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Welcome to This Week's GRANN Newsletter

A Gentle Shift: Our Newsletter Goes Fortnightly

In the gentle, neuro-affirming spirit of our community, we're shifting gears - softly and intentionally.

Here at GRANN, we're always tuning in to the needs of our community, and to our own Neurodivergent rhythms, too. So, in honour of our collective nervous systems, we're shifting the GRANN newsletter to a **fortnightly flow** for now. Why the change? Because even joyful, community-led things can add up, and we don't believe in pushing through just to keep pace.

We're committed to being *demand-sensitive*, not demand-driven. That means creating in ways that honour rest, capacity, and the energy it takes to show up in this world.

This gentler pace gives us space to reflect, to make meaning slowly, and to offer something more spacious, something you can read when *you're ready*, not when the inbox says so.

You can still expect the same depth, care, creativity, and celebration of neurodivergent life, just wrapped in a rhythm that respects regulation and breathing room.

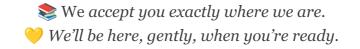
This isn't about doing less - it's about doing differently.

By slowing down, we're choosing **rest over rush**, and **depth over overwhelm**.

It means we can pour care into each edition with the presence and pacing that honours both our capacity and community.

So, whether you're reading on the day it lands or weeks later when your spoons allow, know this:

There is no 'behind' here.



With deep gratitude for walking this path with us, in whatever tempo your mind and body needs, Thank you for being here, however you arrive.

In rest, resistance, and community care.

Please join us now as we delve further into the world of synaesthesia.

In solidarity,
The Collaborators @ GRANN

Discovering Cognitive Colour, Sound, Time & Taste

Last week, we explored mirror-touch synaesthesia - feeling what others feel. This week, we celebrate the sensory richness of other forms: **grapheme-colour**, **chromesthesia**, **time-space**, and **lexical-gustatory**. These are not anomalies, they're expressions of beautifully firing synapses.

Grapheme–Colour Synaesthesia: The Alphabets That Paint The Sky

For some Neurodivergent minds, the alphabet doesn't just tell a story, it *is* a story in colour. Grapheme—Colour Synaesthesia is a beautifully unique perceptual experience where individual letters or numbers are consistently associated with specific colours. Imagine a world where every "A" has always been crimson, where "7" radiates a sandy ochre, or where the word "hello" shimmers in gradients of pastel green and violet.

These associations are not imagined, nor chosen. They are deeply embedded, as real and consistent as a memory.

One community member shared:

"I never realised [until I was older] other people didn't see the calendar as a rainbow. I thought it was just part of how brains worked."

Often, people with grapheme—colour synaesthesia discover their experience later in life, only upon realising others don't see colours when reading or doing math. This form of synaesthesia can bring a vivid beauty to language and learning, or at times, sensory overwhelm, especially when letters or numbers are the 'wrong' colours (think: black and white worksheets or digital fonts).

Polyvocal Reflections - How I ND:

When letters and numbers have hues

"For me, numbers are *colours first* and values second. Doing calculations with '3' feels like working with yellow energy, while '8' is always cool and dark like navy. If something doesn't match the colour it's supposed to be, my brain gets stuck. It's not just about reading - it's about feeling in sync."

Aisha says, "My homework isn't just words, it's a rainbow. Colour helps me remember and makes reading a sensory experience."

Mark shares, "Calculations are easier when 7 is green and 3 is yellow. It's my built-in mnemonic."

Eli shares, "I use coloured pens that match my internal palette—for me, purple 'P' isn't just the letter P: it's my feel."

H's not a gimmick - it's a consistent, involuntary sensory mapping that helps cognition and memory.

Let's affirm that this isn't a distraction or disorder, it's a vivid, sensory way of engaging with the world. It can make reading, memory, and creative play beautifully unique. It is also why it is crucial that we educate the world about the diversity of how brains process the world around us.

