



# Kindlings

*Place-based Learning* 2025



# Acknowledgement

Kindlehill is situated on Dharug and Gundungurra land; we pay respects to the traditional custodians whose cultures and customs continue to nurture this land.

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Truth-telling, and a process of Treaty making to address the impacts of colonisation.




Kindlehill School

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*Kindlehill is a K-12 school with a philosophy in Rudolf Steiner Education*

[www.kindlehill.nsw.edu.au](http://www.kindlehill.nsw.edu.au)

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I am excited to introduce this edition of our annual school magazine, *Kindlings*: A focus on Place-based Education at Kindlehill School.

It is a journey from Kindy to Senior School and reflects deeply on our practise of connecting our children, young people and their learning to the local environment, community and Country.

It's an important thing to do.

At the heart of it is Belonging – a powerful momentum that envisions a world where all living things are recognised, valued and empowered. The interdependence between them is deeply understood, profoundly supported and cherished above all else.

It means we begin to embed a deep valuing of the diverse ways of knowing and understandings of our world. It listens deeply to the many voices in communities.

It recognises and feels each place, each community, as special, unique, important and worthy.

It knows one place is connected to all other places and communities.

It creates actions to protect and nurture each living community.

It is belonging.

*Erica Chaperlin,  
Principal*



# Wirambi Bayala The Bat Story

## A Lesson in Belonging

**N**angamayi (the Dreaming) holds the lessons of our old people, reminding us how to live in good spirit with each other and with Ngurra (Country). This story of Wirambi, the bat, speaks to the deep cultural teaching of belonging, not just to place, but to each other.

A long time ago, the birds decided to have a party. No one was more excited than Wirambi. He dressed himself in his finest, using gum sap to smooth his fur,

and flew down to join in. But when he arrived, Mr. Eagle, standing at the door, blocked his way.

"This is a party for birds," Eagle told him. "And you are not one of us. You have fur and teeth. You do not belong here."

Wirambi was heartbroken. He flew up into the old gum tree and cried. His tears made the branch slippery, and he slipped upside down, hanging there in sadness.

Later, he heard the animals were having a party. This was his chance! He smoothed his fur again, checked his reflection in the water, and went to the gathering. But this time, it was Wombat at the door.

"This is a party for animals," Wombat told him. "And you are not one of us. You have wings and can fly. You do not belong here."

Again, Wirambi was turned away. Again, he flew to his tree and cried, his sorrow so heavy that he could not move.





But the other bats saw him. They gathered in for a Bayala a yarn to ngarra (listen) to his story. And in that moment, they knew what had to be done.

They decided to hold the biggest and best gathering the bush had ever seen. They invited everyone! The birds, the animals, and even the fish. No one would be left out. Because belonging is not about how we look, or how others see us, it is about how we hold space for each other.

And so, to this day, the wirimbi (bats) hang upside down. They remind us to

stand strong in who we are, to make space for others, and to never turn anyone away just because they are different.

### **Dharug Teaching: Belonging in Good Spirit**

Our old people teach that belonging is not just about place, it is about connection, responsibility and respect. In Bayala, we come together to listen and decide how to walk forward in good spirit. The bats showed us that belonging does not mean fitting into someone else's

idea of who we should be. True belonging is when we make space for everyone, because we are all part of the same story.

In our communities today, we must remember Wirambi's lesson. We must look at who is being left out, who is not being heard, and ask ourselves, how can we bring them in? How can we make sure everyone feels like they belong?

That is the way of our old people. That is the way forward.

*Corina & Lex*







Bayern





# Kindlehill's Totem: The Giant Dragonfly

As a School we take inspiration from *Petalura gigantea*, the Giant Dragonfly. The swampy surround of the sweet waters of Wentworth Falls Lake is one of the few remaining habitats to *Petalura gigantea*, which is listed as an endangered species.

In deepening our understanding of *Petalura*'s life at the lake, we have come to understand the importance of protecting the health of the whole swamp. As our School's totem, *Petalura* speaks to an ecological worldview where everything is interconnected.

As a creature of transformation and whose existence is fragile, it also speaks to our purpose as a School in contributing to the transformations in ways of thinking and living that are needed to address the environmental and social crises of our times. We have come to understand the significance of swamps in mitigating the impacts of climate change – as water-holders, they are resilient in the event of bushfires and absorb runoff from intense rains. They are also important carbon sinks.

In her swamp habitat, *Petalura* is a wise teacher in how we in this local place can thrive, learning from and taking care of Country, of which we too are part.

