

# NGC ANNUAL REPORT 2015

**DYNAMIC  
ENTERPRISE  
LEARNING  
FOR YOUNG  
PEOPLE**

**YOUTH  
CONNECTIONS**  
COM.AU

**NG**  
Central



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Yamma Yamma. We respect and acknowledge the Darkinjung people past and present on whose land we live and enjoy today. We cherish and nurture our youth offering knowledge and wisdom through their life's pathways.



**ANDREA  
CINGI**

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Welcome to our second Annual Report. 2015 was an extremely productive, successful and fun-filled year as we continued to strive towards our vision of every young person achieving a purposeful future. We grew from 35 to 45 students and introduced our first Year 11 class at the beginning of the year, and student numbers increased to 51 participants by mid-year. The roots of our small, special assistance school are deepening which will help us to flourish in the years to come. A sense of belonging, self-empowerment through high expectations, and young people taking responsibility for their learning and actions are some of the fruits our school is starting to bear.

Our journey begins by confronting the picture painted by local statistics and ensuring our practices demonstrably prevent further disengagement and improve young people's outcomes. The Central Coast is characterised by severe regional disadvantage, where young people are typically some of the worst casualties. Youth unemployment has exploded to 28% which is now well above the national average of 14.2% of 15-24-year-olds looking for work. This unemployment is often a generational epidemic, with families experiencing joblessness and welfare dependency for two generations or more. Only 61% of young people complete Year 12, meaning that 39% are not job-ready when they leave school and require further training or education to enter the workforce.

At NGC we aim to turn these numbers around and provide our young people with the skills, knowledge and new perspectives to grow, practice self-determination and change their life trajectory in a meaningful way.

The voice of our youth is very powerful and I am so proud and humbled to have such strong, articulate and intelligent young people at our school. We will continue to work tirelessly to bolster them against these barriers, and continue to ask the government and business community to support us to provide these young people the help they so desperately need. Everyone's future depends on the wellbeing of our youth.

But we can't and don't do all this alone. Apart from the academic and vocational learning, we also emphasise the importance of caring and strong relationships to support the welfare and emotional wellbeing of our students and their families. I would like to thank our amazing partners who share their expertise and resources, and facilitate immensely beneficial programs for our NGC participants throughout the year. Aftercare, Oasis Youth Centre, Bara Barang Corporation, Evolution Youth Services, Northern Settlement Services, Uniting, Dr Zehntner, Bob Thomas from NSW Transport, to name a few. It is strong partnerships with families and other organisations that value adds to our education and play a vital role in whole-of-person and whole-of-community engagement. As they say "It takes a village to raise a child" and the community programs our partners offer provide avenues of self-empowerment for our young people to become resilient, confident, leaders and positively active in their society.

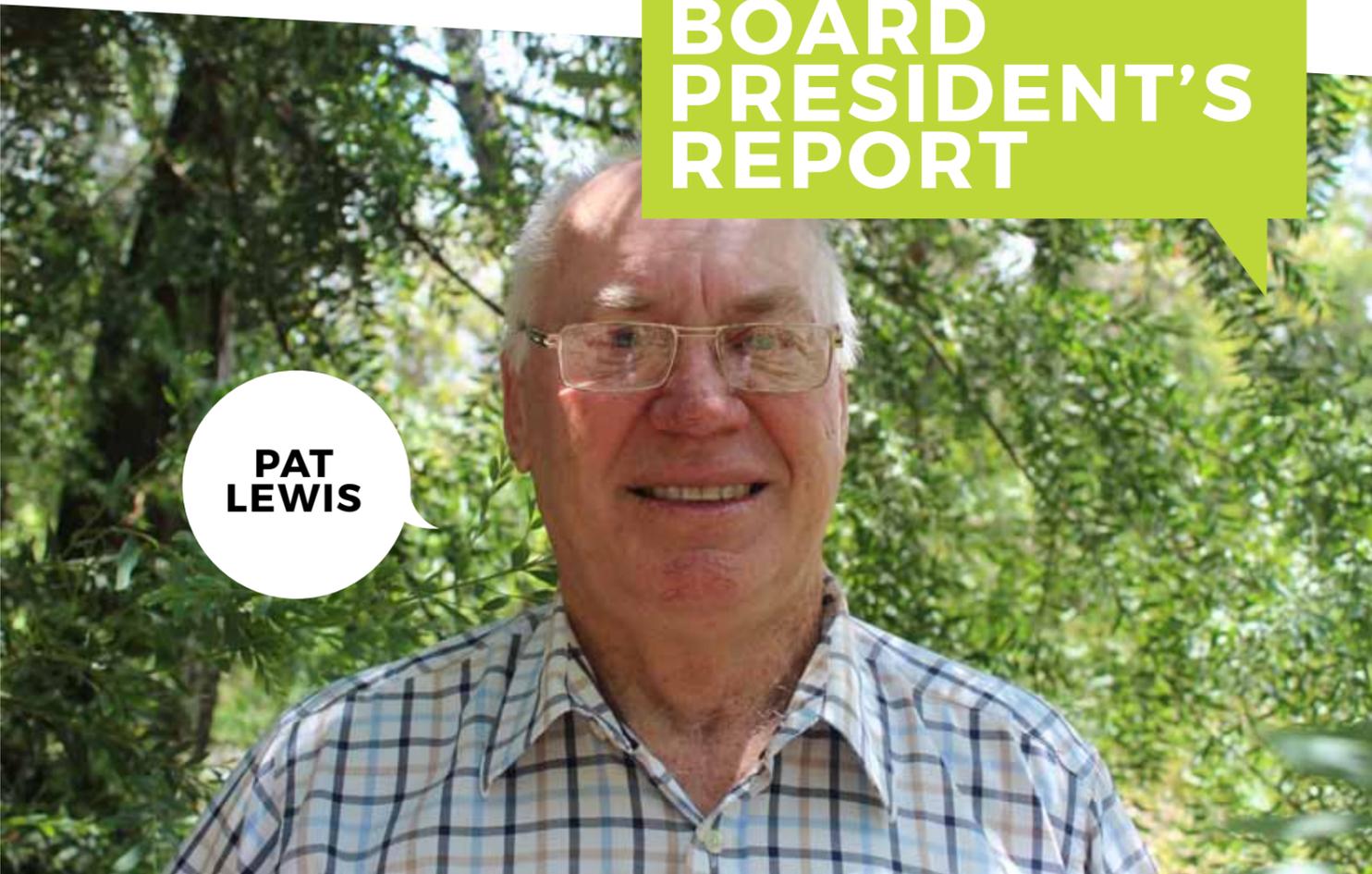
I would like to take this opportunity to deeply thank the board, our staff, our partners and our supporters, all of whom work tirelessly, professionally and voluntarily to provide our youth the opportunity to shine. It is an honour to take this journey with you all. Thank you.

Mutual love and respect. That is what I observed in abundance at the presentation of Certificates to Ngaruki Gulgul students at the end of last year, the school's second year of operation. Not spoken glibly in speeches, but crystal clear in the way the students presented themselves, acknowledged each other and their teachers and school support staff, and expressed their appreciation for the successes they were now celebrating. This from a group of young people for whom school and the classroom had been alien places and the source of much frustration and failure. And yet, here they were, smiling, laughing out loud, and embracing each other, celebrating school achievement. How can this change have come about?

The answer was also clearly evident in the room. The school staff, all present, displaying the same joy and pride as the students- and in the same way! Amazing! Here were a dedicated group of professionals who, for a year, had embraced these young people through tough times as well as many joyous ones, wrapped them in real life curriculum in a garden setting school like no other, and done all of this with respect and consistent high expectations for their success. For students to be able to engage in their learning, very often beyond the classroom's confines, with teachers and support staff who understood their needs and aspirations, had been the key ingredient for the successes they were celebrating here tonight.

Our inspirational Principal, Andrea Cingi, and her wonderful staff have done an outstanding job in gaining the confidence of a somewhat disparate group of young people not accustomed to expecting anything positive from their school experience, and proving to them that they can learn as well as anyone else. These young people have engaged in academic education, enterprising vocational learning, community service and participation, sporting and performance programs, and activities to address the personal barriers which have, and may be continuing to have, an impact on their learning. These learning activities have taken place within our Green Central space and in the world beyond and are beautifully described in this Report in photos and words. I strongly encourage you to share in these student journeys as you read their marvellous stories.

