WIRADJURI CONNECTIONS TO DARLINGTON POINT

... PAST AND PRESENT

Laura Toscan, Ashleigh Pardy, Tanaiya Coe,
Henry Lacey and Billy Reis-Burke

Darlington Point Public School

Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.
www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.
www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.
www.envirostories.com.au

WIRADJURI CONNECTIONS TO DARLINGTON POINT ... PAST AND PRESENT

Compiled by: Laura Toscan, Ashleigh Pardy, Tanaiya Coe, Henry Lacey and Billy Reis-Burke

Teacher: Helen Wood

School: Darlington Point Public School

Our Culture

In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about Aboriginal culture in their local communities. The program was generously funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

Creative Catchment Kids is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeeKdesigns education program.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and thank them for sharing their knowledge and culture with us.

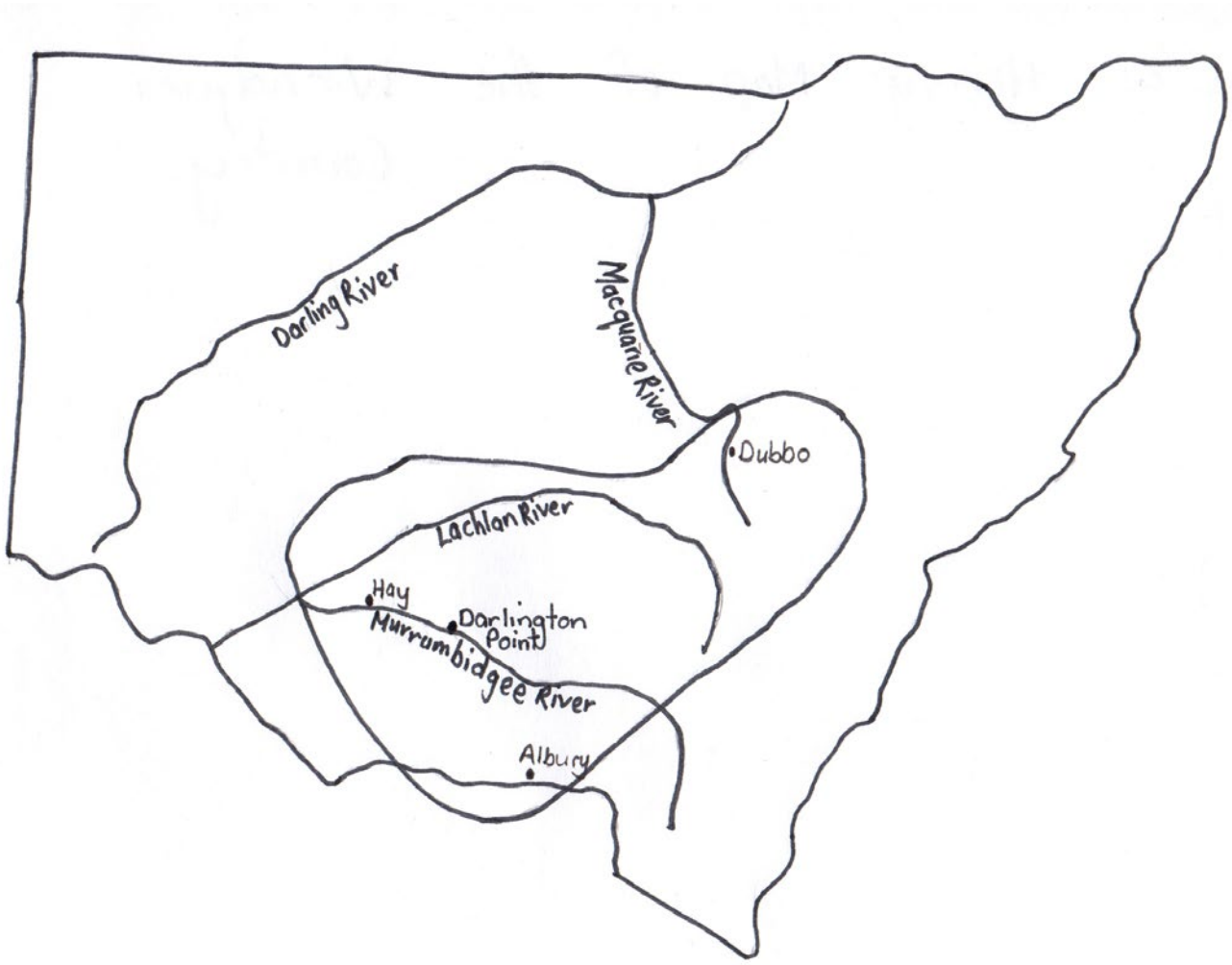
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images and/or names of people who have since passed away.

WELCOME TO DARLINGTON POINT

Darlington Point is a small town of just over one thousand people in the Riverina, New South Wales. It is on the Murrumbidgee River in Wiradjuri country. It is commonly known that north of the river is Darlington Point and south is Waddi.

Darlington Point Public School has a considerable Indigenous population and shows appreciation for Wiradjuri culture and traditions. This includes celebrating NAIDOC Day and recognizing our indigenous students through the Proud and Deadly Awards.

Clockwise from top left: Darlington Point township; Darlington Point Public School grounds; Darlington Point Public School building



WIRADJURI COUNTRY

Wiradjuri Country is the largest Aboriginal Nation in New South Wales.

The border of Wiradjuri Nation runs along to Dubbo, then west across to Willandra Creek and then down to Hay. The border then runs down to the Victorian border on to the Murray River where it travels to Albury and then onto Tumbarrumba. From there, it continues north along the edges of the mountains past Tumut and Gundagai and then onto Lithgow.

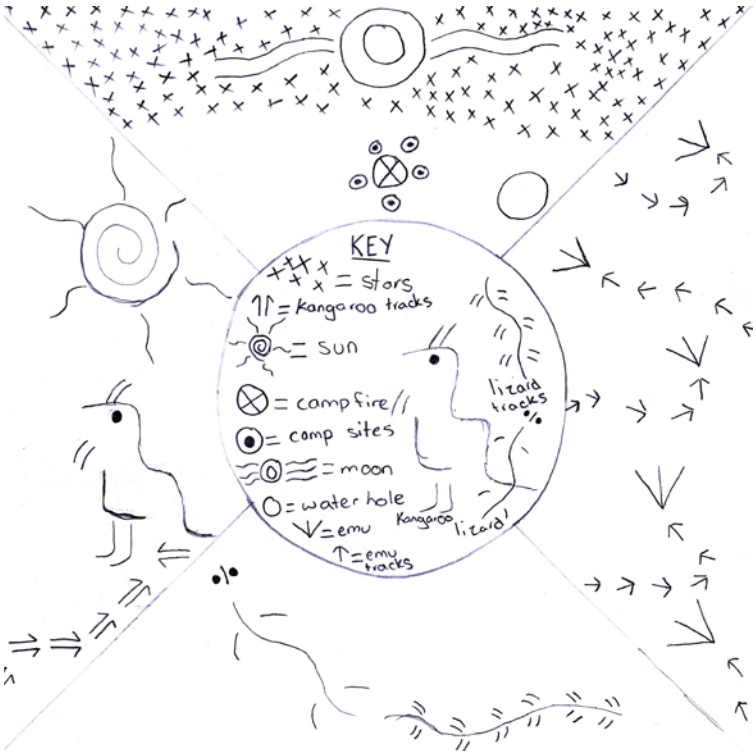
Some territories ran into others as it was not always known where the border ran. For example Lake Urana and the Murray River were shared areas.

