Leadership begins with Culture



Ganbina's Youth Leadership group wrapped up their Cairns tour not in a classroom, but with their feet in the sand, facing the ocean. Over five powerful days, they immersed themselves in deep cultural exchange and witnessed leadership in its truest form grounded, respectful, and real.

A beachside Welcome to Country ceremony led by Traditional Owners, where fire crackled and bare feet touched the earth. This moment of connection reminded every participant that leadership begins with humility, respect, and a profound connection to land and people.

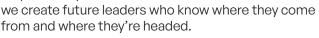
As we move through August, we reflect on these experiences not just as memories, but as guiding lessons. You could see the leaders of our future not only in what they said, but in how they showed up — through conversations, reflections, and the way they carried each other forward.

The Power of cultural connection

At Ganbina, we believe that keeping young people connected to culture is not only important it's transformational. When young people are grounded in their culture, they walk through life with purpose, confidence and pride. Culture is more than tradition, it's a living, breathing part of identity that fosters belonging and resilience in the face of adversity.

This year's Cairns Leadership Tour highlighted the incredible power of cultural connection. From ancient Dreamtime stories shared at Mossman Gorge to conversations with inspiring Indigenous leaders at Balkanu, our students were reminded that their heritage is a source of strength and wisdom.

In a world that can often disconnect us from who we are, we need more opportunities like this, where young people are not only seen but heard, honoured, and given space to lead. It's not just about looking back; it's about carrying culture forward with pride and responsibility. That's how





Exchange that builds bridges

Culture is a bridge. The Cairns Youth Leadership Tour proved that when young people engage in cultural exchange, they open their minds, deepen their empathy, and strengthen their leadership capacity. These experiences create space for reflection, respect and responsibility. They allow young people to connect not only with their own heritage, but with others in meaningful and transformative ways.

Whether students were learning from a Marine Biologist about reef conservation or sipping bush tea after a Dreamtime Walk, each moment was an invitation to see culture not as history but as living story. Our role is to ensure these stories continue to be shared, owned and built upon by our next generation.

Cultural exchange fosters pride, resilience and leadership. It reminds our young people that their roots matter, and that their voices can shape the future. By embedding these values into our leadership program, we're ensuring the impact of Cairns lasts far beyond the trip, it

becomes a part of who our students are and how they lead.

Jean Miller-Fowler, General Manager



What Leadership Looked Like

Exploring Fitzroy Island with marine biologists and traditional owners

snorkelling, reef ecology and learning about environmental impact and our responsibility to care for country

Meeting with Balkanu

hearing firsthand how leadership, reform and community strength walk hand in hand

Learning through ceremony at Mossman Gorge

bush tea and damper, Dreamtime stories, guided walks and cultural teachings from Elders

Understanding conservation at Hartley's Crocodile Adventures

Experiencing Aboriginal identity through art at Citizens Gateway and in community spaces

Fitzroy Island was like a dream come true, wish we stayed longer.

66 Mossman Gorge is
AMAZING. Have as
much fun as possible.

66 Wish there was more than 5 days as it was wonderful and an amazing escape from winter.

The reef tour and cultural guiding/
walks were Very
good to see and learn about.

The beach session was very relaxing and a good way to end the trip.

66 It was really interesting learning about Baulkanu and their progress with land conservation.

This trip was a very good experience as I was more closer with my culture than I was before along with understanding and learning about the Indigenous people from Cairns.

Going to Fitzroy
Island Was a really
good experience,
especially being able
to see the reef, fish and
a turtle while on the
glass bottom boat and
snorkeling.



Experiences are not just memories, they are guiding lessons



To empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Goulburn Valley region aged between 5 - 25 years to reach their full individual potential through self-determination and meaningful engagement in education, training, enterprise and employment programs. We hope to also migrate these programs and key learnings to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for implementation on a wider scale.



Our Values

EQUITY

We support and empower our young people to achieve cultural, economic and social equality based on their individual needs.



CULTURE



We demonstrate a deep respect for our culture and work to embed it into our programs.

INTEGRITY

We act in honesty, fairness and trustworthiness. We consistently work to a high-level moral code and take responsibility for our actions. "Say what we mean, mean what we say."



PROFESSIONAL



We commit to a high standard of work and conduct ourselves in a professional manner. We work to continually improve our knowledge and skills and cultivate professionalism in our program participants.

FAMILY

We value the role family plays in the success of our young people and respect their deep connections.



COMMITMENT



We are dedicated to supporting our young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve success and work to instil in the value of commitment.

PASSION

We're passionate about what we do, why we do it and who we do it with.



RESPECT



We treat everyone with dignity and respect through our word and actions.

NON-PARTISAN

We aim to remain neutral, impartial and carry out business without bias.



Some things for us all to reflect on

The importance of listening to stories, to land, to Elders and leading with that wisdom

a leadership milestone

How a simple moment

on the beach turned into

How carrying culture forward makes for stronger, more grounded leaders

Why cultural protocol deepens responsibility

On the radar

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Friday 19th Primary Accelerated Learning

Program Celebration

Sunday 21st - 26th Youth Leadership Program

New Zealand trip

Wednesday 24th Youth Achievement Awards
Applications Open

October

Friday 17th Youth Achievement Awards

Applications Close

Thursday 23rd - 24th Youth Achievement Awards
Winners Notified

Tuesday 28th - 29th Youth Achievement Awards

Photos

November

Friday 14th Youth Achievement Awards

Dinner Presentation

Canbina is proud to stand beside young people who now know that to lead, you must first connect. And that true leadership begins not with words, but with ceremony, Country and community.

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