Cultural Resurgence 2026

Newcastle Musuem 23rd October- 22nd November

Miti Nukang

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Welcome to Cultural Resurgence, Miti Nukang's inaugural exhibition, 2026. Presented with our official sponsors, the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (PHN) and NOVA for Women and Children, this exhibition celebrates culture, community and wellbeing.

Our heartfelt thanks to Newcastle Museum, our official exhibition partner, for its unwavering support and belief in our programming and impact. We also thank those who welcome us into schools and workplaces, and refer others to our programs, strengthening connection and engagement with Aboriginal people, communities and culture.

We invite visitors to explore the stories, connections and cultural knowledge these artworks hold.

Cherie McLaren
Managing Director of Miti Nukang

Nova for Women and Children has been helping women who have experienced domestic and family violence in Newcastle for 43 years. In late 2024, Nova's Senior Aboriginal Worker Lisa Harshman, and Miti Nukang's Cherie McLaren had a vision of a women's group that offered a safe space for Aboriginal women and children who had experienced domestic and family violence to learn, yarn, and heal.

Two years later, Resurgence: Interwoven workshops have engaged over 60 women to create the beautiful work you see today. But that art is the tip of the iceberg. The connections to culture and community, storytelling and mutual support has given women hope and pride, and uncovered the strength that was always there. We are grateful to the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network for funding the initial groups as part of their Healing and Recovery grants. We are also grateful to our sister organisations who referred women to the project: Wargla Ngurra & Jenny's Place.

We honour the strength of Aboriginal women.

Brittney Jack CEO
Nova for Women and Children- Exhibition Sponsor

BLACKALLS PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Blackalls Park Public School, 2026
Maggie and Her Nest
Participants: Year 4-6 students and Aboriginal students from across K-6.
Artists: Class 5/6K, 5/6D, 4/5L and all Aboriginal students K-6.
Support: Mr Kuczer, Miss Lord, Mrs Hamilton, Mrs West, Mrs Smith, Mrs Egan, Mrs Jeffrey, Mrs Cawley, Miss Wilson and Mrs Samuels.
Cultural Teacher: Lynelle Elliot
Welder: John Turier

Artist Statement

During Term 3, 2026, ninety-eight students from across all stages at Blackalls Park Public School came together through the Interwoven Resurgence project, learning the cultural practice of coil weaving to collectively create Maggie and Her Nest.

Inspired by the school's much-loved magpie mascot, Maggie, the sculpture embodies the three guiding values of the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning framework: Respect, Responsibility and Personal Excellence.

A familiar presence in the school playground, magpies are celebrated for their intelligence, strong family bonds and complex social relationships. Within some Aboriginal cultural traditions, they are also recognised as messengers and guardians, carrying connections between people, place and the natural world.

Through the patient and rhythmic process of weaving, each student contributed to the creation of the magpie and her nest, transforming individual coils into a collective expression of belonging. Just as a nest is built strand by strand, offering shelter, protection and a place to nurture the next generation, the sculpture reflects the strength of a school community woven together through shared values, learning and care.

Maggie and Her Nest celebrates the beauty of collective creation, reminding us that while each contribution is unique, it is through connection, reciprocity and shared responsibility that a community finds its strength.

* Name sourced from Miromma Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre (2020). Awabakal Dictionary, Community Edition.

