



MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN OSHC

Nurruby OOSH

A case study on an Outside of School Hours Care
(OSHC) service in NSW

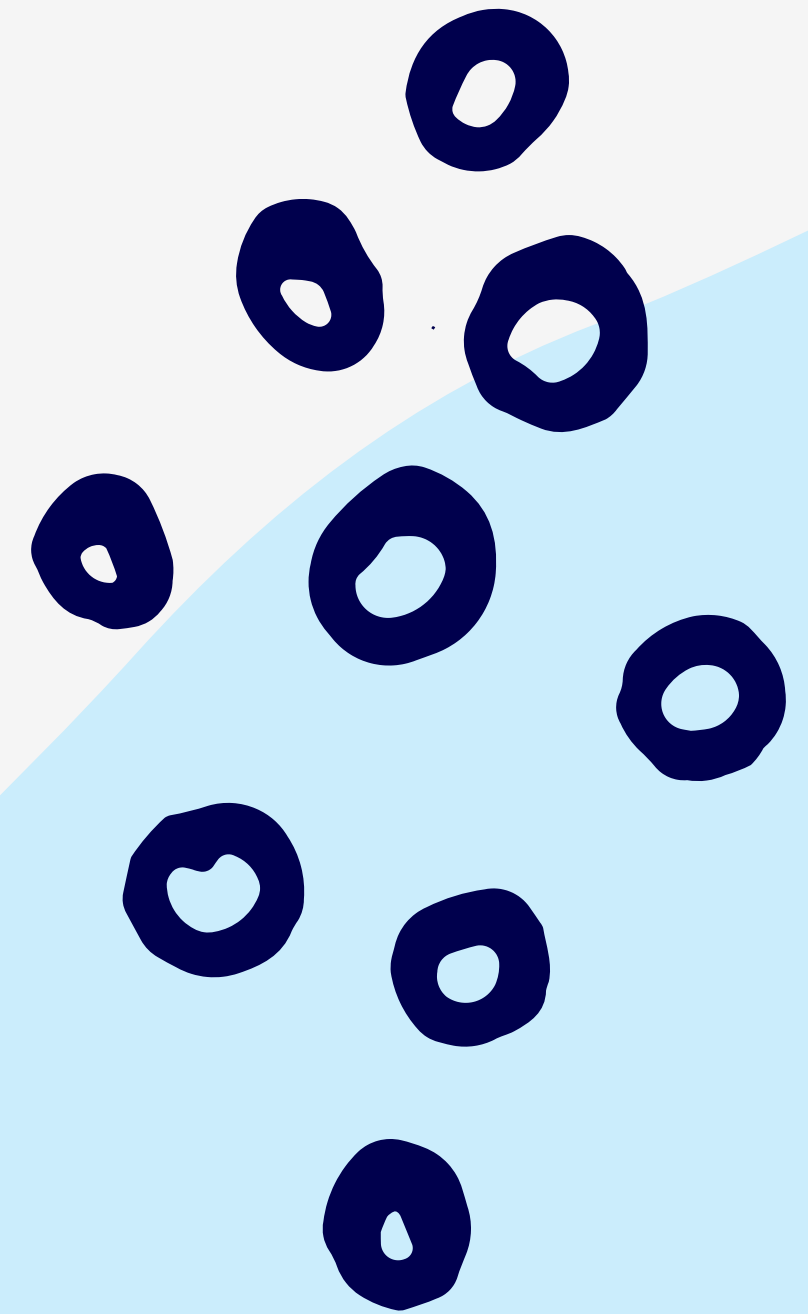
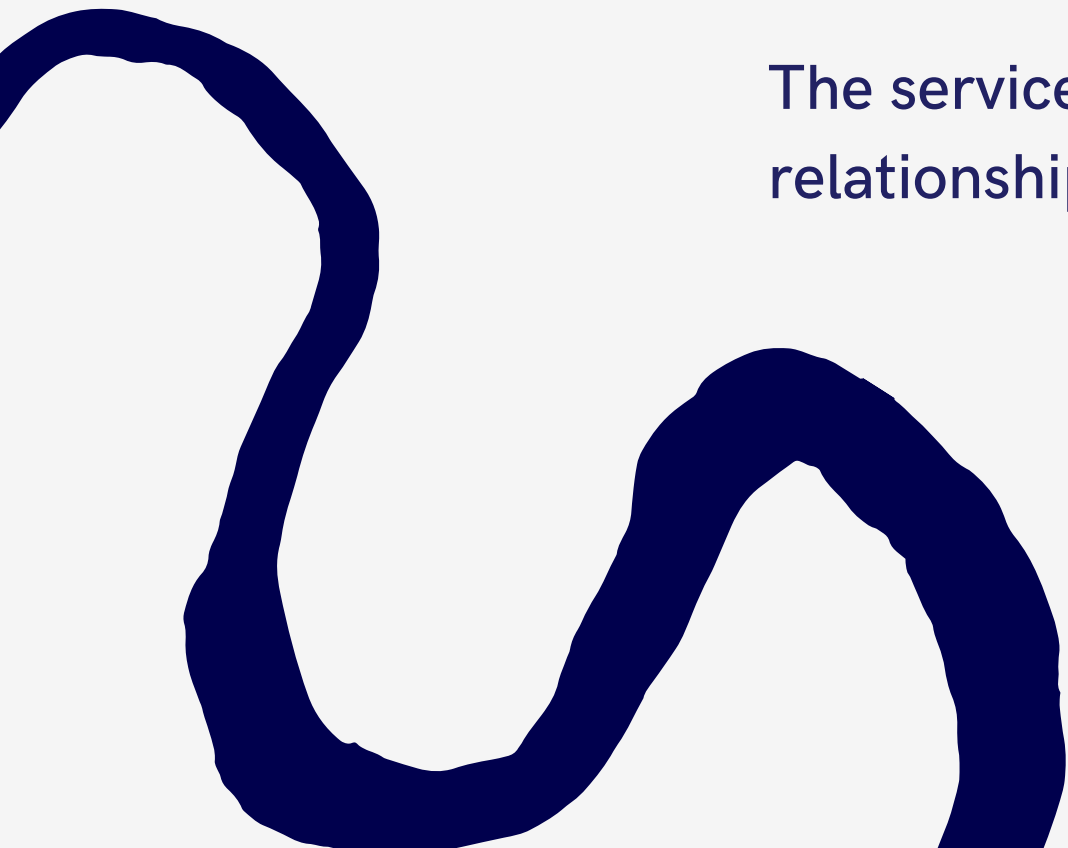
October 2021

