

Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange Report



**Transforming Indigenous
Mental Health and Wellbeing**
www.TIMHWB.org.au



The Centre of Best Practice in
**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Suicide Prevention**
www.CBPATISIP.com



**UWA SCHOOL OF
Indigenous
Studies**

Acknowledgement and Thank You.

The Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, UWA thanks the following organisations for making funding or resources available for the Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange.

These include

- The Anika Youth Foundation, who funded five youths to attend.
- Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, who funded one youth to attend.
- The Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney who hosted the youth in Sydney and provided media support.
- The UWA Media Team for their media support.
- Sister Kates Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation for the Leaving Blessing.

The youths themselves.

Importantly, thank you to Carla Cochrane and the team at the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada who graciously hosted the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange in Canada.

The image on the cover page is part of the sand artwork that was created on Whadjuk Noongar Country (Perth) by Sister Kate's Home Kids Foundation.



**Transforming Indigenous
Mental Health and Wellbeing**
www.TIMHWB.org.au



The Centre of Best Practice in
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Suicide Prevention



**UWA SCHOOL OF
Indigenous
Studies**

Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange Report.

Project Overview:

The generosity of the Anika Foundation and the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health has allowed UWA to organise a cultural exchange to Canada for six Aboriginal Australian Youths. In Canada, they exchanged practices and knowledge about Indigenous suicide prevention and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB). Over two weeks, the group learnt how the First Nations people of Canada use traditional healing and cultural practices to promote SEWB and prevent suicide. The group also shared their ways of preventing suicide and promoting SEWB – In various conversations and presentations. The First Nations People from both countries agreed that a strength-based approach focusing on life promotion is the best way to prevent suicide. This Report documents the project activities and outcomes of the cultural exchange. The Anika Cultural Exchange was organised by the Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATISIP) and the Transforming Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing (TIMHWB) Research Project at the University of Western Australia.



Image 1: Map of Winnipeg, Manitoba

Attendees:

Full Bios in the Appendix.

Tiarnee Schafer: Tiarnee is a Kalkadoon woman. She is studying for a Masters of Clinical Psychology and a Masters of Suicidology. She will be completing her work as a provisional psychologist this year. She is passionate about improving the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Indigenous People. Tiarnee lives on Gadigal Country in the city of Warrang (Sydney) and spends her spare time volunteering and supporting the next generation of young Indigenous people, increasing their knowledge on the ways of strengthening their social and emotional wellbeing and breaking down the stigma that there is no shame in reaching out for support.

Lily Graham: Lily is a Palawa woman who lives in Victoria. Lily promotes access and inclusivity for First Nations People in the AFL. She is passionate about how sports can foster social change and the mental, spiritual and physical health benefits sport can provide. She is also passionate about Indigenous conceptions of health – such as a holistic perspective about mind, body and spirit, cultural practices and ways of healing – being incorporated into Australian healthcare. Lily wanted to learn more about the First Nations people of Canada and see where they have similar views and values.

Derek Nannup: Derek is a Whadjuk Noongar artist and dancer from Western Australia who currently lives on Gadigal Country in Warrang (Sydney). Derek works for NASCA, an entirely Indigenous-governed organisation that wants to use culture and education to promote better outcomes for Indigenous Youth which would benefit families and communities. Derek was also the NAIDOC Perth Youth of the Year in 2021. Derek was excited to meet other international First Nations people and learn about the Country, Community and Culture in Canada.

Mark Nannup: Mark is a Yamatji Noongar man who lives on Gadigal Country in Warrang (Sydney). He is an actor that has starred in several Indigenous performances, including short films, theatre productions and documentaries. Mark was excited to hear the stories of Elders and to discuss the experiences of colonisation and living in Canada with other Youths.

Manny Williams: Manny is a Kalkadoon, Pitta Pitta and Bunjalung man living and working on Wadawurrung Country in Geelong, Victoria. He works as a youth mentor, supporting them to strengthen their identity, and connection to culture and community. He is especially interested in mentoring and advocating for youth affected by the juvenile justice system. Manny wanted to connect with the First Nations people of Canada and share their history and culture.

