



We belong

**ART** Deaf  
EXHIBITION Children  
2026 Australia.

# We belong ART EXHIBITION 2026

“Every art piece and statement is a true reflection of what ‘We belong’ means to each deaf and hard of hearing artist. Together, they convey a powerful message: while everyone is unique, our diversity is what creates a sense of belonging. Within the artworks and artists words there is a strong emphasis on connection and relationships within community, school and at home. No two people are the same, yet we can all celebrate our differences and come together as one.”

**Tamara Trinder-Scacco**  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEADER

## ABOUT DEAF CHILDREN AUSTRALIA



Deaf Children Australia (DCA) proudly presents the fifth annual Art Exhibition, hosted at the Bluestone building, F.J. Rose Auditorium. This exhibition celebrates the creativity and talent of deaf and hard of hearing children and young people from across Australia responding to the theme ‘We belong’. The Art Competition provides a platform for young artists to be supported and inspired as they explore their potential, build confidence, and discover new ways to express themselves.

The three age group categories are: 8 to 11, 12 to 17 and 18 to 23 years. The Early Education Group Project category for children aged 0 to 11, encourages two or more children from a Kindergarten, Primary School or Early Intervention Centre to collaborate on an artwork together. We thank all the young artists and educators for their fantastic contributions.

In total, 89 artworks were submitted this year, each a powerful response to the theme ‘We belong’. The works showcase creativity, community and connection through paintings, drawings, digital art, mixed media and more. We invite you to read the brilliant stories behind the artworks, or watch the Auslan videos of the artists words.

Deaf Children Australia (DCA) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to helping create a world where children and young people who are deaf and hard of hearing have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

By developing and delivering a range of services, resources and events, DCA supports families and works so that deaf and hard of hearing young people can have the same opportunities as their hearing peers.

For more information about the work of Deaf Children Australia, visit our website.

[deafchildrenaustralia.org.au](https://deafchildrenaustralia.org.au)



## THE JUDGES



HAYLEY EDGAR



JORLENE LIM



OLIVIA BEASLEY

## THE PRIZES

We would like to thank and acknowledge our wonderful judges: Hayley Edgar, Jorlene Lim and Olivia Beasley. Learn more about our judges on our website [deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/art-exhibition/](https://deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/art-exhibition/)

We are delighted to have such highly regarded multidisciplinary faces from the Australian Art and Deaf Community take the time to review and provide feedback on the work submitted. As young creatives they have all forged their own path in the creative industry, and are shining role models for our young artists.

It takes courage to put your creativity out into the world. Congratulations to all 89 entrants - even if you didn't win a prize this time, you are all winners!

|                                                              |                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>8 to 11 Years</b><br>1st Prize \$500<br>Runner Up \$250   | <b>12 to 17 Years</b><br>1st Prize \$700<br>Runner Up \$300                                |
| <b>18 to 23 Years</b><br>1st Prize \$1000<br>Runner Up \$500 | <b>Early Education Group Project (0 to 11 Years)</b><br>1st Prize \$800<br>Runner Up \$450 |

## THE CELEBRATION

Winners and runners up will be announced on 24 September at a VIP launch event. Special thanks go out to our MC's Emma Memma and Elvin Melvin, who will join us on the night to celebrate the artists, and welcome families, friends and guests to the ‘We belong’ exhibition.

## THANK YOU

Many thanks to dmemories4U for making custom puzzles for all our entrants featuring their own artwork as keepsakes. Discover more at [dmemories4u.com.au](https://dmemories4u.com.au).



CATEGORY  
8 TO 11  
YEARS

- 01. Logan Afflick **MUSICABLE**
- 02. Thea Belle Armistead **HEARING THE WORLD ABOVE**
- 03. Gemma Berlin **WE BELONG EVERYWHERE!**
- 04. Oliver Boomsma **WE BELONG FC**
- 05. Xavier Boschan **NIGHT AND DAY**
- 06. Amilla Britten **FRIENDSHIP**
- 07. Leah Butler **US COMBINED**
- 08. Linkin Cooper **WE ALL BELONG**
- 09. Maeve Dalton **SEEDS OF BELONGING**
- 10. Klaire Desler **IN PEACE**
- 11. Oliver Finn **MY COMMUNITY**
- 12. Emily Fuller **NO MATTER HOW WE LOOK - EVERYONE STILL BELONGS**
- 13. Maddison Furrugia **EVERYONE BELONGS**
- 14. Tal Goldberg **FRIENDSHIP FROM THE HEART**
- 15. Kaden Gould **PLANET EARTH OUR BRIGHT HOME**
- 16. Isabelle Goyen **DIFFERENCES BELONG**
- 17. Ezekiel Hernandez **ABOUT ME**
- 18. Niana Heron-Teokotai **FRIENDSHIP**
- 19. Henrietta Horsfall **THE GARDEN CENTRE**
- 20. Huda Ibrahim **HAND, HANDS EVERYWHERE**
- 21. Jayna Jayesh **UNDER THE SAME SKY**
- 22. Elloise Jones **I BELONG**
- 23. Sienna Kelly **WE BELONG IN OTHER PEOPLE’S HEART’S**
- 24. Mabel Knop **BELONG - A HEARING AID WORLD**
- 25. Abby Kui **I BELONG IN THE WORLD**
- 26. Emma Lai **YOU BELONG**
- 27. Krystal Le **THE FOUND FRIEND**
- 28. Reuben Leonardo **REUBEN BELONGS**
- 29. Alex Liang **MY PLACE IN THE WORLD**
- 30. Hidayah Maraikayer **WE BELONG ON EARTH**
- 31. Luca Misquitta **HOW I BELONG**
- 32. Mikayla Mooney **WHALE SHARK**
- 33. Ali Moustafa **THE WORLD BELONGS**
- 34. Saharia Napoles **THAT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I BELONG**
- 35. Lexi O’Kane **LEXI’S BRAIN OF THOUGHTS**
- 36. Tyler O’Kane **WE ALL BELONG**
- 37. Mazin Osman **BELONGING TO EARTH**
- 38. Reggie Randall **EVERYONE BELONGS**
- 39. William Rockliff **ROCK CLIMBING**
- 40. Mason Ryan **DREAMS DO COME TRUE**
- 41. Jasmin Seedin **WE BELONG HERE AND WE ALWAYS WILL**
- 42. Anowar Shah **ANOWAR**
- 43. Natalie Shum **WE BELONG/MY QUIET PLACE**
- 44. Annabel Van Der Meer **MY FRIENDS, MY WORLD**
- 45. Liam Vivares **THE RUBIK’S CUBE WITH A COCHLEAR**
- 46. Charlene Vong **THE SOLUTION WE CAME UP WITH**
- 47. Ronal Wanigatunga **WE LIVE WHERE WE BELONG**
- 48. Piper Williams **THE GREAT BARRIER REEF OF THE DEAF**

CATEGORY  
12 TO 17  
YEARS

- 49. Lexie Adams **THE BEST PARTS OF ME**
- 50. George Ardlie **REMEMBER**
- 51. Liam Armstrong **PLANET FUN A PLACE FOR EVERYONE**
- 52. Chloe Brown **A PERFECT FIT**
- 53. Oliver Carr **MY HOUSE**
- 54. Aria Damjancuk **THE SHINING OF A GYMNAST**
- 55. Pachit (Bon) Detkhum **WE BELONG**
- 56. Lilla Duncan **BUTTER-LILLA-FLY**
- 57. Isabella Egel **DREAMER GIRL**
- 58. Billy Garcia **WE BELONG IN THE SILENT CLASSROOM**
- 59. Betselot Getaneh **KINDNESS SPACE FLOW**
- 60. Jessmie Gill **GROWING TOGETHER**
- 61. Hayden Jung **THE SUBMERGED SANCTUARY**
- 62. Pene Junior Luatua **MY HEART IS SAMOAN**
- 63. Liam O’Loughlin **WHERE WE BELONG**
- 64. Lillian Quane **GRASSROOTS TO GLORY**
- 65. Charlie Shackcloth **I BELONG, YOU BELONG, WE BELONG**
- 66. Kurlraj Singh **WORLD FOR THE DEAF**
- 67. Abaka Smith **NGOELMUN DANALAIG “OUR LIVES/WAY OF LIFE”**
- 68. Ebony William **SQUIGGLES AND WIGGLES BELONG IN THE ART GALLERY**
- 69. Kahleeya Wilson **FRIENDS WHO ACCEPT ME, FOR ME**

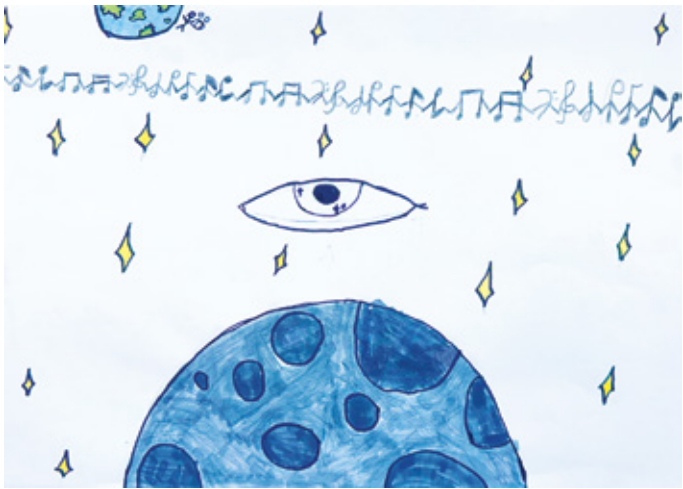
CATEGORY  
18 TO 23  
YEARS

- 70. Jazmyn Chalmers **LOOKING UP**
- 71. Rita Daa **MY JOURNEY TO BELONGING**
- 72. Jakob Demirel **WE BELONG**
- 73. Olivia Hermez **WE BELONG**
- 74. Nathan Lai **THE GIRAFFE**
- 75. Savannah Mandile **THE GREAT OUTDOORS**
- 76. Yvonne Nguyen **EACH OTHER**
- 77. Samadi Weerasingha **ABOVE AND BENEATH THE SURFACE**

CATEGORY  
EARLY  
EDUCATION  
GROUP  
PROJECT

- 78. Aurora School **BELONGING**
- 79. Box Hill Public School **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**
- 80. Eastwood Primary School and Deaf Facility **BUILDING BELONGING: BRICK BY BRICK**
- 81. Furlong Park School for Deaf Children Group 1 **BRIGHT HANDS SIGN TOGETHER**
- 82. Furlong Park School for Deaf Children Group 2 **LITTLE FINGER FRIENDS**
- 83. Goulburn Hearing Support Team **BELONGING IN GOULBURN**
- 84. Klemzig Centre of Deaf Education **WE ALL BELONG IN THIS WORLD**
- 85. Methodist Ladies’ College **OUR COLOURFUL WORLD**
- 86. Next Sense Werrington **I CAN CONNECT THE WORLD**
- 87. Strathcona Girls Grammar School Group 1 **A SCARF OF CONNECTION**
- 88. Strathcona Girls Grammar School Group 2 **WHERE WE BELONG**
- 89. Willmott Park Primary School **WE BELONG TO AUSTRALIA**

CATEGORY  
**8 TO 11 YEARS**



**1. MUSICABLE**

by Logan Afflick, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork shows a girl's eye above the moon looking at music notes. This connects to the theme because the music notes are holding hands because they all belong to the same world. They represent different music styles. In the same way, we all look different, but we still all belong. I want to remind people that music can help us feel that we belong.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

My artwork explores the ideas of inclusivity and diversity. The music notes go all around the world and meet to make music from all around the world.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

I created a drawing which I sketched with a pencil and then I added some colours with markers. I chose this because I wanted my drawing to look neat and clear.



