

HUME CITY COUNCIL

# Young People's Stories of Heritage and Diversity: A Hume Anthology 2024



## Front cover design

*Dreams across the Horizon*  
**Zyle Nolan Tacoloy** (Age 16)  
Kolbe Catholic College







### **Acknowledgment of traditional custodians**

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, which includes the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates, and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and to Elders past, present and future.

### **Acknowledgment of contribution to *Young People's Stories of Heritage and Diversity: A Hume Anthology 2024*.**

Council would like to thank all the young people who contributed their amazing artwork, poems, and stories to this year's anthology.

This year's anthology would not be possible without the support of our local primary and secondary schools and services including:

- Aitken College
- Craigieburn Secondary College
- Elevation Secondary College
- Greenvale Secondary College
- The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)
- Hume Anglican Grammar
- Penola Catholic College
- Salesian College
- St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College
- Sunbury Downs College
- Aitken Hill Primary School
- St Carlos Borromeo Primary School
- Craigieburn Primary School
- Oscar Romero Primary School
- Westmeadows Primary School
- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Arabic Welfare
- Youth Projects

We would also like to thank all of the parents/carers for supporting your young people in their creative endeavours.

We look forward to all your submissions for next year's 2025 theme:

### ***Young People's Stories of Transformations and Beginnings: A Hume Anthology***



## **Mayor's Message**

'Young People's Stories of Heritage and Diversity: A Hume Anthology' is inspired by the voices and ideas of young people aged 6 to 24 years who live, study or work in Hume City. I am delighted to showcase the submissions we received for our 2024 edition, that highlight the remarkable talents of our young people in Hume.

Now in its third year, young people across Hume were invited to submit a drawing, poem, short story, comic, painting, or photograph that reflects their experiences and hopes in relation to the themes of heritage and diversity.

71 submissions were received this year by young people aged 6 to 24 years.

Well done to everyone who contributed. It takes great courage to share your creativity and personal reflections with others, and each piece in this anthology is a unique and heartfelt expression of your individual story. Your work adds a rich tapestry of perspectives, celebrating the diversity and heritage that makes Hume such a vibrant community. Thank you for sharing your talents and allowing us to glimpse into your world.

The public was invited to vote on the best creative pieces in each category, as well as their favourite piece overall. Thank you to everyone who voted, you can find the results in this publication.

In addition, we are also pleased that this year's submissions will be exhibited for three months at the Gee-Lee Wik Doleen Gallery, Hume Global Learning Centre – Craigieburn.

Celebrating young people's achievements and providing opportunities to prosper is part of our ongoing commitment to young people as outlined in Connect & Thrive: A Plan for Young People in Hume 2022-2026.

Thank you to all the parents, carers and schools who supported young people to showcase their artworks this year. This anthology project will be delivered annually and will provide a unique opportunity for young people aged 6 to 24 years to showcase their amazing talents and creativity.

We hope you enjoy this year's anthology and thank you to all the young people who contributed.

**Cr Jarrod Bell**  
**Mayor of Hume City**



## Best creative piece: Mayor's Choice Award



*Dreams across the Horizon*

**Zyle Nolan Tacoloy** (Age 16), Kolbe Catholic College

**Front Cover Mayor's Choice Award**

"Heritage and diversity affect our whole being but still upholding the essence of humanity which is to live in harmony and settle differences the right way."

## Best creative piece: 6-11 year olds

### **My Unicorn Magic New School Bag and the Secret Pencil Case**

Dear Diary,

Yesterday marked the first day of the spring school holidays, and it was a day filled with excitement and adventure! We headed to a wondrous place called Smiggle, a store that's like a treasure trove of amazing stuff. It's a place where even the walls seem to sparkle with magic.

Guess what? I got to pick out a brand-new school bag, and you won't believe how awesome it is. It's not just any bag; it's a unicorn bag! 🦄 My heart raced with joy as I held it in my hands. My mom told me that I could choose something special with the money I've been saving, and I had 12 whole dollars saved up!

Dad, being the superhero as always that he is, not only bought the unicorn bag but also a matching drink bottle! And that's when the real adventure began. Right next to the bag, I spotted the coolest pencil case I've ever seen. It was dazzling, but it had a price tag of 26 dollars. I wished upon a star that it could be mine.

But here's the magical twist: my dad said, "You know what, kiddo? You can have that fantastic pencil case too." My eyes lit up like fireworks on the New year.

This Away Pop Out Pencil Case was no ordinary case. It had secret powers! It had a sharpener that popped out like a jack-in-the-box, and a calculator that appeared with the press of a button. You could even store secret codes in it! How cool is that? And there was more. It had a hidden trick, a special way to open it from the other side that only I knew.

To make it even more special, there was a special tag inside where I could write my name, my class, and my very own signature. And on top of all that, it had a little timetable for my classes, so I'd always know what to expect the next day. Before closing the case, I arranged all my treasures inside, making sure everything had its special place.

And that, dear diary, was the most incredible day ever! Who knew that a trip to Smiggle could be filled with so much magic and wonder? ✨

The End... for now.

*Ala's spring Holiday*

Page 1

**Ala'a Alsowaidi** (Age 8), Hume Libraries Creative Writing Competition

"Adventures in the library: The Newspaper Challenge"

Dear Diary-doo,

The library is my ultimate happy hideout, and there's no way I can survive a week without diving into my treasured books! It feels like I'm on a daring adventure, hunting for stories and marvelous collections that fill my heart with joy. I've explored every nook and cranny of the Billie B Brown world, conquered the diaries of Ella, and laughed with Ella and Olivia on their fantastic journeys.

Now you know the library is my happy place, and I've got to tell you about the super cool adventure I had last Wednesday at the Library. It was no ordinary day – it was an adventure day!

I arrived at the library, and guess what? The challenge of the day was to create something spectacular using just a sheet of newspaper, scissors, and a glue stick. The library was buzzing with excitement! Our mission: to craft the longest or the strongest newspaper chain.

I decided to go for the strongest chain, and I approached the task with all the determination of a treasure hunter on a quest. I snipped, rolled, and glued the newspaper with absolute concentration. My chain was turning into a masterpiece.

Once we were all done, I eagerly handed my newspaper chain to the friendly librarian. She had a bucket, and my mom stood at one end while the librarian held the other. Then the most thrilling part happened. The librarian began to load books into the bucket one by one, and my chain didn't even flinch! It held up nearly 12 books before it finally gave in. Can you believe it? My chain was like a superhero, strong and unbreakable.

Then, I watched as other participating kids finished their chains. The library was like a beehive of creativity, and I was surrounded by other young inventors. When it was time to announce the winners, I was in for a big surprise. I secured second place! I couldn't believe it. I won a prize – a brand-new notebook and three juggling balls. I was over the moon with happiness when they called my name.

And that's how my day at the library turned into an adventure of creativity, strength, and lots of fun!

The End... for now. I am going to have my dinner!

*Ala's spring Holiday*

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**Ala'a Alsowaidi** (Age 8)

Happy evening!

Dear Diary- Doo,

Guess what? I'm back with an awesome story from September 19, 2023. It was Tuesday, and something exciting happened!

My dad, my mum, and I hopped into the car, and we zoomed off to the place where they have the super cool citizenship ceremony. Hooray! This day marked four whole years since we first came to Australia. We did some official stuff, and then we headed to the big hall where all the magic happened.

When the ceremony finally started, there was this man talking, and to be honest, it was a bit like BLA BLA BLA. But then, something really cool happened! They started calling people, one line at a time, and we were in the fourth line. Our turn came, and we got some super special things – citizenship certificates, flags, and even little plants. Oh, and guess what? I got a kangaroo! I decided to name him Roo the Kangaroo. He's going to be my new buddy.

We went back to our seats and sang the Australian national anthem together. It was a bit like a big, happy sing-along! After all the excitement, we had some supper. I had an egg sandwich that was so yummy, and for dessert, a super-duper delicious chocolate brownie. It was finger-licking good!

And the best part? We took lots and lots of pictures to remember this day. Smiles, laughter, and happiness all around.

On the way home, my dad had a surprise for us. We stopped at McDonald's, or as we like to call it, Maccas, and we had some tasty fries. It was the perfect ending to a super happy evening.

Yup, we went home with hearts full of happiness and wonderful memories.

The End.

*Ala's spring Holiday*

Page 3

**Ala'a Alsowaidi** (Age 8 )

**Play date with my best friend!**

"Friday Fun at Coburg Lake!"

Dear Doo Diary,

I'm back with another thrilling adventure to share! This time, it happened on a fantastic Friday. I went to Coburg Lake with my mom to meet my amazing friend, Rawdah. And let me tell you, it was a day to remember!

As soon as we arrived, I spotted Rawdah at the roundabout. She gave her mom a super-speed signal, and we both dashed toward each other. Our smiles grew bigger with every step, and then we were off, embarking on hours of play, giggles, and pure fun.

But that was just the beginning of our epic day! We decided to conquer the big ramp. It was an adventure like no other, full of excitement and daring tricks. And guess what? Just when we thought it couldn't get any cooler, her cousins showed up! They live near our new home, and it was like destiny brought us all together. We continued our playtime, having the time of our lives, and of course, enjoying a tasty snack.

Then came the most magical part of our day. Her cousins led us to the enchanting fairy garden. We discovered teeny-tiny fairy-sized chairs, navigated a whimsical maze, and even made a stop at another playground, where we played to our heart's content.

Finally, as the sun started to dip, we returned to our picnic spot. We squeezed in one last game, and then it was time to say our goodbyes.

It was a day bursting with laughter, thrilling adventures, and memories that will stay with us forever.

The End... for now I got to prepare dinner with my Mum

*Ala's spring Holiday*

Page 4

**Ala'a Alsowaidi (Age 8)**

**Another day at the library**

Dear diary,

I'm back! I had another fun day at the library today. I went to meet my friend Taiba there. I spotted Miss Megan, who's the best librarian. I watched her while exploring all the new things in the library. She told us that the author of "Ella's Diary" visited last week. I really wish I could've been there because her book collection is my favorite these days.

Then, Taiba arrived, and we played together. First, we borrowed Mr. Potato Head, and she returned it with a baby set of Lego. We used the Lego to build a big house. Afterward, we cleaned up and did some coloring, featuring Peppa Pig as the Fairy Queen. Then, we returned and had some snacks. I had one piece of pizza, chips, and strawberries.

We later headed to the mall. I had saved up 17 dollars. We went to a toy store, and guess what? I found a shiny, rainbow, squishy, and stretchy squishy ball. It's one of a kind. I also discovered a unicorn keychain to hang on my bag, but my mom said I could have it with my own money. They both cost 7 dollars.

Taiba left, and I continued with my mom to Kmart. We went to the toy section, and there I found a cool mini cupcake bag that could hang on my school bag, and it could pop up. You can enjoy popping it and put small things inside. I also saw a bag of crafty supplies with mini notebooks, scented mini pens, a big pen that smells amazing, and small erasers with smiley faces. My mom paid for them.

We then went to KFC and got some chips and a frozen Fanta, which we shared. After finishing our meal, we took the train back home, and my dad picked us up from the train station to drive us home.

Back at home, I sat on the couch, opened my new treasures, and played with them all.

I also drew a picture inside each of them and gave them names: the green one is called "Outside," the red one is "Ice Cream," the blue one is "Fashion," the other blue one is "Snack," the pink one is "Birthday," and the other pink one is "Love."

The End!

"I am too excited to find out whether my mom is having a boy or a girl sister. I'll know soon, dear diary. Bye for now; it's my bedtime.

*Ala's spring Holiday*

Page 5

**Ala'a Alsowaidi (Age 8)**



## Best creative piece: 12-18 year olds



*Under one canopy*

**Azelya Cayir** (Age 14), Greenvale Secondary College

"This painting illustrates how individuals from various cultures find common ground and protection under a shared umbrella."

## Best creative piece: 19-24 year olds



*Colourful Bird*

**Jana Tawil** (Age 24), Melbourne Polytechnic

"Before arriving in Australia, I was worried about fitting into society and the new language but when I arrived, within a short period of time, I felt a sense of belonging to this beautiful country. I remembered migratory birds that stay in the areas they migrate to and adapt easily to them, and I felt like I'm free as a bird in Australia."

# Community favourite piece: (all ages)

## **I wish that it was a nightmare:**

Tires on fire  
Smoke is becoming stronger  
Protestors are becoming crazier  
Dad please come back sooner  
Am I dreaming?  
Am I imagining?"

