

For immediate release
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MEDIA RELEASE

Building confidence and self-esteem: Girringun helps restore culture and tradition in Indigenous youth.

Presented by Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, the second National **CARING FOR COUNTRY NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE** (9-12 October) and **FESTIVAL** (13-14 October) is being held in **Cardwell, North Queensland**.

As part of the preparations for 'the biggest event Cardwell has ever seen,' traditional artists from the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation have sought assistance from 20 **Indigenous Tully State High School students to transform one side of the Community Hall into a vivid display of colour and traditional artwork.**

This project, facilitated by local artists Dena Leo and Ludi Geesu, is only one aspect of the Wishbone project, an initiative of the Department of Child Services that has been created to re-connect Indigenous youth with their cultural heritage.

"The true beauty of the Wishbone project is that it enables students to learn about their culture while utilising necessary educational skills, such as literacy and numeracy, at the same time," says Wishbone Facilitator Sonya Grant.

Students involved in the Wishbone project participate in a variety of projects that **integrate contemporary educational requirements with traditional Indigenous cultural skills.** In addition to the mural painting venture, participants have employed mathematical knowledge and procedures into traditional practices such as shield making.

"We've found that **kids who embrace their heritage are able to develop more confidence and self-esteem** than those who haven't been fortunate to understand their history," says Grant.

"**Kids are losing their cultural identity because as the elders die,** we are losing this vital traditional knowledge, it doesn't get passed on. Art is an important part of our culture, so we thought the mural painting would be a **great opportunity for us to teach the next generation,**" says Girringun Project Supervisor Dena Leo.

"It's been a fantastic achievement because the kids are not only learning, but the mural is something that will benefit the Cardwell community and, more importantly, will act as an inspiration for them to keep their culture alive."

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