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Hello GRANN community,

Closing Out December, Holding the Thread

As December settles in and the year begins to loosen its grip, we find ourselves pausing not out of retreat, but intention.

This month has asked a lot of many of us. It has carried endings, new beginnings, quiet reckonings that don't announce themselves loudly. In response, we've chosen to honour rest as practice, not absence. Stepping back for a season is part of how we stay in relationship with this work, with one another, and with ourselves. Sustainability is not an afterthought at GRANN. It is a value we live, even when that means moving more slowly, more gently, and sometimes off the expected timeline.

December also brings a chorus of endings, tallies, and triumphs that rarely make space for the lived realities of disabled, neurodivergent, culturally diverse, queer, trans, and care-laden lives. So instead of lists and resolutions, we pause to recognise what often goes unseen: the daily acts of persistence, the quiet rebuilding after burnout, the moments of learning, unlearning, and choosing to keep going in ways that feel true.

This newsletter, like the posts we've shared on Facebook, reflects that rhythm. It is not a neat bow on the year, but a continuation of conversations we care deeply about: mental health beyond the mainstream lens, reflecting honestly on harm and growth within community spaces, and imagining futures grounded in authenticity, care, and collective responsibility.

As we move into a period of rest through late December and into January, know that community here does not disappear. It softens. It breathes. It holds steady in quieter ways.

Thank you for walking alongside us this year. For your patience, your reflection, your courage, your gentleness. For showing up as you are, not as the world insists you should be.

We'll meet again in the new year, rested where possible, still learning, still listening, still building - together.

In this edition:


- *Our Kind of November*- Building conversations around mental health beyond the mainstream lens, with space for every story year-round.
- *Looking Back to Move Forward*- Reflecting on Our early vision for a stronger, more inclusive community sector.
 - *Lateral Ableism*- Reflecting on harm within community spaces.
- *What Authentic Autistic Community Could Feel Like*- When we let someone be fully autistic - and fully human - at the exact same time.
 - *Fairness in the Targeted Compliance Framework* - The Commonwealth Ombudsman has published their investigation into the Targeted Compliance Framework & Mutual Obligations system.
 - *GRANN Member Spotlight & Supports Signpost for 2026*.

This edition of the GRANN newsletter is an invitation to slow down, look more closely, and stay with the conversations that matter - even when they extend beyond a single month or moment.

Across these pages, we move beyond mainstream mental health narratives and into stories that are lived, layered, and deeply human. We reflect on where our vision began, where harm can quietly emerge even within community spaces, and what becomes possible when we imagine autistic community grounded in care, consent, cultural safety, and authenticity.

Together, these pieces ask us to hold complexity with compassion - to honour every story, to learn from reflection, and to keep building spaces where people are not required to shrink, perform, or explain themselves to belong.

Thank you for being part of a community willing to listen, reflect, and grow - together.

In solidarity,
The Collaborators @ GRANN 

Our Kind of November

Creating space for every story, every body, every mind, every way of being

November, for many people, is often wrapped in mainstream conversations about mental health - conversations that drift toward slogans, statistics, and surface-level awareness campaigns. But for so many of us in the Neurodivergent community, in Disabled communities, in Queer and Trans communities, in Blak,

Indigenous, and culturally diverse communities, those messages rarely reflect
the realities we're living.

So this year, we made room for *Our Kind of November* - not as a moment, but as
a starting point. A way of opening space for deeper, slower, more grounded
conversations about mental health that honour the full complexity of being
human.

A November with nuance.

A November with softness.

A November with space for truths that don't fit neatly into mainstream mental
health posters.

And as December unfolded, those conversations didn't end - they've continued,
expanded, and deepened.

**Our kind of November recognises that mental health is not one story,
one lens - it's thousands.**

It's the Autistic person navigating burnout in silence because they've been
misunderstood one too many times.

It's First Nations communities working through layered trauma - and the
healing carried through story, Country, kin, and connection.

It's the ADHD brain labelled lazy or attention seeking, instead of supported.

It's the Queer or Trans person whose "anxiety" is a reasonable response to living
in unsafe systems.

It's the carer who never gets to put their own oxygen mask on first.

It's the person navigating grief that refuses a timeline.

It's the migrant, refugee, or culturally diverse family balancing identity,
belonging, barriers, and collective expectations.

Mental health is not a checklist. It is not contained to a specific month.

It's lived.

Daily.

Deeply.

Uniquely.

Our kind of November lets people be human - not inspirational.

You don't need to be "overcoming" anything to be valued.

You don't owe the world strength, positivity, or productivity.

You don't need a dramatic transformation story or a neat turning point.

Some days surviving is the story.

Some days resting is the story.

Some days being honest about how hard it is - that's the story too.

Every day, the story is yours.

And it can remain that way, if you choose.

Just yours - truly your own.

Our kind of November makes room for the messy middle.

Not just crisis.

Not just recovery.

Everything in between.

The slow rebuild after burnout.

The confusion of not yet having a diagnosis - or choosing not to pursue one.

The exhaustion of holding truths you're scared to name.

