



An entry to CWT's NAIDOC Week art competition

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## Can creativity boost inclusion?

An inclusive and diverse culture gives companies a [competitive edge](#), boosting innovation and productivity.

But as companies around the world continue to focus on pressing needs, many diversity and inclusion efforts have been put on the back burner.

In the wider world, the pandemic has called on us to do our part by physically disconnecting from others – to socially distance, close borders, and be acutely aware of new variants entering our communities. Mounting isolation

and suspicion create the perfect storm which has sadly led to a rise in Covid-19-fuelled xenophobia, according to [Human Rights Watch](#).

On a personal level, the lack of consistent connection can cause creativity to flatline over time. A 2020 report in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology Review*, suggests that whether you have contracted Covid-19 or not, the pandemic has likely changed your brain chemistry. But the good news is that each one of us has the agency to alter our neural pathways.

While diversity and inclusion efforts may seem like a ‘nice-to-have,’ what companies and the wider world need more than ever is exposure to our differences, and to feel inspired by others and our planet. Therein lies the collective healing necessary to rebuild.

“Go to any one of our global regions, business functions, or office locations, and you will find CWT teams that are deeply engaged with their communities and social causes,” says Francois Grumberg, CWT’s VP Global Responsible Business and Diversity & Inclusion, “from Carlson’s deep philanthropic history to the most recent initiatives highlighted in our annual Responsible Business Report, community involvement is a defining part of our culture that only seems to grow in activity and impact each year. Few things illustrate this as well as our Employee Choice Grant Awards. One of the recipients is Australia’s [Indigenous Literacy Foundation](#).

The aim of the ILF is to reduce the disadvantage experienced by children in remote Indigenous communities across Australia by writing, publishing, and developing reading skills in these communities. They gift new, culturally appropriate books, encourage children to read and support the publication of books written by elders and children of these regions in their regional dialects to then be translated into English for further strengthening of reading skills.

As the partner foundation in Australia, CWT employees have participated in a number of volunteer and awareness activities for ILF this year. This includes a group volunteer day, book swap, and The Great Indigenous Bake Off fundraiser.

CWT joins thousands of companies in celebrating [NAIDOC Week](#) honoring the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, choosing the ILF as a beneficiary.

CWT Australia launched a NAIDOC Week art competition. The theme, 'Heal Country,' brings with it a call to action to seek greater protection for the country's lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration and destruction.

Competition applicants were invited to explore the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to look at the notion of 'country' through a lens of family, kin, lore, ceremony, traditions and language.

The art competition is open to all CWT staff and their families with the winner receiving the gift of 'gifting' books to children living in remote Australia through the **Indigenous Literacy Foundation**.

In these isolating times, a celebration of different cultures through creative pursuits is not just business-critical but essential to a sense of optimism and connections at work and in our daily lives.

As Aboriginal novelist Mudrooroo puts it, "Our spirituality is oneness and an interconnectedness with all that lives and breathes, even with all that does not live or breathe."

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