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NEWSLETTER

Term 3, 2023

Debutante Dreaming



Friday 25th August 2023

Debutante Dreaming 2023 was all that Worawa could have hoped for, and more. This event was the culmination of the College's unique 'Pathways to Womanhood' leadership program connecting young women to leadership roles within the school and wider community.

Debutante Dreaming is a once in a lifetime celebration of the rite of passage for the young Aboriginal women. Mothers and other family members travelled from remote and regional centres to attend.

The venue for the event was the San Remo Ballroom. Formalities commenced with a call to ceremony to the sound of the didgeridoo, played by Djarrin Blow and malangas played by Nakia Firebrace.

A group of Worawa student dancers entered the ballroom reciting the poem written by College Founder, Hyllus Maris. This cultural introduction set the tone of the event.

The Debutantes were presented to distinguished Elders and Respected Persons. After the presentation, the group of Debs and their partners from MLMC, danced gracefully to the waltz and then with some fun to popular contemporary music.

Elected speakers on behalf of the Debutantes were (Tenika) Shirley Spencer and Carol Moore. Both spoke with pride and conviction of their involvement in Pathways to Womanhood and their time at Worawa. It was a highlight moment of the event and their courage and sincerity touched all who were present.

Debutante Dreaming 2023 will long be remembered as a highlight experience by students and guests alike.

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TENIKA SHIRLEY SPENCER'S AMBASSADOR SPEECH

Hello to all that are here with us tonight. I would first like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation on which we stand on, I pay my respect to the Elders past and present.

My name is Tenika (Shirley) Nampijinpa Lechleitner Spencer. I am honoured to be an ambassador for the 2023 Debutantes. As I begin, I would like to share a little bit of information with you all about my culture, community, family and the sacrifices that I have made to be here tonight.

Yuendumu is my community, it is the place where I feel at home and it's where the proud Warlpiri people are. Elders in Yuendumu try to keep the culture going. As Auntie Lois has taught us, our history is fading and we need to keep the Culture, the Dreaming and the spirit of our Ancestors alive through the journey that has been going on for over 80,000 years. I am determined to not let that end now.

I believe that culture is key. It is in all of us and it can be seen all around us, whether it is in the earth underneath us, fire that burns bright, air as the wind blows, water of our rivers and through all the other elements. It is connected to our planet, our communities and within us from the beginning. This connection will never end because it runs in our veins, blood and is expressed through our emotions.

I come from a long line of Warlpiri people. Some gone and some still there on Country, keeping Yuendumu strong with their wisdom of the stories passed down to them. However, for a long time I thought that being Aboriginal meant that I didn't have a future and that I would end up like some people in community. Kids thinking that they have higher knowledge, teens wasting their future because they have nothing better to do and adults who are supposed to help with the knowledge they were given but they just let it waste away. I am proud to stand here alongside a powerful group of women, determined to let this not be our future.

Friends and family that are with me tonight, I acknowledge you for your sacrifices as well. I understand we have all made sacrifices that made us open our eyes to see what we can do, whether it's becoming an actor or working as a ranger in communities, we are the future and we are strong, willing, cunning and connected to Australia.

I thank everyone that supported me through every heart felt, every sorrow and every obstacle on my journey to where I am now. I would like to say that I'm a very proud Warlpiri woman from the central desert and I will try... NO I WILL become a leader to not just in my community but my whole country, for the next generation and show that we to can make a change.

Thank you!



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CAROL MOORE'S DEBUTANTE SPEECH

Good evening to you all, I would like to begin by acknowledging the Wurundjeri people as the original custodians of this land and pay my respects to the Elders past and present for they hold the memories, the traditions, the Culture and hopes of our First Nations people.

My name is Carol Moore, I'm a young and proud Wamba Wamba woman living in Melbourne with my Aunty Lowana, Uncle Troy, little sister Colleen and my two dogs Hunny and Max.

When I first came to Worawa, I was a little bit nervous as I knew no one and it felt daunting. I was surrounded by young Aboriginal women which was an exciting yet different experience for me. However, I have made plenty of friends during my time at Worawa, and I have enjoyed learning about myself. I have found cousins that I didn't even know were related to me, and for that I am grateful.

I've had plenty of opportunities while being at Worawa that no other school could've made happen. For instance, I want to do carpentry as a career and I have been able to get my white card which means that I am allowed to go onto construction sites.

