

10 Year

ANNIVERSARY BOOK



The journey so far

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that these pages contain names and images of deceased persons.

COVER: Uncle Steve Williams (deceased) performing the 10 Year Anniversary smoking ceremony, 2017. Permission has been given from Diane Van Aken and family to use this image.

History in the making

The idea behind this book was to acknowledge the immense vision and courage of the pioneers of Gawura - the original taskforce and stakeholders, as well as the seed donors, the families, the teachers and the students.

Lendlease and HH Global were keen to support the creation of this book, so we would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to them for donating their time and resources to produce this special record of history and keepsake: *Gawura – the journey so far*.

We also give thanks to the author Lucy Crook, whose passion and dedication to her role as Gawura's Director of Development helped secure the future of Gawura and ensured dozens of Indigenous children could access the incredible opportunities at Gawura and St Andrew's Cathedral School. Lucy spent countless hours doing extensive research to ensure the facts, voices and photographs of those who have contributed to Gawura are recorded here.

Thanks must also go to the following contributors:

- Gawura alumni, families and students
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- Initial project team: Lendlease Community Day volunteers.

Original taskforce, 2005

Pastor Ray Minniecon,
Pastor of Crossroads

Sharon Minniecon,
Resident of Redfern

Phillip Heath,
Head of School
St Andrew's Cathedral School

Vic Branson,
Director of Staff Services,
resident of Redfern

Cathy Miskovich,
Head of Gawura Campus

David Lawrence,
Director of Development

In 2008, the taskforce grew to include the following people:

Callopie Diat
(Indigenous Advisor to the
Independent Education Union)

Nola Williams
(Department of
Aboriginal Affairs)

Louise Durmush
(Parent and secretary)

Dianne Jarrett
(Parent and Department
of Aboriginal Affairs).

10 Year Anniversary Book the journey so far

Photo: Izak in 2012



Year 6 students Kayliah and Torey at the SACS swimming carnival in February 2017.

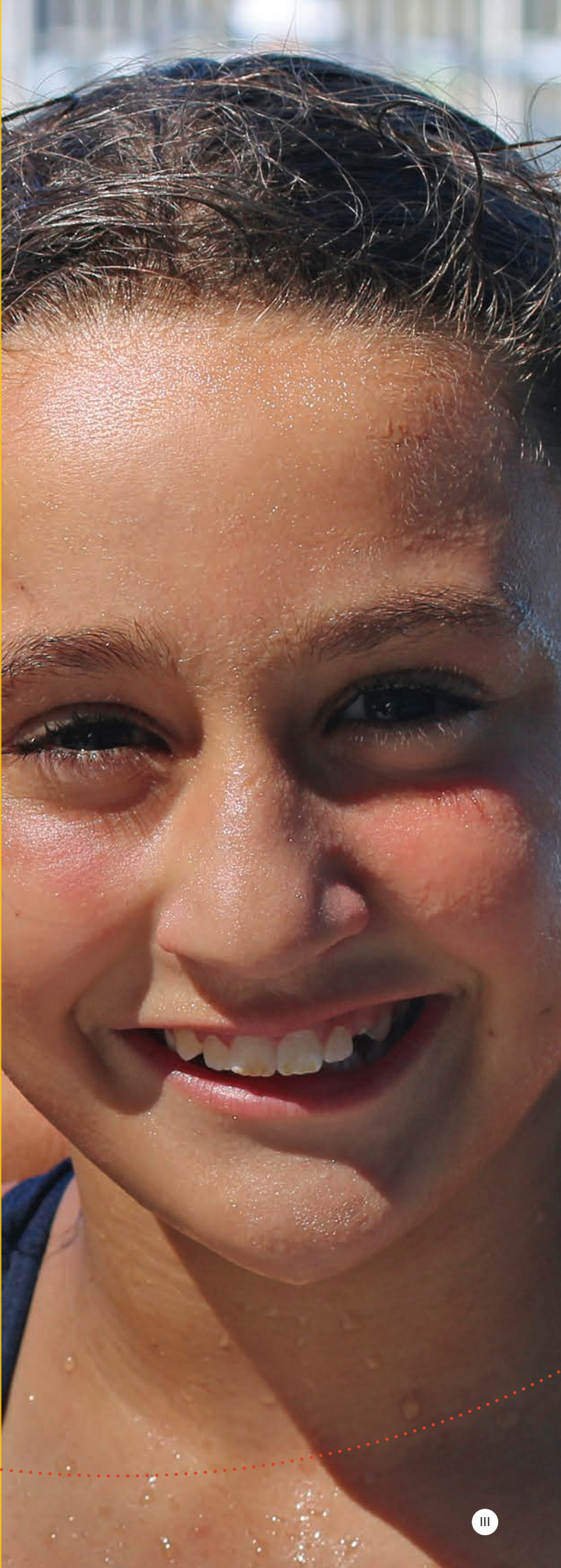
Photo inset: Cathy Miskovich, the first Head of Gawura, who was deeply committed and passionate about the students and the program.

This book is dedicated to Cathy Miskovich and the students and families of Gawura.

Acknowledgement of Country
"Yiradhu Marang"

We would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we stand. The Gadigal are a sandstone and saltwater people and one of the 29 clans of the Eora Nation which is bordered by the Hawkesbury River to the North, the Nepean River to the West and the Georges River to the South.

We would also like to pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.



Acknowledgements

A note of thanks

As you will no doubt glean from the pages of this book, many people over many years, have been involved in the journey of Gawura.

The school communities of Gawura and St Andrew's Cathedral School would like to extend their genuine, heartfelt thanks to each and every person who has contributed along the way by donating time, money or services to the program. All contributions, large and small, have had a positive impact on the success of the program.

We would especially like to personally acknowledge the members of the initial taskforce who navigated through the challenges to get the program off the ground and pave the way for every Gawura student.

Mrs Sharon and Pastor Ray Minniecon, 2017
Co-founders of Gawura



Greeting by Mr David North

Congratulations to the Gawura School on your 10-year anniversary. Gawura is a bottom up educational model founded on the notion that education is a shared journey with a deep commitment to strong, purposeful and respectful educational partnerships. I am looking forward to the ongoing success of Gawura and seeing the children and families continue to thrive as an integral part of the SACS school community.

It was an absolute privilege to work with such dedicated staff, families and volunteers to drive student outcomes over the past 10 years.

Mr David North
Head of Gawura 2008 – 2017



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Top: Gawura students in 2018.
Above: Bank of America Merrill Lynch's Jim Barrett-Lennard and Origin Energy volunteer Frank Becker assist SACS Maintenance and Facilities Manager Clinton Gribble (right) to paint the Gawura rooftop at a working bee in 2014.

"Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute."

– Psalm 82:3

Forward by Pastor Ray Minniecon

Gawura: a positive educational experience

One of the many challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in our contemporary education system has been their capacity to adjust to a foreign educational system and model.

In our traditional Aboriginal educational system, we could guarantee our children that they would not fail. It was almost impossible for a child to fail in the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational system. Why? Because we had multiple teachers and very large classrooms and small classes. In other words, the ratio between student and teacher was very small so that a quality education could be guaranteed for each child.

Multiple Aboriginal teachers also assured a genuine and positive learning experience. Their teachers included gifted and knowledgeable Elders, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Uncles and Aunties, who all guaranteed that the educational experience was fun, exciting and achievable. They knew the student personally and intimately, and they knew the knowledge that needed to be passed on in the ongoing learning experience. They also knew that the survival of each individual student was of the utmost importance. Therefore, the curriculum was based upon the child's personal and individual developmental needs and requirements so that each student could progress and graduate at each important stage of their learning experiences and development.

Taking an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child out of the traditional educational context and system and placing them in a foreign educational system has resulted in far too many of our children being seen as failures. We, on the original Gawura taskforce, realised that it was the system that needed to change. Not the child.

We needed a new model and system of education that was inclusive.

At St Andrew's Cathedral School (SACS), we challenged the old model of schooling with this new and innovative educational model and system. We also realised that we would be challenging a fundamental political and philosophical notion that it's not the child that is the educational problem, it is our educational systems. And so, at SACS, we implemented a different model of education. We designed and delivered a school within the school, purpose built and with a focus of ensuring the system would not fail our Indigenous students.

We know that our model works, we know our model also needs adjusting from time to time, but we do know that we have confidence in the results we have already achieved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students – an exclusive and positive educational learning experience.

*Pastor Ray Minniecon
Co-founder of Gawura
Honorary Indigenous Minister
St John's Anglican Church, Glebe, NSW
(Scarred Tree Indigenous Ministries)*



"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."

– 1 John 3:17-18

Introduction

Succeeding against the odds

The Gawura story is an incredible one of a substantial educational enterprise, operating and succeeding against innumerable odds.

Now in its 12th year, the students and alumni of Gawura are the legacy of this unique educational model, which has evolved through consultation, relationships and sheer hard work of many hands, over many years.

Gawura's founders were committed to righting the wrongs of educational disadvantage and discovered a way they could live out their Christian commitment to love their Indigenous neighbours – a commitment that has been blessed abundantly in the years that followed. As the Apostle Paul writes:

"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." – 1 John 3:17-18

Children have grown and thrived and Gawura is now seen to be making a real difference in closing the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. This is evidenced most in the graduation of 14 Gawura students, many of whom have gone on to university to study a range of disciplines including law, business, communications, sociology, medical science and marketing.

This success has been a source of great joy not only for the students, but for their parents, many of whom have not had these opportunities and whose formal education had been limited. It has been exciting for us to witness how education has the capacity to be a circuit breaker to enabling generational escape from the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

Gawura is unique. It is, as far as we are aware, the only city based, all Indigenous school in Australia. Unlike other independent school initiatives, it is not a boarding school.

Instead, the children of Gawura return to their community at the end of each school day.

Every single Gawura student requires 100 per cent scholarship funding to support his or her place in this school. For this reason, we are immensely grateful to our financial supporters. Strong partnerships with trusts, individual benefactors and foundations, including the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, the Hunt Family Foundation, Origin Foundation, the Bank of America Merrill Lynch, the Rali Foundation, The Mary Alice Foundation, Lendlease (who have generously funded this book) and some individuals, who prefer to remain anonymous, have been critical to the existence and continuation of Gawura.

There have been many key people in Gawura's journey to date. The commitment of Phillip Heath and Ray and Sharon Minniecon cannot be understated. The long-term Chair of our Foundation, Peter Warne, has also played a vital role; Gawura would not exist without his sterling efforts. He has been wonderfully supported by a very active Foundation Board. Our Gawura Ambassador, Professor Larissa Behrendt, has provided splendid advocacy. The enduring commitment of the previous Head of Gawura David North, Gawura Director of Fundraising Lucy Crook and Dennis Blewitt, our first bus driver and pastoral carer, has also been fundamental to our success.

While Gawura stands ready for its next phase, key questions remain around our ability to expand and grow. Those of us who are here believe deeply in the school and feel the next logical step is growth and the ability to serve a larger number of students.