**2. HEARING THE WORLD ABOVE**

by Thea Belle Armistead, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

The girl in the painting feels like she belongs, because she has hearing aids that help her listen to the world around her.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

With hearing aids you can hear things in the world around you.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

Water colour painting

***Anything else you'd like to add?***

This is a painting of a girl with hearing aids, she is out in nature listening to the sounds around her. She belongs because she has hearing aids.





3. WE BELONG EVERYWHERE!

by Gemma Berlin, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows all the different parts of my life where I feel included, such as, ice skating, writing and drawing, listening to music with my friends or family, running and playing sport with people and mostly hanging out with my family.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

While I have selected a few different themes from my favourite places where I belong this artwork shows that I have the right to be included in any type of activity and I deserve the right to be treated kindly in anything I want to do. As a hard of hearing girl I think we should be treated the same as others.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I have made a canvas collage. I used paints, acrylic paint, markers, glue, photos. I chose this medium because I love drawing and using bright colours.



4. WE BELONG FC

by Oliver Boomsma, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Each part of the sash represents something that I belong to. The hearing aid symbol shows that I am part of the Deaf community. Together, the symbol on the sash show the different groups that help me feel like I belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows I belong to different groups that are important to me. These groups help me feel included, supported and connect to other people.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a mixed-media artwork on canvas. I used acrylic paint, a printed collage design using software and PVA glue. I chose this because it would have been very hard to paint the small details on the sash. Using software helped me create the symbols clearly while still allowing me to paint the background by hand.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Being Deaf is an important part of who I am. I hope people can see that everyone belongs somewhere and that belonging can come from lots of different communities.



5. NIGHT AND DAY

by Xavier Boschan, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows myself standing on grass with night sky at the top. It links to the theme because I feel connected to earth and I belong on earth. The message is that everyone on earth shares the same land and sky, and we all belong to the world despite our differences.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that we all share the same planet. I showed this by painting a long line of stars that travel all around the sky and that all can see.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a painting using acrylic paint on paper. I chose this because I like working with paint and mixing colours to make new colours.



6. FRIENDSHIP

by Amilla Britten, TAS

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Amilla's world as a 8-year-old is school and friends, this is where she embraces her sense of belonging and seeks new friendships.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Amilla's artwork explores the challenges of being included and accepted in the school playground. As a hard of hearing child it is sometimes hard to fit in and join the conversation when there are competing background noises. With finding new connections and being open these challenges can be overcome.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Amilla has always had a passion for reading and art. In recent years her favourite books have been Dog Man, Captain Underpants and Wings of Fire, she has taken a similar approach using black pen and watercolours in a comic book style to tell her story.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

In February 2026 we attended our first Deaf Children Australia camp held in Ulverston, Tasmania. Over the 2-day camp Amilla became good friends with Elsie, another girl the same age attending the DCA camp. Elsie is featured in her artwork.

**The story:**

I'm here... But its hard to keep up.  
Wait, what did you say?  
Hey want to play with us?  
Let's go together.  
Yeah!  
We belong. When everyone makes space.





**7. US COMBINED**

by Leah Butler, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is connected to this year's theme because it tells a story of no matter who or what you are you should be proud of that. It is a reminder to take off your mask and be you. Don't you ever stop and think how unfair it is to all those deaf people who have to hide who they are? My artwork is saying that for each bit of hate there's a million pieces of love. That's where the colours come in. Every bit of colour is their unique parts and if you look, there is the same amount of colour on both deaf and the hearing person. This means that whether you're deaf or not, everyone is unique.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

When making my artwork I wanted everyone to know that deaf or not we all belong. That's when I thought of masks. When we are in the hearing community we put on our masks and try and fit in. But when we are in the deaf community, we take off our masks and don't even have to try to fit in. Because the truth is none of us will ever fit in deaf community or not. And everyone needs to be proud of that and just be themselves.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I have made my artwork out of clay polymer, which I chose because when I heard the theme I immediately knew I wanted to make a sculpture. That's when I thought of everything else like the shape, people, colours and meaning.



**8. WE ALL BELONG**

by Linkin Cooper, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows that we all belong no matter how we communicate.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

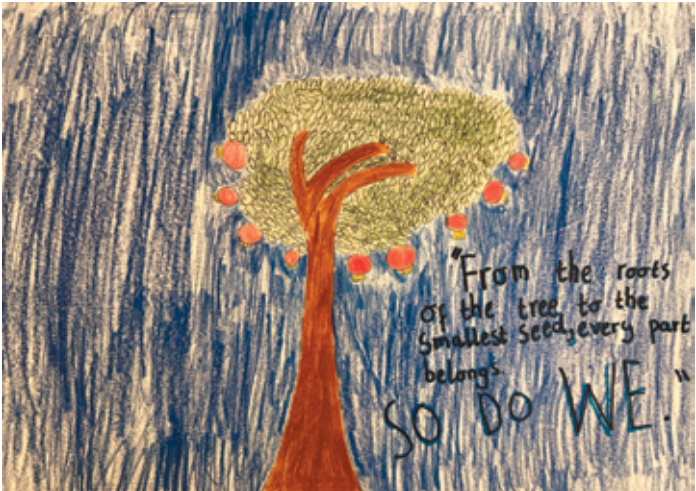
My artwork shows hands signing "belong" and my old hearing aid moulds in a love heart because they helped me hear.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Paper, texta, paints, collage using pipe cleaners and my old ear moulds.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Lots of my friends use different types of communication and they are all important and help us belong together.



**9. SEEDS OF BELONGING**

by Maeve Dalton, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

All the seeds are people, so the seeds are what makes the pomegranate taste. Each pomegranate are different communities, countries and places, without those seeds (people) it's nothing.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that everyone belongs. The seeds represent different people when they grow together into one tree, they show acceptance.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Drawing because I'm really good at it. Pencils.



**10. IN PEACE**

by Klaire Desler, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows that discrimination doesn't belong on Earth. The hands represent how we belong, and the Earth represents where we live. The message is that no matter what, we always belong together.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that no matter what we do to each other, we should always love one another.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a drawing using pencil, markers and oil pastels. I used these because they help make the art clearer and neater.





**11. MY COMMUNITY**

by Oliver Finn, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

All the stuff I have put on my artwork represents the communities I belong to.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

I have used symbols to represent different places we can belong and I belong. I have sports groups and my teams represented - football, taekwando, basketball. I have two basketballs - I play on a team with my brother, and I belong in my family.

The 6 triangles are connected to show how I belong in my family, each triangle is for my family members and my dog. I have the shield symbol to represent my school community where I belong.

I have represented that I belong with my hearing impairment and to the hearing impairment community by using the blue crescents near the ears. I choose blue and green background as we belong, on earth together, and we are part of the earth and the environment.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I drew my portrait and then carved it onto foam using a sharp tool. I cut out the foam and used this to make a print my portrait in paint. I drew

symbols and cut out coloured paper to make symbols and choose contrasting colours to help them stand out.



**12. NO MATTER HOW WE LOOK - EVERYONE STILL BELONGS**

by Emily Fuller, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Because even though people have different disabilities or can't do something like you, they still can try their hardest and achieve what they dream.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

I drew my cochlear and I showed that people are holding hands in a circle like a community.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Texta and Pencil on paper.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I added my name and a little person and a watermelon and a love heart because the love heart symbolises love and the person is holding a banner saying, 'We belong'.



**13. EVERYONE BELONGS**

by Maddison Furrugia, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows four hands with different skin colours. This connects to the theme because it shows that you belong, no matter how different you are.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that people can be different but that it doesn't matter how you look. You still belong.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a drawing using pencils and colour pencils. I chose this because I wanted the hands to look more life-like.



**14. FRIENDSHIP FROM THE HEART**

by Tal Goldberg, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

We belong in friendship: we can be opposites like night and day, hearing and non hearing. But we accept and love each other the way we are. We Belong.

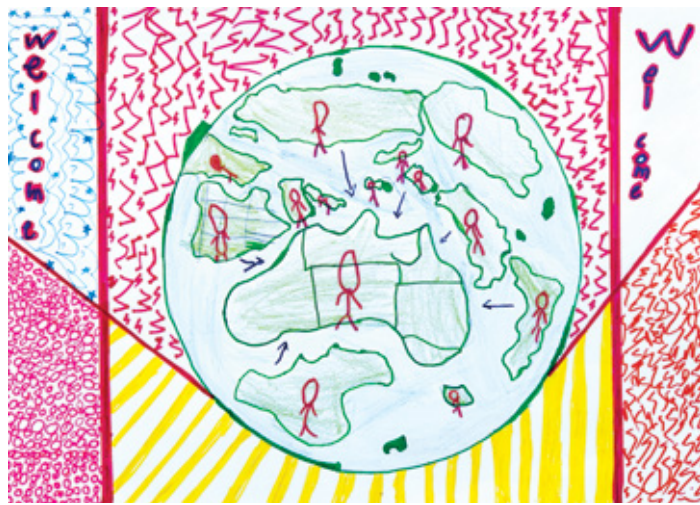
**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The ideas that my artwork explores is friendship, adventures and community - where we all belong and find our place.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I submitted a painting/drawing. I used paint, pencils and pens. I chose to work with this medium because it expresses myself best in drawings.





