



## *Overview*

PREPARED FOR THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
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## Yarn Bark

Yarn Bark is a First Nations led organisation that promotes community control and self-determination through surfacing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and values and embedding them across all aspects of program functions. We believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are at the front and centre of how we move forward collectively as a Nation.

By empowering a community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to draw strength from their cultural foundations, we are supporting the continuation and evolution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Utilising our knowledge to improve a Nations understanding, intelligence and ability to live alongside and work in partnership with First Nations Peoples, culture and community.

## Guiding Values

At Yarn Bark we are guided by values that are inherit to the survival and continuation of First Nations Peoples, culture and society. Yarn Bark reflect these values across all aspects of our work and believe they are essential for all people in today's society:

- **Respect:** We are guided by a genuine sense of admiration and appreciation of self, others and land (country) and traditions.
- **Connection:** We exist to create an environment that inspires individuals and groups to strengthen their linkages and bolster the core essence that their foundations are built on.
- **Authenticity:** We believe in the quality of being yourself at the very deepest level. Your true self guides your mindset, behaviours, actions and ways of being in the world.

## Core Objectives

At Yarn Bark our core objectives are:

- **Young People** - To mentor young First Nations Peoples on their journey of reconnecting to their cultural foundations and pathways.
- **Storytelling** - Capture all aspects of the evolving cultural narrative of our current generation and express through platforms such as storytelling, song, dance and creative arts.
- **Inclusive Australia** - Support the growth of cultural intelligence of all people living in Australia through providing immersive and educational opportunities to connect to the essence of Aboriginal Culture and Community.

## Key Messages

- Embedding power and reason to First Nations People leading social change.
- Strengthening all people's connections to First Nations culture and community.
- Guide young First Nations Peoples to their life purpose.



## Who We Are

### WILL AUSTIN

Will Austin is a proud Keerray Wurrung and Peek Wurrung man, born and raised on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Daylesford, Victoria.

Will is a grounded, resilient, values-driven young man who is committed to creating grassroots community change. Throughout his career, which has been predominantly working within the First Nations youth space, Will has been dedicated to supporting the development of strong young leaders, who are each confident in their individual stories, connected to their cultural identities and strengths, and motivated to be the best version of themselves.

Will has extensive experience in community engagement, program design, management and facilitation and has done significant work at a National scale within the Aboriginal community.

#### Key Skills / Experience:

- Strong ability to engage with key individuals, community organisations and other stakeholders in the delivery of programs, particularly youth programs.
- A commitment to maintaining successful and inclusive working partnerships with groups who want to develop Indigenous programs.
- Facilitation within internal and external businesses and organisational with experience designing and running successful meetings, workshops and programs.
- Specialist knowledge and experience in Aboriginal youth development.
- Extensive engagement experience within Aboriginal communities at a grassroots level and knowledge on cultural protocol.

### ALEX SPLITT

Is a proud Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi) man, born in Tennant Creek NT. Over the last eight years Alex has worked extensively in the field of Indigenous Affairs in areas relating to strategic and policy development within government, operational management for not-for-profits – including the sporting industry and youth sector and worked closely with universities in a number of capacities.

As an Aboriginal man Alex has experienced first-hand the strong cultural identity that our First Nations peoples share. He truly believes the capabilities and capacity of the young people within our communities have the potential to create generational change and end the social disadvantage experience by many Indigenous people across Australia.

In 2018, Alex was awarded a Fellowship with the Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity.

#### Key Skills / Experience:

- Comprehensive understanding of Aboriginal communities, social complexities and entrenched disadvantage.
- Experience with government and commercial funded contracts.
- Strong ability to engage with key individuals, community organisations and other stakeholders in the delivery of programs, particularly youth programs.
- A commitment to and proven experience within the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio.
- Specialist knowledge and experience in Aboriginal youth development.
- A commitment to maintaining successful and inclusive working partnerships with groups who want to develop Indigenous programs and/ or accredited training.
- Facilitation within internal and external businesses and organisational with experience designing and running successful meetings, workshops and programs.



