

Indigenous Program Impact Report



WESLEY COLLEGE
By daring & by doing



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS (1923-2023)



The Wesley Moorditj Mob

A BRIEF HISTORY

“At a school like Wesley, education is not just what you get out of a textbook. It’s about your morals, your guidance, your who. It guides you for the rest of your life...”

CHARLIE BASS

ENTREPRENEUR AND PHILANTHROPIST

The Moorditj Mob is Wesley College’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, officially established in 2006. In the Noongar language, Moorditj means ‘great’, ‘strong’ or ‘excellent’ and fits well with what the College strives to achieve. The program is an important part of the College’s culture and fosters great pride within the Wesley community.

The Moorditj Mob program provides many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who would not normally have the opportunity with a top-quality education, integrated with a deliberate and explicit focus on their own culture and developing pride in their history. It is not an easy challenge, however, as families make enormous sacrifices to support the College and the community in succeeding to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous peoples.

Wesley receives support from a number of philanthropic foundations and government agencies. We are proud to be able to offer 40+ needs-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships, including the Bass Family Indigenous Scholarship. Students celebrate their culture and share it with others. One of the most well-known and public aspects of the program is the Moorditj Mob Dancers and didgeridoo players. The Moorditj Mob has been known to perform up to 60 dances annually both at the College and at outside community events.

In 2014 the Moorditj Mob was invited to represent Australia’s Indigenous people at the International Indigenous People’s Conference in Education in Hawaii, and was the only group to be asked to perform at both the opening and closing ceremonies.

PICTURED The Moorditj Mob performing at *Moorditj by Moonlight*.

IT STARTED AT WESLEY.

DEAN COLLARD
First Nations activist



WESLEY COLLEGE
By daring & by doing



The wyvern has appeared in heraldry throughout history. Considered a symbol of strength, power and endurance, it was believed to provide protection to those who bore its image.

At Wesley, it is a fond reminder for all students and the broader Wesley community to be courageous and daring when approaching all challenges in life.

We hope you wear this special commemorative pin with pride for many years to come.



AUDENDO ATQUE AGENDO BY DARING & BY DOING.

By daring & by doing gave me some of my first guiding principles of believing in one's self and having the courage and fortitude to rise above adversity to conquer fears and face life's challenges.

This is now your road to travel. Best wishes and good luck!

DEAN COLLARD (65-67)



DEAN COLLARD

First Nations activist

Dean Collard attended Wesley College from 1965 to 1967.

As a proud Noongar man, he's devoted much of his life to being an Aboriginal advocate. He's worked with the State Government and other organisations for 40 years to ensure Aboriginal families have access to housing, welfare and justice.





Dean Collard

ACTIVIST

“My time at Wesley College helped me develop extraordinary friendships that have remained until this day. Being an Aboriginal or not made no difference.”

DEAN COLLARD

Dean Collard, a Noongar man, remembers his early years growing up on a farm in Wagin, surrounded by a large extended family, as extraordinarily happy.

In 1965, he commenced his education at Wesley College as a boarder and was in Mofflin House. An avid sportsman, he played cricket, athletics, swimming and football. Dean was also a Sub-Prefect in 1967 and was considered by Clive Hamer, the Headmaster at the time, as; “a conscientious, industrious student and a well-respected citizen of the school.”

A long-time Aboriginal advocate, Dean worked for the State Government as the Coordinator for

Aboriginal Accommodation Services for seven years and then was appointed as the Director of Manguri (formerly Sister Kate’s) in 1987.

As part of the Centenary celebrations campaign, ‘It started at Wesley,’ featuring esteemed Old Wesleyans such as Dean, his message to current students is powerful.

“*By daring & by doing* gave me some of my first guiding principles of believing in one’s self and having the courage and fortitude to rise above adversity to conquer fears and face life’s challenges. This is now your road to travel. Best wishes and good luck!”

PICTURED *It started at Wesley* postcard series featuring Dean Collard to celebrate Wesley’s Centenary in 2023.





Arthur Jones

HOW A WESLEY SCHOLARSHIP CHANGED HIS LIFE

“Receiving a scholarship has given me all sorts of opportunities which have given me a better education and helped me achieve my dreams.”