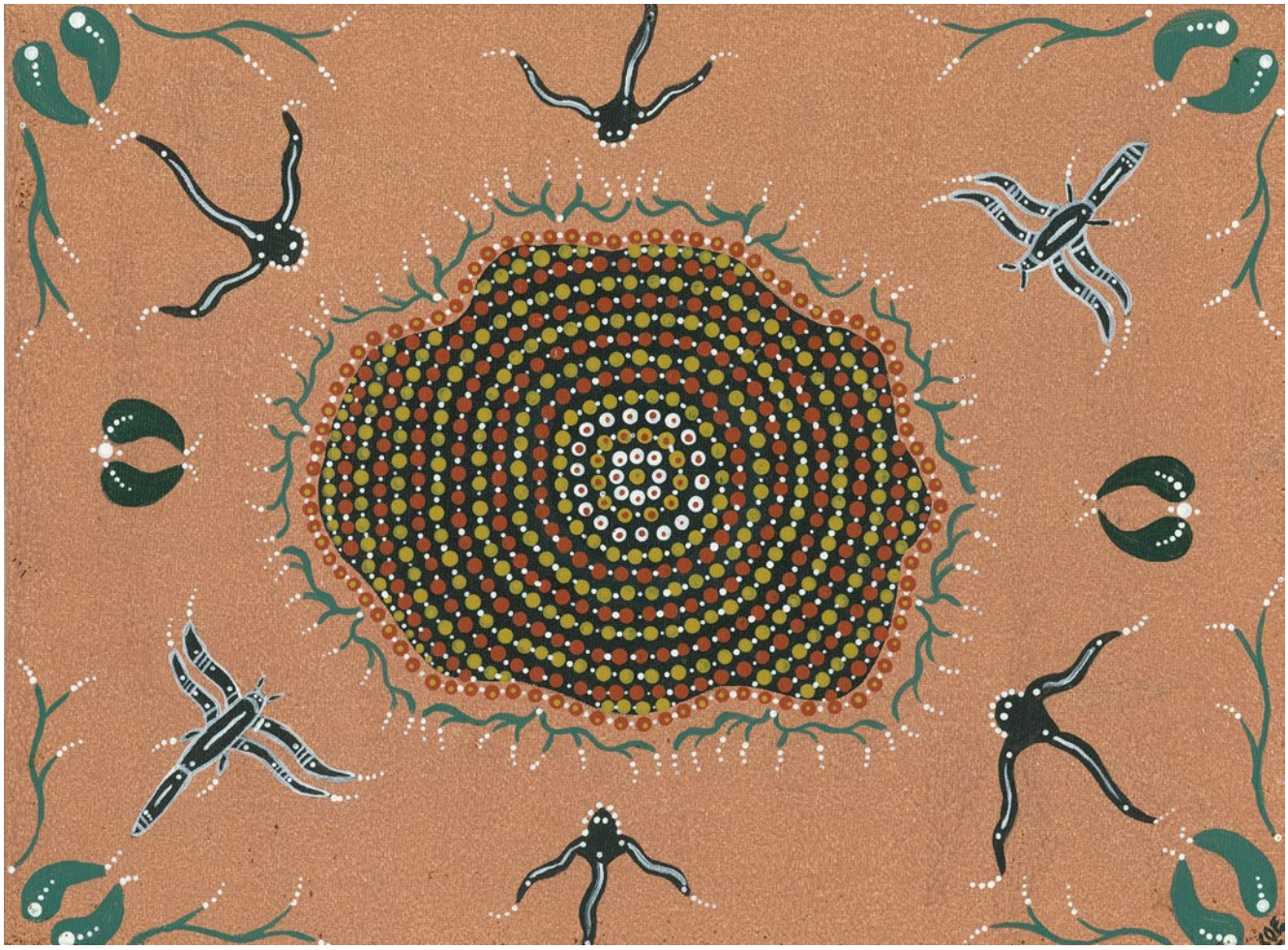
Wiradjuri territory is known as the land of three rivers. These include the Lachlan, Macquarie and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

NOW	WIRADJURI
Macquarie	Womboy
Lachlan	Gubri
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee

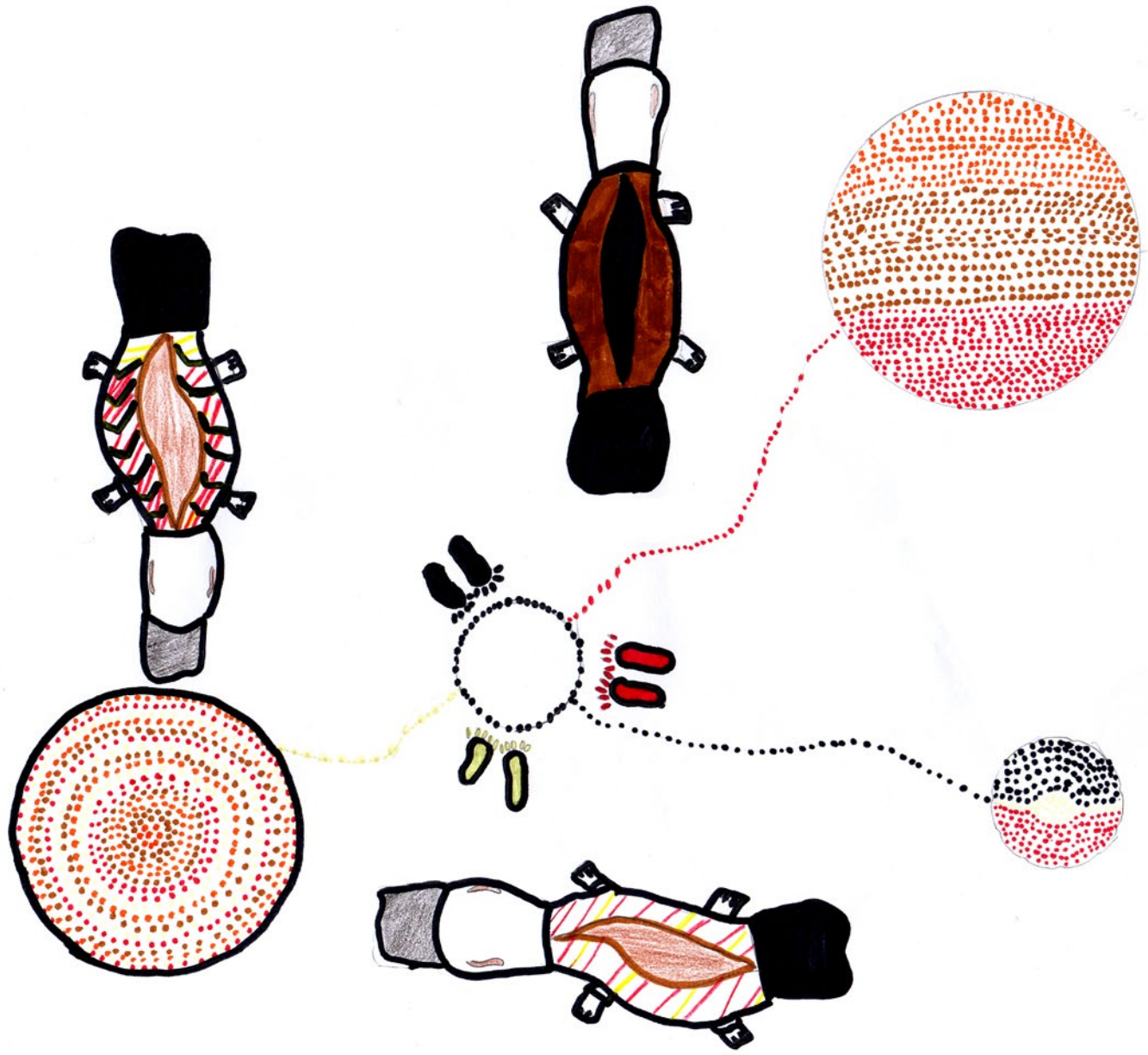
The Murrumbidgee River is the only river in Wiradjuri Country with the same traditional name.