Our Board has also been a great support to the school, particularly through Executive Director, Marj Kong, in curriculum and preparation for accreditation and audit, and Director, Anne Byrne, in HR. All Directors have also undergone four hours of professional learning around school operation and governance over the last twelve months allowing them to be fully conversant with all that the school involves and providing strong governance and support according to their existing expertise and experience. I sincerely thank them for this commitment and support.



## BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**PAT  
LEWIS**

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

**TO CREATE A DYNAMIC, ENTERPRISE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO NEED A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.**

Central to the philosophy of Ngaruki Gulgul is the belief that practical work and problem-solving combined with vocational instruction, with a view to genuine production and sales, will enhance participants' motivation to learn and become positive and fully integrated citizens of our community.

Goals of our education are to develop participants':

- Learning Skills
- Personal Skills
- Social Skills
- Professional Skills

An exciting combination of key learning areas, vocational training and enterprising practical work are pivotal to improving our young people's chances in further education and the employment market.

It is an place where young people are treated with respect and their barriers to engagement are treated in a holistic manner. They need supportive personal relations and identification options in the learning environment. Ngaruki Gulgul provides a caring environment where the participants experience a sense of belonging.

We believe young people want to learn and the majority have substantial learning ability when given the right conditions. There is great emphasis on avoiding any further marginalisation of participants who have had trouble-filled educational histories.

Kofi Annan, former secretary-general of the United Nations, and a powerful yet humble leader said "Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies." And this is what we at NGC work towards - supporting young people to become resilient, confident, innovative, and positively active, who are able to impart a purpose and direction to their lives, and become social, civic and economic contributors to society.

## SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Ngaruki Gulgul is a registered and accredited, non-government, special assistance school specifically designed for the inclusion of young people who are not succeeding in their studies in mainstream schools.

Founded in January 2014 we aim to be a successful model for many young people on the Central Coast who are ready and willing to try something new for either the hospitality, automotive, construction, art or agri-food sectors.

Additional VET qualifications create pathways into further study, school continuation and employment. They also explicitly address employability skills and assist potential employees and young people in making more informed choices about careers.

Ngaruki Gulgul offers participants a Board of Studies school curriculum as found in any other traditional school with the addition of pathways that focus on trade industries. The difference lies in the 'earn and learn' balance to the delivery of educational programs through participation in social enterprise initiatives.

Places are limited to allow participants greater opportunity to identify their strengths and work to improve the areas in which they lack confidence. Enrolments are accepted during the year, however, in selecting any student to fill a vacancy, we give special consideration to young people and their families where there is a demonstrated commitment to the school and its underlying philosophy.

Ngaruki Gulgul provides the opportunity to learn in an environment which helps participants to develop the skills and values they need to fulfil their unique destiny and find their place in the world.

It is an education option designed for participants in Years 9 and 10 working towards a Record of School Achievement (RoSA), and students in Years 11 and 12 not wanting an HSC ATAR but an alternative education pathway into a trade or further vocational education and training. We are not politically or religiously affiliated.

Why Ngaruki Gulgul?

- We believe everyone is unique and accept you the way you are.
- Real vocational pathways are accessible and tailored to current industry standards.
- You attend because you have a desire to make a difference to your future and impart purpose and direction to your life.
- You have the opportunity to make choices about your role as a student.
- Stronger support is available if who need it.
- You and teachers are on a first name basis.
- Smaller class/school size means we get to know you as an individual.
- The harder you work, the more you get.
- There are no school uniforms, school bells or school assemblies.
- We want you to be ready for the workforce.

## CURRICULUM

At Ngaruki Gulgul we tailor a student's program to their abilities.

A core component of the Ngaruki Gulgul curriculum is the inclusion of enterprise learning. We define this through a range of taster subjects with a vocational intent, and offer the possibility for our stage 5 students to complete a Statement of Attainment or full Certificate I qualification in either hospitality or primary industries. In 2015 five students completed a statement of attainment in Certificate I in Hospitality; three students completed a full Certificate I in Hospitality; and eleven students completed a statement of attainment in Certificate I in Horticulture.

### Record of School Achievement (ROSA) requirements

Subjects will be reported with grades (A-E). Teachers use the General Performance Descriptors in determining the appropriate grade to award. This will be outlined in a separate booklet given out during Semester 1 of Year 10.

We are registered and accredited to offer participants the core curriculum subjects and a selection of VET

subjects. We offer participants the opportunity to gain a RoSA, a certificate that can be requested through the Board of Studies and replaces the 'School Certificate', along with a nationally recognised certificate in their chosen VET subject.

### Years 11 and 12 (registration only)

In 2015 we provided an alternative Year 11 program which offers a curriculum option for students who are not wanting or able to achieve a Higher School Certificate. This education program meets the requirements of the Education Act and has Board Developed and/or Board Endorsed Content status however cannot be used to meet the requirements for the award of the Higher School Certificate. It is not necessary for students to address or achieve all outcomes in order to satisfactorily complete the course. The number of outcomes addressed and/or achieved will vary for individual students.

A student will be considered to have satisfactorily completed a course if, in the principal's view, there is sufficient evidence that the student has:

- Followed the course developed by the Board.
- Applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school.
- Achieved some or all of the course outcomes.

It is assumed that participants have completed their mandatory Technological and Applied Studies (TAS), Creative Arts and Language hours in Years 7 and 8. The subjects we offer are:

Grade	Year 9 & 10	Year 11 & 12 (registration only)
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• PDHPE</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Certificate I VET Subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• General Mathematics</li> <li>• Earth and Environmental Science</li> <li>• Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation Studies</li> <li>• Aboriginal Studies</li> <li>• Certificate II VET Subject (trade)</li> <li>• Certificate II Skills for Work and Training</li> </ul>

## VALUE ADDED TO EDUCATION

**A RANGE OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY ARE HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**

### Cultural Awareness Workshops

This is a way our students can meet people from multicultural backgrounds to foster intercultural understanding and inclusion. Through meeting and listening to the life stories of Muslim and African individuals, our students were able to empathise, support and ask respectful questions of our guests.

### #YOUlive

Funding from the AIS NSW was received to develop the PDHPE curriculum through a Road Safety and Wellbeing grant. Titled #YOUlive, an interactive, hands-on, relevant and student led program was developed which included the filming of a raw documentary. See more on page 21.

### Evolution Girls' Group

Facilitated by Kirsten and her team of experienced youth workers, once a week over a term, our female students participated in an engaging and inspiring program which covered consent and legislation around consent; sexual health and STIs; healthy relationships; anti-bullying and cyber safety; alcohol and drugs; and personal wellbeing.

### Dance and Didge

Cultural affirmation and embedding indigenous perspectives throughout our curriculum and teaching pedagogy is something that really defines our NGC program. 37% of our students identified as Indigenous Australian in 2015. We are lucky and honoured to work in close collaboration with Bara Barang Corporation who under the expert guidance of Gavi, Athol and Bruce provide our young males with a life changing program. See more on page 22.

### Anger Management Workshops

We constantly engage in conversations with our students about how they could negotiate interactions without explosive anger. The NGC teachers, support staff and case managers are tireless in their efforts in talking with the students about how they could have done things differently.

### Access to Sport

Students and staff engage in lunch-time basketball and hand ball. They study PDHPE through a variety of physical activities. Boomerang Shield; kids versus Cops touch footy which breaks down barriers between youth and police; OzTag events and much more. Another favourite is flipout.

### Structured interactions with community services and authority figures

PCYC provided a course for our students to understand the role of the police in the community. Busways and the Railway police were also invited to the beginning of the year Orientation to foster a positive and mutually respectful relationship into the future.

### Networking through our YC Case Managers

Negotiating refuge accommodation, medical appointments, counselling, headspace appointments and paediatrician appointments. Support with juvenile justice and court for a variety of offences.

### Work Education Training

Work Education is a class on Friday mornings with Year 10 students. The students could also participate in a one week course also ran a one week intensive course in 2014. Students gained employability skills, completed their resumes, gained job-seeking skills and completed work experience.

## ENROLMENT

All enrolments are done via the Application for Enrolment form and an interview process. The form can be downloaded from our website or contact Ngaruki Gulgul if you require an Application for Enrolment to be sent out to you.

After we receive your application it will join the list of participants waiting for intake. As positions become available we will contact participants on the list and offer an opportunity to attend an interview.

Participants will not be enrolled at Ngaruki Gulgul without attending an interview. Where possible we encourage both parents/carers to join their young person for the interview. We will ask questions about previous schooling and why you want to attend Ngaruki Gulgul. We will ask about any relevant health history or behavioural incidents. We may also ask about your support or peer networks.