Kyanne Paterson-Pryor: Kyanne is a Ballardong Yorga woman from Perth. The POCHE centre covered Kyanne's expenses for the Cultural exchange. Kyanne lost her thirteen-year-old sister to suicide; she has been passionate about suicide prevention ever since. She wanted to go on the trip to learn about how she could make a positive change and learn more ways to support her community.



*Image 2: Attendees in Sydney before going on the Cultural Exchange.
Pictured Left to Right are Kyanne, Mark, Lily, Derek, Tiarnee and Manny.*

Project Activities:

Leaving Blessing Ceremony

The youth left Australia with a Leaving Blessing Ceremony from the Elders at Sister Kate's Home Kids Foundation. After the Leaving Blessing Ceremony, the youth felt safe and connected to their Country and ancestors. The Elders at Sister Kate's, Aunty TJ Mia and Aunty Roma Winmar, the Youth at Sister Kate's, Michael Spratt and Jess Lister, and Professor Pat Dudgeon encouraged the youth to share their culture and bring back knowledge for their communities.

The Leaving Blessing Ceremony took place at Bilya Marlee in UWA and was live-streamed to the youth at the Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney on Gadigal Country in Warrang (Sydney). The ceremony began with a speech from Aunty Roma that ended with her singing up Country. Then the attendees at Bilya Marlee participated in a smoking and water ceremony while Michael Spratt played the didgeridoo; The blessing took place in a courtyard, prepared with sand artwork, a smudging bowl with native plants and water from the Derbral Yerrigan (Swan River), which was returned after the ceremony. The Elders and Youth from Sister Kate's and Pat Dudgeon delivered their speeches and the group had time to respond – They thanked everyone who took part in the blessing and expressed their excitement for the trip. The Leaving Blessing Ceremony ended with Aunty Roma singing out Country, the attendees at Bilya Marlee dancing, and everyone saying "Boordawan!" (See you soon.)



Image 3: Aunty Roma Winmar Delivering a Speech for the Leaving Blessing Ceremony

The entire Ceremony can be seen on the CBPATISIP Youtube Channel here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7CJPZ9Krag&t=12s&ab_channel=CBPATISIP

The Ceremony was also an opportunity to promote the trip along with TIMHWB, CBPATISIP and the Anika Foundation. After the Blessing Ceremony, the youth were interviewed about their expectations for the trip. The interviews have been posted on social media and can be viewed on the CBPATISIP Youtube channel here:

[Tiarnae Schafer:](#)

[Derek Nannup:](#)

[Manny Williams:](#)

[Lily Graham:](#)

[Mark Nannup:](#)

[Kyanne Paterson-Pryor:](#)

NextGEN Youth Conference

At the NextGEN Youth Conference, The First Nations people of Canada shared their knowledge about the Medicine Wheel and its role in their everyday lives. The Medicine Wheel represents the knowledge of Indigenous Canadians. It is a holistic approach to healing that also guides the teachings and ceremonies of First Nations Canadians. This event promoted traditional healing as a way to decolonise mental health institutions. The group gained valuable knowledge that they can share with their communities such as a new approach to health, and the importance of implementing traditional healing.

The youth had a presentation about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conception of health, the SEWB Model, at the NextGEN Conference. It was a ten-minute speech in front of thousands of First Nations youth from Canada and beyond. In this presentation, they discussed the elements of the SEWB wheel and how they use the model in their communities. For much of the audience, this was their first

exposure to the Indigenous Australian model of mental health and suicide prevention. The youth said, "Most of the people that came up to us afterwards said they learned so much from what we presented."



Image 4: Derek Nannup performs a Spearfishing Dance at the NextGEN Conference

Manito Ahbee Gathering

The Manito Ahbee Gathering celebrates Indigenous culture, arts and music. The gathering brought together twenty thousand First Nations people across North America. It celebrates the resilience and continued existence of Indigenous cultures amidst colonisation. The youth were welcomed during the grand entrance to the powwow, a vibrant celebration that honours the traditions and ancestors of First Nation Canadians.