In Boarding, we do lots of activities such as going to AFL matches, adventure parks, shopping in Melbourne CBD and have the opportunity to play on the local football and

basketball team. In school, we have choir where you go out on excursions and sing at a range of important events in front of large audiences. We have also participated in the Reconciliation Sports Carnival, work experience and excursions around Melbourne and the Yarra Valley.

Being here tonight feels like I'm a part of history. The first Aboriginal debutante was held at the Collingwood Town Hall on August 26th, 1949. When the debutantes and their partners were presented to Sir George and Lady Knox. This deb isn't just about wearing dresses or suits and dancing with boys. It is about celebrating young Aboriginal women transitioning into adulthood which means to me, caring for my family, being independent and having responsibilities.

Lastly, I would like to thank the people who got me to where I am today; my friends, my family, Aunty Lois and Tanya, Boarding staff, Teachers, Debutante girls and partners, and my Debutante partner, Fraser. I am proud to congratulate all the 2023 Debutantes who have come a very long way to be where we are tonight, I am incredibly proud of us all.

Thank you, and have a good evening!



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ARTIST IN RESIDENCE - AUNTY GLENYS BRIGGS

On Tuesday September 12 the whole school was treated to a full day workshop with Aunty Glenys Briggs, a Tunguwurung/ Yorta Yorta/ Wiradjuri elder from Victoria. Aunty Glenys is a celebrated and accomplished multi-disciplinary artist. Aunty Glenys Brigg's website reveals how her artwork has been based around the stories that have been passed down through her family for generations. She has exhibited in numerous exhibitions and has been the finalist and recipient of art awards.

She completed a Bachelor's Degree in Contemporary Indigenous Art at the Queensland College of the Arts, Griffith University. This has provided an opportunity for her to investigate the use of a variety of media, particularly print making and to also delve deeper into her cultural history. This has enriched all aspects of her art but her main concern has been to look for cultural and historical information important to her and how that can be communicated in powerful ways.

Aunty Glenys was so generous with

her time, materials and expertise. She began by recounting her journey through a range of roles embedded in Indigenous welfare, health and law before she made the transition into full-time artist. She reminded the girls of the importance of story and how each and every one of them had valid, important stories to tell - that these stories can be shared through any of the arts - the visual being but one. She said that there was a great need and appetite for story out in the wider community. We were all very privileged to be shown some of her award winning artwork - prints and fabric design, skins, weaving and jewellery - all of which told some of her story in striking ways. This was great inspiration for the day ahead.

The students then applied themselves to the many creative opportunities provided by Aunty Glenys. Some began with jewellery making. Aunty Glenys brought a wide range of seeds, pods, stalks, feathers and other natural items to go with other jewellery supplies to enable the girls to make earrings, necklaces, bracelets and headbands. Possum

skins also featured and many girls combined the skins with emu feathers as waistbands and headbands. A very popular activity was to burn designs onto the possum skins. Others began to weave using coloured raffia.

As the creative activity continued, Aunty Glenys encouraged the girls, reminding them of the value in trying different art forms, building their art technique, having trust in the process and being confident about the value of expressing their own stories and experiences through an art practice. In the end there were many art pieces to celebrate. We had a collective showing and a broader discussion about art in general, the benefits and pitfalls of being an artist and the state of the art industry, particularly in regard to Indigenous art. Aunty Glenys was very positive about the art space and was keen to offer it as a viable option for the students as they consider their career options.

The Worawa students are hoping that Aunty Glenys can return and continue her wonderful teaching.

EXPLORING NEW SPORTS - SQUASH

Cumbungi and Baggup students, as well as those senior girls not on work experience, participated in a squash program run by Anthony Hill at the Lilydale Squash Courts on Thursday afternoons. Anthony is one of Australia's most decorated players and reached a career high ranking of number 5 in the world in 1999.

The students were very fortunate to spend this time with Anthony and learn about the game of squash. The girls were quick to impress with their racquet skills even though they had not played before. Anthony guided them through a staged series of activities to build their confidence and skill. Once the students became used to the racquets, the bounce of the ball and the opportunity to use all four walls, they became very involved in honing their technique.