**15. PLANET EARTH  
OUR BRIGHT HOME**

by Kaden Gould, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

People belong to their countries and to the whole planet.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

People should feel safe and have the right to travel and discover new experiences.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Poster, textas and coloured pencils.



**16. DIFFERENCES BELONG**

by Isabelle Goyen, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My art shows lots of colourful birds in a tree sitting happily. They are all different, but they all belong together.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

It doesn't matter your size, colour shape or ability, we all belong together. My picture shows 5 different birds that all belong together just like we do.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I used acrylic paint and soft pastel. I painted my canvas black first with acrylic painting to help the colours be bright. I used the soft pastels like I do when I draw with the chalk on the concrete at my house.



**17. ABOUT ME**

by Ezekiel Hernandez, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows the different places and groups where I belong. I drew a self-portrait with my hearing aid because it is part of who I am. The symbols on my hat represent things that are important to me, including Minecraft gaming, Michael Jackson music, my school, my church and the world. Together they show the people, places and interests that help me feel connected and included.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that everyone belongs in different ways. It shows that belonging can come from our hobbies, our school, our faith, our community and the things we enjoy. The background is Tetris block to show we are all different, but we can join together. It also explores identity by showing that all of these parts come together to make us who we are.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

My artwork is a self-portrait created with a lead pencil sketch and coloured markers. I chose this medium because I enjoy sketching and drawing. I used coloured markers to make the symbols on my hat bright and easy to see, helping to show the different people, places and communities.



**18. FRIENDSHIP**

by Niana Heron-Teokotai, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is about friendship. My friends make me feel happy and included. We all belong because we care for each other, have fun together, and accept each other for who we are.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows that everyone belongs when we are kind, and include others, and make new friends. Even though we are all different. We can learn, play, and help each other. Friendship makes our school a happy place where everyone feels welcome.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I made a drawing. I chose drawing to show my friends and our friendship. It helps to show happiness and how we all belong together.





**19. THE GARDEN CENTRE**

by Henrietta Horsfall, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

The garden brings diverse people together. They all belong in the garden and share their similarities and differences.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Everyone helps in the garden, they all cooperate. There is a blind person reading braille with her guide dog and people with walking sticks there is even some sign language. A boy is signing 'bird' and his mother is signing 'yes'. This shows we all belong.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I used my polychromes pencils and grey-lead on A3 paper.



**20. HAND, HANDS EVERYWHERE**

by Huda Ibrahim, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Hands are the same colour, same pattern so, we all same in our own unique way.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The ideas have a meaning which are Auslan and I use different hand to do my artwork to show we belong.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Paints, clay, and Posca pen (gold)



**21. UNDER THE SAME SKY**

by Jayna Jayesh, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork matches the title 'Under the Same Sky' because it shows that even though the universe is huge, we have a special place in it. I made a model of myself out of clay, which is literally part of the earth! In sculpture, I am standing beside the whole globe. I did this because I wanted to show the earth belongs to all of us, and we have to take care of it together.

Behind me, I created a huge galaxy full of stars. To me, 'the sky' isn't just the blue air above our house - it is the giant universe that wraps around everyone on Earth. It doesn't matter who you are or where you live on the globe, when we look up at night, we are all looking at the exact same stars. We all belong here together under the same sky.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

1. We Are All Made of the Same Stuff (connection): I used clay to make myself because clay comes right out of the dirt! It explores the idea that humans and the Earth are connected. We aren't just living on the planet; we are actually a part of it.
2. Sharing Our Home (belonging): Because my clay model is beside the globe, it explores the idea of sharing. The earth doesn't just belong to one person or one country. It belongs to everyone, and we all have to share the same space and look out for each other.
3. The Sky Connects Us All (unity): This artwork shows that no matter how different we are on the outside, we all live under the exact same ceiling - the sky! When you look up at the stars, someone on the other side of the world can see them too. It means none of us are ever truly alone.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Clay: for the model of myself and the globe. Cardboard and paper: to build the base and the galaxy background. Glitter glue and stickers: to make the stars and planets shine. I chose to make a 3D sculpture instead of just a flat drawing because I wanted my artwork to feel real, like you could step right into it!

I picked the clay for myself because clay comes from the earth, so it feels like I'm actually connected to the ground. I used cardboard and paper because they are strong and let me build a big deep galaxy background. Finally, I chose glitter glue and stickers because space shouldn't be dark and boring - it should be bright, magical and full of sparkly stars! Using all these different materials together made it super fun to create and really brings the universe to life.





**22. I BELONG**

by Elloise Jones, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows the things I do that make me feel happy and connected to my friends and my family.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

I have put my family in the middle because they are more special to me than everything else. Below them I have put other things I love like animals, music and drawing. I love reading because it is so interesting. I have added stars because they make me feel like I belong to the world.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

When I paint and draw, I feel relaxed, so I chose to use paint, crayons and pencils for my artwork.



**23. WE BELONG IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HEART'S**

by Sienna Kelly, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is kind, caring, and loving. I painted the beach because most people like going to the beach. The beach is fun - you are happy at the beach and you can make sandcastles. Family and friends and everybody can go to the beach - everybody belongs there at the beach.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

It doesn't matter who you are or where you are from. We all belong.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I used acrylic paint and acrylic paint pens on canvas board.



**24. BELONG - A HEARING AID WORLD**

by Mabel Knop, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My art piece is a world in the shape of a hearing aid where my family and deaf community are all having fun together, feeling like they have a place to belong! To me belonging means you are acknowledged and supported by the community. It is a place where people want to get to know you and celebrate your individuality so they can make you feel positive about yourself.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The reason why I chose a hearing aid as the world is because it is a symbol of deafness and fits in well with the theme because I'm hard of hearing and I belong in a deaf/hard of hearing community. I have created a loving community of people swimming, buying ice cream, bike riding, swinging, taking photos, all together doing different things that they love to and that's what makes them a unique community. The mini figs that are buying ice cream are my family; I thought it was a good idea to make them because they made me feel like I am loved and will always belong to them as a family!

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I have built a sculpture made entirely out of LEGO bricks and mini figs. I chose LEGO because I like building my own creations and wanted to show that for the DCA competition. I used the mini figs for the people that are together in a belonging community. I also love LEGO MASTERS and wanted to be like them. I have learnt a lot from that show and felt very confident when I was building. Usually, I'm not as confident but I kept on telling myself, 'you can do this!'





25. I BELONG IN THE WORLD

by Abby Kui, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork shows this year's theme which is 'We belong' because I have shown I belong everywhere in the whole world. Like I belong in skiing, badminton, gymnastics, school, home, with my friends and much more.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Even if it is a deaf or hard of hearing person, they still belong in the world.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I use clay for the big earth in the middle. I mostly use my brand new marker. I also used a little bit of glitter and gold paper.



26. YOU BELONG

by Emma Lai, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
It shows you how the world belongs to everyone.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
It shows everyone together.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I used air dry clay because it is soft and easy to turn into specific shapes.



27. THE FOUND FRIEND

by Krystal Le, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork shows the hands of good friends helping each other. It shows that your skin colour doesn't matter, that we can't judge others by their appearance, and what matters is being a true friend and loving yourself.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork explores ideas friendship, as the hands are helping each other up. It shows that if someone is in trouble, another person can help.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I created a drawing using paper, pen colour pencils and markers. I chose this because it is easy to add shading.



28. REUBEN BELONGS

by Reuben Leonardo, SA

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
I am deaf and I belong when people let me join in with their games, parties and special events. I belong to many different groups. To belong is to feel included and welcomed without asking. I belong I feel loved.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
We belong, we have fun and enjoy doing different things, we belong in a family, dance group, church, sports groups, volunteering and watching teams play sport. I belong to a school; I am in a community.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Collage so I can use a photo and draw.





29. MY PLACE IN THE WORLD

by Alex Liang, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork addresses the theme 'We belong' by showing a place that represents a community. It includes buildings, trees, and different structures that connect together to form a shared environment.

This shows that people and places are connected, and everyone has a place where they belong. I used bright colors and different shapes to show how diverse and interesting my world is. It represents how I feel part of a bigger community, not just one place.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork explores the idea that everyone needs a place where they feel safe, accepted, and included. It shows that belonging can be found in family, home, and community. The drawing also explores how people care for each other and share happiness together, which helps create a strong sense of 'We belong'.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I have submitted a drawing and painting artwork. I used a pencil and watercolor paints. I chose this medium because it allows me to express my ideas clearly through sketching and to bring the artwork to life with soft colors and textures using watercolor.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**  
I enjoyed making this artwork and thinking about the theme 'We belong'.



30. WE BELONG ON EARTH

by Hidayah Maraikayer, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
By showing the Earth and the galaxy.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
By being the Earth.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
A paper mache sculpture. I chose this medium so it looks 3D.



31. HOW I BELONG

by Luca Misquitta, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
I used a picture of my brother Levi and me to show that we are both deaf and we are family. We have a special bond because we are the only deaf people in our family. I also used pictures of my hands signing belonging and love. I wanted to use hands in my artwork because deaf people use their hands to communicate.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
I wrote and drew images and words that show how deaf people are connected to all people and also how deaf people are connected to each other. My photos of signing hands show how many deaf people have a strong connection with each other through using their hands to sign.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I used water colours because I love rainbow colours and I wanted a beautiful background. I used photos because I wanted to include my hands signing and I found it difficult trying to draw signing hands. I used text to add powerful words to describe how I feel about the theme Belonging.



32. WHALE SHARK

by Mikayla Mooney, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
The whale shark is a very ancient creature that has lived for tens of thousands of years. They have travelled through all the worlds oceans for centuries. They belong in the global waters and are connected to the ocean ecosystems, large and small.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Deep belonging.  
Belonging in nature.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Pencils on paper.