The Wiradjuri language has almost died out of everyday spoken use. Wiradjuri language was only spoken never written down. Most words were for outside things like animals, plants and other things. Other words are mainly used for place names, for example Wagga Wagga means place of many crows. There were only words for one, two, and many; because they didn't count large numbers. Their family and relationships were really important in traditional life. That is why there are so many words to describe family and relationships. For example Guri (mother), Jerrabung (old man), Burai (boy) and Balli (baby).





Aboriginal art is an important part of their culture. It tells them about ceremonies and rituals. Tree carvings, ground designs and engravings were the main form of art. The people used ochre to paint their bodies for battle and for corroboree. For a paint brush they used a small green stick and flattened it by chewing on one end.



The Wiradjuri people have been living in Australia for thousands of years.

Their country was made up of hundreds of tribes living within Australia. These tribes were built around the spirits so they spoke the same language and believed the same things.

The Wiradjuri observed seasons and the relationship between them. They lived in peace with the land they lived on, taking only what they needed.

Wiradjuri people did not own the land, but had to look after it. These groups of men, women and children moved camp to find new food and supplies. Each group had their own piece of land to hunt and gather. The size of the land varied depending on food amounts.

The Wiradjuri believed they came from the Dreaming where everything was created from the land. The Wiradjuri people pass down their knowledge through dance, music and the telling of Dreamtime stories.

Songlines are one of the most important cultural stories to the Wiradjuri people. Songlines pass through the land telling dreaming or creation stories. The paths of Songlines can be found in traditional art, songs, dance and stories.

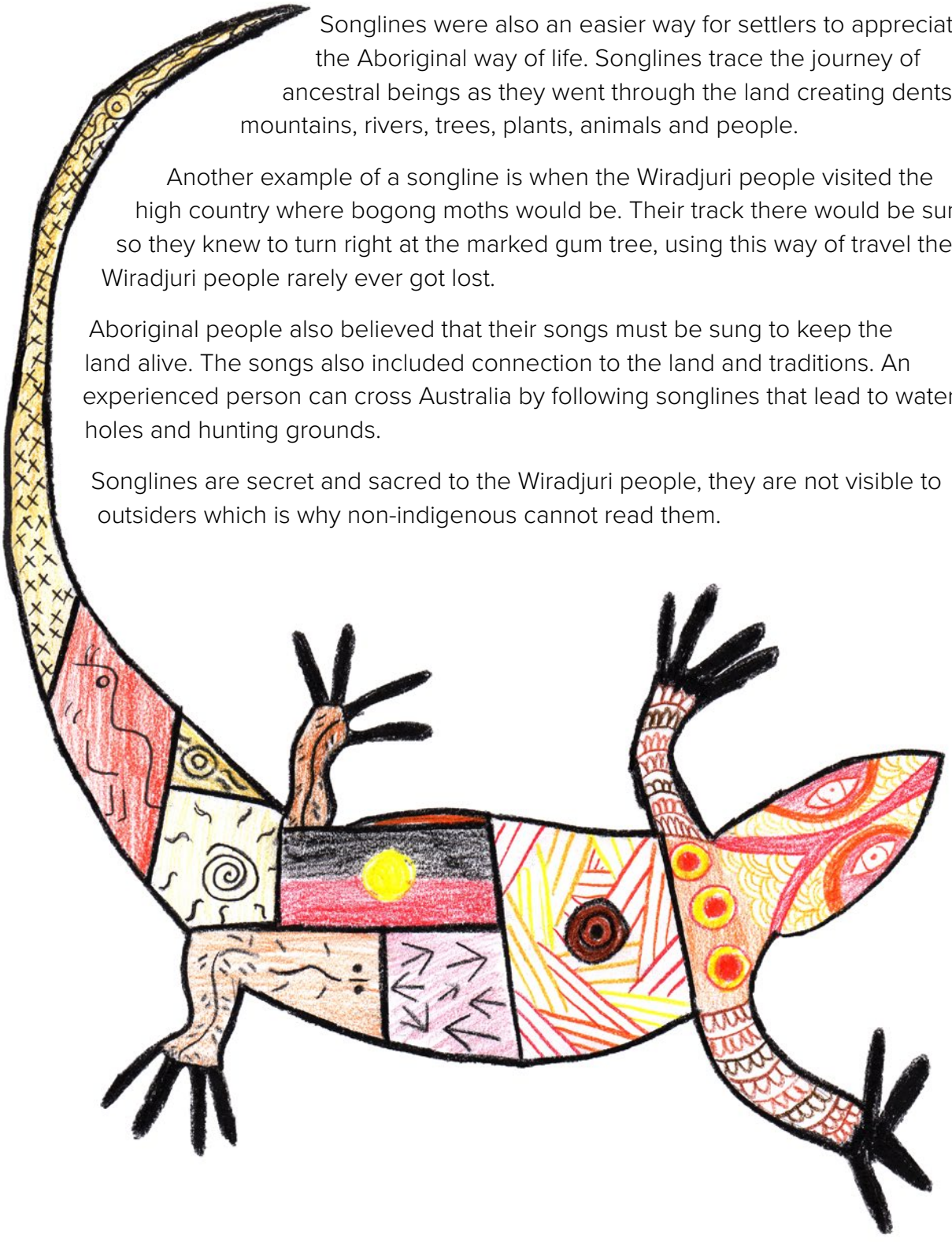
Nearly everything in the natural world would have a songline to go with it. Kengal the rock near Wagga Wagga is one example of a Songline. It is a special and ancient Wiradjuri place connecting the land, the lore and time.