As the weeks progressed Anthony introduced more difficult training exercises. He also emphasized the need for proper footwork to position oneself to give the best

opportunity for a successful swing and hit. Serving was introduced in the third week and this proved to be a challenge for some. Persistence paid off and soon all were able to serve from both sides of the court. By the last session the girls were able to have long rallies, hitting the balls hard and challenging each other to do their best.

In the third week Anthony set up a competition for the girls whereby they needed to serve from one side of the court into a bucket located on the other side after first hitting the front wall as is proper for a serve. Klarissa Tipiloura was the only one to get her ball into the bucket, Hayley Stockman and Desharna Nelson hit the bucket without getting their balls in. Klarissa received a backpack as reward and Hayley and Desharna a headband. In the last week another competition was held; this time the target was a small headband. Desharna again managed to successfully achieve the target as did Suassanna Cronin.

Congratulations to Suassanna and Jackey Sammy for being awarded the overall prize for consistency of effort and positive approach to the program. The prize for each was a sports shirt.

Some quotes from the girls: Joet Collier said that she loved the fact that you could "hit the ball hard and not have to run far". Jackey said that squash was "great fun". Kanelia Gundari relayed that she would like to do it again next year. Elena Nelson also said it was a lot of fun. Suassanna mentioned that she "loved to make the other girls run". All the students indicated they would like to have the opportunity to play squash again next year.

We would like to acknowledge the wonderful way in which Anthony led the students through the program and the great encouragement he offered. We look forward to continuing the relationship with Anthony and the Lilydale Squash Club.



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INDIGENOUS LITERACY DAY

On Wednesday 6th September, we proudly celebrated Indigenous Literacy Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of literacy in First Nations communities across Australia. Our students embraced the opportunity to delve into the rich and diverse world of Indigenous literature by exploring texts authored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors.

There was a burst of creativity amongst our students and staff as they came dressed as their favourite book characters for a Book Week parade. From Alice in Wonderland to the Addams Family, students and staff proudly paraded their costumes in competition for a selection of awards that saw five students win awards for Best Dressed, Best Dressed Runner Up, Most Creative Costume and Most Iconic Duo.

Through these celebrations, the importance of reading, embracing diversity in literature and honouring the contributions of First Nations authors and storytellers was emphasised. Students were delighted to watch the annual celebrations for Indigenous Literacy Day livestreamed from the Opera House as they listened to book readings and guest speakers.



PATHWAYS TO WOMANHOOD

The Pathways to Womanhood lessons were a hive of activity throughout Term 3 as students prepared for the Debutante Ball.

The first unit of the term delved into the intricacies of various dress codes, with students discovering how to assemble appropriate outfits for diverse occasions and age groups. The unit culminated in an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge of business dress as they attended a formal dining experience at RACV Healesville.

At the RACV, students engaged in further learning about table settings and formal dining etiquette while providing one another with a supportive audience to practice their public speaking skills.

Senior students within the program engaged in additional comparative research around Debutante Balls in historical and contemporary

contexts. They heard from other First Nations youth through a study of the podcast *Debutante: Race, Resistance and Girl Power* by Nakkiah Lui, Miranda Tapsell and Nicola Harvey, drawing comparisons to their own traditions and developing questions, perspectives and a student voice about the future of Debutantes.

Students making their debut this year also devoted their Monday afternoons to dance lessons where they were partnered with young men from Mount Lilydale Mercy College (MLMC). Engaging in the dance program was a journey filled with friendship, laughter and unforgettable moments.

It started with a meet and greet with the students from MLMC which took place at Oz Tenpin Bowling in Chirnside Park. Bowling a pizza proved to be a great environment for meeting new friends and getting to know each other better.

Every Monday throughout Term 3, students gathered in the MLMC gym for dance lessons. These sessions not only honed students dancing skills but also provided an opportunity to strengthen the blossoming friendships. MLMC proved to be an excellent partner in our debutante journey, we are immensely grateful for the memories our students have created together.

Together, students explore three dancing styles, a traditional waltz, progressive jive and a modern choreographed dance. These were ultimately performed at Debutante Dreaming to high applause.

As the 2023 Pathways to Womanhood journey comes to its final chapter students will be reflecting on the experiences had, skills developed and friendships forged and considering the question 'where to from here?'



BOARDERS' UNFORGETTABLE TERM 3 JOURNEY: A Recap of Adventures and Achievements

As the final term of the 2023 academic year approaches, boarders at Worawa have had a remarkable journey during Term 3, filled with cultural experiences, exciting outings, and unforgettable memories.