The fear of speaking honestly because you've been disbelieved before.

The quiet victories no one else sees - the shower you managed, the boundary you held, the meltdown you survived, the moment you finally asked for help.

These moments matter.

And in GRANN spaces, they are not overlooked.

Our kind of November is culturally aware, culturally grounded, and culturally safe.

Because mental health does not exist outside culture - it is held by it.

Shaped by it.

Protected by it.

And too often, wounded by it.

We honour the different ways communities speak, heal, gather, process, grieve, and connect.

We recognise that the Western mental health lens is not the only lens - and often, not the one that understands us best, but one that is complicit in generations of harm.

Quite honestly, it is a lens that still requires examination, challenge, and dismantling.

In *Our Kind of November*, everyone's story fits.

No one has to translate themselves to be understood.

Our kind of November doesn't demand unmasking - it invites authenticity at your pace.

If you want to show up raw and open, there is space.

If you need to stay slightly tucked-in, not yet ready to unfold, there is space.

If you're somewhere in between, shifting day to day, there is space.

There is no requirement to be "brave" on someone else's terms.

Our kind of November centres care that doesn't pathologise.

Here, your differences are not disorders.

Your responses are not overreactions.

Your survival strategies are not failures.

Your ways of thinking are not malfunctions.

Your identity is not a diagnosis.

You are not something to fix.

You are someone to honour.

Our kind of November says: every story belongs.

The loud ones.

The quiet ones.

The hopeful ones.

The heavy ones.
The ones still forming.
The ones you can't yet say out loud.
No hierarchy.
No comparison.
No pretending.
Just truth.
Just humanity.
Just us — all of us — exactly as we are.

Beyond November, we continue to make space.

Not just for a month.
Not just for a campaign.
But as an ongoing commitment.
Space for the real stories — not the polished ones.
Not the simplified ones.
But the ones shaped by culture, complexity, neurodivergence, community, pain,
power, joy, grief, identity, and growth.
Because *Our Kind of November* was never just about November.
It's a reminder we carry forward:
Your story matters.
And it has a place here.



Stop Calling It “Brave”

In Disability and Neurodiversity spaces, “Thank you for being brave” has become almost automatic. A reflex. A well-meant pat on the back after someone discloses something deeply personal, painful, or risky.
At GRANN, we want to pause that reflex.
Because telling your story is not always bravery.
Sometimes it is survival.
Sometimes it is exhaustion.

Sometimes it is strategy.

Sometimes it is the only way to be believed.

Sometimes it is not safe at all.

When we label disclosure as “brave,” we blatantly load a lot of weight onto the person speaking, and the echoe can have unintended consequences.

First, it shifts the labour.

The burden of education, reform, and change slides neatly onto Disabled people and Neurodivergent people. Systems stay intact while individuals are expected to bleed meaning into the cracks. The story becomes the currency. The proof.

The price of entry.

Second, it creates a moral hierarchy.

If sharing is brave, what does that make choosing privacy? Silence? Distance? Are those who do not disclose less courageous? Less committed? Less authentic?

Many Disabled people cannot safely tell their stories without consequences.

Employment loss. Professional blacklisting. Child protection involvement.

Medical retaliation. Social isolation. Re-traumatisation. Silence is not cowardice.

It is often discernment, wisdom.

Third, it applies pressure where consent should live.

When disclosure is praised publicly, others feel the pull to follow. To explain themselves. To justify boundaries. To offer their pain for communal digestion. This is especially dangerous in spaces where disability intersects with trauma, abuse, family violence, institutional harm, or coercive care. Not all stories are ours alone to tell. Not all truths are ready. Not all audiences are safe.

Fourth, it individualises what is structural.

Disability violence, exclusion, neglect, and abuse are not rare personal tragedies. They are patterned. Predictable. Enabled by policy, practice, and culture. When we frame disclosure as bravery, we risk turning systemic harm into personal testimony, rather than collective responsibility.

And finally, it misunderstands what courage actually looks like.

Courage can be refusing to disclose.

Courage can be setting a boundary and keeping it.

Courage can be speaking up anonymously.

Courage can be telling one trusted person and no one else.

Courage can be choosing rest over re-telling.

Courage can be living, quietly and stubbornly, in a world not built for you.

So, what do we say instead?

We can say: Thank you for trusting us.

We can say: You did not owe this.

We can say: Your safety matters more than our understanding.

We can say: You get to decide what is shared, how, and when.

We can say: You are believed, with or without details.

At GRANN, we believe stories are powerful. But they are not a requirement. Liberation does not come from constant disclosure. It comes from changing the conditions that make disclosure necessary in the first place.

You are not brave because you told your story.

You are worthy whether you tell it or not.

Looking Back to Build Forward, Together

***Reflecting on Our Early Vision for a Stronger, More Inclusive
Community Sector.***

✨ Building Forward Together

We revisit GRANN's origins through a set of reflections first written two years ago by our Co-Creator and President, Bee — long before GRANN officially existed. These early ideas explored how the community sector could transform over the next five years by centring relationships, rights, accessibility, and lived experience.