Songlines were also an easier way for settlers to appreciate the Aboriginal way of life. Songlines trace the journey of ancestral beings as they went through the land creating dents, mountains, rivers, trees, plants, animals and people.

Another example of a songline is when the Wiradjuri people visited the high country where bogong moths would be. Their track there would be sung so they knew to turn right at the marked gum tree, using this way of travel the Wiradjuri people rarely ever got lost.

Aboriginal people also believed that their songs must be sung to keep the land alive. The songs also included connection to the land and traditions. An experienced person can cross Australia by following songlines that lead to water holes and hunting grounds.

Songlines are secret and sacred to the Wiradjuri people, they are not visible to outsiders which is why non-indigenous cannot read them.



Land and rivers were very important, and although there was no ownership of the land, the people were known as it's caretakers. Each part of the land had its own areas and each area had its own keeper and he was called Gunjung, the man with authority. It was his responsibility to protect the land and the animals on it.

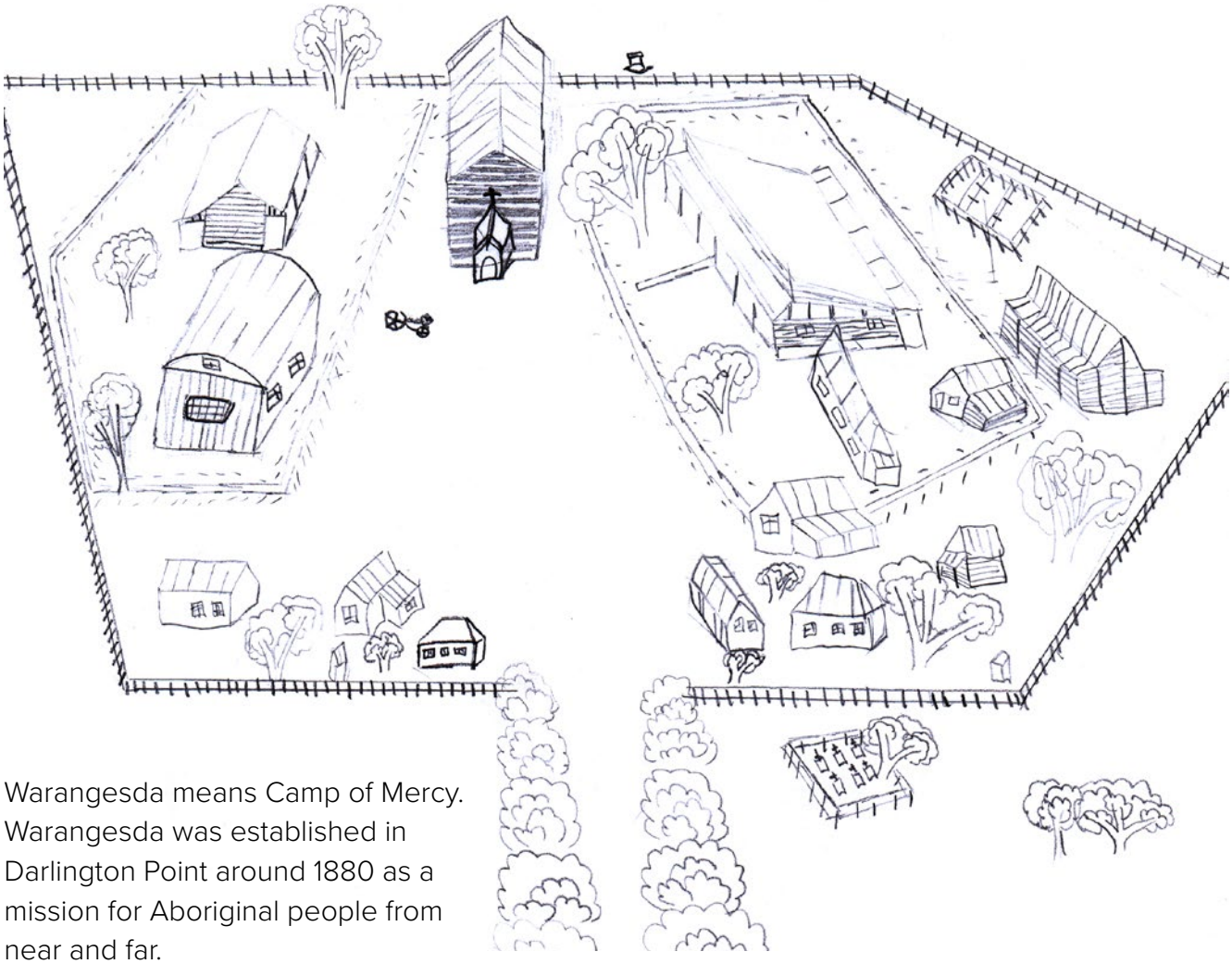
Shelters were a simple structure made from sticks and covered in leaves or sheets of bark. They were built on the south or western side of the camp so that smoke from the fire did not blow into them.

The camp sites were never near initiation grounds because they were sacred areas. They often moved camp sites when food supply ran low.

The Wiradjuri people were hunters and gatherers. The men hunted the animals such as kangaroos and emus, while the women and young children gathered plant food such as seeds, fruit and nuts.

Everything they needed was from the land, however they still had to make sure that the land was managed correctly to insure their resources were not used up.

WARANGESDA MISSION



Warangesda means Camp of Mercy. Warangesda was established in Darlington Point around 1880 as a mission for Aboriginal people from near and far.

Warangesda consisted of many buildings including, a school, a girl's dormitory, a church, a rations store with a butcher shop addition and a quarters for single men.

HEATHER'S STORY

Heather Edwards is a 79 year old local Wiradjuri woman whose mother was born on Warangesda Mission in 1909.

She recalled some of the history of the mission through stories that she has been told over the years. Heather told us that she is a little cautious about what she talks about with children as it was not all good back then.

When Heather's mother was growing up on Warangesda Mission they always thought of it as their own little town. They worked for themselves- growing fruit trees, farming rice and hunting kangaroos.

Heather told us that some of the girls at the Mission were taken away from their families and put into the Cootamundra Girl's Home. Heather's grandmother, Mrs. Murray was told to have her three daughters ready to be collected and she told them no way were they taking her children.

When Heather's grandfather found out, he and several other families made a plan for the return of the Home Manager. When the Manager arrived the next day and demanded to take the children, Mr. Murray came out with a double barrel shotgun and said there was no way anyone was taking his children from him and his wife.

The taking of these children became known as the Stolen Generation.