AURORA
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

Aurora Education Foundation
"Raymond and Raylene"
Camps | July–August 2026
Artists: Ysabel, Taylor, Muhammad, Lucas, Storm, Violet, Janara, Kierra, Maxx, Willow, Navaeh, Lachlan, Ruby, Kristie, Beau, Baylana, Jeremiah, Chase, Shyla, Charlotte, Destiny, Connor, Elizabeth, Mackenzie, Coopa, Jaydee, Meliya, Zoey, Elara, Anabelle, Kamira, Travis, Jahleiyah, Olivia, Patricia, Ofa, Kaleisha, Layla, Ashton, Alexis, Allaria, Leiam, Tesanne, Tayla, Alexxa, Dean, Felicity, Hezekiah, Jordan, Malachai, Marley, Ngaru, Phoenix, Samuel, Tallis, Aden, Bridget, Connor, Ebony, Holie, Isabell, Karalee, Kyedon, Latoya, Lilly, Myleigh, Olivia, Aaliyah, Caitlin, Deegan, Mya
Support: Uncle Charlie, Aunty Doris, Aunty Esther, Kate, Portia, Jiah, Berin, Michelle, Tori, Cassandra, Sheliah, Brittany, Eliana, Isabella, Makhya, Lucy, Anna, Tiana, Zac
Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliot and Cherie McLaren

Artist statement:
Created during the Aurora Foundation camps 2026, at the Sydney Academy of Sport in Narrabeen, NSW, on the traditional lands of the Gai-Mairagal / Gurigi Nation, "Raymond and Raylene" draw inspiration from the surrounding waters of Narrabeen Lagoon.
These waters are home to an abundance of marine life, including stingrays, whose graceful movements can often be observed in the shallows at low tide. Gliding effortlessly beneath the surface, stingrays embody a quiet strength, adaptability and fluidity, moving with the changing currents rather than resisting them.
Created collaboratively by students in Years 8 through 12, "Raymond and Raylene" become symbolic companions on their educational journeys, reflecting the resilience, courage and adaptability required as young people navigate the changing tides of adolescence.
Just as the stingray moves with grace through shifting waters, these young people are learning to navigate the depths of their own emotions, embrace uncertainty and transform challenges into opportunities for discovery, personal growth and self-determination.
Together, "Raymond and Raylene" offer a gentle reminder that growth is not always about resisting the currents of change, but learning to move through them with confidence, purpose and grace.

Pymble Ladies' College

Pymble Ladies College
Our Port Jackson, 2025

Artists: Middle School PLC: Shaanvi Lahiri, Zainab Sijal, Valentina MacAndrews, Izzy Yeh, Nina Basic, Macy Feng, Makiitah Washington, Sophie orcher, Lailahni Blake, Tarli Agius, Kyilista
Gibbs, Islah Washington, Zoe Luelf, Zoe Maynard, Stephanie Shaw, Havana Fuller, Sarah Swan-Cole, Malalai Karimi, Milly Farr, Lexi Whitton, Skye Mitchell, Milla Metcalfe, Olivia Sheldrake, Keira Donovan, Zahra Craig, Dimity Loeve, Katelyn Hsu
Frame by Tim.

C**ultural teachers:** Lynelle Elliot and Cherie McLaren
Welder: John Turier

Artists statement:
We chose the Port Jackson shark as it is native to Sydney's harbours.
Each Port Jackson shark has a unique personality, just like every different girl at our school. Because of that, the Port Jackson shark represents how unique each and every person who worked on it is. Sharks also represent determination, which each girl used while working on the individual pieces of our artwork, and the effort put into every stitch and weave of the finished project.

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Resurgence Womens Group
Karoong Karoong | Pelican- T3 Resurgence 2026
Artists: Tamika, Lynda, Sandra, Anne, Crystal, Kiara, Dani, Lisa and Noeline.
Cultural teacher: Lynelle Elliot and Anne McSweeny

