



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



WIYIYANI U THANGANI YOUTH FORUM

MONDAY 8 MAY 2023



NGUNNAWAL & NGAMBRI COUNTRY

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Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) National Youth Forum Program • 2023

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians of Australia's lands, waters and skies including those whose lands we meet upon for this momentous occasion—the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani project has travelled across the continent and spoken to women and girls from many nations. We give special acknowledgement to our Matriarchs—the first mothers of this land—we pay our respects to them and all our Elders past and present who watch over us, our Countries, waters and skies.

The Commission recognises First Nations' peoples continuing connection to their traditional lands and waters—a connection that has existed since time immemorial—and acknowledges the impacts of colonisation which continue to obstruct First Nations people's full enjoyment of individual and collective rights.

The Commission supports and celebrates the leadership of First Nations women and girls in Australian society and recognises that women and girls' participation in decision-making is essential to addressing intersectional discrimination, lifting the wellbeing of our communities, and to achieving reconciliation in this country.

We welcome to the Summit all First Nations women who identify as women, including cis and transgender women, First Nations people who are LGBTIQ+SB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Non-Binary, Sistergirl and Brotherboy), and those who are gender diverse and non-binary.

Participants have travelled from Countries across Australia to be at the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Summit. We acknowledge you, your ancestors and the diverse and interconnected languages, cultural practices and laws you carry.



About Wiyi Yani U Thangani Youth Forum

Wiyi Yani U Thangani—meaning women’s voices in Bunuba language—is a multiyear systemic change project set out to capture and respond to the strengths, aspirations and challenges of First Nations women and girls. The vision is for First Nations gender justice and equality in Australia. We elevate the voices of First Nations women and girls, knowing that they hold the solutions to drive transformative change.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani National Summit is the first of its kind in Australia to bring First Nations women together (cis and trans women, and non-binary and gender diverse people) into an arena of decision-making with a diverse range of private and public stakeholders. Having a youth forum prior to the Summit is important to ensure youth have a voice and are empowered to fully participate at the Summit. Our young people are valuable agents of change and are key to championing innovative solutions to accelerate action towards gender equality.

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani Youth Forum is a safe space for youth to collaborate prior to the National Summit, to bring their solutions, recommendations, and initiatives towards a sustainable future. This platform is an opportunity to share ideas, network and to hear from some inspiring young leaders who will showcase their work and leadership journeys.

It is critical to hear our young people’s voices and to ensure they are front and centre in the First Nation’s Women and Girls National Action Plan to achieve gender equality.

WE ARE THE CHANGE

We are Connected, We are the Future, We Innovate.



Principles

The Summit is designed as a culturally safe, secure, reflective, inclusive and respectful space that is in line with the Wiyi Yani U Thangani principles and ways of working. The Summit upholds human rights and a strength-based approach, it practices and recognises intersectionality and the right to all participants having a voice, being able to speak and be heard.

All speakers, presenters and participants are asked to engage with one another in kindness, and in the spirit of generosity, care, reciprocity and non-judgement.

At its heart, the Summit is a gathering for First Nations women (inclusive of cis and trans women, and gender diverse and non-binary people), to come together in the first national gathering space of its kind, to be accepted by one another and to share freely with courage and without fear.

When engaging in discussions everyone should have the ability to contribute once before anyone speaks twice.

If you are a non-Indigenous participant, you are here as an invited guest, ally and observer. When in attendance we ask that you listen deeply and speak only when invited, to centre the knowledge and contributions of First Nations women. We further ask that you be mindful of your presence in spaces, and where workshop places are limited, preference the attendance of First Nations women.



Safety and Wellbeing

The Youth Forum is designed to be a safe space for collaboration, innovation and celebration; however, we recognise the serious nature of various discussions and acknowledge that some topics may cause participants distress. We encourage all participants to take care of their safety and wellbeing. There are youth mentors on site if you require support or please see below resources for support, at anytime:

You can also access the below resources for support, at any time:

13YARN – 13 92 76 Free and confidential 24-hour crisis support.