People who participate in the interview with an openness and willingness to embrace change have the best chance of gaining a position within the school. An interview is not a guarantee of enrolment.

While there are no school fees, there is a non-refundable \$50 enrolment fee and \$250/term for Year 9 and 10 students, and \$375/term for Year 11 and 12 students for materials being payable at enrolment acceptance then at the end of each term for the following term. Fortnightly direct debit plans are also available.

Ngaruki Gulgul selection criterion looks at 8 key areas:

- Desire to work in a trade area such as hospitality, automotive or primary industries
- Social disadvantage or isolation
- Age
- Academic level
- Financial disadvantage
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- English as a second language
- Learning and behaviour difficulties/disabilities

**NGARUKI GULGUL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE A SENSE OF BELONGING IN AN ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT.**

## FACILITIES

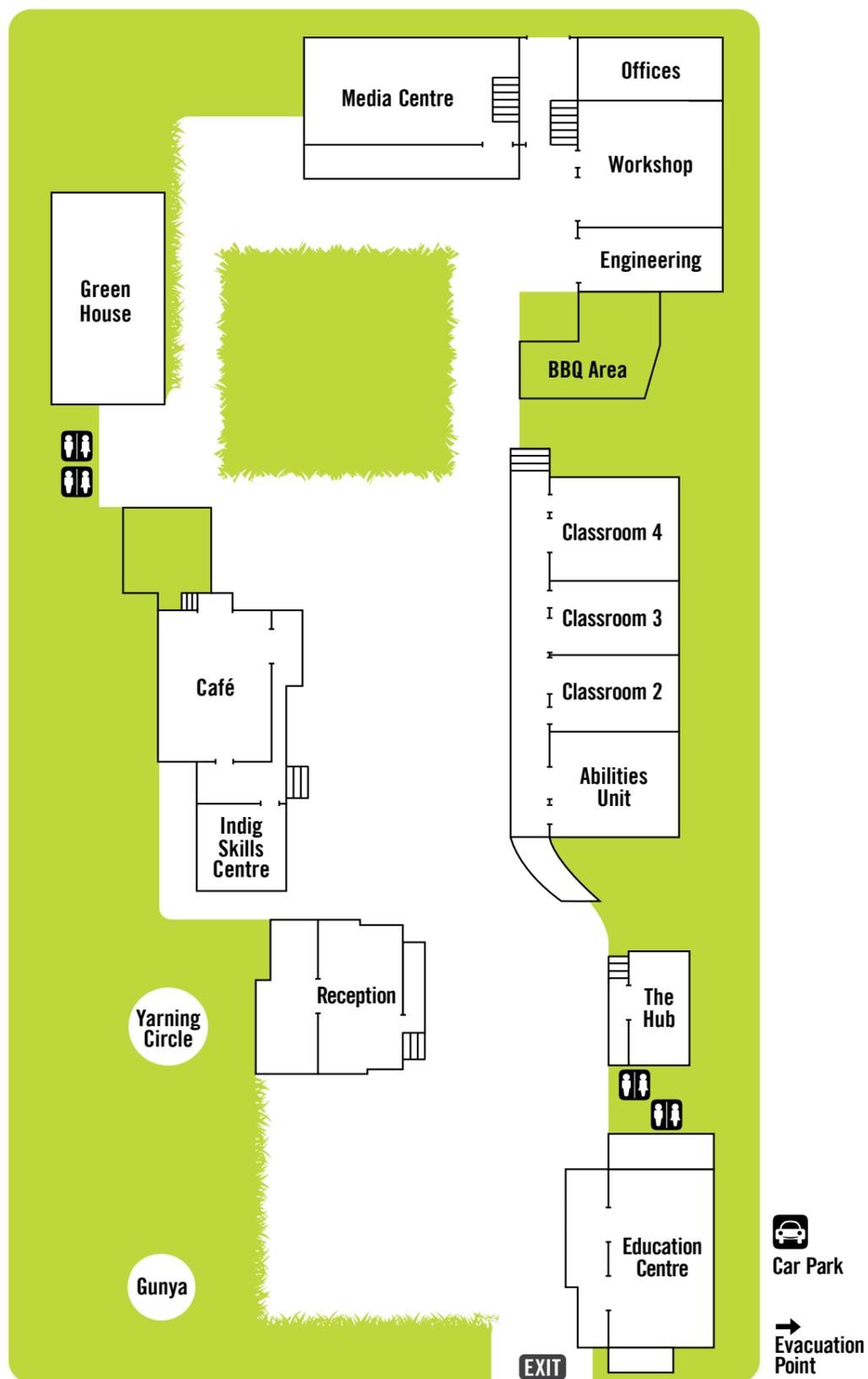
**NGARUKI GULGUL IS A UNIQUE SCHOOL AND A SHOWCASE MODEL OF ENTERPRISE EDUCATION.**

Ngaruki Gulgul is housed in pleasantly appointed, sustainable (carbon neutral) classrooms in the beautiful bush setting of Mt Penang Parklands.

Additional facilities on site include a construction shed, BBQ area, community permaculture, veggie and bush tucker garden, sustainable house and education centre, café, wholesale nursery, social enterprise business incubation space and media production centre including film, television and radio. Our automotive garage is now located at The Skills Generator site in West Gosford.

The facility is designed for disabled participants to reach most areas in wheelchairs. This adds to the feeling of space and makes it easy for everyone to move between classrooms.

## GREEN CENTRAL



## TEACHING STAFF

Ngaruki Gulgul had four full time equivalent teachers during 2015. Teacher 1 commenced at the beginning of term 1. Another FTE Head Teacher commenced in Term 3 following the departure of Linda Thomas.

The composition of Ngaruki Gulgul's workforce had 1 principal, 1 team leader, 4 teachers, 4 youth workers and 2 part-time administration staff members during 2015.

### Teacher 1

- Bachelor Arts Bachelor of Secondary Teaching - English, Special Education  
University of Newcastle, 2013

### Teacher 2

- Bachelor of Agriculture and Forestry  
University of Alberta, Canada, 1993
- Masters of Science  
University of Alberta, Canada, 1999
- Diploma in Education  
University of Newcastle, 2004

### Teacher 3

- B Bachelor of Health Science  
University Western Sydney, 2004
- Bachelor Secondary Education  
University Western Sydney, 2006
- Teaching Certificate  
New England TAFE, 2009
- Cert IV TAA  
North Coast TAFE, 2009

### Teacher 4

- Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching (Major in Religious Studies)
- Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation SIS30410

All NGC teachers are in category 1 of the Teaching Standards and have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia.

**ANDREA CINGI****Position**

General Manager – Youthconnections.com.au  
Principal – Ngaruki Gulgul

**Professional development**

- Association of Independent Schools, NSW – Annual Briefing
- Suicide Awareness Training - Safe TALK, Lifeline
- Anaphylaxis Training, Australian Lifesaver Training
- Governance Training, AIS NSW
- Exploring the Edge – Alternative Education Conference, AIS NSW
- NDIS Action Group, National Respite Association

**Memorable moment with the students**

Participating in the Fairwork Taskforce Hearing – at YC our mission is to provide opportunities for young people to become social, civic and economic participants, and this moment re-enforced the powerful work we do here.

**Best thing about the job**

Seeing our young people flourish and become self-empowered individuals.

**LINDA THOMAS****Position**

NGC Team Leader

**Professional development**

- Diploma of Community Services.
- I was always learning from my Manager Andrea, colleagues and the young people I served.

**THORR IVATT****Position**

Head Teacher Secondary Studies

**Professional development**

- Bachelor Education Design and Technology
- Masters Degree Inclusive Education

**Memorable moment with the students**

My first day at NG Central, following on from a decade in the state education system. What really stood out was the deep connection the students had with the school, support workers and the teachers. I immediately knew I had made the right decision to join the team and have been continually impressed with the school's ability to support its students to be happy and productive members of their community.

**Best thing about the job**

Helping to make NG Central a learning community.

**Memorable moment with the students**

Too many- finding out a particular young person had finished their assignment and was going to pass that subject. The monthly parents group - meeting and supporting the parents of our students. Receiving the beautiful photo book that the young people and NGC team made for me. 2015 NGC Graduation organised by Lee Santi - that was sensational!!!!

**Best thing about the job**

Being with the young people supporting them through their challenges; celebrating with them through their achievements; encouraging them and letting them know how much we believed in them!!! It was an honour to work with these amazing strong young people. Being part of a great team – teachers and welfare bringing our skills and experience together to achieve the best outcomes for our young people.