Artists statement:
Gathering weekly on Awabakal Country, close to the shores of the lake, the women of NOVA drew inspiration from the surrounding landscape, its waterways and the abundant life sustained within them.
The pelican, a majestic and enduring presence across these waterways, holds significance as a seasonal indicator, its movements, resourcefulness and hunting behaviours reflecting the changing rhythms of Country. Following the movement of fish, particularly Kirul (mullet), and crab, the pelican signals seasonal transitions and the approaching presence of Berabakan (whale), revealing the intricate relationships between land, water, sky and the cycles of life. Moving effortlessly between these elements, the pelican embodies the interconnectedness of Country, reminding us that all living things exist within a greater network of relationships, each with its own place, purpose and responsibility.
Pelicans gather in colonies to nest and often hunt cooperatively, reflecting the strength found in community, collective care and shared responsibility. For the women of NOVA, these qualities resonate deeply with their own journeys through motherhood and grandparenthood, where coming together, sharing knowledge and supporting one another creates a place of belonging, strength and renewal.
The pelican also offers a quiet lesson in patience and the wisdom of observation. Gliding gently across the water, attentive to the subtle movements beneath the surface, it reminds us of the importance of listening to Country, recognising the changing tides of life and understanding when to move forward, when to nurture and when to rest.
Karoong Karoong celebrates these connections between women, community and Country, honouring the strength of coming together and the knowledge carried through generations, while recognising that, like the pelican, we are continually learning to navigate the waters of life with patience, resilience and grace.

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Resurgence Womens Group
Koneyn Muraban | Pretty Flower, 2026
Artists: Dakota, Ayla, Tamika, Sandra, Anne, Tania, Sarah, Jessica, Themla, Crystal, Sarah, Lisa, Noeline, and Annisa
Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliot and Cherie McLaren
Welding: John Turrier

Artists statement:
The Flannel Flower (Actinotus helianthi) is a delicate yet remarkably resilient Australian wildflower, flourishing along the eastern coastline from southern New South Wales to southeast Queensland and extending inland towards Narrabri. Growing in sandy, nutrient-poor soils, nestled within rocky crevices and clinging to exposed escarpments, its soft, velvety petals conceal an extraordinary strength and capacity to thrive in challenging environments.

Chosen as a symbol of resilience, quiet determination and the beauty found in strength, the Flannel Flower reflects the journeys of the women who came together to create Koneyn Muraban. Like the flower itself, these women have navigated challenging circumstances, drawing upon their own strength while finding opportunities for connection, renewal and personal growth.

Through the gentle rhythm of weaving, relationships were nurtured, confidence strengthened and a shared sense of belonging cultivated.
The creative process offered more than the development of artistic skills. Within a culturally supportive environment, contemporary weaving became a pathway for wellbeing, connection and self-expression, providing space for women to learn from one another, celebrate their achievements and recognise the value of their individual and collective contributions.

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Ngaroongka Nukang (Proud Women), 2026

Artists: Tamika, Sandra, Anne, Tania, Sarah, Jessica, Themla, Crystal, Sarah, Lisa, Noeline. Kynda, Raine, Jodie, Chloe, Kristle, Lindsey, Lynda and Anissa.

Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliot and Cherie McLaren

Artists statement:

Ngaroongka Nukang is a collective expression of strength, healing and connection, a possum skin cloak carrying the personal stories, lived experiences and aspirations of the women who came together to create it.

Through the cultural practice of possum skin cloak making, each woman was invited to reflect upon her own journey, translating experiences of resilience, hope and renewal into designs carefully burnt into individual pelts. For many, this was the first opportunity to share aspects of their personal story through a creative and cultural expression, contributing something deeply individual to an artwork that would ultimately become a shared narrative.

The cloak unfolds across four rows, weaving together stories of the past, present and future. The uppermost row looks towards the sky, stars and moon, acknowledging the enduring presence of Dreaming and the knowledge carried across generations. The central rows speak to personal journeys of healing, recovery and reconnection, honouring the courage found in transformation and the strength that emerges through shared experience. The final row grounds these stories in Songlines, Country and Ancestral Knowledge, recognising the cultural connections that continue to guide, sustain and shape identity.

Earth pigments, including ochre and botanical colours created through eco-dyeing, enrich the surface of the cloak, bringing together the textures and colours of the natural world with the stories held within each pelt.

Ngaroongka Nukang is more than a sculptural artwork; each pelt holds its own story, yet when joined, they become something greater, a cloak of collective strength, carrying the voices of proud women and the promise of journeys still unfolding.

