged 1–80. It was incredible to see our young people’s confidence and knowledge, and their impact at a community level. A 40 minute dance was held, with current GCA students and Alumni playing a significant role in leading the performance and supporting others.

Finally, the Alumni gifted a set of their 2018 Gomerioi Language Resources to Birrelee MACS, providing the staff with easier access to cultural stories and language. Staff have been using the resources regularly for units of work and activities, and it is a source of pride that our pre-schoolers are hearing our stories at an early age as part of their foundational education.



*up almost 10% from 80.1% in 2018

THE GCA TEAM



Marc Sutherland - Director

Marc is a proud Gomeroid and Ngurabal man who has grown up in Tamworth with strong family connections to Manilla and Glen Innes. An experienced

youth worker and facilitator, Marc has held a number of national leadership roles over 12 years including National Program Manager for the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Academy. He founded the Gomeroid Culture Academy in 2018 as Director, and takes on the cultural mentor role for language and song.



Bronwyn Spearim - Cultural Mentor

Bronwyn is a Gomeroid Yinarr, born in Moree and raised in Tamworth, and has been a proud member of Yinarr Maramali since 2014. Through

her unique artworks Bronwyn has been able to share Gomeroid stories locally, regionally and nationally. As a mother, Bronwyn brings not only her knowledge of Gomeroid art but her years of experience supporting young people across the region.



Lorrelle Munro - Program Manager

Gomeroid Yinarr Lorrelle Munro (Kennedy) was born and raised in Tamworth/Moonbi. Lorrelle is a Co-Director of Yinarr Maramali and shares

her intermate knowledge of weaving as a valued Cultural Mentor. Lorrelle is passionate about her family, her community and her country's wellbeing and this passion has seen her work both within her community as well as internationally. Lorrelle has been mentoring young people and managing programs across the region for well over a decade.



Amy Hammond - Program Coordination

Amy is a Gamilaroi Yinarr who was born in Moree and raised between there, Wellington, and Tamworth. Amy is a Co-Director of Yinarr Maramali and

is a WAAPA Production and Design graduate with a strong career in the Performing Arts dating back to 2004. Amy has held resident positions within First Nations companies such as Bangarra Dance Company, Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre and Ilbijerri Theatre and brings that experience to assist with the GCA program coordination.



Bareki Knox - Cultural Mentor

Bareki is a proud Gomeroid man from Tamworth, who has connections to Moree, Boggabilla and Toomelah. He joins the GCA team

as a cultural mentor, bringing with him an in-depth knowledge of the yidaki (didgeridoo) that he has developed by spending time with knowledge holders over many years. Bareki has spent 10 years as a youth worker, mentoring young people, and has worked nationally to revitalise cultural knowledge and strength.



LOOKING AHEAD

School-based Workshops

Over three months from August to October 2019, the GCA facilitated a series of one day workshops in schools, supporting Year 7 and 8 students to build on their cultural identity. Nine workshops were run across five high schools including Peel, Tamworth, Oxley, Farrer and McCarthy Catholic College. In total the workshops engaged 180 Aboriginal students and were extremely well received by local schools and the Tamworth Local AECG. A number of the schools have booked in for additional workshops to be run in Term 1, 2020.

The workshops covered an introduction to Gomeroid language and allowed students to practice an Acknowledgment to Country. Students then worked on identifying their personal values, and were walked through activities which demonstrated how values impact on decision making. Students also learned about Gomeroid

songs and dance, practicing and performing two Gomeroid dances, learning their songs and the role that they play in sharing aspects of Gomeroid culture.

The workshops not only supported young students, but provided an insight into the GCA and a chance to meet some of the GCA staff and mentors, piquing the interest of many students. A number of Year 8 students asked about the 2020 GCA application on the workshop day, and a large number of applications were received from students who attended.

The Gomeroid Culture Academy would like to acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal Education Officers at each of the schools for organising the workshops and we are looking forward to delivering more workshops in 2020.



PARTNERS



The success of the GCA would not be possible without our valued partners, who ensure that the GCA can make a significant difference in the lives of young people and the world around them. The success of 2019 has been made possible by the generosity and support of likeminded people and organisations. Thank you for supporting our vision.

Yinarr Maramali

Yinarr Maramali (YML) is a Gomeroid women's business based on Country (Tamworth, NSW) that centres on the wellbeing of their Community and Country through the continuation of their local weaving culture. Yinarr Maramali brings together generations of Gomeroid yinarrgal (women) and miyaygal (girls), who share their stories through hand-woven creations, using only natural materials from Country and responsible materials that are gentle on the environment.

Yinarr Maramali is 100 percent owned and operated by local Gomeroid Yinarr. Every purchase supports the YML Weavers and their cultural community programs. The name 'Yinarr Maramali' means 'made by Gomeroid women's hands'.

Gomeroid Dance Company

The Gomeroid Dance Company consists of proud Gomeroid men looking to celebrate the strength of our culture and share that with the world. Formed in 2006, the Gomeroid Dance Company's aim is to increase the cultural knowledge and understanding of all people to support better outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. Strongly focusing on traditional

Gomeroid dance, the company also incorporates other cultural practices to generate strong connections and self-development.

The Gomeroid Dance Company have included GCA participants and Alumni in their performances across NSW and have used their networks to create memorable experiences and greater opportunities.

Both Yinarr Maramali and the Gomeroid Dance Company have assisted in the design of our program and supported students at all of our gatherings and on-Country learning experiences. They have been vital in building and maintaining positive relationships with students, working as cultural mentors for students, supporting student-led workshops and ensured that our students have had the opportunity to grow through connections with experienced cultural practitioners.

The Tamworth Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)

The Aboriginal Education Consultative Group provides advice on all matters relevant to education and training with the mandate that this advice represents the Aboriginal community viewpoint. The AECG play an active role within the Tamworth community and we take pride in having their support and endorsement at a local, regional and state level.



Schools

The GCA is not an alternative to school. Our commitment is to work closely in partnership with schools and assist them to support students to flourish. We would like to acknowledge and congratulate Peel High School, Tamworth High School and Farrer Memorial Agriculture High School for their ongoing commitment to the GCA.

We would like to make special mention of the support of the schools' AEOs - Billy Stanton, Kelli Allan and Tom Leroy-Larhs - along with their respective school Principals. With their support, students were able to share experience and learning across the school, organising students to speak at formal events, lead cultural workshops and provide input to some of the cultural programming internally.





GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY

GOMEROI CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

The Gomerai Culture Academy harnesses the strength and cultural knowledge that exists within our community. Through the GCA, students have the opportunity to connect with respected cultural knowledge holders across the community and continue Gomerai cultural practices. Our unique program enables our young people to not only learn more about their culture, but to also strengthen and develop their own identity. This, in turn, builds confidence which supports students to have a greater opportunity for success throughout their lives.

Our Logo: artist Tom Flanders

The GCA logo symbol represents the presence of two worlds. Through a cultural lens, we can see the footprint of Dhinawan (Emu) travelling Country and through another lens we can see an arrow pointing in the opposite direction. This symbol teaches that we must be able to see the world from both perspectives.



CONTACT US

The Gomerai Cultural Academy has been designed and is delivered by the Gomerai Dance Company and Yinarr Maramali, who have been, both formally and informally, mentoring young people in the local community for over a decade. Both the Gomerai Dance Company and Yinarr Maramali are active members of the community and are passionate about inspiring our next generation of leaders. The Gomerai Culture Academy is made possible by the ongoing and dedicated support of the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

Gomerai Culture Academy

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