

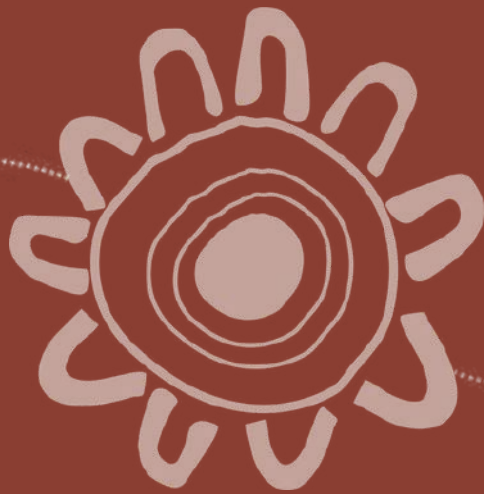


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WHITE PAPER





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At Winya, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we work and we pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging. Winya operates on Ngunnawal, Larrakia, Kurna, Whadjuk Noongar, Turrbal & Yuggera, Kulin, Gadigal and Nipaluna lands. We recognise the diversity and complexity of these cultures and the vital contributions their traditions and cultures have made, and continue to make, to this country. It always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.



WINYA (win-ya): to “*Sit Now*” in Wiradjuri dialect

Winya Indigenous Commercial Furniture is a **profit-for-purpose, Indigenous owned and controlled business** founded in 2015 by Kamilaroi woman Debbie Barwick, alongside a team of furniture industry professionals.

Established to **increase Indigenous employment and economic inclusion**, Winya works with its supply chain to create trainee opportunities and partners with Indigenous businesses nationwide.

We deliver **commercial furniture for large-scale fit-outs** for Federal and State Government agencies including the ATO, Department of Defence, and Federal Courts, as well as corporate clients such as ANZ and CommBank. Through collaborations with major builders like Lendlease, Built, Sitzler, and Multiplex, our programs have grown nationally.

Winya aligns with the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy and Reconciliation Action Plans, setting **new standards for business and social impact**. Recognised by the **United Nations for leadership in Sustainable Development Goals**, we demonstrate that commercial success and ethical responsibility go hand in hand.

AFFILIATIONS & CERTIFICATIONS



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



Delivering commercial furniture with purpose:
**Indigenous-led,
sustainable, and
inclusive.**





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Introducing Lowell Hunter AKA Salty One

Lowell Hunter, known artistically as Salty One, is a proud Nyul Nyul Saltwater man from the Kimberley's in Western Australia. His roots trace back to the Beagle Bay area of the Dampier Peninsula, located north of Broome, yet he has spent much of his life on Gunditjmarra Country in Victoria and Wathaurong Country in Geelong. Now based in Bundjalung Country in Coolangatta, Lowell remains deeply connected to the ocean; a vital aspect of his identity and artistic expression.

A multi-award-winning artist, Salty One is known for his large-scale sand artworks, which he captures through drone photography. His artistic journey began as a personal practice; an opportunity to connect with culture, Country, and sea, but has since evolved into a celebrated career, with his works appearing from New York Fashion Week to the Australian Embassy in Paris. His art has been showcased in collaborations with AFL, Treaty for Victoria, Figurehead, and a custom Fender Guitar, among others. Through his work, he shares First Nations stories, identity, and history in a deeply immersive way. His art is more than just an aesthetic practice; it is a reclamation of space, a continuation of Indigenous storytelling, and a profound act of cultural resilience.

Salty One's connection to the land is deeply personal. As a Saltwater man, the ocean has always been a guiding force in his life, a place of grounding and healing. His sand art practice began as a way to physically reconnect with the land beneath him, using his feet to carve out ancient movements, channeling the wisdom of his ancestors through dance, and imprinting these expressions into the earth itself. The use of drone photography allows him to capture these fleeting works in their entirety, preserving them long after the tide has washed them away. His work is ephemeral by nature, but its impact is lasting, ensuring that the stories he tells continue to resonate beyond their physical existence.



Salty One's Process

Salty One's artistic process is deeply tied to his cultural identity and ancestral teachings. His work is not just about aesthetics but also about the transmission of knowledge, connection to Country, and engaging with the land as a living entity. Each artwork begins with extensive reflection and consultation with Elders and cultural knowledge holders. These discussions provide insights into the spiritual and historical context of the Country he creates on, ensuring he has permission from the local Mob to start his carving.

Salty One then immerses himself in a spirit preparation that includes grounding practices such as song, dance, and traditional movements using boomerangs. Lowell also utilises the sea water from his day-long canvases to mix his ochre and paint his face. This process helps him shift into a creative headspace, one that is guided by deep respect for the land and the ancestors who have walked it before him. Using only his feet, he carves intricate patterns into the sand, embodying the movements of traditional dance in each stroke. The process is both deliberate and instinctual, informed by his cultural lineage and his connection to Country. Each movement is imbued with the energy of those who came before him, creating an unbroken link between past and present.

