

Water storage and art come together at Townsville Kindy

An award-winning Townsville kindergarten is unveiling a water tank with a difference which pays tribute to local indigenous culture.

C&K's commitment to sustainable practice is especially important in Townsville where water restrictions have become normal practice and so all C&K kindergartens have water tanks installed.

C&K Weir Community Kindy Director Belinda Luther and her staff decided that as the tank was located at the front of the building, it provided a perfect opportunity to both brighten it up and provide a way of highlighting that the kindy is a culturally-safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the community.

So the kindy commissioned local indigenous artist Greg Locke to turn the water tank into an artwork and Belinda says it's now a big talking point with families of the kindy and the local community.

Greg Locke and his partner in art, James Mitchell designed and painted the tank over a period of three weeks with the design incorporating local flora and fauna surrounding the kindergarten site. Each animal on the water tank represents the members of the kindergarten community - the children, the educators and the wider community.

Belinda says everyone enjoyed watching as each animal took shape on the tank.

"There was lots of excitement each day to see where Greg and James were up to and what they were planning next and throughout the day the children would sit and watch as the artists painted, asking lots of questions and having a yarn.

"While yarning the children have learnt about their local animals and were introduced to some of the local languages of our area. The partnership with Greg and James will continue as the C&K Weir Kindergarten family has already started the design process for a number of other spaces and surfaces of the kindergarten."

The event to be held on Sunday 8 October will begin with a *Welcome to Country*, followed by a smoking ceremony, music and local dancers. The tank will be officially unveiled by C&K General Manager Children's Services Kathryn Woods who is travelling from Brisbane to Townsville specially for the event.

There will also be an exhibition of children's artwork and a silent auction at the event. Greg and James have kindly donated a painted coffee table valued at \$800 which will be a prize in the kindergarten's "guess how many dots are on the water tank" competition.

C&K Weir Kindy received the top award at this year's Excellence & Innovation Awards in Brisbane in June.

The kindy was also recognised for the work it does in Inclusive Practice. Belinda Luther and her team have built a reputation in Townsville for the unique program at the kindy and for working closely with families to ensure every child reaches their potential.