

Primary entry #17: Dora Creek Public School



The Dora Creek Explorer



TRADITION: The Milibah dancers during their performance at Dora Creek. Picture: Ellie McMaster

Recognition celebrated at cultural day

By ZOE PHILLIPS and SOPHIE TAYLOR

RECONCILIATION is all about improving relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the broader Australian community.

Reconciliation Week is held each year Between May 27 and June 3. Launched by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, which started in 1998, it has been celebrated every year since.

May 27 is the day that the 1967 referendum to recognise indigenous Australians as full citizens was passed. June 3 marks the anniversary of the High Court of Australia's 1992 judgment in the celebrated Mabo Native Title case.

At Dora Creek Public School, Reconciliation Week was recognised by hosting the Milibah Aboriginal Dance Group from the Hunter School of Performing Arts, who performed on June 6 and then provided students with a whole day of activities.

These activities included traditional and contemporary dance, Aboriginal culture, a look at traditional weapons and musical instruments, language and face painting that combined to promote the message "Let's Talk Recognition".

Senior students also sold merchandise to raise money for Koori Kids. The day gave students a real cultural infusion, celebrating the oldest continuous living culture on Earth.

A century of education

By KAYLA DONNELLY and GEORGIA MOORE

OVER the course of many decades, one family who are direct descendants of an early settler of Dora Creek have been attending the local public school.

Both the school and the family's past and futures are intertwined.

When a gentleman named Henry Phillip Parker relocated to the rugged foot of the Watagan Mountains at Dora Creek, he married Barbara Helen Mills of Coorabong and their children started at Dora Creek Public School in 1898.

More than 115 years later the same family are still sending their children to the village school.

While Mr Parker commenced operation at one of the first fishing fleets on the Creek, life went on for the children attending the little school and five generations would follow in their footsteps.

The first generation of students included Martha and Barbara Parker, born in 1903 and 1910 respectively. Gwen Gavenlock, born in 1920 would also attend Dora Creek Public School, before Reverend Joan Horgan, born in 1930, and Betty Horgan, born in the 1940s, enrolled and spent their formative years in the leafy grounds of the primary school.

Hazel White and her sisters also attended the local school as the



TIMELINE: One family equals 100 years of learning at Dora Creek. Picture: Ethan White

family had well and truly settled into life in what is the south lake's prettiest hamlet.

Kevin Gavenlock, born in 1950, and Cheryl King, born in 1960, came along next with Shirley Sharp. Ms King later attended the school during its centenary celebrations and remembers the time capsule being buried near the school bell.

This will be opened again in 2020 for the school's 150-year celebrations in seven years' time.

The fourth generation saw a school leader in Shannon King who was school captain in 2010.

In 2013, Liam King is in his final year at primary school and the current fifth generation of family members includes Kayla Donnelly, in year 6, who also became a school

leader, while Saxon Jansen is in year 4.

Recent additions to the family ensure a possibility that Dora Creek Public School will see another generation of children with direct lineage to Mr Parker attend in years to come.

This has been a fabulous century of education for the descendants of Henry Philip Parker.

School farewells Cheerful Chappel

By ELLIE McMASTER and ETHAN WHITE

AFTER 14 years serving the community of Dora Creek, and 35 in the teaching profession, Prudence Chappel will retire at the end of the term.

Mrs Chappel, or Cheerful Chappel as the students call her, has brought her unique teaching style - often associated with music and laughter - to hundreds of children

in the Southlakes area since arriving at Dora Creek in 2000. She decided not to apply for promotion so she could stay in the classroom every day teaching face-to-face. After 13 years at Dora Creek, Mrs Chappel has taught every group from kindergarten to year 6.

Mrs Chappel is now free to enjoy hobbies such as gardening and cryptic crosswords. She has planted many

trees and won environmental grants to enhance the beauty of the school's playground and landscaped gardens.

She says she will always remember the many special moments in her teaching career such as the innocence and affection that children always display, as well as the moment they finally understand something new they have learnt, which is very satisfying.

RETIRING: The end of an era at Dora Creek for Prudence Chappel.

Picture: Sophie Taylor



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