© Chromesthesia: When Sound Paints the Room

What does your favourite song *look* like? For those with **Chromesthesia**, sound and colour are in constant conversation. A kettle's whistle might shimmer silver, a dog bark may shoot a jagged red bolt through your inner vision, and a cello note might bloom in lush indigo waves.

This isn't metaphor, it's multisensory processing, and for those who experience it, it can be deeply intuitive. Every sound carries a colour, texture, shape, or movement. Some describe it as "a movie in my mind," others as a floating aura of motion.

One young person shared:

"My friend's voice is orange. Not just sometimes. Always. If she's loud, it gets neon."

Chromesthesia is often connected with musical creativity, but it's not always calm or beautiful. Loud or sharp sounds might cause visual overstimulation, leading to shutdowns or overload. Many Autistic and Neurodivergent folks with Chromesthesia describe needing auditory and visual control to maintain regulation.

Polyvocal Reflections – How I ND:

When music shows you colour & movement

"For years I thought everyone saw sounds. I'd wonder why people weren't distracted by how grey and scratchy the school bell was. Music is a gift, I *see* the rhythm, the colour, the shape. But noisy places? That's when the colours crash into each other."

Sam, a musician: "Composing is like painting. My songs have colour palettes and brush strokes in my mind."

Jess recalls: "An ambulance siren is sharp red; rain tapping on glass is a deep blue ripple."

Dana shares: "Listening to rain is like watching a slow blue-green waterfall, centred breathing, grounded calm."

>> Sound becomes a multi-sensory canvas - visual, emotional, alive.

Chromesthesia, like all forms of synaesthesia, isn't about making things up, it's about making sense of the world in a deeply embodied way.

Time—Space Synaesthesia: The Calendar Wraps Around Me

Time—Space Synaesthesia is when time is not just felt, it's seen and *placed*. Days, months, years, decades - all exist as a consistent spatial map. For some, the week forms a circle. For others, years stretch in ribbons, spirals, ladders, or stacked boxes. Tuesday may always be to the left; September may appear diagonally down and to the right.

This perception is deeply intuitive. It's not chosen. It's not a memory aid. It's just how time exists in the mind.

One person described it as:

"The months wrap around me like a racetrack. I always know where I am - not emotionally, but physically, in the year."

In a world built on linear calendars and two-dimensional timetables, living with Time—Space Synaesthesia can be both grounding and challenging. Planning events, reflecting on memory, or visualising the future can feel like physically moving through a space - sometimes comforting, sometimes overwhelming.

Polyvocal Reflections - How I ND:

When time takes shape around you

"I always thought people were pretending when they said 'next month'. It's *right there*, behind my shoulder. I can literally turn and point to where it is. My memory works in visuals. I can walk through the week in my head and stop where I left my thoughts."

Holly describes her year as a circular track surrounding her body: "Summers are high arcs, winters dip low."

Tom says, "Thursday is always that dark blue square over there, floating just past my left shoulder."

Riley shares: "Sundays are pale lavender and float behind me, my week lives in colour and shape."

Time isn't intangible, it's woven into our spatial sense, guiding memory and planning effortlessly.

This form of synaesthesia is a quiet kind of brilliance, one that orients Neurodivergent people in time and space like an internal compass only they can see.

Lexical-Gustatory Synaesthesia: When Words Taste Like Toast

Lexical—Gustatory Synaesthesia brings together the senses of language and taste. Names, words, syllables, each one may evoke a very specific taste or texture. "Monday" might taste like mint. "Elephant" might bring the sensation of peanut butter. "Daniel" might feel like biting into celery.

These sensations are not imagined or associative, they are consistent, involuntary, and often vividly specific.

One person with this form of synaesthesia described:

"The word 'table' tastes like metal. I can't say it without that sharp taste. It's not unpleasant, just always there."

