Year Three visit with Jenny Woodman

On Friday, the 8th of March, Jenny Woodman visited the Year 3/4 class. As our unit focused on local Aboriginal history, Jenny sat down with the students and talked about K’gari, the Aboriginal name for Fraser Island. It also happened to be where Jenny’s heritage lies. She is a descendent of the Butchulla People who are part of the Gubbi Gubbi language group.

Jenny held a captive audience as she sat with us and, while showing us a book displaying wonderful photos of Fraser Island, told us this Dreamtime Story.

Fraser Island is situated off the Queensland Coast adjacent to Hervey Bay on the Mainland of Australia’s Eastern shoreline. Its English name comes from a famous sea captain named Fraser, who was marooned there with his wife in 1836. It is an ancient island dating back some 750,000 years and is home to the Butchulla People and their Aboriginal Dreamtime stories.
This Dreamtime story tells of the Aboriginal God Beerál and how he sent two of his trustworthy messengers named Yindingie, together with his spirit helper K’gari to beautify the world and change the raw material into an island paradise.

So Yindingie and K’gari set off to create paradise. They did such a good job and were so tired after they were finished, that K’gari lay down to sleep in an especially beautiful bay. Whilst she was asleep, Yindingie transformed her body into a long, slim island of crystalline sand. It was the largest island of its type in the whole world.

To make the island paradise even more magnificent, Yindingie made clothes of rainforest and painted her a rainbow of colours. He gave her jewelled eyes in the form of sparkling lakes which became her eyes into heaven. He decorated the skies with magnificent birds, and so that she wouldn’t be lonely he gave the island a tribe of Aboriginals who are the Butchulla People.

Butchulla People pass on the Aboriginal Dreamtime stories from generation to generation and in their language K’gari became the word for ‘Paradise’.

After Jenny had finished, the children asked questions about why the environment is so important to the Butchulla people's spirituality, survival and history. Jenny was only too happy to answer their many inquisitive questions.