The summary highlights:

- Person-led, culturally responsive service delivery
- Sustainable and equitable funding models
- Outcomes focused on wellbeing, not tick-boxes
- Stronger community auspicing and partnerships
- Respect, training, and recognition for volunteers
- Celebration of existing community assets
- Inclusive and ethical data collection
- Self-governance and real community decision-making
- Regulations grounded in human rights
- The power of grassroots change

These early insights continue to guide GRANN's work today — reminding us that true transformation begins in community, grows through connection, and is sustained by shared humanity. 🌱

We invite you to read these reflections not just as our story, but as a conversation about what kind of community sector we want to keep building together.

Of course, you're welcome to read this in full, or skim the sections that resonate most.

Building Forward Together: Reflecting on Our Early Vision for a Stronger, More Inclusive Community Sector

We're revisiting reflections written well before GRANN formally existed — ideas that continue to shape how we advocate, organise, and imagine a more humane community sector.

Two years before GRANN had a name, a logo, a home in community, and before we were the Team we are today, we were simply a small group of people who cared deeply about doing things differently. At the time, we were asked a big, confronting question during a facilitated workshop:

“Can we build on where we are... or do we have to start again?”

We didn't know then that our responses would one day become the foundation of what GRANN stands for now: relational practice, community voice, equity, and neuro-affirming care.

Looking back, these reflections feel just as relevant — if not more — today. So in true GRANN style, we're revisiting, expanding, and humanising those early ideas — because they still call us forward.

1. Service Delivery: Relationships First, Always

We imagined a sector where people aren't “cases,” “files,” or “presenting issues” — they're humans with culture, identity, and autonomy.

Our vision was clear:

- Services should be person-led, culturally responsive, and actively dismantling barriers.
- Gatekeeping must be replaced with genuine accessibility.
- Collaboration — not competition — should be the norm.
- Peer-led, community-grown initiatives deserve space, funding, and respect.
- And most importantly: feedback should be relational, ongoing, and safe for everyone involved.

This is the heart of neuro-affirming practice: seeing the person, not the problem.

2. Funding: Stability Over Scramble

We called for long-term, human-centred funding models that honour continuity of care.

- Communities deserve sustained support — not short-lived projects that disappear overnight.
- Funding decisions must prioritise underrepresented groups and be transparent.
- And we believed in the collective strength of community fundraising — grassroots momentum is powerful — without the financial burdens placed

directly in the pockets of those affected.

Because when funding respects people, outcomes naturally improve.

3. Outcomes: Beyond Numbers and Tick-Boxes

Our early vision challenged the obsession with output metrics.

We wanted:

- Measures that reflect *wellbeing, agency, safety, and inclusion*.
- Community involvement in defining “success” — because communities know what matters.
- Ongoing evaluation that is reflective, not punitive.

In other words: ***No more tokenism disguised as progress.***

4. Community Auspicing: Partnership, Not Gatekeeping

We envisioned stronger, clearer, and more transparent relationships between community groups and larger bodies.

Auspicing shouldn't be mysterious or exclusive — it should be a pathway to collaboration, safety, and shared impact.

(And yes... we even joked that we wanted auspicing “*at all*,” because it was barely accessible at the time!)

5. Community Volunteers: Respect Their Time, Honour Their Hearts, Ideas, and Nervous Systems

Volunteers deserve more than a thank you — they deserve support, training, recognition, and meaningful matching with roles that reflect their strengths. A neuro-affirming community sector understands that people thrive when their interests and identities are honoured.

6. Community Assets: We Already Have So Much

Back then, we wanted the sector to stop reinventing the wheel and start recognising the strengths within communities:

- Local knowledge
- Neurodivergent expertise
- Accessible spaces
- Peer networks
- Cultural wisdom

Asset mapping isn't just a strategy — it's a celebration of collective power.

7. Data Collection: Stories and Nuance, Not Just Statistics

We hoped to see data that reflects many voices — not just the ones easiest to reach.

Standardised, ethical, inclusive data collection could help the sector understand real needs and bridge real gaps.

Data should serve people, not erase them.

8. Self-Governance: Nothing About Us Without Us

We dreamed of a sector where community members — including disabled, neurodivergent, and culturally diverse voices — hold real power in decision-making.

Representation isn't optional.

Training, support, and inclusive governance structures matter.

Self-governance isn't a risk — it's a responsibility.

9. Regulations: Human Rights as the Baseline

We wanted regulations that reflect accessibility, inclusion, and dignity — not bureaucracy for its own sake.

And we believed that communities should be part of creating and reviewing those regulations.

Streamlined processes shouldn't mean less humanity—they should mean more.

10. Sector Image: Let the Change Come From the Ground Up

Our final reflection was simple:

If the community sector truly wants to transform, everyday people must be part of the change — not just the recipients of it.

Grassroots voices, lived experience, and community-led innovation are powerful. The sector becomes better when it listens.

Looking Back to Move Forward

Two years later, GRANN exists because we believed — and still believe — that communities don't need to start from scratch.

We already have the wisdom, connection, strength, and brilliance we need.

