

Poetry in First Languages

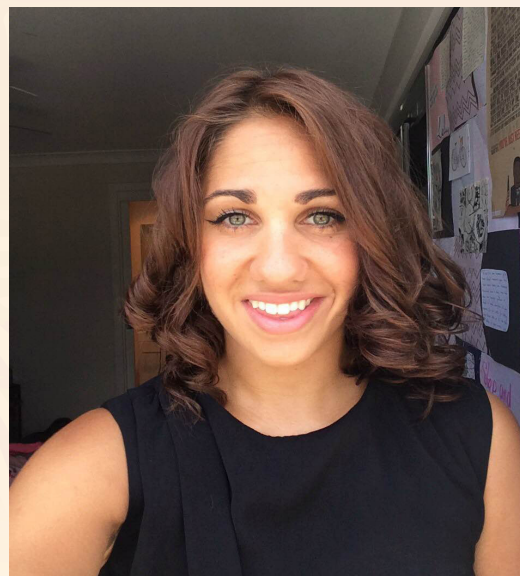
with Kirli Saunders and Jodi Edwards

Red Room Poetry

Red Room Poetry inspires students and teachers to create, perform and publish poetry. We enliven experiences with poetry by bringing contemporary poets into classrooms across Australia to run dynamic writing workshops that awaken imaginations and support creative opportunities.

Jodi Edwards

Jodi Edwards is a proud Yuin woman. Jodi is an Aboriginal Studies teacher, she has a Masters in Language Education, Aboriginal Languages (USYD) and a PHD in Traditional Aboriginal Pedagogies (UOW). She is the Founder of Warrandjah: Weaving the Past into the Future, where she provided Cultural Tours, Environmental tours, Aboriginal connectivity, Leadership programs, and Education support in the Illawarra Area.



Kirli Saunders

Kirli Saunders is a proud Gunai woman with ties to the Yuin, Gundungurra, Gadigal and Biripi people. Kirli is the Manager of Poetic Learning at Red Room Poetry. She was awarded ‘Worker of the Year 2017’ at the NAIDOC awards in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven region. Her first children’s picture book ‘The Incredible Freedom Machines’, illustrated by Matt Ottley is to be released in early 2018. Her second picture book ‘Our Dreaming’ will be released shortly after. Kirli’s work has been published in the Huffington Post Australia. She was poet in residence at Bundanon Trust for the New Shoots project in 2017. Kirli’s work has also been commissioned for Reconciliation Week Keep Cups and a range of Poetic Learning workshops at Red Room Poetry.

Connecting to Country: Group Poems with Waniora Public School and Wollongong Performing Arts High School

By Kiya, Rubie, Cliff, Jerara and Will

Nestled between the mountains and sea,
This beautiful place feels like home to me.
In the ocean where I swim,
I feel at one with the sea.
I love the bush, I feel proud of where I live.
I love see animals – sharks.
I like all animals, skate boarding,
sharks, penguins,
Playing minecraft.

By Eryn and Riley

I prefer to be in the bush
and to be more inland than on the coast.
I feel I have more of a connection to the inland
of Australia.
The sharp, cool air in the mountains in winter

By Ava, Zoe, Rubi and May

Ocean; swimming – I like the way the ocean
feels in my hair
I like the sounds the coast makes,
The breeze that comes from the coast on a
sunny day,
The sunshine on Dharawal country helps makes
the plants grow

By Zippy, Ruby, Taliesha and Lateisha

I love Dharawal country and feel connected be-
cause it reminds me of my home in the torres
strait.
I love the sea and all that fish that swim with
me.
I love looking at the beautiful colourful birds
And swimming in the big ocean.
I love the cold sea on hot days.

By Austin, Rickie and Sam

I love my connection to the land and how it
inspires me to create music
I love the outdoors
I like the ocean and how I can feel the connec-
tion to my ancestors whenever I'm there
My culture also opens my eyes to new kinds of
musical concepts, both melodic and rhythmic.
I'm so lucky to have been born into a culture
that I can derive from for my song writing.

Connecting to Country: Individual Dharawal Poems and English Translations

Dharawal Country

By Lateisha, Year 4

Magnificent, beautiful, amazing.
Ghadu sparkles like the sun and crashes like the storm.
The cold, wet, blue waves
Crashing on the
Shining, yellow sand and the green gundhu
And bushes swing in the lovely wind
Gundhu stands strong
Like soldiers at war.

