



Aboriginal dancers from Taree Public's NAIDOC celebrations. From left: Yah Kent, Christopher Grant, Michael Ritchie, Zac Gibson, Michael Slater, Latrell Mitchell and Logan Simms.

NAIDOC celebrations

Taree Public

TAREE Public School's NAIDOC (National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee) week celebration was an extravaganza of activity with children and staff from Moorland, Cooperook and Lansdowne public schools invited to attend.

The day began with a special assembly that saw a welcome to country in both Ghatung and English. Aboriginal dancers entertained the audience with a variety of dances with brilliant didgeridoo accompaniment and the Lansdowne school choir performed songs with reconciliatory messages including Join Hands across Australia.

The assembly also saw a moment of deep significance with the presentation of the inaugural Faith Saunders educational award that recognised outstanding student achievement. Faith's grandson Jaye Davis, who now works for the Department of Education as an aboriginal community engagement officer, presented the award and spoke with great warmth of his grandmother.

"My grandfather Horace and my grandmother Faith were two of the most respected elders of the Biripi people.

"My nan Faith was a monumental figure in education in this area. She was the first aboriginal education officer this area had ever seen and she cared so much for her children and

grandchildren and children from our community."

Chatham High

NAIDOC Week means a lot to the Chatham High students as it reflects on their cultural history and the way things have changed today. This program helps students acknowledge and recognise the values of indigenous culture.

Students went around in groups to join in different activities run by other students as part of NAIDOC celebrations.

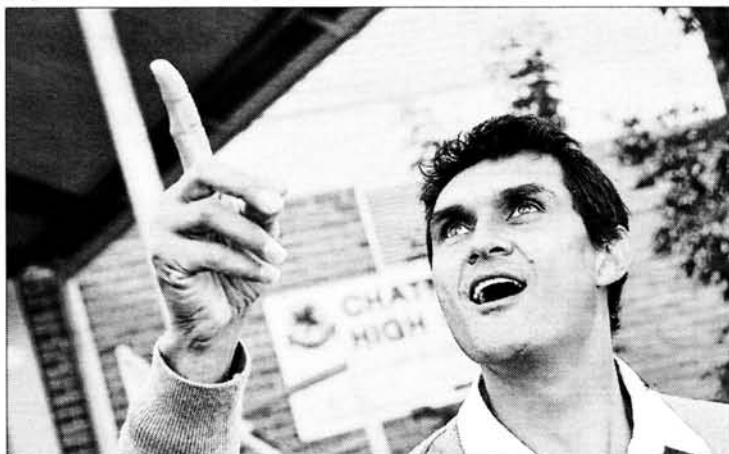
Indigenous dances and performances which featured students were among the day's celebrations, as well as a speech by Andrew Saunders.

There were activities where students had to work together in sport games whilst coached by other students. A variety of indigenous food was prepared

which to the teachers' surprise, most students enjoyed immensely. The food included kangaroo meat, cheese damper and caramelised onions.



Jessica Maher, Shae Glover and Abbey Gorton tucked into some damper.



Andrew Saunders was a guest speaker at Chatham High for NAIDOC week.