



YELLOW DOVE AUSTRALIA

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO AUSTRALIA

## Cultural Connection Project

### Session 1 - Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Sensory/Tactile Art Program

**Date:** 29/01/2025

**Location:** SEWB

**Facilitator:** Ryan Chapman (Founder and Director, Yellow Dove Australia)

**Participants:** 13 Martu Elders and Daughters

**Supporting Partners:** NAHS Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Ane and Vinnie)

### Session Overview

The first session of the Cultural Connection Project welcomed 13 Martu Elders and their daughters, engaging in a Sensory/tactile art session designed to foster mental well-being and cultural dialogue. The session commenced with a warm and welcoming spread of sandwiches and dips, allowing participants to settle in comfortably before the activities began.

Ryan Chapman provided an introduction and overview of the project, outlining its goals of cultural connection, healing, and empowerment through artistic expression. The central conversational theme for the day was: "What could be done to move forward Wiluna Township and Community?"



### Art as a Healing Practice

The art session evolved organically, with artworks growing in depth and conversation flowing naturally. Sensory/tactile art, when combined with open dialogue, serves as a powerful tool for emotional healing, self-expression, and systemic change. The session allowed participants to explore thoughts and emotions without pressure or restriction, creating a safe and inclusive environment for meaningful conversations.

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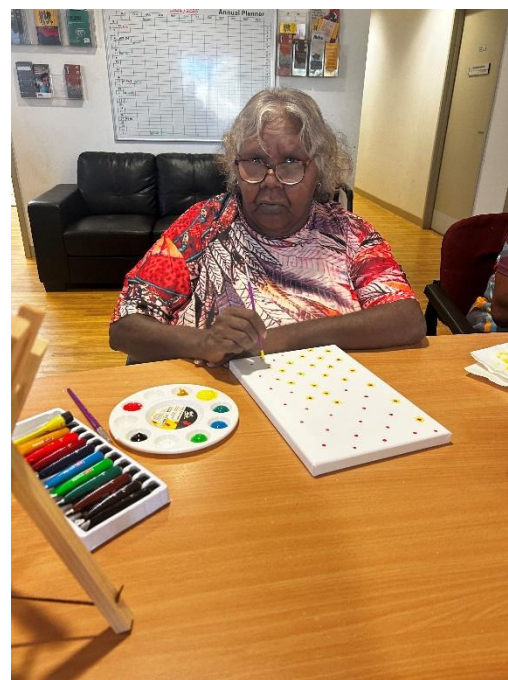
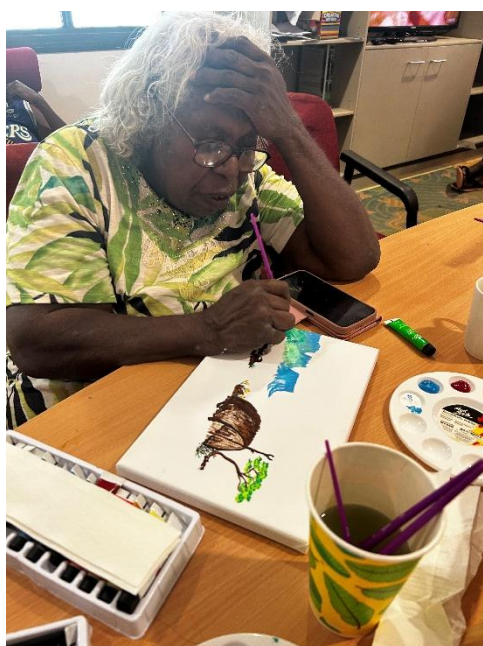
Through this approach, systemic barriers that often weigh heavily on cultural and personal discussions were gently eased. The absence of financial or emotional burdens ensured that the session remained a positive and holistic experience for all involved.

### Acknowledgments

A special thank you to Ane and Vinnie from the NAHS Social and Emotional Wellbeing for their invaluable assistance and contributions. Their presence and support helped create a nurturing and constructive space for participants to share, reflect, and create.

The success of this session highlights the power of cultural engagement and therapeutic practices in strengthening mental health and community ties. We look forward to continuing this journey in future sessions.

A special thank you to the Happiness Co Foundation for their generous contribution and for selecting Yellow Dove Australia as their grant round winners. Your support enables us to continue delivering impactful programs that uplift and empower communities.



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## Cultural Connection Project

### Session 2 - Karalundi Aboriginal Boarding School - Sensory/Tactile Art Program

**Date:** 24/02/2025

**Location:** Karalundi Aboriginal Boarding School

**Facilitator:** Ryan Chapman (Founder and Director, Yellow Dove Australia)

**Participants:** 35 High School Students/Staff

**Supporting Partners:** Karalundi Aboriginal Boarding School Staff

#### Session Overview

Yellow Dove Australia had the privilege of visiting Karalundi, a small Aboriginal Community boarding school, to engage high school students in a unique tactile/sensory art project. The session saw an incredible turnout of 35 participants, all eager to explore creative expression through art.