**ANGE PARFITT****Position**

English/History Teacher

**Professional development**

- The Principles of Purposeful Programming Online Module
- Universal design, Disability and Legislation in Education
- First aid and anaphylaxis training

**Memorable moment with the students**

Our Halloween where teachers and staff collaborated to give the kids an amazing experience. My colleague Pola enchanted the students in costume and did experiments that had the kids more fascinated than ever.

**Best thing about the job**

I pursue my continued learning with enormous passion. I work at our school because I love our unique students, I love my job. Every day is a new challenge and the students teach me about their creative, humorous and resourceful selves.

**NEIL BUSTOS****Position**

Mathematics Teacher

**Professional development**

I have an undergraduate teaching degree.

**Memorable moment with the students**

Seeing students out in nature like at Somersby Falls are always memorable, some of the students don't get to go to those kinds of places very often. So the reaction of these students out there is priceless.

**Best thing about the job**

Hanging out with the students!

**POLA GENOWAY****Position**

Science Teacher

**Professional development**

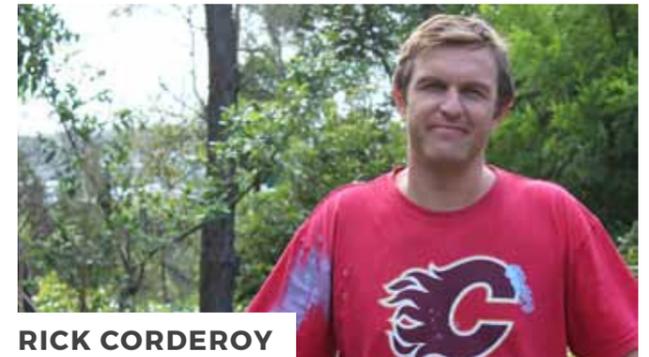
Secondary Science Teacher in Australia from 2003 to Present; Bachelor of Agriculture (University of Alberta 1993), Master's of Science (University of Alberta 1999), Diploma of Education (University of Newcastle 2003) and Graduate Certificate/Master's Theology (currently studying).

**Memorable moment with the students**

Certificate and Graduation day for year 9/10; so awesome to see they achieved these certificates.

**Best thing about the job**

Helping students to achieve success in obtaining an education and enjoying the experience of learning.

**RICK CORDEROY****Position**

School Support Coordinator

**Professional development**

AIS Child Protection Legislation training

**Memorable moment with the students**

Introducing our students to Revolution Park in Newcastle.

**Best thing about the job**

Knowing that we can give the students experiences which expand their minds and change how they see the world. And beating them at sport- not that I'm competitive at all.

**CAMERON THOMAS****Position**

PDHPE teacher

**Professional development**

- First Aid
- Restorative practices
- Sentral training

**Memorable moment with the students**

Automotive training and taking a field trip to the v8 Supercars in Homebush. The students learning to work together to finish an automotive job.

**Best thing about the job**

Having students participate to the best of their ability during practical PDHPE lessons and playing multiple sports at Tumby Indoor Sports. in their lives.

**LEE SANTI****Position**

NG Central Support Worker

**Professional development**

- Special Education Needs British Council online course
- Completion of First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis
- SafeTalk: Training in suicide alertness.

**Memorable moment with the students**

The very first day of NGC 2015 and the return of many of our first year students. The growth and maturity within themselves shone through. Watching them become leaders for the new comers.

**Best thing about the job**

Spontaneity! We can be visiting Somersby Falls one day and the next having a hot chocolate at the Parklands Café, to firing up the pizza oven for lunch. Your day is one big adventure and the students love it.

**LEE TRETOWAN****Position**

Case Manager

**Professional development**

Currently studying 'Teaching Special Needs' online.

**Memorable moment with the students**

Watching all the students dress up for their formal. I felt so proud to see everyone attend and graduate, that brought tears to my eyes.

**Best thing about the job**

I learn from our students every day and see how resilient they are. I am so proud to be working with them.

**BECK JOHNSTON****Position**

Case Manager

**Professional development**

- Cert IV Youth Work, Casework and AOD
- Group Facilitator for Love Bites and RAGE
- Creator and facilitator of Equip

**Memorable moment with the students**

At the end of the year, seeing how far they have come and what they have achieved.

**Best thing about the job**

I get to work with talented and inspirational young people.

**IAN SUTTON****Position**

Trainer and Teachers Aide

**Professional development**

First Aid Training, Restorative Practices.

**Memorable moment with the students**

We took the entire school on a field trip to Frazer Park and as part of the day, we swam out to the sea caves and had the most fun body surfing inside the large cavern.

**Best thing about the job**

Working with a team of professional and committed staff to help improve the lives of our students and prepare them for a successful future.

**NAREEDA TINNOCK****Position**

NGC Administration Officer and RTO Coordinator

**Professional development**

- First Aid, RTO and GTO State Training Forum
- Suicide Awareness Training - Safe TALK
- InSources- Annual Declaration Webinar

**Memorable moment with the students**

Organising work experience for the students and seeing them become job ready and excited for their future careers.

**Best thing about the job**

That NGC can make a difference and support young people succeed in Education and Training.

**SHANE LENNARD****Position**

Administration Assistant

**Professional development**

Anaphylaxis Training

**Memorable moment with the students**

Angela brought one of the student's pictures with an explanation of the artwork to show me, and when I read it I was so surprised by how deep and meaningful the artwork was. It really shows that these students are capable of producing quality work and surprising people.

**Best thing about the job**

Seeing previous students receive awards and know that we really made a difference in their life.

**MARK ALBANI****Position**

NG Central Maintenance Man

**Professional development**

Anaphylaxis Training

**Memorable moment with the students**

Going to Treetops with all YC staff for a team-building activity, and learning team work skills.

**Best thing about the job**

The people I work with, it's a great team environment.

## STUDENT DESTINATIONS

We offer our students a selection of vocational frameworks, through which they can practise job-readiness and clarify their post-school destinations, be it TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships or employment. In 2015, NG Central partnered with the Youthconnections.com.au Work Placement team to coordinate external concreting and construction work placements for some students. As part of their vocational education, students participate in: Hospitality, Construction, Automotive, Horticulture and Skills for Work using our range of facilities.

Four of our students were 17 years and over on completion of their Year 10 Certificate, of which two are continuing in Year 11, none went to TAFE/RTO to complete further study, one found employment via a trainee/apprenticeship, and one unknown. Eleven of our year 10 students were under the age of 17 and continued into our Year 11.

## ATTENDANCE RATES

In 2015, Ngaruki Gulgul provided a registered and accredited stage 5 program.

Year 9:	49.44%
Year 10:	52.31%
Year 11:	64.60%
TOTAL:	55.52%

Attendance and retention rates are analysed on a weekly basis at team meetings and all unexplained absences are followed up immediately.

The Youth Case Manager and/or Team Leader, who is also our Family and Community Liaison Officer, follow up any welfare issues and keep detailed notes of the young person's situation.

All information regarding attendance, both satisfactory and unsatisfactory, is recorded in the student's file. This includes any follow-up conversations/actions with organisations such as Juvenile Justice, Headspace, FACS workers, refugees, Human Services etc.

Strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance are discussed with the Teachers and Support Staff at the weekly welfare team meetings. Program adjustments and (re)engagement strategies include negotiated attendance, community engagement activities, work experience etc.

## NAPLAN

### 2015 RESULTS - YEAR 9

#### NGC School

Assessed	50%
Exempt from test	0%
Participated in test	50%
Absent from test	50%
Withdrawn from test	0%

#### Australian schools

Participated in test	91%
Exempt from test	2%
Absent from test	6%
Withdrawn from test	2%

Reading	Persuasive Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Student population below reporting threshold	Student population below reporting threshold	476 (433-519) schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds	416 (372 - 460) schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds	Student population below reporting threshold
Australian Schools Average ALL 580	Australian Schools Average ALL 550	Australian Schools Average ALL 582	Australian Schools Average ALL 574	Australian Schools Average ALL 588

## ROSA

### RECORD OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS 2015

#### RoSA - Ngaruki Gulgul

Course	School total	School A(%)	School B(%)	School C(%)	School D(%)	School E(%)	School None (%)
English - 200 hours (300)	13		15.38	30.77	23.08	7.69	23.08
Mathematics - 200 hours (323)	13	7.69		23.08	23.08	7.69	38.46
Science - 200 hours (350)	13	7.69	23.08	7.69	23.08	15.38	23.08
Australian Geography - 100 hours (4,015)	13		23.08	15.38	15.38	15.38	30.77
Australian History - 100 hours (4,005)	13		23.08	23.08	23.08	15.38	15.38
Personal Dvlpmt, Health and P.E. - 100 hours (2,421)	12		41.67	16.67	8.33	8.33	25.00

#### RoSA - State

Course	State total	State A(%)	State B(%)	State C(%)	State D(%)	State E(%)	State None(%)
English - 200 hours (300)	85,116	12.60	26.96	36.56	16.73	6.20	.96
Mathematics - 200 hours (323)	85,200	14.87	22.71	31.31	23.10	7.10	.91
Science - 200 hours (350)	85,043	13.34	23.94	35.50	19.11	7.14	.97
Australian Geography - 100 hours (4,015)	85,052	13.30	25.50	35.16	18.19	7.08	.77
Australian History - 100 hours (4,005)	85,073	13.44	25.48	34.88	18.01	7.48	.71
Personal Dvlpmt, Health and P.E. - 100 hours (2,421)	23,787	16.41	33.79	34.18	11.49	3.33	.80

# ENTERPRISE ART



At NG Central (NGC), we give our students as many opportunities as possible to engage in kinaesthetic enterprise learning, which allows them to be creative, collaborate and express themselves in purposeful ways.