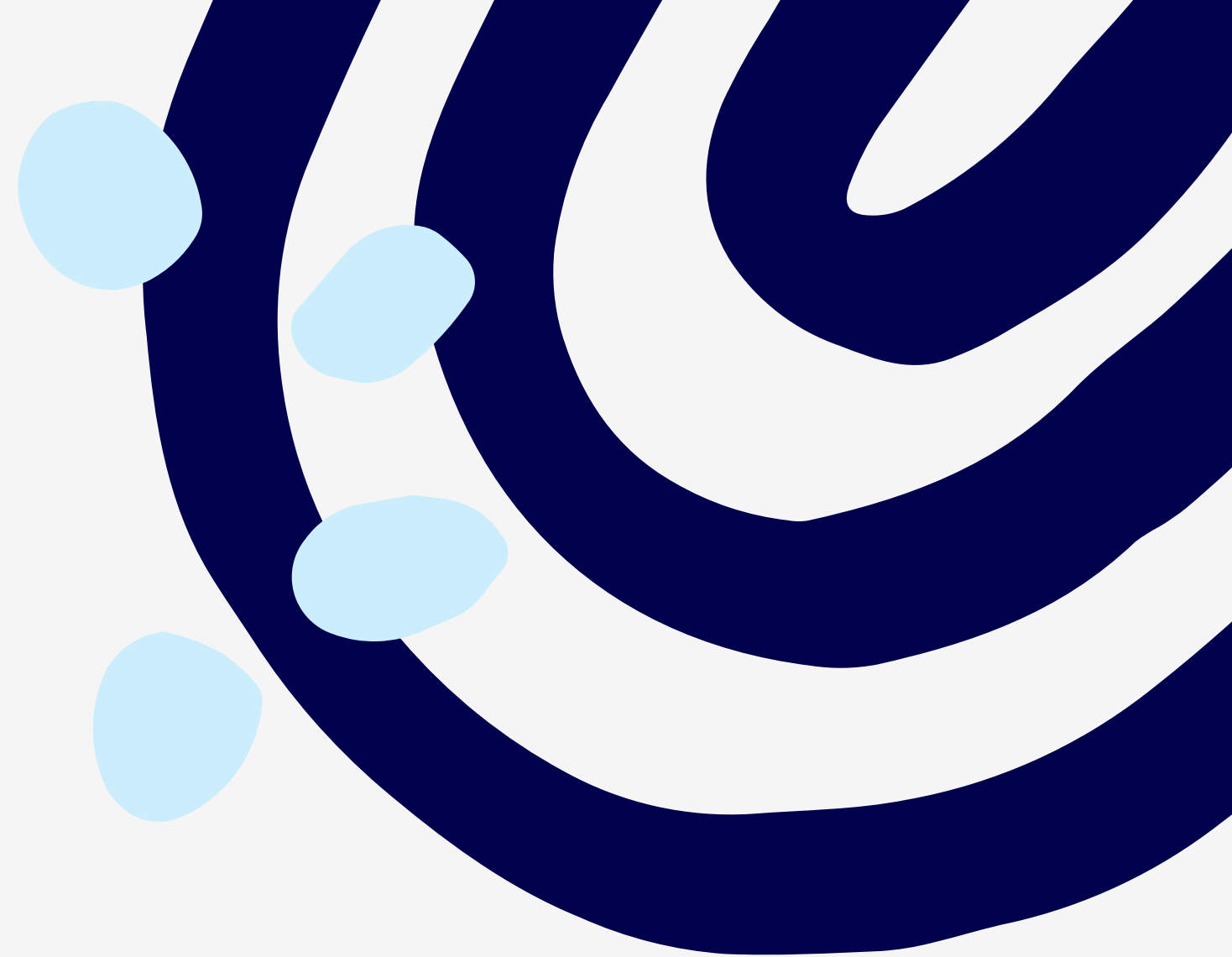
Nurruby OOSH

Nurruby OOSH is one of the services of Nurruby Children's Services Incorporated. It operates in Narrabri, a regional town in north west NSW.

It services three schools in the local area and is currently in the process of purchasing the hall that it has rented and been operating in for 14 years.

