



Beyond NAIDOC Week

Sherif Family Day Care's Journey

Our journey of including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures began in 2018 when our Inclusion Professional, Gayle Biddle, asked us, *“How inclusive is your philosophy?”*

We now have a section in our philosophy dedicated to honouring the Darug People, who are the Custodians of the land upon which our Family Day Care service is located. We have incorporated a range of authentic and respectful practices into our program including:

- ▶ Developing an Acknowledgement of Country which is read each morning.
- ▶ Dedicating an area in our playroom to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures introducing natural materials.
- ▶ Learning the cultural significance of a Yarning Circle and establishing one in our play area.
- ▶ Encouraging our educators to access *ABC Little Yarns Podcasts* and giving suggestions on how these could be followed up and extended for all age groups.

Our Inclusion Professional has continued to support us on our journey including helping us to reflect on taking a sensitive approach when liaising with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and creating connections beyond NAIDOC Week and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

Last year during the COVID-19 lockdown we sent care packages to a Torres Strait Islander community on Thursday Island. This was something that our whole service contributed to, and we now celebrate the Torres Strait Islander culture including Floral Friday.

To support our educators on their journey, we have provided an 'inclusion pack' with information sheets, activity ideas, authentically sourced Aboriginal fabric, Aboriginal symbols, activity cards for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and visual support cards from our Inclusion Agency.

We are planning to work with our Elders, to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan and with our Inclusion Professional's help, to further strengthen our inclusion practices to continue our journey with humility and enthusiasm.