

**Knox Grammar School Collaborative Project
with
First Nations Australians, the Knox Innovation Hub, and OPEN.**

Through a series of recorded video exchanges, live Zoom sessions, and via OPEN's Moodle collaborative forums, OPEN and its partners in Australia are launching a collaborative global education initiative initially between:

- The Knox Indigenous Program
- The Knox Agriculture Department
- The Knox Science Department
- The Knox Innovation Hub
- Walgett Community College Agriculture Department
- St Joseph's Primary School Walgett
- OPEN (One Planet Education Network, Boston, Mass. USA)

This collaboration has been evolving over three years with OPEN and the Knox Aboriginal Program and Walgett Community College, and local elders in Walgett led by Mr Luke Farr.

Re-establishing the importance of traditional cultures and knowledge as the building blocks for a more sustainable future, as the key to Reconciliation, and for a connection to the 2021 Theme of "Heal Country".

The partnership aims to:

1. Empower and improve the wellbeing of our students connecting them to traditional indigenous practices
 2. Connect the students in a meaningful way to learn from elders who will teach the traditional ways of farming, growing bush food and bush medicines.
- We have since connected with OPEN and the Innovation Hub at Knox Grammar so the students and elders learn together and experience the impact from the renewal traditional farming and knowledges as a means to better care for the earth, and to find workable time-honoured solutions to our climate crisis.

The partnership also aims to:

1. Identify the connected links in curriculum, technology, data and indigenous knowledges and cultures and establish the connected Aboriginal communities of knowledge in Australia (and through OPEN in traditional communities in the USA/North America, South America, Liberia, Kenya, DRC, Malawi, Nigeria, Jamaica, and Trinidad).
2. Explore traditional Aboriginal knowledge as a way of conserving the environment. Uncle Luke Farr and Uncle Clarence Bruinsma will demonstrate and pass on the traditional knowledge to Knox Grammar and Walgett school students, and then OPEN schools worldwide through recorded video sessions uploaded to the OPEN Moodle.

3. In doing so we will rediscover “lost” regenerative practices to help advance sustainable farming. Such regenerative practices will include, but are not limited to, testing the companion use of ground cover and the use of firestick burning. We will also cultivate and process plants that have medicinal value.
4. We will concurrently research this through science, and through technology and engineering and math gather, monitor and then analyze Internet sensor data from the test plots, forests and grasslands. We will attempt to show how these regenerative indigenous practices can reduce the level of CO2 in the atmosphere, by examining research data from the CO2, light and soil moisture and temperature sensors OPEN and its partners have provided.
5. Connecting these knowledges with science we will compare practices at both the Waratah Bush Garden at Knox and the Walgett Community High School Agriculture Plots to start.
6. Knox, Walgett and OPEN schools worldwide (via recorded video) will also connect with local elders to explore the traditional history of the areas around Knox Grammar and Walgett Schools.

This has led to the development and completion of the Waratah **Bush and Cultural Garden** at Knox this year. This area, supported by funds from the Waratah Project is the rear garden of a house of a Knox property. This has been build collaboratively by the Knox Gardeners and Maintenance Departments and has been left untended as the aim is that the boys identify any weeds, and any bush plants that have grown over the past five months. We also want the students to ensure that the soil remains free of any pesticide or other contamination so we can successfully establish the traditional foods of:

- Salt bush
- Bush tomatoes
- Lily Pily
- Kangaroo and Mitchell Grass
- Murnong/Yam daisy

The Waratah Bush Garden has the following:

- A green house
- 2 raised gardens
- A traditional ground level garden bed
- A firepit and a yarnning circle area (to be established post Covid) due to the boys not able to access and work on the plot outside their Covid Bubble. Uncle Den Barber is both qualified and works in firestick burning and will illustrate how the use of

potash, fire etc will enhance the development and health of soils and native plants as well as engage the cultural training of the boys in the area where a yarning circle will sit in the middle of the Waratah Bush Garden

With the guidance of Mr Luke Farr (bush foods and medicines), Uncle Waylon Boney <https://gurrawin.org/> (lore and artefacts) Uncle Den Barber <https://www.yarrabin.com.au/services> (an expert in firestick burning) our Cultural Mentors and Uncle Clarence from Bush to Bowl <https://www.bushtobowl.com/>

Our long-term aims are:

- Reconnecting Aboriginal bush food, agricultural practice, and bush medicine with science
- Using Sensors (CO2, light and soil moisture/temp) in bush garden areas in Walgett and Knox Grammar
- Using OPEN partners' Gateways and networks for data collection to determine the resilience of ground cover and soils
- Promote sustainability in our changing environment whilst engaging traditional practices supported by science as a demonstration of care for the environment and reviving of traditional cultural practice which enabled Australia's First Peoples to successfully sustain/maintain/ nurture themselves and their environment for at least 65,000 years!
- Give young students the knowledge and understanding of how to care for and the importance of stewardship of our environment and how such care is demonstrated by First Nations histories and cultures across all continents!

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