BOOM goes the gunshots  
BANG goes the fire shots

Knock knock the door goes

Finally dad came back!  
"Maria, go pack up fast!"  
"No time for hugs"  
"The smell is bad for us"  
We will need to take a hard way  
Since the protestors took over the street  
Life is not always the same as it have to be

Going to our beach house  
I can hear my little brother is happy and being loud  
He still doesn't know what is going on  
They warned us that there are some people breaking in beach houses  
During the nights or days through the balconies

Going to bed  
Exhausted of what happened today  
Trying to process what happened again  
I got used to it  
I know that I have to move on  
Because it have been too long  
I need to internalise my feelings in me  
So that no one realises the pain in me

Lebanon is in a bad condition  
Where is the peace that we so desperately desired?  
Why are they using fighting as their language?  
We share the same sun and moon  
Then why don't we share the same peace and love?  
Closing my eyes gradually  
Hoping that this will end more rapidly

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

Page 1

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College

"There was civil wars occurring in Lebanon when I was there, but because my dad had a famous shop there, they were planning on killing him, therefore, we had to leave."

Days and Days passes  
There were some days that school closes  
Things were getting even worse  
I'm scared that someone might get hurt  
Patience is our only solution  
There is no way to stop the revolution  
Instead of waking up listening to the bird chirps  
We are waking up terrified from the gunshot sounds  
And the screams of the crazy protestors  
I NEED to stay strong  
I know it have been so long  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me strong again

## **21 February 2020**

"Covid cases had increased in Lebanon"  
School will run online from now and on  
The civil wars are still going on  
They burnt my dad's shop once or more  
Thank Allah (SWT) it was only the second floor  
We stayed in our land temporarily  
Where we are trying to protect ourselves from all the fighting  
Calling and ensuring that my family members are safe  
Hoping that no one got hurt  
"BOOM" goes the gunshots again and again  
But this time we could see the bullets shining in the sky  
Like drops of rain during the days and nights  
Demolishing my dreams within a blink of eye  
"Indeed, with every hardship comes ease"  
This is always part of me

## **12 November 2020 ( It's time)**

People are planning to kill my dad  
"We have to leave before he get hurt"  
This is the only way to keep dad safe  
Before it becomes too late  
I am going to miss all my family members  
I have a lot of memories to remember  
Especially my grandma  
I can see the sorrow reflecting from her face  
My heart is so connected to her  
But there is no other way  
I need to internalise my feelings  
So that no one gets affected from my feelings  
I am so grateful with every second I spent with them

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

Page 2

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College

I believe that one day I'll be home again  
And start a new life, with the peace everywhere  
Goodbye Lebanon  
Good my to all my family members  
Goodbye to all the memories I remember  
Goodbye grandma  
Goodbye to all my friends  
Our aim is to go to Australia  
But go to some countries beforehand  
**12 March 2021**  
We came to Australia  
Everything changed  
Everything is new  
I've lost everything I've known  
I am grateful to Allah (SWT) that my dad is safe  
I can smile because the pain has gone  
But cry, because it is where I belong  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me stronger  
And make me cope more longer  
I know that I'll be back home again  
Where there will be peace all again  
We stayed in the quarantine  
Where we were told that my grandma in Lebanon have got Covid-19  
Wanting to go back and help take care of her  
But we were stuck  
There was no way out  
After quarantine  
We were told that she is getting better  
So we thought to stay more calmer  
A week after  
Her body couldn't handle more longer  
The hospital in Lebanon told us that her heart has stopped  
We were all in shock  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me stronger  
And handle everything going on a bit longer  
I'd give anything to see my grandma again  
And tell her how much I love her  
I have cried so many times  
But I know that I have to move on  
I saw her in my dream  
But when I woke up she was gone  
I know after every hardship comes ease"  
I will do anything to keep Allah (SWT) pleased  
I need to stop my tear and stay strong

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

*Page 3*

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College

Happiness is only a temporary feeling  
I am grateful with every moment I spent with her  
But I know that this life will not last forever  
But the next will last for ever  
So I pray to Allah (SWT) to gather us in the place where no eye have ever seen  
And no ear have ever heard  
I know that I have to move on  
And cope with what is going on  
I need to face my grief  
Knowing that "with every hardship comes ease"  
I want to sacrifice to keep my family pleased with me  
And make them happy from me  
Keep in mind that patience is power

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

*Page 4*

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College



# 6-11 year olds

## My Unicorn Magic New School Bag and the Secret Pencil Case

Dear Diary,

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Guess what? I got to pick out a brand-new school bag, and you won't believe how awesome it is. It's not just any bag; it's a unicorn bag! 🦄 My heart raced with joy as I held it in my hands. My mom told me that I could choose something special with the money I've been saving, and I had 12 whole dollars saved up!

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But here's the magical twist: my dad said, "You know what, kiddo? You can have that fantastic pencil case too." My eyes lit up like fireworks on the New year.

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"Friday Fun at Coburg Lake!"

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I also drew a picture inside each of them and gave them names: the green one is called "Outside," the red one is "Ice Cream," the blue one is "Fashion," the other blue one is "Snack," the pink one is "Birthday," and the other pink one is "Love."

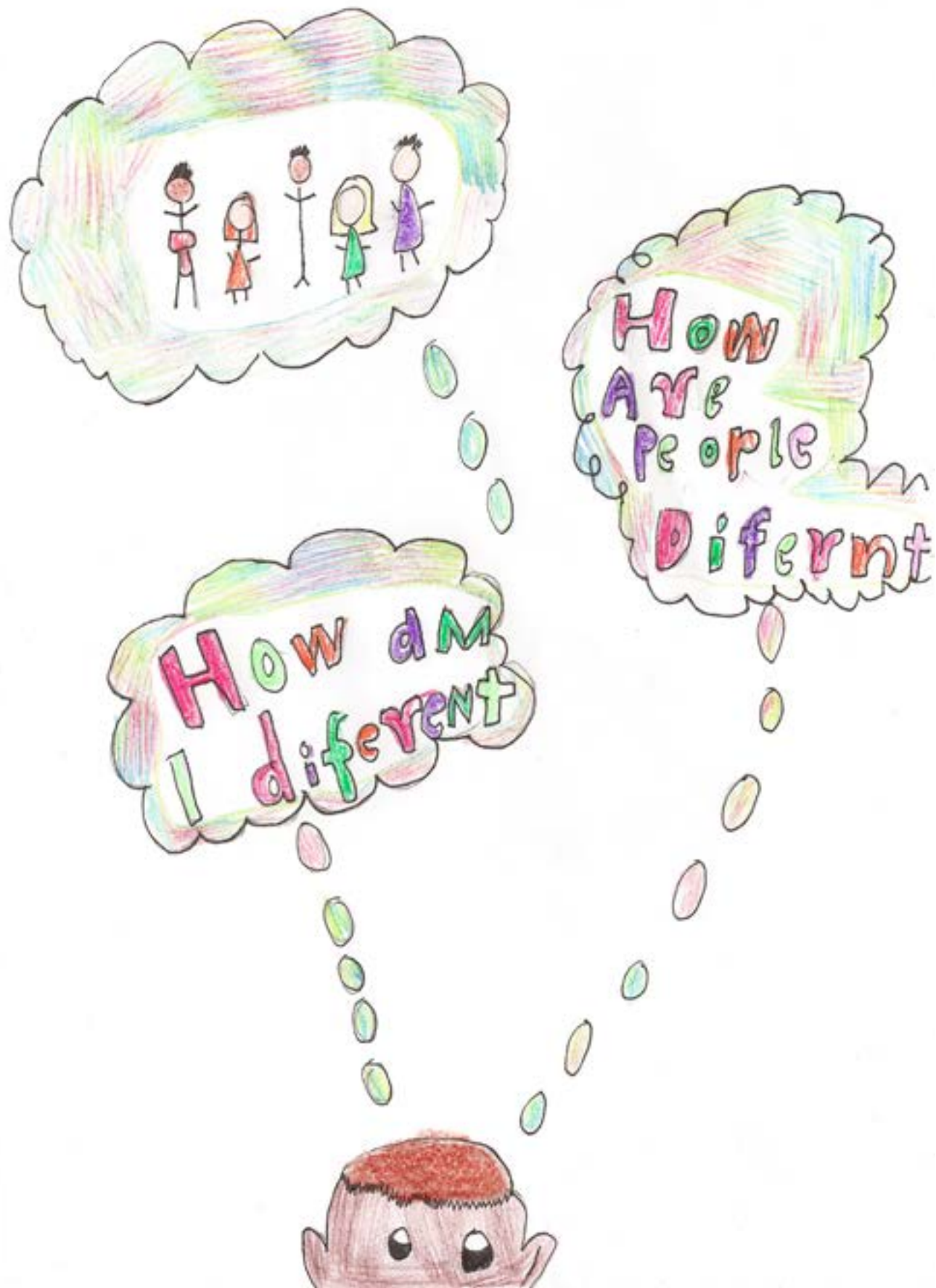
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*Ala's spring Holiday*

Page 5

**Ala'a Alsowaidi (Age 8)**



*We all are*

**Judy Ferguson** (Age 8)

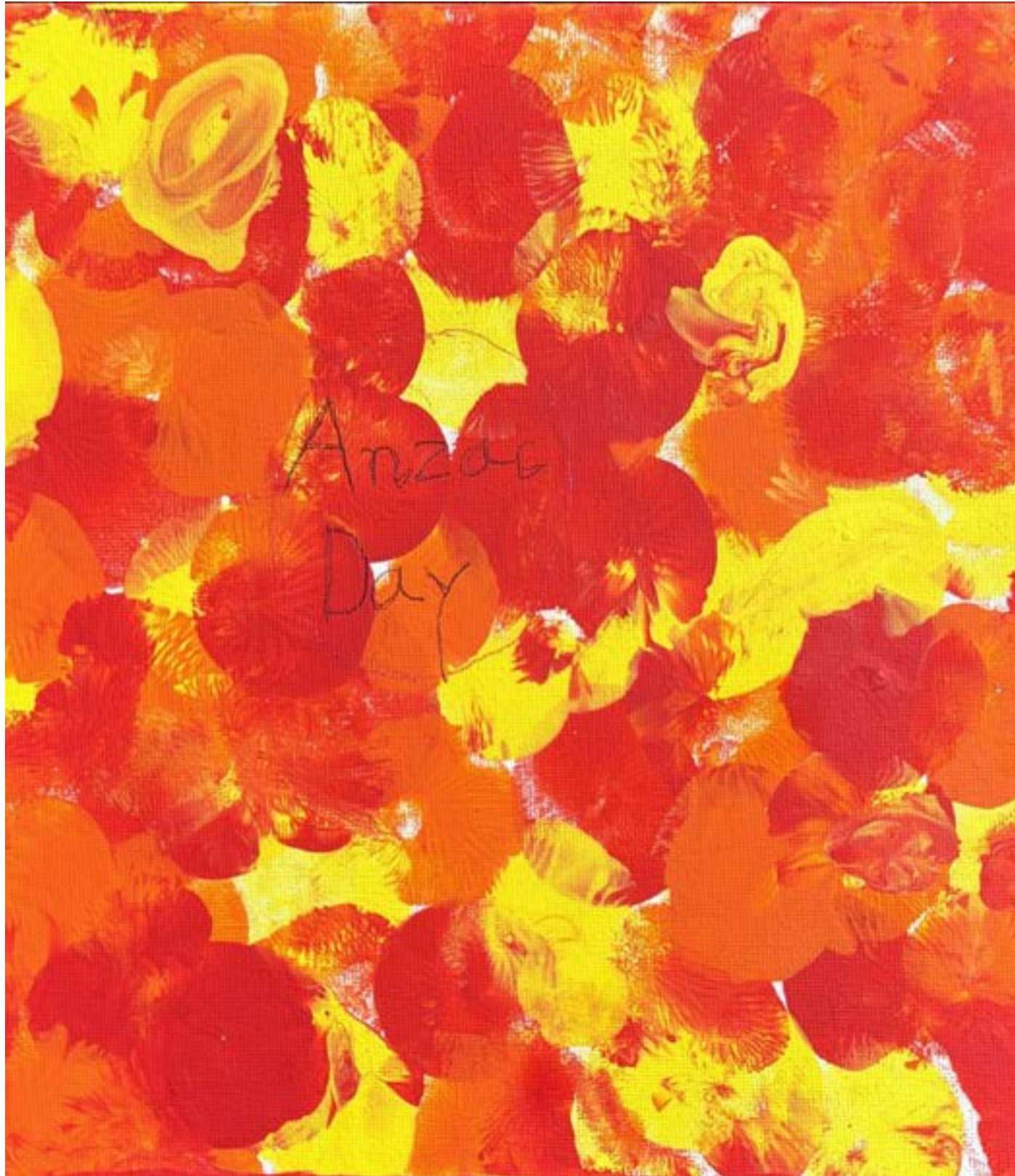


*We All Are*

**Judy Ferguson** (Age 8), St Carlo Borromeo Primary School

"Visual Representation of how I understood diversity when it was explained to me. Everyone's smiling because having differences is a good thing."





