# **Transcript: Sharing our stories: building partnerships for change**

**[Text]**: yaneekan-werreeyt - Sharing our stories, building partnerships for change.

**[Music]**: Aboriginal music

**[Image]**: Painting of a black tree with white dotted branches swirling outward over a gold background

**[Text]**: Kimbarne Wadawurrung Dja, Welcome to Wadawurrung Country by Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles

[**Text**] Seven Deakin and Wadawurrung people sat in a yarning circle to talk about their successful collaboration to make the simulation resource ‘yaneekan-werreeyt’

## What did we want yaneekan-werreeyt to do?

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY, Social Work Lecturer, Deakin University**: I wanted to create a resource that educates the next wave of social workers of how to work safely in cultural safety with Aboriginal people in social work.

**JODIE SATOUR, Social Work Lecturer, Deakin University:** And I think that's also-- you know, as an Aboriginal person, it's about building those relationships. And that's what was important, to make sure that we build relationships with others within Deakin University, but also with community, and engaging with the locals and the traditional custodians, and yaneekan-werreeyt itself, and what our own language means journey, so it was part of the journey. So it's not necessarily the outcome. It's always the process, and the way that you build up those relationships, and who you work with.

## Connecting with Traditional Custodians

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: Well I knew I had to go and see Wathaurong Co-Op, but I didn't really know how to go about doing that, because I thought if I just ring up, they'll think, well, who's she? You know? But luckily, Jodie knew somebody who was there.

And so together, Jodie and I—well, Jodie actually got the contact of the main people that we needed to set up a meeting with, and then Jodie set up the meeting, and I came along with Jodie. And we met with them, and we showed them some of the resources we'd done and talked about what we'd like to achieve. And that's when they said, ah, well, you need to talk to Corrina, Corrina Eccles. And that's how that happened.

**JODIE SATOUR**: Yeah. And I think for me, as an Aboriginal person, not coming from here, it's even important for me to build those relationships and find out, who are the right people and who I should be asking? And I knew someone on the board, and that person then gave me direction for who I should engage with. And it's not as if I didn't know people in that organisation. But even for me, it's important who to talk to.

**CORRINA ECCLES, Wadawurrung Traditional Custodian**: Because of that consultation and the listening from Jodie and then myself, and then I said, we need community people and I have the right people that can do this. And then that is where we had Norm and BJ play those parts along with BJ's brother as well. And you didn't get them from an acting studio, and it was real, it was pure, it was truth, it was honest, and it was heartfelt what they did do.

**NORM STANLEY, Wadawurrung Aboriginal Mentor/Educator**: We're natural actors. We are a little bit deadly in that way.

**CORRINA ECCLES**: Norm is.

**NORM STANLEY**: We have a fantastic sense of humour and a sense of self, too. We know what we can and can't do. We know how to engage with other people really well. And if we feel comfortable with them-- you can see how comfortable we are with you guys, to be able to just sit here, and have a yawn with you, and be really open and honest about our own feelings towards things, and how we are.

And so for me to be involved in it and to be able to sit with boys that I already know that I've already worked with for many years, made it easier. You got cameras and you got microphones and stuff, but so much easier, because I know these boys.

## Production as a journey

**BRETT WILSON, Interactive Designer, Deakin Universit**y: I think with the final product, there was a journey that that went on as well. So there were key messages that we were looking at getting at. And the way that that was going to be presented to the students sort of grew along the way and changed along the way.

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: So we decided that what we first came up with, this character called Evelyn, who's actually the mother of the character that's in yaneekan-werreeyt. And Evelyn created a video diary.

**EVELYN**: I've got this thing called MS, multiple sclerosis. I've had it since Charlotte was one...

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: So that was something that came up out of we really wanted it to be client-centred. We really wanted students to feel that they know Evelyn, as if they've just spent time with her, as if they've just met her in her living room. So that's what the simulation actually is, imagining you're just meeting this person. She's talking to you about her innermost thoughts and difficulties.

So from Evelyn, she had some children. And it was Jodie's idea to have James as one of her children, who's an Aboriginal boy living with his dad on Country.

**JODIE SATOUR**: Yeah. And I think for me, it was also important to have that Aboriginal content in there, but also to acknowledge that it's not just the negatives. We wanted a positive spin.

## Allowing Aboriginal culture to shape the resource

**PETER LANE, Video Designer, Deakin University**: For me, that's sort of where it started, the journey started. For me, it was the tree, because in a multimedia sense, we were looking for a symbol that we could click on and interact with. And it was the tree painting, your tree painting, which the leaves, the roots, the trunk, all that, the meaning behind all of that was really important to understand some of that.

**TIM CRAWFORD, Video Producer, Deakin University**: I found that really important, too, the tree. And I thought it was interesting that you can apply the tree and the symbol of the tree to, like, somebody's situation. Like, they might be going through a rough patch or something like that, but you can apply just what it actually represents and what stage they are in their sort of development. So I thought that was a really interesting way of looking at things.

**BRETT WILSON**: Yeah. I think the symbolism was at the forefront of driving this project. As I said, it wasn't the only difference. There was a lot of differences, but just little shifs. I think as we are now sitting in the yarning circle, that was one thing that took me a little bit of getting used to.

As someone who walks into a meeting wanting to know, what's the agenda? What are the outcomes? What's going on? And if I don't follow that path, I get quite frustrated, and sometimes just completely tune out. It probably took me about three meetings with Corrina and Jodie to get my head around. Oh, OK. Even though we've gone off topic, and we've sort of meandered over here, and we're talking about something that might be completely different to the project, it all sort of ties in and it all makes sense.