ARTHUR JONES

Arthur Jones came to Wesley in 2020 as a Year 11 student. Throughout the two years he was at Wesley he made a significant contribution to all aspects of College life.

He is an exceptional sportsman and has proven himself to be a respected and valued leader in a range of sporting contexts. In his final year, he was Vice Captain of the 1st XVIII Football Team and played a pivotal role in the leadership group. Arthur was lauded as one of the most talented footballers in the PSA, and after graduating he was drafted at pick 43 of the 2021 AFL draft by the Western Bulldogs.

As an influential and respected member of the Moorditj Mob, he used his voice and connection to culture to help foster a greater understanding of reconciliation both broadly and in the Wesley community. Along with 2021 College Captain, Sam White, he worked with pride and care to design an Indigenous tie for Wesley which tells a story of

growth and belonging; this will be a seminal piece of the College’s uniform and Arthur’s willingness to share the story behind his creation has made the piece even more meaningful.

Academically, Arthur applied himself and in 2021 was awarded the Jim Walker Dux of College (VET) Prize. Arthur worked diligently throughout his College journey and is a worthy recipient of this prestigious award.

When asked what being a scholarship recipient has meant to him, Arthur said ‘It has changed my whole life and made me the man I am today. Receiving a scholarship has given me all sorts of opportunities which have given me a better education and helped me achieve my dreams. What was profoundly meaningful to me, was designing the first Wesley Indigenous tie and having multiple roles throughout the school to make Wesley better. I am very honoured to have attended Wesley College and now to be an ‘Old Boy’.

PICTURED Arthur Jones (20-21)





Devyn Jackamarra

THE DIFFERENCE OPPORTUNITY CAN MAKE

“The word opportunity means to me to be presented with a chance to achieve something greater or to better yourself, without these pre-judgements.”

DEVYN JACKAMARRA

The College’s Scholarship Program has granted opportunities for many students like Devyn Jackamarra (06–09), talented, motivated and energetic with a genuine thirst for lifelong learning and giving back to his community.

What have you been up to since leaving Wesley?

Since leaving Wesley, I’ve graduate from UWA with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering and am currently working at the Water Corporation as a Civil Engineer.

Whilst at UWA I took part in a mentoring program called *The Aspiration Initiative* run by The Aurora Foundation. Together with other Indigenous University students I mentored a group of Indigenous high school students from Year 8, all the way through to their first year out of school, be that University, a trade or whatever career path they chose.

What does the word opportunity mean to you?

To me, the word opportunity means to be given a chance at something greater. From first-hand experience I know that a lot of Indigenous people,

especially youth in rural regions aren’t presented with many opportunities. This is often due to predetermined social expectations of Australia’s Indigenous people. So, with that in mind, the word opportunity means to me to be presented with a chance to achieve something greater or to better yourself, without these pre-judgements.

Who at Wesley made the biggest impact on you?

Lynn Webber, the Indigenous Program Coordinator during my time at Wesley. Lynn had endless amounts of time for us and true belief that we could all succeed, when not many people, outside of our families believed we could.

How do you think your time at Wesley prepared you for life beyond school?

Boarding and schooling at Wesley helped me to become generally more independent a lot quicker than most students normally would. Not just in terms of relying on parents for a lot of things, but also by developing a self-driven work ethic.

PICTURED Devyn Jackamarra (06–09)





Tyrell Sykes

BIG THINGS HAVE BEEN MADE POSSIBLE

“I feel pretty lucky to go to Wesley.
The reputation is incredible, and I feel like
I’m part of something really special.”

TYRELL SYKES

When Tyrell was first awarded a scholarship to Wesley he was excited to receive a world-class education, what he wasn’t expecting was something even bigger.

What has your Wesley scholarship made possible?

Before I came to Wesley, I didn’t really know much about who I was, or my culture. The scholarship has given me the opportunity to connect with my culture and really widen my understanding. Through school I’ve had the opportunity to connect with people because of our shared culture. I’ve learnt to play the didgeridoo and to dance. My first performance was at *Moorditj by Moonlight*, one of the biggest events in the Wesley calendar. I was able to be involved in creating the sand mural—it was such a cool experience.