ANZAC

**Kiara Karna** (Age 8),

"ANZAC day is an important day of the year to remember our past and gives us motivation to do best for our country and community".



Fortnite golden agent Peely

**Mintun Fernando** (Age 9), Newbury Primary School

"Popular among kids gaming world".





*Traditional Mask of Shri Lanka*

**Kenuda Katwapityang** (Age 9), Aitken College

"Deeply rooted in Cultural ritual @ folklore".



*Hello*

**Santa Dashto** (Age 9), Mount Ridley College

"Music of my life".





Drawing

**Sophia Youhana** (Age 9), Roxburgh Homestead Primary School

"By bringing my background heritage and love in diversity with other Australian citizens".



My Life Tree

**Fatehdeep Mallaya** (Age 10), Mount Ridley College

"It's about my life and my family"



*The different ways the earth shows itself*

**Hafsa Mohammed** (Age 10), Ilim College

"I am representing the different colours and language across the world".



*Cultural Diversity*

**Hibba Tahseen** (Age 10), Darul Ulum Academy Mickleham Campus

"The world is in our hands, we must accept people of all heritages".



"Diversity is light, and light it shall be,  
With multicultural nations as far as you can see.  
Together as a community,  
We work hard on our dreams,  
Step by step, we succeed in our goals.  
In the heart of the city, cultures collide,  
The streets hum a rhythm, a chorus of pride.  
As diversity dances in the sun,  
A mosaic of life and fun has begun."

*Multicultured Nation*

**Hibba Tahseen** (Age 10), Darul Ulum Academy (Victoria), Mickleham Campus

"It's a poem about diversity in the community"



*Untitled*

**Jasmine Saini** (Age 10) Roxburgh Rise Primary School

"I believe the world is one"

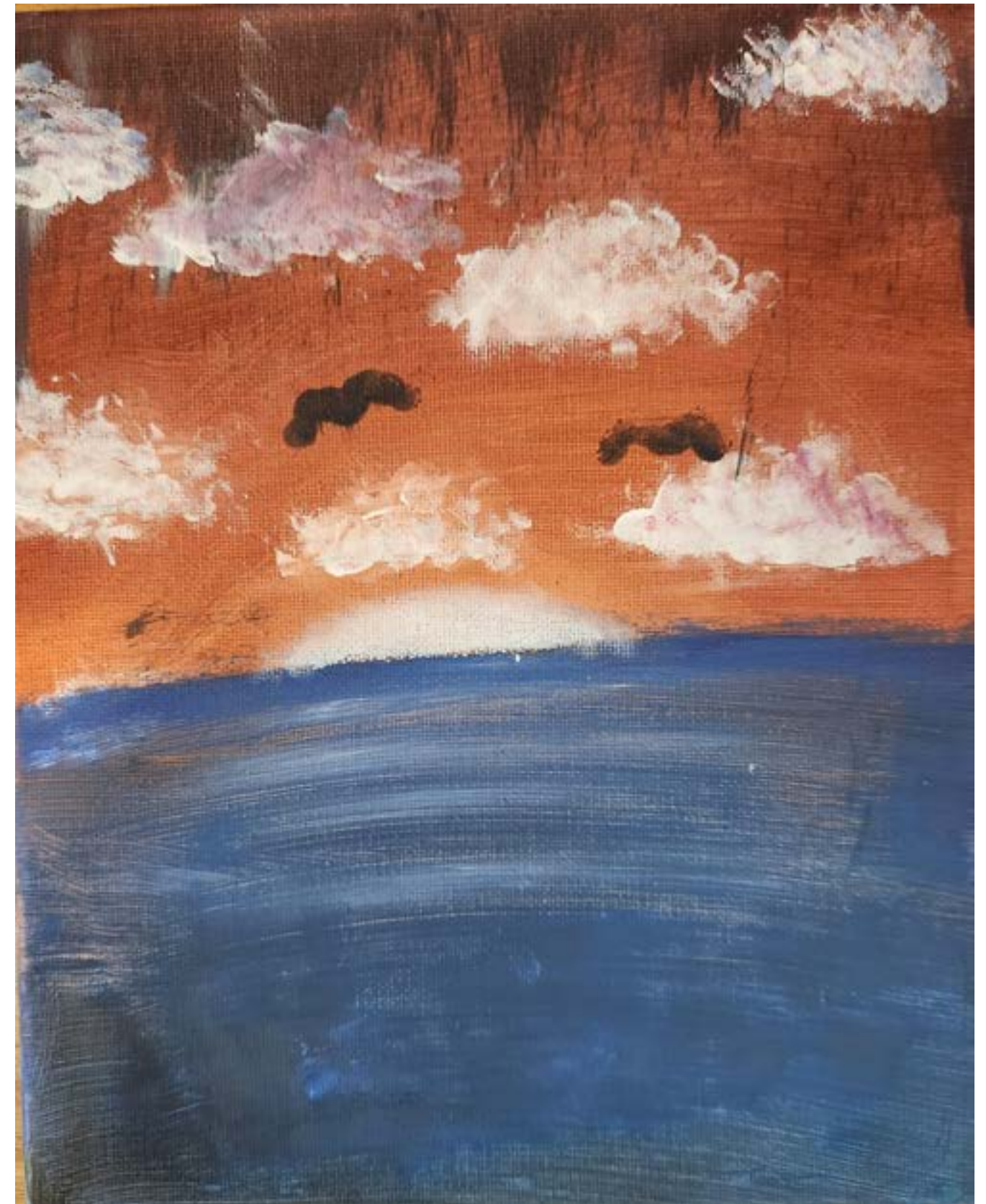




*Tree Growth*

**Kiara Ulm- Lovell** (Age 10),

"I have painted a tree, because Sunbury is growing community with so many families branching off building a beautiful community. The saying on it is "Your day begins as the sun comes up, don't have a good day, have a great day".



*Sunrise*

**Mackenzie Lovell** (Age 11),

"Community is the peoppe, but also the place. My piece displays various features of Hume I love".





*Heritage and Inclusion*

**Christopher Youhana** (Age 11), Roxburgh Homestead primary school

"It shows a drawing of the Assyrian winged lion and different types of flags being held up by 2 kids"



*Diversity*

**Anonymous** (Age 11),

"I feel live in a very diverse, multicultural community and I feel my artwork reflects this."



# 12-18 year olds



*Untitled*

**Abirami Karuppan** (Age 12), Hume Anglican Grammar

"The reflections of the Yarra River depict all of those who we have inherited this sacred land from."



## Remembrance

Suppose you could see but you wouldn't. Flames leap in her eyes, people stare unnoticed, a cloud follows. Her footsteps are silent along the cobbled streets. Her heart-beat thunders in the mist. Her face is expressionless, masked. She leaves the congested road. Like a fox she slips between the alleyways silently.

Her residence is shabby, uncolored and graying. She turns the key in the rusted lock and enters. Off the shelf she takes a picture, a howl of sorrow echoes around the dusty building. The woman picks up the dropped image of her family off the floor and places it slowly back on the shelf. She enters her room and doesn't leave.

No one notices they haven't seen her. "Perhaps the flu", they mutter. She lays silently, even the sound of passing trucks does not wake her. Her mind chases her heart in a purposeless pursuit. Something rustles outside, then stills unmoving. A gentle knocking stirs her. She moves towards her front door, hesitating. A note lies on the floor.

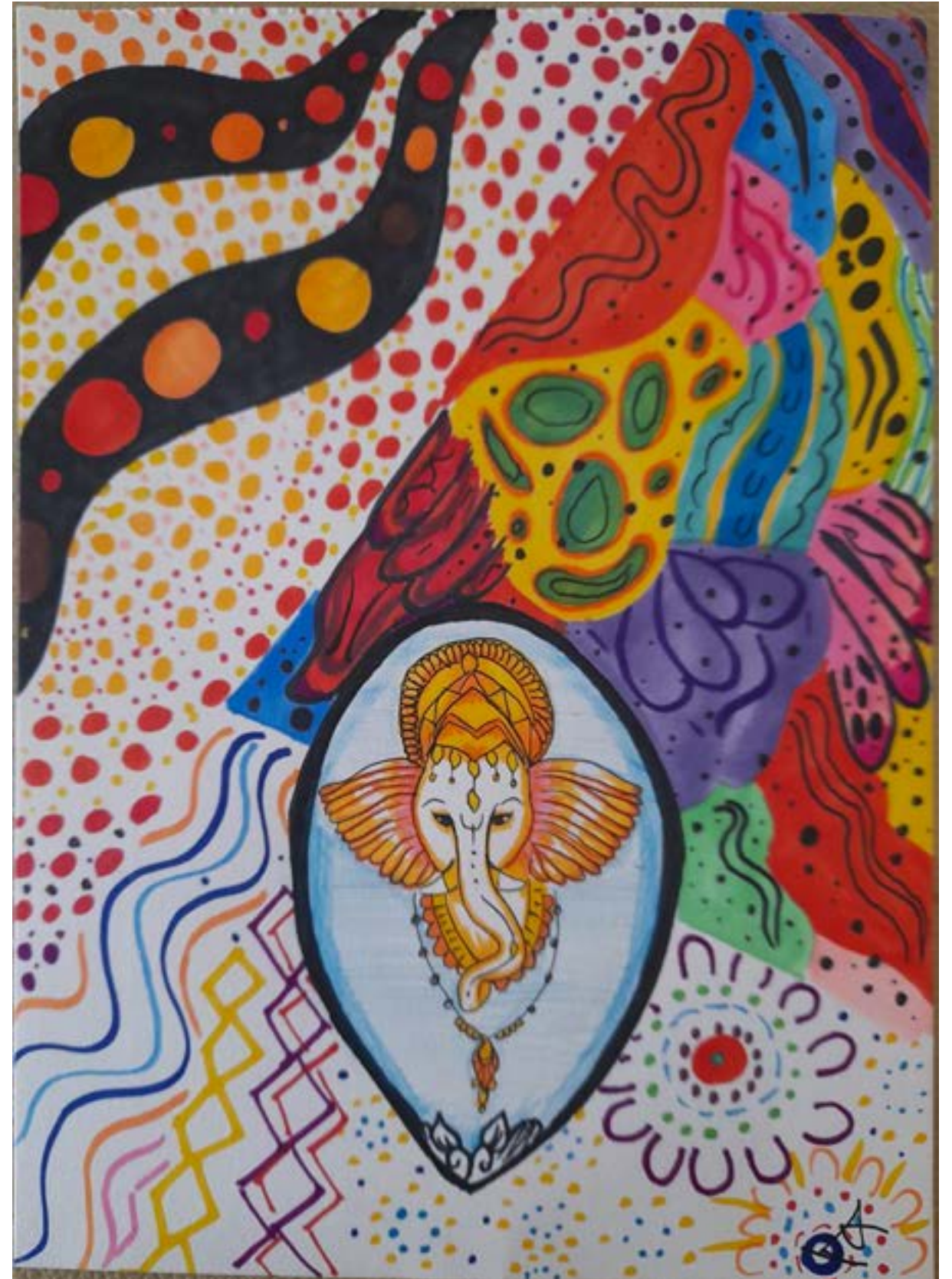
Her eyes flick sideways, her heart beats thunder. She runs, returning to her room and slamming the door. Tears flow hurriedly from her eyes as she looks towards the picture. She remembers her childhood. Going to the river, swimming, joy. Except since "they" had died that had dissolved into smoke. They had laughed at all her jokes. Now all the laughter had followed and died with them, it was gone, like they were. She looks out the window.

This was their room. Their plant like them had died and their pond had shriveled. Her garden had wilted. She looks towards the shed, she remembers the sound of nails on wood, the hammer. Her heart tightens, her face wet. She reaches towards the door handle. She looks at the letter and rips it open, large blotchy tears cascade down her face onto the letter. She opens the front door without fear.

She steps outside. As she walks down the path, her garden blossoms around her.

*Remembrance*

**Akari Mizuno** (Age 12), Hume Libraries Creative Writing Competition



*My Heritage*

**Archisha Chakravorty** (Age 12)

"A drawing bringing together my heritage from my parents that I carry and the culture of First Australians that I now represent"





*Waterfall Painting*

**Inika Timilsina** (Age 12) Hume Anglican Grammar

"Every tree, every rock, every bush is different, but together it forms a symbolisation of diverse cultures within our community. My painting highlights that nature is the fundamental foundation, in which cultural belief systems develop and diverse communities become constructed. The theme of heritage is symbolised through the waterfall, because it displays that different communities are carrying their heritage and moving forward, just like the flowing waterfall."



*Land by Sea*

**Mia Abela** (Age 12), Greenvale Secondary College

"Land by Sea: My artwork relates to the theme HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY by illustrating how my grandparents immigrated from the coastal island of Malta to Australia to give their family a better life."