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Resurgence Womens Group
Ngaroongka Nukang (Proud Women) 2025

Artists: Tamika, Sandra, Anne, Tania, Jessica, Crystal, Sarah, Ayla, Lisa, Noeline and Teelah
Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliot and Cherie McLaren

Artists statement:
Kalabara is a celebration of women, children and community, a collective expression of strength, friendship and the brighter futures we imagine and create together.
Throughout this journey, our gatherings have been filled with laughter, yarns and the generous sharing of stories, knowledge and experiences. Within these moments of connection, we have found opportunities to learn from one another, celebrate our individual strengths and nurture the relationships that bring us together as a community.
The creation of this possum skin cloak reflects the beauty and complexity of our shared journey. Each pelt carries its own story, shape and character, requiring patience, creativity and collaboration as we carefully stitch them together. Just as each piece finds its place within the cloak, each woman brings her own experiences, knowledge and strengths, contributing to something far greater than any one of us could create alone.
While our individual pathways may differ, we are united by a shared commitment to growth, healing and a future filled with possibility. Through connection to one another, to culture and to spiritual learning, we continue to strengthen our sense of belonging, drawing upon the wisdom of those who have walked before us while nurturing the generations who will follow.
The process of creating Kalabara has offered more than the development of practical skills. It has created a space for friendship, cultural learning and collective healing, where confidence grows through shared achievements and where every contribution is valued.
Kalabara, meaning Shining Bright, embodies the strength that emerges when women come together with purpose, care and generosity. As individual pelts become one cloak, our stories become part of a shared future, reminding us that our greatest strength lies not only in the journeys we have travelled, but in the light we create for ourselves, our children and one another.

Resurgence Womens Group
Fringe Lillies, 2026
Artists: Tamika, Sandra, Anne, Crystal, Sarah, Lynda, Lisa, Noeline, Kynda, Raine, Jodie, Chloe, Kristle, Lindsey, Camilla, Kiara, Patsy and Anissa.
Cultural teachers: Lynelle Elliot and Anne Mc Sweeney
Welding: John Turrier

Artists statement:
The Fringe Lily (Thysanotus species) is a delicate, yet remarkably resilient native wildflower found across Australia, flourishing in woodlands and open landscapes. Its intricate, fringed petals reveal a fleeting beauty, with individual flowers often blooming for just a single day, reminding us of the preciousness of each moment and the unique beauty held within every life.
Beneath its fragile appearance lies an enduring strength. Adapted to the changing rhythms of Country, the Fringe Lily can withstand periods of drought and regenerate following bushfire, drawing upon the reserves held beneath the earth. Its underground tubers have also provided a source of nourishment, reflecting the deep relationships between plants, people and Country.
Chosen as a symbol of resilience, renewal and quiet determination, the Fringe Lily reflects the journeys of the women participating in NOVA's Resurgence Interwoven program. Like the flower, whose beauty emerges from a foundation of hidden strength, each woman brings her own experiences, capabilities and aspirations, continuing to grow and flourish through connection, creativity and shared learning.
Within a nurturing and supportive environment, the women have come together to develop new skills, strengthen friendships and discover opportunities for personal expression and growth. Their collective journey reminds us that resilience is not simply the ability to endure adversity, but also the capacity to embrace change, nurture possibility and find beauty in becoming.
The Fringe Lily celebrates the strength that is not always immediately visible, honouring the individuality of each woman and the collective care that allows confidence, connection and new beginnings to blossom.