For many with Lexical-Gustatory Synaesthesia, it creates a unique relationship with words and names. Some avoid certain words that taste bad. Others savour language like a meal. And in moments of stress or overwhelm, some tastes become more intense, creating an added sensory layer that few around them may understand.

Polyvocal Reflections - How I ND:

When words are flavours

"When I was a kid, I didn't want to say my teacher's name. It tasted like wet socks. No one believed me. It wasn't defiance, it was just... gross. I still pick my words based on how they taste in my mouth."

Nina: "Greeting someone isn't just words, it's flavours. My partner tastes like vanilla almond."

Ben: "Reading a spicy word makes me salivate. It's surreal, but grounding." Mitch: "My name tastes like tart apple. A good reminder I exist, flavour *is* identity."

*Language becomes a sensory experience, rich with texture and flavour.

This form of synaesthesia is rare and often misunderstood, but it reveals just how beautifully layered sensory experiences can be, especially in neurodivergent people. It shows us that communication can be textured, sensory, and deeply personal.

Embracing the Synaesthetic Spectrum

Synaesthesia is not a quirk. It's not a problem to solve. It's a way of being in the world - a vivid, layered, often misunderstood richness that deserves space and celebration. Whether it's hearing colours, seeing time, tasting words, or painting numbers in your mind's eye - you are not alone. And you're not imagining it.

Embrace Your Sensory World

Synaesthesia isn't a problem. It reveals the beautiful diversity of human perception.

If this resonates:

Explore it - notice if your brain experiences senses that overlap.

Record patterns - keep a journal or colour palette mapping your associations.

Share with community - find connection, reduce isolation.

Normalise it - this is your natural way of being.

If synaesthesia is part of your reality, know: you're not making it up. You're living in a world layered, textured, coloured, flavoured, shaped, uniquely yours.

There are Many Variations

Synaesthesia isn't limited to what we have listed. There are over 60 identified types, **sound-touch**, **emotion-colour**, **smell-colour**, **multi-sensory forms** (single sound might evoke colour, movement, shape), and **projective and associative** (some see the colour visually ["projective"], others feel the link in their mind ["associative"]).

As GRANN always says:

"You're not "too much" - the world is just too busy trying to blend in for how beautifully your brain works."



Notes Beneath My Skin

A poem by and for synaesthetic, Autistic hearts

The sun rises,

and my mouth floods with lemon rind and brass, the taste of daylight too loud to swallow.

> I press my palms against the window, but the colour sings into me anyway.

> > Every letter,

a stranger's perfume at a crowded train station.

Q is always sandalwood and smoke,

while F buzzes like cola fizz under my skin.

My name tastes of burnt toast and rainclouds.

Do you know what it's like

when someone yells too bright?

Their anger hits me in primary colours,

red like metal on the tongue, yellow like teeth on tinfoil.

I am not being dramatic.

I am feeling you.

When music plays,

it doesn't enter my ears, it takes me over. All of me.

A cello spills velvet along my ribs.

Synthesizers shoot lilac stars behind my eyes.

Every note paints me,

and some days,

I don't know where I end and sound begins.

It is not magic.

It is not brokenness. Or a gift.

It is how I live inside the world.

My calendar curls like a shell in my mind.

Weeks stack diagonally,

coloured like spices: paprika, turmeric, sage.

Saturday has always been ocean blue,

safe, slow, spacious.

You can't teach that.

It just is.

But sometimes...

sometimes I wish I could mute it all.

When the lights flicker tart

and the sirens slice sour

and someone's perfume is shouting in orange.

Sometimes I want the world to shut up

so I can hear my own voice in all it's textured goodness.

I want to scream, yell, just to block the world out.

And yet...

when the world is soft and steady,

when the lamp hums vanilla and my tea sounds like cello,
I feel like I was built to be alive.
If you ask me
what Autism feels like,
I might say
everything at once.
But if you ask what it means,
I'll say -

A poem between your senses.

A story you cannot read with one sense alone. But one that is *always beautifully different*.