<https://www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au/timeline/hanging-in-there/>

To support the understanding and guide our practice as educators, a framework of place-based education is offered as a lens through which our curriculum is viewed and enlivened.

# Place-based Framework for Education at Kindlehill School

A place-based learning framework for Kindlehill School focuses on connecting students to their local community, environment and culture through hands-on, real-world learning experiences. It fosters a deeper sense of belonging and encourages students to engage with their surroundings, the natural environment, local history, businesses, and community issues. This method is highly interdisciplinary and helps to develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and social responsibility.

## Early Childhood and Primary School

In Early Childhood and Primary School, lessons and rhythms of the class reflect those of the environment they are in. This includes a deep reverence for and rich observation of the changes that occur as part of the changes of seasons and our annual rhythm. These are celebrated and interwoven in the teaching and learning as well as community events. Stories, verses, songs, flowers and nature tables will all reflect what children are experiencing in their world. The local context is evident in all lessons, songs and verses.



The stories and themes focus around the lake, the Blue Mountains, the creeks, swamps and waterfalls, and the creatures and plants that inhabit them. The lessons and activities explore, respect and deepen the understanding of the communities which have lived and cared for Country for thousands of years. Students learn to care for their environment, forged from a deep love and reverence for it. Children will also explore the impacts of humans through understanding the history of a place. They will engage with local natural areas, visit historical sites and connect with local communities.

## High School and Senior School

Place-based learning is primarily carried by the Geography curriculum and links to other subjects are explored collegially for a more transdisciplinary approach. Focus studies such as Water in our World and Environmental Management have a local

component where global patterns can be identified in the students' own environment and community. Fieldwork is central to these studies, as is active participation in addressing local issues. The goal is to develop an understanding of the world through a local lens where relevance is evident, as is the individual and community capacity to action transformative change. Students also develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with the local environment and community, as well as those places they visit as part of the Outdoor Education and Camps program.



In the Senior School, through transdisciplinary themes, students address the complex mindsets and systems that are part of our world today. They develop critical and innovative thinking that inspires them to live their lives with a deeply felt sense of the underlying interrelatedness of life. They apply



classroom learning through engagement in significant projects that address real life problems in our local community.

The Senior School program is called Buran Nalgarra, referencing the twisting together of strands from the Stringy Bark into strong twine. Learning through togetherness in the place we live is foundational.

### **The Learning Goals & Outcomes of the Framework**

At Kindlehill, the academic work is situated within the higher purpose of the social deed towards people and the Earth. It strives to ensure that the learning is

authentic and relevant to the context of their environment, the people and cultures that exist within it, and seeks to develop a better world for all who share in it.

- Academic Achievement: Supports core academic goals (literacy, maths, science etc.) through real-world applications.
- Community Engagement: Develops students' awareness of and responsibility toward their community and the natural world as a way to strengthen understanding of the interdependence with other people and the natural world.
- Environmental Stewardship: Promotes an understanding of the natural

environment and the impact of human activities on it and explores the ways in which we can care and protect it.

- Social and Emotional Growth: Fosters a sense of belonging and connection to the community.
- Cultural Awareness: Encourages students to explore and respect local culture, history and traditions with special focus given to living and learning on Dharug and Gundungurra Country.

This framework represents a snapshot which outlines the critical aspects of placed-based learning throughout Kindlehill School.





# Grandfather Apple Tree in the Kindy Garden

Step into our Kindy Garden and slow your pace. Take a breath and smell the earthy scents and gentle fragrance of the leaves. Now notice the leaves of Grandfather Apple Tree softly holding a caterpillar or hiding a child. Observe how the branches are soft and almost silky to the touch after years of bare feet climbing and gentle hands swinging. On the trunk there are curls and twirls and gnarled pieces of bark that are home to beetles, ants and the odd small lizard.

Imagine the child, new to this space as they master the difficult skill of pulling their weight up to the first branch. Their sense of accomplishment in looking down and smiling at a friend or teacher. "I made it!" In Kindy we do not place the child in Grandfather Apple Tree, as the most crucial step in gaining the confidence to climb is to trust their body and know that they can manage on their own in this tricky spot. But oh! That moment of joy and pride is something to see. It is a moment in time that always feels like an honour to see unfold.

We observe our seasons in the Kindy Garden as we watch the changes in Grandfather Apple Tree. On hot summer days, the children are sheltered from the sun, with only their swinging legs revealing where they sit. In Autumn, he turns a soft yellow before the leaves fall on our path, reminding us to care for our spaces with a sweep. When winter arrives, the sun warms the old tree and his visiting children. Without the leaves, the children often comment how far they can see, and sweet spring brings us the soft new buds and the hum of our Kindlehill bees.

