National Reconciliation Week: Sunday 27 May – Sunday 3 June

On Thursday 24 May, Hakeem, Sarah and Ash spoke at the Middle School (MS) assembly about the significance of National Reconciliation Week:

‘The dates 27 May and 3 June commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians—the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision. The 1967 referendum saw over 90 per cent of Australians vote in favour of giving the Commonwealth Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to recognise them in the national census. 2012 marks the 45th anniversary of this referendum.

On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia delivered its landmark Mabo decision, which legally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land, one that existed prior to colonisation and one that still exists today. This recognition paved the way for land rights called Native Title. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Mabo decision.’

During the week at Pembroke School, in recognition of National Reconciliation Week, several events were held. Reverend Keatch made an acknowledgement of Country during Chapel. The Aboriginal and Australian flags were displayed side by side in the library and in the MS quadrangle for the week. On Monday 28 May, Ms Corbett (Convenor of the Marree Exchange) and Ms Grandison attended the Annual Reconciliation Week Breakfast put on by Reconciliation SA at the Intercontinental Hotel. The theme of the breakfast was ‘The First Peoples of Australia: State and Federal Constitutional Reform’.

On Tuesday afternoon a Cultural Training Workshop presented by Mr Klynton Wanganeen was held at Pembroke. On the same night our Indigenous boarders joined with Indigenous students from other Independent Schools, and 66 students in all had a reconciliation dinner at Café Primo on The Parade. A good time was had by all.

The finale was a performance by Mr Nick Haynes on Thursday 31 May in the MS quadrangle. Nick is a student at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at the University of Adelaide. Playing the guitar, he sang songs he had written himself and those of other well known Indigenous singers. Several times he played the didgeridoo for his audience. It was a wonderful occasion.

Ms Grandison
Head of Science

Nick Haynes (CASM) performing in the Middle School grounds
Zanika (Yr 9), Jadeen (Yr 10), Nick Haynes (CASM), Grayson Rotumah (CASM), Hakeem (Yr 10), Michael and Jarrah (both Yr 9)