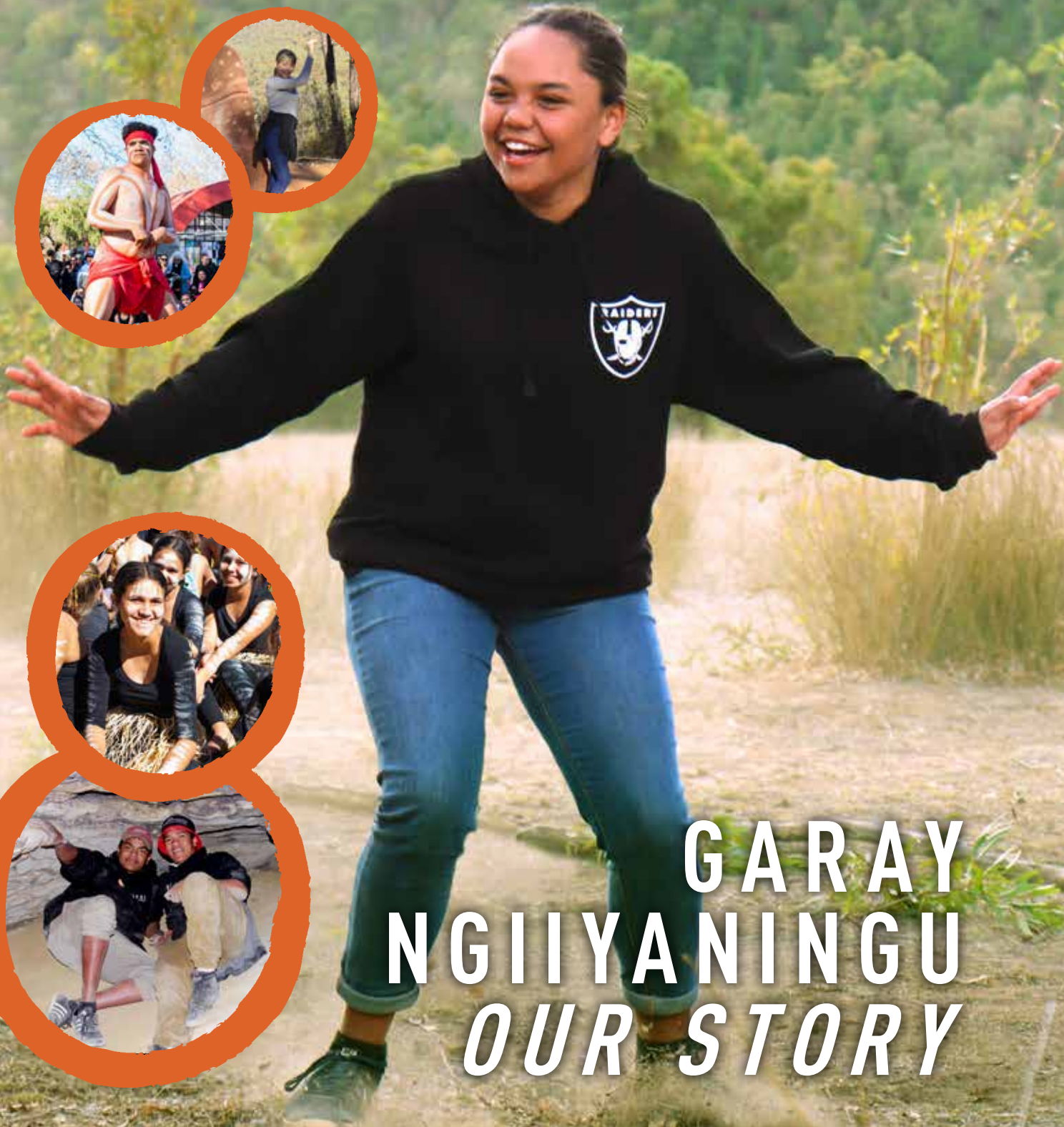


Giiir Maaru

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY OCTOBER 2018



GARAY
NGIYANINGU
OUR STORY



GOMEROI
CULTURE ACADEMY

*Creating a generation of
culturally strong leaders in our community.*

On Country Learning

GAMBU GUNUURRU, THE WARRUMBUNGLES, THE PILLIGA, AND UKERBARLEY

During the July School Holidays students in the GCA took part in an On Country Learning excursion to the northern parts of Gomeroi Country, to better understand the role that language and cultural practices play in sharing stories.