Developing flexibility in the process
So I've probably changed my attitude towards all of my meetings because of this project, whereas when we seem to be going off topic, I'm a little bit more forgiving now, because I know that it's all going to make sense in the end.

**NORM STANLEY**: That's fantastic to hear. I really like hearing that, because it certainly is. Well, we're talking about a journey.

**BRETT WILSON**: Yeah, yes.

**NORM STANLEY**: So it's helping your journey as well.

**BRETT WILSON**: Honestly, without sounding clichéd, this project really changed the way I think about a lot of things--about the way I think about work, the way I think about family, my connection to land.

**JODIE SATOUR**: And I think you make an important point. It's that process. Because often, people will come in, and they have these agendas, or they look for an outcome. They want an outcome, rather than just letting it go, and just not being in control. I know even when we scripted that day for BJ and when we did the filming here, I know that it was like, oh, what are we going to say? No, just let it go. We'll tell a bit of a story, and just let it go, and just film. And it just worked out that day. We didn't have to do much that day, did we?

Creating a resonant story

**PETER LANE**: For me, like, film language is something that I've appreciated a lot more since this project. So sometimes, it's just like even here, sitting here and someone watching this, there's a lot of stuff going on behind us and around us. It's not necessarily explicitly said, but it's just what you take in and what you get out of it.

**NORM STANLEY**: It is. Storytelling is incredibly important. I mean, right through our history, that's what we're based on. And the stories that were shared to us were shared to us to give us that connection to where we were, to the country that we're on, give us connection to our family.

## Trusting the process and people

**CORRINA ECCLES**: I think the whole filming, the cultural essence was captured because it wasn't scripted. It wasn't acted. And we're not actors. Like, Norm is oral, we’re all oral in sharing our stories, and how we educate that it was natural and flowed really well with you guys providing that culturally safe space to have trust that we will get what we need from this.

**TIM CRAWFORD**: Yeah. I did feel a sense of trust, and collegiality, and all that sort of stuff with this. But yeah, it was good to see the performances were really good, just like letting it roll, particularly James. I mean, for a young boy to be able to perform like that and have an understanding in his mind of what he had to deliver in front of cameras, and lights, and stuff, was impressive, you know?

## A partnership from the word go

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: I was just thinking from the point of view of anyone else who's maybe similar to myself who's unit chairing and wants to create a resource, wants to try and educate their students, I think maybe the most important thing that I've learned is it's not about adding something small on to something that already exists. Everything needs to be right from the word go partnership.

So that what we've created, it's not as if it was a thing, and then we just added a little bit of Aboriginal perspective. Not at all. It's like front and centre, first and foremost, this is a partnership between Deakin University and the local people. And I think that's really important, and that the relationship comes first, and the relationship is more important than anything.

## Adjusting: it works both ways

**NORM STANLEY**: It's not just us being comfortable with you guys. It's you guys getting comfortable with us, too.

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: Yeah.

**NORM STANLEY**: And that's what's making that connection work.

**PETER LANE**: Yeah, absolutely.

**CORRINA ECCLES**: And we have those adjustments, like Norm spoke about before, that may not feel comfortable for us in some of these spaces as well. But when they are, definitely there are outcomes from our people and that, you know? So it's not like it's always driven our way. It's about that collaborative of the best ways we can capture, work together and embrace a culture, understand culture.

**JODIE SATOUR**: And also learning both ways. Like, we were trying to impart some of our knowledge, and how do we do that? And then you guys say, no, we need a script. We need to do it this way. And we're like, how does that work for us? I've never done filming or I've never done this before. So yeah, it works both ways.

## Outcomes

**CORRINA ECCLES**: And following on from that, me and Norm and Jodie have talked quite a lot about what we do in the space. We give our all. But why are we doing this? Why are we needing all people, non-Aboriginal people, all students to be doing this unit if we're saying what we do in our communities? Because we can not do it all.

**SOPHIE GOLDINGAY**: It's so great that it's actually influenced people on many different levels, whether it be professionally, or personally, or both, for me, especially. We've also got other feedback from students as well. We rolled it out to the Master students earlier in the year, and one student wrote back to me and said how much she's actually changed her own practice as a result of what she's learned through the unit and the yaneekan-wereeyt and the resources.

She wrote to us and said that she got some real changes set up. She's actually set up an ongoing consultation with the local Aboriginal people in the area. It was up north somewhere. And she would never have thought to have done that before, and there was no consultation prior to that. So that's like a massive change that's going to ripple through that whole agency. And hopefully, the people that are receiving the services now will get a service that is actually safe and appropriate for them. So I was really thrilled.

**JODIE SATOUR**: And I think that's part of the aim and the objective of the resource was if we can change a life, make a difference in the way that people practise and also within an organisation, that's a wonderful achievement, and out in community.

**[MUSIC]** Aboriginal musi

**[Text]** We acknowledge the Wadawurrung People, in particular Corrina Eccles and Norm Stanley, in the making of this video. The video was funded and project-managed by the Deakin University Diversity and Inclusion Unit, the Commonwealth Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program. yaneekan-wereeyt is a simulation resource created by Deakin Learning Futures Health Pod staff, the Deakin School of Social Work team and Wadawurrung Traditional Custodians.

Featured: Jodi Satour, Corrina Eccles, Sophie Goldingay, Peter Lane, Brett Wilson, Tim Crawford, Norm Stanley, BJ and Meredith Lewis. Didgeridoo music: Norm Stanley