If you, or someone you know needs support, contact 13YARN, and safely talk with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.

iBobbly – free self-help app iBobbly is a free social and emotional wellbeing self-help app for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years and over.



Download the Summit App

The Wiyi Yani U Thangani National Summit App will keep you up to date and engaged with everything happening at the Summit, including all recent program changes, additional information about speakers and presentations and interactive features.

Instructions for downloading

1. To access the app in the app store, search for Ignite Event Launcher – available on both Apple and Android.
2. Download the Ignite Event Launcher from the app store.
3. Open the launcher and enter the code 'WYUT'.
4. Register your personal details to gain access to the app.
5. Enjoy! Browse through event and venue information, program, speaker bios, summit questions and more!

If you have any questions, please see the friendly staff at the registration desk.

About Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG)

Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation is a youth-led, non-profit organisation. We are empowered by young people, our families and our communities. Our practices are informed by our strong cultural values and beliefs.

As a youth organisation, we stand on the shoulders of all those who came before us. Their resilience, perseverance and strength guide us as we continue to inspire, equip, and empower young people, their families and communities. Grounded in Our Ways of knowing, being and doing, our work is designed to strengthen our families in times of challenges and develop the next generation of empowered young leaders.

Our Way is a strengths-based approach in supporting young people and community members. By identifying and empowering a youth's strengths and assets, we defy the deficit model.

As Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people we live and breathe the ongoing legacy of colonisation. We have often felt hopeless. Hopeless that things will never change. As a collective we are finding our voice and continuing to forge a better future for our families and our communities.

We aim to ignite the passion for leadership within young people and our community. DIYDG achieve our goals by Inspiring, Equipping and Empowering the next generation to take action to change their world.



Program

Monday 8 May

Welcome Event

Times		Location: Swan and Torrens Room
8.30am	9.30am	REGISTRATIONS
9:00am	9:15am	Welcome and Introductions DIYDG Facilitators, mentor introductions, Social Justice Team
9:15am	9:30am	Welcome to Country Aunty Matilda House
9:30am	10:30am	Connection and Grounding session
10:30am	11:30am	MORNING TEA Cultural Experience from local Traditional Elders
11:30am	11:40am	Reflection
11:40am	11:50am	Words of wisdom June Oscar AO – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner
11:50pm	12:00pm	Envisaging the future Reflection and Personal ideas from the words of wisdom and in relation to the Wiyi Yani u Thangani Project

12:00pm	1.00pm	LUNCH
1.00pm	1.15pm	Energiser Activity
1.15pm	1.45pm	Young Women leading the way Rona Glen and Zhanae Dodd
1.45pm	2.45pm	Building our Vision – Future focused reflections Mikeala Jade
2.45pm	2.55pm	AFTERNOON TEA
2.55pm	3.55pm	Priority Setting & Problem Solving Setting the tone for the summit and preparing for discussions and activities
		Summit Preparation Action to move forward
4.15pm	4.30pm	Reflections <i>Innovation our way</i>
4.45pm	5.00pm	Wrap up and next steps
5.00pm	5.30pm	*Youth Volunteers check in and briefing*



Speakers



Zhanae Dodd, CEO Project Groove Co.

Zhanae is a proud Ghungalu, Birri, Widi and Kaanju woman from Central Queensland.

Zhanae's first and foremost passion is her business, Groove Co which focuses on cultural restoration, revitalisation, restoration and advocacy alongside capacity building for community through education. A notable program from this organisation is the Yambanga Yuindi Cultural Immersion and Exchange program, which recently saw six young people reclaim their language, dances and songlines before heading across to Auckland, New Zealand for a cultural exchange where they were the first Aboriginal group in history to dance at Polyfest. Zhanae is now focusing on growing the business to include a cultural centre, financial literacy programs, traditional jewellery and implementing a wider focus on cross-cultural relationships throughout the Pacific.

Zhanae believes First Nations people have a large role to play in the Pacific and wants to create pathways to strengthen relationships with people and places such as Tonga, Samoa, New Zealand, the Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands and more. Zhanae balances running her business with her role as a Stakeholder Engagement Advisor for Stanwell Corporation, a researcher with CQUniversity, a Board member for Rockhampton rehabilitation organisation Gumbi Gumbi and a full time bachelor of Agriculture university student.