I often remind the children that they are held by our beautiful old Grandfather Apple Tree, and in fact, he holds our whole School, perched at the front, arms open in a gesture of love and greeting. He has been a supportive friend to all children who have passed through our Kindy gates over the last 24 years and will remain so for many years to come.

Kirsty









# Adventurous Play Builds Capacity and Connection

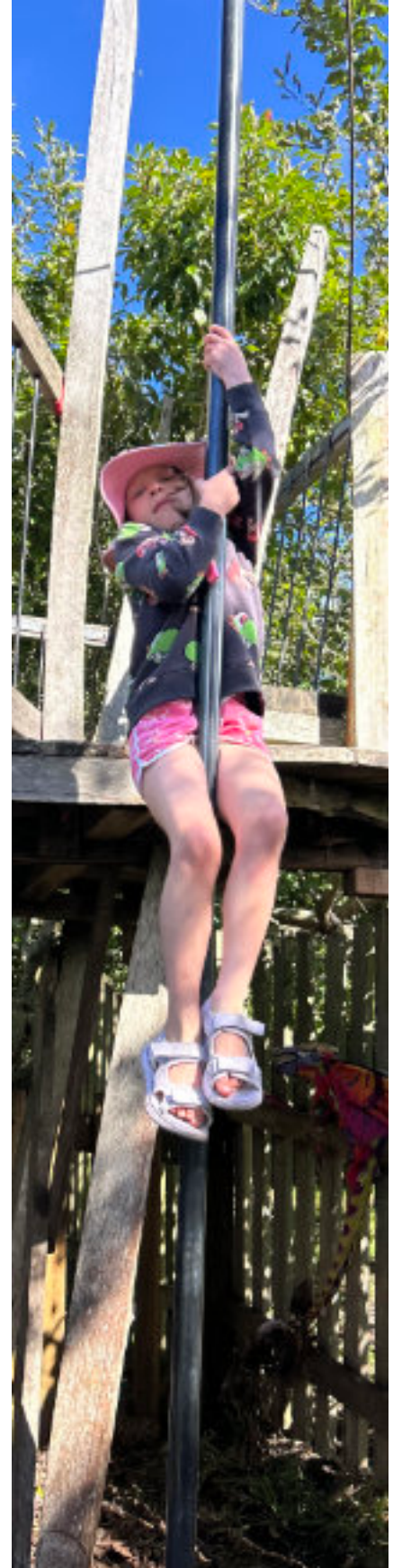
How important do you think it might be for children to have free play that also has an element of risk, a touch of adventure, a tingling of fear?

It is my experience that children need to be physically challenged in a wide variety of ways and to face elements of risk to be able to ascertain their personal boundaries and capabilities. A key milestone in a child's development is learning to navigate the unpredictability of the outside world away from the safety of home.

Outdoor, unstructured activities where children are encouraged to experiment

and explore an unknown outcome allows them to discover the boundaries of their known world whilst building their strength and agility. These types of challenges also allow the child to practise strategies in facing a potentially immobilising fear or nervousness and still be able to act – to make a mistake, recover and move on, or to create, problem solve and have a lot of fun.

The main types of adventurous activities include playing with great heights, playing with speed, playing with tools, playing near dangerous elements, and watching others do adventurous things.





In the playgrounds at Kindlehill School we have treehouses and high places, slippery slides and steep slopes, bikes, unicycles and skateboards, digging spades and hammering mallets, water features and fire pits, swings and spinners, a rope bridge and rope nets, tree stumps, rock walls and a whole lot of dirt. There are wide spaces – hard and soft – for whole-class games, running, dodging and nooks and crannies for cubby building, hide and seek, and the most wonderful, imaginative play.

Class 2-3 have recently claimed the upper orchard area to be a play space that works for the 8-10 year old. Their mission is to play hard, fast, high and fully in this area, and figure out what is missing and what they need. So far they have created tunnels, then a cubby hole in the tall artichoke forest, which was then chopped down to find an ancient foundation that has been converted into a mud pool (a hidden tap was also discovered) and a place to dig and for stepping stumps. They run fast past bushes, ropes, trees and other children, with surprisingly few collisions. They zoom down the brick path on skateboards, first kneeling but now confidently standing. They swing on the pod swing and the tree ropes. The children have requested somewhere to get up high – the ropes on the trees are just not high enough – and more swings, swings, swings!

