Ingham State High School

The Paperbark Tree

For our wearable artwork, we chose to create a design inspired by the paperbark tree which is in our school grounds. As a group, we were interested in the unique textures and layered appearance of the tree's bark and wanted to transform these natural features into a piece that could be worn. We felt the paperbark tree represents strength, resilience and a strong connection to the First Nation culture.

The bark has been used for thousands of years for practical purposes including creating shelters, wrapping and cooking food, making containers and even bedding. This connection added meaning to our artwork and helped us recognise the importance of respecting First Nation knowledge and relationships with Country.

To create our artwork, we used calico, chiffon, florist wire, thread, bead, brown paper, fabric remnants and acrylic paint. The calico, chiffon and card were layered to imitate the peeling bark, while the florist wire provided structure and helped shape the form of the branches. Acrylic paint was applied to paper to recreate the natural colours and textures found in a paperbark tree. Thread was used to attach materials and add details like the beaded insects, and the breast plate was incorporated to suggest strength and structure.

We focused on the art elements of texture, colour, line and shape. Texture was especially important as we wanted the artwork to resemble the rough, layered bark of the tree. Organic lines and shapes created a natural appearance, while earthy tones of brown, cream and green reflected the colours found in nature. Through this artwork, we are celebrating the beauty of Australian native trees and encourage people to appreciate the natural environment.

The Paperbark Tree 2026

Calico, chiffon, florist wire, thread, beads, chiffon, brown card, wire, tissue paper and acrylic paint