Dharawal Country - English Translation

By Lateisha, Year 4

Magnificent, beautiful, amazing.
The sea sparkles like the sun and crashes like the storm.
The cold, wet, blue waves
Crashing on the
Shining, yellow sand and the green trees
And bushes swing in the lovely wind
Trees stand strong
Like soldiers at war.

Flow

By Austin Browne, Year 10

Brackish pallanjang flowing over coarse,
Immovable garabang.

Ngaa the gali-na,
Ngara the yangga-na.

Flow - English Translation

By Austin Browne, Year 10

Brackish saltwater flowing over coarse,
Immovable rock.

See the dance,
Hear the singing.

Connecting to Country: Individual Dharawal Poems and English Translations

I Can Hear

By Erin McGee, Year 9

I can ngara the ghadu yangga-na,
I can ngaa the wet garabang.

The bibara shelters the njaruwun
And all its creatures.

I Can Hear - English Translation

By Erin McGee, Year 9

I can hear the sea singing,
I can see the wet rock.

The mountain shelters the deep sea
And all its creatures.

The Bulli Mountains

By Cliff, Year 5

The homely bibara roots are strong,
Like the jaws of a garabang crocodile.

The bibara in Bulli are so massive
You get a warm welcome home after work

The beautiful trees on bibara
During a tropical storm
Swerve and sway
Like they're gali-na in the storm.

The Bulli Mountains - English Translation

By Cliff, Year 5

The homely mountain roots are strong,
Like the jaws of a rocky crocodile.

The mountains in Bulli are so massive
You get a warm welcome home after work

The beautiful trees on the mountain
During a tropical storm
Swerve and sway
Like they're dancing in the storm.

Connecting to Country: Dharawal Poems and English Translations

The Rushing Waterfall

By Will, Year 4

Ghadu, gundhu, ngadjung.
The waterfall runs like a river
Over garabang ledge.

Ngadjung sparkles and glistens
As it goes over the edge.
The waterfall talks to me like a friendly wave.

The Rushing Waterfall - English Translation

By Will, Year 4

Sea, trees, water.
The waterfall runs like a river
Over a rocky ledge.

The water sparkles and glistens
As it goes over the edge.
The waterfall talks to me like a friendly wave.

Where I Belong

By Rubie A

As I sit on my garabang,
I ngaa the bibara,
Ngara the ghadu.

When I wayagadi around,
There is gali-na and yangga-na.

This is where I Belong.

Where I Belong - English Translation

By Rubie A

As I sit on my rock,
I see the mountain,
Hear the sea.

When I look around,
There is dancing and singing.

This is where I Belong.

Connecting to Country: Individual Dharawal Poems and English Translations

Dharawal Earth

By Zoe Brown, Year 10

Swift, calm, glistening
Your njaruwun is rigid like the garabang-walui
underneath here.

Your rugged earth, connects us far and wide
Your njaruwun whispers
Gentle thoughts and bittersweet memories.

Dharawal Earth - English Translation

By Zoe Brown, Year 10

Swift, calm, glistening
Your ocean is rigid like the rocks
underneath here.

Your rugged earth, connects us far and wide
Your oceans whisper
Gentle thoughts and bittersweet memories.

Connecting to Country: Individual Poems

A Place to Call Home

By Kiya, Year 9

Nestled between the mountains and sea,
This beautiful land feels at home to me.

As your silky waves roll onto the sand,
They wash away the footprint of man.

I feel safe with my feet in your soil,
If I'm ever in strife or toil
The escarpment stands tall,
A protector to us all,
Lifting us up if ever we should fall.

I always know that wherever I roam,
I have a place that I can call home.

The Ocean

By Ruby, Year 6

Sunny, colourful and calm
The ocean refreshes you like a cool drink of
water
On a hot summers day.
The beautiful blue ocean
Sparkles and shines
In the sunlight.
The ocean is a happy friend,
Smiling at me

Cool, Peaceful, Connection

By Samantha, Year 10

The ocean is like a cool healing hug,
The soft yellow sun rises each morning to
brighten
Our days with warmth,
The ocean and sun combine
And dance
Like nobody is watching

My Land

By Rickie, Year 10

The earth we live on, healing us
Like the ocean waves
The soft sun rising
Above the ocean
In the mornings, there to calm our day
The bright sun
Stretches
Peaceful and calm warmth
Across our beautiful land

The Land Around Us

By Rickie Davis, Year 10

Wayagadi and ngara the land around us.

