



# Artist artwork story and bio

## Be That Teacher campaign

**Artist:** Michaela Jeffries

**Title:** 'Connections'

**Year:** 2023



Michaela Jeffries is a Wiradjuri and Ngemba woman and pre-service teacher in regional NSW, on Wiradjuri Country. She is a passionate educator that is motivated to drive better outcomes for First Nations students through equitable access to quality education and learning.

Michaela draws on her experience of becoming a professional teacher to create our bespoke campaign artwork.

She reflects on her experience of walking in two worlds, and how the support of an intuitive teacher can guide this path for a fulfilling and positive future.

At the centre of the artwork, we see our teacher and student relationships illustrated through the large and smaller circles. Michaela reflects on the importance of a reciprocal relationship, as everyone has knowledge and perspectives to share, and as a First Nations teacher, she sees this as her strength.

Finding a shared path, the teacher is equal to the student, and the student equal to the teacher. This continuous respect is a unique First Nations perspective and echoed in the layers of circles. Learning is continuous and never-ending, like the circle.

Surrounding the large and smaller circles, are the connections and experiences that are shared between student and teacher, joining them on their journeys.

The next outer layer represents the cultural knowledge and ways of being. The unique perspective of being connected to Country, our history and experiences. Our laws of kinship, our trading practices and cultural values give us strength and experience to draw from.

Our final layer, on the top left and lower right corners is the most powerful knowledge. The complex cultural knowledge that runs deeper and vaster than we know. This is the

experience of our Elders, passed between generations, and through time. We draw on our verbal history, stories and knowledge that have been shared through millennia, and live on in Country. A running river, a current of knowledge that supports us on our learning and teaching journey.

Reflected in Michaela's colour palette is the 'Koori Rainbow'. Michaela invokes the 'cuppa tea' analogy. No matter the shade of our complexion, we are always connected to First Nations cultural ways and knowledge and draw on this strength throughout our educational journey.