

**'Fenced' explores the complexities and comforts that divide people, from the immediate neighbours in our community, to our neighbours across borders and expanding further to our neighbours across the seas. As we become more familiar with stepping over each boundary we learn more about ourselves. Through the use of puppets we feel safe to explore our differences and personal fears. We learn to take risks, seek understanding and communicate with others. We take action to make gateways through fences, our self-identity strengthens and relationships develop.**

Fenced - What divides us?

The project concept was born from a conversation between prep kids in the playground who began talking to the Cambodian seasonal grape pickers working just 'over the fence'. The older students were quick to jump in and say, "you're not allowed to talk to them, you don't know them." Then a little girl replied, "yes I can, I know the man on the tractor, he's the owner and he's my friend." She had a connection, she had a freedom to communicate and a sense of strength and pride in her own self because she knew her neighbours. We are challenged in our culture to step out and connect because we are master fence builders.

This project aims to empower students to focus on their identity, acknowledging personal fears in making friendships with new people, growing emotionally and gaining knowledge of our own culture and cultures around the world, specifically with our neighbouring Asian countries. This project will facilitate powerful communication channels around difference, acceptance and cultural diversity. Artist, Angie MacMillan will work with all levels from F-6 to design, make and explore the possibilities of puppets. Firstly by making simple puppets that reflect our relationships with family and our community. Then the students will explore puppets that communicate some of the divides across the borders of Australia. Finally, Angie will guide puppet making from various arts traditions from across the world. These puppets will have a voice of their own, speaking from their past and exposing some of the differences and challenges they face, the things they are grateful for and their hopes and dreams for the future. Throughout this the complexities of the discussions, puppet making skills and the relationship with the artist will evolve. A final production in the Town's Community Hall will empower the students to have a voice for understanding and communication. It will be a celebration of puppet making, performance and personal growth.

Angie MacMillan brings the joy of music, movement, art and play to people of all ages. She has an impressive resource of skills across a range of fields including mental health recovery and well-being, community rehabilitation and therapeutic arts in a range of facilities'. Angie regularly performs vocals, ukulele, music and movement and story telling using puppets. Angie holds workshops for the community and has recently self published a children's picture story-book and accompanying CD which she performs to kindergartens and schools. Angie has

recently launched a new venture, which is called InKahootz, which is a puppet making and exploration workshop program. Angie's performing arts incorporates social and emotional learning and her experience using puppets for story telling, body-voice connection and for play and well-being will ensure dynamic and powerful workshops for both students, teachers and parents. Angie's experience in working with children with mental health difficulties aligns with the schools vision to be a 'light house' for mental health. Angie's extensive knowledge of other cultures and art traditions from her world travels provides first hand story telling and rich understandings of countries abroad. Angie has expert knowledge in puppet making, with training from the London school of Puppetry in both 2013 and 2015. Angie has a strong passion for letting people be expressive and creative, she promotes collaborative script creation and enjoys improvisation and exploration. This is extremely important when working with students so that they can play an active role by offering ideas, giving and receiving feedback and learning to value themselves as members of a collaborative team.

This project will be a unit of study that is integrated into all aspects of the school curriculum. This Arts project 'fenced' draws from many sources in the curriculum. The school literacy program will focus on providing rich texts that give students a deeper understanding into communities, change communication, personal and interpersonal development. Civics and Citizenship will also be studied alongside humanities to give the students a broad understanding of where some of the stories and puppets that they will be making come from.