

CELEBRATING



40
YEARS
1983-2023

NEWSLETTER

Term 2, 2023

Debutante Dreaming



Friday 25th August 2023

On Friday 25 August 2023 Worawa Aboriginal College will celebrate our fortieth anniversary with senior students being presented to Elders in Debutante Dreaming. We hope that you will join us as we celebrate this important milestone in our Aboriginal community as well as the lives of the young women as they prepare for adulthood.



BOOK NOW! **eventbrite**

Time: 6.30pm arrival for a 7pm start

San Remo Ballroom, 365 Nicholson St, Carlton North

Ticket Options: \$165 per person Or a table of 10 for \$1,650

For information contact (03) 5962 4344 or email: admin@worawa.vic.edu.au



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Aboriginal women's ceremonies mark 'rites of passage' to celebrate the journey of young girls to womanhood. The debutante ball in Western society is a mark of a young woman's passage to adulthood.

In keeping with the Worawa Aboriginal College philosophy of preparing young women to 'walk in both worlds' Debutante Dreaming is a fusion of traditional Aboriginal ceremonial practice and Western tradition in preparing young women in the transition to adulthood.

Debutante Dreaming is part of a broader suite of activities under the College's Pathways to Womanhood program. The Pathways to Womanhood program is aimed at supporting young women to understand the transition to womanhood, to build self-esteem and prepare them to take their place as leaders in their own communities as well as in the broader community.

PATHWAYS TO WOMANHOOD

With four decades of a proud history of focusing on delivering a unique curriculum that honours, supports and fosters Aboriginal Culture and heritage, Worawa is a place where young Aboriginal women come to reconnect with their own history, foster their culture and increase their knowledge of being part of the world's oldest living culture, whilst preparing to 'Walk in Both Worlds'.

Today Worawa boasts an enviable curriculum model that views learning through an Aboriginal lens. Aboriginal values of Relationship, Responsibility, Respect and Rigour are foundational to all programs offered at the College.

Two way learning and the sharing of knowledge allows Worawa students to become strong and proud in their Aboriginal culture and empowered to be able to chart their own futures.

Beginning each day with an Acknowledgement of the Ancestors of the land they are living on, through to taking part and learning about Aboriginal protocols and ceremony, Worawa offers Aboriginal girls an opportunity to learn in an environment that places their cultural identity at the centre of all they do.

The Worawa productions, international art shows, nationally awarded integrated arts projects, sporting excellence, personalised learning, and supporting the journey to Reconciliation through sport are the mark of Worawa.

At Worawa Aboriginality is celebrated, education is esteemed and each student empowered to proudly chart their own future. It is in this context that the Worawa

education model supports young women with intensive programs addressing their complex needs, providing on-site specialist care and daily routines integrating education, wellbeing, and pride in culture.

The Worawa model builds trust and confidence and provides a bridge towards further education and workplace opportunities.

We instil in our students' high expectations and a number of girls have aspirations to complete secondary schooling – for many it is 'First in Family' to complete 12 years of schooling. Some plan to go on to university, some plan to return to their community to 'make a difference' and perhaps take up a leadership position.

This major leap is made possible through our rigorous approach to education and the support provided by our targeted programs, such as our selective leadership program within the school community, Pathways to Womanhood, Work Experience Program and other opportunities that provide 'Two-way learning'.

The Pathways to Womanhood program focuses on a selected group of up to twelve girls who demonstrate readiness to take up leadership, and provides a series of modules and experiences which broaden their exposure to life-enhancing activities and develop overall life and leadership skills. The approach is one of focused action learning and personal reflection and includes intensive health education, health promotion activities, self-awareness and self-esteem building as well as opportunities to build respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students through contact with our partner schools and through events such as formal and informal dinners sponsored by the Richmond Rotary Club, our Reconciliation Sports Carnival and culminating in 'Debutante Dreaming' a fusion of traditional and Western rites of passage for young women.

The Debutante Dreaming event is essential to the success of the program as it gives the young women participants a strong incentive to complete modules and activities which can be challenging and confronting. It is also a chance to celebrate with family, friends and the wider community the advances the young women have made through participation in the program.