*The Circle of Culture*

**Muskaan Dhillon** (Age 12), Hume Anglican Grammar

"The Indian scheme, which has traditional clothing and popular tourist attractions and there are some other drawings which represent something to the Indian culture relates to heritage and culture."



*We are one*

**Olivia Ferguson** (Age 12), St Carlo Borromeo

"My artwork is about how we are all part of one big family, no matter what we look or sounds like, or how we act. We are one."

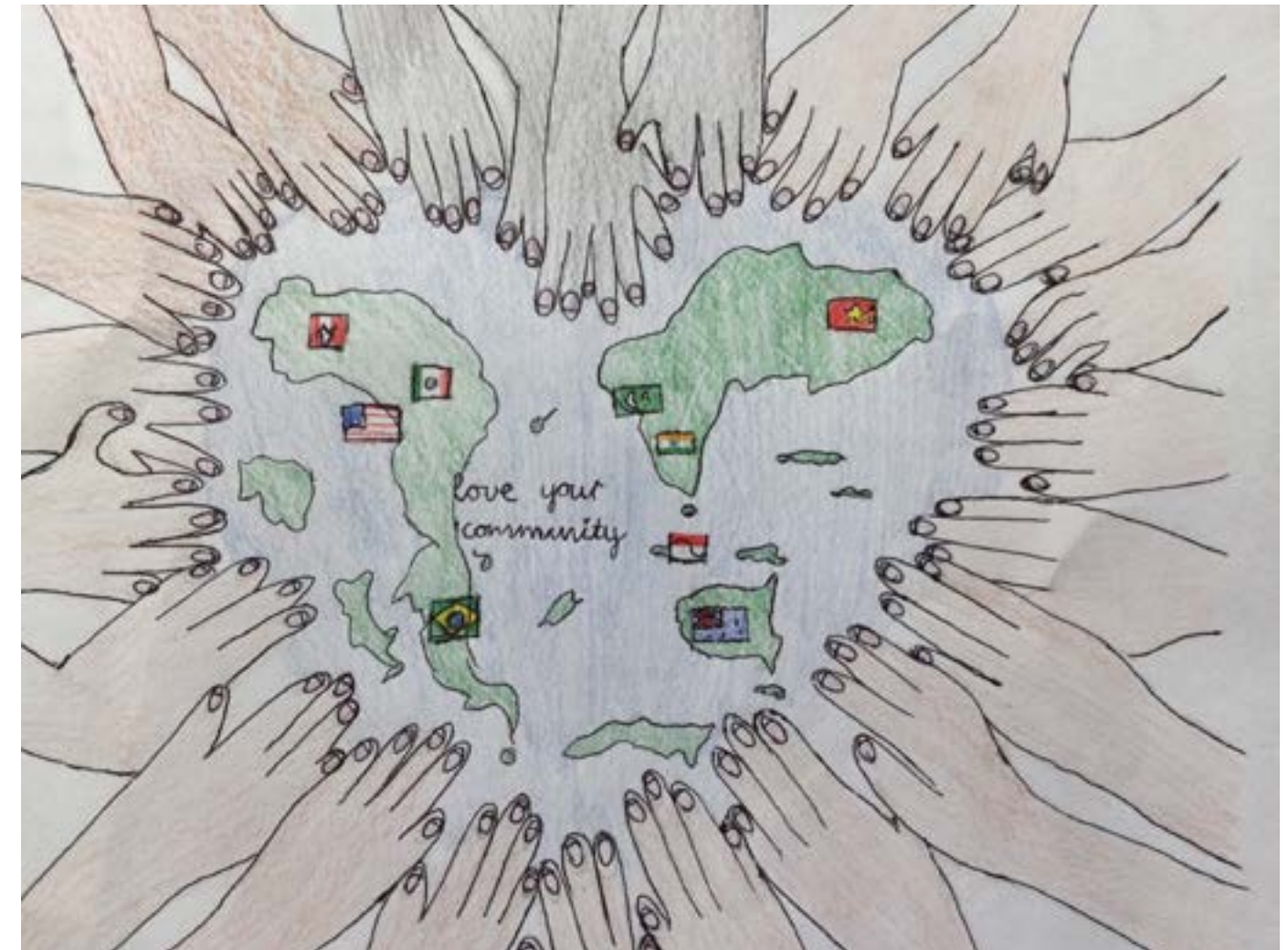




*My home and my background*

**Savannah Kiefer** (Age 12), Hume Anglican Grammar

"My submission relates to the theme of heritage and diversity by exploring my parents' heritage and journey to Australia, as well as the challenges they faced in terms of fitting in, diversity, and racism".



*The Love of diversity*

**Sejal Pal** (Age 12), Hume Anglican Grammar

"This community has contributed love and support towards each other".





*Untitled*

**Achelle Sovis** (Age 13) Hume Anglican Grammar

"I created my digital artwork using colours and symbolic elements, weaving them into my drawing to represent my identity. I am Sri Lankan, but when I was 3, my family and I moved to Australia, where I have lived ever since. In this piece, I used the silhouette of a young woman with my hairstyle and features to symbolize myself. Inside the silhouette, I carefully crafted an image that reflects both my Sri Lankan and Australian heritage. On the left, there is a large elephant, and on the right, a kangaroo. Although these animals could never coexist in nature due to their different habitats, in my image, they peacefully face each other. The atmosphere is warm and serene, connecting the hot Australian outback with the Sri Lankan jungle. You'll notice that the elephant's head slightly overlaps into the outback. This was intentional, symbolizing that I feel more Sri Lankan than Australian, as I am the first part-Australian in my family. It also represents how I have embraced Australia, exploring its new and unfamiliar surroundings rather than retreating. The yellow in the background spreads across both the red and green areas, showing how yellow is a common symbolic colour in both Australia and Sri Lanka. The red is placed on Australia's side, while the green is on Sri Lanka's side, representing how these different backgrounds can be interconnected, even though red is more commonly associated with Sri Lanka and green with Australia. Additionally, if you look closely, the background is slightly transparent, symbolizing that my heritage is not fixed or rigid—it is fluid and free, open to change and interpretation. After all, we are all interconnected."



*Motherboard of Hume*

**Angelina Pham** (Age 13), Greenvale Secondary College

"I view Hume like a motherboard, a variety of features with different mechanisms that work together to function, including the individuality I bring to the community".



## Plan B

### Reality:

Friends forever, so they say; war thought otherwise. Constant attacks lead to harmony's demise, dissipating into blurs of reality. Unleashing something that would go on for decades. Haven't people struggled enough already? The war thought otherwise. Flipping their petty lives upside down. What was peace? Random words wearily made from adust lips, I don't know. A transition I wouldn't forget was the move to the bunker. That is if I live to tell the tale. I wait for myself to corrode into the battlegrounds with many others. I may not grasp memories with the strangers I encounter, but we have one ubiquitous wish, the betterment and restabilization of Sri Lanka.

1st July 1985

5:01 pm

I live in a bunker, cowardly maybe; a 10 year old body and mind cannot withstand mental and physical impacts by the Invisible Bombardier. The Bombardier stalks adults and children alike. Most adults, dare I say, kill it off. Children, however, are duressed by invisible strings as they face unbearable trauma. Who or what was the Invisible Bombardier? Surprise Surprise, the Civil War. Enough about the deep reality outside. My name is Yuresh Siriwardena. I live with my Amma and malli in a safe legerdemain. My Thaththa, Major General Siriwardena, rarely stays by our side, instead he is by the country's side as a committed war hero, carrying a red army regiment on his head with pride.

Amma is a strong woman who nurtures 2 boys and provides the utmost care an expectant mother can give to a baby girl who hasn't yet been welcomed into the ostensible world. Then there's, little malli's a nuisance at times being a younger sibling, but we have each other's backs like brothers would. That was before the war. Malli is as silent as a mouse, the living penumbra child Amma is facing an uphill battle; if she continues life the way she normally does, Nangi will be as weak as a newborn sloth. Pastimes have vanished along with our spirits. Malli is always on the tough mattress, unlike himself Amma cooks and does the bunker a favour of tidiness.

I used to draw with a set of crayons. Only one soldier survived, Red. Every time I examined the worn-out art-utensil, blotches of malformed purples, beiges and blues beamed funny gestures, they were faces only a mother would love. The little perfectionist in me stuck to using the uncontaminated end to draw my people. They are relatives I esteem, barely met or considered odd. The reason they reside on a piece of paper is to pay my solemn respects to those who have passed away from the bloodshed, by crossing them out one by one. I have drawn 100 so far.

## Plan B

Jasraj Riyat (Age 13), Aitken College

"In my story, I dive deep into the theme of heritage and diversity through Yuresh's journey in the midst of a civil war. It's a heartbreaking yet beautiful exploration of how our identities are shaped by both culture and conflict".

7th July 1985

5:45 pm

The Bunker is deemed with a little hole, a Sony battery powered Radio, Kerosene lamps to guide one through dark realities, kitchen, 1 mattress for the entire family and some unexpected visitors coming in, on and off. The visitors were bugs of all shapes and sizes popping in from the crevices and seams of the underground mud structure. Usually, malli goes through a cold sweat when the occasional spider's near him. Now he won't flinch. Yesterday's radio session was to blame.

Yesterday, Malli and I sat down in front of the radio to listen to the news about the ongoing Civil War. Malli intently harked, then he heard something. Something in his mind would haunt him into his teen years. The dead remains of Tamil and Sinhalese children and adults. I glanced over to see Malli's mouth scintillate by the gutters of the Kerosene Lamp. Malli's mouth was wide agape, unable to react accordingly. I could almost see the invisible outlines of their mortal selves forthwith, absconding away from constraint, battling the frivolous sky. Thaththa says I can imagine things well for all the wrong reasons. Soon after, a dramatic demarcation of the radio was put on for Malli's sake. In the future, people might emphasise Amma, a tiger mother. If we survive, that is.

8th July 1985

5:00

Resources weren't really a pet peeve factor in my life. Honestly, having at least a hint of gratitude was good. We receive our essentials on time, with incessant flow compared to most below, protected from the ongoing battles. An exigent hiss floated in the air. I looked to see it was in the direction of the little hole. An ominous presence of fear surged through my body as Amma waddled over to communicate with the messenger. Amma was listening to a squeaky voice, her face was soon attacked by a disarrayed flashback as she gasped for breath. I knew these effects were mustered from the message received. Amma went away, her reticent morals derailed my common sense. I managed to blurt out 2 words; Invisible Bombardier. Amma shone a flummoxed gesture at me; soon understanding what I meant. It seemed the adults had a different name to Invisible Bombardier.

Amma sat down on the mattress with Malli. She started to cry her heart out. I rushed to Amma's side and by instinct hugged her to show my torpid support. "I am so sorry Putha", Amma said to

me in between lull sobs. A coating of panic trickled over my mind. "Your Thaththa has been... assassinated by a suicide bomber... on the battlefield" she continued, crying louder than ever. Our little world had crumbled with a few words, acidic stings chipped my head. I didn't want to cross out or draw my own father. Thaththa's face had faded away with time. I imagined Thaththa lying on the ground blending in with the harsh topography of the island, a soldier in search of their Major General rummaging through the ruins of displaced foliage, soon sensing a soft clammy figure, uncovering Thaththa, ringing the bells of their fallen leader and backing up from the area I was unable to accept the strident truth. LTTE had ended my father's life, regulated the area, swept away

## Plan B

Jasraj Riyat (Age 13), Aitken College

"In my story, I dive deep into the theme of heritage and diversity through Yuresh's journey in the midst of a civil war. It's a heartbreaking yet beautiful exploration of how our identities are shaped by both culture and conflict".



18th July 1985  
6:00pm

Precarious Warnings had also been sent that LTTE would scour my area in search of Lieutenant Siriwardena's family and zealously make them tarnish into the soil of their own bunker. The precocious-like night gleamed blissfully. I helped Amma garner the bunker of leftover rations and belongings. I took responsibility for Malli and, as we were close to decamping the area, THUD.