Connecting to Country: Individual Poems

Spirits in the Dark

By Austin B, Year 10

These hills are the ancestors of past.
These spirits are the songs, creation is our task.
When the legends take their physical form,
These are the places that shelter us from the storm.

From crimson sap of ancient trees,
To the cool flowing ocean and its beautiful soft breeze
The rugged mountains,
The sun that is home,
Here is the place that we call our own.

Leaves singing sweet melodies
Accompanied by the booming rhythm of sticks and bark
Smoke from the fire blowing up into the night sky,
Spirits dancing in the dark.

Peace

By Sam, Year 10

I wayagadi and ngara the njaruwun
Feeling peaceful and calm.

Sweetman's Creek

By Eryn, Year 9

The weather is warm and harsh,
Like the comforting and rough feeling
Of the dry gravel between my fingertips.

Your rigid and dense bushlands
Never sleep
As a symphony of cicadas sing into
The endless summer nights

The drying creeks
And common drought

Fighting to stay alive
Like the culture of my land

The Land We Live On

By Ruby, Year 9

Warm, breezy, beautiful.
These are the words to describe our country.
The ocean glitters like diamonds on a ring.
The wind weaves through the trees,
A peaceful song it sings.
The waves of the sea
Dance and roll towards me.
This is why I love Dharawal country.

Connecting to Country: Individual Poems

Dharawal Sea

By Ava-lilli, Year 9

Colourful, gentle, beautiful
The ocean is gentle, like the seaweed that flows
in it
Its glistening sea, is as bright as the sun's reflection
Its waves creep up on the sand,
Whispering
Soft lullabies

The Escarpment

By Riley, Year 9

The escarpment looms over us,
Just as our ancestor's legacy does

Your shape is geometric
A Picasso masterpiece

The river below cowers
Beneath the grandeur of the cliffs above.

Journey of Home

By Zipporah, Year 9

Welcoming, Adventurous, Hearty.
Your warm embrace is like an invite to the best
party.
I sing with the songlines of the first,
And acknowledge the past within this dirt.
The spontaneous breeze guides me
Towards what I know
Will be my fulfilling destiny.

Dharawal Country

By Taliesha, Year 4

When the big shiny sun hits the water
It's like a big yellow explosion
Your rugged calm trees
Make me feel at home
The big giant trees
Wave at me
When I look out the window.

Me and the Sea

By Rubie, Year 9

Gentle, glistening and beautiful.
Your glistening oceans
Are like diamonds in the sun
Within your waters
I want to spend hours of fun
The sun hits your gentle, turquoise waters
As they roll and crash
Your warriors protect the sea from harm
But I feel at one.

The Sea

By Riley Smith, Year 9

Bibara-a next to the sea,
Ghadu and njaruwun.
Ngara the ghadu
Lapping against the garabang
And ngaa it gali with the shore

Standing

By Aina P, Year 9

Standing on the bibara,
On top of garabang,
I can ngaa the njaruwun
And the ghadu waves
Gali-na in the pallanjang.
I can ngara the leaves and pallanjang sway-
ing
Yangga-na in perfect harmony.

Gali

By Maeve, Year 3

The wind changes as I gali alone
The sun sets and I yangga with the wind and
sea
I play with the funny shaped garabang
Near the bibara and the beach
I ngaa a big splash
It's a big blue whale

Do you?

By Zipporah, Year 9

Wayagadi, do you ngaa the gali-na?
Do you ngaa the pallanjang yangga-na?

I stand beneath the bibara and yanma
along the garabang
And ask the njaruwun to yangga with me
As I yanma through the ghadu.

When I'm guwihn, will you ngara me yangga-na?

Wayagadi

By Ruby P, Year 9

Wayagadi, I can ngaa the ghadu.
I can ngara the waves yangga-na.
I can smell the pallanjang
Wayagadi at the ghadu
Smashing up against the garabang

Connecting to Country: Turning Poems into Songs

Pallanjang

By Ruby, Austin, Kiya, Zippy and Cliff

Nestled between the mountains and the sea,
This beautiful land feels like home to me.

Ocean glitters like diamond on a ring,
A peaceful song the wind and trees sing.

The silky waves roll onto the sand,
Washing away the footprint of man.

I sing with the songlines of the first,
And acknowledge the past within this dirt.

Trees like giants tower over me,
Rocks from the mountains tumble into the sea.

The rugged mountains,
The sun that is home,
This is the place we call our own.