Having an adventurous play space at Kindlehill is about creating an environment that supports immersive opportunities for our students to explore and test their own capacities, to assess and manage risk, and to grow as capable, resourceful and resilient children. This ability to evaluate risks, make informed decisions and navigate uncertain situations will instil a sense of competence and resilience that will serve our children throughout their lives.

*S'haila*





# Plants in Their Environment

In the Kingdom of Childhood lectures, Steiner commented that plants are like the hair of the Earth and questioned why we would study hair as though it would grow anywhere else but from skin? We must also learn of plants as they are in their environment, where they grow, in soil, in place.

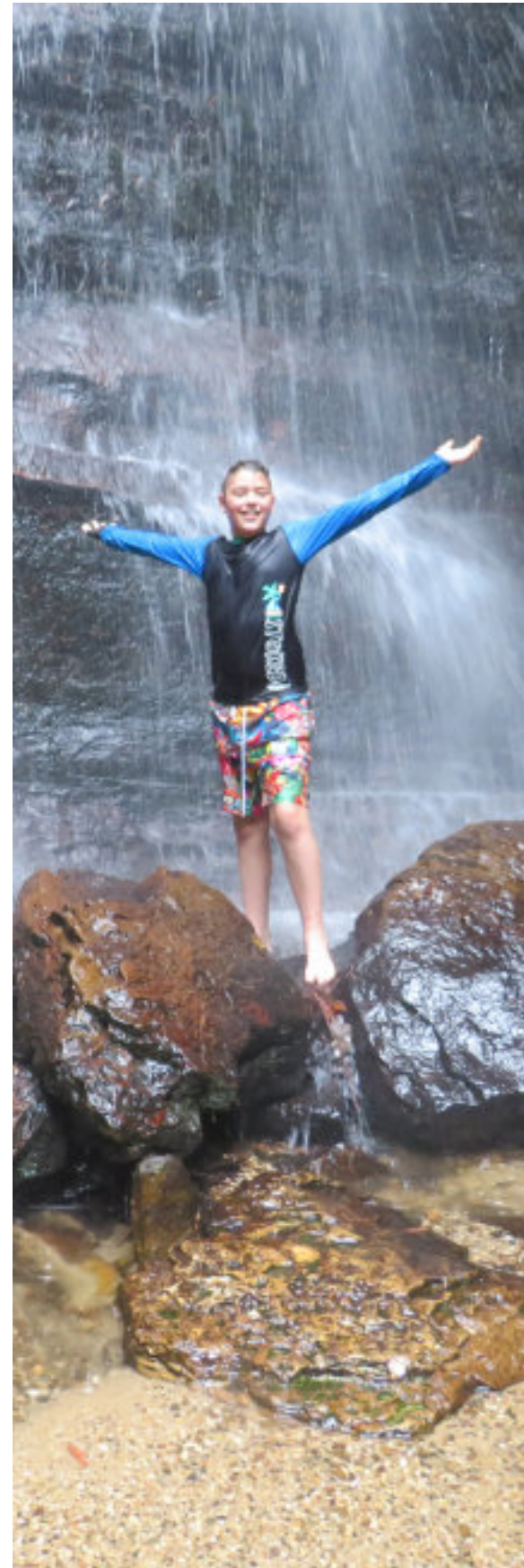
Outdoor education, as a part of place-based curriculum design, allows us to experience direct interaction with plants in quiet, sacred places. Together, we walk in the forest and explore the biodiversity of our place. A deep connection to the land is fostered and this is something that is built through the entire school life at Kindlehill.

In the planning of such a lesson, multidisciplinary connections are inevitable. Here we had PDHPE, history, science, oral literacy and poetry smoothly interwoven. This approach allows for deep synthesis of information.

Our place-based lesson starts with a story connecting historical and cultural details to the here and now; the same place in a different time. Honouring Dharug and Gundungurra perspectives stretches our imagination to the beginning of time for humans in this very place.

We review details about the place, the climate and the types of plants we might be able to find. There is a lot of familiarity because this is 'our' place. There is a strong foundation to work with. A question is hypothesised to drive our curiosity throughout the day: What can we learn from the forest? Then the forest becomes a classroom and teacher at the same time.

