

Northern Beaches State High School

Guardian of the Reef

This contemporary wearable art piece explores the powerful symbolism of the seafaring navigator, drawing loose inspiration from traditional Torres Strait Islander navigation by the stars. Infused with steampunk – which is a subgenre of science fiction that combines retro-futuristics technology aesthetics – and organic reef motifs, the garment becomes a vessel of storytelling – anchored in both history and imagination.

Elements of coral, fish, and oceanic textures flow through the design, echoing the vibrancy and fragility of the reef. Metallic components and intricate detailing suggest an invented past or alternate future, where ancient wisdom meets mechanical ingenuity.

The figure who wears this piece becomes the Guardian of the Reef – a protector, wayfinder, and witness to change. It honours those who read the skies and waters to survive and protect, while also raising questions about our relationship with the natural world, its beauty, and its endurance.

Guardian of the Reef 2025

Matilda ARABENA, Larita AUDA, Caydyn BROWN, Caidence COOPER, Jesse FROST, Melodi KYLE, Keira, Kallyn-Jack MURPHY, Marcus NAGAS (Model), Roselie PENNINGSON, Alierah ROSSER.

Wetsuit, wire, air dry clay, paint, mesh, foam and faux leather.