**THIS YEAR, STUDENTS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN LANDSCAPING AND ART PROJECTS WHICH HAVE NOT ONLY MADE OUR SITE 100% MORE EYE-CATCHING, BUT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCTIVE CREATIVE EXPRESSION.**

Our outdoor hang-out area is looking amazing now that it has received some TLC from students and Conservation and Land Management trainer Ian Sutton. Students took on a range of landscaping, gardening, maintenance and construction duties and finished the space off with flair through creating customised NGC graffiti boards. Their enterprise art skills have grown exponentially under the talented supervision of NGC Support Team Coordinator Rick Corderoy and Case-Manager Beck Johnston.

'Transcendence- Gaming at its Best!' was an initiative of our Abilities team at Youth Connections and is a gaming hub for young people with a disability to mix and game with their mainstream peers. This new space onsite was crying out for a gamer-themed make-over and who

better to tackle the task than our tribe of aspiring street artists?

The students were responsible for the project from start to finish, dedicating time and effort to planning the graffiti mural, chalking up the initial sketches and spray-painting the art so it became a smorgasbord of colour and action. It was a hive of activity, with students quick to show off their work.

Year 9 student Danielle Morgan was certainly impressed with her teachers' street-smart skills.

"I drew up the Pickachu and Beck showed me how to improve it a bit- it came out really well in the end".

Rick noted the sense of ownership students had over the project.

"It's important for the students to feel accountable for something, and because this was a graffiti project with a purpose, they got to hone their skills and really took pride in the final product".

This successful project is an excellent example of NG Central integrating our students into the wider community of Youth Connections and Green Central, to foster a sense of belonging, accountability and pride.

# BREAK THE HATE



A significant focus for NGC this year was equipping our young people to respond to diversity with awareness and respect. We wanted to break down barriers our young people encounter that foster ignorance and hostility in our society.

To achieve this, NGC students and staff worked intensively on a video documentary project called Break The Hate. This was made against the backdrop of National Youth Week 2015, which focused on the theme 'It Starts with Us'. Our young people certainly took that challenge on as they met with local community members, including authority figures and people of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Everyone came together at Green Central, for an afternoon of honest discussion on stereotyping and stigma and how we can work together to break down these barriers caused by misunderstanding and negative assumptions.

NGC Case Manager Beck Johnston was the mastermind behind the filming and editing of the documentary and a key facilitator on the day. She was incredibly impressed by how our students embraced the opportunity, despite being an experience many were encountering for the first time.

"I was extremely proud about how honest they all were and how respectful they were to our guests. They really took a lot away from it".

NGC students echoed this sentiment, with one student acknowledging how quickly perspectives can shift when you engage in discussions rather than rely on stereotyping.

**"JUST SITTING HERE NOW AND HAVING A FIVE MINUTE CONVERSATION, IT CAN CHANGE YOUR OPINION COMPLETELY. IT REALLY MAKES YOU THINK ABOUT STUFF."**

Community member Nahid Mohamed spoke about the importance of mutual respect. "I assume well of you, so I would hope you would assume well of me. It's a two-way street. I have a lot of faith in your generation and think that you are all open-minded, so I would love to approach youth at any opportunity to talk openly together."

The group also had a chance to speak one on one to further share their experiences and talk about how they could better communicate in the future.

"It definitely was a mutual exchange; our guests really connected with our students and that direct dialogue meant they could see young people in all their complexity, rather than as a stereotype" Beck said.

Thank you to our case managers, the community members who so generously took part and of course, to our young people who approached the day with open hearts and minds.

Check out our masterpiece at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDyaAym46R8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDyaAym46R8)



**JUSTIN  
CASHIN**

A keen footballer, automotive aficionado and Indigenous dancer-in-training, Justin Cashin is a young person going places. A naturally reserved young man, Justin found it hard to connect with other students and engage fully in a mainstream school environment. NG Central's dynamic combination of enterprise, kinaesthetic and vocational education speaks to students who might need additional support in the classroom, creative and varied teaching techniques or a fresh perspective on what it means to have skills and knowledge. Justin finds the small class sizes and hands-on activities make his studies relevant and more accessible.

"I've made good friends here and the teaching style suits me. Things are more flexible and we do lots of different stuff so the classes are more fun. Teachers talk to you one on one to help you understand."

NG Central believes in thinking outside the box when it comes to engaging young people in their education. Highly attuned to the multiple and often intersecting barriers that may make mainstream schooling difficult for some students, staff create an inclusive, supported and fun forum for learning that gives insight into the wider world of training, employment and community. With several case managers employed on-site to refer students to an extensive network of community services, health practitioners and counsellors, our young people are supported in navigating their education and adolescence. Justin benefits from this individualised case management.

Regular exposure to industry builds career aspirations among NG Central students. Those interested attend weekly automotive training at Youth Connections' The Skills Generator, a partner vocational enterprise that inspires and equips jobseekers for further training and employment.

**"I WANT TO GET INTO MECHANICS AFTER SCHOOL, I REALLY LIKE CARS. I'M WORKING AT BMW IN KARIONG ON THE WEEKENDS, WHICH IS GOOD AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING AND GIVES ME SOME MONEY OF MY OWN."**

With an Indigenous student intake of approximately 30%, NG Central prioritises cultural affirmation as another tool to increase student well-being, engagement and confidence. Through his NG Central education, Justin was linked up with Aboriginal organisation and Youth Connection's partner Bara Barang Corporation Ltd. He was selected for a Fox Symes' education scholarship, which has fully equipped him for the classroom and provided access to a laptop, printer, mobile phone and many other resources.

Justin is also learning about his Indigenous culture through NG Central and Bara Barang's joint initiative Dance and Didge, a weekly workshop where Indigenous students craft and paint their own didgeridoos and learn the intricacies of Aboriginal dance. Justin has taken his talents public, performing at NAIDOC celebrations at Green Central alongside his Aboriginal mentors.

"I like learning the dancing, I'm getting more confident and I know a lot more about my culture now with Bruce and Athol teaching me."

Justin also regularly attends excursions to Camp QUOLL with Conservation and Land Management trainer Ian Sutton where students are encouraged to reconnect with nature in a sustainable way. "I don't think I could live out there though- no tv and no wifi would be pretty hard."

**#YOUlive**



With young drivers between 17-25 years old accounting for one quarter of all Australian road deaths, we know road safety is incredibly important for our students. But beyond road rules, seat-belts and safety precautions, attitudes to drugs, alcohol and peer pressure certainly play a crucial role.

Our PDHPE team received a small grant and organised a range of activities around the theme of road safety and wellbeing, with an emphasis on discussion and interactivity. To initially gauge student attitudes, a forum was hosted with some of our students where they discussed how drugs, alcohol, mobile phone use and fatigue can all affect their ability to make sound driving decisions.

"I know why it affects young people most, but I think at the end of the day, everyone could be a victim on the road. It just takes one second of distraction, or one drink or driving when you're tired and you could crash, or cause someone else to." Tiana explained.

The students took an excursion to Homebush Stadium for a B Smart About Road Safety presentation where they witnessed a reenactment of a real-life crash that had occurred the previous Friday night. Paramedics, police

and the fire brigade were all involved in the installation, providing detailed explanations of how such crashes may occur and the physical and legal consequences. We also visited PARTY at Royal North Shore Hospital, where our students had the opportunity to hear from crash victims who were undergoing rehabilitation; a particularly eye-opening experience for many. To make the experience even more visceral, Tiana and Kane had their arm bandaged and neck braced respectively, which they wore for the visit duration.