What we *do* need is space, trust, and support — true investment —to keep building.

In a time when community organisations are stretched thin, workers are burning out, and systems are asking more while offering less, these early reflections feel less like history and more like instruction.

These reflections are not abstract ideals for us.

They show up in how GRANN works day to day — in how we pace projects, prioritise relationships over outputs, centre lived experience and person-centred decision-making, and resist systems that ask us to move faster than people can safely go.

As GRANN continues into another year of advocacy, education, and gentle disruption (unless burning bridges is demanded for), we hold these early visions close.

They're not just workshop answers.

They are the blueprint for the future GRANN is still creating.

This is the lens we'll continue bringing into our advocacy, education, and partnerships.



Lateral Ableism

Reflecting on harm within community spaces.

As we explore mental health beyond the mainstream lens, revisit GRANN’s early vision for a more humane community sector and imagine what authentic autistic community could feel like (keep reading for that piece next), we also need space for honest reflection. This piece looks gently at **lateral ableism** — the ways harm can surface within community spaces — not to assign blame, but to deepen care, accountability, and connection as we keep building forward together.

When we talk about ableism, we often imagine it coming from systems, institutions, policies, or people with obvious power. And while that harm is very real, there is another form that can be quieter, harder to name, and more painful because of where it happens.

It’s called **lateral ableism** — harm that occurs *within* disabled and neurodivergent communities.

This is not a conversation about blame.

It’s a conversation about care.

About honesty.

About learning how to hold one another better.

What do we mean by lateral ableism?

Lateral ableism shows up when disabled or neurodivergent people, often unintentionally, reproduce the same standards, expectations, and hierarchies that have harmed us.

It can look like:

- Judging others' needs through our own capacity or access
- Valuing some forms of disability, communication, or independence over others
- Expecting sameness instead of difference
- Policing how someone should advocate, cope, heal, or show up
- Withdrawing care when someone's support needs change

Often, this doesn't come from malice.
It comes from survival.

Why it happens

Many of us have been taught — explicitly or subtly — that safety, access, and belonging are limited resources. That to be heard, we must be “reasonable.” That to be included, we must be easy to support. That to be respected, we must perform disability in acceptable ways.

These messages don't disappear just because we find community.

Sometimes they follow us inside.

Internalised ableism doesn't always stay internal. Under pressure, stress, scarcity, or burnout, it can leak sideways — into our relationships with each other.

Naming this doesn't mean we've failed.

It means we're human.

Why it matters to talk about it

Community spaces are often where we go to rest from harm. When harm happens there — even quietly — it can cut deeper.

People withdraw.

Trust erodes.

Voices go silent.

And often, the harm remains unnamed because no one wants to fracture community further.

But silence doesn't protect us.

Reflection can.

A neuro-affirming way forward

At GRANN, we believe that acknowledging lateral ableism is part of building safer, more sustainable community — not tearing it down.

That means:

- Making room for different access needs, even when they conflict
- Recognising that capacity fluctuates — especially during burnout
- Understanding that communication differences are not disrespect
- Allowing people to change, need more, or step back without penalty
- Valuing repair over perfection

It also means slowing down.

Asking questions instead of making assumptions.

Choosing curiosity over judgement.

This is not about calling people out

It's about calling each other *in*.

About remembering that many of us are unlearning harm at the same time as we're trying to survive it. That we are all shaped by systems we didn't choose.

That growth doesn't happen through shame — it happens through safety.

Holding community with care

Lateral ableism is not proof that community doesn't work.

It's proof that community is real — and that it needs tending.

If we can notice when harm happens without rushing to blame,

If we can repair without erasing impact,

If we can honour difference without ranking it,

Then community becomes not just a place of belonging, but a place of growth.

At GRANN, we're committed to having these conversations gently, openly, and

with compassion — because we believe disabled and neurodivergent communities deserve spaces where we don't have to be perfect to be safe.

This is part of how we build forward together.



What Authentic Autistic Community Could Feel Like

Autistic community is one of those things people talk about as if it already exists in every corner — a ready-made place where we all fit neatly, instantly, effortlessly.

But the truth is: authentic autistic community is still something we are building.

Carefully. Tenderly. Imperfectly.

And maybe that's the beauty of it.

Because when something has hurt you — when community has fractured, misattuned, or slipped away right when you needed it most — imagining what it

could be becomes an act of resistance and repair.

So what *could* an authentic autistic community feel like?

A place where showing up as yourself isn't an event — it's the baseline.

Not something you earn.

Not something you apologise for.

Not something that gets taken the moment you struggle.

Just... you.

Exactly as you are, with no need to adjust your tone, soften your face, disguise your overwhelm, translate your thoughts, or pretend you're "fine" when your body is screaming otherwise.

Imagine a space where sensory comfort is the norm and not a special request.

Where the lighting doesn't lie to your nervous system.

Where silence isn't awkward.

Where stimming is expected.

Where pacing, pausing, and withdrawing are understood as communication — not avoidance.

A place where communication is an exchange, not a performance.

