

Reconciliation South Australia Breakfast Speech
by Year 9 Mount Carmel College students, Danielle and Rachel

Danielle: "We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.

Rachel: We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.

Danielle: Good morning. My name is Danielle, a Ngarrindjeri person and a Year 9 student from Mount Carmel College, Rosewater. My friend Rachel, also a Year 9 student, is here with me today to share our learning and the work of our fellow students in the spirit of Reconciliation.

Rachel: We appreciate the opportunity to tell you about the 'Proud Race' project we have undertaken. It has helped us to grow in understanding of the need to walk and work together in the spirit of Reconciliation.

Danielle: In recent years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Mount Carmel College, Rosewater and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish School, Pennington have come together to take part in this exciting initiative, launched in 2012 during National Reconciliation Week.

Rachel: The aim of the project was to help schools to record and celebrate the stories of Indigenous Australians on life-size bollards. The bollards have since been shown in various venues throughout Australia. Our bollards were exhibited in the foyer of the Department of Education in Adelaide. We proudly wear the designs on our t-shirts this morning to celebrate National Reconciliation Week 2015.

Danielle: 'Proud Race' encourages us and our school communities to keep alive the spirit of the "I Feel Proud Today" campaign. This campaign celebrates the National Apology delivered by former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd on 13 February 2008. We were Year 2 students at the time of the National Apology and have since learnt of the words spoken during the apology:

Rachel: "...today we honour the indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing culture in human history."

Danielle: "For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written."

Rachel: "We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians."

Danielle: "A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions"

Rachel: "A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility."

Rachel: At Mount Carmel College we have been living the spirit of Reconciliation by 'changing it up' every day. We continually acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains upon which our school stands. We work with our local community members to deepen our understanding.

Danielle: To help us design and create the bollards, we worked with Aunty Josie Agius and Aboriginal artist, Brad Webb. We listened to their stories of country and culture which they generously shared with us. We learnt so much about our rich culture and the way we can be proud to live our culture today.

Rachel: Our bollards are based on Song Lines. Song Lines are Aboriginal walking trails, pilgrimage routes and trade routes. They were far more plentiful than non-Aboriginal people could imagine.

Danielle: In traditional Aboriginal society Song Lines criss-crossed the whole Australian landscape, linking important sites and locations. They were maintained by regular traffic use, burning off and clearing. These trails were also signposted by natural and man-made environment signs; these man-made signs usually being in the form of "Marker Trees."

Rachel: These were trees that had either been scarred in the process of canoe or artefact making, or had been tied together when young to grow in the form of an arch or ring. They were trees that naturally grew with a spiral grain. These 'spiral marker trees' occurred naturally, however they were only able to grow if they were on a Song Line.

Danielle: The bollards have been a very important way for our school community to walk and work together to learn and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contribution to Australian society and history.

Rachel: The Song Lines symbolised on our bollards reinforce the value of story and culture. They remind us at Mount Carmel College to continue to build a strong community through the Core Values of Relationship, Belonging, Excellence and Diversity.

Danielle: We continue to use the bollards in our school community when learning about Aboriginal culture to complement the learning that takes place every day.

Danielle: We are honoured that the stories we have shared have been chosen to communicate how we are walking and working together in the spirit of Reconciliation to "change it up" in 2015. We wear our t-shirts with pride."