Zhanae's previous work in her community includes NGO work such as case and project management specialising in Youth Justice, government work with the Local Thriving Communities project and Child Safety and private sector work inclusive of journalism and marketing. Her driving force in her work and business is to empower Indigenous peoples of all ages to self-determination, while educating others on how to create safe spaces to learn and work in.



Rona Glynn-McDonald, founding CEO of Common Ground and co-founder of First Nations Futures

Rona is a Kaytetye woman who grew up in Mparntwe on Arrernte Country. With ties to storytelling, economics and narrative change, Rona works with First Nations organisations to shape future systems that centre on First Nations people, knowledge and solutions. Rona is the founding CEO of Common Ground and co-founder of First Nations Futures. Through her work across social change and philanthropy, she is shaping futures grounded in reciprocity and economic justice.



Mikaela Jade, Founder and CEO of Indigital

Mikaela is a Cabrogal woman of the Dharug-speaking Nation of Sydney. She began her career as a national park ranger. While working in the remote Northern Territory, she started a project that led her to found Indigital: Australia's first Indigenous Edu-tech company.

Through Indigital, Mikaela seeks to develop innovative ways to digitise and translate knowledge and culture from remote and ancient communities. Her aim is for Indigital to help create meaningful pathways for Indigenous people into the digital economy and the creation of future technologies.

In 2022 Mikaela was announced as one of 15 leaders to be awarded the Schwab Foundation 2022 Social Innovators of the Year award, was nominated for the ACT Australian of the Year Award and was named ANU Indigenous Alumna of the Year.



Co-facilitators

Semara Jose, Co-facilitator

Semara Jose is a proud Gudjula, Kuku Yalanji, Erub woman she is committed to creating a more just and equitable society for all Australians. She is a passionate advocate for equality and justice. She works to ensure Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Voices are heard in decisions that affect their lives and communities. Semara's leadership journey started in High School alongside for 40 Indigenous students from across the Far North Queensland Region.

Later, alongside Program Manager Kerry Hollingsworth, she spent the following 7 years employed by the Department Education and growing the school-based leadership program to regional flagship program that spanned 18 schools, more than 1200 students from Year 5 to post-secondary. Semara now is the Co-founder and Chair of DIYDG, she has been delivering and building capacity of young people to lead change their way.

With over 12 years' experience facilitating leadership development for First Nations young people, Semara has seen the power and potential of those young leaders affecting change in our communities. She believes everyone should have the opportunity to have their say, be heard and have grassroots solutions actioned.

Semara is currently the Co-Chair of the King and Wood Mallesons' First Nations Youth Voice Council and is a Director of Wuchopperen Health Service. As an advocate for the Yes23 Campaign, Semara believes that a First Nations systemic response is the foundation of our success, and it requires our young leaders to learn, grow and rise above.

Nicole Caelli, Co-facilitator

Nicole Caelli is a proud Ngawun and Yirandali descendant. Born and raised in Gimuy (Cairns). Nicole is an advocate in the social and emotional well-being area and in youth leadership. She has a passion to empower young Indigenous voices to be heard and to strengthen young people to enable them to make change in themselves as well as in their communities.

Nicole is a co-founder of Deadly Inspiring Youth Good (DIYDG). In 2015 Nicole became a director on the DIYDG board, who delivered youth led initiatives in the community and aimed to build on the foundations set to create a sustainable efficient organisation. In 2020 Nicole transitioned to employment at DIYDG to be able to provide support, mentorship and a safe space for young children who are in and out of the home care system.

In 2021 Nicole had the opportunity to work as an Indigenous Youth Wellbeing Research Officer at Central Queensland University in Cairns to improve systems and services that promote the mental health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adolescents.

Now Nicole has transitioned back into DIYDG as the Good Vibrations Program Coordinator, strengthening the mental health of young future leaders. In the time she has been in Good Vibrations she has achieved coordinating successful community events and a convoy for young Indigenous people within Queensland to educate them and raise awareness about the Yes campaign.

