

## Mascot Public School empowers students with Wakakirri Story Dance



**W**akakirri's Best Start Program (formerly the Artist in Residence Program) has been helping Mascot Public School to participate by enlisting a Wakakirri professional to facilitate their Story Dance production.

The school's Wakakirri Coordinator Cherie Hamilton has engaged Best Start to do the heavy lifting of producing Wakakirri items so she can focus on the organisational aspects.

Mascot is in a largely low-socio-economic area and has limited resources for the Arts. As Mascot's Best Start facilitator, Wakakirri's Hannah Barn has been working with Hamilton to cater the experience to their school community.

In their first year, Mascot used the school's uniforms and sporting equipment to tell a schoolyard story about children who love sport and dance existing in

harmony. In 2018, the students are telling the story of 'The terrible, no good, very bad day'.

A 10-12 week mid-year program, Best Start can be integrated as an in-class incursion or offered as an extracurricular activity. At Mascot, Wakakirri rehearsals run once a week during lunch breaks for Years 3 to 6.

"Year after year so many more kids want to get involved because they hear from their friends how much fun it is," says Hamilton. "They're just so excited, every year they're asking 'when is Wakakirri starting?'"

The school's P&C Association has made it a yearly goal to support Wakakirri by funding props, costumes and the show day dinner. The P&C also sponsors five students by covering their participation fees.

Wakakirri culminates in the opportunity for schools to perform at professional theatres around the country. For the last two years, Mascot has moved through to perform at Wakakirri Awards Nights.

Cherie Hamilton says that with the support of Best Start, she has seen her students gain confidence and mingle with students from other grades they otherwise wouldn't.

"I think that the program is so fantastic because as a teacher that I wouldn't have the time to put together a Wakakirri piece by myself. It means that we have been able to give the kids an opportunity that we otherwise wouldn't have been able to."

*For information about Wakakirri and the Best Start Program call Waka HQ on 1800 650 979 or visit [wakakirri.com](http://wakakirri.com)*

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