

Feeding Connection Learning from Country

ART AND STORYTELLING AS A PATHWAY TO RECONCILIATION

For over 15 years students have been creating art and writing that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's cultures, histories, languages, stories and the call for all Australians to participate in reconciliation. The Schools Reconciliation Challenge is a free annual art and writing program open to all NSW and ACT primary and secondary students in stages 2-5. Teachers and students are encouraged to use the curriculum-based resources online to inspire, learn and create a culturally inclusive classroom. Each year we explore a different theme, in 2025 the theme is **Feeding Connection: Learning from Country**.

Artworks and writing are showcased in a variety of locations including International Towers at Barangaroo, the Foyer of The Rocks Discovery Museum and NSW Parliament House in Sydney. The exhibition also travels to regional locations throughout NSW supported by the National Trust.



"Sunset Dreaming" by E. Howlett



"Sea Life" by S. Rylands

FREE RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Both the Schools Reconciliation Challenge and the Reconciliation NSW website offer online resources to support teachers and educators learn about a range of subjects.

Students are encouraged to express themselves and to engage in practical exercises such as participating in talking/yarning circles, reading and evaluating stories and articles, understanding truth telling and race-relations, as well as practicing their art and writing skills. This year we have a special lesson plan developed with Australians Together, that you will receive for free upon your registration.

FEEDING CONNECTION : LEARNING FROM COUNTRY

is a celebration of deep knowledge, cultural resilience, and ecological care. At its core is the understanding that Country is a living entity - one that teaches, nourishes, and connects us all. This project invites students to explore how food and farming are cultural practices, rich with stories, identity, and wisdom.

First Nations peoples have cared for Country for tens of thousands of years through regenerative agricultural systems that align with natural rhythms. Practices like native grain cultivation, cultural burning, and land stewardship support biodiversity and climate resilience. These traditions show us that sustainability is not new - it's long been central to Indigenous ways of being.

Growing food becomes a metaphor for planting seeds of change. Students are invited to reflect on their relationship with land, culture, and each other. They explore how food connects us to the past, sustains the present, and shapes a just, sustainable future.

Grounded in visual storytelling and thoughtful design, this project encourages curiosity and connection. Reconciliation is not a single act, but an ongoing commitment - rooted in listening, learning, and acting with care.

Register your classroom or school for this year's Schools Reconciliation Challenge.

Explore *Feeding Connection: Learning from Country* on our website and access classroom resources and upcoming workshops and receive your special lesson plan pack.



Reconciliation
NSW



PARTNERSHIPS

The Schools Reconciliation Challenge is coordinated by Reconciliation NSW, the peak body for advancing reconciliation in NSW. We promote a respectful, just and equitable community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians in NSW. We engage people in open and honest conversations to understand our diverse histories and experiences. Our work is guided by Aboriginal voices, with the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination at the forefront.

NARRAGUNNAWALI Reconciliation in Education

We partner with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education program to support all schools and early learning services in Australia to foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. Narragunnawali's online platform is free to access and provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school and with the community.

Burruga Foundation

We are proud to also be working with Burruga Foundation to share your students amazing artworks with community and be shared on the Storylines platform! As well we will have Uncle Shayne and Auntie Lyn on our judging panel.

Storylines

Artworks and writing are showcased in a variety of locations including International Towers at Barangaroo, the Foyer of The Rocks Discovery Museum and NSW Parliament House in Sydney. The exhibition also travels to regional locations throughout NSW supported by the National Trust.

FREE LESSON PLAN

Each year, the Schools Reconciliation Challenge offers free online workshops in partnership with leading cultural and education organisations, including the Department of Education's Arts Unit, the Powerhouse Museum, Red Room Poetry, and Sydney Story Factory. These workshops explore both contemporary and traditional perspectives on First Nations cultures, languages, art, and technology - sparking student creativity in writing and visual art.

This year, we're excited to offer a special lesson plan developed in collaboration with *Australians Together*, based on the theme **Feeding Connection: Learning from Country**. You'll receive this resource after you sign up, along with access to all our free classroom materials on the [Schools Reconciliation Challenge website](#).

HELP FOR TEACHERS

The Schools Reconciliation Challenge recognises that some teachers need support when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, themes, and issues. We offer guidance for culturally competent teaching, access to professional development webinars, and subject-specific resources aligned with both primary and secondary curricula.

To further support your journey, we encourage you to book cultural competence training through BlackCard - a valuable opportunity to deepen your understanding and confidence in teaching First Nations content.

Email mundanara@theblackcard.com.au to make a booking, and learn more about BlackCard training [here](#).

Please mention that you were referred by Reconciliation NSW when booking.



REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL

Teachers can register their school now via this [link](#).

Create a more inclusive classroom and explore our lesson plans.

The closing date for all entries is Friday 12 of September. Judging will then take place and the finalists will be included in an exhibition and launch in November/December.

Visit the [Schools Reconciliation Challenge website](#) for more information and to access resources and activities as well as view the gallery of previous finalists.