



# Because of Her, We Can!

A NAIDOC Week Exhibition by  
Ara Palka (Colleen Strangways)



Women's &  
Children's Hospital  
Foundation



*Because of Her, We can!* is a NAIDOC Week exhibition by Ara Palka (Colleen Strangways) featuring photographic portraits of Aboriginal women and their families.

Titled with the official NAIDOC Week theme, *Because of Her, We can!*, the exhibition celebrates the role of Aboriginal Women in caring for families, communities and culture. A strong Arabunna woman herself, Ara Palka's photographs show the women's strength, and her work conveys the ongoing importance of culture in pregnancy, birth and caring for children.

The photographs in this exhibition are striking portraits of Aboriginal women – mothers-to-be, grandmothers,

daughters, aunties and community leaders. For Ara Palka it is so important to show strong, positive images of Aboriginal families.

*"This year's theme for NAIDOC is truly empowering for the Aboriginal women all over Australia. it is the cultural sisterhood and backbone of our people, from our elders and our young. This is the sisterhood that I am born into; my daughters, my sisters, my mothers, my Aunties, my Nana's... but most of all my people."*

Under the theme - *Because of her, we can!* - NAIDOC Week 2018 celebrates the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made – and continue to make - to communities, families, and to our nation.

As pillars of our society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played – and continue to play - active and significant roles at the community, local, state and national levels.

As leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women fought and continue to fight, for justice, equal rights, rights to country, for law and justice, access to education, employment and to maintain and celebrate Indigenous culture, language, music and art.

They continue to influence as doctors, lawyers, teachers, electricians, chefs, nurses, architects, rangers, emergen-



cy and defence personnel, writers, volunteers, chief executive officers, actors, singer songwriters, journalists, entrepreneurs, media personalities, board members, accountants, academics, sporting icons and Olympians, the list goes on.

They are mothers, elders, grandmothers, aunties, sisters and daughters. For at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried the dreaming stories, songlines, languages and knowledge that have kept their culture strong and enriched their communities as the oldest continuing culture on the planet.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were there at first contact.

They have marched, protested and spoken at demonstrations and national gatherings for the proper recognition of indigenous rights and calling for national reform and justice. They often did so while caring for families, maintaining homes and breaking down cultural and institutionalised barriers and gender stereotypes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women did so because they demanded a better life, greater opportunities and - in many cases equal rights - for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and people. Their achievements, their voice, their unwavering passion empowered past generations and paved the way for generations to come. Because of her, we can!

NAIDOC Week 2018 is held nationally from Sunday 8 July to Sunday 15 July. For more information: [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)



The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (WCH Foundation) raises funds in support of the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, South Australia. Founded in 1984, the WCH Foundation is committed to ensuring that mums, children and their families have access to the very best in medical care, hospital facilities and support services at a time when they need it the most.

The WCH Foundation has developed a number of Arts in Health programs to integrate art into the life of the Hospital to improve people's health and wellbeing. We try to make the environment more 'child-friendly', making it look better and helping to make the time spent in hospital 'feel better'.

Established in August 2008, the Arts in Health program delivers a range of activities throughout the hospital across art forms such as: Visual Arts and Digital Media, Music and Performing Arts, Public Arts and Integrated Design, Literature and the Therapeutic Arts (Play Therapy, Art Therapy and Music Therapy). From providing pencils and colouring books in waiting areas, to managing Gallery spaces and art displays in the Hospital, collaborating with Hospital School on book week activities and working closely with the Play Therapy Team, the Arts in Health program delivers smiles and fun throughout the Hospital.

The WCH Foundation's Gallery program coordinates four galleries in the Hospital, providing a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire, improving the visual environment. The artworks displayed in the exhibition spaces come from a range of sources – internally from hospital staff, patients (women & children) and their families, through Hospital School, or specific Arts in Health activities and externally from local artists and art collectives.

*Because of Her, We Can!* was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kurna People, we pay our respects to the Kurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.



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