## 2018 in Review

### Engagement Overview

Service	Details	NO. Delivered	Audience Engaged
<b>First Nations Youth Programs</b>	Programs / workshops that are solely focused on the personal, skill and cultural development of First Nations Young People.	5	475
<b>Inclusive Australia Experiences</b>	Includes cultural immersion keynote presentations, cultural strengthening training, design and delivery of tailored workshops for corporate forums / events.	14	2,575
<b>School Cultural Immersion</b>	Half / Full Day Cultural Immersion Experiences for all levels of education from kindergarten – University. Tailored to provide interactive, authentic and educational experiences for all young people to connect to the essence of First Nations Culture.	8	880
<b>Wayapa Wuurrk</b>	Wayapa Wuurrk is an Earth Connection Wellness Practice based on Aboriginal wisdom that combines earth mindfulness, narrative meditation and physical movement of 14 key elements to create holistic wellbeing & sustainability. Suitable for all levels of education and corporate.	7	325
<b>Totals</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>4,255</b>
<b>Authentic Craft</b>	Yarn Bark authentic hand-crafted products.	50+ (orders)	

*Note: The above numbers were achieved with Yarn Bark's current working capacity of 1-2 days per week.*

### Highlights

#### Malmsbury Youth Detention Precinct

Yarn Bark was engaged to design and deliver a three-day personal and cultural development intensive for 20 First Nations Young People at the Malmsbury Youth Detention Precinct as part of their NAIDOC week celebrations. Utilising traditional dance, song, arts and craft, this program was tailored to instil pride, confidence and connection towards culture and community and was based on the values of respect, authenticity and accountability.

#### Department of Health & Human Services – On Country Staff Forum

Yarn Bark was engaged to facilitate and provide expertise and guidance in the design phases of a full day internal health and wellbeing conference for 160 DHHS staff that had a strong focus on cultural connection, breaking down barriers of participation and interaction between the VPS Grades and the concept of appreciation, respect and connection to/for country. Yarn Barks facilitated workshop utilised cultural immersion, team building activities and experiential learning that increased the learning potential of participants, by complimenting the on-country experience being facilitated by the Yorta Yorta Traditional Custodians.

Yarn Bark's Cultural Immersion Experience delivered at Canadian Lead Primary School highlighted our ability to deliver highly engaging and tailored cultural educational experiences to large and diverse cohorts of primary school ages students. A record number of 230 students from years prep – six participated in our 4.5-hour half day experience offering. In addition, Yarn Bark was able to implement our vision of providing casual employment opportunities for Young First Nations Peoples, through engaging a local photographer for the day.

## 2019 Project Scope / Visions

### **Project 1: Karreeta Meerta Peeneeyt – “Grow & Rise Up Strong”**

*Karreeta Meerta Peeneeyt – “Grow & Rise Up Strong”* is Yarn Barks personal, skill and cultural development programming aimed at building the capacity of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in having the necessary skills, confidence and knowledge to navigate their future, and a strong sense of cultural identity and resilience towards maintaining healthy in mind, body and spirit well-being.

Workshops are thoroughly designed and delivered by skilled Aboriginal facilitators and encourage personal growth through experiential learning, providing opportunities for young people to step outside of their comfort zones and ordinary worlds to connect to and explore their true selves.

Our workshops can be tailored to individuals and groups of young people in years 8 – 12 and are based on five key modules:

- Tackling shame, removing your masks and finding strength in vulnerability.
- Personal Narratives, values and storytelling.
- Connecting to your shared and individual cultural journey.
- Connecting to and caring for country.
- Understanding grassroots issues, social action and the power of being a young person.

It is Yarns Barks vision to work in partnership with schools, communities and organisations throughout Victoria to implement *Karreeta Meerta Peeneeyt* programming. The delivery structure will be determined within the design stages and will be guided by the expertise and knowledge of each community, school and organisation we work with. Methods of program delivery will be through workshops, intensives programs between 2-4 days and camping on country weekends.

### **Project 2: Yarn Bark - Koytpa Koy Koy Marra (Storytellers)**

Yarn Bark – Koytpa Koy Koy Marra (Storytellers) is a movement of First Nations young people taking a stand against mental illness and Indigenous youth suicide, through proud and strong, modern and traditional forms of cultural expression.