The service takes pride in building meaningful relationships with its children and the community.





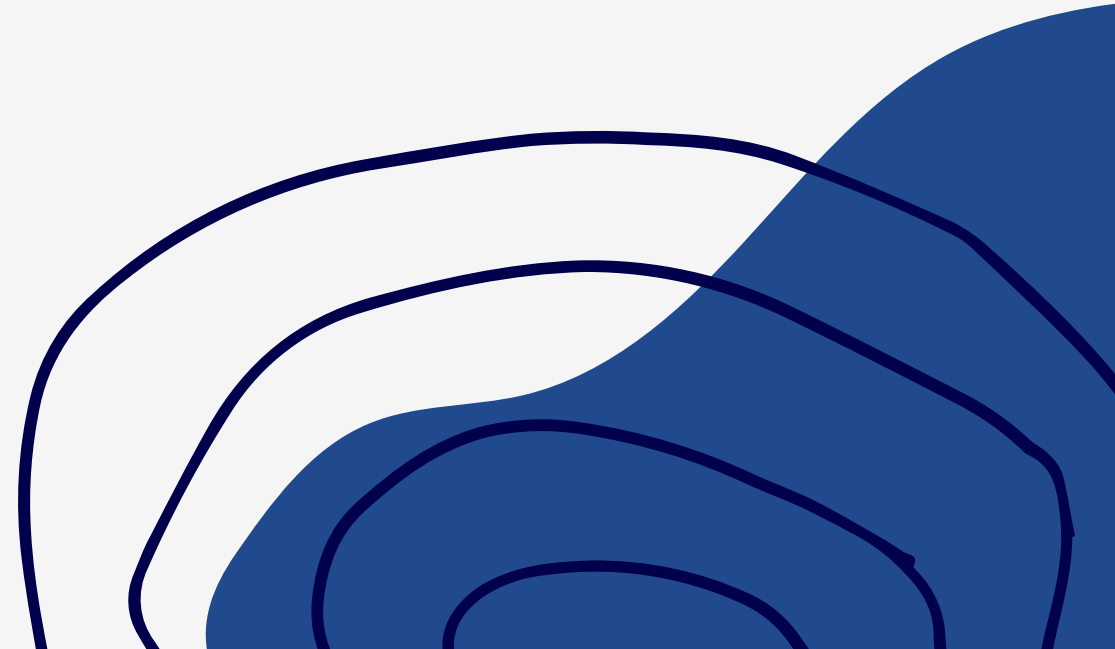
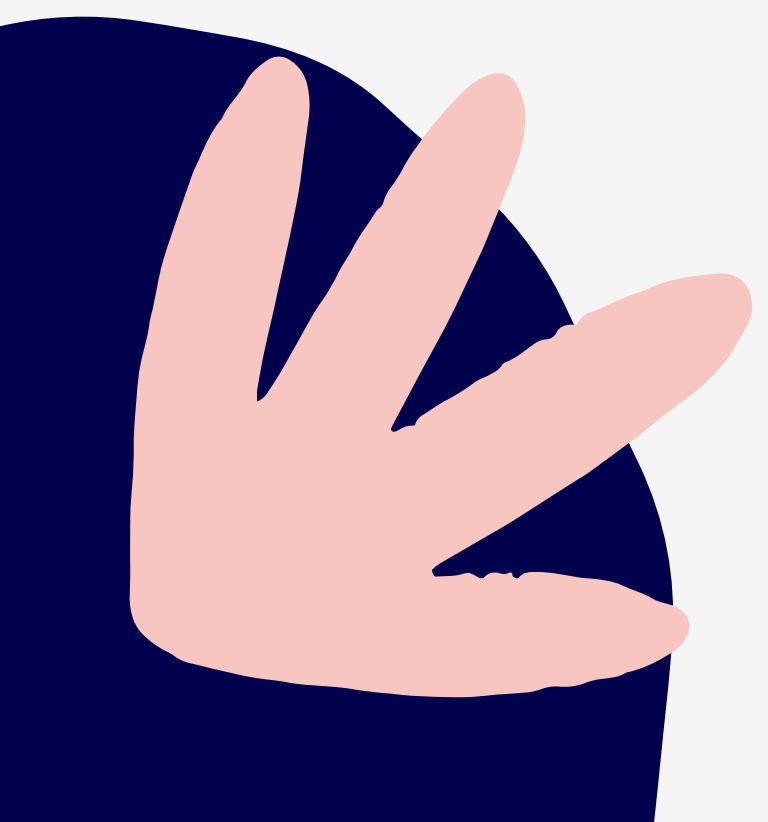
Children travel between the school and the service on a bus named 'Boris', which was purchased by a member of the Narrabri community.


