

“Flight”

By

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Merriwa Primary School

Merriwa, Western Australia

A Per Cent for Art Project



The establishment of a new school is often part of a much greater change in the surrounding environment. The majestic Tuart trees that mark the entrance to Merriwa Primary School provide a link to the area's natural history and are home to generations of kookaburras that now form the school's logo.

The artwork describes a journey from bushland to sea providing a bird's eye view of the changing landscape. Animal species, both native and domestic, represent the unfolding of the journey from east to west.

The imagined pathway which the elements create can be seen as a river or stream. It weaves its way through the school site appearing at intervals along a meandering route.

It is at the entrance to the school that one gets the first hint of the Merriwa artwork. Located in the pavement on the approach to the administration, the school logo combines elements of the kookaburra and the tuart trees that are such a dominant feature of the surrounding area.

Moving through courtyards and buildings, the twelve elements of the work are revealed. They emerge from classrooms and wrap around trees on their meandering route from east to west.

The sandblasted granite elements in the undercover entrances to the classrooms invite the children to touch, play and discover. Combining black and green granites with brass inlay, these elements introduce a subtle but lively element to the children's daily routine. The pavement insets in the western end tell a story of the marine and coastal wetland environment. Fish, crabs and marron dance across the stony surface.

Emerging from the eastern classrooms the animal species acknowledge the bushland of Neerabup National park which provides a backdrop to the area. Lizards and swamp turtles appear as if swept along on a stream flowing towards the sea.

The trees in the courtyards that link the main buildings provide shelter from the midday sun. The animals that surge around the base of the trees are a link between east and west, old and new. Domestic cats and dogs merge with the surrounding native animals as they pass around metal tree grates. These grates graphically depict the leaves of the banksia and tuart trees which are such a feature of the coastal bushland setting.

**MERRIWA
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