

Artworks stimulate students' creative flair



Bicycle network: Dylan, Miles, Jack and Matt demonstrate using bike wheels and rope how communities are connected to each other. Pictures: Gary Sissons



Ponder the Pelican perches on a wall created by Declan and other Western Port Secondary College students. Picture: Gary Sissons



Flinders the Scarecrow shows that gardens provide food, shelter and beauty. Time spent in the garden is never time wasted, according to Jackson, Matt and Simone. Pictures: Gary Sissons

WESTERN Port Secondary College may be the first school in Australia to have a sculpture park in its grounds, assistant principal Hannah Lewis believes.

It came about after year 8 students visited McClelland Sculpture Park earlier this year to explore the park and ponder why creativity was important, as well as the role of the artist in society.

"Inspired and challenged by the sculptures they came away with ideas for setting up their own sculpture park, modelled on McClelland, to complement student-created sculptures in its grounds," Ms Lewis said.

Students from the year 8 Young Entrepreneurs Stream set about curating a roving 'pop-up' mini exhibition of paper sculptures they had created as a prototype for the real thing. The 'pop-up' sculptures were judged by staff and students on their creativity and awarded prizes.

School groups were then invited to enter works in the inaugural Western Port Secondary Sculpture Prize, with many creative designs and sculptures accepted.

Indigenous students and friends worked with Baluk Arts to create Bunjil's Nest for a Learning Stones garden set within bush tucker gardens.

"We want all students in our school to be nurtured and have the opportunity to develop and grow," Ms Lewis said. "The Learning Stones garden is a place to find solace, dream and play. It is a place where we acknowledge and honour Indigenous culture, history and heritage."

Hands-On Learning students rendered a wall at the front of the college and created Ponder the Pelican to perch on top to greet visitors.

Year 8 students have been welding and using angle grinders to make giant spider webs to hang between trees made of metal rods. The spider web represents nature.

Flinders the Scarecrow was created for the Hinterland Scarecrow competition.

"We want people to think that a garden is more than just a garden: it provides food, shelter and beauty, and time spent in the garden is never time wasted, but time well spent," Ms Lewis said.

The creators of The Birdcage did not want it to be a traditional birdcage. They wanted it to be a cage that birds could easily get and in and out of, rather than it being a jail. Butterflies in the cage represent joyfulness. Bright colours create a sense of safety.

The college's creative enterprises aim to connect students to the broader community. A giant spiral sculpture on the bike shed wall is labelled Connections. "We are all part of a network of communities and groups that are interconnected and reliant on each other in many ways," Ms Lewis said. "Groups are represented by the bike wheels and the rope that connects them."

Western Port Secondary College has invited the public to a market, 4-6pm, Thursday 17 November, and to tour the sculpture park.

The winner of the 2016 sculpture prize and people's choice award will be announced at the opening of the VCE art exhibition later in the evening. Those attending are asked to vote for their favourite sculpture.