Operating away from school grounds, Nurruby OOSH offers an environment which is separate and distinct from the school. This is one way to help children to 'reset their mood' after a day in the classroom.



Children develop meaningful relationships in OSHC

Nurruby OOSH strives to become a significant part of children's journeys of development. It is seen as a safe environment where children continuously engage with the service through receiving and reaching out for support, and offering support when they are older. The service aims to build and maintain a strong and long-lasting bond with its children.



The top half of the page features abstract decorative elements. On the left, there are several dark blue, wavy, leaf-like shapes. On the right, there is a large, dark blue, curved shape that resembles a stylized cloud or a large drop, containing several smaller, solid red circles of varying sizes scattered within it.

Earlier this year, a child with a challenging background who had previously attended, unexpectedly arrived at the service. After experiencing an altercation at his high school, the young man sought contact with the educators at the service. Although he had not attended the service for several years, he shared that he still saw it as a space where he felt he would be listened to and be supported when he encountered difficulties.



Children grow and develop leadership skills in Nurruby OOSH.

Older children enjoy taking initiative in a range of activities, including cooking and experimenting with their ideas in crafting projects, volunteering to help to fix a new swing, and by guiding and attending to younger children on the bus.



Educator Fenella who is studying radio in Sydney, teaching children to record their very own show throughout vacation care

Nurruby OOSH offers a welcoming and supportive environment. The educators find that children return as young adults, even after they have left the service's care.

Most of the present and past staff have previously attended the service and some continue to engage through working part time as university students.

