



Hard Place/Good Place

Enabling Recovery for Young People

Presenters:

Linda Snell – Community Recovery Coordinator

Willow Swaneveld – Yarra Ranges Young Citizen of the Year 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands we meet on today.

Yarra Ranges Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people and other Kulin Nations, as the custodians of the unceded lands across the Yarra Ranges that our work in the community takes place.

We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, and value their essential role in our region's history and ongoing story.

Before we begin...

To set the scene for our presentation we will show a short video filmed in augmented reality that captures the essence of Willow's story.

It contains images and part of her story of the traumatic experiences which could be triggering for some audience members.



Willow



Claudia



Kayla Jess

Damian

Fionn

Harry



About the 2021 storms

June 2021

An unprecedented severe weather event on the 9 June 2021:

- Significant storm damage
- 79 homes were deemed uninhabitable
- Wind speeds of over 120km/hr from Southeast
- 25,000 trees fell
- Moderate flooding
- Prolonged power outage – peak of 54,000 residents
- No power - no access to triple zero emergency calls
- No water or septics for others

October 2021

Lockdowns were over and our tourist areas geared up for a busy Melbourne Cup weekend.

- More homes lost including Willow's

Mount Dandenong Tourist Road

The Opportunity

The Big Anxiety Festival was due to be hosted at the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum and there was the opportunity to offer Hard Place/Good Place as a storytelling opportunity for young people impacted by the storms.

Hard Place/Good Place: Yarra Ranges was a recovery project developed in collaboration between UNSW and Yarra Ranges Council.

It is part of a broader Hard Place/Good Place creative research project, led by the fEEL Lab (Felt Experience and Empathy Lab) at UNSW.



Image: Volker Kuchelmeister

What is involved?

- Meet one-on-one or in a small group setting with a narrative therapist to share and develop your story at either Burringja Cultural Centre or Yarra Ranges Regional Museum (maximum 3 hours in June-July).
- One or two site visits to a local place relevant to your story with the UNSW team and YRC council staff for audio recording of the stories and 3D scanning of the site/objects* (maximum 3 hours in late July)
- Informed consent processes (you or your guardian if you're under 18 signing a couple of forms) as are usual for any project related to research.

*Your voice will be heard but you will not be visually seen in the video or final outcomes.

Exhibition

Hard Place/Good Place: Yarra Ranges
Wed 28 Sep – Sun 27 Nov 2022
Yarra Ranges Regional Museum

For more info, questions and to get involved, please contact:

Jessica Adams, Recovery Officer
j.adams@yarraranges.vic.gov.au
03 9294 6866 / 0419 569 490.

Please note, places are limited, so if you're interested please contact us ASAP!



Hard Place/Good Place: Yarra Ranges is supported by the Victorian Government.



Project Design

- Power of storytelling and unique capacity of the arts to share complex experience
- Contribute to recovery
- A platform for seven young people aged between 14 and 25, to share with the broader community what happened and what they want the world to know about how the storm has impacted their relationship to place.



Project Development

- Ethics approval through UNSW
- Funding
- Managing Duty of Care
- Power of storytelling and unique capacity of the arts to share complex experience

'I got to tell the story that I wanted to. I feel like none of it was cut out or shortened. My story and my message wasn't distorted from what I wanted to deliver. Everything I said was authentically me'.

Image: Parragirls Past, Present, courtesy of fEEL Lab, UNSW





Recording the Stories

Here is Volker Kuchelmeister, taking the hundreds of photographs to bring the stories to life



The Exhibition



Images: Sean Paris



There's two sides to every story...



Amplifying Untold Stories

"Disaster relief is a topic that demands attention and empathy, as it affects countless lives worldwide."



A Morning of Chaos and Loss

"I've just lost both my parents
this year."

Beyond Physical Loss: The Grief of Memories

"Grieving the memories and the inability to make more is truly the hardest part."



Reaching Out for Help

"When you've been drowning for so long, sometimes it is very easy to forget to stick your hand out of the water and ask for help."



The Glass Box Shattered

"Suddenly I didn't feel stranded anymore... I could finally breathe."





Recognizing Unique Challenges

"They bear the weight of trauma while navigating a world that often overlooks their voices and struggles."

Transforming Pain into Purpose

"The power of storytelling had manifested such healing, demonstrating the transformative effect that having my voice heard had made."



Uplifting Voices and Creating Safe Spaces

"Supporting young people means investing in their mental and emotional well-being."





Building a Resilient Tomorrow

"Together, we can stand side by side with young people, ready to listen, support, and help them tell their stories of triumph against all odds."