33. THE WORLD BELONGS

by Ali Moustafa, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork shows hands and the world. The hands represent different people from different cultures. It shows that no matter who you are or what you look like, you always belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
My artwork explores ideas about friendship and being connected.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I created a drawing using paper and markers. I feel calm when I draw with markers.



34. MY FAVOURITE THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I BELONG

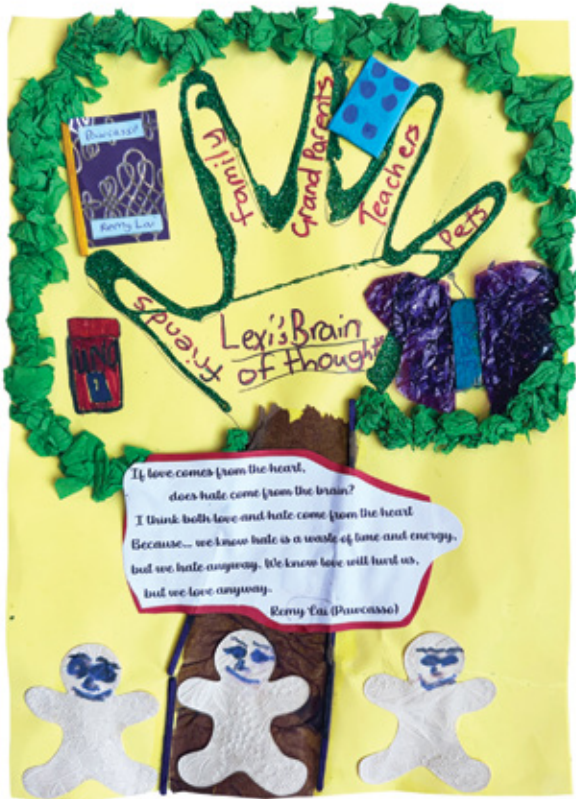
by Saharia Napoles, QLD

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
I love 4 things that make me feel I 'belong':  
The Ocean - I love the water, I live by the sea, I love swimming and mermaids.  
Music - I love playing and listening to music. It makes me feel calm (blue background).  
Book - I love reading especially mystery books. It has key and padlock to unlock the mystery. Green represents mysterious feelings.  
Horse - I love riding horses - purple to represent love and joy.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
My idea identified who I am as a person and what I love doing and a place I love being at.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I use a pencil to sketch, then I use acrylic paint.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**  
I enjoyed making this artwork and thinking about the theme 'We belong'.



35. LEXI'S BRAIN OF THOUGHTS

by Lexi O'Kane, QLD

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
In my artwork I tried to show where I belong. When I belong, I feel happy and safe.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
My ideas explore different groups of people that I belong with.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
I submitted collage. I used crepe paper, cellophane, cardboard, match sticks, paddle sticks, glitter, coloured paper and textas and PVA glue.



36. WE ALL BELONG

by Tyler O'Kane, QLD

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
I belong at home, at school and at the town library.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
We belong means everyone is equal.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Paper white A3  
Crayons (colours)  
Hot gun glue to hold the crayons  
Hair dryer - to melt the colour crayons





**37. BELONGING TO EARTH**

by Mazin Osman, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

It shows that we are all different but all still part of the same Earth.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

We come from different counties and different religions, but we are all human and can have respect for one another.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

3D model. I used a balloon, newspaper for the paper mache and then I painted it. I chose it because it reminds me of the real Earth.



**38. EVERYONE BELONGS**

by Reggie Randall, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Everyone deserves the chance to feel safe, happy and that they belong in their chosen community.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

That people's differences should be celebrated.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Small sculptures made with air clay.



**39. ROCK CLIMBING**

by William Rockliff, TAS

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

I went to the DCA family camp. While I was there, I went rock climbing. I tried and tried to get to the top. I thought I couldn't. But then everyone cheered for me and gave me hope. I made it to the top! I felt like I belonged at camp, because other kids were like me. It was great being with other kids with hearing aids.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Everyone is cheering for each other and being kind. We belong together and support each other.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Drawing with textas. It is easier. I like the bright colours.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Thank you everyone who organised the camp. I really enjoyed it and felt like I belonged. Goodbye! P.S Please vote for me!



**40. DREAMS DO COME TRUE**

by Mason Ryan, TAS

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork represents 'We belong' by showing that everybody deserves a place where we feel accepted, included and valued.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

'We belong' is about my personal journey that dreams do come true when you have family, friends and a community making spaces where we feel seen and supported to participate and connect.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I have submitted a collage of photos taken by camera and phone. This represents that we belong and dreams come true.





**41. WE BELONG HERE AND WE ALWAYS WILL**

by Jasmin Seedin, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork addresses the theme of 'We belong' because in my artwork I show all of the different aspects of my life in which I belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The ideas my artwork explores is that I belong to the karate community because I am a brown belt in karate. It shows that I belong to Australian girls' choir and I belong there. It shows that I belong to my friends because they are very close to me. It also shows that I belong to my family because I love them very much and I only put my immediate family on my artwork but I still love my aunts, uncles and grandparents very much.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I submitted a drawing in which I used markers to colour it in and shade it, grey lead pencils to sketch and fine liners outline the main components.



**42. ANOWAR**

by Anowar Shah, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows different symbols. There is the heart shape. The flag is my country. The 7 with the crown is the soccer team Real Madrid. These show how I belong by helping people understand me.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the ideas about my interests and identity, using symbols that are important to me.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a drawing using paper and markers. I chose this because I enjoy drawing.



**43. WE BELONG/MY QUIET PLACE**

by Natalie Shum, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This artwork is a drawing of a library because I feel I belong when I am there. The books in the library are full of information to give us knowledge of the world. I feel comfortable in a library because it is quiet and I like to read and get lost in the stories.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Anyone can go to a library at school or in the local area and have a quiet space to read, relax, think or work. I feel safe in the library as it is not too loud and the dog in the drawing also makes me feel safe.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I have submitted a drawing. I used coloured and metallic pencils for the drawing because I have more experience in using pencils in my artworks.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I really like drawing and I have enjoyed making my picture for competition. Thank you for hosting this competition.



**44. MY FRIENDS, MY WORLD**

by Annabel Van Der Meer, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

I am with my friends. My friends always accept me. It's not about how you look, it's about who we are. When I'm with my friends, I belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The bee, ladybug and flower reminds me of nature because I love nature. Everyone belongs to nature in a different way. I love every part of nature.

The teacup represents my home because I have a tea set at home. I feel like I belong at home because everyone loves me, no matter what.

The reel the lights are on is like the movies. At the movies, I feel like I belong because anything is possible. At the movies, your dream world could happen.

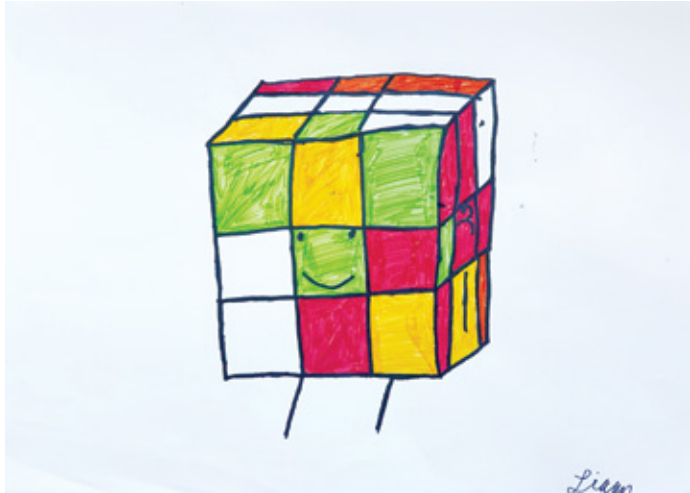
**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

A drawing with a decorated frame. We used cardboard, pencil, paper, pipe cleaners, crayons, watercolour pencil, lights and glue.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I would like to add that this took me two months to do and I'm very proud of it, even if it doesn't win.





45. THE RUBIK’S CUBE WITH A COCHLEAR

by Liam Vivares, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows a Rubik's cube with a cochlear, this artwork connects to the theme because it shows that I feel connected to the cubing community and the Deaf community.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores ideas about community and being connected. I showed this by putting the two symbols of the communities I belong in.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a drawing. I used paper and marker. I chose this because the markers are bright and has a similar brightness to a real Rubik's cube.



46. THE SOLUTION WE CAME UP WITH

by Charlene Vong, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is inspired by the Norman Rockwell painting "The Problem We All Live With". It connects to the theme because it shows how everyone has rights and freedoms. The message is that racism is taught.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores ideas about freedom, rights and respect.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a sketch using paper and pencil. I chose this because this grey lead pencils are really easy to use and great for shading.



47. WE LIVE WHERE WE BELONG

by Ronal Wanigatunga, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is about places where I feel like I belong and places that keep my mind warm.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea that everyone belongs in the world, no matter who they are. I chose Usopp from One Piece because he represents courage, Friendship, and believing in yourself even when you feel different. By placing Usopp with planet Earth, I'm showing that we all share the same world and we all have a place in it. The artwork celebrates belonging through imagination, adventure, and the message that our differences make the world more interesting and connected.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Pencil. Textas and paper. I work well drawing and enjoying making art this way.



48. THE GREAT BARRIER REEF OF THE DEAF

by Piper Williams, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

The ocean is my favourite place to go with my family on holidays. It always makes me feel happy and calm.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

I am the same as the other deaf kids at school, but also different, like the fish in the ocean.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Painting with acrylic paint, paper and pva glue. It was fun to make and easy to do at home.



CATEGORY  
**12 TO 17 YEARS**



49. THE BEST PARTS OF ME

by Lexie Adams, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year’s theme ‘We belong’:***

The artwork addresses the parts of Lexie’s life that make her feel like she ‘belongs’.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme ‘We belong’:***

Her artwork explores the themes of home, family, friends and hobbies.

I am Lexie,

I am who I want to be.

We all want to belong, on that we can agree.

To belong: that makes us free,

I’m Lexie, and I love frogs. The real me doesn’t carry a frog around in her bag, but I wish I could.

Welcome to the start of my journey of belonging.