What does it mean to you to be a scholarship student?

My family and I were all really thrilled when we found out I had been awarded a scholarship. It’s not every day that you get offered a scholarship at one of the most prestigious schools in Perth. My Mum was really proud.

The scholarship and the chance to come to Wesley has meant a lot. It’s through the connections at Wesley that I’ve been able to find out about where I’m from and who I am. Dan Barnes, connected my Mum and I with an elder in the Torres Strait who was able to tell me what Mob I was from. It was so cool.

What does it mean to be a Wesley student?

I feel pretty lucky to go to Wesley. The reputation is incredible, and I feel like I’m part of something really special.

During NAIDOC week, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students all come together help create this huge sand mural. Everyone really cares and wants to be part of it. At the end of NAIDOC Week the community watch us dance on the sand mural, they clap and cheer us on—that feels really good. It’s great the way that everyone comes together and celebrates our differences. As a Wesley student I’m getting opportunities to share my culture with others, kids just like me. Reconciliation and Wesley’s indigenous program aren’t just for show, they’re genuine.

PICTURED Tyrell Sykes, Year 9



ABOVE Year 12 students proudly wearing the new tie. | OPPOSITE The Indigenous school tie was even featured in The West Australian.

A gift for generations

THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE STUDENT-DESIGNED INDIGENOUS SCHOOL TIE



The Reconciliation Action Plan is a key focus of the 2021 Year 12 cohort, and their gift to the College reflects this. Samuel White, along with Arthur Jones, have designed an Indigenous school tie, the first piece of College-wide uniform that incorporates Indigenous design and in doing so celebrates and supports Indigenous students and culture in the College.

The tie shows the pathway a student takes through Wesley College, stopping along the way at significant milestones.

The yellow centre strip is the journey walked during school life and the marking inside the strip symbolises this.

The top right of the tie represents the community the students leave to begin their Wesley journey.

The first destination, shown by a kangaroo, is Junior School. The kangaroo, small and spritely, is representative of the size and shape you are when in this milestone destination.

As the journey along the path continues, the next milestone is Middle School. Represented by an emu, it symbolises the student getting bigger and starting to grow.

The student continues their journey to get to the goanna nest, which represents the next significant milestone: Senior School.

You can see the Wesley gates, represented as a meeting place, at the bottom of the tie, where the journey through the College ends. The pathway ends with an incomplete water-hole, which symbolises the transition from the College out into the real world.

The tie is available for purchase at the Uniform Shop.

All profit from sales will be set aside in a Reconciliation Fund for our Moorditj Mob to fund projects within the College, such as art and other activities designed to aid our path to reconciliation.





The Power of Cross Cultural Learning and Teaching

Being a member of the Moorditj Mob brings with it a mutual opportunity for the students to both learn and teach about their culture.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys (and young men) are afforded the chance to learn about their culture through mediums such as language, story, art, dance and song. To help them do so, the College taps into a wealth of wisdom from Elders, former Moorditj Alumni, role models and cultural agencies.

The true power of cross-cultural learning though, comes in the form of the Moorditj students being able to share their culture. In any given year, the Moorditj Mob over 50 cultural performances. While some of

these are done within the Wesley community, many happen beyond the College gates.

This sees the Moorditj boys speak, dance, perform and teach at schools, workplaces, conferences and various events across the State. In doing so they educate thousands of children, professionals, dignitaries, delegates and everyday citizens about what Indigenous culture is and represents.

To stand back and watch the confidence, knowledge, leadership and pride that the Moorditj boys display in these moments, is truly inspiring. And the impact they have on other people is something that words on a page could never adequately describe.

PICTURED Students share their culture through performances at assemblies.





Katitjin

‘TO LISTEN AND
TO LEARN’

Since 2005, every Year 8 student at Wesley has spent a term in our Katitjin program. This means that some 3,000 students have had the opportunity to do Katitjin, with the majority identifying it upon their graduation as their most transformational experience at Wesley.

It is a program unique to Wesley College, where students are removed from the main campus to the Western Australian Rowing Club on the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River), on Whadjuk Boodjar (Noongar lands).

Instead of daily timetabled classes, students learn to tap into their understanding of self, operate effectively in teams, and integrate as motivated and

effective members of their communities. Rather than learning in a typical school setting, the river and city become their classroom.