The Manito Ahbee Gathering hosted conferences and symposiums on Indigenous issues, culture and community development. At these events, the youth learnt about preserving traditional art and dance and the importance of revitalising languages. These learning opportunities highlighted the importance of culture for the social and

emotional wellbeing of First Nations people. They also learnt how Canada granted its First Nations people the right to self-determination and land stewardship through treaties. Other symposiums discussed ways to build strong and resilient communities – Knowledge that the youth want to use to improve their communities in Australia.



Image 5: The Manito Ahbee Gathering brings large crowds together to celebrate the culture of Canada's First Nations people.

The youth had a thirty-minute presentation at the Manito Ahbee Gathering. Their presentation consisted of speeches, live poetry and traditional dance. In this presentation, they discussed the diversity of language groups across Australia, the need to revive languages and the Social and Emotional Wellbeing model.

Nibi Water Gathering

The Nibi Water Gathering is dedicated to the teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers about "Building Water Relationships." In many First Nation cultures, water is treated as a living entity, deserving of respect and gratitude because of helps sustain life. Fostering a relationship with water strengthens a connection to culture

and Country. The Nibi Gathering also encouraged socialising and building stronger communities through water ceremonies.

The Nibi Water Gathering also emphasised the role of Indigenous people as stewards of water. Many Indigenous Canadians struggle to access clean water because of water pollution, lack of infrastructure and other ongoing effects of colonisation. Inadequate access to clean water causes many health and wellbeing problems for First Nations people. This ceremony seeks to bring awareness to environmental issues and teaches people ways they can heal their Country.

Project Outcomes:

Life Promotion as a Suicide Prevention Method:

During the trip, the group learnt about life promotion, the method that the First Nations people of Canada use to prevent suicide. Life promotion encourages resilience and a strength-based approach to suicide prevention, mental health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing. It seeks to address and alleviate social determinants of health that cause suicide. This approach encourages suicide prevention through teaching and practising health beyond the absence of illness and through encouraging intergenerational resilience. This approach is similar to how Indigenous Australian organisations, like CBPATISIP, prevent suicide.

Intergenerational Trauma:

The youth learnt about the long-lasting impacts of colonisation on Canada's First Nations people. Both Indigenous Canadians and Australians continue to experience repercussions of colonisation: The effects of genocide, dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands into missions and reserves, servitude, removal of children and forced cultural assimilation. Past and contemporary oppression has resulted in the current disadvantage of First Nations peoples. They learnt more about colonisation and how Canada's First Nations people preserved their culture at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Mark said, "I took in the history of how the First Nations people managed to survive a long time with the impacts of colonisation.

Their language, stories, and traditions have survived under the radar and in secrecy through their determination to make sure their identity was not stripped away from place and community."

The First Nations people of Canada acknowledge the effects of trauma but also recognise that they pass down cultural practices that instil strength and resilience. The celebration of culture at Manito Ahbee was inspirational for the group. After the gathering, Derek Nannup told us, "I believe that our people are in a transition phase where the impacts of colonisation are slowly being left in our past and as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is becoming embedded in day-to-day conversations and teachings in the broader community our people begin to become stronger. This to me, shows that time and truth-telling heals."

The Importance of Treaty

The Canadian government made agreements with its First Nations people which improved self-governance and wellbeing. The group travelled to the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, land that belongs to the Anishinaabe people. The treaty recognises the Ojibway nation's ownership over the land, their rights to self-determination and the right to pursue their traditional way of life. The group learnt about the agreements that allow the Anishinaabe people to continue their culture and ceremonies in contemporary Canada.

The group learnt about healing and the importance of self-determination at the Brokenhead Reserve. At the Brokenhead Reserve they "spent time learning about cultural practices linked to healing, in particular about young people and mental health. Elders taught us tools they use to assist young people in hard times." The reserve also gave them direct experience with "First Nations self-determination movements & cultural strengthening programs within the reservation-schooling, health system, cultural teachings, case management, Maternity" and more. After the trip, The youth wanted to implement similar agreements with the Australian government – like the Voice – to improve the self-determination and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.