A man flounced into the bunker alongside armed soldiers with rifles readying to fire. The camouflage suits were an obvious alibi for my gullible accusation of the men being allied with LTTE. I pleaded silently for the survival of my Amma, Malli and Nangi. It wasn't always about me. It wasn't fair either! Nangi hadn't even experienced the world, the aura of her siblings, remaining family or mother. Then the man eased his weapon and spoke. "We are glad we got to you quickly Siriwardena Family". The man announced, "I am part of the Red Cross Association and have come to take you someplace safe with the protection of Sri Lankan Soldiers" the man pensively stated manifesting a bright Red Cross, I gave a wholly salute to remark my sheer appreciation. We were now escorted toward the exit with a soldier in front and behind us and the Red Cross individual helping Amma

We neared the door. Amma started to fret She normally did that, the small human inside her kicked to make her presence known. Although this time was different Amma flailed her arms saying: "the baby's coming!": After the signal, the soldier in front of us slammed a converted door, revealing a gaudy truck holding many other injured passengers being tended to by Red Cross staff. The indigence and lithe remains of the civilians made me wonder why such war was necessary. Nothing so far has been achieved other than the many casualties lost

13th July 1985  
6:10pm

My head was throbbing against the truck cabin, I was bunched up with many other passengers squeezed into one, like a can of tuna. Amma had been given a special seat to provide her with the slightest bit of comfort Beside me was an elderly man and a young Tamil boy about my age showing disgruntled faces. I could understand The boy's right arm had been minced from a land mine. I learnt about landmines from Thaththa when he was alive, fighting at the forefront of the battlefield. Inside a LTTE landmine are silenced killers aimed to fire in all directions. Once a certain area of a person/target has been blockaded, they crumble into mites. The person would only feel a sprinkle of numbness and pain would gourmand them, enlivening a nasty death. I looked up to show my respect to the gods known above, saving a 10-year-old's life, invoking this everyone to never face maltreatments again

The truck was still passing through the jungle-like area, which comprised of twisted forms of verdure, toxin-filled botany and placid trees swallowing a large area close to suicide bombers. We still weren't in the safe zone away from extirpating. Oh no, LTTE could still get us. I am certain by no means any of the people could take another blow. The expedition so far was smooth, having an undertone of bumps and bruises along with a bomb-resistant army truck alluding to threat-posing landmines. Then our travels took the rough with the smooth. The elderly man beside me dropped onto my lap, he was dead. I screamed my head off, creating a rave chain reaction; other young people joined in. I blared at the pale man thrashing about, his blood torrenting onto my skin, a mild adhesive penetrated my fear-stricken knee. An army soldier wobbled over to the back with a rifle as the driver floored the accelerator. The soldier aimed fire, letting out 20 bullets per reload My eyes squinted at the 6 bullets impelled in the man's head.

*Plan B*

Jasraj Riyat (Age 13), Aitken College

"In my story, I dive deep into the theme of heritage and diversity through Yuresh's journey in the midst of a civil war. It's a heartbreaking yet beautiful exploration of how our identities are shaped by both culture and conflict".

27th July 1985  
Time:

I put my head against the window up and embraced a new day, gazing at the new striking countryside, gently drizzled with poppies and a sky embossed with hope. This was Australia.

I glanced over Amma tendering toward my little nangi. Malli used to be silent, now he talked as usual. 14 days ago, we rocked on a boat, holding onto hope going up and down half swallowed by the murky Indian waters. I had also witnessed nuances which are now in the past. LTTE, living examples of war and dead bodies were long gone after the family were conceded with Refugee Visas. Things were back to normal... Everything was brought back except one thing, Thaththa.

*Plan B*

Jasraj Riyat (Age 13), Aitken College

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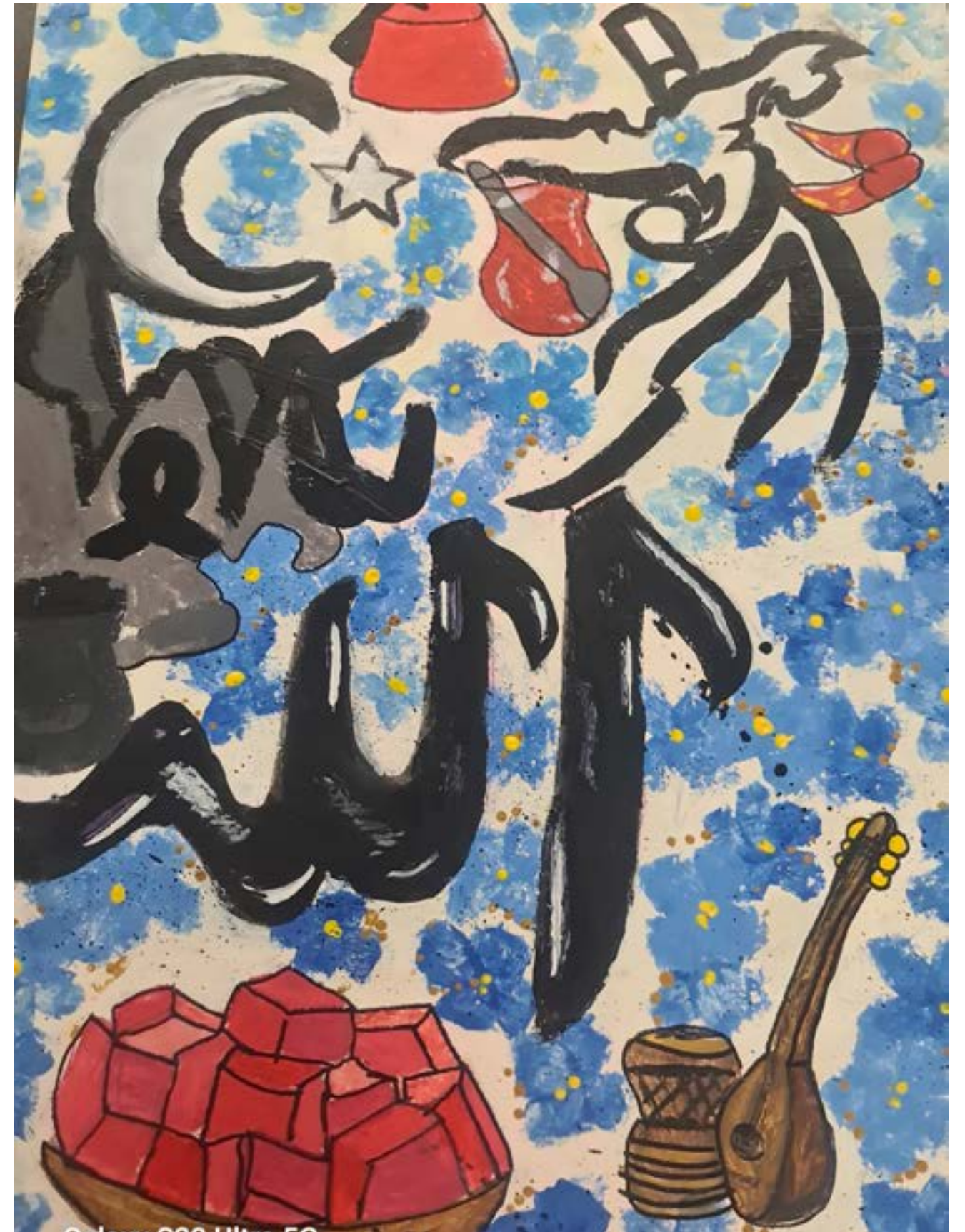




*Halfu*

**Miwa Katsuragi** (Age 13), Alice Miller High school

"I was born in Australia, with one Japanese and one Australian parent. In Japan, that's referred to as "Halfu". In Japan I am perceived as foreign, in Australia, more Asian. In my self-portrait I wanted to highlight and celebrate my features and celebrate my heritage and diversity."



*Turkish Heritage*

**Zeynep Yavus** (Age 13)

"It's Cultural".

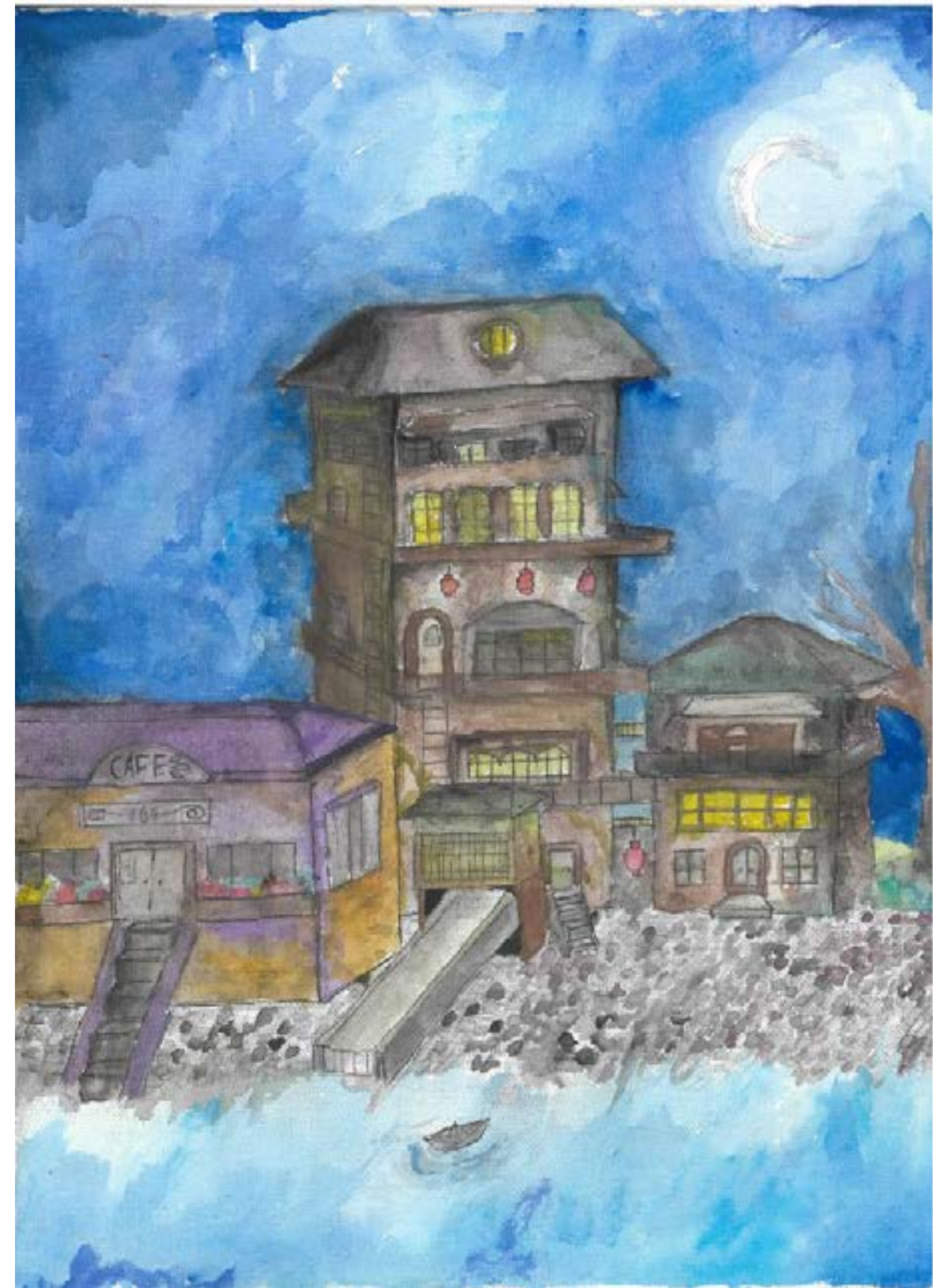




Six

**Abigail Walker** (Age 14), Sunbury Secondary College

"The Musical is a modern retelling of Henry the Eight's six wives, and the actors chosen to play these characters are noticeably diverse. In my drawing I used five different combinations of my markers for the skin tones alone, and I tried to accentuate the different hair textures of the actors, despite my cartoon-esque style."



*The Love of Diversity*

**Alveena Usmani** (Age 14), Sirius College

"This community has contributed love and support towards each other".





*The Love of Diversity*

**Alveena Usmani** (Age 14), Sirius College



*Coming Together*

**Angel Mc Donald** (Age 14), Sunbury Downs Secondary College

"Through DNA ancestry".





*Under one canopy*

**Azelya Cayir** (Age 14), Greenvale Secondary College

"This painting illustrates how individuals from various cultures find common ground and protection under a shared umbrella."