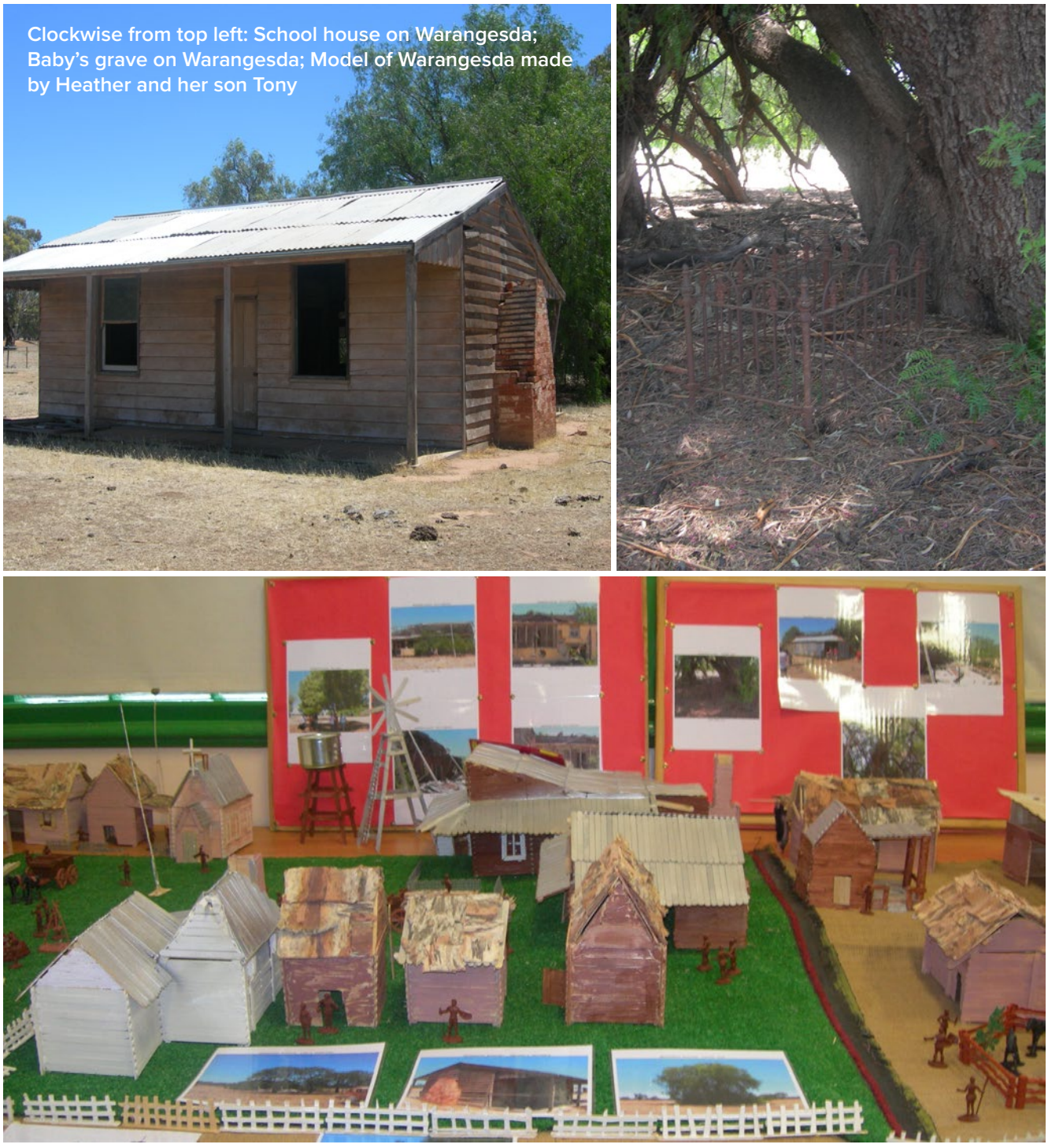
An early home of the Edwards family

Up to 200 people lived on Warangesda at some times.

Mrs. Murray always spoke well of Warangesda and growing up there when retelling stories to her family. Most of the families were quite large. The children on the Mission had their own school because they were not allowed to come to the Darlington Point School as the town wanted to keep it all “white”.

In 1920, Heather’s grandfather started corresponding with the government to allow the Aboriginal children to come to the town school. He believed that his children, and all children, deserved the right to an education.

The Warangesda Mission closed in 1927 and the people left on the Mission at this time relocated to another site on the other side of the river that became known as the Police Mission or the Sandhills.



Clockwise from top left: School house on Warangesda; Baby’s grave on Warangesda; Model of Warangesda made by Heather and her son Tony

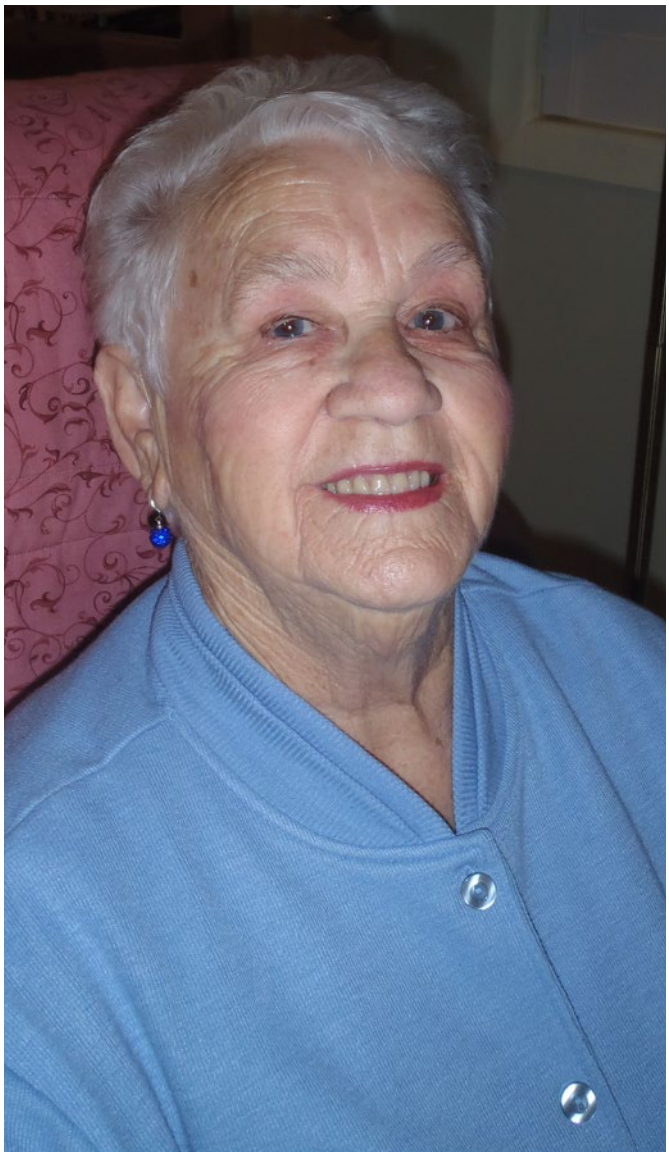
JUNE'S STORY

June was born in Darlington Point on the other side of the river. The family had a small house near the wharf, along with several other families. She lived there until she was seven years old when the family moved to another part of Darlington Point. June attended the local primary school and then went to Griffith High School.