As we reflect on our students and take pleasure in their growth to adulthood, we know the future of our Gawura community is bright. We are grateful for the interest of so many in this important educational endeavour, which is designed to close the gap in the national scandal of Indigenous educational outcomes and in that respect, is an important part of our national reconciliation process.

As we enter the next and (we hope) expanded stage of Gawura, we look forward to the mark our graduates will make on our society, as they emerge from university and other forms of education and training as competent and empowered adults, ready and able to make a difference to Indigenous outcomes and Australian society at large.

Dr John Collier

Head, St Andrew's Cathedral School

Head, St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School

The Journey Begins

Ideas turn into reality

"Your word is a lamp
to my feet and a
light to my path."

– Psalm 119:105

*Pastor Ray and Mrs Cathy Miskovich with the first
Gawura students at the formal opening of Gawura,
St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, November 2007*



The setting for a new concept in Indigenous education

Even in the first decade of the new century, it was abundantly clear that the national life of Australia was blighted by the nature of our origins. Embedded in the spirit of the age, 18th century settlers who ventured far from the country of their birth, viewed the acquisition of land as a natural right and a matter of survival. Respectful attitudes for the original inhabitants were undermined by generations of conflict, the heart of which was the fundamental failure of peoples to reconcile in the context of incontestable rights to land and resources.

The four great strengths of traditional Indigenous cultural identity in Australia – land, lore, language and community – were demolished with virtually no awareness, no understanding or regard for the impact on the original inhabitants. In their place, European notions of ownership, economics, authority, power, religion and education rose up through repeated cycles of government policy, some of which is deeply shameful in our history.

The consequences of this massive disruption remain so pervasive on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Our first people continue to be over-represented in virtually every measure of social morbidity. Being Indigenous is frequently regarded as synonymous with being disadvantaged. Regrettably, education features heavily in these matters, with widespread national concern about attendance rates, achievement scores in NAPLAN, retention rates and many other measures. By 2005, attempts to redress these difficulties had been stubbornly unsuccessful, despite the fact that separately every state and territory government had commissioned reports into Indigenous education and closing the gap in performance with non-Indigenous students.

It was in such a context that the concept of Gawura was formed. During the previous decade, St Andrew's Cathedral School had passed from uncertainty to relative strength

and confidence. Yet, only a short distance from the school is where the Eora warrior Pemulwuy mounted his early resistance to British settlers. The heartland of urban Aboriginal identity in Australia is located at Redfern, a mere two railway stops from Sydney's Town Hall – the stepping off point for St Andrew's Cathedral School. The tragedy of the Redfern Riots in 2004 brought the compounding grief of our failures in reconciliation to the front of our mind. As a Christian school, and with all the blessings we enjoyed, we had to consider: What shall we render unto the Lord for His goodness to us?

Education of young people provides access to the future. This is an established truth. Education that respectfully engages the community from which a child is drawn offers a powerful way to strengthen the lasting impact of educational experiences. This also is an established truth.

However, past educational models in Australia place schooling in the context of state requirements and have paid little regard to the cultural distinctions that come from being part of the First Nation. It was time to change this model, time to reach out respectfully and lovingly to Aboriginal parents and students, time to walk together towards a reconciled vision for Australia.

Despite the doubts and the objections of many, Gawura was born on the eve of ANZAC Day, 2007. Our first community event was to join the Black Digger March through the streets of Redfern, and gather with the community to listen to stories of Aboriginal enlisted military service personnel and their subsequent rejection upon return. There is pain in the past of our nation, to be sure. But there was a hole in our future, and Gawura was part of this great quest to make a positive contribution to the lives of Indigenous families in our midst, for this generation and the next.

*Mr Phillip Heath
Head of St Andrew's Cathedral School,
(1995–2009)*



“How can we as a school and as a community stand with hands in pocket and wait for governments to act when the original people of our land continue to be the most disadvantaged people in our country?”

*Phillip Heath, at the formal opening of Gawura,
at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, November 2007*



Indigenous artist Colin Davis, who created the original Gawura whale painting, hands it to Mr Phillip Heath in 2007. “You know it’s a real Colin Davis painting if it is signed off ‘Colin D. and a cup of tea!’”

Cementing a location

Cementing a location

The project was not without significant challenges. Initially the intention of the founders was to house the school in the political heart of Aboriginal Australia known as 'The Block' in Redfern, an inner-city suburb with substantial Aboriginal residential presence. What they found was a host of obstacles: suspicion that this was another form of white paternalism; concern based on past experience that this idea would be big on promise but short on delivery; the sense that this was an attempt to whisk children away to an inappropriate, elite environment within a high fee school; and the grinding and sometimes paralysing internal conflict within the Aboriginal community based on different tribes, kinship groups and Aboriginal languages. There was also opposition from the proponents of public schooling, based on the incessant sectoral wars between the public and independent school systems.

Ultimately, no agreement on a site could be achieved and it was decided to start the school in one of the two current buildings of St Andrew's Cathedral School, in Sydney Square, Sydney. In hindsight, this was a positive move, as it allowed for far greater integration of Gawura with the rest of St Andrew's Cathedral School, facilitating the sharing of resources within an environment well established for effective learning.

The significance of location

St Andrew's Cathedral School is arguably the most city-centric urban school in Australia. It exists in two high-rise buildings, immediately behind St Andrew's Cathedral, the Anglican Cathedral of the city and adjacent to Sydney Town Hall. Underneath is Town Hall Station, the beginning of the underground City Circle of the city rail line, one stop from Central Station.

George Street, the main street of Sydney, located at the front of the school, is a modern 'macadamized' descendant of a track from Circular Quay forged by the Gadigal people, one of the 29 tribal groups of the Eora Nation, the First Peoples of our Harbourside. Moreover, Camp Cove, at the end of George Street, was the site of the original and subsequently tragic interface between white settlement and Aboriginal people. In that respect, the school's location is a step towards reconciliation with our Indigenous forbears. Furthermore, an Indigenous school in this location is demographically appropriate, with one of the largest concentrations of Aboriginal people in Australia located in the inner-city suburbs of Sydney. The location resonates deeply with Aboriginal experience of the land, their home.

Sydney City Council generously facilitated the school's location by funding a bus to collect each child every school day morning (the 'run' extended from the inner-city suburbs of Redfern, Woolloomooloo, Petersham, Glebe, Balmain and Pyrmont) and return them home after the school day. The bus became a vital means of encouraging attendance, a lack of which has historically been one of the challenges of Aboriginal education.

The significance of "Gawura"

Sharon Minniecon suggested the name, *Gawura*. It is pronounced *ga-war-ah* – a word meaning "whale" in the local Gadigal language spoken in this part of Sydney at the time of the first European settlement. The word refers to the creature as a totem of the Sydney region, with connotations in the Old Testament as the means by which God saved a nation. It reflects the interface between sea and land and captures the image of God sending the whale to rescue

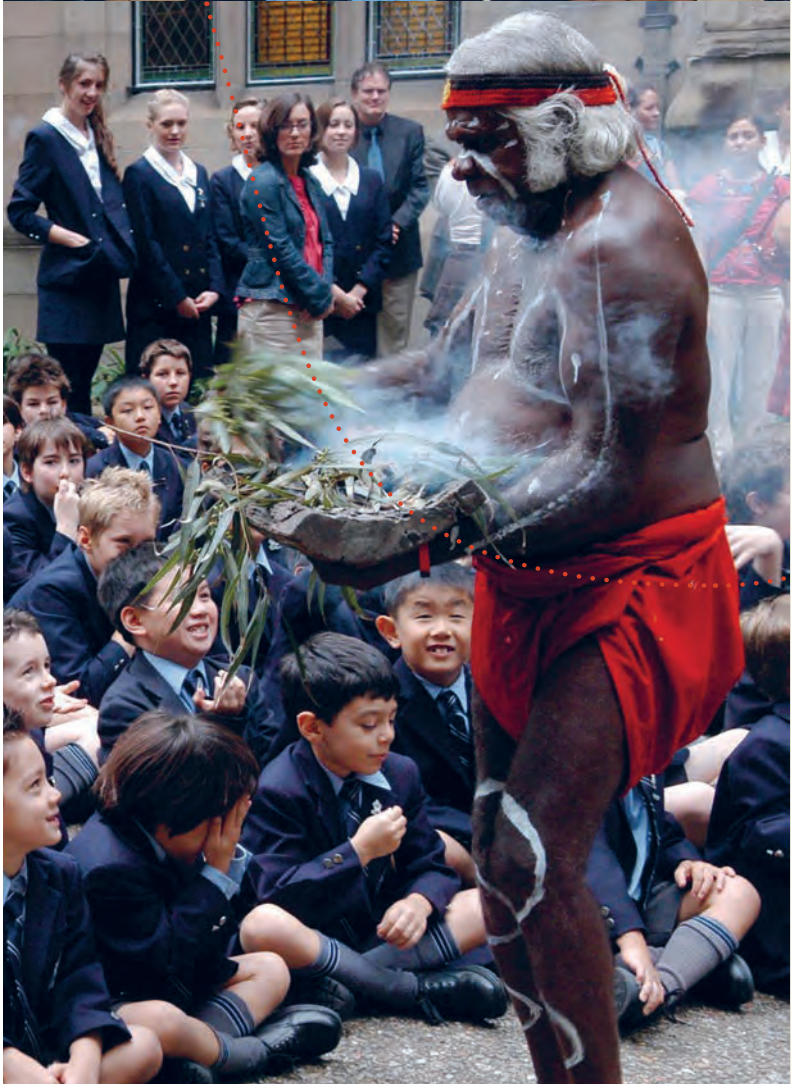
Jonah, a metaphor for the educational and spiritual hopes of Gawura.

The taskforce was unanimous in committing to such a proud and symbolic creature. Visiting Indigenous artist Colin Davis, from the South Coast of NSW, created the Gawura logo. Colin had created many pieces of art in association with the local Redfern community. (His work can be seen at the Redfern Community Centre and local Catholic Church.) Both Colin and his wife Rita enjoyed the experience of creating the proud symbol of the whale, Gawura, incorporating the colours of both the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Island flags.

The whale rising from the waters is symbolic of the determination of those involved with the project to provide a culturally enriching educational opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with a clear focus on Aboriginal perspectives throughout the curriculum.

A smoking ceremony in Sydney Square performed by Uncle Max in front of a huge gathering of people brought Gawura safely into existence within the walls of St Andrew's Cathedral School, the significance of which, after the initial controversy, was not lost on the community.

With Ray and Sharon Minniecon as guardians, Phillip Heath at the helm, Cathy Miskovich as the first Head of Gawura Campus and seven students ready for the journey, the school opened its doors for the very first time in April 2007.



“The enormous task was like pushing a wheelbarrow full of people across a tightrope – we made it across!”

– Pastor Ray Minniecon

Top: First students Ivor Rigney-Sebastian (left) and Izak (centre-front) attend the Gawura opening ceremony with Les Saxby (deceased) in April 2007.