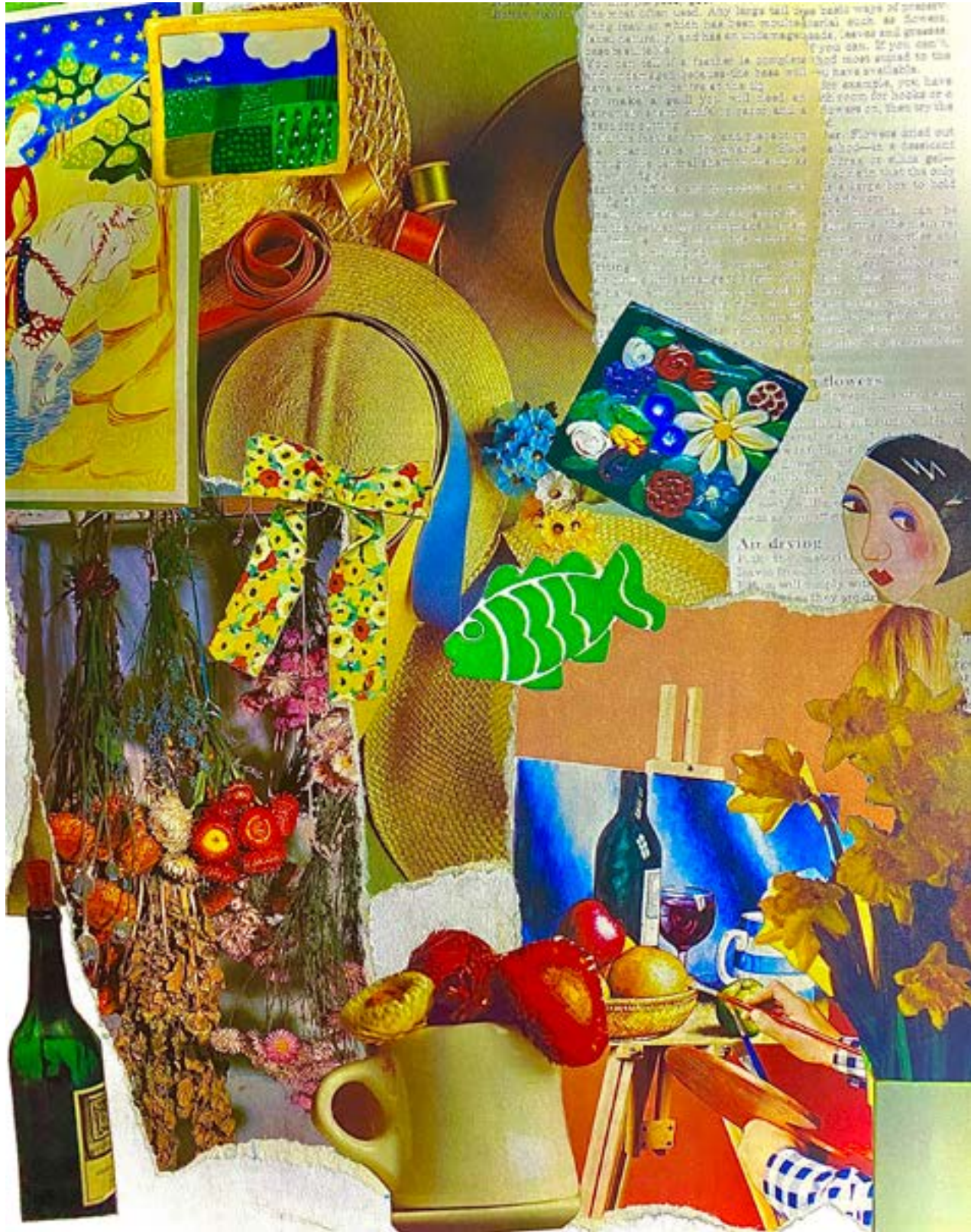


*My Culture*

**Luancecelia Loane** (Age 14), Hume Central Secondary College

"My culture, patterns and beliefs".





*Pétales et Pinot Noir*

**Chantal Elfranji** (Age 15)

"Flowers: Symbolize growth, beauty, and cultural significance in various traditions. • Fish: Can represent abundance and prosperity, relevant in many cultural heritages. • Bow and Hat: Evoke a sense of old-world charm and tradition. • Olden Day Painting: Reflects history and the richness of the past. • Writing: Signifies storytelling and the transmission of culture through generations. • Wine Glass and Bottle: Symbolize celebration and the sharing of cultural heritage through wine."



*St Mary and Baby Jesus*

**Chantal Elfranji** (Age 15),

"St. Mary is deeply revered in Lebanese Christian heritage, especially within the orthodox tradition. Many churches, festivals, and sites, such as the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, are dedicated to her. The Feast of the Assumption on August 15th is a significant celebration, reflecting her importance in Lebanon's Christian culture."





*Map of Diversity and Unity*

**Rokayya Nazzal** (Age 15), Mount Ridley College

"This digital art piece reflects the theme heritage and diversity by showing people of different race and heritage, united by religion and beliefs all around the world".



*Ichor Roots*

**Ameera Asri** (Age 16), Kangan Institute Broadmeadows

"The idea was to showcase how generational trauma runs through the roots of heritage and family, and how it impacts young people, but yet goes ignored often (thus the red roots being a normal colour in the light and red in the dark, as young people tend to make themselves seem alright and fine, when they aren't".





*Survarna*

**Delisha Kaushal** (Age 16), Kangan Institute Broadmeadows

"'Survarna', meaning 'golden' in Sanskrit, is an appropriation of Gustav Klimt's work of Adele Bloch-Bauer and depicts the celebration and positives of Indian culture. It draws inspiration from Indian jewellery and textiles, the gold being the main colour not only being referenced from Klimt's style but to show the significance of gold in Indian culture".



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**I wish that it was a nightmare:**

Tires on fire  
Smoke is becoming stronger  
Protestors are becoming crazier  
Dad please come back sooner  
Am I dreaming?  
Am I imagining?"

BOOM goes the gunshots  
BANG goes the fire shots

Knock knock the door goes

Finally dad came back!  
"Maria, go pack up fast!"  
"No time for hugs"  
"The smell is bad for us"  
We will need to take a hard way  
Since the protestors took over the street  
Life is not always the same as it have to be

Going to our beach house  
I can hear my little brother is happy and being loud  
He still doesn't know what is going on  
They warned us that there are some people breaking in beach houses  
During the nights or days through the balconies

Going to bed  
Exhausted of what happened today  
Trying to process what happened again  
I got used to it  
I know that I have to move on  
Because it have been too long  
I need to internalise my feelings in me  
So that no one realises the pain in me

Lebanon is in a bad condition  
Where is the peace that we so desperately desired?  
Why are they using fighting as their language?  
We share the same sun and moon  
Then why don't we share the same peace and love?  
Closing my eyes gradually  
Hoping that this will end more rapidly

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

Page 1

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College

"There was civil wars occurring in Lebanon when I was there, but because my dad had a famous shop there, they were planning on killing him, therefore, we had to leave."



Days and Days passes  
There were some days that school closes  
Things were getting even worse  
I'm scared that someone might get hurt  
Patience is our only solution  
There is no way to stop the revolution  
Instead of waking up listening to the bird chirps  
We are waking up terrified from the gunshot sounds  
And the screams of the crazy protestors  
I NEED to stay strong  
I know it have been so long  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me strong again

**21 February 2020**

"Covid cases had increased in Lebanon"  
School will run online from now and on  
The civil wars are still going on  
They burnt my dad's shop once or more  
Thank Allah (SWT) it was only the second floor  
We stayed in our land temporarily  
Where we are trying to protect ourselves from all the fighting  
Calling and ensuring that my family members are safe  
Hoping that no one got hurt  
"BOOM" goes the gunshots again and again  
But this time we could see the bullets shining in the sky  
Like drops of rain during the days and nights  
Demolishing my dreams within a blink of eye  
"Indeed, with every hardship comes ease"  
This is always part of me

**12 November 2020 ( It's time)**

People are planning to kill my dad  
"We have to leave before he get hurt"  
This is the only way to keep dad safe  
Before it becomes too late  
I am going to miss all my family members  
I have a lot of memories to remember  
Especially my grandma  
I can see the sorrow reflecting from her face  
My heart is so connected to her  
But there is no other way  
I need to internalise my feelings  
So that no one gets affected from my feelings  
I am so grateful with every second I spent with them

I believe that one day I'll be home again  
And start a new life, with the peace everywhere  
Goodbye Lebanon  
Good my to all my family members  
Goodbye to all the memories I remember  
Goodbye grandma  
Goodbye to all my friends  
Our aim is to go to Australia  
But go to some countries beforehand

**12 March 2021**

We came to Australia  
Everything changed  
Everything is new  
I've lost everything I've known  
I am grateful to Allah (SWT) that my dad is safe  
I can smile because the pain has gone  
But cry, because it is where I belong  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me stronger  
And make me cope more longer  
I know that I'll be back home again  
Where there will be peace all again  
We stayed in the quarantine  
Where we were told that my grandma in Lebanon have got Covid-19  
Wanting to go back and help take care of her  
But we were stuck  
There was no way out  
After quarantine  
We were told that she is getting better  
So we thought to stay more calmer  
A week after  
Her body couldn't handle more longer  
The hospital in Lebanon told us that her heart has stopped  
We were all in shock  
Oh Allah (SWT) I turn to you to make me stronger  
And handle everything going on a bit longer  
I'd give anything to see my grandma again  
And tell her how much I love her  
I have cried so many times  
But I know that I have to move on  
I saw her in my dream  
But when I woke up she was gone  
I know after every hardship comes ease"  
I will do anything to keep Allah (SWT) pleased  
I need to stop my tear and stay strong

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

*Page 2*

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

*Page 3*

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College



Happiness is only a temporary feeling  
I am grateful with every moment I spent with her  
But I know that this life will not last forever  
But the next will last for ever  
So I pray to Allah (SWT) to gather us in the place where no eye have ever seen  
And no ear have ever heard  
I know that I have to move on  
And cope with what is going on  
I need to face my grief  
Knowing that "with every hardship comes ease"  
I want to sacrifice to keep my family pleased with me  
And make them happy from me  
Keep in mind that patience is power

*Poem about why did I leave my country Lebanon*

*Page 4*

**Maria Mouhtadi** (Age 16), Ilim College



*Little Corella Feeding*

**Mohammad Akand** (Age 16), Hume Central Secondary College

"This piece shows heritage through the native Australian bird and shows the diversity in the Australian ecosystem and nature"



Once, in the quiet town of Eldergrove, a young boy named Kael lived a simple, joyous life. He spent his days playing by the river, feeling the cool, clear water rush over his feet, and exploring the dense, fragrant forests. The townsfolk, with their warm smiles and hearty laughter, were his friends. One day, while playing hide-and-seek with his friends near the old cemetery, Kael slipped on the damp grass, hit his head on a gravestone, and everything went dark.

When Kael woke, the world felt different. The vibrant colors of the autumn leaves were now muted, the birds' songs were distant echoes, and the air had an eerie chill. Confused, he wandered home, only to find his parents' house empty and silent. The once bustling town now appeared deserted. "Mom? Dad?" he called out, his voice trembling and echoing eerily through the empty halls. But no one answered. Panic started to rise in his chest as he frantically searched every room.

Kael ran through the deserted streets, calling out to familiar faces. He saw Mr. Thompson, the baker, but when he tried to talk to him, Mr. Thompson continued kneading dough, oblivious to Kael's presence. Desperation grew as Kael realized he could walk through walls and couldn't touch anything. It dawned on him: he was a ghost. Desperate to return to his normal life, Kael roamed the town, seeking a way to become human again.

He remembered stories about a wise old woman, Elara, who lived on the outskirts of Eldergrove. Legends said she had powers that could communicate with the otherworldly. With newfound determination, Kael floated to her cottage, the journey through the dark, misty woods filling him with both hope and dread.

Elara's cottage, surrounded by ancient, twisted trees, was bathed in a soft, ethereal light. As he approached, Elara seemed to sense his presence. "Come in, young spirit," she said gently, her voice like a comforting melody. Kael felt a sliver of hope ignite within him.

Inside, Elara's cottage was filled with the rich aroma of herbs and incense. She listened intently as Kael explained his plight, her wise eyes full of sympathy and understanding.

"I can help you, but the path is difficult," she began, her voice both grave and kind. "You must find the Kamín, a gem hidden deep within the forest. It is said to bridge the gap between life and death and can restore you to your human form."

With a mission clear in his mind, Kael ventured into the forest. He searched tirelessly, facing challenges and puzzles that tested his resolve. He navigated through dark caves, crossed raging rivers, and deciphered ancient runes. Days turned into weeks, but finally, he found the Kamín, glowing faintly beneath a gnarled old tree, its light piercing through the darkness.

Elara prepared a ritual to use the Kamín. The air crackled with energy as she chanted ancient words, and the gem pulsed with life. As the ritual neared its climax, a strange sensation washed over Kael. He felt warmth, a heartbeat, a breath. His vision cleared, and colors returned in their vibrant glory.

*Once*  
Page 1

Isha Sodhi (Age 16), Hume Libraries Creative Writing Competition

Joy surged through him, and he raced back to town, eager to reunite with his family and friends. But as he ran through the streets, a chilling realization struck him. The town was still empty, the silence deafening.

Desperately, he reached his home. He found his parents there, sitting at the dining table, but they were different—pale and translucent. His heart sank as he realized the truth. He wasn't the ghost; everyone else was.

"Mom? Dad?" His voice trembled as he approached them, his hands shaking.

His mother looked up, her eyes filled with a sorrowful recognition. "Oh, Kael. We didn't want you to know this way."

Tears welled up in his eyes. "What happened? How did this happen?"

