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Incorporating cultural awareness and protocol within the school and local community
Canungra State School is situated on the banks of the Canungra Creek, which is within the Wangerriburra country, traditional custodians of the land. The school has undertaken ongoing creek restoration works focusing on rehabilitation of the existing ecosystem.

The creek ecosystem is of great importance to the school and the local community. It’s cultural significance is the catalyst for this project—The Canungra Creek Wangerriburra Culture Trail.

The students, parents, staff and Aboriginal people are committed to embedding culture within the school and the wider community.

Existing native vegetation and revegetation works form the basis for the interpretive trail. Wangerriburra elders have assisted in the provision of the key cultural information for the project.

The Canungra Creek Wangerriburra Culture Trail will provide an invaluable resource that will serve to strengthen the aim of youth working together to protect, repair and restore the environment and cultural ties. This awareness will have a positive flow-on effect for local indigenous children and families attending the school.

1. Paperbark: The paperbark tree is like the bush chemist. The bark can be stripped off and used for many purposes like: as a plate for eating your food; as a bandage for a cut; wrapping up fish and other foods and cooking them over the coals of a fire; roofing and bedding for a shelter. The leaves can be crushed up in your hand and inhaled to relieve coughs and colds, and applied as a mild antiseptic for sores and cuts.

Early Europeans dipped the flowers in hot water creating a mild tea. This is how the tree got the name Tea-Tree.

2. Mat Rush: The base of the leaves can be removed and chewed. They taste like fresh peas. The leaves can be split and woven into baskets.

3. Black Wattle: The wood from this tree is very strong. The tree roots and branches can be cut out and removed to make boomerangs and other utensils. The root’s natural curves provide the strength to the boomerang.

4. Native Ginger: Native Ginger is a very versatile plant for Aboriginal people. The flesh from the blue fruit are eaten, so too the roots, which taste of ginger. The large leaves are thatched and used to make shelters, and to also wrap food for cooking.

5. Lilly Pilly: The berries from this shrub can be eaten fresh and are very tasty. They can also be used to make a very sweet jam.

6. Hoop Pine: The Hoop Pine can often be mistaken for the Bunya Pine (Arucaria bidwillii) or Buan (boo-unyee). The bunya pine is a favoured food. The bunya pine occurs in large numbers in the Blackall Ranges and the Bunya Mountains in Southeast Queensland. Historically, every 3 years many Aboriginal groups from far and wide, including the Wangerriburra, walked to the Blackall Mountains or Bunya Mountains to feast on these nuts. These festivals were some of the largest social gatherings of Aboriginal people in Australia. To gather the nuts Aboriginal people would cut toe-hold marks in the tree and use a vine held between their toes and wrapped behind their back to climb the tree. The nuts can be eaten raw, boiled, or roasted. They are high in starchy energy and taste a little like potatoes.

7. Sandpaper Fig: The karung-gum leaf is used like sandpaper to make a smooth finish to spears, boomerangs and other wooden utensils. The fruits are also edible when fully ripe and the skin has been removed.

8. Jackey’s Rest—Canungra Creek: Many animals that live in the creek are hunted by Wangerriburra people and other Aboriginal groups in the region. Some of these animals include:

- freshwater fish like the catfish (mulunyumm) and cod (togo)
- yabby
- eel (jarun)
- turtle (pingin).

Fish and other animals are caught using string nets made from vines, hooks made from bone, and stone and timber fish traps built in the river. Fish can also be stunned by throwing crushed up leaves of the soap tree (Alphitonia excelsa) into shallow pools in the creek. The leaves remove the oxygen from the water stunning the fish making them easier to catch. Water birds like swampfens and ducks are also hunted along rivers, creeks and billabongs using boomerangs or by swimming under the water and drowning them.