




SPELL
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Kylie Caldwell

Open Sourced Blueprint for the
Spell x Kylie Caldwell Collaboration



In January 2023 Spell and Kylie Caldwell will release a 7-piece capsule collection featuring Caldwell's artwork 'A Beautiful Chaos'.

In the spirit of transparency and cooperative sharing, Spell and Kylie Caldwell have documented the collaborative process and are offering it as an open sourced resource. This resource may be helpful to brands looking to engage in a collaboration with a First Nations artist or simply for those interested in knowing more about the structure and process behind the Spell x Kylie Caldwell collaboration. Kylie Caldwell and Spell hope that by sharing this information it may increase the economic opportunities for First Nations artists, designers and other creatives who are significantly underrepresented at all levels of our industry.

ABOUT KYLIE CALDWELL

First Nations artist and Bundjalung Woman, Kylie Caldwell is a renowned multidisciplinary artist, most notably for her weaving, fibre art and painting. Caldwell's works explore contemporary and traditional Bundjalung culture and themes. She is dedicated to sustaining and promoting First Nations arts and culture through her artistic innovation.

The artwork featured in this collaboration, 'A Beautiful Chaos', is inspired by Caldwell's culture and Bundjalung Country. It explores the emergence of old and new patterns, and the discovery of beauty within life's chaos.

Caldwell works as Indigenous Arts Officer at Arts Northern Rivers and hopes to use her experience from this collaboration to assist and guide other First Nations artists venturing into textile design and fashion. A new textile pilot program is currently being developed offering a series of workshops and an individualised textile project with three Aboriginal artists.





ABOUT SPELL

Australian lifestyle brand Spell, which has operated on Bundjalung Land for over a decade, creates ready to wear pieces intended for making memories. Spell's instantly recognizable pieces meet at the intersection of romanticism, escapism and rock and roll. Each piece, considerably crafted using a pointed combination of both colour and print, is simultaneously easy to wear and elevated.

Sustainably minded and forward-thinking – designing with fibres that are circular, regenerative and renewable – Spell is a global pioneer at the intersection of environmental consciousness and ethical fashion production.

It is the intention of the brand to collaborate with First Nations creatives and professionals at all levels of the industry and to use fashion as a tool for change, engagement and helping Australia move forward into a more inclusive future.

A note from the Artist,
KYLIE CALDWELL

This collaboration is my first commercial collaboration. It has given me the opportunity to work with seasoned fashion industry professionals. I am no expert and have appreciated the opportunity to share my art and fashion with a brand, an Australian fashion house that has such a wide reach. The idea of entering a collaboration appealed to me, I know that I still have much to learn in textile design, clothing design, clothing manufacturing and commercial licensing agreements. This way I could gain hands-on experience and be a part of creating a collection.

The experience of working with Spell on the many facets of the new capsule collection, has been truly enriching and respectful. I could tell from the initial conversations with Spell, that they had done their homework and were

wanting to offer a collaboration informed by experienced experts, which in turn informed me on options to take. The First Nation Fashion Industry is slowly growing. There are a number of industry experts that support the development of collaborations like this one - seek their advice.

In essence the collaboration process was a genuine creative partnership, where input and preferences took much consideration and time to deliberate to create a beautiful collection. In honesty there were times of uncertainty where I felt unsure about the designs and indecisive about the final selections. This is where I relied on the Design Manager and Spell advisors who know their customer base, we kept working on designs until there was an agreed preference.

I hope our experience: inspires and stimulates commercial creative opportunities for First Nation artists and increases First Nation involvement at all levels of the industry.

This blueprint is our experience, central to its success has been Spell's commitment to care, to communicate and to co-design.

My deepest appreciation extends to SPELL and their amazing team. I've enjoyed immensely entering your Creative Chaos.

Kylie Caldwell

A note from Spell Co-Founder,
ELIZABETH ABEGG

Traditionally, Spell textile designs are original artworks conceptualised by my sister and Spell Co-Founder, Isabella Pennefather, and designed by a textile designer. As a fashion business operating on Bundjalung Land it has been an honour to work with Kylie Caldwell, a Bundjalung woman on our first artist collaboration.

Kylie's creative direction was instrumental throughout the process, from design to campaign. We also worked with many other First Nations individuals and organisations who guided and advised us along the way and we wanted to acknowledge and celebrate these voices here.

We have been working on this collaboration for two years. Kylie and our team have marveled at the coming together of many different individuals from different communities, most of whom have not worked together before. Cultural Consultants, individuals from the Arts Law Centre of Australia (Arts Law) and Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair Foundation (DAAFF), First Nations photographers,

models and makeup artists, all contributing to the process. Forming these new relationships is legacy enough to be proud of but there are many other things both artist and brand have learnt along the way. This document has been worked on collaboratively between Kylie and ourselves and we are happy to share it with our Spell community and beyond.