The take-home message was one of vigilance on the road, looking out for your mates and never compromising your safety because of peer pressure or substance abuse.

Having recently acquired her L's, Tiana was adamant that it had encouraged her to eliminate distractions on the road, such as turning her phone on aeroplane mode and keeping her music at low volume.

**"IN THE CRASH WE WITNESSED, THE DRIVER KILLED HIS BEST MATE BECAUSE OF ONE STUPID DECISION. IT MAKES YOU REALISE THAT YOU CANT AFFORD FOR SOMETHING SO PREVENTABLE TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER."**



## DANCE AND DIDGE

Cultural affirmation is something that really defines the NG Central difference. It's even embedded in the name; Ngaruki Gulgul translates to 'standing strong' in Darkinjung language. We integrate acknowledgement of Indigenous culture into the fabric of our students' everyday school experience, be it going 'bush' and exploring the cultural and environmental significance of our surrounds, exploring Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum or commemorating important Indigenous events in the school calendar.

A great success of 2015 that speaks to this dynamic cultural exchange and affirmation, was our Dance and Didge program for Indigenous males. We are fortunate to enjoy co-location and close partnership with Bara Barang Aboriginal Corporation on our culturally significant site of Penang Parklands. In collaboration with Bara Barang, we designed a weekly program where students learnt the intricacies of Indigenous dance, didgeridoo and cultural practices and rituals.

For some, this heralds totally new territory, for others it reaffirms cultural identification that has begun at home; but for all, it has been an revelatory experience.

17-year-old Joel Smith has enjoyed the energy of the program and the positive relationship he's forged with his mentors.

**"I'VE LEARNT SKILLS I'VE NEVER USED BEFORE; SOURCING BUSH TUCKER, FISHING, GOING BUSH WITH THE BOYS AND YARNING."**

The piece de resistance of the program was the construction and decorative design of their very own didgeridoos, which they learnt to play under the expert instruction of Gavi, Bruce and Athol of Bara Barang. The students similarly engaged with Indigenous song and dance, performing at our Green Central site for Naidoc Day celebrations. Cultural awareness intersected with NG Central's focus on proactive mental health care through a joint initiative with Headspace Lakehaven for Mental Health Month. Our students learnt Aboriginal painting techniques and cultural symbols as a vehicle for creative, healthy self-expression, creating message boards and artworks that combined artistic finesse and cultural connotation. Beyond these activities, each conversation between the students and their mentors broadened their understanding of culture and identity. For students who face challenges within the walls of a classroom, the opportunity to connect to land and strengthen community connections provides a solid foundation for engagement and self-affirmation.

17-year-old Kane Laws is a keen horticulturist and has relished the opportunity for hands-on learning that transcends traditional curriculum. "Working with Bruce and Athol reminds me to stay humble, respectful and focused on what I need to be focused on- that's what our culture is all about. It keeps me grounded."

That's the kind of outcome that transcends theory and embeds itself into the worldview of our students. Thank you to Bara Barang for their continued partnership and innovative approach to cultural education.



## KANE LAWS

17-year-old Kane Laws is a perfect example of alternative education done right. A Ngaruki Gulgul original who joined us in our first year of operations, his ambitions for the future have vastly evolved and now centre around university education, cultural connection and financial stability.

When you meet Kane, he speaks assuredly and articulately about the importance of his Indigenous identity, the clarifying powers of going bush and the family-like feel of the NGC school environment. But he didn't always feel that sense of belonging, recounting a tumultuous time in mainstream education.

"Before here, I wasn't part of a good scene. I'd skip school a lot, I was stealing, getting into fights and doing drugs. But since I started, I actually want to be here and I've dropped those habits. There is a lot of support around you here, it goes beyond the classroom and it's a place to feel safe and relaxed."

The philosophy of NG Central revolves around strength-based, hands-on learning, practical experience, healthy self-expression and vocational training. Kane has always been a green thumb, having participated in an intensive Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management course as a Year 10 student and now learning about all things ecology, conservation, landscaping in his weekly Horticulture 'trade day'. Kane is quick to praise his trainer Ian for his extensive local knowledge and his willingness to share his personal experiences as an environmentalist.

"It's great because we get to go to different places

depending on what we're learning; everything from rainforests, wetlands, bush and here at Green Central. When you're outdoors and doing physical work, it puts you in a completely different mindset. I don't feel trapped staring at a board in a classroom. When you're out there yarning about plants, there are endless possibilities."

Kane's love of the land has foundations in his strong identification with his Indigenous culture; a connection that NG Central proudly fosters, with 30% Aboriginal intake. He has been a passionate participant in Dance and Didge; a youth engagement program in partnership with Bara Barang Aboriginal Corporation. Students learn the intricacies of Indigenous dance, art and music, designing and painting their own didgeridoos and participating in significant cultural rituals.

**"WORKING WITH BRUCE AND ATHOL REMINDS ME TO STAY HUMBLE, RESPECTFUL AND FOCUSED ON WHAT I NEED TO BE FOCUSED ON- THAT'S WHAT OUR CULTURE IS ALL ABOUT. IT KEEPS ME GROUNDED."**

When asked about his ambitions for the future, university and a career in Business is now on Kane's agenda. He's already got a foot in the door, having recently applied and been successful in landing a school-based traineeship with the Commonwealth Bank. Balancing school, TAFE and on-the-job training, Kane is looking forward to attaining a Certificate II in Business Services. We know his penchant for humility and hard work will serve Kane well in everything to come!



# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NG Central believes in thinking outside the box when it comes to engaging young people in their education. Highly attuned to the multiple and often intersecting barriers that may make mainstream schooling difficult for some students, staff create an inclusive, supported forum for learning that gives insight into the wider world of training, employment and community. Vocational training is one way we give our students new perspectives, skills and knowledge.

Through our Registered Training Organisation, we deliver Certificate II Hospitality, Horticulture and Skills for Work and Vocational Education (SWVE), with Automotive and Construction vocational taster courses available for interested students.

### SKILLS FOR WORK AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

Led by Nareeda Tinnock, Certificate II in SWVE was a first for 2015, with 9 Year 11 students learning vocational planning, employability skills and workforce entry and discussing the merits of pre apprenticeship courses, university, TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships. Industry guest speakers such as The ORS Group, Wilsons Real Estate and Trade Staff Australia offered deeper insight into their relative fields.

To replicate real-life workplace scenarios, Youth Connections Board Members Pat Lewis and Marj Kong, along with YC Media Coordinator Nicole Yardley

volunteered their time to conduct one-on-one mock interviews while Linda Thomas from UnitingCare held a mock group interview for students to participate in.

Students had great success putting their theoretical knowledge to the test through practical industry placements. Ellie-May Wagner completed Childcare work experience with Good Start Early Learning, as well as gaining entry into Certificate III Children Services with TLK Community College. Tristan Sommerville completed work experience with Artform Kitchens, gaining casual employment through his efforts, while Brittany Pearman honed her Hospitality prowess at Lisa's Cafe and gained casual work at McDonalds Swansea.

An outcome that leveraged multiple partners was Dylan Cambrey- Fairbridge, who completed work experience at Central Coast Fencing and was successful in gaining a full time Apprenticeship through our affiliate group training company Trade Staff Australia.

Dylan is now thriving in his new work environment.

**"MY WORK-MATES SUPPORT ME REALLY WELL AND TRADE STAFF AUSTRALIA LOOK OUT FOR ME AND ARE THERE TO OFFER SUPPORT WHEN I NEED IT. THERE ARE DEFINITELY ROUGH MOMENTS- THE 5.15AM WAKE-UP FOR ONE, BUT IT'S GREAT TO BE ABLE TO EARN SOME MONEY WHILE I GET SOME EXPERIENCE."**

### HOSPITALITY

We had six budding Masterchefs in the making undertaking Certificate II in Hospitality in 2015, swarming to our on-site commercial kitchen on a weekly basis, under the guidance of Hospitality trainer Sarah Hardcastle.

Students learn a variety of cooking and baking techniques, often dishing up their culinary delights for the enjoyment of surrounding students and staff.

Brittany has big plans to follow on with her Hospitality career after school.

