

Project Overview.

The Mungo Youth Project (MYP) emerged as a core part of the 2006 Mungo Festival, which celebrated 25 years of World Heritage listing and over 45,000 years of indigenous culture in the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area.

The MYP is a biennial, mentored, research in schools program that culminates in a three- day conference hosted by the Tribal Elder communities (the Paakantji, Ngyiampaa and Mutthi Mutthi Aboriginal Tribal Groups) within the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area.

With a focus on Australia's First peoples, the project has been designed with close links to the National Curriculum and in particular History, Geography and Science. An essential aspect of the program is to stress the ongoing Aboriginal connection with the landscape.

The Mungo Youth Project brings together traditional Aboriginal knowledge and understandings with science and archaeology to focus on '*a deeper understanding of present-day events as well as the enduring significance of earlier ones.*' *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*

The project employs the *Kids teaching Kids* model, where students learn so as to teach in an interactive way with other learners. Student groups study a topic and prepare a 40-minute presentation to engage and educate their peers. At the conference students teach one another about their topic and participate in exploration and activities led by Elders from the traditional tribal groups, Discovery Rangers, scientists and pastoralists in this spectacular and culturally rich World Heritage area.

The Mungo Youth Project provides students with skills in knowledge development, cultural and environmental education and importantly builds optimism and capability. It aims for a cultural change in the way we understand history and use and understand our natural environment whilst developing public speaking capabilities to communicate ideas in many different forms.

Critically the project is based on partnerships: students partner with Elders, Traditional Owners, Discovery Rangers, archaeologists, scientists, landholders, educators and National Parks staff as their mentors *before, during and after* the conference.

Occurring in a purpose built, high-tech tented village within the World Heritage area, the camp is located adjacent to an area excavated by archaeologist Isabel McBryde containing one of Australia's earliest dated freshwater middens (Bowler 1998). More recently members of the Paakantji, Ngyiampaa and Mutthi Mutthi Aboriginal Tribal Groups, with Shawcross and Westaway, excavated the area.

The 2011 conference was beamed live and interactive into schools in Alaska USA
<http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2011/10/26/3348576.htm>

The 2014 conference, to be held in March, will also be interactive with schools across Australia and internationally.