We preface this blueprint with some notes: We realise we are certainly not the first brand to collaborate with a First Nations artist and this document outlines just one of the many different ways a collaboration of this type can be structured. We are not suggesting this process was exhaustive or perfect and know that the path to learning is an unending one. The key is a willingness to be First Nations-led and to engage in co-design with the artist. Each First Nations artist has a different perspective and each individual has a different lived experience, so we sought advice from multiple experts in different fields.

This list of consultants is far from exhaustive and we encourage artists and brands alike to seek their own consultation from different sources far and wide.

We thank Kylie for allowing us into her world. Life at Spell is often 'creative chaos', so it felt like fate when Kylie told us the title of her artwork, 'A Beautiful Chaos.'. Thankfully the collaborative process flowed smoothly for all of us, and it is with pleasure that we share it with you now in this document.

We hope anyone reading this benefits from our journey, or simply enjoys the insight.

Elizabeth Abegg
Chief Brand Officer

The Initial Approach



TIP 1: FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS CREATE CONNECTION

A meaningful First Nations collaboration needs to be matched with organisational commitment first. Before a collaboration with a First Nations artist had even been considered, Spell was engaged in developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). [Reconciliation Australia](#) says RAPs provide a framework for workplaces to contribute to the Reconciliation movement, delivering tangible and substantive benefits for First Nations peoples and increasing cultural safety in the workplace.

During the first stage of their RAP, the Spell team began to understand the importance of forming new relationships with local First Nations communities and saw how these new relationships can impact the wider Reconciliation movement within Australia.

During a Connection to Country tour of Bundjalung Land, Ashley Moran, a Bundjalung man and Heritage Conservation Officer suggested that the Spell team meet

his wife, Kylie Caldwell. On meeting Caldwell, they bonded over their mutual love of art, fashion and textile design. The Spell team and Caldwell continued to meet and develop their relationship, discussing how a design collaboration could work.

During this time Spell was also engaging with different Cultural Consultants, having wider discussions around Diversity and Inclusion and developing a better understanding of how to meaningfully engage with First Nations individuals and organisations.



List of consultants Spell engaged with during this time:

DIXIE CRAWFORD OF NGANYA

nganya.com.au

Dixie Crawford, is a Barkindji woman from Brewarrina and lives on Ngunnawal Country. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Nganya. At Nganya, Dixie leads stakeholder engagement, masterclasses, executive coaching, and the design, implementation and monitoring of Reconciliation Action Plans.

YATU WIDDERS-HUNT

[linkedin.com/in/yatu-widders-hunt](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yatu-widders-hunt)

Yatu Widders-Hunt, descendant of the Dunghutti and Anaiwan peoples of NSW, is the General Manager of Cox Inall Ridgeway (link), an Indigenous social change agency and a board member for the Australian Fashion Council. She is also the founder of online community @ausindigenousfashion.

KIRLI SAUNDERS

wearestarling.org

kirlisaunders.com

Gunai Woman, Kirli Saunders (OAM), is an award winning writer, visual artist and educator with a passion for enlivening spaces and engaging broad audiences in bold conversations for social impact. Kirli has had experience speaking, facilitating and teaching across a multitude of stages and settings.



Kylie's note on this process:

The initial approach came after a friendly phone call from Spell. We decided to meet to chat further about the possibility of doing a collaboration. This initial face-to-face meeting was important, because it gave me a chance to discuss in detail the possibilities as well as get to know a representative from Spell. As stated, we bonded over a mutual love of art, fashion and textile design. The initial meeting and ongoing discussions enabled me to get to know Spell and their intentions, developing a relationship in the beginning helped in my decision to do the collaboration. The collaboration is my first ever, so being able to work with a fashion house that is transparent, approachable and responsive to my queries was important. Their openness and willingness to have my input made me feel comfortable to express my opinions and preferences.

The Licensing and Deal



TIP 2: DEVELOP A CONTRACT EARLY IN THE PROCESS

The Spell team had already engaged in several collaborations before entering into this one with Caldwell, so they already had existing contracts in place outlining how potential creative partnerships could be structured. However, the brand wanted to ensure best practice when it came to licensing artwork from a First Nations artist.

Spell spoke with David Giles-Kaye, Indigenous Fashion Projects Mentor at Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair Foundation (DAAFF) and received important advice about engaging and collaborating with First Nations artists. David advised that a brand should never perpetually license, nor try to own the art created by a First Nations person.

In previous partnerships, Spell held the intellectual property (IP) of the designs, textile prints and artwork created for their mainline collections. Traditionally, when Spell commissions a textile designer to create artwork for a print, essentially they pay the artist for their work and own the art to replicate how they choose.

Similarly, when Spell has collaborated with a creative, the designs become the property of the brand. This piece of advice from DAAFF shaped the collaboration contract process to ensure that Caldwell would retain IP/ownership over her artwork.