The physical aspect of his work is demanding, requiring intense focus and endurance. The scale of his pieces means that each artwork must be carefully mapped out in his mind and on paper before he begins, ensuring that every step is intentional. The act of using his own body as a tool for creation reinforces the idea that art is not separate from life but is instead an extension of cultural practice, ceremony, and storytelling.





Meaning of the Artwork

The artwork created as part of a workshop with AURIN (Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network) is rich with meaning, deeply reflective of First Nations storytelling and spiritual symbology. At its core is Bunjil, the great Wedge-tailed Eagle, who is revered in Wurundjeri culture as the creator and protector. Bunjil's presence in the artwork serves as a guiding force, reminding those who sit around the table of the enduring wisdom, strength, and interconnectedness of Indigenous knowledge.

The intricate journey lines flowing through the piece represent movement, connection, and the relationship between people, land, and spirit. These lines tell a story of continuity, showing how cultural knowledge has been passed from generation to generation, uninterrupted despite colonisation and historical challenges. They also reflect the pathways of individuals and communities, weaving a narrative that speaks to belonging, history, and identity.

The composition also integrates elements of saltwater and land. The lower portion of the artwork represents the saltwater Country that holds profound significance in Lowell's life and ancestry. Water is sacred in Indigenous cultures, embodying cleansing, renewal, and life. The upper sections bring in land elements, illustrating the fundamental relationship between different aspects of the natural world. This duality emphasises balance and the necessity of respecting and caring for Country in all its forms. This connection between land and sea is central to Indigenous cosmology, reinforcing the idea that everything is interconnected and that caring for one element of Country means caring for all of it.



Winya's Involvement

The creation of the University of Melbourne boardroom table was a collaborative effort between Salty One, Winya, the architect firm Vincent Chrisp, and AURIN (Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network). The project began in September 2024 when Vincent Chrisp Architects introduced AURIN to the Winya showroom. Seeking to engage with an Indigenous business, AURIN explored various options for embedding Indigenous storytelling into their boardroom. Justine Davis, Winya's WA and VIC State Manager, introduced them to Winya's wood-burning technique, which sparked interest from Tracy Baylis, AURIN's Head of Operations and Strategy.

Earlier that year, AURIN had participated in a cultural workshop in April 2024 with Salty One as a team-building and cultural learning exercise. During the workshop, they collaborated to create a sand artwork on the beach, later printing a version of it as a keepsake. After discussions with Winya, the idea emerged to transform this artwork into a functional, permanent centrepiece for their boardroom.

To achieve this, Winya facilitated collaboration between Salty One and one of their House Artists, Lucinda Johnson-Cornes, a proud Pitjantjatjara woman, with expertise in digital adaptation. Over December 2024 to February 2025, they refined the artwork for engraving, ensuring it retained cultural integrity while meeting practical requirements. Even minor details, such as journey lines crossing, carried cultural significance and were carefully considered.

During this period, Luke Whittaker, Winya's VIC Operations Manager, worked on logistics for the table's construction.