The space, everything in it, and each other, is enjoyed. There is hands-on, experiential learning, to spark attention and embody our learning. We keenly observe this place with our senses: the sights, smells, touches, sounds, life sense and



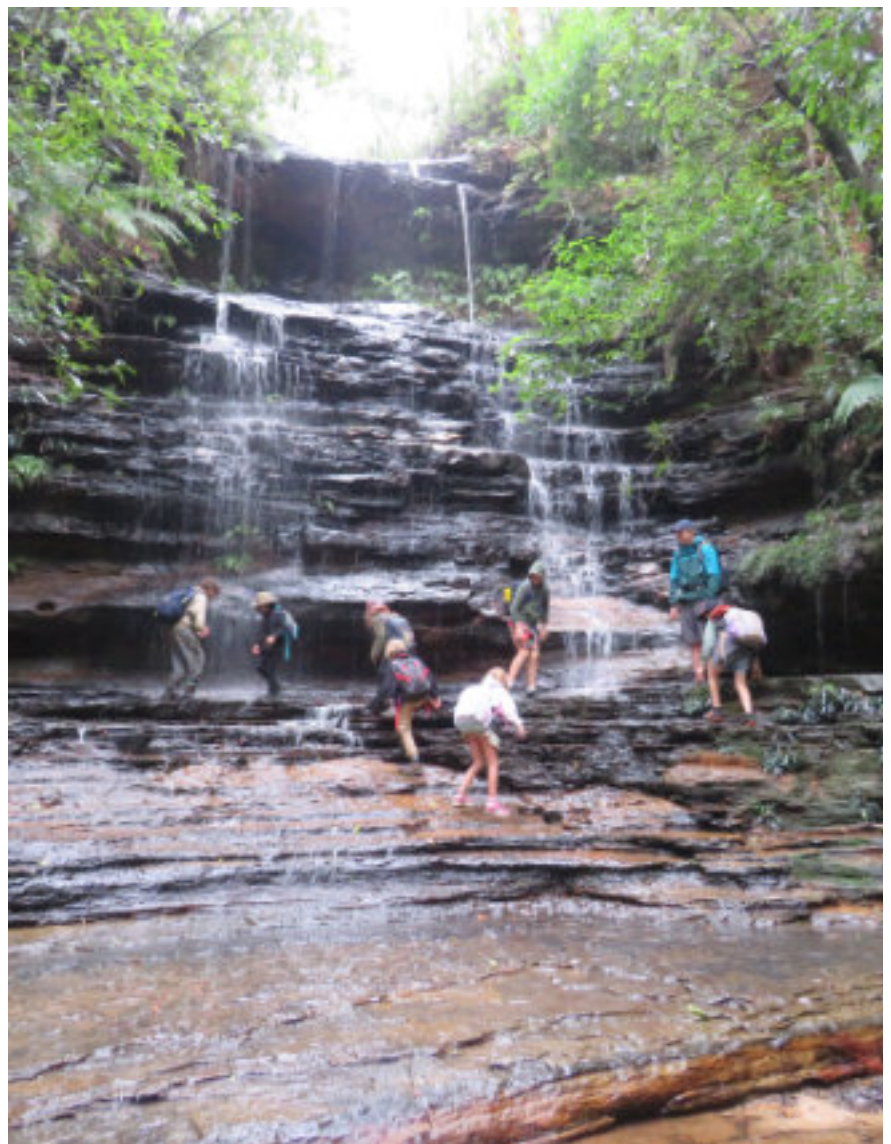




movement. We practice knowing in connection to others by talking with each other about our observations. We strengthen our observational skills and scientific thinking through this firsthand sensory exploration. Reflections on our observations help us connect to what we already know, feel and articulate what is new. The timeliness of talking in place keeps the relevance strong. Showing respect and care for nature through this direct experience of a place that's 'ours' strengthens our capability for reverence and appropriately balances scientific thinking.

The lasting impact of fostering a relationship with place is obvious at Kindlehill. This is a way of learning and a way of life that offers everything that is beautiful and real and right in front of us in this place.

*Bec*







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# Growing Home

**O**n a bright summer afternoon in the rooftop garden, Class 6 uncovered a big, juicy cucumber. Hidden away under the shelter of weeds and veggie leaves, fed by the rain and summer sun, it had gone from golden flower to fruit, ready to be discovered with delight.

Look! was the cry.  
Can we pick it?  
Of course!

We fetched a knife from the kitchen and ate our treasure in thick slices right there in the garden.

One of the underpinning areas of knowledge in permaculture is ecological literacy. I see this as the emerging capacity to understand the world around us through its cycles, elements and interconnections. We learn this best through direct observation and interaction with the living world, feeling the sun and watching its path, noticing the patterns of water across the environment, or where we can find ourselves protected from prevailing winds.