Where words don't need to be coated in social varnish to be received with care.

Where directness isn't mistaken for aggression.

Where emotional honesty isn't treated as oversharing.

Where your internal state isn't dismissed simply because it's inconvenient.

Imagine conversations that move at the speed of real understanding — not small talk, not pressure, not masking, but genuine connection that honours the way autistic people think, process, and relate.

A place where your needs are not burdens — they are data.

In authentic autistic community, needs aren't embarrassing.

They aren't framed as "too much."

They're information.

Signals.

Your body's way of saying, *This is what keeps me regulated. This is what keeps me safe.*

And instead of judgement, you hear:

Thank you for telling me.

How can we adjust the space to support you?

You don't have to push through this alone.

A place where reciprocity is not measured in sameness.

Autistic reciprocity is real — just different.

It's depth over frequency.

Consistency over performance.

Presence over perfection.

In an authentic community, it's okay that everyone's capacity fluctuates.

You're not penalised for needing downtime.

You're not excluded because you "disappeared."

People don't withdraw connection simply because you couldn't maintain constant communication.

Imagine a world where relationships breathe — expanding and contracting without fear.

A place where repair is possible.

Autistic people know what rupture feels like — deeply.

We often experience relational pain as something physically heavy.

We fear abandonment because we've lived it.

We fear misunderstanding because it has shaped us.

In an authentic community, rupture is not the end.

It is something you move through together.

With clarity.

With gentleness.

With the understanding that communication differences are not failures — they are differences.

Imagine conflict not as danger, but as something navigable.

A place where creativity, passion, and special interests are celebrated — not managed.

Where nobody tells you to tone it down.

Where your passions aren't labelled obsessions.

Where info-dumping is a love language.

Where your deep thinking isn't seen as intensity but as brilliance.

Imagine a space where your curiosity feeds the collective energy instead of being "too much."

A place where interdependence replaces independence.

Independence is a neurotypical fantasy.

Interdependence — the ebb and flow of shared support — is where autistic people *actually* thrive.

In authentic autistic community, supporting one another isn't charity.

It's reciprocity.

It's connection.

It's how we survive and how we grow.

A place where trauma-informed practice isn't a prescriptive checklist — it's a culture.

Autistic community could be a place where:

- masking isn't expected,
- shutdowns are met with softness,
- transitions are supported,
- sensory boundaries are respected,
- and everyone understands that autistic burnout is not a personal failing but an environmental mismatch.

Imagine a community built on nervous system safety.
A community that honours humanity, not performance.

A place where belonging isn't conditional.

Maybe the most important part:

Authentic autistic community is a place where you don't have to *earn* your place through productivity, emotional labour, or social output.

You belong because you are here.

You belong because you are autistic.

You belong because your presence matters.

And maybe...

this is what we're quietly building.

Authentic autistic community isn't a fantasy.

It isn't a someday.

Bits of it are already growing — in micro-moments, in gentle connections, in spaces like GRANN, in the ways we rewrite what was missing in our own early experiences.

We build it every time we choose care over correction.

Every time we honour needs instead of dismissing them.

Every time we let someone be fully autistic — and fully human — at the exact same time.

It's not perfect.

It's not finished.

But it is possible.

And it is ours to create.

In ripples & waves.



Fairness in the Targeted Compliance Framework: When Decisions are Made Beyond Your Control

The Commonwealth Ombudsman has published their investigation into the Targeted Compliance Framework & Mutual Obligations system. This is a strong, credible, and damning administrative review that establishes the TCF as a system producing foreseeable and preventable injustice. It convincingly demonstrates that:

- Illegality was not an anomaly
- Harm was widespread and disproportionate
- Oversight mechanisms failed to protect those most at risk

However, the report ultimately remains bounded by administrative reform logic. It diagnoses systemic failure without fully confronting the deeper political and ideological assumptions underpinning conditional welfare, behavioural compliance, and outsourced governance.

In short:

The report proves the system is unfair.

It does not yet ask whether the system itself is fit to exist.

The report reads, through disability justice, as an account of state-managed precarity: people already living at the edge are subjected to a compliance machine where small administrative decisions can trigger catastrophic material harm (loss of income, delayed reinstatement, re-application burdens). The Ombudsman explicitly notes that affected people often had “vulnerability indicators” including psychiatric, cognitive/neuro impairment, homelessness, caring responsibilities, and low literacy or language skills. Disability justice treats these not as “extra needs” but as evidence that the system is designed around an ableist baseline: the “ideal user” is always available, always literate, always regulated, always resourced, always able to self-advocate on command.

Disability justice also foregrounds coercion. Automatic suspensions in the Penalty Zone operate like “compliance under duress”: even where penalties are later overturned, the system first applies financial pressure that makes contesting decisions harder, not easier. That is structurally akin to forcing people to “prove deservingness” while their rent clock keeps ticking.

Key UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) principles the report implicitly engages (even if it doesn't name them) include:

- Equality and non-discrimination (CRPD Art 5)

The disproportionate impact on First Nations people and the concentration of disability-related vulnerability markers point to indirect discrimination: a neutral policy producing unequal harm.