**Bendigo**

I have lived in Bendigo for all my life. Bendigo is known for its rich gold mining history, as we played a crucial role in the 1850s gold rush, and for it’s majestic Easter parade. Which features the famous Chinese Imperial Dragons included Dai Gum long, the world’s largest parade dragon. The Bendigo Easter parade celebrated its hundredth anniversary this year (2026). Being at the parade every year helps me feel like I belong to Bendigo and its fantastic culture.

**Friends**

My BFFs (Best Friends Forever) always make me feel like I belong. They comfort me when I’m sad and make me laugh. They help me up and cheer me on. I hope that everyone gets the chance to have amazing friends like I’ve got.

**Crochet**

Most of the things in this sculpture are crochet. Crochet is a medium that uses wool, and a hook. I love crochet as it is very relaxing. My mum crochets also. It is becoming popular among many young people, as it is a way to be creative. As you can see, I used crochet to take you on a journey that shows where and how I belong. I store my wool in a basket like the one I have crocheted, and that said wool comes from sheep’s backs. I wouldn’t be able to give you this stunning artwork without sheep and their wool. (Also, sheep are really cute! Have you seen their little faces!)

**Deaf Culture**

I’m hard of hearing. I hadn’t met anyone that is deaf or hard of hearing until I went along to one of the DCA family fun days. I belong to this community, and many others do too. I really enjoy learning Auslan. My three-year-old sister is also hard of hearing and now I can help her to learn to take care of her hearing aids. A butterfly is the symbol of the Deafness Foundation, chosen because butterflies are hard of hearing too.

**School**

This year I started high school: it is wonderful school to belong to. There are lots of programs and clubs to help everyone belong, on top of that our school values are ‘kind safe learners’ which makes everyone strive to be just that ‘kind safe learner’.

**Cheerleading**

Cheerleading is a team sport. One that I have been doing for over 10 years. Cheerleaders are normally found wearing bows atop their heads during the competition. I belong to a team called ‘Obsession’ and we are part of a club called ‘Cheer ‘n’ Dance Athletes’.

**Music**

Belonging in the music community at the school is kind of unique for a hard of hearing person. But everyone is super welcoming and my teachers are so talented. I am in the band and I play Bass guitar.

**Family**

I belong with my family: we always have fun together. Harper, my three-year-old is always hilarious and super cute! Family helps everyone belong.

That’s my story so far. I am Lexie, I am who I want to be, and I belong.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

Sculpture - using the technique of crochet. Lexie has not stopped crocheting since she started learning about 18 months ago. She finds it gives her amazing outlet to be creative. She finds every project she learns something new and exciting. The material is yarn from the Bendigo Woolen Mills- Lexie’s favourite shop.





## 50. REMEMBER

by George Ardlie, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork addresses the theme 'We belong' by being divided into seven sections, with each section representing a different connection to belonging in my life. Each section is showing through a different colour and memory. Red represents school and where I belong. Orange represents friendship, friendship is what I sense as a place to belong. Yellow represents family and who I belong with. Green represents fun memories that remind me that I belong. Blue and purple are nostalgic of childhood and where I used to belong. Pink represents where I travelled to belong. I also drew myself all of the different colours from the sections to show, and places are part of who I am and contribute to my sense of belonging. Together, these sections show the different places, people, memories and experiences that make me feel like I belong.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

My artwork explores the feelings of belonging through memories, relationship, experiences, and important moments in my life. It shows how belonging can come from family, friends, and school childhood memories, travel, and fun experiences. The different parts of my life and show that belonging can be found in many different places.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

I submitted a coloured drawing. I used pencil, a rubber, and a sharpener to create the design, and pens and markers to add colour and texture. I chose to use markers because I wanted to focus on each section and make each part stand out. The different colours helped me show different memories, people, and places that make me feel like I belong.

***Anything else you'd like to add?***

Being part of this competition gave me a feeling of 'We belong'. It gave me the opportunity to share my artwork and be part of something with other young artists.

***Fun facts***

I decided to draw this artwork in my old style of creating because all of the sections are based on memories and parts of my past. I thought using my old art styles would help to connect the artwork to those memories even more.

The blue section includes parodies of movies that I enjoy and that remind me of different memories from my childhood. Lets see how may movies parodies you can guess!

I drew myself all of the colours from different sections to show that all of these memories and experiences come together to make me who I am.

One of the colours in my artwork is the same name as my cousin. Can you guess which one?



## 51. PLANET FUN A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

by Liam Armstrong, NSW

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

I created a planet and it is environmentally fair and it is fun for all people who are hearing impaired and vision impaired. They can go to it have fun and enjoy themselves as they can. All people can go there. Teddy bears are members of the planet association and they have cute magic and they poof anywhere. They are basically genie and can grant unlimited wishes.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

In my artwork it explores that anyone who can't see, if they are an animal, or can't hear, they can go to this planet and enjoy themselves.

The humans, teddy bears and dinosaurs on my front cover for the artwork are linked together by kindness and peace like the force from Star Wars.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

I submitted an artwork like a picture book to show that anyone can belong. I used braille paper for the perkins brailier to colour draw and write this story. I used puff paint to give it a tactile experience and I gave it colour because the more rainbow it is the more beautiful it is. I used the writing to explain more about why I did the artwork.



## 52. A PERFECT FIT

by Chloe Brown, NSW

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong' as it displays a puzzle surrounding Earth. The puzzle and puzzle pieces symbolise fitting and belonging together. These puzzle pieces also represent people from different cultures, countries, backgrounds, religions and abilities. Despite each piece being unique and different, they are all a perfect fit coming together and forming something beautiful and meaningful. The Earth represents our shared home, reminding us we are all connected.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

My artwork explores within the theme 'We belong' by exploring ideas of diversity, inclusion, acceptance and connection despite the difference. The bright colour represents the uniqueness of every individual while the puzzle pieces demonstrate how differences help to create a complete and balanced community. The drawings include the universal sign for "I Love You" the cochlear and hearing aids. Highlighting the different experiences everyone goes through. Through this commission I wanted to show that belonging comes from accepting and supporting one another.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

The type of artwork I have submitted is a painting. The materials I used to accomplish this composition were dual tip acrylic paint markers on a 42cmx32cm stretched canvas.





**53. MY HOUSE**

by Oliver Carr, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This is all the people that belong with me and this is my house. There are my grandparents, my brothers Robert, William and Jaden. My auntie Tracey, my dog Hugo, my stepdad, Simon. Chalkie, Samantha and all my friends including Jemma, Lilly, Ebony and Evan. My mum is on the roof!

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Family and friends.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Drawing with texta on a canvas.



**54. THE SHINING OF A GYMNAST**

by Aria Damjancuk, WA

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

The Shining of a gymnast. I'm showing you this as we all belong somewhere and how rhythmic gymnasts is where I feel accepted, confident and happy. Being a deaf person on a sport team could help me connect with others and be able to express myself. This leotard and equipment represent my passion for gymnastics, the artwork shows my journey of determination, success and belonging. The Shining is colourful, this represents and shows how I feel when I'm doing rhythmic gymnastics.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The Rhythmic gymnastics shows to be very close to my heart, people in the sport made me feel supported, and I got lots of connections and good friendship from it. I feel within me doing the sport I can be successful, every time I do gymnastics in a class it makes me feel connected to other people I can feel, I feel I'm really energised and will do anything to learn gymnastics, more movement gives me more determination. My heart really feels stronger to never give up myself in my eye always trying to help improve myself, love to be giving it my all. The shining shows how within myself I'm excited and ready for learn and let success for deaf person in a sport like this.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I'm using paint, pen, and clear crystal gems, I'm using it because I have a shine of the light uniform as belonging of a team. This drawing of a blue uniform has hand of a deaf person in a gymnast team. I wanted light and colourful items in this drawing showing this what I was feel too.



**55. WE BELONG**

by Pachit (Bon) Detkhum, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Focusing my artwork on cultural identity, community, connections, and personal memory.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

To belong is to be part of group, team, or community, means I know where I am accepted and I know that I can be myself there without being criticized or judged.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Painting and drawing. I used pencil, graphic markers, colour pencils and acrylic paint. I like drawing and painting. It is easy to work with and delivers the messages that I want to share.



**56. BUTTER-LILLA-FLY**

by Lilla Duncan, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork addresses this years theme 'We belong' by including my hands which make my language Auslan. It expresses how I communicate with others.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

I specifically used the same yellow and blue colours as the deaf pride flag. I wanted to add butterflies because they make me happy and the way they move is similar to the way my hands move when I'm expressing myself.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I painted on canvas using watercolour paints, markers and made sure to add some sparkles on top.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

It was really important to add butterflies. The symbol continues to appears in all my art.





**57. DREAMER GIRL**

by Isabella Egel, SA

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork is about respect. Respecting each other and understanding each other, help us to belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

In my artwork, the person in the middle is dreaming about her future and around her, each point of the diamond represents different ways to show respect and belonging.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

An A3 drawing. I used: Pencil, Paint pen, Point pen, Texta, Ruler.



**58. WE BELONG IN THE SILENT CLASSROOM**

by Billy Garcia, ACT

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork addresses the theme "WE BELONG" by showing how Deaf children create belonging even in environments that were never designed for them. This piece contrasts chaotic, inaccessible classrooms with the warm, connected space Deaf Children build through sign language and community. Despite the headlines of "Budget cuts" "Access Denied" and "No Funding" the children's shared language became a source of strength. The glowing phrase "WE BELONG" represents their refusal to disappear inside systems that overlook them. Instead, they reclaim the classroom through connection, culture and identity.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The artwork explores the tension between exclusion and resilience. It highlights how structural barriers - lack of funding, inaccessible communication, and institutional neglect - shape daily experiences of Deaf students. At the same time, it celebrates the power of Deaf culture, sign language, and peer connection. The central idea that belonging is not something granted by institutions: it is something Deaf Children create together. Their joy, their language, and their solidarity, transform a silent, isolating classroom into a place of community and pride.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I submitted a hand-drawn artwork created on thick paper using markers, pen, pencil. I chose these materials because they allowed me to combine bold, expressive colours with fine detail. The markers helped to create strong contrast between the chaotic background and the warm, glowing connections between the children. The pen and pencil allowed me to add texture to the headlines, scribbles and classroom elements. Working by hand also gave the piece a raw emotional quality that matches the message of struggle and resilience.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

This artwork is dedicated to Deaf children who continue to shine despite system overlook them. It is a reminder that belonging is a right, not a privilege. When Deaf culture and sign language are respected and supported, Deaf children don't just fit in - they thrive, they lead, and they reshape the spaces around them.