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WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Resurgence Womens Group
Our healing, Term 2, 2025
Artists: Anne, Dani, Lisa, Noeline, Roxanne, Brittany, Alanie and Belinda
Cultural teachers: Cherie McLaren and Bonnie S
Welding: John Turier

Artist Statement
Our Healing marks the beginning of a collective journey of cultural resurgence, connection and renewal, created by the women of the Resurgence Women's Group during Term 2, 2025. Inspired by the enduring strength and cultural significance of the gum tree, this inaugural sculpture celebrates the relationships between Country, cultural knowledge, community and wellbeing.
For Aboriginal peoples, gum trees hold deep cultural significance, with their leaves used in smoking ceremonies for cleansing, healing and spiritual wellbeing. When placed upon a fire, the leaves release aromatic smoke and vapours, traditionally associated with purification, renewal and the restoration of balance. The gum tree also offers its gifts through the natural pigments held within its leaves and gumnuts, which can be extracted through eco-dyeing processes to create the earthy colours used in contemporary weaving practices. In this way, the tree becomes both a source of cultural knowledge and a material connection to Country, bringing together ancient practices and contemporary creative expression.

Funded by the Primary Health Network and led in partnership with Nova for Women and Children Newcastle, the project provided a culturally supportive space for women to develop new skills, strengthen relationships and explore the connections between creativity, culture and wellbeing. The process of creating together became as meaningful as the finished sculpture, offering opportunities for reflection, laughter, learning and the sharing of knowledge across generations.
Our Healing honours the cultural knowledge carried within Country and the strength found in community. As the first collaborative sculpture of the Resurgence Women's Group, it symbolises the foundations of a continuing journey, where healing is nurtured through connection, cultural practice and the recognition that, like the gum tree, our strength comes not only from what we can see above the surface, but from the roots that sustain us and the relationships that allow us to flourish.

2026 SOCIAL IMPACT

CULTURAL RESURGENCE EXHIBITION

@Newcastle Museum
October 23rd-November 22nd

Cultural Revitalisation Through Collaborative Art
Led by our Aboriginal team and guided by Elders and Cultural Knowledge Holders, our programs support schools and community groups to strengthen cultural understanding, navigate living off Country, and develop respectful connections with the Country on which they live, learn and work.

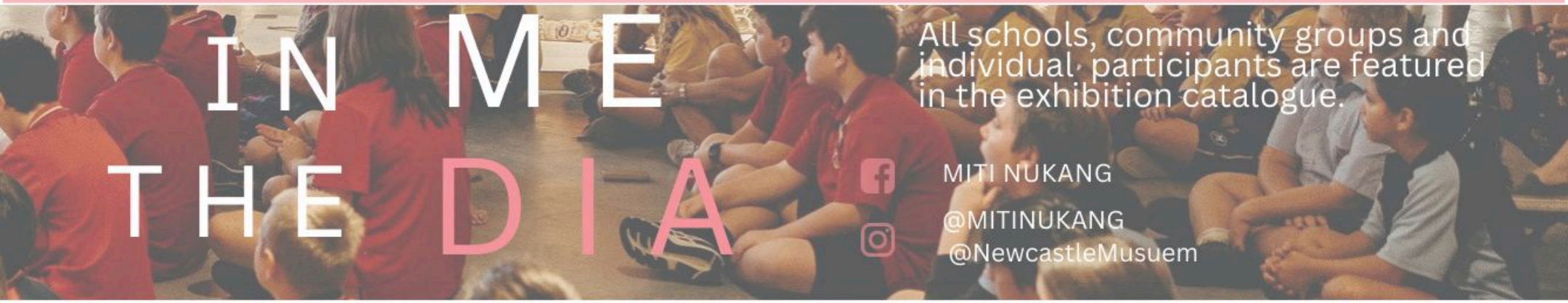
Drawing inspiration from traditional Aboriginal weaving and possum skin cloak-making practices, participants collaboratively create large-scale contemporary artworks that celebrate cultural knowledge, identity and connection. Each program is tailored to the objectives of the school or community group, creating meaningful opportunities for cultural learning, creative expression and collective achievement.

The completed artworks remain the property of the participating school or community group and are loaned to the Museum for public exhibition. Through this process, every participant becomes an exhibiting artist, contributing to a collective cultural legacy while sharing their stories, creativity and achievements with the broader community.

10
Featured programs

78
Eldersand community

230
Youth



IN THE MEDIA

All schools, community groups and individual participants are featured in the exhibition catalogue.

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Empowering Community

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