June's father wasn't Aboriginal and her mother, Vera, was part Aboriginal and came from Queensland and wasn't Wiradjuri. Her grandmother Minnie had to get permission from the 'Protector of Aborigines' before she was allowed to marry a white man. She was quite young as well.

When June finished school she moved to Sydney and lived there with her aunt for 2 years, working in a sewing factory. She then moved back to Darlington Point and got a job on the telephone exchange, where she worked for 2 years until she met her husband. The exchange operated 24 hours a day. The women worked up to 10.30pm and then the men did the night shift.

After June married she went away for a few years, before returning to Darlington Point where she has lived in the same house for 49 years.



Clockwise from left: June Weymouth; Minnie, June's grandmother, lived on Warangesda; June as a little girl.

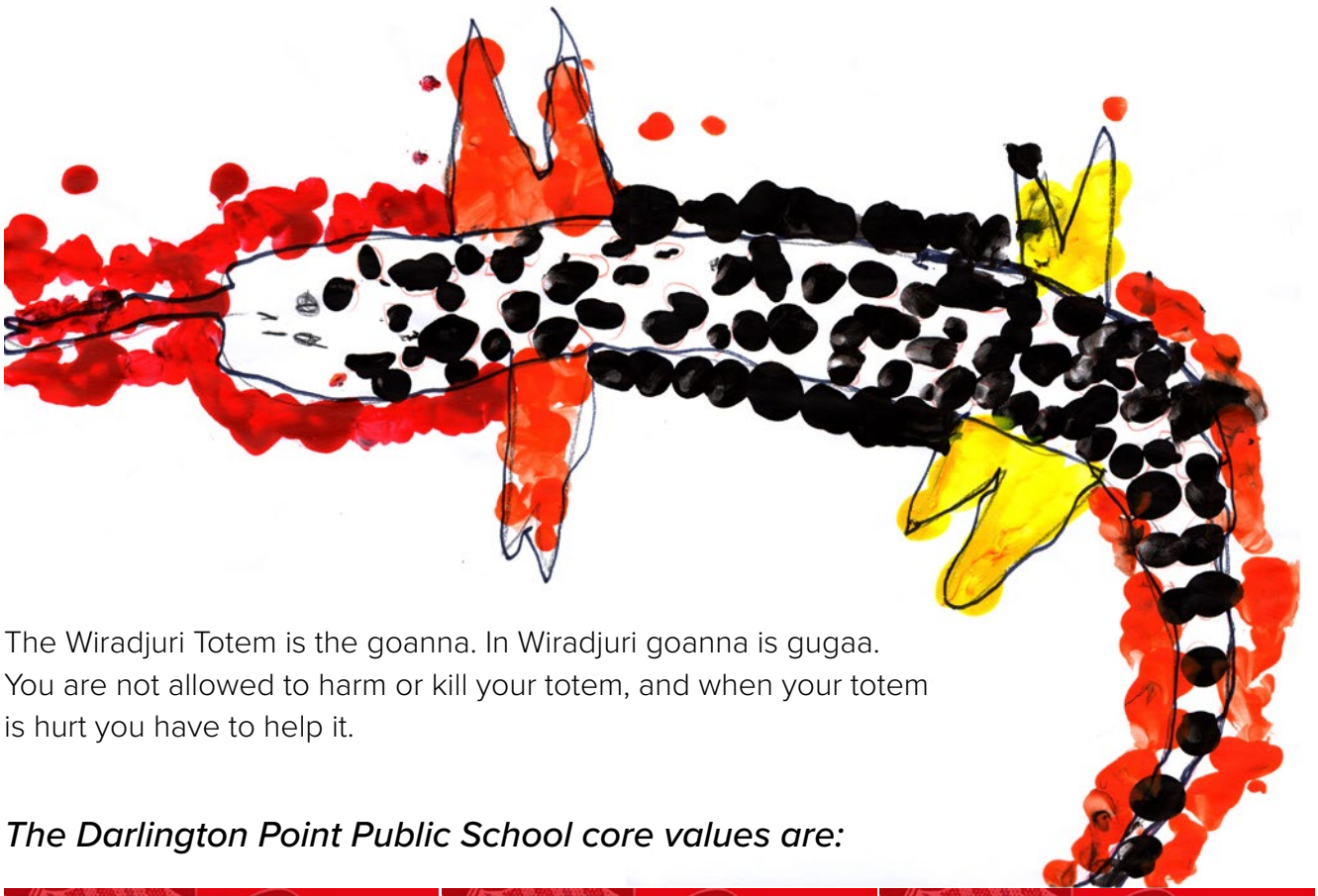
June talked about the Mission on the other side of the river that was set up after Warangesda closed. It is referred to as the Police Mission or the Sandhills. Several families lived there and they had their own church. Every year they had a games day with races and other activities, until this Mission closed. When this happened, there wasn't available housing in Darlington Point so some of these families moved to Griffith and Narrandera.

Due to the shortage of housing for Aboriginal families, Waddi Housing was established. June's sister, Jean, ran it for 10 years. When she took it over it was quite run down, so they worked hard to get it going again. At the start there were about 6 houses available, now there are about 23.

Jean got houses built here in Darlington Point. Since her death not a single house has been built.

June has been a director of Waddi Housing and is still part of a small group that meet there each week on a social basis. Waddi Housing operates twice a week on Wednesday and Friday and anyone looking for housing has to have lived in the town for six months before they can apply.

One last thing that June talked about is, unfortunately a lot of the Aboriginal culture has been lost from this area. June and her daughter Megan, know a little Wiradjuri and sometimes use words in conversation without even realising.



The Wiradjuri Totem is the goanna. In Wiradjuri goanna is gugaa. You are not allowed to harm or kill your totem, and when your totem is hurt you have to help it.