It is an active social media platform of purpose, belonging and connection utilised to share our stories from across the land. Where young people can inspire each other to embrace and celebrate their own cultural identity, and to form a solidarity through focusing on the inherited strength, love and spirit of 75,000 plus years of a living, breathing and healthy cultural survival.

Young people that wish to become a member of Yarn Bark – Koytpa Koy Koy Marra will feature a profile on Yarn Barks website and will have access to close mentoring of Yarn Bark staff in capturing, articulating and sharing their story around particular themes in their own unique way.

Yarn Bark - Koytpa Koy Koy Marra will capture all aspects of the evolving cultural narrative our current generation lives, to contribute towards preparing future generations for the complex society they will one day be required to inherit and navigate.

In addition, it aims to generate causal employment opportunities for its members to share their stories at events, schools, organisations and leadership programs across the Nation in the future. Contributing to our vision of supporting the growth of cultural intelligence of all peoples living in Australia.

### **Project 3: Wayapa Wuurrk Cultural, Earth & Sustainability Education Program**

Wayapa Wuurrk (Connect to Country) is a globally certified Earth Connection Wellness Practice based on Aboriginal wisdom that combines cultural expression and education, earth mindfulness, narrative meditation and physical movement to create holistic wellbeing & sustainability. Wayapa teaches the importance of Earth, Mind, Body and Spirit wellbeing and supports all people in establishing a healthy relationship with the Earth, based on connecting to 14 fundamental elements that have significant cultural meaning and teachings.

After investing to become certified practitioners in Wayapa Wuurrk, Yarn Bark are now developing an innovative 14 week intensive Cultural, Earth & Sustainability Program model based on the 14 elements of Wayapa Wuurrk. We aim to pilot this program in primary schools within Victoria, as a creative approach to implementing First Nations knowledge into curriculum.

The model will be delivered as 14 one-hour workshops, each focusing on the cultural stories, significance and teachings attached to each element and how they relate to our Earth, Mind, Body and Spirit wellbeing.

Utilising interactive cultural activities such as dance, song, language, traditional games, bush walks and arts / craft, this intensive program will expose young people to the most authentic aspects of traditional culture and knowledge, whilst teaching how it can be adapted to benefit today's modern society.

## **Yarn Bark and the Indigenous Education Foundation**

Given the clear organisational alignment between the Indigenous Education Foundation (IEF) and Yarn Bark, we would like to open an invitation to partner with Yarn Bark. By partnering with Yarn Bark, IEF will play a pivotal role in maximising the impact of our projects across all our work, allowing our young people and the broader community to have the opportunity to engage in the initiatives outlined above. In addition, Yarn Bark are open to supporting IEF through access to any of our Inclusive Australia offerings. On request, Yarn Bark can provide a number of investment options and opportunities for consideration.

## **Next Steps**

- IEF to review the information presented in this overview; and
- Yarn Bark and IEF discuss IEF's interest in partnering.

## **Key Contact if required:**

If you would like to discuss this proposal in further detail, please feel free to contact us at [Yarn.Bark@gmail.com](mailto:Yarn.Bark@gmail.com).



## Testimonials

*'We were lucky enough to have Will and Alex at our National Reconciliation Week event for the Melbourne Football Club. They were such a pleasure to deal with and went out of their way to assist at short notice. On the day, they did a wonderful job of sharing their culture with us & had everyone captivated with their beautiful storytelling, traditional song and Yidaki / Didgeridoo playing. The traditional song and didgeridoo were an incredible experience that will not be forgotten by our players and staff. Thank you, Yarn Bark, for making our event so special!'*

### **Brooklyn – Melbourne Football Club**

*'Will introduced a fully understood theoretical and spiritual underpinnings of Wayapa Wuurrk. As he took the group through the 13 different elements of Wayapa Wuurrk he forged new relationships and connections in the most honest and genuine way. Will's energy and enthusiastic cultural experience was powerful and deeply inspiring. Participants were then invited to go outside to participate in traditional song and dance. Even those who normally do not engage in practical, mental and physical movement fully embraced this incredible cultural experience.'*

### **Maurice – Department of Health and Human Services**

