

# Resurgence: Possum

Aboriginal regional public art project



# Connecting people to our rich Aboriginal culture.

## Welcome

Thank you for your enquiry about our Possum Skin program, we trust you will find this proposal informative and to your specifications.

To date we have had a number of schools and community organisations participate in these projects throughout the Hunter region including:

- The Awabakal Elders
- Newcastle High School
- Warners bay High School
- Yerin Eleanor Duncan
- Muswellbrook High School
- Singleton High School
- Mindaribba LALC
- Rutherford Technology High School
- Greta Public School
- East Maitland Public School
- Uniting Adamstown Pre-School

These works in the Cultural Resurgence exhibition at Newcastle Museum (2020), Maitland Regional Art Gallery (2022) and the cloaks were also showcased on national television program, Better Homes and Gardens.



## Overview

Starting with an armband and a 'contract of respect' Speaking in Colour will step through the process of making a Possum Skin Cloak while teaching the cultural significance and knowledge surrounding these practices.

## Format

We recommend for a community or youth organisations to have a five day program, this allows cultural immersion and the time and creative space to create the work.

For schools we find a full day is too much for the youth and recommend 10 half days or five full days spread over a few weeks. Some schools have opted for a Sista speak program with girls and parents in conjunctions with a unit of work for a particular stage or class works well. Community organisations often have a target group.

Each project is approached differently, depending on the group of participants, the school/ community culture even the goals set by the project coordinator. Therefore, the outcomes vary from project to project.

# Cost breakdown and outcomes.

## Possum pelts

\$1200 - Teenage sized cloak or  
\$2400 - Adult sized cloak

## Other materials

\$599 - Possum skin Cloaks: Aboriginal education kit

\$300 - Materials and equipment (burners, twine, resin and ochre) Program:

\$10,000 - Program delivery

\$5800 TPL - (40 staff @ \$145 each includes t-shirt) and \$145 pp for extra staff Invited to participate in a Regional Art exhibition (all costs covered by our corporate partnerships)

Interim report - provided at the conclusion of the program with the completed body of work. Evidencing student and teacher program and TPL engagement and possible impact.

Final report: provided after the exhibition reporting on all aspects such as advocacy, attendance and engagement.

*Total: \$17,899 for a teenage sized cloak 16 pelts*

*Total: \$19,099 for an adult sized cloak*

Travel 50kms outside Newcastle CBD incurs additional costs. (50% paid at the start and 50% on the completion of the project)



## Outcomes

- A possum cloak the school or organisation gets to keep.
- The possum Skin Cloaks: Aboriginal education kit you have purchased. An artist in residence experience for the staff and participants.
- A show case item for NAIDOC week.
- Professional development for your teachers or staff involved. (Additional cost) Opportunity to involve local community in a school-based project.
- Provision of cultural opportunities for your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be involved in.
- Opportunity to take part in a professional art exhibition.

Depending on the group, what is created is often different. Ranging from an arm band to an adult sized Possum Skin Cloak.

Please note possum projects are created in consultation with my Elders and mentor senior cloak maker and mentor Aunty Vicki Couzens.



# Sample timeline.

## Week 1: Introductions

- The historical and cultural context of Possum Skin Cloak
- Explain contract of respect
- Making arm bands

## Week 2:

- Create contract of respect
- Finish arm bands
- Aboriginal art lesson
- How to use a burner

## Week 3

- Contract of respect
- Finish arm bands
- Lay out pelts in order

## Week 4

- Complete contract of respect
- Start cutting and sewing the cloak

## Week 5

- Start to record the story and discuss
- Design, cut, sew

## Week 6

- Design, cut, sew



### Week 7

- Design and sew

### Week 8

- Design and sew

### Week 9

- Burning the design onto the cloak

### Week 10

- Burning the design onto the cloak





[contact@speakingincolour.com.au](mailto:contact@speakingincolour.com.au)  
1300 346 064

565 Glebe Road, Adamstown NSW 2289  
[speakingincolour.com.au](http://speakingincolour.com.au)

ABN 90614 399 825

**speaking  
in  
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