The Darlington Point Public School core values are:

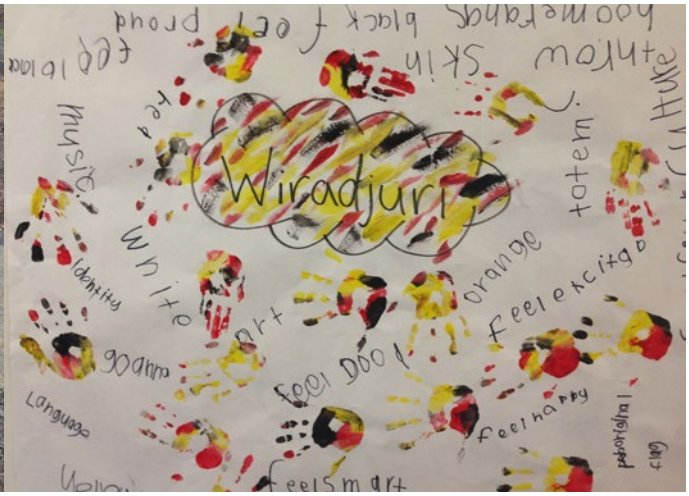
What these values mean to Colita and Amarni:

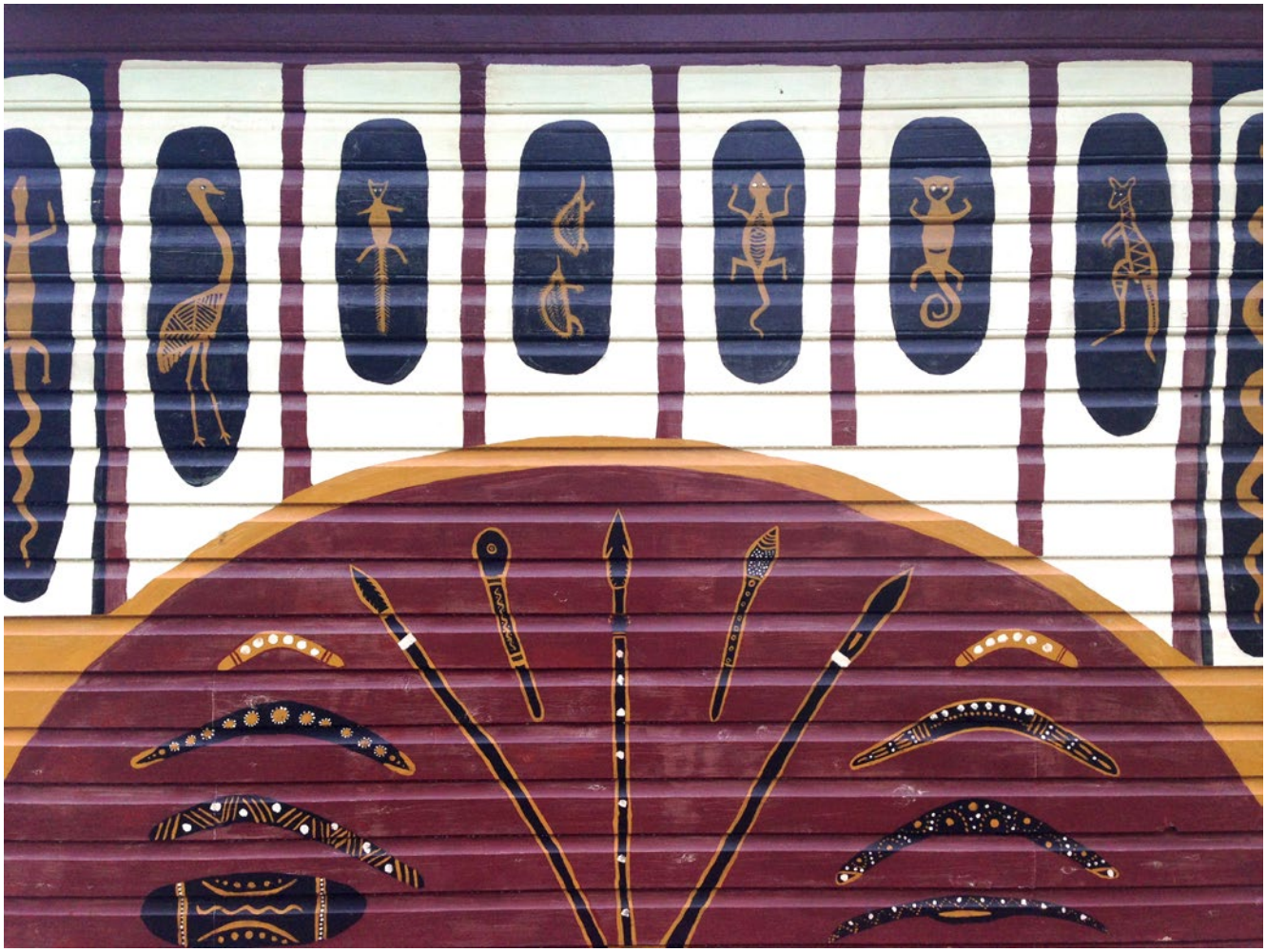
Respect – be yourself, listen, take care of people older than us and don't listen to bullies.

Cooperation – working together, being helpful, kind and nice, having friendships, listening to others, taking turns in talking, taking turns at handball and the puppy game.

When you're out, you're out!

Responsibility – being good, sitting nicely, taking care of others.





The painting on the front of our classroom was painted by Max Harris many years ago.

The animals on the painting represent Aboriginal culture and they are all totems of different Aboriginal tribes.

The painting also shows tools used by the Aboriginal people for hunting food and as weapons.

The Wiradjuri people lived in extended family groups of around 30 men, women and children, moving between different campsites and living in Gunyahs.

A Gunyah is an Aboriginal hut also known as a humpy, lean-to or Ganya, Gundyigang and Gunyi in traditional Wiradjuri language. They are made in a variety of sizes often 1 to 2 metres high.

Gunyahs are typically made using standing trees as the main support, they are then covered in large sheets of bark, bushes, leafy branches and grass.

They made gunyahs before permanent houses were built. The traditional Aboriginal people lived in them to make them feel safe and to offer protection. They often had a camp fire nearby for warmth.

Gunyahs are not lived in today, but many are displayed to show Aboriginal culture, such as the gunyah in our school grounds.

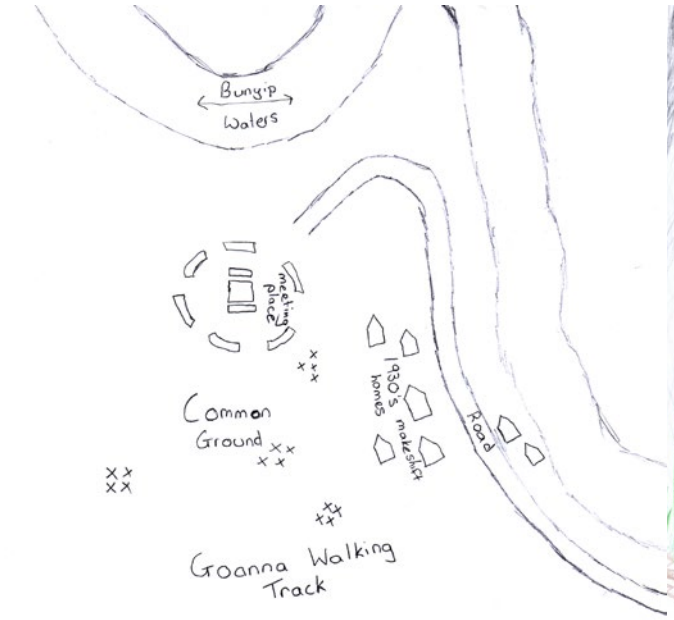
Over the last 40,000 years the Aboriginal people have lived off the Murrumbidgee River, it is the only river that is still known by its Aboriginal name in Wiradjuri Country. Murrumbidgee means “big water” in Wiradjuri language; it is the second longest river in Australia. The Murrumbidgee flows through a number of nations so it wasn’t just ours, we shared it. The river kept all the animals alive and fed all the plants, which kept us alive. For a long time the river was clear and beautiful, this made it easier to catch fish to share for dinner. Then in 1976 carp were introduced into the river, now the river is brown and muddy, but it can still do its job.

