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Spirituality, culture, family – defining attributes of Manjaree Cross

Aboriginal students from The University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle, have collaborated with Prendiville Catholic College in Ocean Reef to create a major glass cross designed to showcase the link between spirituality, culture and family.

The 70cm x 40cm 'Manjaree Cross', which took nearly two months to complete, was unveiled on Wednesday 28 February at the University's Manjaree Place on the Fremantle Campus. It hangs adjacent to the magnificent 5.5m long mural painted by Neta Knapp and Notre Dame students in December 2017.

Blessed by Notre Dame Campus Chaplain Fr Mariusz Grzech, the Manjaree Cross was unveiled by Mark Antulov, Principal of Prendiville Catholic College, Louise Austen, Senior Lecturer at Notre Dame's School of Medicine and Rommie Masarei, Executive Director Admissions and Student Services.

Notre Dame student and project leader, Dana Anaru, worked with students Tash Victor and Danielle Thurlow on the first phase of artwork, capturing Aboriginal spirituality through the use of bold colours, diverse symbols and culture of Country on this cross.

They focused on colours of sea and land, as well as intricate symbols of creation, collaboration and rebirth. And they created one of the most striking features of the cross – three large rings, representing the University's Fremantle, Broome and Sydney Campuses.

Based on their design, students in the unique glass making program at Prendiville Catholic College completed the work with expert guidance from Lynn Vroombout who coordinates the College's TIDE (technology, industry, design, enterprise) Program.

Mrs Masarei said the Manjaree Cross not only symbolises Jesus's love for humanity and for all life, but is tangible recognition of reconciliation at work at the University.

"Each time we walk into Manjaree Place, we're reminded of the deep and profound spirituality of Aboriginal people across this continent, many of whom hold faith and culture within their hearts, and the connective love and support for each other within the Notre Dame community – which also extends way beyond these walls," Mrs Masarei said.

President of the Notre Dame Student Association, Dylan Gojak, said the special glass cross will be constant reminder of the importance Manjaree Place has within the Notre Dame community.

"From little things big things grow is an adage aptly suited for Manjaree Place. Seeing this space grow since its opening as an inclusive and diverse space that welcomes students and strengthens links between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is very special," Dylan said.

"The Manjaree Cross grew out of a want by the NDSA to contribute something to this space and the artists who designed and created this cross, along with the students at Prendiville Catholic College, have done a brilliant job."

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Caption: Students and staff from Notre Dame and Prendiville Catholic College at the unveiling of the Manjaree Cross.



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