His father spoke, his voice echoing with a haunting resonance. "There was a terrible accident the day you fell, Kael. A gas leak in the town... it claimed us all."

"But why wasn't I affected?" Kael asked, confusion and grief mingling in his voice.

His mother sighed softly. "When you hit your head, you were knocked unconscious. The accident happened just after that, and by some twist of fate, you were outside the town's limits, hidden in the cemetery. The gas didn't reach you."

The accident at the cemetery hadn't taken his life but rather, a mysterious event had taken the lives of everyone else in Eldergrove. He had been living in a spectral version of his world, his ghostly presence the only thing tethering him to his loved ones.

Kael sat down, feeling the weight of his loneliness. But then, he understood that he had a new purpose. He wasn't alone; he could help the spirits of his family and friends find peace. With the Kamín, he would become a bridge, guiding them to the afterlife.

He took his mother's hand, feeling an ethereal warmth. "I'll help you all move on," he said with determination. "I'll make sure you're at peace."

His mother smiled sadly. "Thank you, Kael. You've always had such a big heart."

One by one, Kael visited each spirit in the town, using the Kamín to guide them towards the light. He listened to their stories, shared in their sorrows, and celebrated their joys. As each spirit departed, the town grew a little quieter, a little emptier, but Kael felt a growing sense of fulfillment.

As the last spirit faded into the light, Kael stood in the center of the now deserted town, feeling a profound peace. The Kamín, now devoid of its glow, crumbled into dust in his hands. He had fulfilled his mission.

*Once*  
Page 2

Isha Sodhi (Age 16), Hume Libraries Creative Writing Competition



Elara appeared before him, her spectral form more radiant than ever. "You have done well, Kael. You have given them peace."

"Thank you, Elara," Kael replied, feeling a deep gratitude. "But what now? Am I to remain here, alone?"

Elara shook her head. "Your journey is not yet over. You have learned to help others, to bring peace. Now, it is time for you to live your life, to find your own peace."

With those words, Elara touched Kael's forehead, and a brilliant light enveloped him. When the light faded, Kael found himself standing by the river, the sun shining brightly, the sounds of life around him once more. He was alive.

Tears streamed down his face as he looked around, feeling the warmth of the sun on his skin, the cool breeze in his hair. He knew he had a second chance at life, a chance to honor the memories of those he had helped.

Years passed, and Eldergrove thrived once more. Kael grew up to become a kind and wise man, always remembering the lessons he had learned and the spirits he had guided. He married a lovely woman named Ebinez, who shared his love for the town and its history. Together, they had children, and Kael often took them to the river and the forest, sharing stories of bravery, love, and loss.

He became a guardian of Eldergrove, not only to the living but also honoring the spirits of the past. Every year, on the anniversary of the tragic event, Kael would gather the townsfolk for a memorial, reminding them of the love and community that had once flourished and could thrive again.

And so, Kael found his peace, not in solitude, but in the community he helped rebuild, in the family he nurtured, and in the memories he cherished. Eldergrove became a place where the living and the memories of the departed coexisted in harmony, a testament to the enduring power of love and the resilience of the human spirit.

*Once*  
Page 3

*Isha Sodhi (Age 16), Hume Libraries Creative Writing Competition*



*The Blooming*

**Preeyapat Promrat** (Age 16), Mount Ridley College

"The two main elements in this painting are the various flowers and the three gods in the center. The flowers are like people, who are diverse and different from each other, both in the cold and the tropics. They grow in different soils and are therefore different and have their own beauty. The three gods in the center are all gods of love from different beliefs. They also show the uniqueness of the people in different areas and beliefs. The names of the three gods are Rabbit God, Aphrodite, and Laksmi."



## Dreams Across the Horizon

**My parents embarked on a journey to Australia alone 20 years ago, seeking dreams, aspirations, and opportunities despite the fear and nervousness that comes with exploring a new chapter in their lives.**

*My father comes from a large family of farmers in India. His grandfather founded the family house where he had 4 sons and 4 daughters. From these humble beginnings, the oldest and most successful of these children, my grandfather, brought his family to wealth and prosperity through his business ventures and hard work.*

**Father:** "When I was a small kid, my father worked on boats; he travelled the world. When everyone else was drinking or gambling, he would spend months on the boat learning the languages of each country he went to. He was the most educated and smart person in our whole family and still is to this day. He was sure that he wanted to send me and my brother abroad. In all his travels, he found only one country suitable for a new life for his son, so it was predetermined that I would be going to Australia."

*My mother on the other hand came from a very well educated and wealthy family in the city. Her father was a successful accountant while her mother had multiple bachelor degrees but decided to be a housewife to raise their daughters well. These daughters were very engaged with western culture, from watching "The Matrix", to listening to "Backstreet Boys" on TV, or reading English books; the oldest of these daughters was my mother.*

**Mother:** "I wanted to study and start a new life abroad. I had always had a passion for teaching. As the eldest sibling in the family I was often looking after children. But I wanted to do it overseas, I wanted to explore the world beyond India, I knew that I didn't want to spend the rest of my life here. I had met my husband through a family friend and found out that he was planning to go to Australia. So when he came to my house's front door and asked my father if he could marry me, I knew this was my chance to go overseas. Even though I was only 20, which is young even in India terms, my father reluctantly accepted the proposal for me to achieve my dreams. After a rushed marriage, we were sent across the world to Australia the next year."

"All we brought was some clothes, toiletries, dishes, and \$1000. It was the first time I had been without family, without friends, in this mysterious foreign country. When we first got here, we were living in shared accommodation; a very small unit in Thomastown where we lived with another family we didn't know. It was all we could afford, money was very hard at the beginning because my husband struggled to find work. On top of paying for the rent, he was also paying for our food, bills, taxes, and my university fees. When he did land a job, he would walk over 5 kilometres to work and back everyday because he couldn't even afford a taxi, let alone a car."

**Father:** "Australia was very different from India. You go from seeing the same people in your hometown to now a variety of different people from different cultures everywhere you go. The hardest thing to adjust to was having no family or friends. We were the first generation from our family in Australia so naturally we had zero connections. This also made us feel

*Dreams across the Horizon*

**Sahnan Saini** (Age 16), Suzanne Cory High school

"My submission relates to the theme of heritage and diversity by exploring my parents' heritage and journey to Australia, as well as the challenges they faced in terms of fitting in, diversity, and racism."

very alone; my wife found it really hard to adjust as she had always been surrounded with friends and family. Now she was over 10,000 kilometres away from them. The most apparent difference was the language barrier. While my wife was educated well in English from living in the city, I grew up on a farm in the countryside where the closest word we had to English was "Chutney". Learning the language, especially when everyone spoke with such a thick accent, was really difficult for me."

"Furthermore, finding a job as an Indian in a white dominated industry was nearly impossible. When I did get one, I was disrespected and disregarded in many ways. While everyone always took the Christmas holidays off, I was scolded for asking to celebrate Diwali, my cultural holiday. When I caught public transport, people would often avoid sitting with me even if I was surrounded by open seats. When we eventually did get a car, I often got fined while driving because of my race. They would pull me over without a reason and be unnecessarily rude, I couldn't do much as I was still struggling to speak the language. We both faced so much discrimination when we came here, it's better now but it still exists."

"Sometimes when you travel around Australia, you still get dirty looks in public, still get stereotyped often, and people still assume things just because we're Indian. But it doesn't bother me much, because I know back in our neighbourhood we are respected and appreciated for who we are, and that's what matters in the end. Our Indian community in Craigieburn is strong, we all support each other and celebrate our cultures while still acknowledging and respecting everyone's differences"

**Mother:** "Raising children was difficult. It was hard to blend lifestyles so they could still be Indian while living in Australia. They were brown, surrounded by people who weren't, they were vegetarians, surrounded by people who weren't, and they had Indian accents from only talking to us. It was hard for them to understand and learn two languages and cultures at the same time, but despite all this, I'm very satisfied with how they have grown. They managed to successfully embrace both their Indian and Australian identities. They were able to quickly feel belonged and accepted in this world where it took us so long to. We faced a lot of challenges in this country, but I have no regrets coming here; I love Australia. We might have been very young and alone when we came here, but thanks to that we were able to learn so many things and grow into independent people. This beautiful country gave us the freedom and opportunities that India couldn't give us. Surrounded by a great circle of friends and family, we can now call this country our home. We're grateful and thankful for this country for letting us achieve our dreams, learn and grow, and most importantly, give us a home where we feel we belong."

*Dreams across the Horizon*

**Sahnan Saini** (Age 16), Suzanne Cory High school

"My submission relates to the theme of heritage and diversity by exploring my parents' heritage and journey to Australia, as well as the challenges they faced in terms of fitting in, diversity, and racism."





*Dreams across the Horizon*

**Zyle Nolan Tacoloy** (Age 16), Kolbe Catholic college

"Heritage and diversity affect our whole being but still upholding the essence of humanity which is to live in harmony and settle differences the right way."



*Hume: Our Community*

**Hayley Rogato** (Age 17), The Gateway School

"It represents how accepting the City of Hume is with the large amount of diversity."



## HUME: OUR COMMUNITY

If you're from the northern suburbs of Melbourne, then you know how diverse and mixed the community is. The city of Hume is home to many cultures, ethnicities, genders, ages, sexualities, disabilities and more. It is home to difference, change and acceptance, because Hume and all of Melbourne has made that good change happen, many people from overseas, different cultures, genders, ages, sexualities, disabilities, ethnicities and a lot more, feel more 'at home' and welcomed due to this. We as a whole community accept those who are different or feel like they are different, and because we have accepted so many different people from all over the world or those who have changed their identities, or genders, sexualities, cultures etc, we don't care where you're from, what you look like, what you're gender or sexuality is, what you're religion or culture is, all that matters is that you're apart of the Hume community, and you're a HUMAN BEING! We accept you for who YOU are, not what your background, religion, culture, your age, gender or sexuality or any of that, Hume is home to difference and change. If you're a boy wanting to become a girl, then go ahead, it's what YOU want to do and no one has the right to tell you otherwise. If you're someone who wants to convert to a religion or culture, again, go ahead, it's what YOU want to do, no one can tell you otherwise. It's up to YOU what you want to do, nobody else but YOU, YOU are in control of yourself, YOU can decide what YOU want to do with YOUR life. Even with all the chaos and 'wars' happening, you can still do what YOU want to do, and if someone tries to stop you, tell them to turn around and walk away, because they don't deserve to tell YOU what to do with YOUR life. Hume has changed so much over the years, it's become a more welcoming and accepting community, and in my opinion, it's made Hume a better place and a safer place.

*-Hume may be a bit intense, but it's a safe, welcoming and accepting community.  
-Hayley Rogato*

*Hume: Our Community*

**Hayley Rogato** (Age 17), The Gateway School

"It represents how accepting the City of Hume is with the large amount of diversity."



*Strength of Diversity*

**Onela Ibrahim** (Age 17), Mount Ridley College

"We are each unique, and it is crucial to recognise those distinctions as "diversity is what makes us strong". When we unite and interact with a variety of perspectives, we create a future that is more "powerful" than any single experience could create alone."





*Untitled*

**Sophie Zheng** (Age 17), Mount Ridley College

"This was a digital illustration I created, with the intention of researching different outfits from different cultures. The top character is an existing character from a game I play, whereas the bottom character is an original character with clothes that is Ancient Greek inspired. The concept designs are also attached to show the different iterations of the outfit I came up with, based on a variety of reference images I collected on the internet. This art process allowed me to explore clothes of styles I have never really delve into in the past, and I had a lot of fun making this work.."



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*Thrills on Track*

**Tameka Taylor-Ward** (Age 17), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)

"Thrills on track: High-Speed Excitement at the Alexandra Speedway." (Speedway)



*Melbourne's Skyline*

**Tameka Taylor-Ward** (Age 17), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)

"Melbourne's Skyline Sparkles with the Magic of Aurora Lights." (Aurora lights- Pink/green)"





*Nature's Dazzling Dance*

**Tameka Taylor-Ward** (Age 17), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)

"The Mesmerizing Glow of the Southern Lights." (Southern Lights)".



*An Endless Sea of Stars*

**Tameka Taylor-Ward** (Age 17), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)

"The Milky Way Galaxy in All its Brilliance." (Milky Way)."





"Over the past few years, The Hume Community has advanced substantially, transforming into a vibrant and supportive network."

Rainbow

**Tameka Taylor-Ward** (Age 17), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)  
"Hume City Council."



The Face of Adversity

**Eliza Develioglu** (Age 18), The Gateway School (Roxburgh College)  
"Shows how opposites can come together".





*Peace and harmony to the world*

**Leithan Guard** (Age 18), Banskia Gardens Gateway school

"There are many beautiful and wonderful people in the world, and I think if we all come together as one, we could make the world around us a better place".