**59. KINDNESS SPACE FLOW**

by Betselot Getaneh, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows deaf people holding hands on earth with some decorations. It connects to the theme because it shows that deaf people belong in the world and with every culture.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the idea of people getting along on Earth with kindness. I showed this by showing people holding hands and smiling, and with different colours in the sky. The message is that everyone can be themselves and still show kindness.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I created a drawing using pencils and markers. I chose this because I like using markers.





## 60. GROWING TOGETHER

by Jessmie Gill, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My creation relates to this year's theme of 'We belong' because the golden leaves represents the uniqueness and diverse background and stories of every individual, including culture, language, and family. The tree helps to showcase that we all connect to our roots and grow together in this world.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The tree and the distinctive leaves help us remind ourselves that although we have different values and come from different backgrounds, we all have a desire to grow and belong together.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I made 3D tree with cardboard, papers, glue, and a lazy suzan, colouring for it is markers.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I made this because I wanted to grow my action figure collection. It means so much to me and it's my source of joyiness.



## 61. THE SUBMERGED SANCTUARY

by Hayden Jung, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

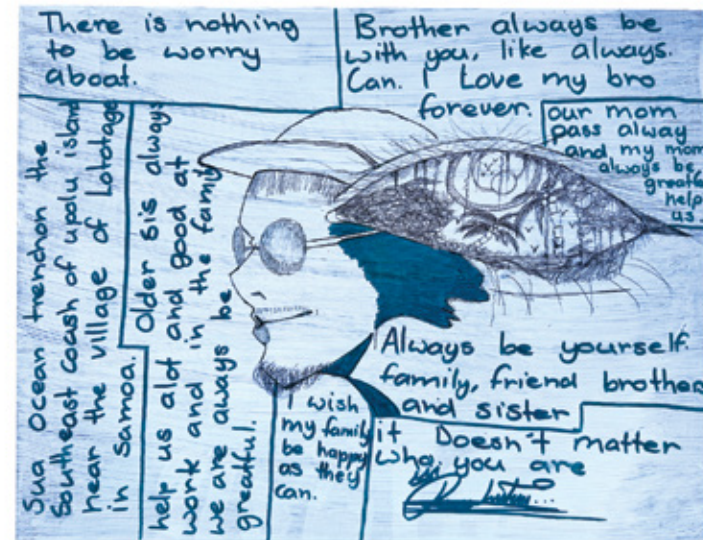
To me, belonging means finding a safe sanctuary where you can let your guard down and be completely yourself without changing to fit in. My artwork illustrates this by contrasting a dark, monochromatic storm at the top of the page - representing the overwhelming social pressures and isolation of the outside world - with a vibrant, glowing underwater tent below. Inside this protective sanctuary, a diverse group of teenagers are shown laughing and sharing space. By placing this safe haven beneath the surface chaos, my piece demonstrates how true community creates a protective barrier against life's storms, proving we thrive when we find the space we belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores the ideas of emotional safety, strength found in diversity and the contrast between isolation and inclusion. It examines the concept of a safe haven as an ecosystem requiring everyone's unique identity to function. The teenage experience of mental health and vulnerability is explored as well, illustrating that while the outside world can feel cold and turbulent, finding a supportive community provides the emotional warmth and grounded needed to survive the storm.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

My artwork is a fine-liner pen and coloured pencil drawing. I chose this medium because it allowed me to create the intense, dramatic contrast I wanted to achieve for this concept. The precision of the inks/pencils allowed me to map out intricate lines, giving the protected community inside the tent a crisp and tangible reality.



## 62. MY HEART IS SAMOAN

by Pene Junior Luatua, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork reflects the theme 'We Belong' because Samoa is the place I feel most connected to my family, my memories, and myself. I have not been back to Samoa for a long time, but it is where I last felt truly happy and whole. The landscape in my artwork represents a place that feels like home to me. It reminds me of being with my mum before she passed away and of the special memories we shared there as a family. Even though I am no longer living in Samoa, it remains a place where I belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores belonging through family, memory, identity, and grief. I was inspired by the Sua Ocean Trench in Samoa, but I changed the original scene to express my own feelings. In the reference image, the opening is clear and does not have vines hanging down. I added vines and shaped them to look like tears, turning the opening into the shape of an eye.

The eye represents the way I see and remember Samoa, while the tears represent sadness, I feel about losing my mum and being away from the place where I felt most at home, by changing the landscape, I was able to show both happy memories and the grief I carry inside. The artwork explores how belonging is not only about a place, but also about the people we love and the memories that stay with us even when they are gone.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

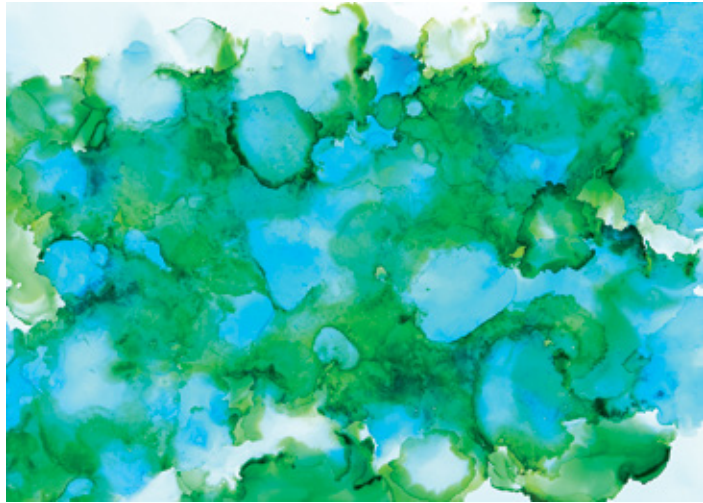
I submitted a mixed-media drawing on an A3 Art board. The board was second-hand, so I first painted it white to create a fresh surface before beginning my artwork. I then used black pen to draw the landscape and details, watercolour markers to add colour, highlights, and the text.

I chose these materials because they allowed me to create fine details while also adding soft colour and emotion to the artwork. Reusing a second-hand art board was important to me because it gave new life to an existing material. The combination of pen and watercolour help me show both the beauty of Samoa and the feelings connected to my memories.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I am happy with my artwork as it shows my message about identity and where my heart belongs.





### 63. WHERE WE BELONG

by Liam O'Loughlin, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork shows colours flowing and blending together. Even though the colours are different, they all connect and make one piece of art. This represents people belonging together in a community, and the world.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

My artwork explores connection and inclusion. I chose the different shades of blue and green because they look like the earth and give a feeling of calm and peace. Even though each part blends differently they work together and belong together just like people in the world.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

I submitted an abstract alcohol ink artwork. I used the alcohol ink and blending techniques to make the colours flow and blend naturally. I chose this medium because my mum taught me how to use the alcohol inks and I love the way they make me feel when using them and how it matches the theme of 'We belong'. I used alcohol inks with methylated spirits on synthetic paper (yupo paper).



### 64. GRASSROOTS TO GLORY

by Lillian Quane, SA

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

This artwork came about at school where we had to create a street art mural that sends a message. Soccer is part of our community, team, family and club. It's a way of everyone to connect with each other. This doesn't always need to be with people that play, it could be with people around the world, bringing that sense of belonging. We belong to a lot of different groups and places, you feel connected and supporting their national team. Like in the world cup this connects people around the world, bringing that sense of belonging. We belong to a lot of different groups and places, that you feel connected and supported. There will be ups and downs, like in soccer with the wins and losses. When I 'Belong' I feel connected.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

The main ideas that my artwork explores is equity and inclusion. The Matildas strive to achieve equal pay and recognition. They welcome new players and allow people feel included and like they 'Belong'. When I play soccer, I feel included in my team, my Club and my community. When I play soccer, I feel like I belong. My artwork also explores ideas of perseverance, persistence, trust and the importance of believing in yourself and your teammates. To conclude my artwork expresses the many emotions in soccer around 'Belonging'.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

The artwork I have submitted is watercolour, pen and digital. I chose this medium because I like the pastel look of the watercolours outlined with pen to give the outline definition. I used digital for the text in sharp contrast to the pastel colours of the players.

***Anything else you'd like to add?***

In 2024 I submitted a photograph to our local regional annual show. I really enjoyed exhibiting my art and seeing all of the other entries. I didn't get a prize, but it was a really good experience. This is the first time I have exhibited my artwork in a national competition. I always like putting myself out there to try experience new things and find belonging in new communities. I want to be able to be connected to the heart of hearing/deaf community and I believe this will help me to feel I belong more.



### 65. I BELONG, YOU BELONG, WE BELONG

by Charlie Shackcloth, QLD

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork shows my favourite game of chess with a difference. In this game the board has some special messages important to Deaf and hard of hearing people like me. In this chess game, all creatures belong. I belong, you belong and we all belong. There are lots of different types of animals that all hear differently, have different skills and make different sounds to communicate. The door is a symbol of a better world - our future. We can only unlock the door together when we all belong. I know that I need to feel safe, understood, heard and loved to feel like I belong. What do you need to feel like you belong?

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

- The importance of everyone belonging in play, life and our world.
- The strengths in our differences coming together.
- Understanding what we need to feel safe now and in a better world - our future.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

Installation art - combining found materials, objects, painting and drawing.





**66. WORLD FOR THE DEAF**

by Kurltraj Singh, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

It means deaf people from all over the world can belong to the deaf community.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The eyes are the most important sense for deaf people.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

This was created on the iPad with the program Procreate. I chose this medium as I had used it on my work experience at Expression Australia.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Auslan has given me the opportunity to learn about the world, communicate my ideas and connect.