Project Outcomes

- Willow's story featured in The Age newspaper
- Willow and Jess interviewed by Virginia Trioli on ABC Radio
- Willow awarded Young Citizen of the Year
- Community Recovery Team building storytelling into disaster recovery
- Participant Jess interest in social work, Willow pursuing creative career
- All stories offered for acquisition into the Yarra Ranges Museum collection
- Ongoing research project at UNSW and sharing best practice
- Relevance and awareness of Museum



Project Funding

We thank our sponsors for providing the funding that supported this project and to the ADRC23 sponsors.

Without funding none of this is possible.

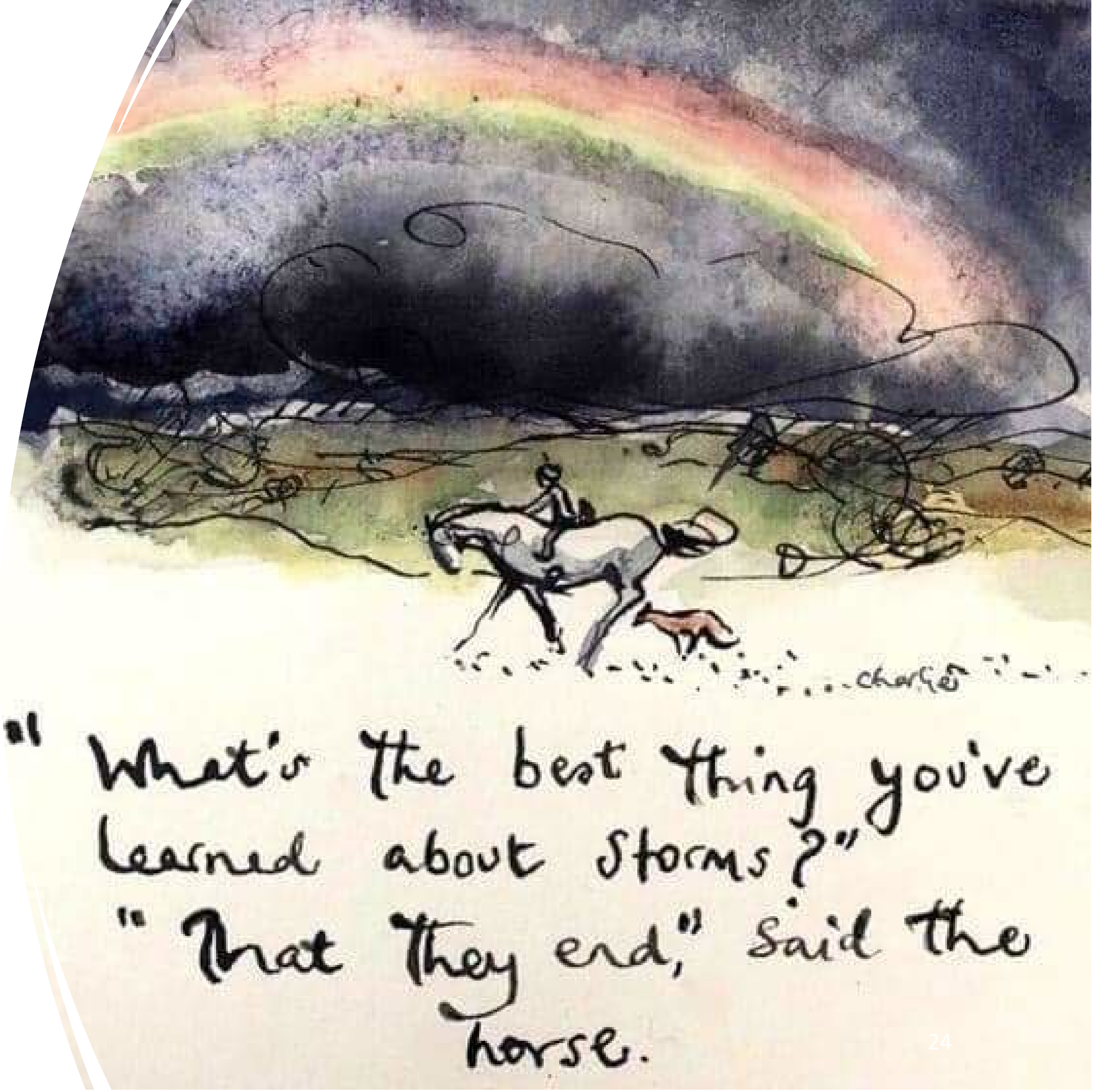


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From my team to yours –
We encourage you to find your
own Willows!

Image credit – Charlie Mackesy.



"What's the best thing you've
learned about storms?"
"That they end," said the
horse.