Our trip started with a short stop in Gunnedah where we visited the resting place of Gambu Gunuurru. We then made our way to Coonabarabran and the Warrumbungles. Here the students were introduced to Uncle Peter Thompson and given a guided tour of some of the special places close by.



Students learned the importance of 'Calling Out' to Country and were given some language to make this easier. Uncle Peter made clear some of the links between our cultural stories and the scientific analysis of the landscape. He explained that by having a better understanding of our language, these links become easier to identify as this information has been understood for thousands of years.



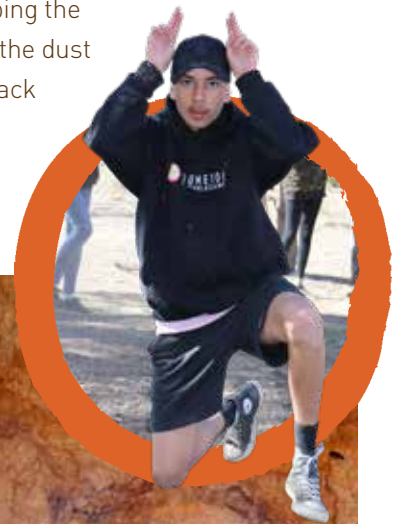
While in Coonabarabran, we met up with Buddy Robinson and travelled north into the Pilliga. Here, Buddy took us to some amazing places including the Sandstone Caves and Dandry George, where he shared some of the stories connected to the area.

With the Warrumbungles being a 'Dark-Sky Park', students had a clear view of the night sky, and could learn some of our stories about the stars. After

hearing these stories students were given the opportunity to spend some time with a local astronomer to look at the stars through a powerful telescope, identifying different planets, galaxies and constellations.

On our final day, we experienced some special moments with Marty Gordon and a few others at Ukerbarley National Park. Spending time at Ukerbarley gave us all a special feeling, as Marty showed us many places which hold valuable stories and knowledge. Marty talked about the importance of continuing culture and being a part of the legacy that has been given to us by our families.

After feeling the connection everyone broke out into song and dance, stomping the ground and kicking up the dust to celebrate and give back to Gunimaa and those who had danced there before.



GATHERINGS



things that they have experience during the year and new dances are currently being developed to support the sharing of these songs.

During the Gatherings, students set themselves a goal of learning 100 words or more in Gamilaraay. After learning different words and phrases, students concentrated on learning sentences focused on individual items including animals, plants and actions. By the end of the year, all students will have created educational posters which will connect these sentences in language and the stories that they have learned throughout the year.

Building on the experience that students had during their On Country Learning excursion, our students continued to build on their knowledge of Gamilaraay language.

During the Gatherings, students had a busy time this year, immersing themselves in language. Students practiced the 'Call Out to Country' shared by Uncle Peter Thompson and took turns in saying it as we walked Country. All students also learned an acknowledgement of Country and all made a commitment to Acknowledge Country at an event or function by the end of the year.

After having some fun and learning a few songs in Gamilaraay, students worked together to create new songs. These songs were based around some of the



MENTORING

As the year is moving forward, so are the works of the students during their mentoring sessions. Each student has been concentrating on learning more about their individual focus areas and preparing to have their projects finished by the Graduation Ceremony.

During mentoring sessions, the boys have been spending time with Brad Flanders who is supporting them to better understanding the role of song and dance in culture. They have also learned new songs and dances from Brad and have become more confident in the dances they had already been taught. The boys have also continued their efforts in wood carving and have already completed pairs of

boomerangs and clapsticks made from different woods, as well as a didgeridoo.

