

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wonnarua people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land who have walked and cared for this place for thousands of years, and their descendants who maintain their spiritual connection and traditions. We thank them for sharing their culture, spirituality, and ways of living with the land in this place that we now call home. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging. May we continue to walk gently and respectfully together with each other.

Following on from our Visit to the Reptile Park

On the last day of Term 3, I had the pleasure of accompanying the Year 3 cohort to the Reptile Park near Gosford on Darkinjung Country. It had been several years since my last visit, and I was amazed at the changes especially in the field of conservation. A big eye-opener was their work in the protection and conservation of freshwater turtles. This really pricked my interest, which led me to 'The 1 Million Turtles'.

'The 1 Million Turtles' initiative is a national community conservation citizen science program. This program promotes a strong collaboration between scientists and the community to support initiatives aimed at conserving threatened Australian freshwater turtle species. This is another fantastic way for our kids to get involved with **Looking After country**.

Further information on how you can help can be found by following the links below:

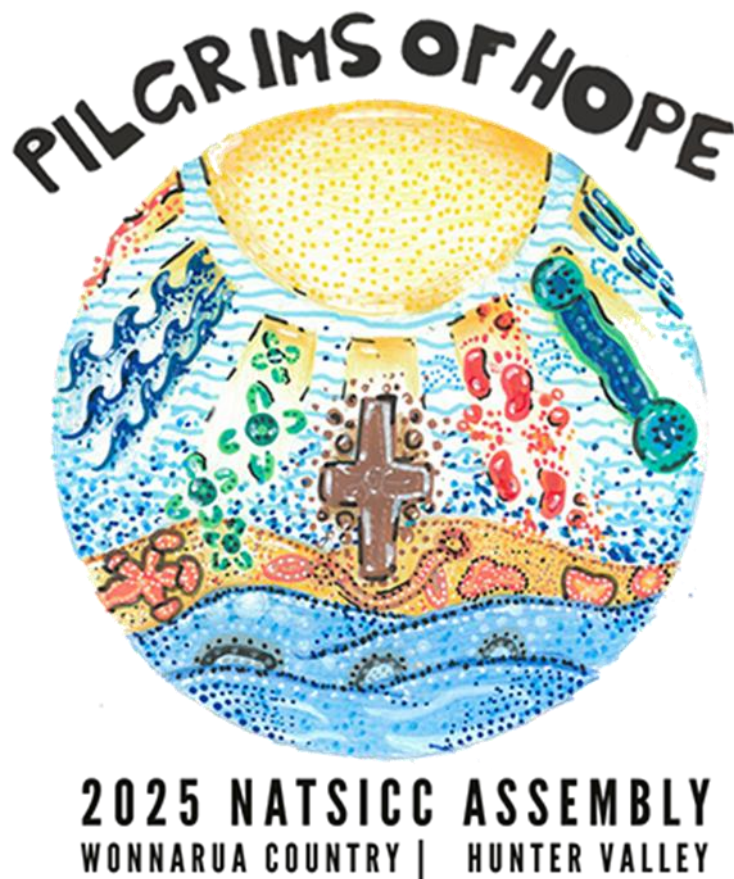


<https://1millionturtles.com/>



https://www.turtlesat.org.au/turtlesat/?mc_cid=a4596b8b2a&mc_eid=f2e09ed572

2025 NATSICC ASSEMBLY: PILGRIMS OF HOPE



Beginning Monday, 29th September and concluding Friday, 3rd October, Miss O'Neil and I had the privilege in attending the 2025 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council Assembly.

Assemblies are a time that allow us to step away from our daily work to connect face to face, to listen deeply to each other, and to celebrate the gifts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality in the life of the Catholic Church.