**67. NGOELMUN DANALAIG  
"OUR LIVES/WAY OF LIFE"**

by Abaka Smith, QLD

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My culture is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This painting depicts dancers in traditional dress. My story includes – I am in an indigenous dance group at school, and this makes me feel I belong. Because of this I drew the watercolour of Torres Strait Islander Dancers.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

We all belong and dance is something everyone can join in. I can copy the other dancers' steps and be part of the group even with my hearing loss. I wear two Cochlears and I'm always included in our cultural dance at school and in community.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Watercolour painting on watercolour paper. I like the way I can shade with watercolour. Black pen helps define my work.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Dear 'We belong', I am writing you a note as Abby's art teacher. I met Abby this year and have watched her grow as an artist. She is more talented than what she thinks. Her beautiful support team and I have been encouraging Abby to explore art as an opportunity to express who she is and to feel good while she is creating. Abby is such a wonderful young woman and is one of the more focussed students I have, at the time of writing this, Abby doesn't know that her support team has filled the Application form out for this competition. I am about to let her know in our next art lesson. Wishing you luck Abby – Ms Connolly



**68. SQUIGGLES AND WIGGLES  
BELONG IN THE ART GALLERY**

by Ebony William, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

I am Ebony's hearing support teacher and I have assisted Ebony by giving her the tools to contribute an entry to this exhibition. Ebony is DeafBlind, uses a wheelchair and has complex health needs, but she can still express herself through art. Her contribution, created using assistive technology, shows everyone belongs in the art world and can find a 'voice' through artmaking. She also belongs as part of our hearing support team with her Deaf and hard of hearing peers who were all given a opportunity to put in an artwork.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Inclusion, equity and creativity all contribute to a sense of belonging.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Ebony used an online drawing application called Wigglypaint to make an animated digital artwork. She enjoys this application because it makes lots of different sounds when you make marks and the bright colours and movement help her engage with the visuals. She used a large, adapted mouse with a trackball and a switch device to make her marks on the 'page'.





**69. FRIENDS WHO  
ACCEPT ME, FOR ME**

by Kahleeya Wilson, NSW

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

My artwork addresses the theme 'We belong' by showing my friends at school. School is a place where I feel like I belong because I am surrounded by people who care about me and accept me for who I am. Being with my friends makes me feel happy, included, and supported. When all of my friends are at school together, it is exciting because we can spend time together and share experiences. My painting shows the importance of friendships and belonging.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

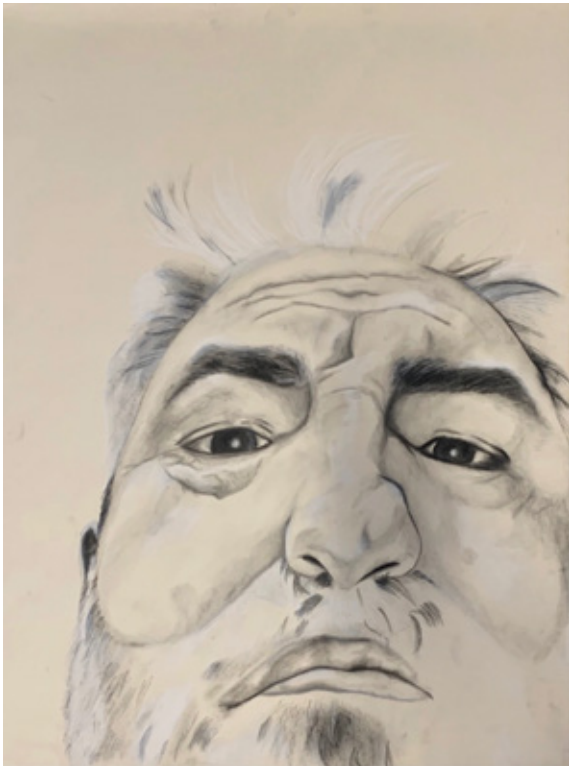
My artwork explores ideas of friendship, acceptance, happiness, and connection. It shows how belonging comes from being accepted by others and feeling comfortable being yourself. Through my painting, I wanted show that my friends help me feel included and that school is a place where I feel connected to others. The artwork celebrates the positive feelings that come from being part of a supportive group of friends.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

I submitted a painting. I used a pre-used A4 board, white paint, pencil, and acrylic paint. First, I painted the art board white so I could reuse it. Then I sketched my design with pencil before painting it with acrylic paint because it is colourful, easy to use, and allowed be to bring my friends and ideas to life.



CATEGORY  
**18 TO 23 YEARS**



**70. LOOKING UP**

by Jazmyn Chalmers, NSW

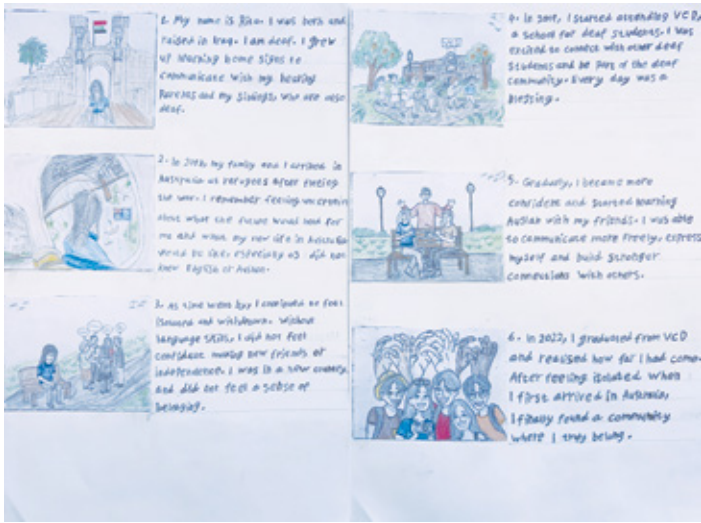
***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***  
This artwork portrays my father from a unique perspective, reflecting the important role family plays in creating a sense of belonging. Growing up as a Deaf person, feeling connected, understood and supported by family has been an important part of my identity. By drawing my father, I wanted to celebrate the relationships that help shape who we are and remind us that we always have a place where we belong.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***  
My artwork explores family, connection and identity. It reflects the bond between a parent and child and the sense of comfort and belonging that family can provide. The unusual perspective invites viewers to see my father through my eyes and highlights the importance of relationships that support, guide and accept us. The artwork represents the idea that belonging begins with the people who know and love us for who we are.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***  
This artwork is a realistic portrait created using charcoal and charcoal pencils on paper. I used charcoal to build contrast, depth and texture while capturing facial details and expression. I chose this medium because it allows me to create strong tonal values and realism while conveying emotion and character. Charcoal's versatility helped me empathise the unique perspective of the portrait and create a striking visual representation of someone important to me.

***Anything else you'd like to add?***  
This artwork was originally created as part of a portrait series exploring expression, perspective, and human connection. The portrait depicts my father, a person who has played an important role in my life. Through the unusual viewpoint, I wanted to capture both his character and my own perspective as his daughter. As a Deaf artist, visual storytelling is an important way for me to communicate experiences, relationships and identity.





## 71. MY JOURNEY TO BELONGING

by Rita Daao, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

My artwork shows my journey from coming to Australia as a refugee to finding where I belong. The Deaf community helped me learn language, build confidence, become independent, and feel that I belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My artwork explores belonging, community, and acceptance. It shows how being part of the Deaf community helped me feel connected and supported.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

My artwork is a drawing. I used paper and colouring pencils.



## 72. WE BELONG

by Jakob Demirel, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Jakob's artwork focuses on Auslan and how communication using hands, helps him to communicate and understand his friends, supports and family. The painting is 2 people linking fingers.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Auslan is such a powerful way of communication, and his artwork depicts happiness and peace and beauty.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

His artwork this year consists of a hand mould sculpture (plaster) and a painting. He used paint, Posca markers, Staedtler Acrylic paints and pencil. Both are presented as 1 artwork, atop 2 wooden boxes.



## 73. WE BELONG

by Olivia Hermez, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This clay artwork represents the Auslan sign for 'We belong' as a deaf person, I use Auslan to communicate, express my deaf identity, and connect with others. By accepting my hearing loss, I have developed a strong sense of self, community and belonging. The inclusion and support I experience within the deaf community have helped me feel valued, connected, and accepted. Through this artwork, I celebrate the idea that everyone deserves to feel a sense of belonging.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Gaining a sense of belonging is very important to me because Deaf people often share similar experiences and challenges which helps us relate to and support one another. This artwork represents the connection I feel with other Deaf people and the wider community. Through my ability to communicate in Auslan, I can express who I am and feel understood, accepted and valued. The artwork expresses the importance of inclusion connection, and belonging for everyone.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

The artwork is a hand-built clay sculpture created by using clay as the main material. I chose to sculpt my artwork because clay let me shape my idea in a 3D form, it also helps me show the Auslan sign for 'We belong' in a clear way and express my ideas about connection and belonging.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I have included our "Deaf Flag" which is our deaf community for everyone on this planet.





**74. THE GIRAFFE**

by Nathan Lai, SA

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This an artwork about the zoo, because I feel I belong at school and we often go for excursions to the zoo as a class.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Belonging at school.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Drawing and collage.



**75. THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

by Savannah Mandile, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

We all enjoy and share the ocean.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

My art shows how we can all enjoy the outdoors.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

Painting helps me express myself.



**76. EACH OTHER**

by Yvonne Nguyen, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

At first I needed to google the meaning of 'We belong'. What I found was 'We belong' usually means we fit in together, we are accepted somewhere, or we are connected to a group, place, or each other. My art work shows this through connecting both of my characters through sign.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Through my creative journey I wanted to connect my experience and the theme together. In Deaf culture hands are important. I wanted to use my characters hands that draw the attention which is why I used the signs 'we' and 'belong'. The signs also connect the characters through touch and language which is a major part of Deaf culture too. No matter where you come from or what your story is, we belong and we are all connected.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I used digital art for my artwork. I feel most comfortable using Procreate.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

I want to say thank you for this opportunity! I believe these art competitions are very important for our Deaf community to be able to have involvement and have avenues to express our experiences.





77. ABOVE AND BENEATH THE SURFACE

by Samadi Weerasingha, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

When I first reflected on the theme 'We belong' I realised there isn't one definition of belonging that represents everyone. Belonging is personal, constantly evolving and shaped by our experiences. Instead of trying to provide an answer I created two photographs that invite viewers to explore different perspectives of belonging. Although each photograph tells a different story, together they connect by one question: Where do we truly belong?

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

**Photo #1 Above the Surface**

Question: Does being surrounded by people always mean we belong?

I chose a crowded public space because people often believe being surrounded by others means someone belongs. The person standing still becomes the focus, showing that someone can feel unnoticed even in a crowd. The motion blur represents how life continues to move while personal emotions remain hidden.