Body Doubling & Parallel Play - with GRANN

Parallel Play: Prefer quiet presence over conversation? Join a shared (virtual) space with no pressure to talk or perform - just being together is enough.

JULY Dates:

Tuesday 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd: 6:30pm - 8pm Thursday 3rd, 10th, 17th: 6:30pm - 8pm

Register:

https://events.humanitix.com/parallel-play-with-grann

*Online event is held via MS Teams. Access link will be delivered via email the day before the event.

and

Body Doubling: Need help starting or staying on task? Come sit with us (virtually) while we each do our own thing.

JULY Dates:

Wednesday 2nd, 9th, 16th: 10am - 11:30am

Register:

https://events.humanitix.com/body-doubling-with-grann

*Online event is held via MS Teams. Access link will be delivered via email the day before the event.

These gentle, neuro-affirming spaces are designed to support motivation, connection, and belonging - whether you're tackling a task, creating something, or simply need company while doing your own thing.

These sessions are community-led, flexible, and low-demand. Come as you are.

You can also contact GRANN directly to express your interest: <u>enquiries.grann@gmail.com</u>

Or message us directly on Messenger Let us know what kind of support feels good for you.

More information will be provided via our <u>Facebook page</u>, or visit our website: http://www.grann.com.au



// Badge-Making Workshop

This is me, Neurokind Circles

A Creative Online Workshop Celebrate identity, connection, and belonging through wearable art!

Now Taking Expressions of Interest

Join GRANN for a badge-making experience that welcomes all ages and minds.

Create your own badge & Submit your design

or choose a pre-printed design

*Link to the event will be sent out via email the day before the event.

Session 2: 18+ - Thursday - 24 JULY @ 6:30pm - 8pm https://events.humanitix.com/this-is-me-neurokind-circles-a-creative-online-badge-making-workshop/tickets

*Link to the event will be sent out via email the day before the event.

Watch your badge being made via livestream

Collect badges after both sessions complete

(option to have badges posted at participant expense of \$12.50)

Contribution: \$12 per person (GRANN Members - \$10 p/p)

This covers 6 x badges & materials
(3 different sizes - 25", 32", 58" - 2 of each size)

EOI OR QUESTIONS: enquiries.grann@gmail.com
Or visit: http://www.grann.com.au

Let's make art, connection, and small wearable acts of resistance, together.



August Dates

This August, our Community Connections Sessions are back - now gently held in online spaces, and taking the place of our previously held in-person Community socials (they will also take the place of our Parallel Play & Body Doubling sessions this month).

They are community-led, low-demand, and entirely flexible.

You can join with your camera off, bring a task (or not), sit in silence, stim, share, or just exist alongside others who get it.

Come as you are. Stay as you need. No pressure, ever.

AUGUST DATES:

Monday 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th : 1:30pm - 3pm Wednesday 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th : 6pm - 7:30pm Friday 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th : 10am - 11:30am - 11:30am

Register via link below:

https://events.humanitix.com/online-community-connection...

You can also contact GRANN directly to express your interest: <u>info@grann.com.au</u>

Or message us directly on Messenger Let us know what kind of support feels good for you.

More information will be provided via our <u>Facebook page</u> or visit our website: <u>http://www.grann.com.au</u>



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.

We'll be back next fortnight with fresh additions to add to the 2025 Book list.



Neuro-Affirming Reading List



Autistic & Neurodivergent-led Organisations, Supports, & Resources

Danny with Words

https://www.facebook.com/dannywithwords/

Minimally speaking autistic writer and advocate Danny Whitty shares his lived experience through Spelling-to-Communicate, using poetry, reflections, and essays to lift the voices of nonspeaking Autistic people.

Fighting for My Voice https://fightingformyvoice.com/

Jordan LeVan offers heartfelt first-person insights into living with verbal apraxia, accompanied by advocacy and guidance to help others find their verbal autonomy.