- Accessibility (Art 9) and access to information (Art 21)

The Ombudsman finds job seeker-facing information about reviews/complaints is vague and incoherent, and decision letters lack clear reasons and accessible explanation of rights. Under CRPD logic, "you can appeal" is meaningless if information is inaccessible, jargon-heavy, hidden in small print, or effectively requires digital access and high literacy.

- Access to justice (Art 13) and effective remedy (linked to Art 4 obligations)

Rights of review become hollow when provider decisions are functionally determinative but not reviewable, or when processes demand extensive historical evidence years later because the state delayed remediation. A remedy that shifts the burden onto disabled people to reconstruct past harm after government error fails the "effective remedy" spirit.

- Independent living and community inclusion (Art 19) and adequate standard of living/social protection (Art 28)

A four-week waiting period after cancellation, plus re-application requirements, risks housing loss, food insecurity, and destabilisation. The report recognises cancellation is "significant" for people with limited resources. CRPD analysis treats this as rights-impacting, not merely unfortunate.

Bottom line (CRPD): This is not only "poor administration." It is a rights impact event produced by inaccessible systems, weak oversight, and coercive design.

Additionally, On harm and accountability:

- Unlawful cancellations weren't a glitch. They were a system outcome. 964 people lost payments unlawfully, and the burden of proving harm was then pushed back onto them.

- When government makes the mistake, government should carry the burden.

The Ombudsman found DEWR's remediation approach is not fair or reasonable because it expects people to produce historical evidence years later after an agency error.

- A "right to challenge" is meaningless without reasons. Services Australia letters did not provide meaningful written explanations for penalty decisions, undermining real review and appeal.

On accessibility and disability equity

- The system rewards the people who can self-advocate on demand, and punishes the rest. Capability and penalty assessments were heavily shaped by what a person could disclose in the moment, with provider records often minimal or generic.

- Information is a support. Withholding clarity is a barrier. The Ombudsman found job seeker information on complaints and reviews lacked transparency, clarity and accessibility.

On provider power and oversight failure

- Providers have quasi-penal power, but oversight is weak. The report shows high overturn rates and poor transparency in provider performance assessment.
- If decisions are frequently overturned, the front-end decision-making is failing. Overturn rates are not a sign of “checks and balances working”; they’re a sign that people are being wrongly pushed into penalty processes in the first place.

On coercion-by-design

- Automatic suspensions create compliance under financial threat. In the Penalty Zone, payments are suspended immediately, undermining people’s ability to challenge penalties.
- Fair process means time to respond. The Ombudsman recommends a five-day window before suspension, aligning Penalty Zone processes with other zones.

Concrete asks you can pair with the above points

- Presumptive remediation (automatic compensation, not “prove it years later”).
 - Mandatory, accessible written reasons with plain language definitions.
- Independent reviewability of provider decisions that materially affect payment risk.
- Public, granular provider performance transparency (no default “moderate” with no data).

You can access the file via the link here:

<https://ombudsman.gov.au/.../Fairness-in-the-Targeted...>

As the calendar curls toward its final pages, the world scuttles through the familiar parade of student awards, business achievements, top-ten lists, shiny resolutions, and end-of-year rituals. These moments have their place, but they were never built with all of us in mind. They rarely speak to quieter triumphs, nonlinear journeys, or the slow, stubborn evolutions that shape so many of our lives.

Here at GRANN, we walk a different path. We’ve spent another year unpicking the threads of internalised ableism, loosening the tight seams of colonial constructs, and learning how to breathe in our own rhythms, head bang to our own tunes, and paint our own landscapes. That work is ongoing. It hums beneath everything we do, reminding us that milestones don’t need podiums or applause to matter.

So as the world counts certificates, grand gestures, and resolutions, we honour a different kind of tally.

Here's to everyone who gets up each day, even when the weight is uneven.

Here's to those learning how to rise again after a fall or a setback, shaping strength not as a performance but as a quiet, living skill.

Here's to the ones passing on what they know, in ways that ripple outward and take root in someone else's tomorrow.

Here's to all who are making the world a little "better" for those here now, and for those who'll walk after us.

And here's to every child - every smile, every tear, every sleepless night and playful moment - now and through the winding years ahead.

No trophies.

No scoreboards.

Just humanity in motion.

Thank you for being part of this community, this unfolding, this tender reframing of what it means to grow and to look toward the future.

As many of you know, every Collaborator at GRANN also carries roles, responsibilities, and care-work beyond this space. We love what we do here, deeply. And we are also humans with limits, boundaries, and lives. Tending to our own wellbeing is part of how we continue showing up with clarity, intention, and integrity.

With that in mind, we've made a collective decision to step back for a period of rest until at least **16 January 2026**. This time is for recalibrating, tending to our bodies and nervous systems, and reconnecting with the practices that allow this work to remain sustainable. We'll also use this quieter stretch to refresh resources and set gentle foundations for the year ahead.