For more information visit worawa.vic.edu.au



Friday 26 August 1949

REFLECTION ON FIRST ABORIGINAL DEBUTANTE BALL

The first all Aboriginal Debutante Ball was held at the Collingwood Town Hall on August 26, 1949. When Debutantes and their partners were presented to Sir George and Lady Knox.

With the exception of a few, all participants were Yorta Yorta whose families were either living, or at some time had lived on the riverbank of the Goulburn River between Shepparton/Mooroopna, an area known as 'the Flat' following the walk off from the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Reserve.

The Cummeragunja Walk off was a milestone in the struggle for Aboriginal rights and dignity both nationally and for the Yorta Yorta people. In the modern era the 'Walk Off' at Cummeragunja on the 6th of February 1939 was a profound political act undertaken by the 'people' as a whole, as a collective and connected identity that set in train political activism that continues to this day.

When non-Indigenous girls were making their debut, Aboriginal girls were in servitude under the government policy of removal of children to training institutions. The authorities were enforcing the

Aborigines Protection Act which saw the forced removal of Aboriginal children to train as house maids and farm hands for non-Indigenous families.

The girls were taken to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Girls which housed only Aboriginal girls aged from 13 years. From there they were then placed into non-Indigenous homes as domestic servants. It was idea of Aunty Margaret Tucker who had been 'in service' from the age of thirteen years to hold an Aboriginal event. The girls were trained by Mr Reginald Jones who made weekly trips to Mooroopna to teach them the waltz 'La Rinca' says Aunty Lois who was one of the flower girls. The Aboriginal Debutante Ball a source of dignity and pride for young Aboriginal girls and became an important annual fundraiser. This is the basis for the Worawa Pathways to Womanhood Program which culminates in Debutante Dreaming.

Meet the 2023 Debutantes

The Worawa Debutante Dreaming event serves to celebrate the historic event of the first Aboriginal Debutante Ball held in 1949 and provides the opportunity to honour and reflect on the tenacity of those involved in the original event which was held at a time before Aboriginal people were counted as Australian citizens. The historic event was led by Aboriginal women who said 'we want to see our girls take their place in the community'. This resonates with Worawa Aboriginal College who today, prepares our young women to 'Walk in both Worlds'.

Katiana Zboril



My name is Katiana Zboril. I am 15 years old and I am a proud young Wadawurrung woman of the Kulin nation. I live in Castlemaine, Victoria and I am the first girl in my family to ever attend Worawa Aboriginal College. I am currently in Year 10 and I started my journey here at Worawa when I was in Year 9. I have 3 younger sisters and 3 older brothers. Not all of my siblings live with me but I am the middle child in both sides of my families.

I will be the first girl in my family to ever participate in a debutante ball. By being here and participating in events such as the Debutante Dreaming, I hope to inspire my sister and other young girls in my family to do similar things when they get the opportunity.

Becoming a woman to me means that we are growing into our true selves and leaving our childhood behind. It's a milestone, meaning that we are becoming more independent, finding as well as achieving our goals in life. It's about young women being able to make life decisions such as where they want to go for university, or where they would like to work in the future, finally making decisions for ourselves but with the guidance of loved ones.

My biggest inspiration is my mum. She was the first girl in our family to go to university and even after taking a break for a few years, she got back into her studies to pursue her dream in Archeology. I hope to attend university in the future for Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies.

As I participate in Pathways to Womanhood I hope to achieve a new understanding of what it means to become a woman.

Carol Moore



My name is Carol Moore and I'm a proud 17-year-old Wamba Wamba women, my mob is from Bendigo and Swan Hill but I live in Melbourne with my Aunty Lowana, Uncle Troy and my little sister Colleen.

Becoming a woman means; caring for my family, being independent and having responsibilities like looking after myself and especially my mental health. My goal for this year

is to develop my skills in painting, this is something I would really like to work on and get better at.

Participating in the Pathways to Womanhood program has helped me with my communication, leadership and teamwork skills. Participating in the Debutante Ball would mean challenging myself to use my communication, leadership and teamwork skills in a public space. This will also mean a lot to my family because not many of my family members could do this, it would make them proud knowing I wanted to do this.