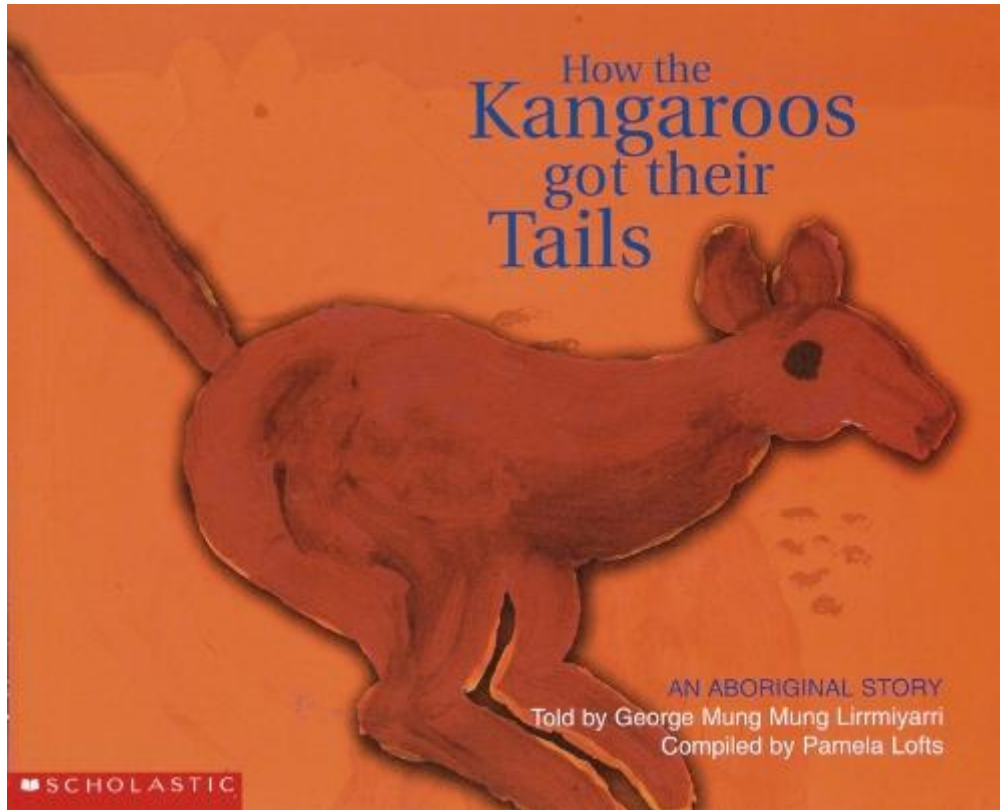
Guest speakers included Stan Grant, acclaimed Journalist and Author, Kelly Humphrey, ACU Pro vice Chancellor (Indigenous), Bishop Tim Norton, Bishop of Broome, Toby Whaleboat, Torres Strait Knowledge-holder and singer-songwriter, Kelly Paget, Head of Mission and Chancellor of the Diocese of Broken Bay, Dr Trudy Dantis, Director of the Catholic Bishops Conference National Centre of Pastoral Research, Louise Luu, Wangkangurru Yarluyandi woman, Teacher at Xavier College Melbourne, AJ King, Bigambul/Wakka Wakka man, Catholic Education Tasmania, Maurreen Jadai and Madelaine Yanawana, Kimberley Catholic Community, Western Australia, Geraldine Vytilingam, Reconciliation Leader, Youth Ministry consultant, Melbourne, Madeline Forde, Representative International Youth Advisory Body-Vatican and Sharon Cooke, Ngemba woman as Master of Ceremonies.

This Assembly, organised by the Maitland Newcastle Catholic Schools Office's own Aboriginal Education Team and deliver on Wonnarua Country was well attended with peoples from all over our nation, proving that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality is compatible in partnership with the Catholic Church nationwide.

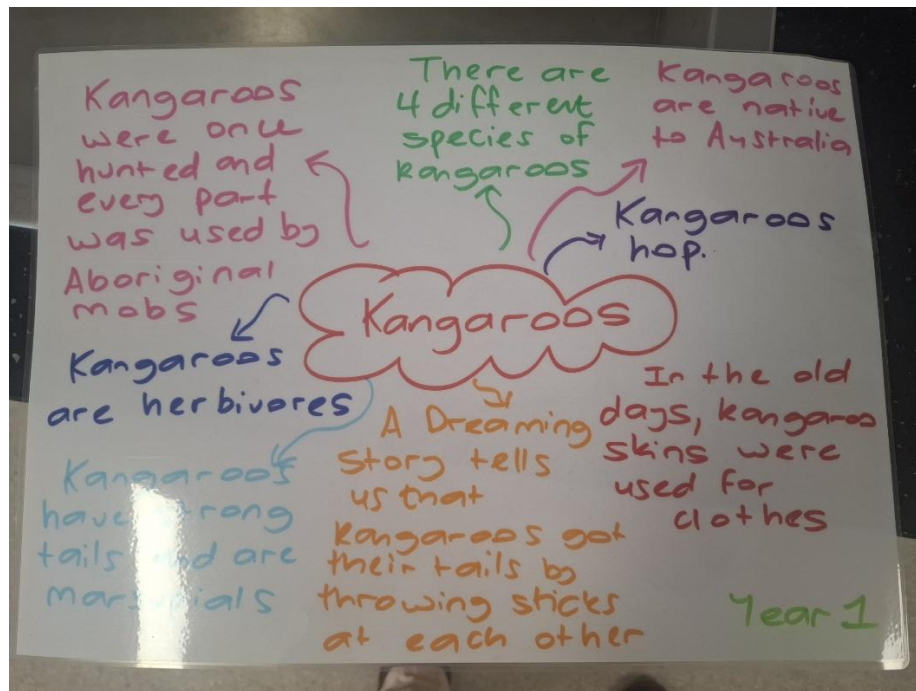


Year 1 Complete their Investigation About Kangaroos

Following a number of lessons exploring the world of kangaroos, our Year 1 mob have finally created a clay sculpture depicting this beautiful animal. You will notice a stick in place of a tail as discovered in the Dreaming story – How the Kangaroos Got Their Tails.