Left: The opening Smoking Ceremony in Sydney Square with Uncle Max in April 2007.

The Pioneers

Building momentum

In the first 18 months of Gawura's operation, the word slowly spread that St Andrew's Cathedral School was doing its part to address the disparity in education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. This resonated with many people in the school community who were subsequently inspired to get involved through volunteering or financial support.

*Cathy Miskovich, teacher Faith Landy
Ariel and Pastor Ray Minniecon with
students in 2007.*



The first teachers and mentors



St Andrew's Cathedral School made a commitment to provide the seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a high quality education in a culturally sensitive environment, with a focus on literacy and numeracy acquisition. Within a year and by the time of the official launch of Gawura in November 2007, that commitment had grown to include 24 Indigenous children enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 9.

Head of Gawura Campus, Cathy Miskovich, enlisted the help of a teacher's aide. Together they embarked on embedding a new model of education for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and boys.

The St Andrew's staff embraced the students of Gawura from day one, helping them settle quickly into their new environment. Some who had a major impact were the Head of

Music Mrs Chris Belshaw, Head Librarian Mrs Elizabeth Greef, and French teacher Mrs Chris Culas, who initiated the Gawura Homework Club. Many other SACS teachers and staff spent considerable time, particularly in the early days, working with the Gawura children to make them feel welcome. These included Deputy Head of School, Mr Graeme Kightley, Head of Drama Jane Simmonds, Music teacher and from 2013, the Head of Music Ralph Wilcock; Careers Advisor Des Sinovich, Science teacher Jim Boddy, former Head of School Services Ken Bunt, Support to the Head of School, Phillip Bryson and Glenda Hunter-Brittain.

Top: (from left to right) Rita and Colin Davies, Pastor Ray Minniecon, Cathy Miskovich, Sharon Minniecon and Phillip Heath, 2007.



"Cathy had been so instrumental in the development of relationships with the community and securing their trust to support these young children in their learning."

- Long-time Gawura volunteer and early learning teacher Elizabeth Stevens summed up the state of emotions within Gawura after the departure of Cathy Miskovich due to illness.

Very sadly, after Gawura had been operating for only a short time, the community mourned the passing of Mrs Cathy Miskovich after a short illness.

The Gawura community were honoured to have had Cathy as their first Head of Gawura Campus and acknowledged her commitment to and incredible passion for the students and the program. They remain thankful to Cathy's husband, Tom Miskovich, for his unending support of Gawura and his wife during this time.

Long-time Gawura volunteer and early learning teacher Elizabeth Stevens summed up the state of emotions within Gawura after the departure of Cathy:

"My involvement in Gawura began in its second year of operation in 2008, in the rooftop classroom, as a volunteer, working principally with the Kindergarten to Year 2 children. At the time, David North had recently taken over as Head of Gawura following the sad passing of Cathy Miskovich. It was a highly charged emotional period for Gawura families, children and staff. Cathy had been so instrumental in the development of relationships with the community and securing their trust to support these young children in their learning."

Message Stick

The very first Gawura school newsletter, Message Stick, sent to parents and carers and written by Cathy, announced:

"The curriculum that the Gawura students will participate in ... developed in consultation with the taskforce ... will focus on explicit literacy and numeracy programs, with a cross curriculum approach to all other Key Learning Areas, emphasising an Aboriginal perspective in themes. It would be remiss not to mention the support of the Kindergarten to Year 12 staff here at SACS, with their offer to provide specialty support to the students of Gawura through music, art, drama, science, library, physical education, chapel and pastoral care."

The very first Gawura newsletter also included the following note of thanks from Mr Phillip Heath:

"The school deeply appreciates the remarkable support of the St Andrew's Cathedral School community. I have received scores of notes and other material gestures of support from parents, students and the wider SACS community. We all seem to be moved with a similar conviction that our school must contribute to this immensely important national challenge of conscience. Our dream is to provide the educational foundations for a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, living within our own city, who will progress to lead a new nation under God. Please pray for this exciting time in the life of our community."

The first teachers and mentors



Mrs Chris Belshaw
Head of Music

Mrs Chris Belshaw, the Head of Music for many years prior to her passing in 2014, had a vision for both Gawura and St Andrew's students – an integration of culture through music. Chris welcomed the Gawura students into the fold while helping SACS students experience Indigenous culture through music. Gawura's first performance began with 'Create the Beat' – a musical item using instruments created by the students and made from household things, including mag wheels and wood. It ended with a concert in Sydney Square for students and families. Chris always had the health and welfare of Gawura students top of mind, recognising the importance of embedding a culturally enriching music curriculum from the outset. She was a much loved and respected teacher and her passing was a great loss to the Gawura community.



Mrs Elizabeth Greef
Head Librarian

Mrs Elizabeth Greef, the SACS Head Librarian, introduced Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and invited the Gawura students to learn with her about their own culture. The library still has a collection of Indigenous books, newspapers and magazines available for all students to use.



Mrs Chris Culas
former French teacher

French teacher Mrs Chris Culas started up and ran the Gawura Homework Club four nights a week. Chris was passionate about providing care and support to the Gawura students and was committed to seeing them complete assessments and progress. Chris bid the school farewell to take up her well-deserved retirement in 2017. Gawura secondary students today are required to attend at least two Homework Club sessions per week as part of their scholarship conditions.



Jane Price
volunteer and teacher

Jane Price and her husband Glenn used to work as flight attendants with the Qantas Cabin Crew team. Glenn was the Chair of the Qantas Cabin Crew team which, for many years, financially supported the Gawura program and held annual art shows showcasing the students' artwork at the airport. After volunteering at Gawura for a short time, Jane changed careers to become a teacher and started teaching at Gawura. She continues to teach the Kindergarten students at Gawura today.



David North takes the reins

In 2008, David North took over as Head of Gawura campus, leaving his executive teaching position at St Andrew's Cathedral School. David brought with him excellent teaching experience and the determination to resolve issues as he continued Cathy's work of building community relationships. Before long, he had a committed team working with him to lead the children of Gawura through the next part of their journey.

David, together with teaching staff Rachel Crealy (Webster), Indigenous teacher Louise Hamilton and mentor and Gawura bus driver Dennis Blewitt, (followed shortly by Jane Price), were a formidable team who worked tirelessly with the families to ensure Gawura kept on track to achieve its mission of successfully engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in education. Louise was employed as a Wiradjuri and Kindergarten teacher and is credited with providing cultural expertise and true reconciliation support for the program.

Over David's nine-year tenure, he and his team, with support and counsel from Gawura families, shaped the program into what it is today.

David was not only a great teacher and role model for students, he also highly valued his team.

His first Gawura teaching staff member Rachel Crealy (Webster), who left after almost nine years to return to her native Canada, had the following to say about David and Gawura:

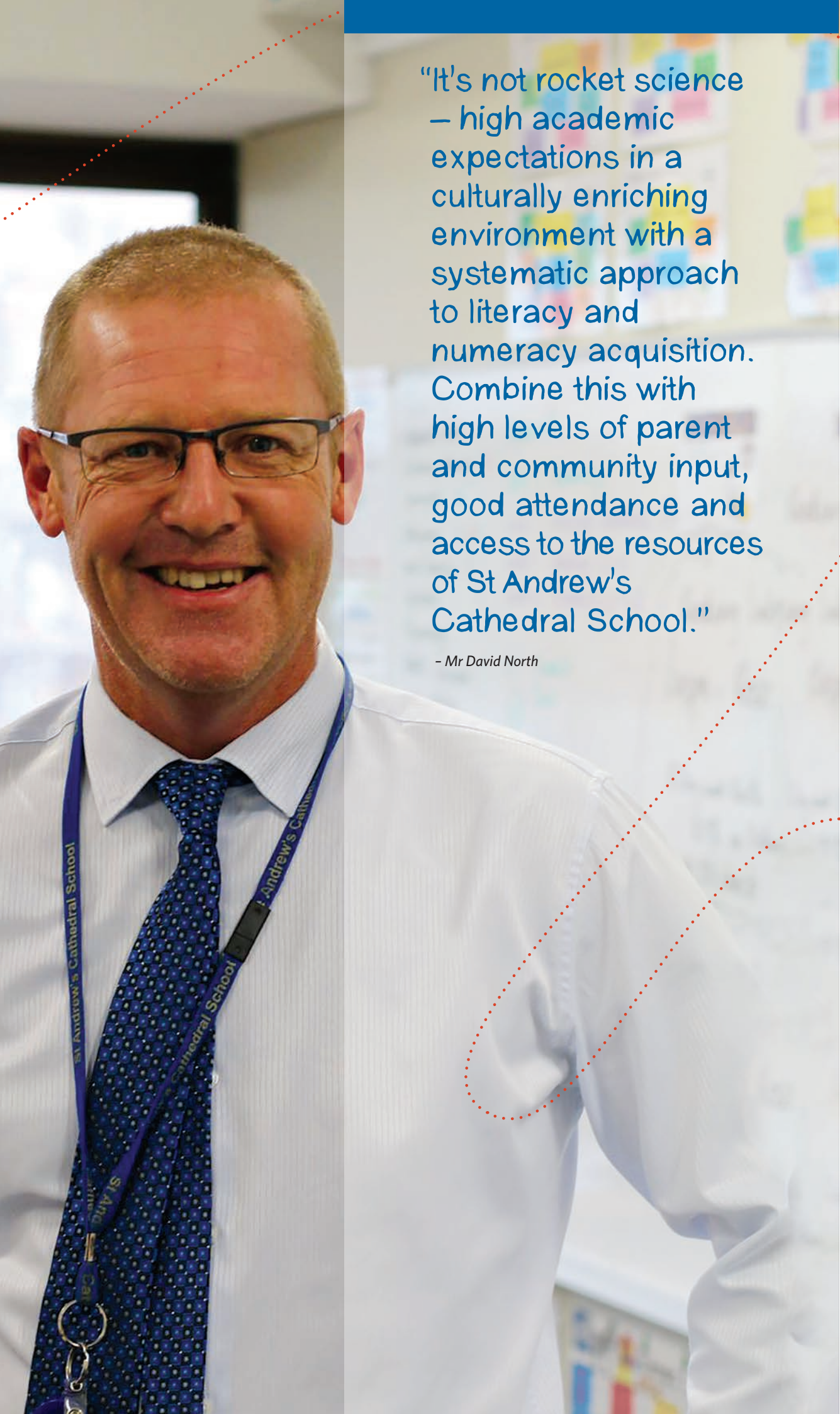
"They say it takes a village to raise a child, and the same is true for educating one. Anyone who has had the extremely good fortune of being a part of the Gawura School in some way knows just how much time,

dedication, commitment and passion goes into helping every student excel. "It has been a real privilege for me to have had the opportunity to work at Gawura School for almost nine years. I started here when Gawura was still in its infancy, and my teaching journey grew alongside it as the school went from strength to strength. I can't imagine it any other way. Being with Gawura from the beginning gave me a unique insight into one of the most extraordinary cultures in the world. It is something I will always cherish.

