

VIBE ACTIVITIES

Stay Strong – *Finding Culture Key to Power* pages 24 and 25

Finding culture key

Murwillumbah dance group reconnects kids with their heritage

Rainbow Serpent
Perhaps she will come again when the spirits of men and the spirit of this land are once more together as one

THESE POWERFUL WORDS ABOUT RECONNECTING WITH LAND AND CULTURE WERE WRITTEN BY THE ICONIC POET, POLITICAL ACTIVIST, ARTIST AND EDUCATOR OODGEROO NOONUCCAL (AUNTY KATH WALKER), A WOMAN WHO WAS DEDICATED TO THE CONTINUATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE. NOW OODGEROO'S GRANDSON DENNIS WALKER JNR IS CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF UPHOLDING CULTURE BY SHARING BOTH HIS KNOWLEDGE AND PASSION FOR TRADITIONAL DANCE. HE HAS FACILITATED A YOUNG DANCE GROUP IN MURWILLUMBAH, IN A PROGRAM CALLED 'KIDS CARING FOR COUNTRY':

What was initially a daycare group for single mothers with young children has turned into a thriving group of 40 that now includes teenagers, too. Lara Bennett, a project worker at Murwillumbah Communities for Children, asked Dennis to come along and share his knowledge of traditional dance and song with the group.

Dennis is originally from Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah), but he moved to the Tweed Coast so his wife could be closer to her family. He was more than happy to be involved in the program but remains adamant that he is simply empowering these children to find their own love.

"I do what I do, so I can pass on (knowledge) to my kids," he says. "I'm not from this country; these kids are from this country. I'm just giving them something back that they should know. It's our birthright. It should be common knowledge."



The Kids Caring for Country group meets every Wednesday afternoon to learn traditional song and dance. One of the parents of the group who is also a facilitator, Deirdre Currie, says that her own children



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have grown up with culture at home, but the group is "a way to get the kids involved in learning singing, dancing, culture and language together. They love it, it's fun".

Dennis says he has seen a huge shift in the kids he is teaching, particularly with the teenagers who have joined the program.

"They realise their power now and it's good watching them realise it. They've got mad power these kids. We've got to teach these babies now the proper way," he says.

Other parents are also involved with the group as facilitators now, with the objective being to keep and pass on the knowledge.

"The parents in the group are teachers now, too," says Dennis. "My main job is as a facilitator. I've taught them, but I want to give it back to them. It's theirs now. I want to step back and let them do their thing. And hopefully they can then find their business because at the moment they are doing our (Nonneccal) thing," he says.

"My main focus is to get them to chase their own lore now. They can use our stuff in the interim, but they have to find their own."

"We've got to find where we are from. That way we can be whole."

As a group, Kids Caring for Country has already undertaken many performances – or "presented culture" as Dennis rightly puts it – at local openings, festivals and schools. The most recent was a large performance for the Tweed NAIDOC March that Dairde says went very well.

This year, they were also invited to perform at the Launa Dance Festival on the Cape York Peninsula but were unable to attend due to a lack of funding.

"We couldn't make it this year," says Dennis. "The invitation is still open for the next festival, and I would love to see these kids get the chance to go and experience that kind of culture."



Do you love to sing and dance?

Kids Caring for Country, a group of young Indigenous people from Murwillumbah in northern NSW, are reconnecting with land and culture through traditional dance.

Knowledge is passed on through dance, songs and traditional languages.

READ *Stay Strong – Finding Culture Key to Power* on pages 24 and 25



Murwillumbah area, NSW



Kids Caring for Country group

ACTIVITY 1 BUILDING READING SKILLS

- skimming and scanning for information.
- reading headings, text boxes and pictures.
- reading for meaning.
- making connections between the text and your world.

There are three levels of comprehension questions:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Literal | The answer is located in one sentence in the text. |
| Inferred | You need to make links between sentences and graphics (such as illustrations, maps and tables) and what you already know. |
| Applied | The answer is in your background knowledge, what you already know or feel. |

1 Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Aunty Kath Walker) is

(literal)

- a poet.
- an artist.
- an educator.
- all of these



2 What is the name of the Murwillumbah program?

(literal)



3 Why did Dennis Walker move from Stradbroke Island to the Tweed Coast?

(inferred)

4 What are some reasons that Dennis became involved in the program? (inferred)

5 What would you like most about joining a Kids Caring for Country group?

(applied)

ACTIVITY 2

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS - SPELLING

- 1** The spelling mistakes in these sentences have been underlined. Write the correct spelling for each word in the box.

Write your answer in the box.

They are rekonecting with land and culture.

He is continuing the tradishon.

A lot of yung people are interested in the group.

- 2** Unscramble these words from the text.

Write your answer in the table.

w i a n r b o	
r p e e n t s	
u u l t r c e	

- 3** Each sentence has one word that is incorrect. Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.

Write your answer in the box.

Lots of children and teenagers joined the group.

He wanted to share his knowledge.

A lot of community's joined together.

ACTIVITY 3

SENTENCE CUT AND PASTE

- 1** Unscramble this sentence. Glue the words and punctuation to your page in the correct order.

“ their realise power

They and . good

it's them said Dennis

watching , ”