Klarissa Tipiloura



My name is Klarissa Tipiloura, I am from Tiwi Island but I grew up in Wadeye Northern Territory, west of Darwin. I am interested in doing the 2023 Debutante Ball because I have seen two of my sisters, Alliyanna and Rochelle, do the Debutante Ball when they were students at Worawa.

To me, becoming a woman means responsibility, caring for family and being a leader in my family. My dream is to become a police woman or a sports teacher and to protect people within my community. I have to study hard to achieve this goal and change the way people feel about our community.

Through the Pathways to Womanhood program I hope to develop leadership skills so I can be a leader in my community. The program will challenge me and I hope to learn a lot from it. By participating in the Debutante Ball, I will gain confidence, learn new skills like dancing and develop new friendships.

Cordelia Daylight



My name is Cordelia Daylight and I am a proud Mangarrayi girl. I'm from Jilkminggan Community in the Northern Territory. I am currently in Year 10 and have been attending Worawa Aboriginal College since Year 7. I really like playing sports, especially football and basketball.

Becoming a woman means beginning my journey to adulthood and growing into myself. This includes a vast

range of knowledge from learning about my body to becoming a productive member of society. It means doing my part, helping others, working hard and being the best person I can be.

Leaving the school in my community to attend Worawa for high school was an important goal for me. I would like to graduate from Worawa and pursue teaching by going to university and studying education. I would like to eventually move back to my community, Jilkminggan, and teach primary school to the little kids in my community.

Through the Pathways to Womanhood program I hope to learn more about what it means to become a woman and how to present myself well in society. I am looking forward to participating in the Debutante Ball.

Geraldine Jacky



My name is Geraldine Jacky. I was born in Darwin and grew up in Palumpa. I came to Worawa in 2020 and I am currently in Year 10. I like to play sports, especially football and basketball. I also participate in cultural dance here at Worawa.

Becoming a woman to me means growing into adulthood and gaining more responsibility and independence. Back at home we

have Women's Business as we become women. I want to be a good role model to the younger people and elders within my home community. Since I have been at Worawa I have enjoyed English, Maths, Humanities, Art and Science, all of these will help me achieve my goal of joining the Army and working in the Artillery Division.

I am hoping that the Pathways to Womanhood program teaches me confidence, responsibility, respect for my elders and life skills. I would like to participate in Debutante Dreaming because it will make my family proud and also myself. The ball will help me overcome my fear of nervousness, I will also learn to dance, make different friends and have a lot of fun.

Kyiesha Fretwell-Ferguson



My name is Kyiesha Fretwell-Ferguson. I am 15 years old and a proud Arrernte woman from Alice Springs, Northern Territory, I am currently in Year 10 and I have been at Worawa since Year 7. I have three siblings; Martika, Nairyah & David (who we call Junior). Martika used to come to Worawa however she left in 2021 to be closer to home. I am the only girl in my whole family to make

it to year 10 as my family all left before years 9 or 10. I will be the first in my family to attend the Debutante Ball.

Becoming a woman means moving forward in life and leaving childhood behind. Becoming an independent, productive member of society, achieving goals, finding new things to do and learn, moving forward to get what you want and setting your mind on what you believe and want in life. My goals are moving forward in life, setting my mind on what I want to do in the future and achieving it. I have always wanted to go to university so that would be a major aspiration. I would like to study music, acting and performance.

As I participate in Pathways to Womanhood I hope to achieve a new understanding of what it means to become a woman.

Rosarita Leanorah Williams



My name is Rosarita Leanorah Williams and I am from Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. I have aspirations of being a social worker within my community and helping young people and adults to overcome their challenging situations.

Becoming a woman to me means that I can achieve my dream of being a social worker and helping others

that are in need, being a constructive member of my community and my family and maybe becoming a mother of my own children.

By participating in the Debutante Ball; I will learn to dance and work together with my partner to achieve this, gain confidence in myself by learning something new and having many people looking at me. I think I will develop confidence, patience, friendship and relationships with others by participating in the Pathways to Womanhood program.