"The experience and knowledge I have gained working with amazing educators in Gawura, St Andrew's Junior School and the wider SACS community cannot be replicated. It's not every day that you have the opportunity to work with an accomplished teacher like David North, a Head of School with an amazing commitment to his students, the school and community.

"And of course, I would certainly not be the teacher I am today without the opportunity of working with such incredible students. It is so rewarding to watch them grow and develop into confident, accomplished, successful adults.

"Gawura and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community will forever hold a special place in my heart, and I wish the school and everyone involved in it every success for the future."



"It's not rocket science – high academic expectations in a culturally enriching environment with a systematic approach to literacy and numeracy acquisition. Combine this with high levels of parent and community input, good attendance and access to the resources of St Andrew's Cathedral School."

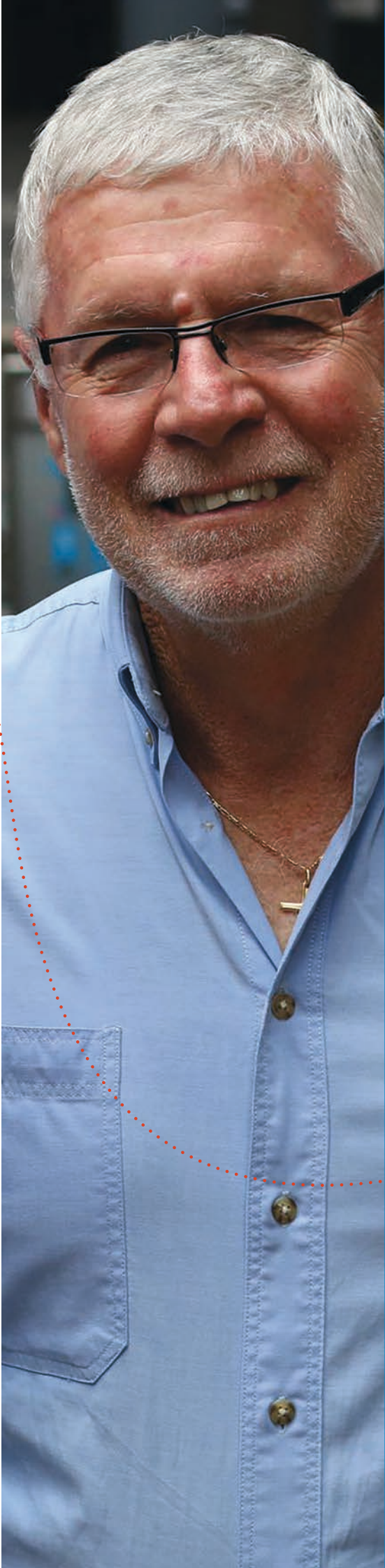
- Mr David North

Mentor and bus driver Dennis Blewitt



David North’s confidante and sounding board was Gawura’s very first bus driver, Dennis Blewitt. A cherished mentor, Dennis worked with the school for almost nine years before retiring in 2017. Fiercely dedicated, he would ring the parents when a student was not at the designated pick-up spot and urge children to be dressed in time for the bus. When they weren’t, he would wait or come back later to collect the child. Dennis had the trust of parents, who shared with him their pastoral concerns and messages for the school, and the affection of the students themselves. In nearly nine years of service, he did not miss a day. Upon his retirement, he shared the story of one student, Keon, who refused to get out of bed some days. With the help of Keon’s mother, Dennis carried Keon kicking and screaming to the bus. Dennis promised to buy him an ice cream if he calmed down and went to school. Keon stopped complaining immediately and indicated his delight at this arrangement.

At Dennis’s farewell celebration six years later, Keon received his reward. “For the next six years Keon reminded me on a daily basis about that ice cream,” Dennis recalled. “He finally received his reward when I retired. It’s called the ‘Keon Dawson Ice Cream Award’. I will always remember Phillip Heath’s words to me in his office when he offered me the position in 2008 and I accepted: ‘Don’t think of this position as a job but as an outreach to the Gawura students and their families’.



“There was nothing in the job description that described the working environment at Gawura. The positive environment was contagious. When I was driving the bus I had a genuine concern and commitment to the students in my care, to get them to and from school safely and for them to be happy was paramount to me. I treated them like my own family, so I got to know them well. There was not one day that I did not wake up and say I don’t want to do this anymore, rain, hail or shine. It was the best part of my working life.”

– Mr Dennis Blewitt



Opposite: The Gawura bus in 2016.

Top: Bus driver of nine years Dennis Blewitt and student Keon Dawson at Dennis’s farewell celebration in 2016.

Above: Head of Gawura David North, Dennis Blewitt and teacher Rachel Crealy at Dennis’s farewell.

Passionate staff supporters

The program has had many other wonderful teachers including Indigenous teacher Ryan Bulger, Gawura’s first Wiradjuri teacher and SACS sports teacher, who left teaching to study medicine at the University of Sydney. He still coaches a SACS cricket team. Indigenous primary teacher Ms Annie Winters was a great role model for students and supporters of Gawura families. She also provided cultural guidance for the school. Mrs Kylie Ford taught Years 3 and 4.

Mrs Alice Peel was at first a part-time teacher of intervention and literacy support programs before she left Gawura to set up her own business providing support to disadvantaged students. She has since returned to assist the Gawura students. Miss Rebecca Solomon and Miss Lauren Rutter were also brilliant teaching and classroom support staff.

Gawura is also proud to have had amongst its teaching assistants two Gawura alumni, Miss Kas Mann (HSC 2012) and Miss Taylor Naylor-Taggart (HSC 2015). Kas has recently completed her Bachelor of Health Science and is working as a case worker at an Indigenous health clinic in Cairns. Taylor is studying a Bachelor of Teaching through the University of New England.

In addition to the many teaching staff who have supported Gawura over the years, non-teaching staff and their teams across many departments, including marketing, accounting, enrolments, IT and maintenance, have offered excellent support to the program. These include former Head of School Services, John Cross; our former Director of Marketing Ms Vicky Fraser; Registrar, Bruce Perry; Director of Staffing Services, Diane Inman; IT Manager, Lyle Corvisy; Maintenance and Facilities Manager, Clinton Gribble; Multi-media and Brand Coordinator Rachel Heriot; Editorial and Communications Coordinator Melanie Collins and former Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator Rose Miller, and current Community and Engagement Coordinator, Karen Swibel.

The first students and families

The Durmush family

Twins Rachel and Georgia Durmush began their journey at Gawura in its first year of operation, starting in Year 4 in 2007. They graduated from St Andrew’s Cathedral School in 2015 and commenced tertiary studies at the University of Sydney in 2016. In 2019, Georgia became the first Gawura graduate to commence a PhD.

Rachel Durmush tells her story:

“My mum met Cathy Miskovich, the first Head of Gawura, when Cathy was meeting people in the community to talk about the school. Mum told Cathy that my sister and I wanted to move schools for better opportunities, as our primary school at the time did not embrace Aboriginal culture. Cathy spoke about how St Andrew’s was setting up Gawura, which would focus not only on small class sizes but also on Aboriginal culture. On Good Friday that year (2007) we came and looked around SACS/Gawura and the Cathedral. We were in awe and really wanted to go there. We started a couple of weeks later in Year 4 and never looked back!

“Some of my favourite memories include reading in the mornings, having the opportunity to become involved in the school musicals and go overseas on a drama tour to New York and Chicago. In addition, I had the opportunity to complete a school-based traineeship with the Sydney Opera House in Years 10-11 and I still work at the Opera House today. We were taken to university open day lunches and introduced to the prospect of completing university degrees when we graduated. This made my transition into university easier and gave me the confidence to enrol for further study. Mum cried when we sat in on a law lecture before we enrolled. She was just so proud.”

“I loved my experience in Gawura and am very proud to have graduated from an amazing program. I am now studying law at the University of Sydney. Gawura gives young Indigenous students opportunities and the support that we may never have received in other schools. These are opportunities that my grandparents were denied, so I am very thankful.” – Rachel Durmush

Clockwise from above: Twins Rachel and Georgia Durmush in their first week of Year 4 at Gawura, 2007; Georgia and Rachel with their mum, Louise, at their Year 12 graduation, 2015; Stephen Green, student Sadie Green, bus driver Dennis Blewitt and Sonny Green show some of their family artworks, which are often auctioned to raise funds for Gawura, 2015; Year 12 Gawura graduates in 2015 – Rachel Durmush, Georgia Durmush, Taylor Naylor-Taggart, Kelsi Smith and Brock Kinchela-Packer; Gawura alumni Taylor Naylor-Taggart and Kelsi Smith with students Leita Green and Dion Lewis, 2016.



The Green family

Stephen and Roxanne Green also had two children start in the first year of Gawura. They eventually had four children go through Gawura – their youngest, Sadie, is currently in Year 10. Their eldest boy, Sonny, was the first in their extended family to complete Year 10. He then went on to complete his HSC and was accepted into Art School at the University of NSW.

Roxanne Green explains how she first heard about Gawura:

“I got to know Sharon Minniecon through RPA Hospital where all my children were born. She worked in the Under 21s natal clinic. One day, a few years after my last child was born, I was sitting in a coffee shop in Redfern where my sister was working. Sharon was there. She said to me ‘You have a lot of children, don’t you?’ at which point I laughed and said ‘yes’, and she told me about the school they had just set up. We were living in a refuge in the city at the time so Stephen went straight down to St Andrew’s Cathedral School, met with Cathy Miskovich and signed up two of our kids. The school had opened in April and our kids started in June.”

The Kinchela family

Louise Kinchela remembers feeling nervous when she took her children, Brock (HSC 2015) and Rhianna (HSC 2017), out of the local public school to take up the opportunity at Gawura. Louise saw an advertisement in the *Koori Mail* advertising Gawura when she was working in Redfern. Learning that members of her local community, Pastor Ray and Sharon Minniecon, were involved was the trigger for her to investigate the option. Both her children have since graduated.

Louise says the friendships formed in the early days of Gawura will last forever:

“The friendships we made in the early days of Gawura when everyone was working hard together to get the school off the ground will last forever. We might all be doing different things now but we are all still connected. We still call on each other and help each other out. Phillip Heath, Gawura and St Andrew’s have done great things for Aboriginal education. Other schools are now joining in and helping Aboriginal kids too. The future for our kids is looking much brighter but there is still lots of hard work and support required particularly after they finish school.”

The financial supporters – our long-term partners

The framework established by the Council of St Andrew's Cathedral School at the inception of Gawura determined that the school should ideally be self-funded. The school required a dedicated fundraiser to advocate the vision to major trusts, foundations and individual donors and garner critical support. The Head of Development at the time, Mr David Lawrence, followed by Mrs Vicki Fraser and her part time support, Mrs Susan Lucas, together with Phillip Heath, worked hard to secure much needed seed-funding for the first three years of the program and well beyond. Vicki and Susan both had children at SACS. Vicki moved from her role as P&F President to the role of Development. Susan introduced and implemented the software program, Giftworks, used to record all the donations, which is still in use today. With the infrastructure in place, Gawura was equipped and ready for fundraising.