**"I LOVE COOKING. IT'S A BIG ACCOMPLISHMENT WHEN YOU COOK SOMETHING THAT SOMEONE REALLY ENJOYS. I'D LOVE TO OPEN A CAFE AND BAR AFTER SCHOOL; SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU CAN GET ALL THE MEALS YOU CAN THINK OF AND ENJOY THE ATMOSPHERE TOO."**

### HORTICULTURE

In 2015, we had 11 enrolments in our Certificate II in Horticulture, led by trainer Ian Sutton. Students learn conservation, land management and horticulture techniques via a fusion of theory and practice, changing their outdoor classroom to suit the specific eco-systems of study each week. They've brought a new lease on life to many parts of our Penang Parklands site, including a break-out area for our students to enjoy on their lunch-breaks.

Indigenous student Kane knows that working outdoors makes a real difference to his engagement.

**"I LOVE GETTING TO GO TO DIFFERENT PLACES- WETLANDS, RAINFORESTS, NATIONAL PARKS- DEPENDING ON WHAT WE'RE LEARNING AND WHEN YOU'RE OUT THERE CONNECTING TO THE LAND, OTHER STUFF FADES AWAY AND POSSIBILITIES FEEL PRETTY LIMITLESS."**

### AUTOMOTIVE

Our Automotive aficionados undertake weekly training in automotive body repairs, using the workshop at our trade enterprise The Skills Generator. Utilising

industry-standard facilities, students learn the basics of maintenance and repair work, get to work on real cars and see some of TSG's other Auto projects in action. The group even attended the Easter Creek Drag Races to see what the Fast and Furious lifestyle is really like, checking out the view from the driver's seat!

Joel loves the chance to get his hands dirty and take a hands-on approach to learning in the auto workshop.

**"IT'S REALLY DIFFERENT TO BEING IN THE CLASSROOM. I LOVE CARS AND WORKING THAT WAY MAKES SENSE TO ME. SEEING THE V8 ENGINES ON THE TRACK WAS SO COOL."**

### CONSTRUCTION

Led by NGC Head Teacher and Construction trainer Thorr Ivatt, our construction crew are the on-call handymen on our site. Working on a range of projects, students gain foundational skills in construction and cabinet-making.

As part of National Skills Week, a few of our aspiring brickies got a taste of apprentice life. The Skills Generator coordinated a Step Out bricklaying taster course in partnership with Australian brick and Block-Laying Foundation and Sarina Russo Apprenticeships, where students created a wood-fire pizza oven from start to finish.

Tristan was one of the stand-out participants of the course.

**"IT WAS GREAT WORKING WITH THE TRAINER DAVE AND IT ACTUALLY FELT LIKE WE WERE ON A PROPER JOB-SITE. WE GOT TO MANAGE BUILDING THE OVEN THE WHOLE WAY THROUGH, SO IT FELT LIKE WE'D REALLY ACHIEVED SOMETHING BY THE END OF THE WEEK. I'D LOVE TO BUILD ONE FOR THE SCHOOL NEXT!"**



DANIELLE MORGAN

Danielle Morgan is a budding artist, keen scientist and animal rights advocate with a bright future. That list of talents becomes only more impressive when you learn she is a Year 9 student!

Danielle has overcome significant barriers in mainstream education, found it hard to engage both academically and socially and has dealt with mental health issues that made a comprehensive high school challenging. Now, she is accessing a wealth of support in and out of the classroom and her enjoyment of school life has exponentially improved.

"Often when work is moving too fast in class, it could be embarrassing to ask for help at my old school. That means that you either end up uncomfortable or you don't ask at all. But here, I find it a lot more open and supportive. I don't always deal with change easily, so the pace of mainstream school could be quite stressful. But the teachers here provide help one on one and whenever you ask for it, which means I've improved with all my subjects."

Danielle has a burgeoning interest in Science, loving the array of hands-on experiments that dominate the classes and is a talented English student who frequently writes her own fan-fiction and makes up stories regularly in her spare time. But not content to stop there, Danielle shows great potential in Visual Arts, being innately creative and interested in the Japanese art form Anime and creating her own

characters from scratch. To celebrate Halloween and their Gothic Genre Unit in English, Danielle's class complemented their studies with hand-crafted masks and spooky decorations for their classroom.

NG Central facilitates a proactive approach to mental health and views student engagement as the sum of many factors. We employ caseworkers on site to provide additional support and leverage extensive partnerships with health providers, counselling services and psychologists to ensure help is always available. Danielle notes that she feels like she can be herself, seek support when needed and talk freely when she needs to.

**"THIS IS THE BEST SCHOOL I'VE EVER BEEN TO. I'M A LOT HAPPIER HERE BECAUSE I CAN LEARN MORE EASILY AND FEEL A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE AROUND EVERYONE. I'M PROUD TO HAVE OVERCOME SOME HARD TIMES BECAUSE NOW I'M REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT HELPING OTHER PEOPLE."**

Danielle has many years to figure out her future career path, but she is fairly certain it will involve creativity, with drawing and music being huge parts of her everyday life. She'd also like to work with animals, in rescue, advocacy and rehabilitation. We look forward to seeing what incredible accomplishments Danielle achieves in her last three years of school and know there is a diverse and exciting future awaiting her.

# HALLOWEEN

This year, Halloween was marked by a Freaky Friday of epic proportions. All students and staff got into the spooky spirit with their costumes and classroom decorations; but none more so than Ms Sinister from Sylvania (formerly known as our Science teacher Pola!).

The day kicked off with Ms Sinister leading some wacky experiments in her laboratory, concocting fake blood and conjuring up some homemade dry ice. Students tested their pumpkin carving skills, jumped sky-high through a horror movie screening and showed off their papier-mâché masks created in Visual Arts.

It's hard to say who had more fun...between Witchy-Poo Ange, Ms Sinister and Zombie Apocalypse Rick, our staff may have a tough time topping their creepy costumes next year!



# CHRISTMAS

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS! Our annual festive feast was our best one yet- not only did we have all NG Central students and staff in attendance, but we even managed a surprise visit from football star Jamal Idris! Jamal stopped by to meet and greet our students and (equally star-struck) staff and sit down to our roast lunch in the Coolamon Cafe. Teacher Ange and our Hospitality students had been busy whipping up the ultimate spread, finishing off with intricately crafted ginger-bread houses and a DELICIOUS Oreo Cheesecake.

A really special part of our celebration is the exchange of presents, where every student receives gifts donated from our staff and local community. In this case, giving trumps receiving every time and the excitement in the room is infectious. Thanks to Case Manager Lee for her outstanding Santa act: you look fabulous in red! We finished the day off with a fierce waterballoon fight- our students took no prisoners when it came to showing staff what they were made of.

Days like this could not be possible without the generosity of our staff team, who ensure that every detail is attended to and every student walks away feeling appreciated. Thank you to all Youth Connections staff who donated gifts and took the time to celebrate Christmas with our school.



## HUNTER MILLS

Year 10 student Hunter Mills is a young man on a mission. An amazing Masterchef and barista in the making with talents in automotive to boot, Hunter has been excelling in the alternative education environment of NG Central and has made huge progress academically and personally.

Hunter found mainstream schooling difficult, as he needed more intensive support to comprehend class material and to improve his literacy and numeracy. At NG Central, Hunter has proudly made huge advances with his literacy, praising his English teacher Ange for her innovative, solutions-focussed teaching style.

"At a regular school, there aren't enough teachers to give you individual help. I would get left behind a lot when I struggled with my reading, but here you can get much more support and it isn't uncomfortable to ask for it. My literacy is definitely what's improved the most- Ange always sits with me and goes through everything step-by-step."

When it comes to vocational education, Hunter is (quite literally) a man of many trades. He has cultivated serious talent both with cars, and in the kitchen. He is working towards his Certificate II in Hospitality, gaining work experience in Youth Connections' on-site cafe and commercial kitchen and learning the art of coffee-making. Hunter is a self-confessed baking expert, with enviable white chocolate brownies in his repertoire.

"I definitely make good brownies. It's great training in the cafe, all you have to do is ask if you want to try out

a new recipe and they supply the ingredients and let you have a go."

**"I ABSOLUTELY LOVE COOKING. WHEN YOU TAKE TIME TO COOK SOMETHING AND SOMEONE REALLY ENJOYS IT AND YOU SEE THAT SMILE ON THEIR FACE- IT'S SUCH A GOOD FEELING."**

Hunter enjoys the regular excursions, particularly to play indoor sport, go to the beach and spend time going bush at Camp Quoll, a Community Protectors Camp. He thinks the time out to engage in group activities where everyone can relax and be themselves is important to success in the classroom.

