Keep the fire burning

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Held across the country from 7-14 July 2024, NAIDOC Week will celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year's theme chosen by the National NAIDOC Committee, is *Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud*.

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAIDOC Week, which first began in 1975, provides an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

This year's theme celebrates the unyielding spirit of our communities and invites all to stand in solidarity, amplifying the voices that have long been silenced.

The fire represents the enduring strength and vitality of Indigenous cultures, passed down through generations despite the challenges faced.

It is a symbol of connection to the land, to each other and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we honour this flame, we kindle the sparks of pride and unity, igniting a renewed commitment to acknowledging, preserving and sharing the cultural heritage that enriches our nation.

"Blak, Loud and Proud" encapsulates the unapologetic celebration of Indigenous identity, empowering us to stand tall in our heritage and assert our place in the modern world.

This theme calls for a reclamation of narratives, an amplification of voices and an unwavering commitment to justice and equality.

It invites all Australians to listen, learn and engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering a society where the wisdom and contributions of Indigenous peoples are fully valued and respected.

Through our collective efforts, we can forge a future where the stories, traditions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are cherished and celebrated, enriching the fabric of the nation with the oldest living culture in the world.

The 2024 National NAIDOC Week poster

The National NAIDOC Committee are thrilled to announce artist Deb Belyea as the winner of the 2024 NAIDOC Week Poster Competition.

Deb's design captivated the National NAIDOC Committee and perfectly captured the meaning of the 2024 National NAIDOC Week theme.

Deb is a proud member of the Samuawgadhalgal, Cassowary Clan, whose bloodlines stretch to the people of the top Western Torres Strait islands of Saibai, Dauan and the Bamaga-Saibai community of Cape York.

Currently living on the lands of the Juru people in Bowen, North Queensland, Deb is an educator, curriculum writer and practising artist.

The winning entry is titled, Urapun Muy, and means "One Fire" in the Kalaw Kawaw Ya dialect.

"When I saw that the NAIDOC theme for this year was Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud, I wanted to create an art piece that reflected our First Nations cultures", Deb said.

The artwork shows ancestors hands placing an ember into a burning fire. This ember and the fire, represents the sharing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

"Culture is the fire that burns within all of us. It is essential to us when we talk about our people, identity and spirituality," Deb said.

"Throughout our lives, culture is taught to us by our Elders in our rich heritage languages, which have sprouted from our homelands. It shows us our roads to one another and how we belong to our Place or Country. As First Nations mob, it is our lifelong responsibility of learning, teaching and practising culture."

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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