Gawura is forever indebted to the early visionaries – Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and the Hunt Family Foundation – for their start-up funding and ongoing support.

The Vincent Fairfax Foundation

The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) was instrumental in providing operational costs for Gawura. Operational funding is particularly difficult to obtain as most trusts and foundations don't support this funding category. The VFFF also supported several scholarships, funding many students through secondary school. Not only were they extraordinary financial supporters of the program, some members continue their support today, volunteering for the Gawura Morning Reading Program.

Mrs Sally White, a board member of the VFFF, explains how the foundation became involved with Gawura.

"I was introduced to the idea of Gawura from the very early stages as a board member of the Vincent Fairfax Family

Foundation. My father was Sir Vincent Fairfax. In 2007 it was agreed that the VFFF would provide operational support for the Gawura Campus for the first three years. St Andrew's Cathedral School made available a classroom up on the roof space. Indigenous artists from NSW and Queensland painted colourful murals representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures on the walls, and I think only six to eight children of varying ages became the first students. Later the school moved to the seventh floor with an enlarged space.

"In 2012, I decided to take part in the reading program as a way of keeping in touch with Gawura and I am still part of the reading program today. I began reading with the older children and wondered why I was there, as they read so well and fluently, but I was told it was an important interaction. I then went to the Kindergarten /Year 1 class as I was pre-school trained. I have really enjoyed my mornings there and see the benefits of Gawura. It is especially gratifying to witness some of the students graduating through secondary levels in the main school.

"VFFF and my husband Geoffrey and I have also supported some children through their secondary years at St Andrew's. This is an important part of the program to continue the Gawura students' education through their secondary years."

Sally's husband, Geoffrey, was the first CEO of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. Geoffrey was instrumental in recommending funding support for Gawura to the Board of Directors at VFFF. He and Sally were at the opening of the school in November 2007, along with Lucy Crook, the VFFF Program Officer, who in 2010 became the Director of Development for Gawura.

Lucy became a major advocate for Gawura and spent the next eight years securing vital funds to continue to grow and improve the program. She departed her official role in mid-2018 but still remains a major supporter of Gawura.



"My father was Sir Vincent Fairfax. In 2007 it was agreed that the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation would provide operational support for the Gawura Campus for the first three years."

– Sally White, a board member of the VFFF, explains how the foundation became involved with Gawura.



Main: Sir Vincent Fairfax established the VFFF in 1962 as a charitable trust.

Top inset: VFFF Board member Sally White in the Gawura classroom, 2018.

Above inset: Sally and Geoffrey White with the first cohort of students outside St Andrew's Cathedral, 2007

The Hunt Family Foundation

The Hunt Family Foundation continues their incredible support of Gawura today by contributing funds for six scholarships managed through two Foundations – the Hunt Family Foundation and the closely related Mary Alice Foundation.

Founder of the Hunt Family Foundation, Mr Peter Hunt, explains why the Gawura model of Indigenous education is worth supporting:

"Australia's track record in bridging the gap between Indigenous people and other Australians has not been good. Too often we have left this task to Government and we have been disappointed with the results.

"My family has therefore been delighted to support the Gawura initiative of St Andrew's Cathedral School which has provided quality education and outreach to Indigenous children. The results have been inspiring and demonstrate what can be achieved across Australia if we give organisations like St Andrew's the financial support to excel. The quality of education and support that these young Indigenous children are receiving is exemplary and we have had the privilege of watching these children growing into empowered and confident young adults.

"We have enormous respect for what the team at Gawura are achieving."



Early supporters of the Gawura vision

In the first 18 months of Gawura's operation, the word slowly spread that St Andrew's Cathedral School was doing its part to address the disparity in education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. This resonated with many people in the school community who were subsequently inspired to do their bit.

The school would like to acknowledge all the people involved from the very beginning (listed on the opposite page), who went out on a limb to give a grass roots program a 'financial leg up' at a time when there were so many unknowns. They have truly helped shape Gawura into the school it is today.



Top: Les Saxby (deceased) beside the Aboriginal mural he painted for the Gawura classroom, 2007.
Above: Aicey Zaro, creator of Gawura's Torres Strait Islander mural, 2007.

Foundations and organisations

- Abbotsleigh School for Girls
- Anglican Board of Mission – Australia
- Bardas Foundation
- Macquarie Group Foundation
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
- Qantas Cabin Crew Team
- PCYC City of Sydney Woolloomooloo
- St James Church Parish Outreach Committee
- Trust Company Limited, trustee for Fred P Archer Charitable Trust
- Ian Thorpe's Fountain for Youth
- Ballarat Grammar School
- Babcock & Brown Australia Ltd
- DJD Services Pty Ltd
- Kevtek
- Marketing Elements
- The Rotary Club of Turrumurra 2007, 2008
- Total Image Interiors Pty Ltd
- Tyrain Pty Ltd

Families and individuals

- Belinda Allen
- Altman Family
- Ampt Family
- Angie Baker
- Rohan Berry
- Tonia Abrahams
- Graeme and Virginia Adam
- M Conrade
- Michael Dolan
- Peter Dixon
- Lloyd Edmunds
- Veronica Fordham
- Samantha Ferris
- R Haig
- Rowan Hanley and Family
- Heath Family
- R Henderson
- J Balazs
- Jill Brightwell,
- Nick Kernaghan
- Sam Kernaghan and Julia Salt
- Paul Kenny and Jenny Campbell and Family
- Roger Hamilton
- Mark Houston
- Helen and Stephen Humphreys
- Matt and Vicki Hayes
- G Applegate and S Glenton
- Peter and Ellie Hunt
- Alexander Jury
- Lesley Kerneghan
- Graham Kelly
- Cameron Kline
- Caroline and John Killick
- Susan Lucas
- Lawrence Family
- Lawson Family
- Light Family
- Marianne Knox
- Tahma Moon
- Carol Mason
- Linda Madgwick
- Marlow Family
- Nathan McCann
- J Merkur
- Cathy Miskovich
- Neilson Family
- Nicol Family
- Partridge Family
- Pond Family
- Mitchell Pogson
- Porter Family
- SACS Pistols Parent Band
- Tony and Gail Powers
- John and Susie Rankine
- Glenn Richard
- Asher Roberts
- Kathy Rankin
- Adrienne Rothwell
- Michael Sharpe
- Peter Stephenson
- Rev Paul and Sarah Weaver
- AE Sinclair
- Elizabeth Stevens
- Sharon Sweeny
- Tyndale Family
- Dorothy Ross
- Susan Todd
- Joanne Wilcocks

A school in its own right from 2011

In 2011, a considerable breakthrough occurred, which had a major positive impact on the funding and status of Gawura. With assistance from the Association of Independent Schools (NSW), Ms Robyn Yates and Ms Lynne Hayes, who worked closely with Mr Philip Bryson from St Andrew's Cathedral School, Gawura achieved registration through the NSW Board of Studies as a separate school to St Andrew's.

As an entirely Indigenous school, this registration enabled Gawura to receive the top level of Indigenous Federal Government funding. The AIS staff, including Ms Roslyn Thomas, continue to be excellent supporters of the program, for which we are extremely grateful.

Whilst Gawura now relies on significant support from Government to fund students in Kindergarten to Year 6, private donations are relied upon to support students through secondary school, where they become part of the 1350-strong St Andrew's Cathedral School cohort.

Unconventional fundraiser

In addition to support from trusts and foundations, staff at St Andrew's were also keen to lend a helping hand to raise awareness and funds for Gawura – sometimes in some rather unconventional ways!

While most teachers spent their October school holidays in 2007 relaxing after a busy term three, St Andrew's science teacher Malcolm Jones found himself facing a deadly ice avalanche on Ama Dablam, one of the most difficult summits in the world. Considered by most climbers as second to Everest, Ama Dablam in Nepal represents the challenge of a lifetime. Jones' climb wasn't just for personal reasons, it meant something more. He took on the mountain to raise money for Gawura. Head of Gawura, Catherine Miskovich, said of the achievement: "The Gawura symbol spans the continents and reaches new heights with the helping hands and efforts of Malcolm Jones. His efforts are an inspiration to our students to reach for the top."

– Marketing Elements media release,
November, 2007

Science teacher Malcolm Jones
raised funds for Gawura as part
of his attempt to climb the summit
of Ama Dablam, Nepal, 2007.



10th Birthday Celebrations

Uncle Stephen Williams (deceased) performing a traditional cultural smoking ceremony at Gawura's 10th Anniversary celebrations in Sydney Square on 22 June 2017.

Honouring the graduates, families and founders

"To me personally,
Gawura represents
one of the most positive
futures for our Aboriginal
community in Sydney."

- Pastor Ray Minniecon, 2017





Beginning with a memorable opening and smoking ceremony in 2007, Gawura and the St Andrew's Cathedral School community celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a special event in Sydney Square on 22 June 2017. Starting with a traditional smoking ceremony led by Uncle Stephen Williams (deceased), the community and friends of Gawura gathered to celebrate the journey so far.

Playing the didgeridoo alongside Uncle Steve was Gawura's first HSC graduate, Mr Ivor Rigney – Sebastian. Ivor was also part of the first cohort of Gawura students who participated in the opening smoking ceremony in 2007.



In 2018, the community mourned the loss of Uncle Steve, with Ray and Sharon Minniecon losing a brother and a friend. The Gawura community feel blessed that he led the 10 Year Anniversary celebrations and shared the culture of his people with the students, school community and guests gathered before him.



Gawura turns 10

The smoking ceremony and Welcome in the Square was followed by a celebratory assembly in St Andrew's Cathedral. Highlights included the presentation of awards to outstanding Gawura students, an Indigenous play called "Tiddalick" performed by students and the first-ever presentation of "We are Australian" sung jointly by 200 Gawura and St Andrew's Cathedral School students in Wiradjuri and English. Special thanks go to Aunty Beth for the translation, Wiradjuri teacher Ms Peta-Joy Williams for teaching the students and Ms Kate Robertson, from the SACS music department, for conducting the choir.

The song and assembly was a wonderful example of unity of two cultures and languages. This unity brought back memories for many of those present of Mr Les Saxby (deceased), the uncle of students Ivor and Izak Rigney-Sebastian and the artist of the Aboriginal mural in Gawura. Mr Saxby played the didgeridoo alongside the organist in St Andrew's Cathedral at the launch of the school in 2007.

We are very grateful to both Peta-Joy Williams and her Aunty Beth for the permission to print the translation and words of the song in this book.



Gawura students performing "We Are Australian" at the 10 Year Anniversary celebration assembly in St Andrew's Cathedral, 2017.