Lucy Adds Mulch to Her Mary MacKillop Bottlebrush Garden

Lucy from our Year 4 mob, was busy this week mulching the Mary MacKillop bottlebrush, she originally planted in Term 2. With warmer weather, it is important to keep weeds at bay and preserve moisture by adding a layer of mulch to our garden beds. We look forward to seeing this shrub in flower next season. Well done Lucy!



Charles Attends the Latest Release of Regent Honey Eaters on Wonnarua Country

Last Thursday, Charles, a member of our Year 6 mob was lucky enough to attend a Regent Honey Eater release on Wonnarua Country. When questioned about this event, Charles mentioned that it was important to preserve our endangered species, because once they have disappeared, they were gone for ever, which is something he did not want for the Regent Honey Eater.

This initiative in partnership with the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water species, Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council, Welfare and Conservation Taronga Conservation Society and the Regent Honey eater Recovery Advisory group from Birdlife Australia, shows that together people can make a real difference.



In the photo below, you will notice Chales holding a book, which was released not long ago detailing the survival plight and efforts put into place to save this iconic species.



Gallahs Use Nesting Box on Schools Grounds for the Second Year Running

Some of you may recall that in 2023, we installed several nesting boxes on school grounds as part of one of our **Looking After Country** projects. I am delighted to report to you that our gallah pair returned this year, and below is a photo of their 2025 offspring. You will notice mum and dad in the branches of the eucalypt and the baby poking its head out of the nesting box. Another successful project.

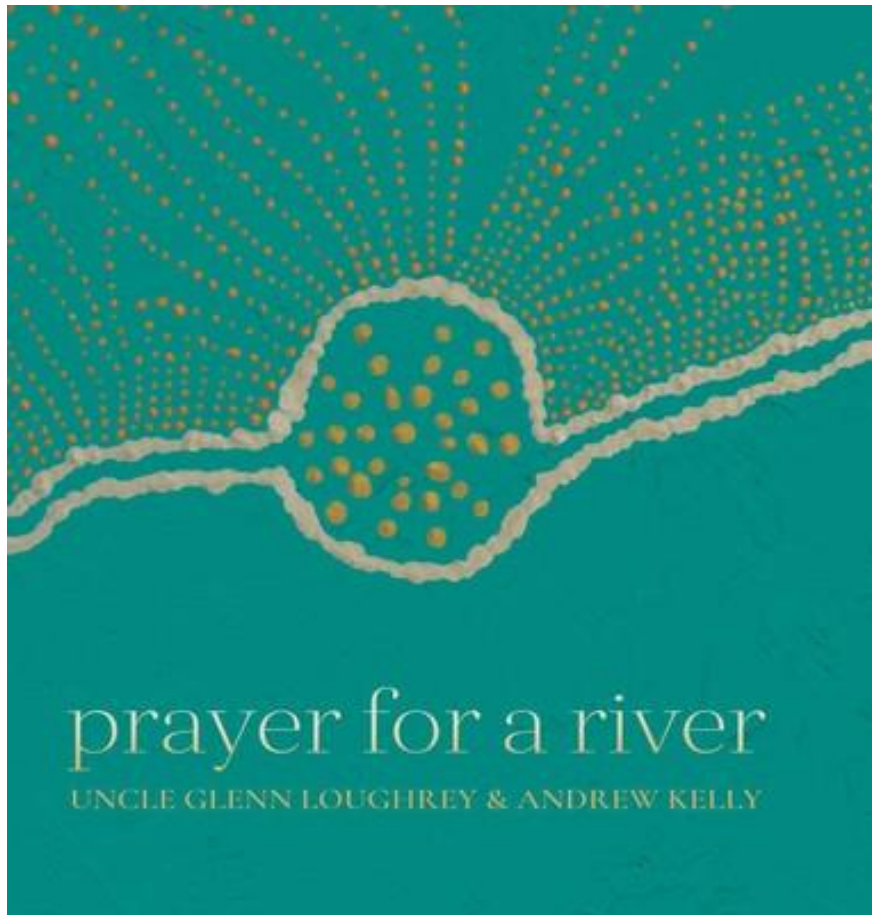


Book Recommendation

I have three book recommendations for you this week. The first is 'Fast Fish' by author and Kamilaroi man Gregg Dreise. 'Fast Fish' is based on a traditional story about the creation of the Murray Cod Fish, Yellow Belly Carp Fish and the transforming Murray-Darling Basin. The story comes with an encouraging message of celebrating differences, learning from mistakes and looking to the future.



My second book recommendation is 'Prayer for a River' written by Uncle Glenn Loughrey. This book works well for us locally with the Coquun (Hunter) River calling this place home. Water falls from the sky, joins the river and gives life to Country. The book tells how waterways hold knowledge, memory and story. A simple, direct and moving acknowledgement of the life-giving role water plays.



Book number three is 'Neighbourhood Nest' by Sarah Jane Lightfoot. Although not entirely Indigenous based, this book still allows us to explore the wonders of Baiame's creations. I fun little book about the birds that inhabit our gardens and school.