Niko Boskovic

https://nikoboskovic.wordpress.com/

Niko Boskovic, a nonspeaking autistic letterboard communicator, shares powerful blog posts on identity, mental health, and self-advocacy as part of *Navigating with Niko*.

Mikey's Wish - Verbal Dyspraxia Awareness /https://www.facebook.com/mikeyswish/

Founded by teenager Mikey Akers, this campaign-turned-community raises awareness of verbal dyspraxia, shares personal storytelling, and funds therapy through social media, events, and lived experience.

Autism Goggles https://www.facebook.com/autismgoggles/

An active Facebook community centred on autistic-led insights, sharing reflections, decision-making strategies, and everyday truths about life "on the spectrum".



Your Views Matters We'd Love Your Feedback

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.

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

✓ Access our feedback form here:

Feedback Form

or visit our homepage 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: enquiries.grann@gmail.com

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

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 contentCo-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 your interest to volunteer here:

Volunteer EOI Form

Or visit our website www.grann.com.au and click "Volunteer" in the menu You can also www.grann.com.au and click "Volunteer" in the menu You can also www.grann.com.au and click "Volunteer" in the menu

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

Headspace Gladstone presents be bold! be proud! be LOUD!

LOUD! is coming and it's going to be the most iconic night of the year.

LOUD! is more than just a party, it's a celebration of being young, bold, and completely yourself!

Whether you're there to dance your heart out, hang with mates, meet new people, or just enjoy the ride, you'll feel the magic as soon as you step on board.

What to expect:

Live DJ keeping the beats rolling all cruise long
Sunset views + the ultimate selfie spots
A dancefloor under the stars (yes, for real)
A chance to connect, chill and vibe with other young people

Event Details:

Join us on August 29 2025

Drop off and pick up at the Gladstone Yacht Club

For young people aged 16-25

Drop off from 5:30pm for a 6:30pm departure

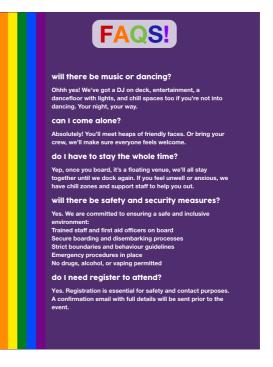
Pick up from Gladstone Yacht Club at 9:30pm

Don't miss the boat! Get your tickets for LOUD! here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/loud-tickets-1261982887789









Rosella Park School Presents Post-School Support Expo this September!

They are currently inviting agencies, organisations, and service providers to register their interest in exhibiting. This is a fantastic opportunity to share your programs and services with senior students preparing for life beyond school.

Check out the brochure for more details and how to get involved.

Date: Tuesday 2nd September **Time:** 9:30am - 11: 30am

Contact: Jo-Anne Leeson at <u>jlees37@eq.edu.au</u> or ph: (07) 4976 8333

Know a group or service that might be interested? Please share the brochure with them - let's make this a valuable and inclusive event for all senior students across our district!



Rockabilby & Neurokin Events Supporting RAD Artists Are you a RAD (Regional Australian Disabled) Artist?

Did you know that RAD artists are the lowest paid people in the Australian creative industries?

Want to be part of a collective action to improve the payment and representation of and services for RAD artists?

Rockabilby & Neurokin Events are looking for Neurodivergent, D/deaf and Disabled artists from across regional and remote Australia to be part of our Tshirt Drive on October 23, National Giving Day to the Arts.

We won't let RAD artists die from exposure!

Featured artists will be paid \$10 per tshirt sold with their design on it.

Express your interest & submit a design (they don't have to relate to disability)

https://forms.gle/Wcd4enEdL9sMQTsXA









Gladstone Region Autistic & Neurodivergent Network Inc.

enquiries.grann@gmail.com

You've received it because you've subscribed to our newsletter.





GRANN acknowledges the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we reside and pa 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 Never Ceded.