The session commenced with an introduction to Yellow Dove Australia and Ryan Chapman, setting the stage for an insightful discussion on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. This lesson encouraged students to reflect on how their environments shape their identities. This led to the thought-provoking question of the day:

**"What makes me happy when I'm away from family and Country, and what keeps me grounded in the community I'm creating?"**



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### Key Insights & Engagement

A prominent theme that emerged from the discussion was the students' appreciation for boarding school life, where they could develop independence without the pressures of community expectations. The session was conducted in two groups, male and female, fostering a culturally safe and open environment for discussions.

Through the sensory/tactile art activities, students created artwork that provided profound insight into their sources of happiness and personal grounding. The artistic expressions revealed their resilience, strength, and the significance of cultural connection in their lives.



### Conclusion & Acknowledgments

The session concluded with a refreshing cool-off in the pool, celebrating the students' engagement and creativity.

This program is part of our Cultural Connection Project, made possible by the incredible support of the Happiness Co Foundation Happy Grants. Their generosity enables us to continue delivering impactful projects that foster growth, connection, and joy within communities.



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## Cultural Connection Project

### Session 3 - Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Sensory/Tactile Art Program

**Date:** 26/02/2025

**Location:** Wiluna SEWB

**Facilitator:** Ryan Chapman (Founder and Director, Yellow Dove Australia)

**Participants:** 12 Martu Elders and Family Members

**Supporting Partners:** NAHS Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Ane and Vinnie)

### Session Overview

The third session of the Cultural Connection Project was held at SEWB in Wiluna, welcoming 12 Martu Elders and their family members for a sensory/tactile art session designed to foster cultural dialogue and community engagement.

The session commenced with a warm and welcoming spread of sandwiches and dips, allowing participants to settle in comfortably before the activities began. The central conversational theme for the day was: "What else could be done?" Building upon previous discussions, this topic encouraged deeper reflection on future possibilities for Wiluna Township and its community.

Bronwyn from the K Farmer Dutjahn Foundation joined the session to learn more about the project and explore how the Dutjahn Foundation could further assist Wiluna through its various funding initiatives. Her presence sparked meaningful dialogue about potential collaborations and additional support for community-led initiatives.



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### Key Insights & Engagement

The discussion during the session was organically driven, with participants sharing ideas on ways to enhance community well-being and access to essential resources. Key topics included the need for fridges and washing machines for family homes in the reserve (located 5km outside Wiluna Township), the development of a splash park to support health and well-being during the hot winter months when the pool is closed, and the importance of consistent cultural connection activities for Elders as part of a broader community access initiative. Additionally, participants emphasised the need for programs tailored to middle-aged community members, providing them with meaningful engagement opportunities.

### Conclusion & Acknowledgments

This program is part of our Cultural Connection Project, made possible by the generous support of the Happiness Co Foundation Happy Grants. Their contribution allows us to continue delivering meaningful projects that foster connection, growth, and joy within communities. We also extend our sincere appreciation to SEWB and the Wiluna team for their ongoing collaboration and commitment to supporting Yellow Dove Australia in this shared vision.



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## **Cultural Connection Project**

### **Session 4 - Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Sensory/Tactile Art Program**

**Date:** 19/03/2025

**Location:** Wiluna SEWB

**Facilitator:** Ryan Chapman (Founder and Director, Yellow Dove Australia)

**Participants:** 6 Martu Family Members and 1 Elder

**Supporting Partners:** NAHS Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Ane and Vinnie)

### **Session Overview**

The fourth session of the Cultural Connection Project took place at SEWB in Wiluna, bringing together six Martu family members for a sensory/tactile art session focused on connection and well-being.

The session provided a space for participants to check in with one another, particularly in light of recent incidents in town that had led some community members to disengage from certain services. Despite a smaller turnout due to Main Roads licensing renewals and a large Ranger meeting, the session proceeded as planned, reinforcing the importance of consistency and structure.

Due to community activities and employment outside of the project, Yellow Dove Australia has donated the remaining 13 pieces of art supplies to SEWB to continue their therapy work in social and emotional developments.

### **Key Insights & Engagement**

The session provided a meaningful check-in with the family, fostering discussions around education, on-Country trips, and the items that bring joy to their lives. Conversations also explored employment opportunities and training options for parents and guardians, highlighting a shared interest in long-term support and growth.

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## Conclusion & Acknowledgments

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