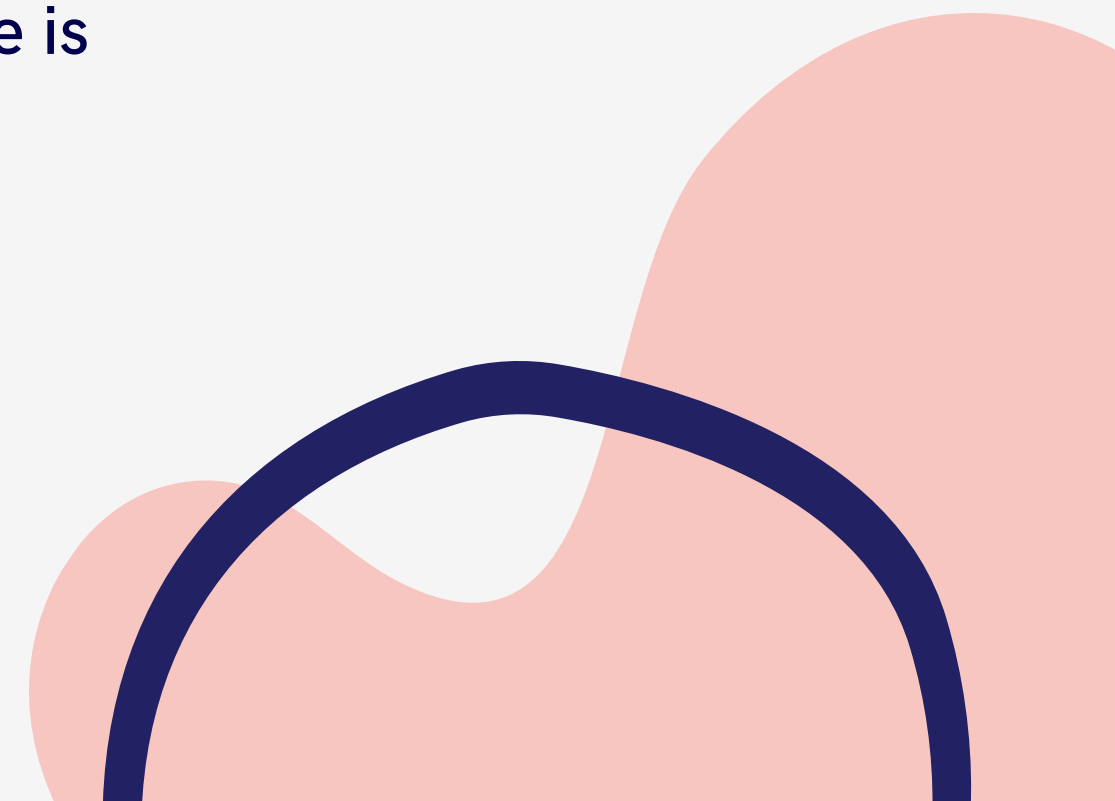
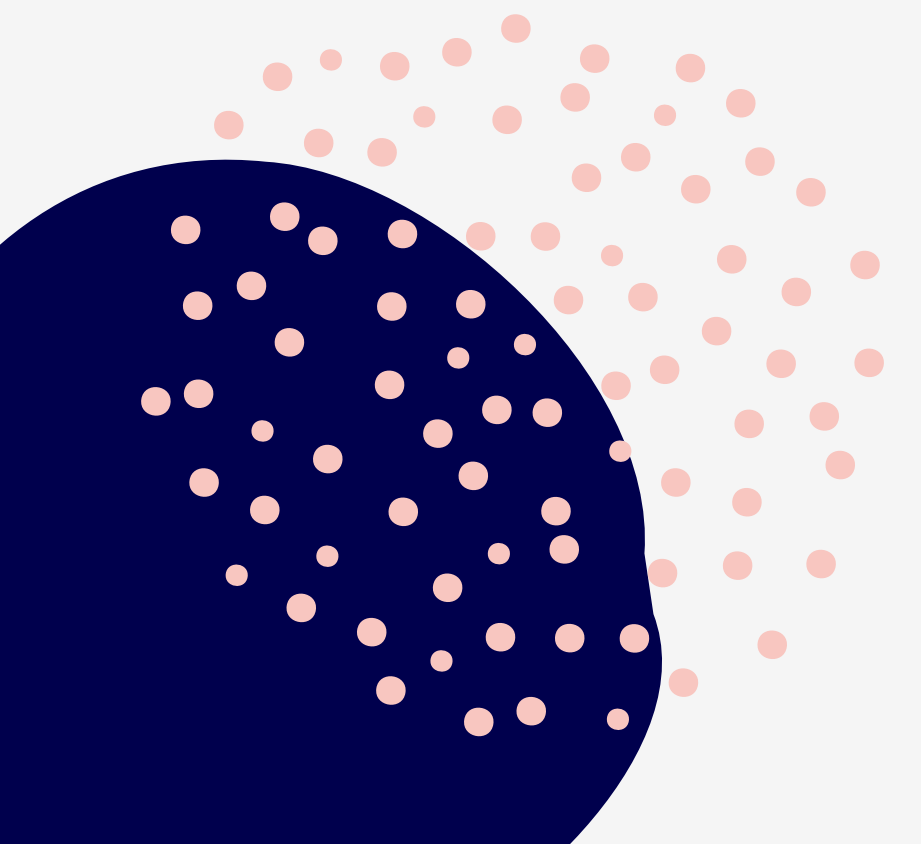
Children enjoy playing sports weekly with a sports representative of NSW who also used to attend the service. Students who have previously attended Nurruby OOSH continue to build relationships, and pass on the sense of community and belonging, with children that currently attend the service.





Child-driven approaches

To fully engage children, Nurruby OOSH embeds their voices into their programs, the environment, philosophy and code of ethics and practices. They do this by applying a statement across the organisation which drives everything the service does, from planning, to having conversations with parents. The physical space is designed according to children's points of view.





Intentional teaching opportunities and programs are available; however, most programs are child-driven and child-initiated.

Children's voices are captured through the children's planner, which is a large piece of paper for them to write about activities that they would like to do from Monday to Friday, and educators would read and sign off.

On Mondays, educators reflect on children's input and plan collaboratively against curriculum goals, using their planning book. There is also a section for them to write down observations which would also inform planning.



Isabelle & Hannah's Father Tim, teaching children about fires and how they breathe

Due to a child-driven approach, children have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences in indoor and outdoor settings.

For instance, there was a bonfire experience which was refreshing for many who never had camping experiences.





Meeting needs of families


Being the only service in Narrabri that offers before and after school care as well as vacation care, Nurruby OOSH always has a high demand with waiting lists. Operational hours have been adjusted to suit many mining families in the area who prefer earlier starting times.