Networking:

The group made connections with other First Nations people throughout the cultural exchange. They had networking opportunities at the NextGEN Youth Conference, Manito Ahbee and the Nibi Water Gathering. The First Nations people of Canada were interested in connecting with the Youth – who were glad to share their cultural knowledge and experiences about SEWB and suicide prevention practices in Australia. The youths said they, “made lifelong friends from Turtle Island [North America] that we can stay in contact with and reach out to about First Nation topics such as mental health and suicide prevention globally.” The connections that the youth made in Canada will continue long after returning to Australia.

The Youth also made connections with a “traditional healer who... travels into communities and works on assisting with trauma, grief and life promotion.” The youth made other connections with healers including Elders and health workers at the Brokenhead Reservation First Nations Health Centre – who were able to share stories about healing, and how they do life promotion in their communities.

Medicine Wheel:

The youth learnt about the Medicine Wheel, a model that represents the knowledge of Canada's First Nations people. The Medicine Wheel guides the traditions and rituals of the First Nation people of Canada and helps them live a physically, mentally and spiritually healthy life – like the SEWB model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Both Indigenous Canadians and Australians strive to implement their traditional ways of healing in the health systems around them.

The youth returned with knowledge about the Medicine Wheel that will help the social and emotional wellbeing of their communities. Tiarnee said that “The Medicine Wheel shared many of the same teachings as our people. We all have roles and responsibilities. Every community and country is diverse as the next and we all have a role to play for the greater good of our people.”

Preserving Indigenous Cultures

The youth learnt how the First Nations people of Canada preserved their culture. Cultural events and conferences at the Manito Ahbee gathering helped the youth learn about how they could preserve culture and improve mental health in their communities. The discussions that the group had with other First Nations people has inspired them to attend more First Nations and suicide prevention events in Australia.

"I learnt so much about how we, as Aboriginal people can maintain our culture through the lens of the Native Canadian people, through festivals that can embrace all tribes no matter where you come from, because it's about continuing culture while it's still here and keeping it strong for the next generation... It's given us a plan to spread the word about how we can continue cultural practises in a festival-styled program. This will only happen by collaborating with Native Canadians to make sure we are being culturally respectful and that no intellectual property is being used from ideas they have originally had."

Experiencing the celebration of Indigenous Canadian culture was a powerful emotional experience for the youths. Lily told us about "a particular moment about three days in where we experienced the grand entry to the powwow at Manito Ahbee and we cried, we all cried for what was strong and what was lost. I wrote this poem about that moment.

Juxtapose Across the World – By Lily Graham

Thinking of a time to come

With a focus to restore our past

Hear the sound of the drum

Feel hope in the contrast

Hope for our kids

Strength for our heart

A future where nothing forbids

How can we play our part?

Creeping in comes despair

for what my eyes may never see

so much to share

potential for what can be

We can't measure the length

or know what it will take

but we have the strength

and know what is at stake

Spirit, body and mind

Culture keeps us strong

No one will be left behind

The time is now, to sing our future's song.

I feel this experience has allowed me to further broaden my vision and begin conversations of how we can contemporise elements of culture to mobilise a movement to promote accessibility to our ways. How we can utilise our old ways, traditions and customs to modernise teachings thus allowing them to be adaptable and accessible for all mob."

The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, the Transforming of Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing, The University of Western Australia and the six Indigenous Youths would like to thank the Anika Foundation for making this experience a reality with their generous support and funding. The trip was an experience of a lifetime and an invaluable learning experience that has taught them new cultures, ways of promoting social and emotional wellbeing and preventing suicide.

Appendix: Youth Information

Hi, I'm Tiarnee Schafer

About me

Puthut Nyini all, I am a proud Kalkadoon woman from Mount Isa, QLD. I am currently living, working, and studying on beautiful Gadigal land (Sydney). I am currently in my sixth year studying a Master of Clinical Psychology and completing my placement as a Provisional Psychologist and also in my last year studying a Master of Suicidology.

I am extremely passionate about helping improve the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of our mob. We are the oldest living culture; and believe we should be the oldest living people too.

In my spare time, I enjoy volunteering and supporting the next generation of young mob and increasing their knowledge on ways of strengthening their social and emotional wellbeing and breaking down the stigma that there is no shame in reaching out for support.



