



## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Indigenous Issues Forum

Over 80 students from five surrounding colleges gathered at Kilbreda College to discuss the multitude of issues that Indigenous communities have faced and still do today. In a student led initiative carried out by Kilbreda's *Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education (FIRE) Carriers*, the thought provoking forum featured three highly regarded speakers, all experts in their fields.

Arweet Carolyn Briggs, a Boon Wurrung senior elder and founder of the Boon Wurrung Foundation, welcomed the students to country and discussed the history and tragedy that the Boon Wurrung people had faced. In her compelling presentation, she also stressed the importance of knowing the history and culture of the people of whatever land you are on, a valuable reminder for the visiting students to take away from the day and one that the Kilbreda FIRE Carriers are spreading through the College community.

Brother Rick Gaffney, a former principal from Luurpna Catholic School in Balgo, spoke of the differences between traditional learning and current education, addressing how the education system is leaving Indigenous students behind by failing to incorporate needs and customs. He also focused on the strengths of Indigenous culture, explaining in detail, how nothing is individually owned and how sharing is just their way of life.

The final speaker, Mr Brian Walker from Monash University spoke about racism in Australia. In his deeply personal presentation, he shared how racism had effected his mental health and offered a broader view of how racism in the media as well as other issues that still arise, continue the cycle of dehumanising Aboriginal people. This led to student workshops that prompted interesting and insightful conversations, a main objective of the forum.

The Kilbreda College community respects Indigenous spiritual connections and beliefs and aims to work together on a journey to help reconcile wrongs done in the past and to deepen the understanding of Indigenous culture within the college.

For more information, relating to college based initiatives, visit [www.kilbreda.edu.au](http://www.kilbreda.edu.au).

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\*Images to accompany this story are attached

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*Kilbreda College is a Kildare Ministries School for Girls in the Brigidine Tradition. Based in the Bayside suburb of Mentone in Melbourne, the college is committed to providing a contemporary, comprehensive and innovative learning environment that empowers young women to be well informed and confident to embrace an ever-changing world. For more information about the college visit [www.kilbreda.vic.edu.au](http://www.kilbreda.vic.edu.au)*