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Latisha Humbert



My name is Latisha Humbert. I was born in Kununurra, grew up in Goorbidigum/ Bulla Community and now live in Timber Creek. I came to Worawa in 2020 in Year 8 and I am currently in Year 11.

To me becoming a woman means becoming independent, being responsible and caring for family. Becoming a woman also means beginning my journey into adulthood

and being the best person I can be.

My goal for the Pathways to Womanhood program is to develop my communication skills to be able to help others in my community. I look forward to challenging myself to successfully achieve this during 2023.

Shantay Theresa Morris



My name is Shantay Theresa Morris. I am a Walpiri and Gurindji woman who lives in Darwin. I am the middle child of my family but seem to be the oldest because I carry the responsibility that I wish my parents held.

To me, becoming a woman is when a young lady has passed through challenges in life and becomes powerful to overcome them. She

grasps the knowledge that she has gained and brings it upon herself to hold leadership skills and responsibilities for herself and others around her.

By taking part in the Pathways to Womanhood program, the Debutante Ball and graduating into womanhood I hope to grow spiritually and mentally. We are all aware that being a woman isn't easy, that it isn't just having a menstrual cycle, but actually growing and becoming stronger and able to shape her own future. By participating in this program, I will develop the skills and confidence to do just this.

I strive to become the best person I need to be for my family, community and myself.



FOR OUR ELDERS

2-9 JULY 2023

In celebration of the 2023 National NAIDOC Week theme of 'For Our Elders', pictured below is Aunty Lois and cousin Aunty Beverley Briggs who were the flower girls at the first Debutante Ball in 1949.



Meet The 2023 Ambassadors

Dakoda Lee Taylor-Hodgins



My name is Dakoda Lee Taylor-Hodgins. I am a proud Yamaji woman and I live in Darwin. I am currently in my last year at Worawa Aboriginal College. I started at Worawa in 2019 as a Year 8 student. Since starting at Worawa I have gained an interest in developing my art skills.

Becoming a woman means having respect for yourself and others, having more responsibilities, caring about yourself, having good hygiene and being a good role model to the younger generation. Caring for your elders is another responsibility as a young woman in my life.

My goal in life is to give back to my family.

As an Ambassador I hope to encourage and inspire the young Aboriginal women around me to follow their dreams and achieve their goals.

Teigan Ricky



My name is Teigan Ricky. I am a proud Jigili, Mudbarra, & Gudinji young woman. I am currently in my last year at Worawa.

I am from Elliott community but spent my infant years growing up in Lajamanu with my mums' older sister Vicky. At 5 years of age I was given to my mums' other older sister Annette and her husband Daniel who I now call my parents.

Becoming a woman to me is being a role model to your peers, family and your community. Is it becoming of an age where you have more responsibilities and opportunities and where your voice is heard more. Becoming a woman is a hard thing to do, you always have to be mature in important situations and sometimes you just want to be a kid again, but mostly you have to act like a woman.

As an Ambassador for the Pathways to Womanhood program and Debutante Ball I hope to continue working on my confidence while being a role model for the younger students participating in the program. I am willing to help them and guide them through the program.

I am looking forward to my sister and mum attending the Debutante Ball.

Shaicody Gregory



My name is Shaicody Gregory. I am a Garawa and Gangalidda young woman from Robinson River, Northern Territory. I am in my final year at Worawa.

For me becoming a woman means I have a lot of responsibility for my younger siblings and to be a role model to children around me. Becoming a woman means we have to act mature in serious situations.

As I am developing as a young woman this can be difficult because those who are older can still see me as a young kid. We are expected to act mature but at the same time are still treated as kids. As an Ambassador I will support my peers through this difficult transition.

As an Ambassador for the Pathways to Womanhood Program and Debutante Ball I will support new members to the program by being a role model and encouraging younger students to join the program by seeing me do it. I hope to inspire them and lead by example.

BOOK NOW!