I enjoy camping, swimming in the ocean, hiking in nature and fishing



Connecting
with country!

What I'm Looking Forward to on the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange

I am so excited and honoured to be going to Winnipeg and am looking forward to learning, sharing and connecting with other First Nations people from across the globe.



**Hi,
I'm Lily Edwards**


About me





I am a Palawa woman. I work for the AFL, my role focuses on making the game more inclusive and accessible for First Nations people. I am passionate about the role sport can play in social change along with the mental, spiritual and physical health benefits for mob.

I am also passionate about Indigenous cultural practices and healing being embedded into our healthcare along with ensuring we are focusing on a wholistic view of mind, body & spirit.

What I'm Looking Forward to on the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange



I am so excited about the trip to learn so many things and partake in new experiences! I am excited to see similarities in views and shared values!





**Hi,
I'm Derek Nannup**



**WA Young Person and NAIDOC
Perth Youth of the year in 2021**



About me

I am a proud Whadjuk Noongar from the south-west of so-called Western Australia. I have ties to six of the fourteen sections (Whadjuk, Yued, Ballardong, Wilman, Wardarndi & Bindjareb) of Noongar Boodja (Noongar Country). I grew up in the city of Boorloo (Perth), but am currently living on Gadigal Country in the city of Warrang (Sydney) and work across Dharug & Dharawal Country.

From a young age I've practised my Noongar culture, learnt about Aboriginal History, sat with my Elders and have done my traditional dances with local Noongar dance groups, including Middar, Bindjareb Middar, Djenna Maara Moorditj & Baldja Moort, to name a few. Since moving to Warrang I have been blessed to dance with Muggera Cultural Enterprise. This is a dance group that consists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from all over the continent. We share dances and culture, but mostly perform under our Songman and represent Minjungbal, Mununjali, Yugembeh & Yuin dances.

I am currently working at NASCA, which is an 100% Indigenous Governed and controlled organisation and has 97% Indigenous staff rate on the ground. NASCA's vision is for Indigenous young people to experience better outcomes, creating a positive ripple effect for families and communities, through culture & education.

What I'm Looking Forward to on the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange

I am very excited to meet different First Nations/Indigenous people from around the world and learn about the Country, Community and Culture that I am on, once over there.






**Hi,
I'm Mark Nannup**



About me

I am a Yamatji Noongar man from Port Hedland and Meekatharra in Western Australia. I recently played 'Trofimov' in the 2021 state theatre production of 'The Cherry Orchard' directed by Clair Watson. I am also next to be heard voicing the 'Inspector' in Fist of Fury Noongar Daa directed by Kylie Bracknell and produced by the Perth Festival, a dubbing of the Fung Fu film Fist Of Fury into Noongar language. I was recently seen as the role of 'Malcoms' and 'Mischief Maker' in the 2020 Perth Festival production of HECATE directed by Kylie Bracknell; a Noongar language adaptation by the Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company of Macbeth that subverts Shakespeare's play by setting the drama on boodja.



I completed the Victorian College of the Arts Acting short course in 2016, where I played 'Thisbe' in A MISDUMMER NIGHTS DREAM, and a year later was accepted into the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting) graduating in 2019. I have starred in a number of short films and documentaries. I also work as a casual narrator for BSB.


What I'm Looking Forward to on the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange

I'm looking forward to hearing the stories of the old people and how the young people are navigating the two worlds and exchanging culture and the lived experiences of colonization.





**Hi,
I'm Manny Williams**



About me

I enjoy hiking in nature (barefoot, grounding), freshwater swimming, connecting to the land/spirits, and watching sunsets.

Puthut Nyini (Hello), I am a proud Kalkadoon, Pitta Pitta and Bundjalung man with Thai heritage, from Mount Isa Queensland. I am currently living and working on Wadawurrung Country in Geelong Victoria of the Kulin Nation, as a Youth Mentor. My role is to support young people to strengthen their identity, connection to culture and community.