A few things to hold:

- Our mutual aid and behind-the-scenes work won't disappear. It will continue in its steady, quieter rhythm.
- If you genuinely need us, you can still reach out. Community doesn't pause. We are simply giving ourselves permission to be a little less immediately available, as an act of care rather than distance or disconnect.

Thank you for your patience, for understanding our need to rest, and for walking alongside us in solidarity.

Rest is resistance, and we remain committed to living the values we ask the world to hold.

In solidarity and with care,
The Collaborators @ GRANN 🌻



GRANN Member Spotlight: ***Nurture Learning Support Ambition -*** ***NLSA***

As we move toward a new year, we're excited to highlight one of our valued GRANN members whose work truly embodies neuro-affirming, person-centred support: Nurture Learning Support Ambition – NLSA.

NLSA is a small, dedicated team of Support Coordinators and Psychosocial Recovery Coaches who put people- not systems- at the centre of every decision.

Their philosophy speaks to empowerment, autonomy, genuine choice, and walking with people rather than directing their path.

From the Gladstone region to the Gold Coast, and remotely across Australia, NLSA supports Neurodivergent and Disabled people to navigate the NDIS with clarity, confidence, and control. Their approach is warm, relational, and rooted in seeing each person as whole and worthy- never something to “fix,” only someone to support in ways that honour their needs, culture, learning style, and humanity.

On their team:

Louise Schultz, Director, Support Coordinator & Psychosocial Recovery Coach - bringing 15+ years of experience walking alongside Disabled people and supporting autonomy, capacity building, and self-determined goals.

Roisin O'Malley, Support Coordinator - with deep experience working alongside families, survivors, children, and young people, and an unwavering commitment to advocacy and relational safety.

As we enter 2026, GRANN proudly supports NLSA in their mission to create accessible, respectful, and affirming NDIS pathways for the Gladstone and Brisbane community.

If you're seeking support coordination that honours your Neurodivergence, your lived experience, and your right to thrive- not just survive- NLSA may be a beautiful fit.

Self-referrals and professional referrals are welcome.

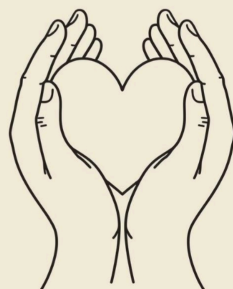
For more information, check the contact details on the accompanying flyers or visit us at grann.com.au (under the social enterprise section).

Here's to a new year of support that feels safe, human, and deeply aligned with who you are.



**NURTURE
LEARNING
SUPPORT
AMBITION (NLSA)**

Empowering Lives Through NDIS Support Coordination



self-referrals and
professional
referrals
welcome

At NLSA, we put people at the heart of everything we do. Our small, dedicated team of Support Coordinators are committed to helping you navigate the NDIS with confidence, choice, and control. We are primarily based in the Gladstone and Gold Coast regions and can provide in-person support locally, while also offering remote support to participants across Australia. Our personalised, people-centered approach focuses on supporting your goals, learning, and independence every step of the way.



Louise Schultz
 Director, Support Coordinator, and Psychosocial Recovery Coach at Nurture Learning Support Ambition (NLSA)

Phone: 0407223967
 Email: louise.s@nlsasc.com.au

About me

Hi, I'm Louise, the Director of Nurture Learning Support Ambition (NLSA), as well as an experienced Support Coordinator and Psychosocial Recovery Coach. I have over seven years of experience as a Support Coordinator and more than 15 years working alongside people with disabilities.

My journey in the disability sector began in employment services, supporting people with disabilities to find meaningful work. I also have a background in youth work, and over time developed a strong passion for supporting adults with mental health challenges. This led me to where I am today—working closely with individuals to build capacity, strengthen confidence, and create pathways toward a more independent and fulfilling life.

I use a person-centred approach in everything I do. That means I take the time to understand your goals, preferences, and unique needs so I can tailor my support in a way that genuinely works for you. By collaborating with your NDIS providers, my aim is to help you reach your goals, increase your independence, and ensure you have choice and control over your supports.

At NLSA, I hope to make your NDIS journey empowering, supportive, and as seamless as possible. I look forward to walking alongside you on your journey.



To refer for support with NLSA please scan the QR code and complete our referral form

Self-referrals and Professional referrals welcome



Roisin O'Malley
 Support Coordinator at Nurture Learning Support Ambition (NLSA)

Phone: 0455231369
 Email: roisin.o@nlsasc.com.au

About me

I bring over five years of experience working in specialist Domestic and Family Violence services, with a particular focus on supporting children, young people and their families. Prior to this, I spent seven years in the early education sector, providing whole-of-family supports as well as developing and delivering playgroups for families with more complex needs.

As a Support Coordinator, my goal is to make your NDIS journey feel easier and more empowering. I work closely with you to understand your goals, connect you with reliable providers, and build your capacity to navigate the NDIS more independently over time. I'm approachable, responsive, and committed to making sure your supports work for you.

I'm here to walk alongside you, advocate for your needs, and help you build a strong support network around you. I look forward to supporting you and your family as you work toward the goals that matter most.



