



## National Reconciliation Week

This week is Reconciliation Week, a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

To acknowledge this, Damascus College has planned activities for the College community throughout this week, to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To mark National Sorry Day, all Year 8 students along with indigenous students and families, gathered at Loreto College on Friday, May 24 with St Patrick's College students for a National Sorry Day ceremony.

The event commenced with a traditional smoking ceremony and a traditional message stick featured as part of the ceremony. This message stick symbolised the traditional practice of asking permission to enter another's lands, and how vital it is to acknowledge the country we walk upon.

This year we also offered an invitation and an opportunity for staff, parents, carers, friends and family to attend a performance of 'Facing Up'. This is a powerful and thought-provoking play written by Lynden Nicholls. The play revolves around the collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers and actors to unpack the Federal Government's treatment of Australia's Indigenous peoples throughout history. It is both an important and timely piece of writing. It was held on Wednesday, May 29 at the Wendouree Centre of Performing Arts at 7pm.

Students also participated in six Nallei Jerring sessions at the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC). Nallei-Jerring, meaning join and unite, aims to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people, by providing opportunities as a way of encouraging leadership within the local Aboriginal community. The Nallei Jerring Program offers practical and theory based activities designed to enhance young people with cultural knowledge, leadership, teamwork, resilience, communication, support networks and connection to community.

It is important that as a Ballarat Catholic education community, we come together to acknowledge and reflect on our role in the healing process for all First Nations people. We pray that the work of truth-telling and reconciliation will finally carry the day in Australia.

*Sarah Boswell - Leader of Marketing & Development*



