Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks video transcript

**Glen Mackie:** My name’s Glen Mackie and I’m from Yam Island in the Torres Strait.

I’m an artist from that community.

We’re small – you can’t even see Yam Island on the map. So, I see it as my job to tell a story, educate people about Torres Strait.

**Jasmine Bennett:** My name’s Jasmine. I have grown up on Gumbaynggir Country which I am currently living on now.

My family’s mob is from Dunghutti and Kamilaroi. I feel a big connection to the Country. I love being out in nature and feel really privileged to be Indigenous Australian.

**Glen:** My grandfather, when he taught me, the first thing he taught me is the designs is not mine to keep, it’s to teach younger kids. So, when young kids want to learn I am very happy to teach them because I was like that when I was young.

**Jasmine:** With my mum, she always encouraged us to explore our Indigenous heritage. When we were young, she was really involved in sharing that culture with everyone at our little primary school that we went to, and mum would organise artists to come in to share the culture and educate everyone, and I think from that very young age I always have been creative.

**Glen:** I’m glad they wanted my designs to tell that story. We have to educate people, especially further down, since some of them don’t know where Torres Strait is.

With that particular design, we use mat for teaching – everything always talked about on the mat, your culture, your family, everything. The mat symbolises where we sit and learn.

The ‘E’ designs are sounds – carving designs, you will see them on drums. Where I put the ‘E’s together, means that we are teaching one another – our younger generation, our future.

The triangle represents the woman and man, means all of us. Not just man, not just woman, all of us, cause, you know, we learn from one another.

The two birds – the white one is called Karaguai and the black one is called Kunai – they symbolise black and white. We’re different colour, but we’re same.

**Jasmine:** The sun to me is really important, it’s shining a light on our journey, and our progress, and I feel that it brings energy to the painting, and to life.

Then we have the storyline, which travels from left to right in the painting. Being a progress painting, it’s progressing from one point to another.

Then the natural elements, representative of the connection that I have with nature, and all Indigenous people have with Country.

Then from the element that we have of people coming together, meeting together, and within the agency, with the journey I’ve had, starting out alone, along the way, building up relationships and community, and progressing to a point where we’re all together and connected, is really important.

When you see something and identify it as your own, that’s what I hope people – Indigenous people – will see this artwork and go ‘Oh I know what that is – that’s part of me’.

I think that if we have that, we might get a bit more trust, and hopefully an easier working relationship with our customers and people that we are in contact with.

**Glen:** We need to come as one, you know. That’s the only way that we can move forward. And I am trying to show people that we’re just same people, we just got different culture. At the end of the day, we’re human beings.