

# WAKAKIRRI

## NATIONAL STORY-DANCE FESTIVAL

# BUILDING RESILIENCE AND BELONGING: LILLI PILLI'S JOURNEY WITH WAKAKIRRI

“At Lilli Pilli Public School, our experience with Wakakirri has been transformative, serving as a vital component of our well-being program and our class formations for 2024.

Over the past two years, we have implemented the Resilience Project - a comprehensive project focused on resilience, gratitude, and empathy, which has yielded remarkable results among our students.

Our work on resilience is starting to equip children with the skills to navigate challenges and develop a growth mindset that extends beyond the classroom. Through engaging activities, we've seen students develop a deeper sense of empathy, allowing them to connect with their peers on a more meaningful level. This emphasis on empathy aligns beautifully with the collaborative spirit of Wakakirri and our story - 'Longing for belonging'. The gratitude our students express through their participation in Wakakirri is palpable.

In our work with The Resilience Project, students work on developing an understanding of what gratitude is and how to show it everyday. Research has shown that regularly practicing gratitude can improve mood, reduce stress and increase overall life satisfaction. It promotes optimism and positive thinking, which in turn can enhance our mental resilience and coping mechanisms.

We have had students perform on a stage for the very first time. They not only appreciate the opportunity to perform but also demonstrate immense gratitude for the collective experience with their classmates and teachers. This sense of community and appreciation has been mirrored by our parents, who have been incredibly supportive and grateful for the enriching experiences provided by this program.

In forming classes with Wakakirri in mind, we've intentionally included our creative thinkers and those who may not have had prior performance experience. Every child has had the chance to participate. Wakakirri has truly helped to foster resilience, gratitude, and empathy, allowing our students to thrive both individually and as a community”.

**Jane Shepherd**  
School Principal  
Lilli Pilli Public School, NSW