The term commenced, in a moment of excitement and anticipation, our boarders received their new uniforms. The school corridors were filled with smiles as students donned their fresh attire, ready for the challenges and adventures ahead.

Week 1 was an inspiring cultural immersion as boarders visited "The Lume" in Melbourne. This unique exhibition, born from an idea to celebrate First Nations art and music while giving back to its artist communities, transported our students on a journey through the rich cultural history of our country. The vivid and immersive displays left a lasting impression, deepening their appreciation for Australia's Indigenous heritage.

The second week back was anything but ordinary as boarders celebrated Christmas in July. The catering team outdid themselves by presenting an extravagant spread of prawns, roast dinners, and festive treats. It was

a heartwarming reminder that the spirit of Christmas can be shared and cherished at any time of the year.

On the 29th of July, some of our boarders attended the Youth NAIDOC Ball, where they had the privilege of celebrating alongside other young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. This event was a celebration of culture, unity, and the bright future ahead for Indigenous youth.

August 5th brought a thrilling day out for our boarders as they witnessed the Hawthorn Football Club in action at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). The cheers, excitement, and camaraderie among the students made this outing truly unforgettable.

Boarders had the opportunity to welcome visitors from Nyirripi Primary School. They shared a delightful evening around the campfire, bonding over kangaroo stew and marshmallows. It was a heartwarming experience of cultural exchange and friendship.

During the exit weekend, our boarders embarked on another adventure. They attended an AFL game at Marvel

Stadium, indulged in some retail therapy during a shopping spree, and enjoyed a movie night featuring "Barbie." The day was capped off with delicious grilled burgers, making it a perfect weekend getaway.

August 27th marked a historic moment as our boarders, who play for the Healesville Football Club, secured victory in the Grand Final with an impressive win by over 40 points. Their dedication and teamwork paid off, earning them a well-deserved championship.

Wrapping up the term, our boarders bid adieu with a memorable visit to Sovereign Hill in Ballarat on September 2nd. The day was filled with gold panning, witnessing the creation of old-fashioned sweets, exploring underground mines, and enjoying the captivating Aurora night show, voiced by the late Uncle Jack.

As Term 3 ends, the boarders at Worawa reflect on the incredible experiences they've shared. With anticipation building for the final term of 2023, the Boarding community is excited to welcome them back for more adventures and growth. Here's to another exciting term ahead!





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WORK EXPERIENCE – HAWTHORN COMMUNITY CADET

This term, Cordelia Daylight has been thoroughly enjoying completing work experience at Hawthorn Football Club. Each week, Cordelia has explored a new set of work tasks across a range of departments within the Hawthorn Community Outreach Office such as marketing and administration.

Cordelia has loved every minute of her time at Hawthorn Football Club, and she was excited to share her experience with a group of students from Cumbungi and Baggup who visited on the 24th of

August! Cordelia led her younger peers through a tour around the club rooms where students had the opportunity to meet AFL player Jai Newcombe! Students showed a great interest in the training facilities at Hawthorn, and were impressed by the magnitude of the club. At the end of the tour, the girls played football on the oval before the AFLW players began their training. It has been a wonderful experience for Cordelia, and we are grateful to Hawthorn Football Club and their community outreach team for the opportunity.



ABC Q&A & BTN HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL

On July 19th, ten students from Worawa Aboriginal College embarked on a journey to the city to participate in a segment of the ABC Q&A "Q&A High School Special." In the days leading up to the filming, all students came up with questions tailored to the panelists' interests and expertise. Joet Collier and Katiana Zboril's questions stood out and were selected for the discussion. Joet was fortunate enough to engage in an exchange

surrounding her question during the filming. Unfortunately, time constraints prevented Katiana from posing hers.

Following the conclusion of filming, there was an opportunity to pose additional questions. During this time, Suassanna Cronin bravely spoke up and had her question addressed. This segment of the show has been shared on YouTube for a wider audience to enjoy.

Later in the evening, a meet-and-greet session provided our students with the chance to meet Amelia Mosley from "Behind the News." Excitement filled the air as everyone eagerly snapped photos with her. Through this invaluable experience, we honed our communication skills and bolstered our confidence in speaking before large audiences. We are immensely grateful for this remarkable opportunity.