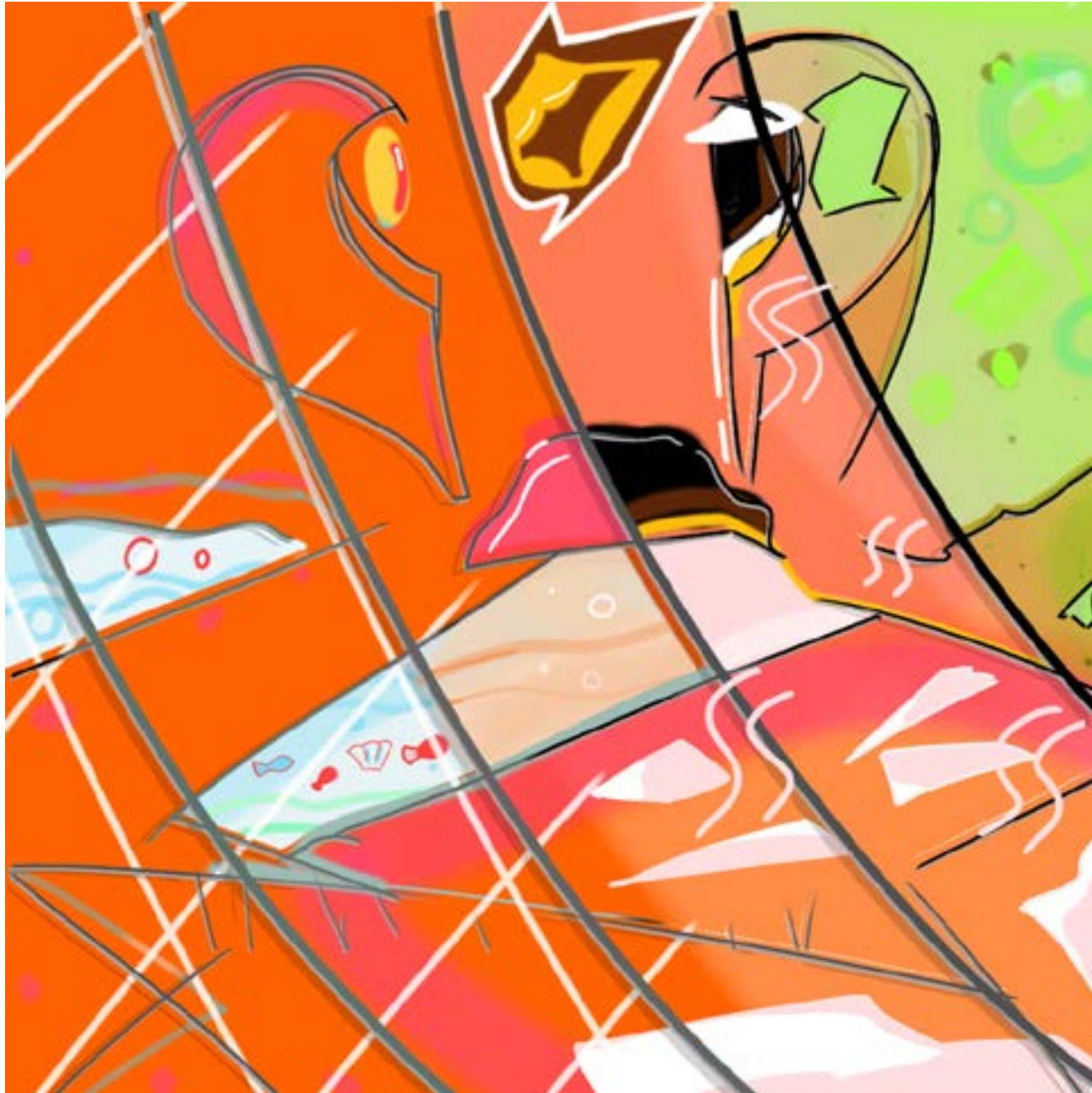


*Harmony*

**Sophie Abou Asali** (Age 18), Arabic Welfare

"This artwork tries to use colour and shape to represent the needed harmony in the community".





*How a crab's life ends*

**Trang Vo** (Age 18), Hume Central Secondary College

"Australia's seafood consumption, including crab, highlights the nation's rich coastal heritage and multicultural culinary traditions. However, this increased demand raises sustainability concerns for crab populations and marine biodiversity, which are vital to Australia's natural heritage."

19-24  
year olds





*Trip to The Continental Deli:*

**Joseph Basham** (Age 20),

" This artwork tries to use colour and shape to represent the needed harmony in the community".



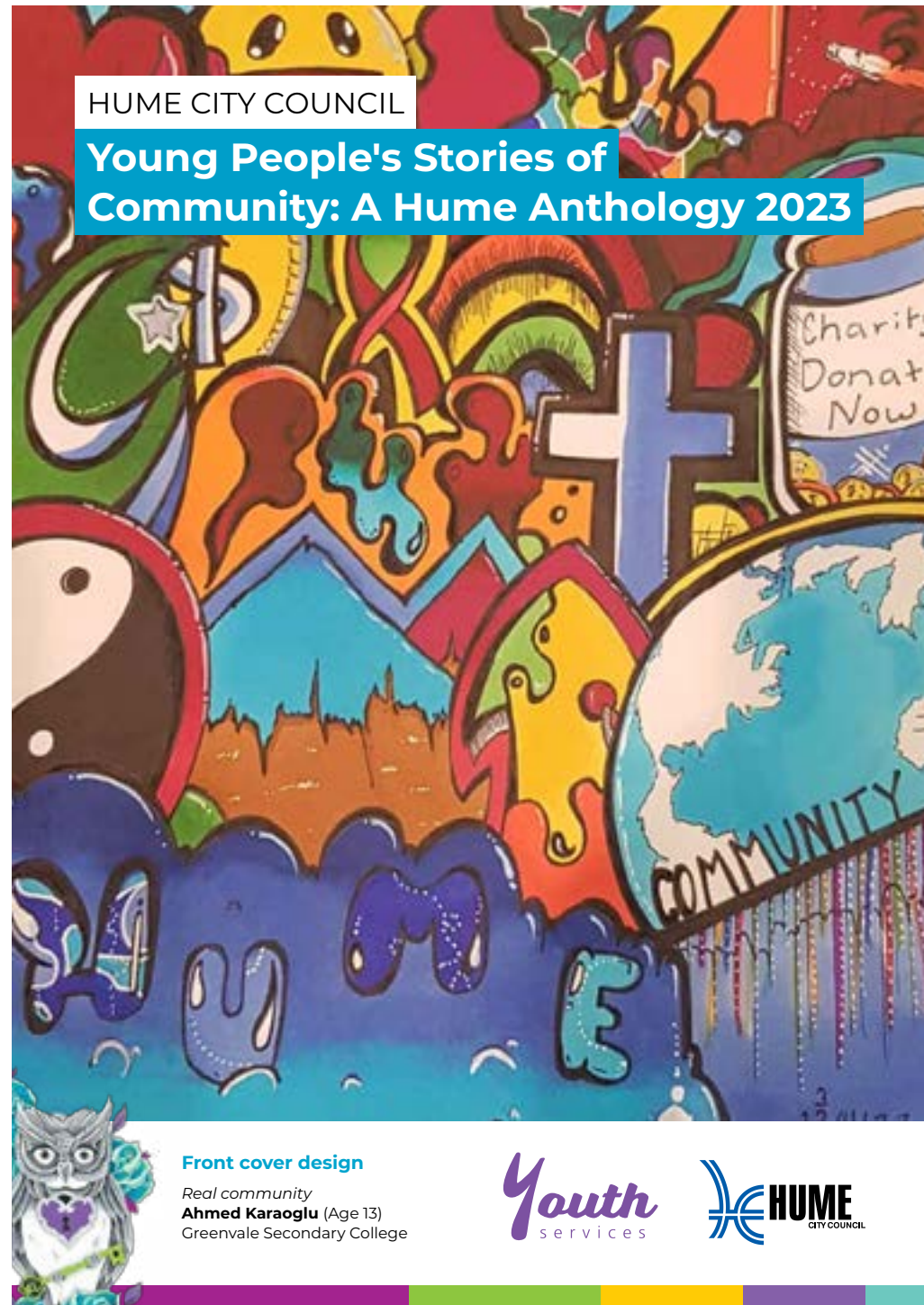
*Colourful Bird*

**Jana Tawil** (Age 24), Melbourne Polytechnic

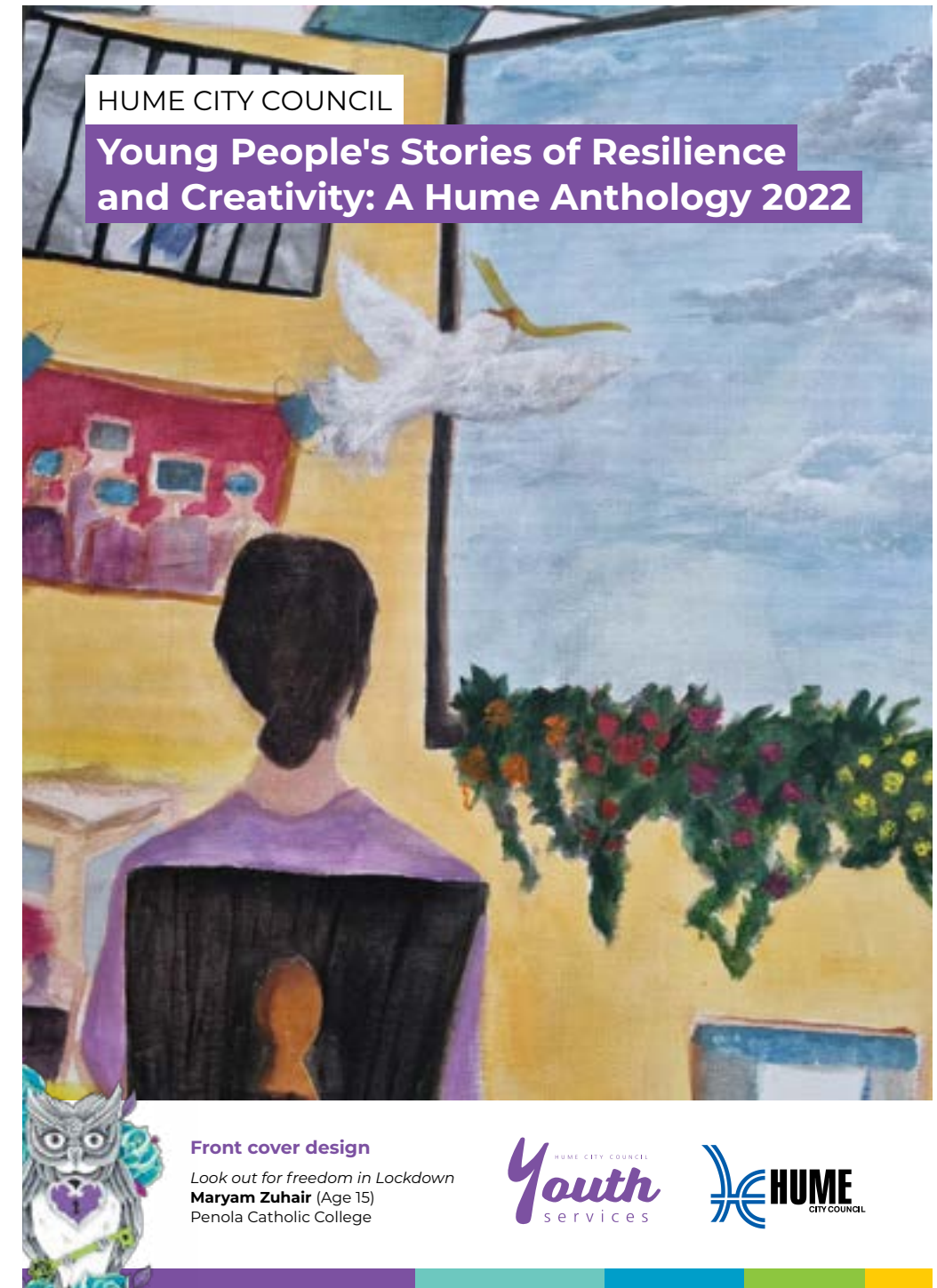
" Before arriving in Australia, I was worried about fitting into society and the new language but when I arrived, within a short period of time, I felt a sense of belonging to this beautiful country. I remembered migratory birds that stay in the areas they migrate to and adapt easily to them, and I felt like I'm free as a bird in Australia ".



# Young People's Stories of Community: A Hume Anthology 2023



# Young People's Stories of Resilience and Creativity: A Hume Anthology 2022













# HumeLink

Multilingual telephone  
information service

**Enquiries 9205 2200**

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-  **Roxburgh Park Youth Centre**  
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