One aspect of the river known to locals is the Bunyip Hole. The bunyip is an Aboriginal mythological creature that lives in deep water.

During the 1930’s approximately 25 families lived along a section of the river, however, only the bachelors lived close to the Bunyip Hole.

There is also a meeting place along the river to show the Wiradjuri connection with this area of the Murrumbidgee River.

We appreciate our big water so much, it kept our people and land thriving.



The ways in which we can identify with the Wiradjuri culture is through dancing, spoken language, the way we show respect and the tools that we use.

When the Wiradjuri dance, they paint their bodies with ochre and use clap sticks and didgeridoos for the music. They use branches with leaves as part of the dance. Dancers have ochre painted on their bodies, with the Elders having different designs painted to the younger dancers.

Although some people use the Wiradjuri language to speak, it is not very commonly used. Some of the words we use include budyabudya for butterfly, gulaangga for frog, jillawa is toilet, minhi is sister, wambuwany is kangaroo, yarraman is horse, dinawan is emu, wambad is wombat, gadi is snake, wilay is possum and gugubarra is kookaburra. Also, Warangesda means Camp of Mercy.

When painting, the Wiradjuri use yellow for the sun, red for blood and black for skin. The three colours are also the three rivers – the Lachlan, the Murray and the Murrumbidgee.

To show respect, we call Elders aunties and uncles.

The tools we use are the boomerang and the spear.

NAIDOC DAY
AT DARLINGTON POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL

We began our NAIDOC Day with an Assembly where Mr. Tony Edwards(Heather Edwards' son) gave the Welcome to Country and followed with a speech about Songlines which was the theme of this years' NAIDOC. Mr. Edwards is the Aboriginal Police Liason Officer for the Griffith area.

Tamsin and Laura delivered their own speech about how Aboriginal people used Songlines.

We were then entertained by the boys from Tirkandi Inaburra who performed three Aboriginal dances accompanied by didgeridoo and clapping sticks. Tirkandi Inaburra is a Cultural and Development Centre for Aboriginal male youth aged from 12 to 15 years. It is located between the townships of Coleambally and Darlington Point. It provides school based education programs, sport and recreational activities, cultural activities and life and living skills. Its motto is "Boys to Men: Learning to Live their Dream".

After the Assembly we separated into 8 groups to participate in Aboriginal based activities that included games, boomerang painting, animal fridge magnets and plaited keyrings.

Our lunch was a BBQ which included sausages, kangaroo steaks and even meatballs made from crocodile mince!

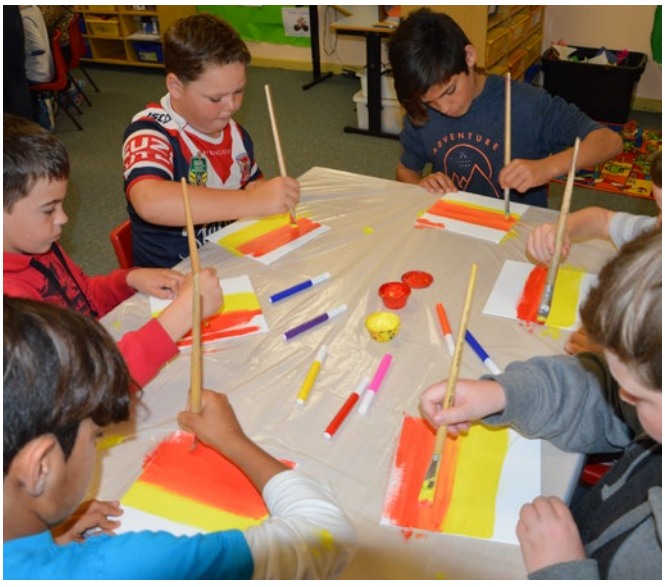
ART WORKSHOPS WITH DAVID DUNN

David Dunn was the 2016 Albury/Wodonga NAIDOC Week Artist of the Year.

We were very lucky to get David for our school NAIDOC celebrations and his workshops were a highlight of our day's activities.

He took the children step-by-step through producing a silhouette painting.

The children were amazed at their finished products. Even some of the teachers had a go*!*



MEGAN'S JOHNNY CAKES

My name is Megan Wood and I have been cooking Johnny Cakes for our school NAIDOC day for many years now. Before I started doing it, my Aunty Flo Carroll used to do it at both the school and town celebrations.

She was a wonderful cook and we all loved to sample her Johnny Cakes at these events. She was renowned amongst our family, friends and many of the town locals for her great cooking skills.

One of her first jobs was as a cook at Yanco Agricultural High School. She would ride to work on her push bike from Darlington Point, as the story goes!

Aunty Flo no doubt learnt her skills from her mother and grandmother who were Aboriginal women from South East Queensland, who came to this area around 100 years ago.

I can imagine that my great grandmother would have made many a Johnny Cake, Puftaloon (fried scone) and camp oven meal on her journey south with her new husband and young family. Her husband being a drover, would have survived on basic wholesome meals that were easy and cheap to acquire.

I enjoy teaching the students how to make the Johnny Cake's. We also talk about how the Aboriginal people would have made them prior to white settlement and after.

The kids really enjoy this part of the day. I like to carry on this tradition as I feel it is important and useful knowledge and also a nice way for me to remember my Elders.

WHAT DOES BEING WIRADJURI MEAN TO ME?

Kyle: it means I'm part of something bigger, I'm not alone.

Breeanna: it's good, it means we aren't all the same because everyone is different.

Abbey: makes me feel proud that I come from people who could make things on their own like spears, didgeridoos and boomerangs.

Kallum: it makes me feel proud to carry on our traditions, but I also feel sad because our culture is dying and our people were killed for nothing.

Brayden: that I'm part of a great culture that can do things like catch fish with our hands.

Issabella: you have to follow your culture, do your dances.

Brock: Cool, getting to know about your culture.

Isla: culture, I feel happy to be Wiradjuri.

Mahalia: Wiradjuri people are special.

Ash: it feels normal.

Sye: always happy and proud to be Wiradjuri.

Issac: proud to be part of the Aboriginal nation.

Lachlan, Michael and Noah: being proud and going to the bush and fishing in the river.

Shanice: never ashamed to be Wiradjuri.

Tanaiya, Jai, Bryce and Tamsin: showing respect to our Elders.

Laura Toscan, Henry Lacey, Tanaiya Coe and Billy Reis-Burke

Absent: Ashleigh Pardy

2016 Opportunity Class, Darlington Point Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

WIRRAMINNA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE BURRUMBUTTOCK

CREATIVE CATCHMENT KIDS

peek designs