We notice when fruit ripens, seeds germinate, flowers bloom, speaking to rhythms and patterns in nature that correspond with the movement of our shared planet. We see the value of each part of systems, from the insects in the blooms to the decaying leaf litter. We learn to listen to the language of life and soon find ourselves speaking it through our actions as we gently cover the soil, aerate compost, water our veggies and share sweet strawberries. We begin to find ourselves in relationship with the world, and with that, our capacity to live with care for it.

Last year, Leni (Alchemy Farms) made a beautiful permaculture design for Kindleshill. She spent time listening to us and what we envisioned, but also the place we are situated in. Her design helps us see the web of relationship, patterns, limitations and opportunities of our place. We are slowly working toward implementing this design, putting in gardens, buying fruit trees and considering whether we can really handle goats! Along with working to reduce waste and run off, and to catch and store water, nutrients

and energy, our School can be more sustainable, and an example to our young people of what a regenerative community space can be.

One of David Holmgren's (co-founder of permaculture) principles of permaculture design is to obtain a yield. So, let's go back to the garden with Class 6 on that sunny afternoon. We have our yield, this fine crunchy cucumber, being shared generously. It was grown by the earth, the sun and the rain, from the seeds and the hands that carefully placed them. We have our yield, the knowledge of the long summer that grew that fruit; we remember rain, and look at the lively soils around its roots; we check the flowers to see if any of them will be the next fruit. We have our yield, the enjoyment of the earth and of togetherness in sharing. And, for me, the ethics of permaculture are never clearer: care for the earth, care for the people, and fair share. Simple as a summer cucumber!

*Sarah*





# Big Projects – Class 6

## Think Big but Keep it Local

The Class 6 Big Project is an individual undertaking, frequently with the support of mentors from the broader community (and carers and parents!), taking twists and turns through the year; the journey as important as what is placed before us as a final and finessed presentation.

It is design-and-make, sparked by student curiosity that requires big picture thinking with a very local application.

To be at the 4th term Class 6 project presentation was laugh out loud joyful. Enthusiasm, intelligence, problem solving and dogged perseverance were evident, as each young person articulately presented their individual year project with a splash of good humoured-ness. It is no exaggeration to say there were jaw dropping moments from the audience.

Wow! Just Wow!



### Big Projects for Class 6 included:

- finding, researching and curating historical items
- building a raft
- how to keep a lizard
- the art of makeup
- writing, notating and performing three original piano pieces
- watercolour illustration, and presenting a project in song
- jewellery making
- making and forging a bushcraft knife
- making pottery
- restoring a motor bike
- making a synthesiser
- repurposing denim fashion
- linoprinting and zines of Japan

Wow!

John









# Camps on Country

I think that Kindlehill does the best camps. And the children agree.

We provide plenty of outdoor challenge even in our playgrounds and on excursions, but camps are the pinnacle. Friendships are deepened, class culture develops, independence is nurtured, courage and physical confidence are honed. These are the times that we tread respectfully on Mother Earth, immersively.

It all starts with a cozy winter night, camping indoors at school in Class 1. Hearty food and just so exciting! The following year we go to Patonga: short travel, tiny beach waves, and who can resist jumping on a boogie board and riding the estuarine tidal flow to meet the sea? Life is good. Mangroves and soldier crabs.

Then, the camps diversify for each class, but they are likely to include a bike camp at Dubbo Zoo, snorkelling the underwater world in Jervis Bay (Wow – a blue groper!) and cultural camp at Yellomundi. Or it could be out to Wilcannia following the Rainbow Serpent story trail, seeing the PM in parliament while touring Canberra, abseiling and kayaking at Ganguddy, or surf school on a north coast beach camp. One camp per year, sometimes two, three if we can fit it in! With my classes I have followed explorers' trails – diverted because of flooding rain – headed to the Warrumbungles and gazed through Pandora's Pass upon the fertile Liverpool Plains (just like Cunningham did). We got opal fever in an active underground mine in Lightning Ridge and then polished the stones and made jewellery back at school. We also did a ten day, 3,000km road trip, visiting cultural sites throughout Uncle Pete's Ngijampaa Country. The possibilities are endless and the experiences, transformative.

Camps are linked to lessons: we sing Happy Harry's bridge building song from our play as we cross his bridge! The play – the camp – the lesson; as we cross the ranges, follow the river, wade through the mangroves, sail down the estuary, onto the sand dunes and up the headland – these experiences are woven together with stories of Happy Harry's adventures that the children live within. And this is all



before the children get to their High School camps! That's a whole other story.