Hunter has also accessed yDrive, Youth Connections' learner driver mentor program which assisted young people in achieving their probationary licence when they did not have access to a vehicle or supervising driver. Hunter had barely scratched the surface of his hours initially, but vastly improved with individual driving lessons. He was quick to praise his instructor for a relaxed, responsive teaching approach that allowed him to target his weak areas and learn efficiently. Hunter is now well on his way to achieving his probationary licence and is ready and waiting with his own car; a prized possession which gets attentive automotive care.

He has some big plans for his future, with an entrepreneurial drive to open his own one-stop-shop cafe and bar, where we will all surely enjoy those piece de resistance brownies one day in the future!

# FAIRWORK TASKFORCE HEARING

In September 2015, YC was well-represented at the Fair Work Task Force hearing that took place in Gosford. NG Central students were invited by Ms Deborah O'Neill to speak to a panel of local MPs about how Youth Connection's programs have addressed their needs. Tiana, Breagh and Jayde spoke beautifully and eloquently about how alternative education has changed their perspective on learning and given them insight into the wider world of community, work and training. What a great opportunity for students to see civic engagement in action and to speak to key decision-makers about the issues most central to their lives.



TRISTAN  
SOMMER-  
VILLE

Year 11 student Tristan Sommerville is a force to be reckoned with and a talented and aspiring bricklayer with serious construction skills.

Mainstream schooling didn't suit Tristan's hands-on approach to learning and he needed some additional support in the classroom to increase his comprehension and engage with his studies. Tristan's understanding of genre and narrative has come alive in English through a spooky foray into horror writing, while his engagement in Science is aided through hands-on experiments including dissections, clay modelling of the human skeleton and creating customised hover-boards.

For students like Tristan, NG Central strives to relate the curriculum to the world outside the classroom and places emphasis on vocational training as a touch-point that can raise student aspirations and employable skills.

**"CONSTRUCTION IS DEFINITELY MY STRONG POINT AND MY FAVOURITE THING ABOUT SCHOOL. I'VE HAD SOME BRICKLAYING EXPERIENCE BEFORE AND ALWAYS ENJOYED CARPENTRY AND BUILDING THINGS. THAT'S DEFINITELY WHERE I WANT TO HEAD AFTER SCHOOL."**

Tristan regularly works on construction projects on-site and is also completing his Certificate II in Construction at Ourimbah TAFE as a TVET subject. He has visited local Try a Skill expos, is training in his Certificate II in Skills for Work, achieved his First Aid certificate and recently took part in a bricklaying taster course for National Skills Week.

The bricklaying course was an initiative of Youth Connections' trade enterprise The Skills Generator which connects jobseekers to employment and training. Tristan worked with other aspiring brickies to construct a wood fire pizza oven from scratch and received fantastic feedback from the course instructor.

"I'm really suited to hands-on work and we got to create the whole pizza oven from start to finish. The trainer Dave was awesome, he really let us try out things ourselves and helped us out when we needed it. Now I want to build one on-site at our school."

Tristan aspires to take on a school-based apprenticeship in bricklaying before graduating and would then like to pursue construction and engineering for the Australian Defence Force. He's definitely got the drive and talent to get there and we look forward to watching him succeed.

## REPORTING POLICIES

### Enrolment policy

Ngaruki Gulgul is a specifically designed to re-engage disenfranchised and 'at risk' young people. Our school aims to provide opportunities to young people who wish to undertake their education within an alternative learning environment.

The selection criterion focuses on eight key areas:

- Learning difficulties/disabilities
- Behavioural difficulties/disabilities
- Social disadvantage
- Age
- Academic achievement
- Financial disadvantage
- Non-English speaking
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders
- Isolation

Ngaruki Gulgul cannot cater to students who are functionally illiterate or who require intensive behaviour or health support. We provide case management to all students who are enrolled in the school but are not in a position to manage students who cannot operate within our open learning environment.

All students who apply to attend Ngaruki Gulgul within the designated intake times shall be offered an interview as part of the application process. Student's acceptance into the program is dependent on their presentation at interview and their demonstrated ability to work within the policies and philosophy of Ngaruki Gulgul.

Refer to Interview Format and Application Forms for more information. Students and parents will also be provided with the current requirements for meeting ROSA outcomes and the certification structure.

All students who are enrolled at Ngaruki Gulgul will need to undergo a Literacy and Numeracy assessment if the teaching staff deems it necessary. This may be conducted prior to enrolment if required.

All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already

attending the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time. Once enrolled, students are expected to act consistently with the school's ethos and comply with the school rules to maintain the enrolment. Parents also are expected to be supportive of the ethos of the school.

### Continued enrolment

Once students have gained entry to the school, it is expected that they will complete their schooling with us and their enrolment is automatically continued. Other school policies

All policies undergo an annual review. Only minor or cosmetic changes took place in the following policies in 2015. For a set of the full text please contact the office on (02) 4346 1111.

### Student Welfare Policy

An ethos of care is embedded in our school and organisational values. Pastoral Care is every employees job, however, in situations of higher need, young people are to be referred to our Youth Case Worker.

We define Pastoral Care as:

- Fostering young people's social, emotional, physical and spiritual development
- Encouraging values of mutual respect through extra-curricular activities
- Enhancing students' wellbeing which is increasingly attributed to:
  - School conditions
  - School relationships
  - Means of fulfilment
  - Health status

### Anti-bullying

Our students attend our programs to participate in quality education that will help them become self-directed, lifelong learners. There is an expectation that students will be safe at Green Central, free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Harassment, violence and bullying will NOT be tolerated at any level at youthconnections.com.au. No one has the right to bully, harass or intimidate. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying. If a bullying incident is reported all students will receive appropriate support.

Harassment and bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

### Student discipline

In this Policy, breach of discipline means: Conduct that impairs the reasonable freedom of any person (whether or not a student) to pursue his or her studies or work with Ngaruki Gulgul or on the premises leased by the school, or elsewhere related to school activities.

However, Ngaruki Gulgul believes in allowing students the opportunity to learn by their mistakes. Should a student persist in breaching the guidelines of the school there are 3 levels of discipline that can be progressed through.

### Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

Students have the right to complain or report any misgivings at any time. The teacher in charge of that class will deal with matters concerning the classroom. For issues concerning the teacher the Principal will handle the matter. For complaints regarding the Principal, an appropriate external source will need to be identified.

### Procedural fairness

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals dealing with authorities. All members of the Ngaruki Gulgul community have a legitimate expectation that Youthconnections.com.au and/or Ngaruki Gulgul staff will follow these principles in all circumstances, including when dealing with suspensions and expulsions. Procedural fairness is generally recognised as having two essential elements: The right to be heard and the right of a person to an impartial decision.

The decision making process regarding a student's withdrawal or suspension of placement will be made in the first instance by the Teacher. If necessary the Principal will become involved as a part of the Appeals process. To ensure the elements of procedural fairness are met, it is appropriate to provide students and their parents or caregivers with details of all allegations relating to the incident.

### Corporal Punishment

Ngaruki Gulgul does not permit corporal punishment of students attending the school under any circumstances. Corporal punishment includes the use of force, striking or withdrawal of basic

life needs to be used as a form of punishment on the student. The school and its staff are also not permitted to use corporal punishment regardless of whether the parent or caregiver has requested or given permission to do so. The school also does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the use of corporal punishment by a parent or caregiver or any other non-school persons to reinforce any discipline actions implemented by the school or any disciplinary decision by a parent or caregiver. This is not to say that reasonable force cannot be used in self-defence, protection of another student, or in provision of protection against harm to the person who is acting violently.

### School determined priority areas for improvement

Extremely low levels of literacy have emerged as a priority area and were focussed on in 2015. Student attendance and engagement is also a priority area for improvement.

### Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Ngaruki Gulgul is an independent school and as such parents can decide at any time whether their children should remain at the School. Parent and student satisfaction can thus be determined in one way by the number of student withdrawals where parents choose to enrol their child in their local public school or another similar independent school as an indicator of parent dissatisfaction. The percentage of student leavers in this category each year is always very small when compared to the total school population which suggests a high degree of parent and student satisfaction. Students are happily extremely verbal about their satisfaction and dissatisfaction and comments are taken seriously and addressed.

Staff turnover at the School was high at the beginning of the year suggesting dissatisfaction, or the inability to cope with difficult students in a new environment.

We have an open channel of communication with the parents who can phone, email, write or visit the School at any time during work hours. We hold a monthly parent group which is well attended suggesting a high need for an environment in which parents with similar issues and concerns can network. This also provides a forum for parents to raise any concerns which are immediately addressed.

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