



INDIGENOUS CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ACTION AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Despite two years of global isolation and lockdowns across Greater Sydney that hit pause on NAIDOC Week celebrations, Indigenous-owned-and-operated business Eather Group and Penrith Selective High School were still able to bring connection and culture to the lives of students.

Months of design and preparation came together during the recent two-week school holidays to revamp various spaces of the high school, including the creation of a Yarning Circle, which have been used for centuries by Aboriginal Australians to build respectful relationships and preserve cultural knowledge.

The design comes from the 2021 NAIDOC theme “Heal Country!” as a way to celebrate the cultural significance and ecological diversity of the land in the Nepean area.

“Penrith Selective High School is a richly multicultural school, and this space offers the students an opportunity to sit down together and connect, to listen deeply, learn from, and discover each other’s cultures,”

says Divinia Eather, Marketing Manager of Eather Group and Penrith Selective High School Alumna.



River rocks, coloured mulches, granite, sandstone, and native flora flow together and intertwine into one central meeting place.

Eather Group was established in 2010 to address the need for more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable solutions within the construction industry, and have been leaders in the development of a Circular Economy as the largest Indigenous waste-to-resource professionals in NSW.

From the consultation, planning and design, resourcing, execution, clean up & quality control, the project was completed start to finish by Indigenous businesses. Eather Group brought on five other Indigenous contractors to deliver this project, including their partners social traders certified Muru Mittigar, as well as Kangaroo Transport & Haulage. Yamari Ochre Signs, the Richmond franchisee of Fox Mowing, and Plate Events and Catering also contributed to the project. Even further, this project directly provided work for upwards of 12 Aboriginal people in a time of Sydney-wide job insecurity.



Principal Mark Long and Penrith Selective High School staff have long expressed a passion for supporting the growth and learning of the school's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and are impressed with the final product and what conversations and opportunities it opens up for the current and future students.

"We are incredibly proud to see this project come to fruition and are very grateful for the guidance and work led by Eather Group. To have a recent Alumna and young Indigenous woman return and be involved in the project at the school has been very special,"

Principal Mark Long says.

"Post the current learning from home period, we are excited about students returning to school to use the space for a range of purposes, and we will be commencing an art project in the area with Indigenous artists working alongside students."

Eather Group are excited about the potential to use this project as a blueprint for other interested schools, and are looking into more opportunities to contribute to the preservation of the region's culture and significance.

Both Penrith Selective High School and Eather Group are eager for students to return and enjoy this beautiful space. It seems for these students, isolation from distance learning will be completed by connection and conversation.