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San Remo Ballroom

365 Nicholson St, Carlton North

Ticket Options:

\$165 per person

Or a table of 10 for \$1,650

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or email: admin@worawa.vic.edu.au

eventbrite



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FOCUS ON BOARDING

Semester One of 2023 was an absolutely incredible start for our boarding community! The anticipation and enthusiasm were palpable as our boarders arrived, brimming with excitement for the year that lay ahead. Not unexpectedly, at the beginning of the year being in a new house, new room and new housemates a few nerves were present, but those quickly dissipated as new friendships began to blossom.

One of the standout moments from the semester was when our senior girls embarked on a thrilling excursion that took them from Sorrento, situated on the picturesque Mornington Peninsula, all the way across the bay to Queenscliff and Ocean Grove. For many of our girls, it marked their inaugural experience of being on a boat and journeying over the vast expanse of the ocean. The excitement and wonderment in their eyes was truly heartwarming to witness.

In addition to the coastal adventure, our girls also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the vibrant

atmosphere of Melbourne's CBD. They participated in an exhilarating city-wide scavenger hunt, aptly named the "Amazing Race." Divided into teams, the girls used their collective wit and problem-solving skills to decipher clues and race to the final destination. The competitive spirit among some of our girls was on full display, fuelled by the grand prize of a night out at the movies.

As the end of Term One approached, we decided to celebrate the incredible first part of the year with a day of pure fun and excitement at Adventure Park in Geelong. Laughter filled the air as our boarders enjoyed thrilling rides and engaging activities, creating lasting memories that will be cherished for years to come.

Transitioning into Term Two, our weekends became even more action-packed as the girls enthusiastically embraced various sporting endeavours. Many of them joined the Healesville Football Club and played matches on a weekly basis, showcasing their skills and team spirit. Additionally, Monday

nights became a thrilling basketball competition night, where our girls eagerly showcased their talents on the court.

Furthermore, AFL (Australian Football League) became a focal point of our weekend activities. With organised numerous excursions to watch professional football games, allowing our boarders to witness the passion and excitement that surrounds the sport. To add to the excitement, they were even given the unique opportunity to umpire Auskick half-time games during the Indigenous Round, further deepening their connection with the sport and the community.

We are truly fortunate to have had such an eventful and enriching Semester One, filled with new friendships, thrilling excursions, and unforgettable adventures. The remainder of the year promises to be equally remarkable as we continue to foster a supportive and vibrant boarding community for all our boarders.



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

On the 31st of May the Worawa choir attended the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. This day honoured the service and sacrifice of Indigenous Australians in war and peace keeping.

At the beginning of the service there was an Acknowledgment of Country, a Smoking Ceremony and a didgeridoo performance. The Worawa Choir had been officially invited to perform two songs, Ngarra Burra-Ferra and

Maranoa Lullaby. Students attended the event supported by music teacher Sarah-Rose and teacher support Shohreh. After the performance many people came up to congratulate and compliment us on our singing. Aunty Lois also attended and was recognized for her contribution to the Aboriginal community. During the service there was a one-minute silence and a member of the Air-Force band played the Last Post on the bugle. Students Joet Collier

(Year 9) and Teigan Ricky (Year 12) laid a wreath on behalf of the school.

It was an honor to be invited to attend the service and to sing. It was a solemn event that had a very calming and quiet atmosphere. We had an amazing time and it is a very special memory.

Written by Suassanna (Sanna) Cronin - Year 7 - Wadeye NT & Joet Collier - Year 9 - Wagga Wagga NSW



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UMPIRE TRAINING AT WORAWA

On Tuesdays during periods 5 and 6 some students from Baggup, Kombadik, and Polango were excused from their timetabled classes to participate in an AFL umpire training program in preparation for umpiring Auskick during the Indigenous round at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. We had to attend every Tuesday practice leading up to the games in order to be selected! Our coach's name was Josh. He is Noongar and from Perth, WA. It was a fun experience and we all learnt a lot about umpiring.

The game was held on Saturday 20 May, 2023. When we got to the MCG, it was crowded with thousands of people. We were all nervous, but mostly excited. We walked out to the oval with Cordelia holding the footy and they were videoing us, we had lots of fun. We got to sit back down and see the half game when they played and then our coach Josh called us and told us to practice in the umpire office.