We are Australian

Nginyanhi ngumbaay
Nginyanhi nulabang
Dhaagun—dhi biyang ya—nha—nha
Nginyanhi yarru—dhang
Babirra ngumbaay
Ngadhu, Ngindhu, Nginyanhi Australian

We are one,
But we are many,
And from all the lands on,
Earth we come. We share a dream,
And sing with one voice,
I am, You are, We are Australian

If you would like hear this heart-warming performance, you can visit Gawura's YouTube channel at:

www.youtube.com/GawuraSocial



Gawura turns 10

Mrs Sharon Minniecon, along with the new Chair of St Andrew's Cathedral School Council, the Very Rev Kanishka Raffel, Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, welcomed the community to the auspicious event and reflected upon the tremendous achievement of a united group of supporters.

"The 10-year anniversary celebrations showcased the faith and prayer, the generosity and service, the hope and hard work by community members, supporters, teachers, and families that have contributed to the very significant achievements of Gawura students," he said.

"What a thrill to see young Indigenous people mature and develop and decide for themselves what they will be and do and offer to the world and, as Gawura School, to have a part in encouraging, enabling and celebrating each step along the way."

Rev Raffel joined the SACS School Council in 2017 and Gawura is grateful for his support and that of his team. Long-term Council members Mr Ray Jarratt, Dr Jill Wheeler and Rev Dr Andrew Ford have all played active roles in supporting Gawura.



Panel: (top to bottom) Uncle Steve, who performed the Smoking Ceremony, sits with former Director of Development Lucy Crook at the celebration assembly, 2017; Year 12 student Kade Dawson receives an "outstanding student" award; Sharon Minniecon; Chair of St Andrew's Cathedral School, the Very Rev Kanishka Raffel.

Above: Gawura students join Sharon Minniecon in cutting the 10 Year Anniversary cake, donated by SweetArt, 2017.



Gawura turns 10

"At St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura, we needed to challenge the old model of schooling with this new and innovative educational model and system. We also realised that we were challenging a fundamental notion that it's not the child that is the educational problem, it is our educational systems. And so we have implemented a different model of education. We have designed and delivered Gawura – a school within the school."

– Pastor Ray Minniecon, 2018.
Co-founder of Gawura.



Co-founders Pastor Ray and Sharon Minniecon were overjoyed to be part of the celebrations, but also believe there is much work still be done.

"To me personally, Gawura represents one of the most positive futures for our Aboriginal community in Sydney," Pastor Ray said in 2017. "These children are eager to learn, excelling in academic abilities, showing us that they want to achieve some big goals in their lives. They are my pride and joy. I am also so proud of my involvement in the establishment and ongoing development of Gawura. We need more Gawura schools, not only in Sydney, but all over Australia – where Aboriginal parents have a deeper involvement and control of the education and future of their children, returning to the ways we have done over the last 50,000 years. Gawura is a quiet revolution and it is the true dream of the Gawura community to build more of these "schools within schools".

Two of our Gawura alumni, Kas Mann and Ivor Rigney-Sebastian at the Gawura graduates afternoon tea, 2013.

Artwork created by Gawura Kindergarten student, 2018.

Gawura Today

Inspiring a love of learning

The Gawura model is based on intensive teaching of literacy and numeracy to 'close the gap' or, as we like to think at Gawura, 'stop the gap' entirely.

Teacher's Aide Ms Tace Stevens with Gawura student, Anthony, 2018.



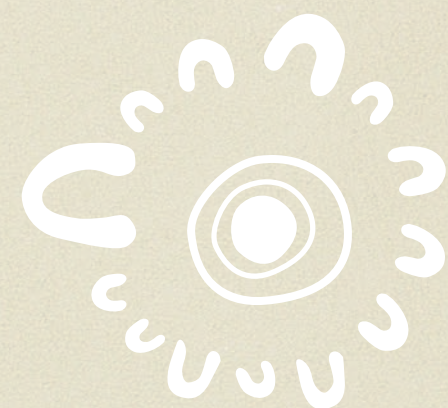
The Gawura model

So what is the Gawura model and how does it help close the gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children today?

Gawura is a primary 'school within a school' catering for Kindergarten to Year 6 Indigenous students, at which point students have the choice to transition to St Andrew's Cathedral School to complete secondary school. We aim to provide scholarship funding for every student's journey from Kindergarten to Year 12.

The Gawura model is based on intensive teaching of literacy and numeracy to 'close the gap' or, as we like to think at Gawura, 'stop the gap' entirely.

One of the keys to its success is the very small class sizes, where there is a high teacher to student ratio.



Gawura Year 1 and Year 2 students with their teacher Ms Lavinia Gibbs, 2019.



Left: Year 1 student Nyarla and Kindergarten student Latrell, 2019
Main: Year 12 student Jacqueline Jacky on Graduation Day, 2018



Gawura at a glance in 2018

- Gawura founded in 2007 with seven students in K – 6
- Residing in St Andrew's Cathedral School, founded 1885
- 37 students in 2018 (from Kindergarten to Year 12).
- 41 students in 2019 (32 from Kindergarten to Year 6 and eight in Years 7–12)
- A total of 14 Gawura students have completed Year 12 (HSC)
- 10 Gawura alumni are currently undertaking university study in disciplines that include science, psychology, law, communications and business studies.
- 4 Gawura alumni are working or living in their local communities
- 8 Indigenous staff are now employed at Gawura and St Andrew's Cathedral School

Teachers and carers

Teachers and carers

Mr John Ralph took up the position as the third Head of Gawura after the resignation of Mr David North in May 2017. Mr North took up a principalship at Chifley Public School overseeing 170 students, over a third of whom are Indigenous.

Mr Ralph works closely with St Andrew's Cathedral School's Head of Junior School and Deputy Head of School (Primary), Mrs Rhonda Robson. Together they will work in consultation with the Gawura families to lead Gawura through the next 10 years and beyond.

Gawura Kindergarten - Year 6 currently caters for around 30 students - four to five students in each of the seven years from Kindergarten to Year 6. Its success relies on a high teacher to student ratio.

The current teaching staff includes four teachers and two teachers' aides:

Kindergarten:
Mrs Jane Price

Years 1 - 2:
Ms Lavinia Gibbs

Years 3 - 4:
Miss Chloe Watson

Years 5 - 6:
Head of Gawura, Mr John Ralph
Miss Anastasia McGrath

Teacher's Aides:
Ms Tace Stevens
Ms Lauren Ferguson

All students are offered the opportunity to transition into Year 7 at St Andrew's Cathedral School. There are currently eight Gawura students in secondary school.

Top: Kindergarten teacher
Mrs Jane Price with Lizzy Ray, 2018.

Right: Teacher Mrs Pip Naden, 2018.

Main: Head of Gawura,
Mr John Ralph, 2018



All students are offered the opportunity to transition into Year 7 at St Andrew's Cathedral School. There are currently eight Gawura students in the secondary school.

Volunteers and community heroes

The weekly reading program commenced in 2011 with seven volunteers from our first corporate scholarship supporter, the ASX Group. It became known as the ASX – Gawura Morning Reading Program. Seven years later, we have over 70 volunteers, individuals and employees from a range of corporations, who have been inspired to sign up and support in any way they can.

Two of our very first volunteers from the ASX had the following to say about reading with Gawura students:

"I was a 'disruptive' volunteer (now a fashionable label) who spent the first part of each session talking to the student about their life, pets, family, dream job, haircut, favourite sport and TV show – any subject at all, including the book in front of them. They'd ask the same questions of me. Our exchange built trust, familiarity and gloating, if their football team beat mine on the weekend. It also changed the setting for reading from labour into an act of playfulness. Bonds through books! What a privilege to step into the world of others and learn more about my own in the process."

– Mr Matthew Gibbs, General Manager, Media and Communications, ASX Group, 2018

"On my first day at Gawura the little lad reading to me was so quiet I could hardly hear him, such a contrast to the energy of the Year 1 girl last year who would insist on singing each story to me. I'm now in my fifth year volunteering and I'm so keen, I turned up a week before reading started this term. It is such a pleasure to see the children grow in confidence over the year."

– Mr Bill Woods, ASX, 2018

Staff members of the Origin Foundation, one of Gawura's current corporate partners, have committed their time to help students develop literacy skills through a love of reading. It's an experience that long-time Origin volunteer and energy trader, Will Pearce, describes as immensely rewarding. *"The kids are always happy to see you, and it's really satisfying to see their progress and to know you've played a small part in that."*



"The kids are always happy to see you, and it's really satisfying to see their progress and to know you've played a small part in that."

– Will Pearce, Origin Foundation, 2018

"I'm now in my fifth year of volunteering and I'm so keen, I turned up a week before reading started this term!"

– Bill Woods, ASX, 2018



Clockwise from top left: Staff members of Lendlease, one of Gawura's current corporate partners, at their Community Day with Gawura. They have committed their time to help students develop literacy skills through a love of reading; Lendlease volunteer Ms Kerrie Franks with LaQuelah reading at the Lendlease Community Day, 2018;

Gawura students Imani, Kailan and Jada; Lendlease volunteer with Sonny;

Left: While rehearsing to perform a music item at the NAIDOC celebrations in 2014, the Gawura students had the pleasure of performing for the Governor of NSW Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO.



Vital connections with St Andrew's Cathedral School

The Gawura model is complemented and enhanced by close interaction with the St Andrew's Junior School for non-core subjects. Music and sport and house competitions see both schools learning and playing together. The students also come together for visual arts, drama, languages and Christian Development lessons, which are taught by St Andrew's secondary school teachers.

This close interaction allows students from both schools to experience the best of both worlds. It also produces academic success. The NAPLAN (National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy) results of Gawura students have mostly been above the national Indigenous average and often above the national average! This is an extraordinary achievement given that some children come from homes with no books or educational materials, or any space for students to undertake homework.

Indigenous perspectives, culture and mentors

The Gawura model deliberately and consciously honours students' Indigenous heritage and actively seeks to encourage a sense of pride in their Aboriginality. From the beginning, incorporating Aboriginal perspectives and culture into the curriculum and engaging Aboriginal staff has been of utmost importance.

The school celebrates key cultural events each year, including:

- National Sorry Day
- NAIDOC Week
- Indigenous Literacy Day
- Cultural excursions including Bundeena and Jibbon Beach, and "On Country" to Dubbo, and Bathurst
- Tribal Warrior Cruise on Sydney Harbour
- Acknowledgement of Country performed by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at assemblies and special events.



Clockwise from top left: Gawura students performing a dance composed by Indigenous cultural artist, Nadeena Dixon, granddaughter of Chikka Dixon, 2016; Joylara receives a certificate of achievement at the 2014 NAIDOC awards; Jenarose doing a ballet class, 2017; Co-founder Sharon Minniecon and staff member Lauren Ferguson take students on an excursion, 2018; Students discover ancient rock carvings on a cultural excursion to Jibbon Beach, 2017; Centre: Students singing at the Gawura NAIDOC Music and Awards Ceremony, 2014

Gawura's Indigenous staff

Today we have eight Aboriginal teachers on staff. Along with the NSW curriculum, they teach Aboriginal culture and the Wiradjuri language, which the school has embraced as the region's official Aboriginal language, with the blessing of the Gawura parents and carers. Wiradjuri has also been included in the curriculum for Stage 3 students at St Andrew's Cathedral School, a class students really look forward to each week. We have two Aboriginal teachers' aides for younger primary students and an Aboriginal mentor for our secondary students.

