



Leisa Simmons with one of her pieces, inspired by stories of the stolen generation, it depicts a woman kneeling down and crying, with her bloodshot eyes reflected in her fallen tears.

Comfort in her art

ILLNESS lead a Chatham High School year 10 student to realise her artistic talents and now she'll be exhibiting her works, just a couple of weeks after she began creating them.

Leisa Simmons has had two recent bouts of Bell's Palsy, that have left one side of her face and torso paralysed, however since she first came down with the illness she has been able to find

comfort in drawing and painting.

Leisa says that art has had a calming effect on her since she's been ill and has allowed her to express herself.

"I've always liked to draw but I never thought seriously about it," she says.

"When I became sick the artworks just started flowing out of me and my aunty decided to take me along to Gangga Marrang to show them my work."

Gangga Marrang is Taree's newest art experience and will open its doors next Friday.

Amanda Bicknell said they were more than happy to include Leisa in their opening exhibit and expect to see a lot more of her.

"She's obviously very naturally talented," says Amanda.

Gangga Marrang is an Aboriginal Gallery and Cultural Centre and was the perfect place for Leisa to showcase her cultur-

ally significant artworks.

"It's been easy for me to find inspiration for my paintings and drawings," says Leisa.

"I have had dreams about all of them and then I wake up and put them together."

Leisa is proud to be a representative for Chatham High School and hopes that her achievements inspire other young artists in the community.