From its inception some 18 years ago, there are many cross-cultural strands that have been deliberately woven through the program.

Katitjin culminates in a week-long rites of passage style experience at Morapoi, a station on lands owned by the Wangkatha people. Some 200 kilometres from Kalgoorlie, Morapoi is both remote and culturally unique. While at Morapoi students get a truly immersive experience and in doing so gain a genuine appreciation of traditional Indigenous culture.

PICTURED While at Morapoi students learn about traditional Indigenous traditions.





Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

WESLEY COLLEGE'S VISION FOR THE
RECONCILIATION IS TO CELEBRATE OUR
COMMUNITY AND SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Since the launch in July 2020, Wesley's RAP is a living breathing strategy that guides and forms the basis for many decisions we make at the College. We are proud to have worked with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and advisors to create our RAP.

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised for their history and cultures, are celebrated for their knowledge and are able to pursue any opportunity they wish.

Education is a key part of this, and we are proud of our Moorditj Mob program and the scholarships we have available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

To borrow some words from the NAIDOC website: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were Australia's first explorers, first navigators, first engineers, first farmers, first botanists, first scientists, first diplomats, first astronomers and first artists.' At Wesley we hope to keep adding to that list of firsts.

Our Moorditj Mob program has offered the opportunity of a world-class education to more than 180 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys. Who knows what doors they will open, what firsts they will achieve.

Wesley College has always been committed to the meaningful journey of Reconciliation, fostering deep connections and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples.

PICTURED The Wandjoo is the first assembly of the school year, where students from Year 1 to 12 gather.



2023 Moorditj by Moonlight

Wesley College's third Moorditj By Moonlight event was a resounding success, drawing our biggest crowd yet with more than 2,000 people celebrating Indigenous culture.

Performances from Wesley, Penrhos College, Presbyterian Ladies College, and Guildford Grammar School had the audience enthralled.

Dancing on a giant sand mural, more than 80 Indigenous students brought their cultural stories to life. The crowd sang along to the famous cover of I Am Australian by the Yabu Band, cheered at a didge-off and clapped to the celebration dance, Nyumbi.





WESLEY COLLEGE

A new century and a new Wesley anthem!

In 2023, Wesley College turned 100—this is an amazing opportunity to celebrate the past and the incredible accomplishments that have led the school to where it is today. It is also the time for us to prepare the College for the next 100 years.

What better way to welcome in the new century than with a new College Anthem?

Glenn Sarangapany (96-00), multi-award-winning composer and a member of the internationally acclaimed band Birds of Tokyo, was commissioned to compose the song. To respect and acknowledge our First Nations people, Glenn collaborated with both Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse, who adapted a verse into Noongar. The end result is an anthem that celebrates who we are at Wesley and what we value.

VERSE

How can we dream bigger than the world were shown
How can we bring volume to our voices
How can we be better than the best we've known
How do we find strength in all our choices

PRE

And we won't fall when our hearts beat
with the green and the black and the gold
Stand tall we're making our way

Yarn ngalak koomba, koorndarminy boodja-ngat
How do we dream big across this earth?
Yarn ngalak danjoo wer wangkiny dima
How do we together raise our voices?
Nidja kwobba-djil koort yarn ngalak kanyiny
How do we hold this really good heart?
Yarn moorditj koordak ngalak warniny
How do we make strong/solid wishes?

CHORUS

By daring by doing, our courage will shine
We're building the moments that make up our lives
By daring by doing, our courage will shine
We're searching for truth in our hearts and our minds

MOORDITJ MOB BY NUMBERS

180+



Indigenous students at Wesley College since 2006

47



Indigenous students currently at Wesley College

4 YEARS OLD

Age of the youngest member

1,000+

People watched the Moorditj Mob perform at Wesley's Centenary Gala Ball

1



Performance at Government House to celebrate the start of Makuru

4



Sand murals were created

50+



Performances (mostly at other schools)

2,245km



Distance travelled by boys from as far north as One Arm Point

2



Winners of the NAIDOC Perth Empowerment Award

NOONGAR LANGUAGE



Classes offered to Wesley Community



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