

Pinemont Preschool

'We Walk as One'

Wurundjeri People have walked this land since the beginning of time. Our footsteps are imprinted in the sand and dirt and our spirit is in the trees – grounded in the earth and deep in the roots. We are custodians of this beautiful piece of Country and are Children of the Dreamtime.

Our Creator Spirit travels in the form of the Wedgetail Eagle. His name is Bunjil and he is a great and mighty bird. When Bunjil finished creating the rivers and mountains and valleys and sea – he created man. He used the clay of the earth to mould our bodies and took the string from the stringy bark tree and used it for our hair.

Bunjil was tired after creating such beautiful Country. He asked Waa the Crow; the Keeper of Wind and Water to open up his bag of wind to create a whirly wind to carry Bunjil up to the sky so he could rest. Waa did as he was asked but the bag did not let enough wind out, so Bunjil asked if he could open it more.

Waa opened his bag wider, and the wind whirled and whirled around creating such a powerful whirley wind. Bunjil was lifted into the sky along with his wife and children where they became the beautiful stars, they are still there today staring down to Country making sure everyone respects the land and waterways.

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The traditional language group for the Wurundjeri People is 'Woi-Wurrung'. In Woi-Wurrung language, the word Wurundjeri is broken into two parts. The first part 'Wurun' means the 'manna gumtree'. The second part – 'djeri' means the white grub that lives in the tree. Gum leaves and witchetty grubs represent the Wurundjeri Peoples on the totem poles. This is a sign of respect for the ancestors who once walked this Country.

The preschool's Group Totems are represented on the poles acknowledging the children who have been a part of the Pinemont Family and will continue to be – the Joeys, Koalas and Possums. Their animal tracks stretch across the totem poles telling of their significant presence on Country and at the preschool. The Rainbow Serpent features on the backs of each of the poles referencing the colour of his body spreading colour to the land and waterways and beautiful creatures. The children's handprints signify all the colours of his long and colourful body.

The large Gathering Circle on the pathway represents the Meeting Place that is Pinemont Preschool. This is where the children and families gather to learn from their 'Elders' (teachers) to be prepared for their learning journey in life. Each child is represented by the large 'U' shapes that encircle the Meeting Place. Each child faces one another in equality – everyone treats one another with respect and kindness, this is the way of our people.

Around the Gathering Circle are five sets of handprints. These handprints represent the Pinemont Preschool 'Elders', the Educators, the Guardians. These special people 'have their arms around' the children protecting them with their life knowledge, they are guiding the children on their journey tracks to school and beyond, they will always welcome them back into their Community.

Simone Thomson

Wurundjeri / Yorta-Yorta