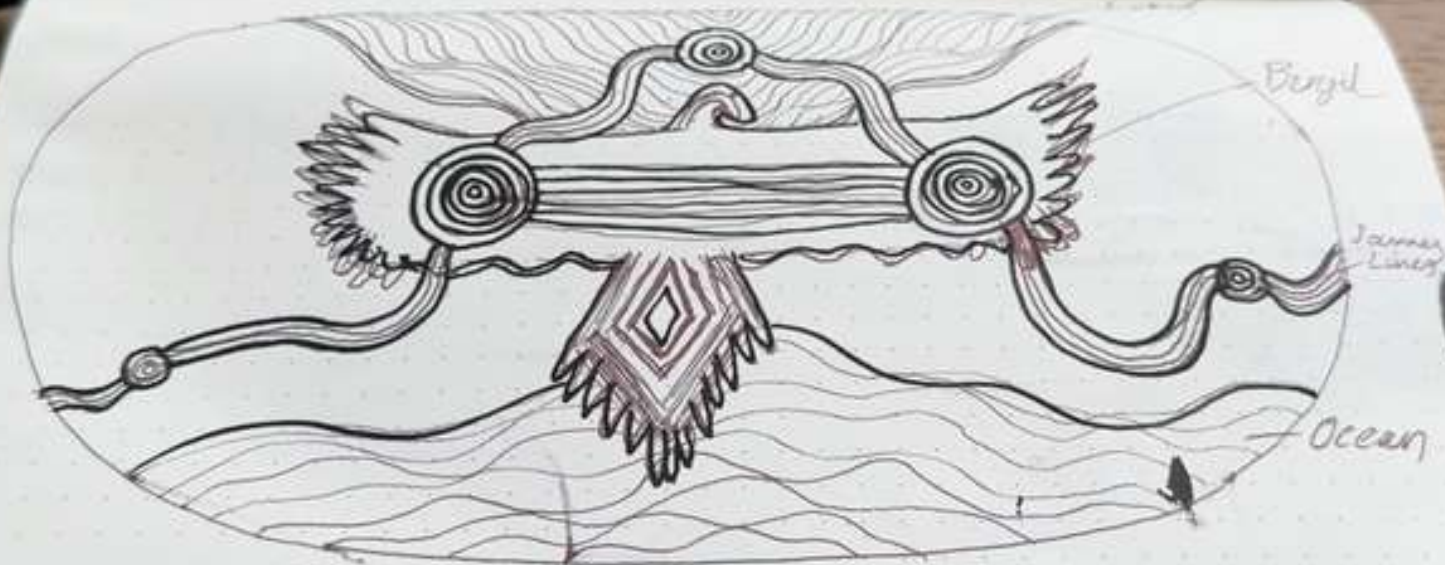


Winya's Involvement

Salty One proposed incorporating a glass overlay to protect the artwork while respecting its meaning. This required modifying the table's design, adding a recessed space to accommodate the glass without disrupting the artwork. While the final artwork was being refined, Winya's production team built the custom boardroom table. Once approved, Shelby Kschenka, the owner of Marara Designs, was entrusted with the engraving process. Shelby, a proud Wiradjuri woman specialising in wood-burning Indigenous designs, immediately connected with the project and considered it one of her most meaningful works. After engraving, the table was transported back to Winya for glass fitting and final assembly.

The project culminated in a smoking ceremony led by a Wurundjeri Elder, officially welcoming the table into its new space. During the unveiling, Lucy Johnson-Cornes and Justine Davis spoke about the project's journey, answering questions and sharing the significance of transforming Salty One's sand art into a permanent piece. The response from AURIN and stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive, with the table recognised as not just furniture, but a meaningful cultural statement.

This collaboration highlights Winya's commitment to Indigenous engagement, sustainability, and cultural storytelling. By integrating Indigenous art into corporate spaces, Winya ensures that First Nations narratives continue to be honoured, embedded into workplaces, and preserved for future generations.





Wood Burning Table Artwork

Transforming Salty One's ephemeral sand artwork into a permanent wood-burned design required a careful balance of technical precision, artistic adaptation, and cultural respect. Created on the beach in Anglesea, Victoria, the original piece carried deep spiritual significance, making its transition onto wood a meticulous process.

Wood-burning (pyrography) was chosen to etch the design into the table, as it allows for a textured, organic finish that honours the original artwork's natural flow. The engraving was entrusted to Shelby Kschenka, a proud Wiradjuri woman, artist, and the owner of Marara Designs, who specialises in wood-burning Indigenous artworks. Her connection to the cultural weight of the piece ensured each line was faithfully preserved, maintaining the meaning and essence of the original design.

Adapting sand art to wood presented a challenge—sand shifts with movement, while wood is static. To ensure the artwork retained its fluidity and authenticity, Salty One and Lucy Johnson-Cornes, Winya's Indigenous House Artist, refined the digital adaptation over two months. Every detail, down to the placement of journey lines, was carefully considered before engraving.

To further protect and preserve the cultural integrity of the piece, a glass overlay was added, as suggested by Salty One. This not only prevents wear but also symbolises the importance of safeguarding Indigenous storytelling for future generations. The table itself was built with sustainably sourced materials, aligning with Winya's environmental initiatives.



Wood Burning Table Artwork

Once complete, the table was delivered to the University of Melbourne, where it was welcomed in a smoking ceremony led by a Wurundjeri Elder. More than just furniture, the table now stands as a living cultural statement, embedding Indigenous storytelling into a modern workspace and inviting ongoing reflection on connection to Country, history, and reconciliation.



Winya's Story

Winya is Australia's leading Indigenous-owned commercial furniture supplier, accredited by Supply Nation and certified by state Indigenous Chambers of Commerce. Operating on a profit-for-purpose model, Winya reinvests revenue into training and employment initiatives that provide direct benefits to Indigenous communities. Beyond selling furniture, the company is committed to fostering long-term opportunities for First Nations people in design, craftsmanship, and manufacturing.

Sustainability is a key focus of Winya's operations, with a strong emphasis on ethical sourcing, recycled materials, and innovative take-back programs to reduce landfill waste. These efforts align with Indigenous values of environmental stewardship, ensuring that furniture production respects both cultural traditions and ecological responsibility. By working with Indigenous artists like Salty One, Winya integrates cultural storytelling into functional design, transforming everyday spaces into places of meaning and connection. The University of Melbourne collaboration exemplifies this, as Salty One's artwork was permanently embedded into a boardroom table, ensuring Indigenous perspectives are represented in decision-making spaces.

Winya continues to challenge industry norms by proving that commercial success and social responsibility can go hand in hand. Through sustainable practices and cultural partnerships, the company is helping to redefine how workplaces engage with Indigenous art and craftsmanship in a way that is both impactful and enduring.

NSW . VIC . QLD . NT . ACT . WA . SA . TAS



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