**Photo #2 Beneath the Surface**

Question: Can belonging begin within ourselves?

I chose a reflection because it encourages us to look beyond what we first see. While the first photograph explores the outside world, this photograph explores the inside world. The reflection symbolises our thoughts, emotions, memories, fears, hopes, and personal growth. It suggests that belonging may begin not in the world around us but within ourselves, inviting viewers to reflect on their own journey.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

I submitted two conceptual digital photographs taken with a Nikon camera. I chose photography because it captures real moments while allowing viewers to interpret their own meaning. Using composition, light, moment and reflection, the two photographs explore belonging from both the outside world and the inner self.



CATEGORY  
EARLY EDUCATION  
GROUP PROJECT



**78. BELONGING**

by Aurora School, VIC

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

This sculpture represents and addresses the theme 'We belong', through this circular art project showing that every child at Aurora belongs together. We support and encourage each other no matter what culture, religion or level of ability we have.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

This artwork explores the theme 'We belong' by joining each child's artwork together in a circle, showing that we are all connected and belong at Aurora School. The circle represents friendship, inclusion, acceptance, and support. It reflects a community where every child feels heard, valued, needed, and loved. When children feel a strong sense of belonging, they are more confident to learn, grow and flourish.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

A sculpture - Each child painted one recycled bottle in the colour of their choice. Next, we decorated a cut-out person with sharpies, textas or paint pens, finishing it off by decorating the face. All the bottles were then joined together in a circle. We chose this type of artwork because it was the best way for every child at Aurora to participate individually and independently.



**79. YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

by Box Hill Public School, NSW

***Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':***

Our artwork addresses the theme as it shows one person, who other deaf and hard of hearing people can identify with and how they feel. When they then see the people in the background they realise they are not alone and belong to a community that isn't just at school but extends to other countries and that's why we have translated 'We belong' to other languages.

***Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':***

Belonging to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Belonging to school, friends, and people who you haven't even met.

Belonging to a community greater than where you live.

Belonging to a community of people who are just like you.

***What type of art have you submitted and why?***

Drawing using lead pencil on art paper. We chose this medium as it was easier to collaborate together when using physical art supplies. We went in with coloured pencils and black texta to highlight details and make parts pop.





**80. BUILDING BELONGING:  
BRICK BY BRICK**

by Eastwood Primary School  
and Deaf Facility, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

Our art piece "Building Belonging: Brick by Brick" shows how we all can be ourselves and belong together to make something bigger than ourselves. Our wall of bricks fit together to make the community that we belong in together, with our similarities and differences.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

Belonging is about acceptance of ourselves and others, and when we all come together we make something bigger than ourselves – a community. Individually, we are bricks but together we make a strong wall where we all belong, regardless of our differences.

We are connected by our similarities and differences and support each other to be strong. Being Deaf/deaf/hard of hearing, wearing hearing aids/cochlear implants, signing or speaking, that is what makes us bricks, but when we belong together, we are a strong, powerful wall, supporting and strengthening each other.

The love and support of our friends, family and community is what holds us together and gives us strength together.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

This is collage made from paper and laminated plastic, decorated using permanent marker and texta. The bricks, made from different coloured paper, have been chosen then decorated, drawn or written on, using sharpies and markers by each member of our community. The clear laminated 'graffiti tags' of their names in bright colour, provide a different texture over the layers of paper brick, providing another way of expressing themselves and their individuality on top of our community while being the brick, that makes the community simultaneously.



**81. BRIGHT HANDS SIGN TOGETHER**

by Furlong Park School for Deaf Children Group 1, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This artwork shows various Auslan handshapes and gestures linked to the idea of connection and communication within the Deaf community and beyond. It shows that Deaf people can use Auslan as a way to show that they belong in the Deaf community. However, many of the signs would also be recognisable to people who have had no exposure to the Deaf community or to sign languages, thus showing the power of signs to create a feeling of inclusivity and belonging regardless of whether or not they are Deaf.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

This artwork explores the idea of individuality within a community, and how language can help to create a shared sense of belonging. It represents individuals within the Deaf community coming together to create a sense of belonging for everyone through the use of Auslan. It shows that when individuals contribute in small ways, such as with a simple sign for communication and connection, they can create something that is bigger than the sum of its parts. In this case, it is a community where people can communicate without barriers, where language and culture are valued, and where everyone can feel like they belong.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

The artwork is a simple collage consisting of individual pieces arranged together in a grid. It was created using coloured paper and markers. This medium was chosen because the paper allowed for the use of varied colour to create contrast, and the markers stood out clearly for patterns and outlines.



**82. LITTLE FINGER FRIENDS**

by Furlong Park School for Deaf Children Group 2, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**

This artwork shows that a lot of different people, with different appearances, different personalities, different interests, and different ways of communication can still all come together to create a community where everyone can get along, make friends, and feel like they belong together. It shows that people can have their own identities but at the same time can belong with others, and that they do not have to let their differences divide them.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**

The artwork explores the ideas of friendship, communities and people's unique identities. Each little friend in the artwork is made of a fingerprint, showing that they have unique things about them that are different to everyone else. But they can still come together to form bonds, friendships, and a broader community based on things that they have in common. This applies in all sorts of settings, such as in school, within families, and in the Deaf community as a whole.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**

The artwork was created with acrylic paint and fine liners. Paint was a medium that was familiar to the students that still allowed them creative freedom with the colours they chose. The fineliner was chosen as it stands out well against the paint while being thin enough to make the final appearance of each character clear.





**83. BELONGING IN GOULBURN**

by Goulburn Hearing Support Team, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
Students were given wooden rounds and asked to think about places, people or symbols that represent belonging to them. Students included abstract representations of belonging and concrete examples such as the being with their Deaf and hard of hearing peers flying kites, at their homes, the beach, school, playing football, with their dog, with family and friends and camping. Symbolic works included rainbows, repeating patterns, a phone and people together.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Togetherness, family, friends, disability, teamwork and joy.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
We used wooden rounds and a variety of different textas.



**84. WE ALL BELONG IN THIS WORLD**

by Klemzig Centre of Deaf Education, SA

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
In our school, the deaf and hard of hearing students come together once a week for 'Deaf Time'. This time gives us a chance to get to know our DHH friends in other classes and to build our community. In Term 1 of 2026 Deaf Time encouraged students to reflect on their identities. We talked about our skills, communication preferences, families, hobbies, identities, and communities. Whether it is a friendship group, sports team, family, class, school or community... People who are deaf or hard of hearing belong there. We made a model of the world to show that people who are deaf or hard of hearing (we) all belong in this world.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
The world would be a boring place if everyone was the same. It is important that deaf and hard of hearing people are in our classrooms, our school, our community, and the world because we have a right to be there, we bring unique perspectives and make any place we go a better place. Students collaborated for weeks, slowly building the layers of paper mache to make our world sculpture. We chose the words that would be placed on the sculpture (deaf pride, belonging, friends, family, community, inclusion) and took photos of students' hands showing signs they thought relevant to the theme (family, harmony, inclusion) and these became the land of our earth model.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
The students wanted to create a 3D sculpture after collaborating on a 2D artwork in 2025. 'We belong' was extrapolated to understanding that it is important to have deaf and hard of hearing people in our world. Consequently, it was decided we would make a model of the world and paper mache would be the easiest way to do so. Students added layers to the model twice/week for 5 weeks to complete the sculpture.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**  
Our Year 5 and 6 students were leaders in completing this project. The responsibility and kindness they showed to the younger students helping them add layers was commendable.



**85. OUR COLOURFUL WORLD**

by Methodist Ladies' College, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
We have decided to make the world, because everyone belongs on this earth. It doesn't matter if you wear glasses, have hearing loss, or like pineapple on pizza. So no matter what you like or your differences, we all belong to the earth.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
We are all part of this earth, we are all different, but we all belong here, and we are all allowed to be happy and enjoy this world.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Clay and painting.





**86. I CAN CONNECT THE WORLD**

by Next Sense Werrington, NSW

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
There should be no racism in this world, so it can be a better world we all belong together.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
United countries helping hand in hand.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Drawing because I can express how I feel through my drawing.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**  
My artwork is about people looking at me in the centre. The boy in the photo is me wearing a hearing aid. They are all from different backgrounds, but they are all connected. I drew the artwork and my little sister who also wears a hearing aid coloured the artwork. We enjoyed making this project. I hope we win!



**87. A SCARF OF CONNECTION**

by Strathcona Girls Grammar School Group 1, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
Our artwork shows 'We belong' by using a scarf to represent the warm feeling you have when you belong, and badges to show the people and places where we feel we belong.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Our artwork shows that we belong in different places and with different people. It is about feeling safe, included, and part of a community.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
We created a mixed-media artwork using knitting, badge-making, and drawing to show how we belong in different ways. Each part represents our strengths and interests, and together they form one unique piece that shows 'We belong'.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**  
Cloe: I enjoyed working together on this piece.  
Olivia: I had a jolly good time working with my friends on the woolly scarf.  
Chloe: I had a great time making this scarf. Everyone should know that we belong.



**88. WHERE WE BELONG**

by Strathcona Girls Grammar School Group 2, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
Our artwork shows a house with different rooms that represent the places and people we feel connected to. Each room shows where we feel safe, happy, and included.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Our artwork explores the idea that belonging means feeling accepted and valued. It shows that we can belong in different spaces, like home, school, extracurricular activities (Stage Left) friends, family, and the deaf community.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
We created a drawing using pencils on paper. We chose this medium because we enjoy drawing, and it helped us show lots of detail in each room. We could add colour and include the people and places that make us feel like we belong.



**89. WE BELONG TO AUSTRALIA**

by Willmott Park Primary School, VIC

**Tell us how your artwork addresses this year's theme 'We belong':**  
My sister and I both made ourselves, and we belong to many places.

**Tell us about the ideas or themes your artwork explores with the theme 'We belong':**  
Colour and happiness.

**What type of art have you submitted and why?**  
Clay, Paint and Varnish.





---

597 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne,  
Victoria 3004  
Telephone 03 9539 5300  
Email [info@deafchildren.org.au](mailto:info@deafchildren.org.au)  
**[deafchildrenaustralia.org.au](http://deafchildrenaustralia.org.au)**

---

    | **We belong**  
ART EXHIBITION 2026 | **Deaf Children**  
Australia.