Caldwell engaged with [Arts Law](#) during the contractual process. Arts Law is Australia's independent national community legal centre for the arts, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. They provide specialised legal advice, education and resources to Australian artists on a wide range of arts related legal and business matters. Arts Law's Artists in the Black program delivers targeted services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists nationally.

Contracts were mutually agreed upon and signed before the official design process began.



Kylie's note on this process:

Establishing the contract is an important part of negotiating the terms of collaboration. Contracts are word heavy with terms not commonly used. Involving Arts Law in the process helped enormously in understanding what the certain phrases meant in the contract and assisted in adding in specific terms for Spell to be guided by. For example, I wanted to ensure any extra work beyond scope of the collaboration and not stipulated in the contract should be reimbursed accordingly. I also wanted to have input into the direction of the campaign.

Allow yourself time to deliberate on the agreement, I asked a number of friends to have a read through as well. Developing a contract with Arts Law can take a while, there are phone meetings as well emails regarding adding and altering the agreement.

THE SPELL X KYLIE CALDWELL FEE STRUCTURE

(specific fees and percentages are not revealed at the request of the artist)

Part 1 of payment structure:

Upfront artwork licensing fee artist retaining ownership of art, to be used by Spell exclusively for this singular capsule run.

Note: Spell paid 2.5x the advised upfront licensing fee recommended by DAAFF and Arts Law.

Part 2 of payment structure:

% commission of sales (Brand and Artist agreed upon using the same % as Spell's previous collaborations, minus the upfront licensing fee*)

Note: It is often the case that brands license an artwork from a First Nations Artist but do not go on to provide a percentage of sales (this decision is at the discretion of brand and artist). Spell and Caldwell decided it felt right in this case to have both licensing fee and a commission as part of the pay structure, especially given Caldwell's creative involvement in the design process.

*nb: This version of the document is our second published to add the 'minus upfront licensing fee' from the commission fee structure as this was left off the first version.

A note on commerciality of a first nations collaboration:

Caldwell and Spell both believe that when brands engage and collaborate with First Nations artists, it is important to put commerciality front and centre. It is often the case in a brand/artist collaboration that a charitable donation be involved (example; for each item sold, an amount is donated to charity). While this might feel right for some partnerships, both Spell and Caldwell (and many of the First Nations cultural consultants who advised us) agreed that First Nations artists are entitled to benefit commercially from their creative work, just like any other artist.

Both artist and brand decided on this occasion to approach the Spell x Kylie Caldwell collaboration commercially as would any other artist or creative. This will be the brand's approach for future collaborations with First Nations creatives unless the collaborator specifically requests a charitable component.

Spell has an ongoing giving-back partnership with local First Nations-owned non-profit, Bunjum. In 2022 alone they donated \$150,000 to Bunjum.

List of consultants Spell engaged with during this time:

DAVID GILES-KAYE

au.linkedin.com/in/dave-giles-kaye

David Giles-Kaye, Indigenous Fashion Projects Mentor at [Darwin Aboriginal Arts Fair Foundation](#) advised Spell on how arts collaborations work and ownership of artwork. David is an experienced senior executive from the textile and fashion industry and previously CEO of the Australian Fashion Council. David now leads DAAFF's newly established Indigenous Fashion Projects - www.ifp.org.au

ARTS LAW

Through completing an initial online legal query form with Arts Law, Kylie was connected to a Sydney based law firm whom she worked on the contract with, they helped clarify the agreement terminology and wording and add in artist's terms.

Arts Law Phone: 02 9356 2566

artslaw.com.au

GPO Box 2508

SYDNEY NSW 2001

artslaw.com.au/services/legal-query-form/

artslaw.com.au/artists-in-the-black/request-a-call-back/

Design Process



TIP 3: IF YOU CAN, INVOLVE THE ARTIST IN THE PROCESS FROM DESIGN TO CAMPAIGN, IT WILL ENRICH THE EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH ARTIST AND BRAND.

Spell was fortunate to enter a collaboration alongside an artist who had a passion and innate skill for textile design in the talented Kylie Caldwell. At each stage of the design process Caldwell worked alongside the Spell design team to ensure her creative vision was followed.

The Spell team learned that Caldwell's schedule didn't always match their 9-5 schedule and flexibility was important.

During the process, Isabella, Spell Co-Founder and Creative Director chatted to Kylie about her thoughts on an additional colourway of the original artwork. Kylie loved this idea and they worked together on creating an earthier version of the artwork.