I have been blessed with fabulous parent helpers who pitch the tents, look after the endless stream of food for hungry children, assist with activities, rescue us when the rains turn to floods, and form a joyful bond with each other and the class. What a wonderful example for the children. When the children are older they are pitching their own tents, setting up the big tarp, helping with meals, and packing and unpacking the trailer. Self-reliant.

We reach the end of each camp, weary, but knowing that we have shared something truly special. Yes, there are leeches, ticks, stingers in the water, rain (oh, the rain!), and missing my mum, my cat, my bed; but always a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. I did it. I can do it. Empowerment.

We love camps!

*John*









# SEEN – Affirming Identity and Breaking Down Stereotypes

**S**EEN – *Affirming Identity and Breaking Down Stereotypes* was developed and presented by Buran Nalgarra, our Senior High School. A key project in our 2024 Problems that Matter unit, SEEN was created in response to conversations we held with six influential changemakers in our community about issues affecting local young people. Culminating in a portrait photography exhibition at Gallery ONE88 in Katoomba, SEEN invited young people to engage in conversations and activities centred around self-expression, identity, and positive youth mental health.

Blue Mountains teens were invited to create a portrait of themselves or a friend that speaks to our theme of *affirming identity and breaking down stereotypes* and answers the question, 'How do you want to be SEEN?'. Teens had the opportunity to attend a free photography workshop at Gallery ONE88 with local pro-photographer, Maja Baska, before shooting their portrait. Twelve young people from Kindlehill High School, the home school community, Blaxland High School, Korowal School, and Sydney Distance Education High School spent a sunny Sunday afternoon exploring composition, in-camera effects, the power of lighting, and shooting in studio versus outdoor locations.

## Experimenting with in-camera effects

The culminating exhibition of 34 portraits by students from Kindlehill High School, St Columba's Catholic College, Katoomba High School, Sydney Distance Education School, and the home school community, ran for two weeks at Gallery ONE88. The exhibition drew such a positive response from the community that the gallery is replicating the project for a range of social groups in our community, and we will run the program again in Terms 3 and 4, 2025.

The community support for *SEEN – Affirming Identity and Breaking Down*

*Stereotypes* was resounding: Gallery ONE88 embraced the concept in our first meeting and provided the gallery space and staffed the exhibition for two weeks free of charge, the Blue Mountains City Council Youth Development Team sponsored the free photography workshop, and schools across the mountains shared the information with their students. This affirmation from our community was heartwarming and inspiring. A key component of our Problems That Matter work is building community partnerships; the relationships our students are building with local businesses, Council and their community creates connection, support, and confidence in their ability to have an impact.

The gallery was packed on opening night. The event was beautifully supported by local figures such as Uncle Chris Tobin, Rilka Oakley - BM Cultural Centre, Sophie Davis – BMCC Community and Social Planning Team, Kelvin Onaghise – BMCC Youth Development Team, Maja Baska – Photographer, and Kalani Gacon – Mountain of Youth as well as our exhibiting artists and their families and friends, and as always, our strong and loving Kindlehill community.

Georgia

"Just want to formally congratulate you on what is a fantastic show at Gallery ONE88. I spent quality time down there on Saturday. I really appreciate all the hard work and the generous inclusivity of the approach. It's been a great experience for the students. I hope it becomes an annual fixture on the exhibition calendar. We need all the inclusive and collectivising cultural experiences we can get right now."

- Sean O'Keefe, Art Teacher, Katoomba High School



"As parents of 7 kids spanning 9-28 years, and also as people who were once upon a time at-risk teenagers, we are very aware of society's perception of and attitude towards, teenagers. As someone also very interested in addressing mental health issues, I was very interested when the lovely people at Kindlehill approached us to host their Seen Exhibition this year. SEEN is about pushing back against the stereotype and giving teens a place and platform to express themselves creatively, front and centre. If we all just took a moment to pull back the veil of stereotype and took time connecting, with a view to understanding teens, I really feel society would have a much healthier state of mental wellbeing. Congratulations to everyone that took part in this exhibition. It's not easy to put yourself out there, so thank you for allowing us to get to understand you a little better".

- Gallery ONE88 Instagram post 31/10/24



Harvard University  
Last meeting  
November 1990

After all the years we have spent in the  
hospital, in the day to day routine, we have  
had a night, when the hospital was not  
there, when we were not patients, when we  
were just a family, when we were just  
a family, when we were just a family.



After High School  
After School  
November 1990

After all the years we have spent in the  
hospital, in the day to day routine, we have  
had a night, when the hospital was not  
there, when we were not patients, when we  
were just a family, when we were just  
a family, when we were just a family.