To help provide accessible care, the service applied for funding through the Commonwealth's Inclusion Development Fund (IDF). The lack of respite services in the area caused some families to enrol their children with additional needs to OSHC as an alternative.



Nurruby OOSH aims to consider and care for every single child that attends the service.

This means following an inclusion curriculum goal that frames all practices; assessing the staffing capacity and skillsets; having opening discussions with staff; understanding limitations of the support that can be offered; and making reasonable adjustments to meet needs of children.



Parents trust and respect the service and its staff. There are many single parents who have reached out to educators and received invaluable advice on how to best support their children. The service maintains relationships, builds trust, gains feedback through face-to-face conversations with parents; engages on social media and uses sticky notes to ask directly for quick feedback.

Incorporating Aboriginal Perspectives

Wendy Lotter is an Aboriginal Community Elder and the owner of Platypus Dreamin Educational Programs and Bush Education. Wendy visits the service each year and provides professional development for the educators on Aboriginal culture and perspectives.

The service has shared that being present in the community allows it to form meaningful relationships with Aboriginal Elders. It actively networks with members and organisations in the community and engages in cultural events and activities that are happening in the area.

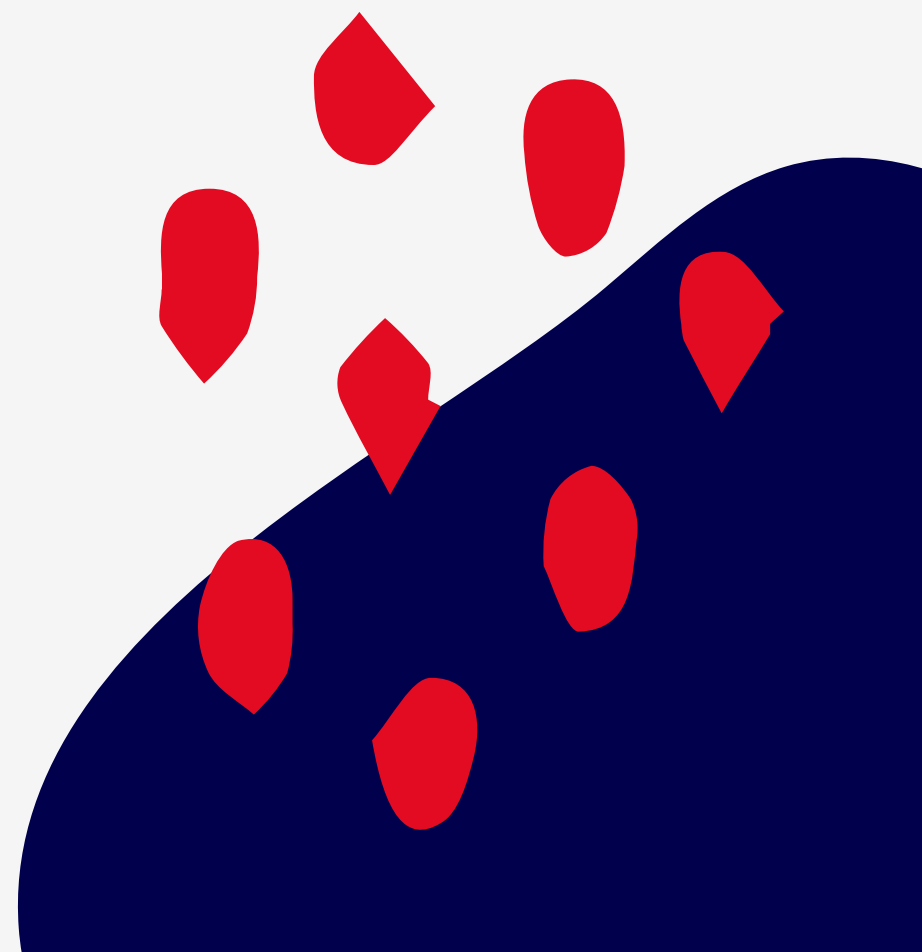





Professional Development

Those who have worked for the service for many years have become leaders and mentors that continue to bring inspiration and positive influences to the team.

Staff engage in mentoring, and attend leadership and support meetings to access and utilise each other's strengths and skills. They also learn through participating in meetings with Inclusion Officers from the IDF team. A recent meeting covered topics on children's self-esteem; and ways to support children with challenging behaviours.



Accessing professional development is a challenge for the service as it is in a regional setting.

Individual development plans are in place and staff are required to attend at least 4 training sessions or courses each year. They previously travelled to locations such as Sydney, Dubbo and Brisbane however, most of the training has been delivered through webinars in the past two years.

Fortunately, Anthony Semann, a specialist in early education engages the service each year to deliver professional development.

