The Mile Pool

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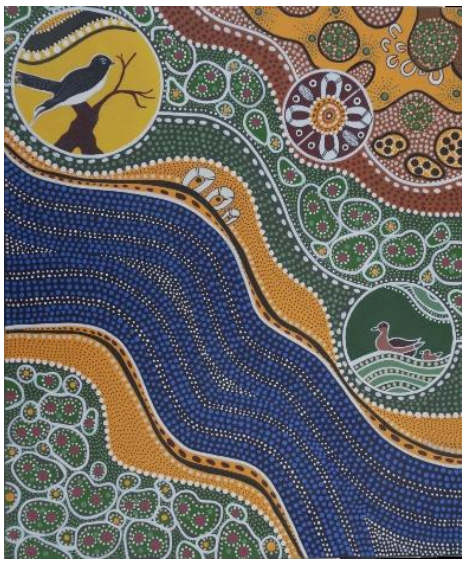



Michelle Wilura Kickett
Acrylic on canvas, 2026

The artist explains how being traditionally connected to the Ballardong area and York itself enables her to paint about that site, which was a traditional birthing site for Noongar women.

“Its a very significant place, for me it seemed like a natural topic or theme to express as an Aboriginal woman living here in York. I watched the film and talked to family - seeing the djiti-djiti (willy wagtail) sitting on the chair, I felt it told me that Dulcie had a very strong connection to country. Hearing her share her experiences and learning that she was the last person born on that site, became an important source of inspiration for this work.

Dulcie’s totem, the djiti-djiti (willy wagtail), is represented within the work, alongside the part of the story connected to the ducks and her experiences of this site. The yellow tones reflect the sandy areas of Country, while the U shapes represent the women gathered near the Mile Pool collecting water to prepare for birth.

In the upper right corner, the birthing trees and paperbark trees are represented, along with the midwives - traditionally the Elders of the community who supported women through childbirth. The black dots represent the babies who did not survive, acknowledging that amongst life there is also death.

The depiction of women preparing a fire, along with the coolamon and digging stick, communicates to the viewer that this is a women’s site. The softer colours reflect the feminine qualities of the work. At times, I sit back and reflect on the colours I have chosen, recognising that they come from what I absorb through being on Country.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander viewers are advised that clicking on the video link will show images and the voice of a person who has died.