To refer for support with NLSA please scan the QR code and complete our referral form

Self-referrals and Professional referrals welcome




Supports Signposting for 2026 Play & Creative Therapy Bundaberg / Neuroinclusive Co.

As we look toward 2026, we want to share this beautiful reflection from Play & Creative Therapy Bundaberg / Neuroinclusive Co. and gently point our community their way.

This is what values-aligned, ND-led work looks like when it's done with care, attunement, and deep respect for nervous systems and lived experience. Play & Creative Therapy Bundaberg, and now Neuroinclusive Co. are creating spaces that are safe, playful, and genuinely neuro-affirming - not just in name, but in practice.

If you're in or around Bundaberg and thinking ahead to supports, connection, or creative spaces for the new year, we wholeheartedly encourage you to follow, connect with, and learn from them.

We're proud to walk alongside organisations like this, and grateful for the way community can reflect, uplift, and strengthen each other when the roots are shared. 🧡🌈🌟


 Gladstone Region Autistic... 1d · 🌐

We want to take a moment to spotlight an organisation in Bundaberg that has long held our admiration, our respect: [Play & Creative Therapy Bundaberg](#), who have now expanded into their new neuro-affirming venture, [Neuroinclusive Co.](#)


Their philosophy, their depth of insight, their playful spirit- it all resonates with us at GRANN in the gentlest, truest ways. Even their logo design and colour palette feel like a soft song to the nervous system. It reaches us.

We are genuinely thrilled for them as they step into this new chapter. Neuroinclusive Co. is exactly the kind of future-facing, strengths-based, community-rooted work our region needs, and we're so excited to watch them grow.

Here's to organisations built with heart, curiosity, and Neurodivergent wisdom at their core. 🧡🧠✨

 **Neuroinclusive Co.**
26 Nov · 🌐



 Play & Creative Therapy Bundaberg
9 December at 07:02 · 🌐

This is such a dearly supportive post from [Gladstone Region Autistic & Neurodivergent Network Inc - GRANN](#). It means more than I can say.

We pour so much into creating spaces that feel safe, attuned, and deeply neuro-affirming. To have another ND-led organisation reflect that back with such care is something really special.

If you're not already following GRANN, please go and show them some love. They are doing incredible, community-rooted work for autistic and neurodivergent families in the Gladstone region, and their advocacy is powerful, brave, and needed.

Thank you GRANN for your kindness, your words, and the way you champion neurodivergent people. We're so grateful to walk alongside organisations like yours. 🧡🧠✨



*Autistic & Neurodivergent-led
Organisations, Supports, & Resources*



**Supports
Signpost**

**GRANN
Resources**



Autistic & Neurodivergent Books and Authors

Looking for stories that reflect *you* or someone you love?
GRANN's carefully curated 2024 & 2025 Booklists includes powerful titles by
and for Autistic and Neurodivergent people - spanning identity, advocacy,
creativity, lived experience, children's stories, YA fiction, and more.

Whether you're seeking representation, learning, or just a good read that doesn't
pathologise your existence, there's something here for you.







**Neuro-
Affirming
Reading List
2024**

**Neuro-
Affirming
Reading List
2025**

Want to Get Involved? *Volunteer with GRANN*


GRANN is powered by community - and we're always grateful for kind, creative, Neurodivergent-led hands to help shape what we do. Whether you're looking to contribute your time, skills, ideas, or presence, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteering with GRANN can look like:

-  **Helping behind the scenes with admin or website content**
-  **Co-creating accessible resources or artwork**
-  **Supporting events, workshops, or advocacy campaigns**
-  **Offering lived experience wisdom or gentle peer support**

Lived experience needed and a willingness to show up in your own way.

**Flexible, affirming, and low-demand roles available.
We'll always work with your access needs and capacity.**

Register below or visit our website www.grann.com.au
and click "Volunteer" in the menu
You can also  Email us at: info@grann.com.au

 **Thank you for helping us build something meaningful, inclusive, and proudly Neurodivergent led.**

 **Register your interest to volunteer here:**

**Volunteer
EOI Form**

Your Views Matters
We'd Love Your Feedback

✨ **Share what's working. Tell us what's not. Suggest something new.**

At GRANN, everything we do is shaped by *you*, our community. Your experiences, insights, and ideas help us create spaces that feel safer, more supportive, and more *you-shaped*.

Whether you've joined one of our sessions, explored our website, or just want to share a thought or suggestion - we'd love to hear from you. Your feedback doesn't have to be formal or polished. Honest, imperfect, and heartfelt is welcome.

Access the Feedback Form below or visit us at www.grann.com.au and click "Contact" in the menu.

Prefer to send a message directly or use voice, pictures, or dot points instead of a form? That's okay too. Let us know how we can walk beside you.

✉ Email us at: info@grann.com.au

🧠 Your views helps us build a place to belong, together.
Thank you for being part of it.

 **Access our feedback form here:**

[Feedback Form](#)



Gladstone Region Autistic & Neurodivergent Network Inc.

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GRANN acknowledges the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we reside and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

**Always Was. Always Will Be.
Sovereignty Was Never Ceded.**