To whom it may concern,

To celebrate the conclusion of our History Unit ‘First Australians’ we have organised an excursion for the Year Three students to participate in the ‘Connecting to Country’ experience at The Royal Botanic Gardens on Tuesday 21st June 2016. We will be leaving school before recess, having lunch at the gardens, attending the afternoon session and arriving back at school before the end of the school day. Students are required to wear full school uniform.

Focus Topics
- The richness of local Aboriginal culture, its past and present Australian plants, their uses and significance to Indigenous Australians
- Making connections with our own lives by exploring connections to the land and our sense of belonging
- Exploring sustainable land-use methods used by Aboriginal people with particular reference to the local Kulin groups, the Boonwurrung and the Woiwurrung.
- Understanding the significance of the history of Aboriginal people on the Royal Botanic Gardens site and its relationship to the history of Melbourne.

Experiences include
Each class is welcomed by an Indigenous Guide through a Tanderrum Ceremony. Students explore the ancient river landscape of the Gardens examining its value in sustaining a rich cultural life. They explore the sensory quality of plants and their many and diverse uses in Aboriginal culture. Students are able to discuss their ideas regarding sustainable resource management and are introduced to examples, such as fire-stick farming and resin harvesting. Students are engaged through sensory exploration, story-telling and discussion. The opportunity to examine and use artefacts makes the connection to plants and landscape memorable and meaningful for students. Children can see and feel the fibre plant lomandra, growing and see an eel trap woven from its leaves while exploring Birrarung (the Yarra River) wetland habitat at Long Island. Ochre-grinding and mixing and painting gives students the opportunity to experience traditional painting methods whilst understanding the significance of communication in Aboriginal culture. By painting a journey they consider their own sense of belonging to land. The focus is on painting methods used by the Kulin people and the significance of ochre as a resource. The texture and qualities of fibre plants are explored by children as they use indigenous plants such as cumbungi to make a simple 2-ply string. This social experience also provides them with the opportunity to teach each other, discuss their methods and ask questions. The students will also visit and discuss Long Island, Remnant Plants and The Australian Forest Walk.

Kind regards,

Year Three Team.

Gayle Cope.