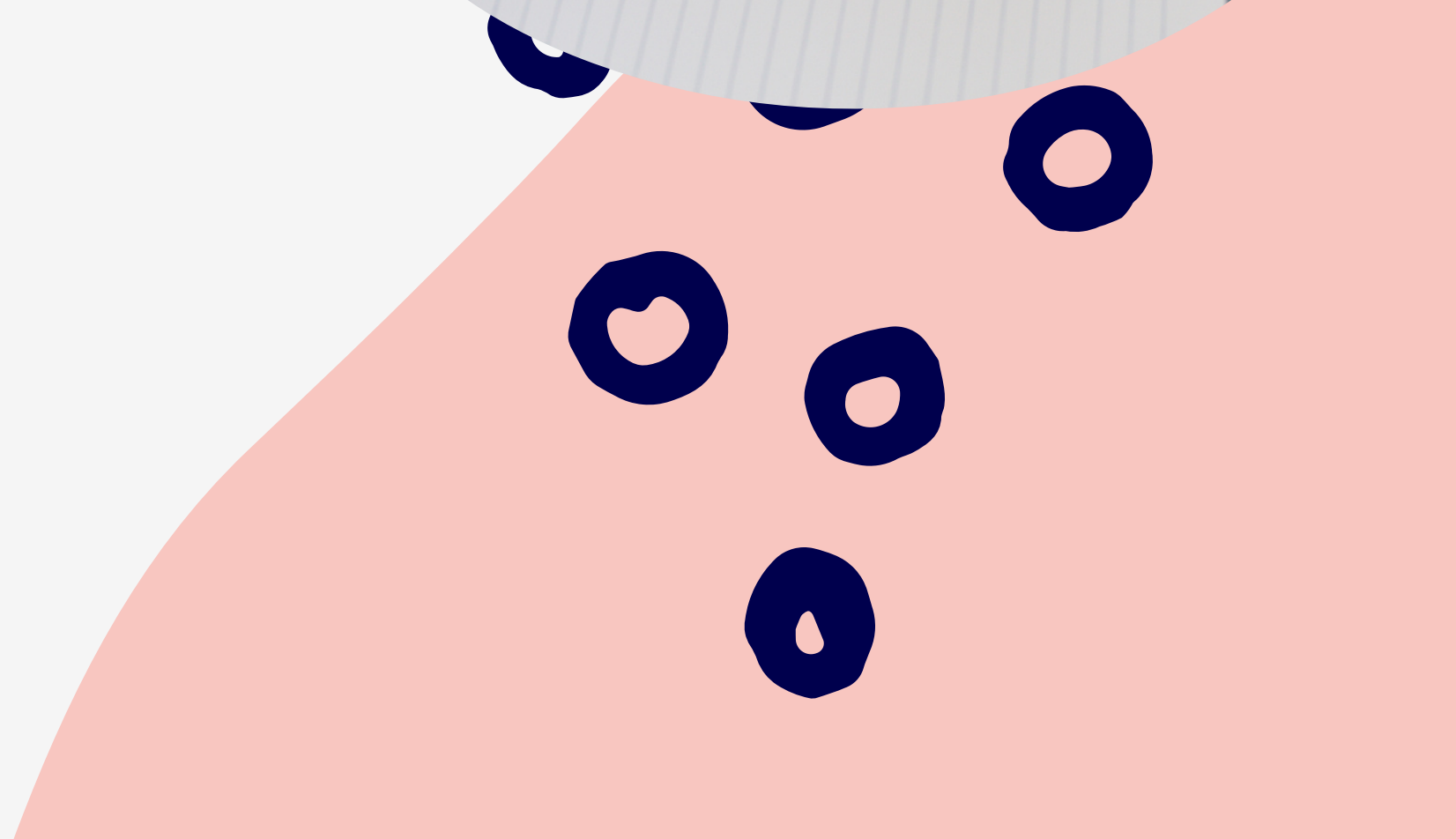
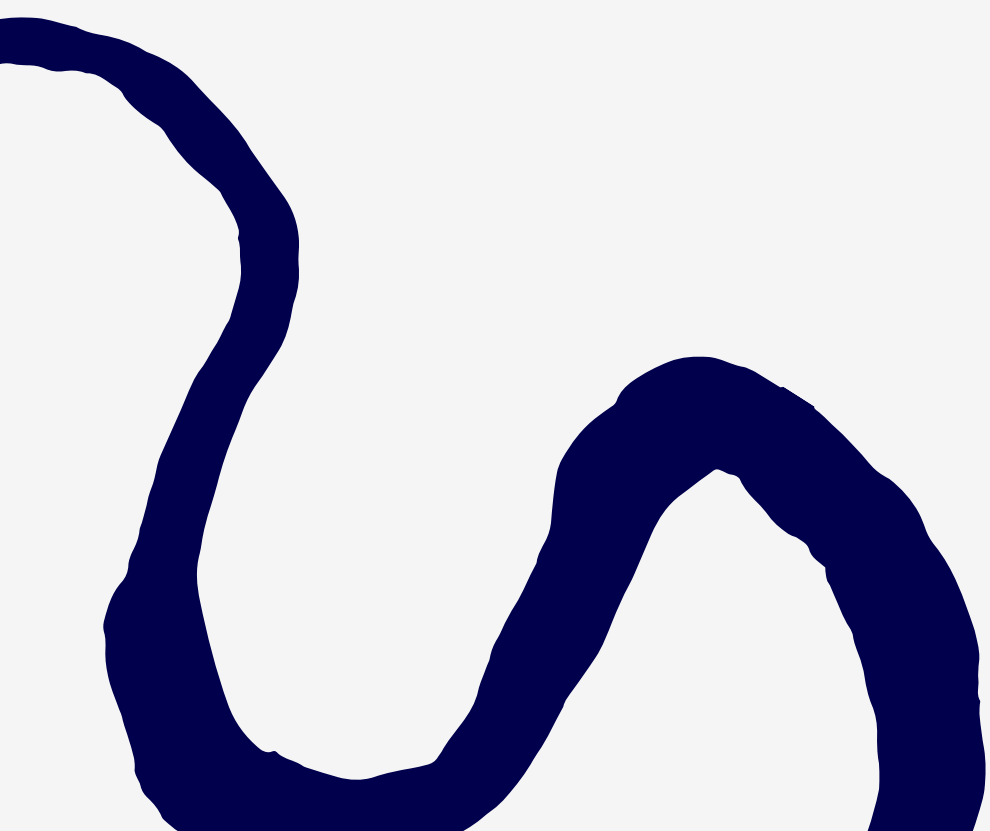