# Partnering with Community for Care and Protection

**“If everyone does their part, the task is done” Māori proverb**

Last year, the Blue Mountains Last year, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society approached our School, inviting a partnership to encourage families and young people to be involved in conservation and protection of our local environment. Our Senior School's investigation into the Canyon Colliery's contamination of the headwaters of the Grose River spurred a Connect to Protect Campaign, a collaboration of science, conservation and art. This initiative was welcomed by Dharug elders, Chris Tobin and Lex Dadd, who encouraged us to popularise an alternative name for the Grose River. Bulgamatta, they explained, translates as 'mountain water place'. In this way, our

Connect to Protect Bulgamatta Campaign was a very beautiful expression in acknowledging that this river valley is unceded and still resonant with ancestral presence and wisdom.

The Protect to Connect Campaign became strands woven together of activism, family fun and connection to place. It culminated in a community event at Govett's Leap which included the launch of a petitioning to the NSW Environment Minister, to address the leaching of heavy metals into the headwaters of Bulgamatta, as a gift in celebration of 25 years as a World Heritage Area.

For our Senior School students, the knowledge and skills gained as part of a geographical investigation and in event organisation, were a shining example of our Buran Nalgarra program. As an innovative alternative to the HSC/ATAR, students engage in rich learning that is applied in real life contexts. Additionally, the students feel themselves in connection to community and place, a sense of belonging cultivated as an antidote to the epidemic loneliness and despair amidst deeply troubling times.

In 2025, the partnership with community continues. We currently have a proposal with Consoc for Arts on Country, a series of workshops in songwriting, painting,





printmaking and ceramics which will culminate in an exhibition. This will run alongside our ongoing invitation to government, to act on cleaning up the abandoned Canyon Colliery, and to demonstrate world class science and technology in the protection of our environment. This is a community partnership in healing Country, including the healing that happens when we come together as a community around the things that are of shared importance.

*Lynn*

\*You can learn more about our Senior School program, Buran Nalgarra in our blog: <https://blog.kindlehill.nsw.edu.au/>





# Belonging to Country – High School Art Camp

Early in the new term of each new year, High School congregates on Wiradjuri Country for our annual Art Camp. This year we travelled to Coorongooba Campground, home of the Daybee, Wiradjuri people in the spectacular Capertee Valley.

As our longest all-High School camp, it's a time of belonging as we welcome our new Year 7 cohort into the High School group, and as our older year groups move into leadership roles. Whilst students camp in their year groups, classes on Country see students working together across year groups.

Camp reflects the definition of 'belonging': security, support, acceptance and inclusion. Upon arrival, students play the essential role of supporting and including each other with the rigours of camp set up, as they help each other through the grunt of unpacking trailers, share knowledge and tools with the pitching of tents, and prepare meals for all to share. Security is about 'having one another's backs' beyond the friendship group – and accompanying each other to the drop toilets in the middle of the night! – and acceptance arrives as students make new connections across the year groups.

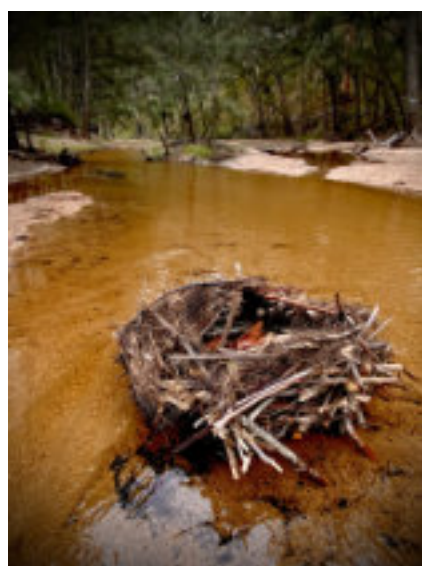
Circles, spirals and the flowing, cyclic nature of water were part of the focus on this year's camp. Surrounding us, a part of us and an essential element of life on Country, students were encouraged to find their 'sit spots' on the edge of the clear flowing creek, connecting to place through written responses and sketches. Students went adventuring, embraced clay and drawing workshops, and finally, were issued envelopes of nature-based art images and elemental poetic verse. In response to these, each group found secret spaces along the creek bed to develop their art pieces by gently using the surrounding natural elements. As each group collaborated to gather, design and assemble their creations, the resulting site-specific nature sculptures themselves became beautiful embodiments of belonging.

On our final morning, we ventured along the vast creek beds to locate and engage with each piece, eventually leaving the sculptures for others to discover and enjoy, within this, their own place of belonging.

*Steph*











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