Kylie's note on this process :

The design process I enjoyed the most. I sent through a vision board of images of silhouettes and styles I liked. Having input into the style of collection was established initially with Spell, I am aware this may not be done with all artwork commissions. In the design phase our initial meetings and communications were done in person, via zoom and emails. The design manager used the vision board to draft some initial drawings whilst we started to liaise on the scale of the print. The original artwork is A3 in size. The collection developed and changed as we looked at what worked, considering assembly requirements, range of fit, fabrics and spell fans. We played with using elements of the artwork as borders and colourway changes as an option. I felt having a love of fashion, understanding of garment assembly and developing rapport quickly with the design manager contributed to ensuring this process success. At times I also checked in with my daughter as a sounding board in regards to designs, silhouette and colourways to gain a younger perspective.



Design team:

Print designers (to help scale the artwork on the garments, conduct recolouring with artist's permission)

Design manager - worked with Caldwell to create the silhouettes to brief into the technical team

Tech team - Fitting the garments, ensuring they sit perfectly

Production team - sending the designs/samples to the makers

Communications and Marketing Process



Once the designs were finalised, Spell and Caldwell began conceptualising how to bring the capsule to life and tell the story of the artwork.

This involved:

- Photoshoot
- Packaging and tags
- Outward communications (social media, press releases, homepages etc)

TIP 4: CENTRE THE ARTIST IN COMMUNICATIONS, ENSURE THEIR VOICE IS HEARD THE LOUDEST.

For Spell, storytelling is an integral part of the brand, and centering their brand is often how they do this. Unlearning this innate communications strategy of ‘brand-centering’ was challenging for the Spell team. They enlisted the help of First Nations communications agency Cox Inall Ridgeway who connected them with a consultant to help shape some of the communication that flowed from Spell onto their social channels, press releases, website etc. The most important pieces of feedback were: to centre the artist; elevate the artist’s voice and profile; ensure the artist was involved in the communications (reviewing and providing feedback); and to highlight the process of this collaboration as being just as important to Spell’s audience as the creative product (our 7 piece capsule).

Kylie's note on this process:

Storytelling is an integral part of my culture, the artwork and the process and it is just as important as the collection itself. Cultural artworks are often centered around a story, the expression or representation from the artist, they are more than pretty prints that make striking garments.

Artist's involvement in outward communication may differ based on personal preferences and literacy. I write all of my own content. Some artists may need additional support to capture their stories respectfully.

Balancing supporting the local community and sharing opportunity versus engaging national talent and professionals through the marketing material development is something we considered. From a marketing perspective talent is preferred whereas from a local perspective it is important to unearth and support local talent.

List of consultants Spell engaged with during this time:

**KIRLI SAUNDERS
AND KAZ MCGRATH**

Starling - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training

Starling is an organisation that brings together ambitious leaders, bold organisations and great agencies to work collaboratively on purpose driven projects. By bringing together and collaborating with the people and organisations who are best at what they do, Starling offers a unique model that breaks down barriers and drives collective impact.

COX INALL RIDGEWAY

www.coxinallridgeway.com.au

Cox Inall Ridgeway is a Sydney-based First-Nations social change agency specialising in First Nations engagement and communications, with significant fashion industry experience under the leadership of General Manager, Yatu Widders-Hunt [@ausindigenousfashion](https://www.instagram.com/ausindigenousfashion).



TIP 5: WHERE POSSIBLE, ENGAGE WITH A FIRST NATIONS TEAM ON CAMPAIGN PHOTOSHOOT

Spell was guided by Caldwell in putting together a team of First Nations creatives for the campaign shoot for this collaboration. It was an opportunity for the brand to form new relationships with First Nations creatives with a fresh and unique creative perspective, as well as an opportunity for these creatives to work with a brand and have their voices elevated.

The launch event will be on Bundjalung land at Timbré, a First Nations owned gallery/cafe in Lismore. The event will feature the Nini Nhari-Gali Dance Group and will include refreshments from a First Nations-owned beverage company and snacks from a First Nations-owned food company. The guestlist is a mix of Spell and Caldwell's friends and community coming together to celebrate the capsule.

TIP 6: HEARTS OPEN, READY FOR ACTION! DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET IT WRONG

When Spell embarked on their RAP journey they put out a statement about having 'Open Hearts, Ready For Action'. The sentiment of this statement is woven throughout the process of the Spell x Kylie Caldwell collaboration. Spell was aware of the many challenges that might come with a collaboration of this sort, knowing that there was every chance they'll make mistakes or get it wrong sometimes. However, Spell are proud to have kept open hearts and have taken action. They are proud that, to the best of their ability, they have tried to celebrate and elevate Caldwell's work, while honouring her heritage. The team at Spell feel grateful for the privilege and joy of getting to know her and all of those they've met along the way.





We acknowledge the Arakwal and Widjabul People of the Bundjalung Nation, the traditional owners of the lands and waters of our region, home to Spell's operations and the lands where this special collaboration came to life. We pay our respects to Arakwal and Widjabul Elders past and present and honour those whose culture and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture these lands and waters.