Gawura's Indigenous staff

Sharon Minniecon
Community Liaison Officer

John Ralph
Head of Gawura

Lavinia Gibbs
Year 1-2 teacher

Leanna Carr-Smith
Wiradjuri teacher

Tace Stevens
Teacher's Aide

Lauren Ferguson
Teacher's Aide

Matthew Hammond
Indigenous Secondary Mentor

Bill Russell
Bus driver



Teacher's Aide Tace Stevens, teacher Lavinia Gibbs, former Secondary Mentor Nat Foster and Head of Gawura John Ralph.



Both of Gawura's current drivers, Neal Flatley and Bill Russell, have a wealth of student stories to share, including the opinion of students that their music is not cool enough to play on the bus! They are, however, allowed to join in singing. We could devote an entire book to telling stories about the Gawura bus.

Bill Russell, who shares the role of picking up the primary students in the morning and dropping them home each afternoon, is an Indigenous man who is considered family to some of our students.



Above: Leanna Carr-Smith and Gawura student LaQuelah 2019

Bus drivers Bill Russell (top) and Neal Flatley (above) play key pastoral roles and are integral to the success of Gawura, 2018.

Gawura's Indigenous mentors Deborah Cheetham

Deborah Cheetham, an Indigenous Opera Singer who runs her own Opera company and wrote Australia's first Indigenous Opera, *Pecan Summer*, is also a role model and Ambassador to Gawura. When she has time away from performing and running her company in Melbourne, she can often be found teaching Gawura students the ins and outs of singing opera. For Gawura's 10th Anniversary she was commissioned to write a very special piece, which was performed by a combined St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura orchestra and choir. The piece, *Tarimi Nulay*, was written and performed in English and the local Gadigal language.



Tarimi Nulay

This song is our connection to a land of ancient wisdom and the history of a people who have been here all along. If you listen I will tell you what I've learned about this country and I'll help you sing so we can all belong.

For the longest time you have lived your culture in your dance and in your song and the same is true for today and tomorrow, it's our way to know, it's our way to belong

The beauty of this country surrounds us every moment and the path to understanding is a path that we can share

If you listen to the knowledge that was here from the beginning you will find a strength you never knew was there

For the longest time you have lived your culture in your dance and in your song

Tarimi nulay, ngalawa yura garabara bara ya, yagu barabugu and the same is true for today and tomorrow, it's our way to know, it's our way to belong

Tarimi nulay, ngalawa yura ngyiningi ngara, ngyiningi berong

Tarimi Nulay by Deborah Cheetham AO and Matthew Doyle, commissioned by Head of Music Ralph Wilcock on behalf of Gawura School to celebrate its 10 Year Anniversary.



Above: The Chamber Orchestra and Combined Choir perform Tarimi Nulay at the St Andrew's Cathedral School Evening of Celebration and Prizegiving, composed by Ms Deborah Cheetham AO, conducted by Mr Ralph Wilcock.

Top right: Students and staff have a singing lesson with Gawura Ambassador Ms Deborah Cheetham AO and singer Josh Pyke, 2016.

Right: Gawura Ambassador Ms Deborah Cheetham, AO. (Photo courtesy of Wayne Quilliam)



Gadigal

Tarimi nulay, ngalawa yura garabara bara ya, yagu barabugu and the same is true for today and tomorrow, it's our way to know, it's our way to belong

Tarimi nulay, ngalawa yura ngyiningi ngara, ngyiningi berong

Gawura's Indigenous mentors Larissa Behrendt

The success of the Gawura model requires the continued support of a range of people from the wider Indigenous community, including students' families, teaching staff and founders Pastor Ray and Mrs Sharon Minniecon, who continue to champion the cause, and respectively sit on the School Council and work on staff.

Professor Larissa Behrendt, an Eualeyai Kamilaroi woman and Professor of Law at the University of Technology Sydney is another Gawura champion who has generously and superbly given her time as the official Ambassador for Gawura since November 2008.

Each year Larissa sets the students a writing challenge over the holidays and judges the stories, announcing prizes for the winners upon their return.

At the NAIDOC celebration in 2016, Larissa spoke passionately about the Gawura program.

"As a society, we struggle to find solutions to the intractable problems facing Indigenous communities and to solve the large gap between the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous communities and those of all other Australians. Governments of all levels and colours struggle to find policy solutions to these issues," she said.

"But nothing is more transformative to the life changes of an Aboriginal person, their families and their communities than a good education. More than any government policies or programs, an education will open up endless opportunities.

"I am honoured to be the Ambassador of Gawura. No one understands the transformative power of education better than me. My grandmother was a member of the Stolen Generations and my father was in a home from the time he was five.

It is thanks to the powerful advocacy of my father's generation and the work of Aboriginal leaders like Pastor Ray Minniecon that

members of my generation got the educational opportunities that they never had a chance to enjoy."

"But nothing is more transformative to the life changes of an Aboriginal person, their families and their communities than a good education. More than any government policies or programs, an education will open up endless opportunities."

- Gawura Ambassador Professor Larissa Behrendt, an Eualeyai Kamilaroi woman and Professor of Law at the University of Technology Sydney



Top: Professor Larissa Behrendt (Photo courtesy of Andy Roberts)
Above: Professor Behrendt, with co-founder Pastor Ray Minniecon and St Andrew's Cathedral School Foundation Chair Mr Peter Warne.

Consulting with Gawura families

Twice a term, our parent and carer community meets at Gawura to discuss the curriculum, plan term activities and provide much needed advice on cultural programs and events. Throughout the school year, families attend a range of events, some in the classroom and some combined with the SACS community, including sports carnivals, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and Grandparents' Day celebrations.

Working and consulting with our parents and carers makes for a stronger, more engaging educational experience for the children. As a result, our Gawura families enjoy an open-door policy and make valuable contributions to the learning experience of their children.

Current Gawura parent Ms Fiona Smith has been a part of the Gawura community for most of its existence and believes Gawura has had a wonderful impact on her two daughters.

"We have been involved with Gawura from the very beginning. My daughter Kelsi graduated in 2015 and is now studying a Bachelor of Communications at UTS. My daughter Peta-Lacey is in Year 4. Gawura has displayed a consistent commitment to quality education for Aboriginal children," Fiona said. "This has remained steadfast from the very beginning and continues to go from strength-to-strength. From the very beginning to this day I have seen the same passion and commitment from all staff working with our children. I have always found the staff and Heads of Gawura to be extremely supportive, encouraging and so understanding of our personal journeys. I have always found, both with David North and now John Ralph, that they are approachable, always super eager to understand the cultural complexities of working with our community in an educational environment.

"In all honesty, I judge the success of Gawura by Kelsi and Peta-Lacey. To send your child off to school each day, amongst the hustle and bustle of inner city life and for a happy, joyful child to return home every afternoon ... Gawura is doing something right and it allows me to have peace of mind."

Homework club

Gawura provides homework facilities for both primary and secondary students. Primary students have access to homework club twice a week after school, while secondary students are required to attend at least two to three afternoons per week. The club is supervised by Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, who offer assistance and support.

The school works closely with Indigenous organisation AIME, who has played a big part of the Gawura program from the beginning, and Career Trackers. AIME mentors join the secondary homework club once a week. In the picture below, students proudly wear their AIME hoodies, 2015.



"To send your child off to school each day, amongst the hustle and bustle of inner city life and for a happy, joyful child to return home every afternoon ... Gawura is doing something right and it allows me to have peace of mind."

- Parent Ms Fiona Smith



Top to bottom: Peta-Lacey with her grandmother at Grandparents' Day, 2018; Fiona Smith (right) with daughters Kelsi and Peta-Lacey, 2015; student Wolmorry with his dad John Roach on Father's Day, 2015.

Program funding today

Today Gawura relies on the continued generous financial support of trusts, foundations, corporates, individuals and families. Our supporters donate in a variety of ways – from funding full scholarships to supporting our end of financial year appeals and our annual fundraising evenings.

Our annual fundraising evenings have been an important part of the Gawura calendar each year. In addition to providing funds for the program, they also provide an excellent opportunity for the community to come together. It gives the students a chance to showcase their talents to supporters of the program and Gawura families an opportunity to show their thanks by donating artworks for auction and sale. We are also very grateful to the Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Macquarie Bank for hosting and supporting our events over the last few years.

In addition to the life-changing support from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and the Hunt Family Foundation, a number of corporates, newer foundations and organisations of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney and various parishes have offered much appreciated scholarship support. Other Anglican organisations that have generously supported Gawura include St James Parish, King Street, the Anglican Board of Mission and Anglican Deaconess Ministries.

Column (top to bottom): At the 2016 Gawura fundraising cocktail party at Macquarie Bank, a panel of community members answered questions about Gawura and Indigenous issues (from left to right: Mrs Pip Naden, Ms Tameka Ingram, Professor Larissa Behrendt, Mr Ivor Rigney-Sebastian, Mr Nat Heath, Mrs Roslyn Thomas, AIS, 2016); Ms Lucy Crook, Director of Development and Rose Miller, Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator, 2016; Head of Music Ralph Wilcock plays with Gawura and SACS students, Tyreek and Harry at the Gawura fundraising cocktail party in 2014 at Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Former Director of Development Ms Vicki Fraser and SACS Board member Dr Jill Wheeler at the Gawura fundraiser, 2016.

Artwork by Gawura father, Stephen Green, auctioned at the fundraising cocktail party, 2016.



The following donors have made significant contributions to Gawura over the last three to seven years and continue to support us today:

- the Origin Foundation (also involved in the Reading program);
- Bank of America Merrill Lynch;
- Mary Alice Foundation and the Rali Foundation.

The Origin Foundation

The Head of the Origin Foundation Mr Sean Barrett, said Gawura's success is exciting.

"Since 2013, we have gifted more than \$920,000 to support the development and progression of the Gawura model, so that Sydney's Indigenous children can reach their potential," he said. "We are encouraged by the positive educational outcomes Gawura students are achieving, in attendance, literacy and numeracy and are delighted to see many of Gawura's first graduates thriving at university."

The Rali Foundation

The Rali Foundation, run by founding members Ralph and Alison Stagg, has been supporting primary scholarships for the last seven years.

"Rali's contribution to the Scholarship Fund has enabled children in Kindergarten to Year 3 to attend Gawura," Alison explained. "Rali representatives have visited Gawura on many occasions. We have had our numeracy tested in competition with students (and failed!) and listened to the younger students reading with high literacy skills. It is a wonderful opportunity to see the students in their learning environment, to be able to interact with the teachers and see the excellent progress the students are making.

"The Gawura school has achieved excellent results; it was a milestone to attend the celebration of the first high school graduates on their way to university – for some the first ever in their family. The balance for both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous students provides them with the opportunity to share in cultural activities. Anecdotally, non-Indigenous students singing Indigenous songs at home in the shower is testament to this success.

