

Company: Small Business of Australia, Australia

Nomination Submitted by: Award Writing Services

Company Description: Time is of the essence for small businesses and the work we do, helping uncover their stories, digging into their successes and ultimately helping them see all they've achieved is worthy of celebrating. We help these businesses find and enter awards so they can leverage the opportunities for PR, credibility and visibility.

Nomination Category: New Product & Service (Developed for/by Women) Awards Categories

Nomination Sub Category: Best New Product or Service of the Year - Consumer Services

Nomination Title: Wiluray Gunyah - Indigenous-led respite house



HOW TO ENTER >

1. Which will you submit for your nomination in this category, a video of up to five (5) minutes, explaining the features, functions, benefits, and results to date of the nominated product or service, OR written answers to the questions? (Choose one):

Written answers to the questions

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video. If you are submitting written answers to the questions, please provide them in the appropriate spaces below:

3. Describe the features, functions, and benefits of the nominated product or service (up to 350 words):

Total 349 words used.

Wiluray Gunyah means 'sweet home' in Wiradjuri. Spear & Arrow Therapeutic Services built a warm, culturally grounded space where Aboriginal children feel safe, supported and proud of who they are. It's not a facility or a clinic. It's a home and is one of the first Indigenous-led respite homes of its kind in the Central West of NSW.

Across Australia, First Nations people are 28% less likely to access the NDIS despite having higher rates of disability. In some regional NSW communities, over one-third of children start school developmentally vulnerable, and culturally safe services are either non-existent or out of reach. Too often, families wait 6–12 months for help that may never arrive, only to be met by professionals who don't stay, don't listen, or don't understand. Families are forced to drive hours to access unfamiliar services, if any exist at all. Many go without. Many suffer burnout and mental health issues because of the lack of culturally appropriate respite.

Wiluray Gunyah was built to change that. It opened in July 2024 as a direct response to what families told us they needed: a space that felt like home, grounded in culture, run by people they knew and trusted.

Features and functions

- o **Culturally safe environment:** Decorated with Indigenous art and identity-affirming books, designed for sensory regulation, and grounded in Wiradjuri values.
- o **Relationship-based staffing:** Local, familiar, and often Aboriginal support workers, people the kids already know and trust.
- o **Trauma-informed care:** Calm lighting, soft furnishings, unhurried routines and emotionally safe spaces for children who've experienced trauma or complex disability.
- o **Flexible, child-led respite:** Activities include yarning, cooking, bushcraft and sensory play, offered without pressure or rigid programming.
- o **Emergency and transitional care:** Designed for urgent placements, especially in kinship or out-of-home care where stability is essential.

Benefits

- o **Community-led healing:** A place where kids feel safe to express themselves, and families feel heard, respected and supported, many for the first time.
- o **Real relationships:** No fly-in-fly-out staff. No strangers. Just consistency, trust, and care that stays.
- o **Accessibility for mob:** Located in Dubbo and designed by and for community, removing barriers to care that's long been missing.

4. Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words):

Total 183 words used.

1. Business progression - our structural growth over the past year, including the creation of two distinct arms (Spear & Arrow and Wiluray Gunyah), our leadership development, and investment in workforce retention. It includes key metrics such as a 27% drop in staff turnover, 60% reduction in waitlists, and growth to over \$2.5M revenue

2. Financial overview: our year-on-year revenue growth from \$950K to \$2.42M, with strong reinvestment into team development, program expansion, and infrastructure like Wiluray Gunyah. Our FY24 forecast reflects intentional reinvestment in impact over profit.

3. Indigenous excellence - cultural context, highlight the significance of our community-led model, and include quotes and feedback from First Nations families who now feel seen, respected, and supported.

4. Growth metrics: showing real-world outcomes: 88% of children improving emotional regulation, 67% attending school more regularly, and 52% forming friendships.

5. Testimonials: Shared throughout the supporting materials, these qualitative insights, like a mum hearing her child say "Mum, look at me" after months of silence, bring heart to the data and show our unique value in a sector often dominated by transactional models.

5. If you are nominating a brand-new product or service, state the date on which it was released. If you are nominating a new version of an existing product or service, state the date on which the update was released:

Spear & Arrow Therapeutic was established in 2020. Since then, we have continued to evolve our services to better meet the needs of Indigenous and regional families across NSW.

Our newest service arm, Wiluray Gunyah, officially launched in July 2024. This culturally grounded respite house represents a significant expansion of our wraparound model, designed specifically in response to calls from the community for safe, Indigenous-led short-term care.

Wiluray Gunyah is not just an extension of our original services, it's a purpose-built, trauma-informed, culturally safe environment that offers core supports, mentoring, and respite to Aboriginal children and families in the bush.

Wiluray Gunyah is a name grounded in Wiradjuri language and culture:

- o **Wiluray** means **sweet**
- o **Gunyah** means **home** or **shelter**

So together, **Wiluray Gunyah** means **Sweet Home**.

Our intent is to create a **safe, warm, culturally grounded space** for children, especially Aboriginal children in regional NSW, to rest, reconnect, and feel truly at home. We built it with care at its heart, not rigid systems.

6. Outline the market performance, critical reception, and customer satisfaction with the product or service to date. State monetary or unit sales figures to date, if possible, and how they compare to expectations or past performance. Provide links to laudatory product or service reviews. Include some customer testimonials, if applicable. (up to 350 words):

Total 350 words used.

Since launching in July 2024, Wiluray Gunyah has exceeded expectations across every measure, from community trust, demand, cultural impact and operational performance.

In nine months, Wiluray Gunyah delivered over 1,400 hours of respite care to 28 Aboriginal children across the Central West. This far outpaced initial projections and reflects a deep, unmet need for culturally safe, trauma-informed respite in regional NSW. Families who'd previously gone without any form of short-term care now describe the service as "life-changing."

From a market standpoint, demand has doubled within six months. We've received triple the referrals from more than 15 schools, GPs, and child protection caseworkers, now refer to Wiluray Gunyah as a trusted go-to for children requiring urgent, culturally appropriate care. Our waitlists for respite and early intervention supports have been reduced by **60%**, compared to the regional average of 6–12 months for similar services.

Our group programs have supported 80+ children in the past year:

- o 88% showed improved emotional regulation
- o 67% increased school or daycare attendance
- o 52% formed their first real friendships

The financial model has been sustainable from the outset, with income fully funded through NDIS plans and core support billing. Wiluray Gunyah contributed to our overall business revenue growth from \$950K in FY22–23 to \$2.42M in FY23–24, with continued growth forecast into FY25.

The impact on families is profound. In post-care surveys:

- o 95% of families reported reduced stress and feeling more supported
- o 100% said they would recommend the service to others
- o 87% of carers said they finally felt confident leaving their child in respite care

Testimonials

"We've never had this kind of support before. It's the first time we felt our child was truly safe and understood." —Parent, Dubbo

"Wiluray Gunyah has given me the first real break I've had in years. I trust them completely." —Kinship carer, Trangie

"He used to shut down the moment we mentioned respite. Now he looks forward to going. That says everything." —Mother, Wellington

We're currently exploring expansion opportunities in nearby towns due to demand and strong local endorsement.

Online reviews and media articles www.spearandarrow.com.au/testimonials

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Wiluray Gunyah - Indigenous-led respite house](#)



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