The girls have been spending time on a range of projects but have maintained a focus on weaving, with many amazing objects being made including bags, basket and skirts made from both recycled and natural materials. Mentoring sessions have also seen the creation of many artworks. The girls have begun work on large canvases and the sewing and design of a possum skin cloak.

With students becoming more confident with the knowledge they are learning, they are beginning to find new ways to pass on this knowledge, both appropriately and respectfully.



BECAUSE OF HER WE CAN NAIDOC WEEK 2018

Our students were very active this year during NAIDOC Week in support of the theme 'Because of her we can'.

The students were recognised by their schools for their academic, sporting and community efforts and received a number of awards.

All students were invited to take part in formal celebrations at NAIDOC ceremonies where they performed Acknowledgments to Country, and many songs and dances within their schools and across the community.

One of the students was the key note speaker at her school assembly, where she shared an emotional speech about her Grandmother and the impact that she has had on her life.

This year the Tamworth community hosted it's largest ever NAIDOC Corroboree and our students played an important role performing in the event. Students also participated in, and helped facilitate, weaving and dance workshops over four days leading up to the corroboree, and they supported over 120 other young participants.



STUDENT PROFILES

“CULTURE,
TO ME,
IS LIFE”



CALEB BERGAN

Caleb is a year 10 student, studying at Peel High School, who is passionate about his culture, being in the bush and playing sport. Though born in Bowral, Caleb moved to Tamworth where he is the brother to three younger brothers and sisters.

Caleb has been developing his leadership skills over the past few years and is leading the way in many areas. He has been a part of the Peel High Aboriginal Dance Group since year 7 and is now assisting in facilitating the workshops to ensure the strength of the group continues after he has left. Caleb has also represented his school and region in many sports including rugby league, touch football, oztag and cross country.

From the beginning of his time in the GCA, Caleb has been focused on his goals. He would like to continue to learn more about the role that song and dance play in culture and find more ways to pass this knowledge on respectfully. He also would like to learn more about the Didgeridoo and has begun to spend time with different Didgeridoo players to learn some new techniques.



“FAMILY IS
LIKE A BEATING
HEART, WITHOUT
IT YOU AIN'T
ALIVE.”

SHEENA RUTTLEY

Sheena is 15 years old and is an aspiring young woman with a goal of playing in the National Rugby League Women's Premiership (NRLW). Born in Tamworth, Sheena also has a strong connection to her family, which is spread mainly over northern New South Wales and southern Queensland.

The eldest of six children, Sheena has a strong appreciation of family and she takes every opportunity to sit and listen to their stories. Sheena loves spending time with her Nan and Pop – her favourite time is when she is out in the bush with her Pop at Mungindi.

Sheena is looking to better understand the steps, processes and knowledge needed to create a possum skin cloak. She is also learning about the importance of art, especially the use of different patterns and symbols. With this understanding, Sheena will be sharing her own story on these skins.

A stronger knowledge in Gamilaraay language is another focus for Sheena, as is a better understanding of the steps and processes to weaving baskets.

THE GOMEROI CULTURE ACADEMY STORY

Gomeroid Culture has been passed down between generations for thousands of years. Story-telling, dance, and other cultural practices such as weaving, have been integral to the development of cultural identity and values for young people.

The GCA harnesses the strength and knowledge that exists within our community to support our young people. The individually tailored program and mentorship will enable participants to learn more about their culture, strengthen and develop their own identity, and have a greater opportunity for success.

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 and be passionate about their future.

Giirr Maaru
("gear-er ma-roo")

THIS IS A POSITIVE PHRASE THAT MEANS WELL DONE, GOOD STUFF OR GREAT JOB. THE NAME HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO REFLECT AND RECOGNISE THE WORK THAT IS BEING ACHIEVED BY GCA STUDENTS WITHIN THE STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS IN THEIR LIVES.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Gomeroid Cultural Academy has been designed and is delivered by the Gomeroid 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 Gomeroid Dance Company and Yinarr Maramali are active members of the community and are passionate about inspiring our next generation of leaders. The Gomeroid Culture Academy is made possible by the ongoing and dedicated support of Joblink Plus.

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