"Rali is proud to be involved with this successful school, which has also provided us with the opportunity to learn and appreciate more personally about the Indigenous culture."

Column (top to bottom): Frank Calabria, CEO Origin Energy, reads with student Jakayla Reid, 2017; Rali Program Officer Marilyn Chambers with Rali Founder Ralph Stagg, 2017; Alison Stagg of The Rali Foundation with Gawura student Joshua 2018; Gawura graduate Ivor Rigney-Sebastian with his father Mr Alex Sebastian, 2015.

Program funding today

Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Bank of America Merrill Lynch has been supporting Gawura for six years. In addition to financial support, they provide staff volunteers who help Gawura students in the morning reading program. Kevin Skelton, Australia Chief Executive Officer and Jim Barrett-Lennard, BofAML Australia Chief Operating Officer, who volunteers occasionally in the morning reading program, said: "We're proud to have supported Gawura since 2013, building on Bank of America Merrill Lynch's longstanding tradition of helping children in Australia, across the region and globally. As our volunteers will attest, having the opportunity to read with the students, and to watch them learn and build their understanding of the world around them, is a highlight each week and deeply rewarding. It's been a privilege for everyone involved to have played our small part in the success of Gawura and, more importantly, to watch its students' progress on their journey from Gawura to secondary school and beyond."

The Mary Alice Foundation

The Mary Alice Foundation support three of six student scholarships, in partnership with the Hunt Family Foundation.

Mary Alice Foundation Trustee, Rosy Sullivan, said it is an easy decision each year to support the Gawura school program. "Ellie Hunt (now deceased) who established the Mary Alice Foundation, was one of the initial donors to support the establishment of Gawura with her husband Peter Hunt. Gawura was very dear to Ellie's heart, and the trustees of her Foundation are keen to continue her legacy with the outstanding work that is being done at Gawura," Rosy said. "Each year, we are provided with feedback on the successes of the children who benefit from the program and have the opportunity to see their work and participate in their programs. It is truly making a difference in the lives of the children, who would otherwise not have the opportunities that they are now being afforded through Gawura."

"In addition to scholarships, the Mary Alice Foundation provided 50 per cent of the funds for the purchase of the school bus that is used each day to ensure that the children of Gawura school are safely collected and transported to school and home again at the end of the day."

"We are looking forward to a long and successful association with Gawura and watching the enormous education and personal growth in each of the children."



Top: Mary Alice Foundation Trustee Mrs Rosy Sullivan with Gawura teachers and students - celebrating the arrival of the new Gawura bus, 2016.

Above: Bank of America Merrill Lynch staff at the strategic planning day, building bikes for the Gawura students, 2014.

Anglican Board of Mission (ABM)

Long-term scholarship supporter, the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) are still very generously supporting Gawura today, collecting support for Gawura from Anglican churches and schools all over the country, as well as individual donors. ABM's partnership with Gawura began in 2008 as the result of a bequest, which was to be spent on the secondary education of Aboriginal students.

ABM's St Andrew's Cathedral School Secondary Scholarship project for Gawura students continues today. "ABM is proud to support Gawura," the Mission said. "We are committed to 'closing the gap' and seeing lives transformed, such as those of the recent graduates who have gone on to tertiary studies."

Lendlease

Lendlease has become an invaluable partner of Gawura over the past three years. We count ourselves lucky that Lendlease employee Mr Michael Dockery is also a 'SACS dad'. We have Michael and a group of Lendlease volunteers to thank for the funding and production of this book. Lendlease also provided the school with funding to conduct the first (of many we hope!) Indigenous cultural awareness training sessions for St Andrew's Cathedral School parents and carers, which was a great success. These initiatives came out of two Lendlease Community Days held at Gawura.

Personal contributions by the school community

In the early days and over the years, the St Andrew's Cathedral School P&F has provided funding to support Gawura. Jude Karikios, who operates the school canteen, has also offered support and has provided many school lunches over the years.

Gawura continues to be supported by many families and individuals from within St Andrew's Cathedral School and the wider community. Many SACS parents help where they can, by donating silent auction items, flowers, alcohol and fantastic cakes. Mrs Anthea Leonard, mum to former SACS school captain Ruby Leonard, has provided magnificent birthday cakes for key events, including the Gawura 10-year anniversary celebration.

St Andrew's Cathedral School Council and Foundation members continue to financially support the program.

While we wish we could acknowledge every single person who has contributed to the success of Gawura, a lack of space and the fear of leaving someone out precludes us from doing so here.

We would, however, like to give a huge 'shout out' to everyone who has supported our school. We are heartened by the contributions we continue to receive and excited and hopeful for the future.

Students performing 'We are Australian' in Wiradjuri and English at Lendlease Property Live, 2018.

Toni, Gawura student, 2018.

Miri Miri Cultural Awareness training at SACS, 2018.

The next 10 years

Inspiring the next generation

Gawura has emerged as an exemplary Indigenous schooling model with a promising and exciting future. We plan to continue growing into a school of excellence, aiming for Aboriginal cultural and academic competency across both schools.

Gawura student, Graham, 2018.



The next 10 years

Gawura's journey engaging Indigenous children in learning and closing the education gap is still relatively young. Despite this, our achievements have been great. Today, we are a school of choice for nurturing the emerging leaders of our First Nations people living in the centre of Sydney.

Gawura students have gone from strength to strength, achieving milestones many of their family members had never before had the opportunity to reach, like graduating from school, enrolling in university or TAFE and joining the workforce. Each day Gawura continues to celebrate these successes, no matter how big or small, as students defy the national statistics that present Aboriginal children significantly lagging behind. Our alumni are already role models for our younger students and are emerging as leaders of tomorrow. They are the Elders of the future.

With results like these, Gawura is committed to continuing the journey to bring more young role models and leaders to the forefront, defying the statistics and waiting in hope that governments will 'cotton on' and join in.

Gawura has emerged as an exemplary Indigenous schooling model with a promising and exciting future, with plans to continue growing into a school of excellence and aiming for Aboriginal cultural and academic competency across both schools. We will continue to nurture and encourage student and staff engagement, consult with families and engage the greater community.

As celebrations of Gawura's 10-year anniversary came to a close, the school was already planning the next 10 years. A survey was sent to the parent and carer community, donors, volunteers, staff, family and friends of Gawura to capture their hopes and dreams for Gawura's future. The feedback was collated and included in Gawura's Strategic Planning sessions. The message from the feedback was loud and clear: give as many Indigenous children as possible the opportunities that current and past Gawura students have experienced.

Best practice Indigenous education programs around the globe have been reviewed and comparatively, the results show what we already know: Gawura is doing great. But as a school, we will always look for ways to improve.



"The biggest consequence of being involved in Gawura was being able to graduate and study law at university. This is something that I never thought that I could ever achieve. Gawura encourages students to believe you can achieve any dreams or goals if you work hard. Many more children will receive this opportunity as Gawura continues into the future."

- 2016 graduate Rachel Durmush, 2018

Alumni graduates Kas Mann, Sonny Green and Ivor Rigney-Sebastian with Pastor Ray Minniecon, Dr John Collier and Mr Phillip Heath, 2015

With results like these, Gawura is committed to continuing the journey to bring more young role models and leaders to the forefront, defying the statistics and waiting in hope that governments will 'cotton on' and join in.

Goals for the future

Gawura's ultimate desire for the future is to enhance the transition into schooling. We know that the first 1000 days of a child's life are critical and ideally, we need a range of strategies to implement prior to the commencement of formal schooling to ensure readiness from day one. To do this, we will continue to work with local Indigenous preschools and develop joint ventures that improve our offering and that of our partners.

Maintaining Aboriginal staff is also vital to continued success and a vital cog in the wheel of engaging Indigenous children successfully in education. Currently only 1 per cent of Australian graduating teachers are Indigenous. Attracting quality Aboriginal educators can be enhanced by strategically targeting pre-service quality teachers.

We will continue to strive for cultural competency across both schools by developing the strength and effectiveness of the Wiradjuri language program.

Gawura will continue to offer Wiradjuri classes for parents, staff and the greater community and will embed culturally specific excursions and experiences into the school calendar.

Networking with leading educational researchers and speakers to keep up with leading thinkers in the field of Aboriginal education will be imperative. Ongoing participation in and representation at national Aboriginal Educational Conferences will ensure a continuing commitment to best practice.

Continuing our commitment to the health of our students, we will offer access to dental, optometric, auditory and general health services.

It is imperative that our students have access to expert specialised education services in the fields of Occupational, Speech and Behavioural Therapy, whether through the Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) or specific funding or grants.

Role models are key to our ongoing development to nurture the aspirations of our emerging leaders in both Gawura and St Andrew's Cathedral School. Our alumni are a key part of Gawura and will continue to be invited to school events and be actively involved with current students.



Gawura Kindergarten and Year 1 students, 2019.

Funding for the future



It's worth stating again that we are forever grateful for the support we continue to receive from our Friends of Gawura – foundations, trusts, organisations, families and individuals. We are confident that this generosity will continue and are blessed to have so many long-term supporters. The challenges ahead are significant, however, and the need to continue to grow our support base and raise funds is constant.

Kindergarten students Graham and Djani Lebron, 2019

While we have a small number of incredibly committed corporate supporters, most corporations with the means to support a program like Gawura choose not to, as their charters do not allow for the support of a specific school, particularly one within a privileged independent school.

So, as we look to the future, we look to Government support as an option, particularly for our secondary students attending St Andrew's Cathedral School.

Currently, significant government money is made available to fund scholarship places at boarding schools for Indigenous students from remote areas. While remote Indigenous students need and are entitled to quality educational opportunities, there is no denying the complementary needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from urban communities.

Our aim will be to continue raising a significant amount from corporate donors, in the hope that government can be persuaded to give a dollar for each dollar donated by a private donor. A combination of tax-deductible donations plus significant government funds has the potential to effectively quadruple every corporate dollar donated.



Today, our overall conviction remains.

We who have the means need to provide ways to dramatically improve the appalling health and educational outcomes of Indigenous people, to provide an example of lived reconciliation, and to manifest Jesus' instruction:

'Whoever welcomes a child like this welcomes me.'

- Matthew 18:15

Design notes – songlines and symbols

Indigenous “songlines” tell the story of the Australian landscape and provide important knowledge, cultural values and wisdom to Indigenous people. These are represented by the dotted trail lines throughout this book.

In 2019, the United Nations declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages to help preserve indigenous languages and safeguard the rights of those who speak them. Gawura is creating more opportunities for students learning Wiradjuri to cement their language skills throughout 2019 and beyond. The horseshoe-shaped symbols in this book represent groups of students and teachers learning and growing in their understanding of Indigenous language and culture.

Lendlease are proud supporters of Gawura and are delighted to have partnered with HH Global and Gunn Taylor Printers to produce this 10 year anniversary book.

 **lendlease**

 **hh global**


**GUNN
TAYLOR
PRINTERS**

*Year 1 student
Lizzy Ray, 2019*

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