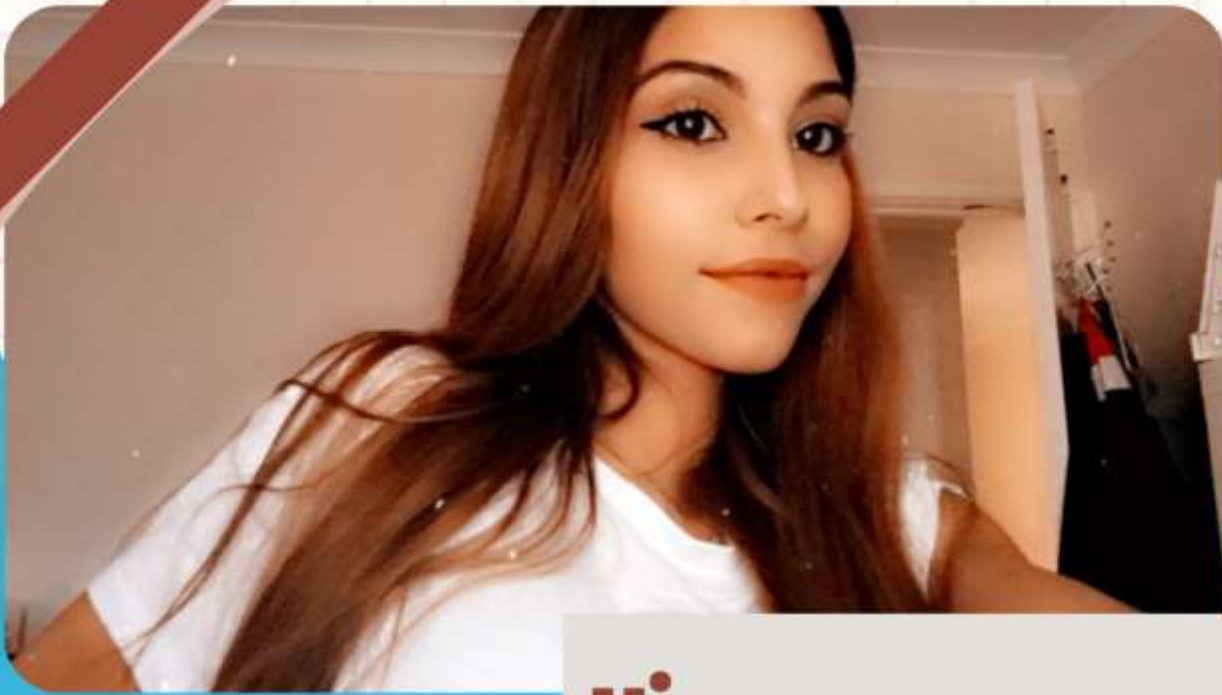
I take pride in being a strong advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, especially those affected by the juvenile justice system. I am a strong believer that our youth need love and connection not locked in detention, and will continually speak up for their rights to be connected to culture and family.

I'm also developing an online platform titled Blak2Blak, which includes a podcast that will shine a spotlight on First Nations young people across communities. Sharing stories of community achievements, personal life experiences and cultural history.

**What I'm Looking Forward to on the
Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange**



I'm really looking forward to connecting with the First Nation's people of Canada, learning the history and sharing our culture with one another. Most excited to see the cultural performances and try the Native food of the area.



**Hi,
I'm Kyanne Pryor**

About me

I am a York, Beverly Ballardong yorga from Perth, currently working as a full-time receptionist while also participating in Miss NAIDOC. Prior to this, I completed a year of Law School and obtained all three certificates in community service. The loss of my beloved 13-year-old sister to suicide in 2019 led me to become my father's caretaker until he passed away three months later. These experiences taught me the value of independence, and inspired me to become involved in supporting the Indigenous community and children facing similar challenges. My goal is to be one of many individuals who can help to make a difference.

What I'm Looking Forward to on the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange

I'm excited for this opportunity. Not only to explore places beyond Western Australia, such as Los Angeles, but also with the hope of making a difference in our community. Since many of our people, especially the youth, have lost their lives to suicide, I believe that I can contribute to positive change, by participating in the Anika Indigenous Youth Cultural Exchange