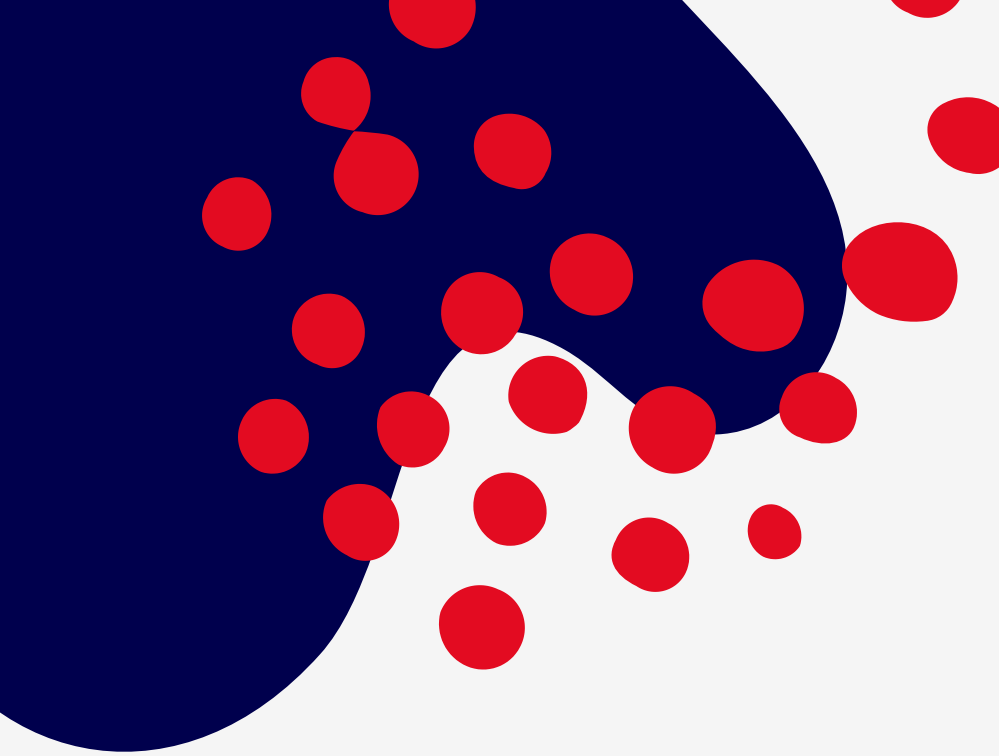
Useful links

[KU Children's Services: Inclusion Development Fund](#)

[Platypus Dreamin Aboriginal Cultural Education Programs and Bush Walks](#)

[Semann & Slattery](#)





The Department of Education would like to sincerely thank the staff of Nurruby OOSH for their participation in this case study. Particular thanks to Jessica Voysey (Nurruby OOSH Coordinator) and Prue Jamieson (Managing Director of Nurruby Children's Services), who generously shared their time, resources and insights with the OSHC Policy team.

