

Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Primary School

Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island

MURRUPURTIYANUWU CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Primary School (MCPS) is located at Wurrumiyanga, on Bathurst Island, about 70kms West of Darwin. Wurrumiyanga is an Indigenous community of 1600 people. They are one people, the Tiwi, divided into four skin groups. The Tiwi people are the traditional owners of the land on which the Wurrumiyanga Township is situated.

Wurrumiyanga was founded as a Catholic mission by Bishop Gsell in 1911 but the community is now run by the Tiwi Islands Shire Council. The Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart established the school in 1911, originally known as St. Therese's school, for girls only.

MCPS has a combined staff of fifty two, thirty of whom are Indigenous. Of these, there are approximately sixteen Indigenous staff who work as teachers, assistant teachers, literacy workers and ancillary staff. Current enrolment is over two hundred and fifty, catering for girls and boys from pre-school to year six.

The school's vision statement states that, "As Tiwi and Non Tiwi teachers in the school we work together with parents and community to provide the best environment to enable our Tiwi children to be educated in a Tiwi Catholic way. We strive to achieve this by working together to develop self esteem through two way learning that will lead to a strong self identity. We work together to develop in the student's respect that will lead to responsibility and a strong faith for the Tiwi people."

The use of English as a Second Language strategies is an important underpinning feature of all curriculum areas. The school conducts a formal Indigenous Languages and Cul-



ture program which is delivered by Indigenous teachers and community elders through the medium of the Tiwi language. There is also a Literature Production Centre for language resource production and this also serves as a cultural link between school and community.

The school boasts a number of new and refurbished classrooms, administration areas and facilities, including interactive whiteboards and a computer lab. It also offers a student nutrition program, providing breakfast, morning tea and lunch for all students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- ◆ Teachers work closely with an Indigenous assistant teacher who knows and understands the students, families and their relationships
- ◆ Both teachers and assistant teachers bring a range of skills in a spirit of active and mutual participation in the teaching and learning process
- ◆ 'Learning Together' sessions are on-site meetings where staff learn and plan in a cooperative group providing opportunities to develop teaching skills and to gain or share knowledge about cross-cultural situations and the school curriculum
- ◆ All students learn using English as a second or additional language. Teachers are provided with introductory and on-going support for teaching ESL
- ◆ Religious Education is a key priority for Indigenous people in Indigenous Catholic Community Schools
- ◆ Professional Learning is provided for teachers to deliver school designated approaches to literacy and numeracy

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- ◆ Tiwi Island Land Council
- ◆ Tiwi Island Shire Council
- ◆ Licensed club
- ◆ Museum
- ◆ Coffee shop
- ◆ 2 Take Away shops
- ◆ Excellent fishing and beautiful bush (permit required)
- ◆ Football oval and local football competition Tiwi Island Football League and the Tiwi Bombers

For more information

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