While I was running on the field I fell down and broke my right ankle! I was crying in pain and Latisha helped me to walk up the stairs because I could not walk. Tanya, our Head of

Boarding, called the help service to come and get me with a wheelchair. When we got there, they gave me medicine to reduce the swelling of my ankle and help me with the pain. The medics told Tanya that I was getting an X-Ray and check-up at the Royals Children's Hospital. My leg was put in a plaster for one week and then I was moved into a moon boot. I've been told I have this for four weeks so I have gone home with it still on. Overall, it was a great experience! Minus the injury.

**Jackey Huddleston – Year 8
– Mataranka NT**



POLICE CADETSHIP

Early last term I was selected to participate in a police cadetship with Victorian police. As part of our induction, I was taught that everything I see and have access to must remain confidential, which is hard because I want to share some of the funny things with my friends that have happened during my time there.

I have been placed at Warrandyte Police Station which is about a half hour drive from school. I work every Thursday as a part of my work experience. When I'm there I mainly do admin, which includes a lot of computer work, filing and sorting out paper or property that has been confiscated. Everyone at the Station has made me feel welcome, by inviting me to join them on trips to the local café.

This has been a great opportunity and experience for me, I have learnt a lot do with the police and gained a lot of work skills. I would encourage my friends at Worawa to take up this opportunity if they have the chance.

**Dakoda Taylor-Hodgins – Year 12
– Darwin NT**

TELLING OUR STORIES

This term in Kombadik English, we have been writing and learning about biographies and autobiographies. Initially, we focused on narratives about people's experiences, such as "Sally's Story."

Our teacher Jessica would give us short essays to write about different things, like our time in primary school. First, we would all have to write out the essay in our books, edit it, and then type it up on the computer. Over time, these essays became intertwined with our own autobiographies.

We had the opportunity to make our autobiographies into a book and create a front cover, which was really cool. We also had the choice to keep them in the classroom as a class book.

Currently, I have started to write a biography about Eddie Koike Mabo. Eddie Mabo was a big part of our indigenous history, and I feel proud to not only write about his life but to also learn about and understand it.

**Written by Katiana Zboril – Year 10
– Castlemaine VIC**

BUNGUL: MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

On the 25th of June all the Worawa students were invited to watch an Aboriginal performance called "Bungul" at the Arts Centre in the city. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra played along with recordings from Gurrumul and Yolgnu dancers and singers with clapsticks.

We were at Hamer Hall in a big theatre room with rows of seats and projectors. The projectors projected images of all different places like bush, water and land. It helped us understand the story the dancers were telling. The music was good and reminded me of slow songs that help you to fall asleep.

Although the orchestra was great, my favourite was the clapsticks and the Yolgnu singers, their voices had so much emotion and it felt like they were connected to the dances and audience.

I'm very grateful for the experience as it is something I probably wouldn't go to on my own.

**Carol Moore – Year 11
– Melbourne VIC**



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RECONCILIATION SPORTS CARNIVAL

Tuesday 30th May saw Worawa come to life with hundreds of students visiting from 19 schools around Melbourne. The visit was an opportunity to come together to acknowledge and celebrate reconciliation through friendly sport competition.

Since its inception in 2017, The Worawa Aboriginal College Reconciliation Sports Carnival has become a key element of our annual calendar and the calendars of our visiting schools. The carnival is regularly mentioned by attending students as a highlight for the year and is spruiked by Worawa students whenever potential students ask what they like about living and studying at Worawa.

A big thank you to all the students and supervising teachers involved who came with a spirit of reconciliation and created a positive environment of camaraderie that everyone could enjoy. Our acknowledgement to the volunteers from GSK, South East Phoenix Basketball, CLB 3x3, Hawthorn FC, Netball Victoria, AFL Sports Ready, Moondani Toombadool, Yarra Valley Coffee, 3KND, Army Reserves and Healesville Police Station, the Worawa staff and students who helped the day run smoothly.

We look forward to welcome everyone back onsite on Tuesday 28th May 2024 for our next Reconciliation Sports Carnival.

